

Thai News Update: 6 October 2020

1. Ministry earmarks about Bt3 billion for Covid-19 vaccines

Source: The Nation ([Link](#))

The National Vaccine Committee is planning to set aside Bt2.93 billion to purchase 66 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines within next year, Public Health Ministry spokesperson Dr Phanprapha Yongtrakul said on 5 October. The 66 million doses will cover 33 million Thais or roughly 50 per cent of the population. “The committee, chaired by Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, has decided to reserve the vaccines via two methods,” she said. Nakhon added that the vaccine will be provided to priority groups first, such as medical staff who are at the frontline of the battle against Covid-19 as they face the highest risk and are vital to the country’s public health system.

2. Transfer of employment under Thai labour laws

Source: Bangkok Post ([Link](#))

Amendments to Thailand's Labour Protection Act (LPA) on May 5, 2019, ushered in significant changes to a variety of labour laws, resulting in increased statutory severance pay, increased maternity leave benefits, implementation of paid necessary business leave, changes in wage payments during temporary suspension of business, interest payments for non-payment of wages in certain situations, and new workplace relocation procedures. These changes to the LPA also enhanced employee protections by setting out key amendments to the law governing transfer of employment.

3. EEC panel okays feasibility studies on three new projects

Source: Bangkok Post ([Link](#))

The Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) Policy Committee on 5 October approved feasibility studies on three new development projects worth a combined 1.18 trillion baht, aiming to create connectivity between the government's flagship EEC and regional industry. The three new projects are a trio of dry ports worth a combined 24 billion baht in Khon Kaen, Nakhon Ratchasima and Chachoengsao; a deep-sea port, motorway and double-track rail development network linking the Gulf of Thailand and Andaman Sea worth 168 billion; and the Thai Bridge Project (Saphan Thai) worth 990 billion. The committee chaired by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha agreed the development of three new projects will help strengthen the competitiveness of the EEC and create a link between the EEC and similar regional development projects.

4. Arkhom is new finance minister

Source: Bangkok Post ([Link](#))

His Majesty the King has endorsed the appointment of Arkhom Termpittayapaisith as the new finance minister, ending the month-long vacancy left by the sudden resignation of his brief predecessor Predee Daochai. The Royal Gazette announced his appointment on Monday, with immediate effect. The former National and Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) secretary-general is a familiar face in government. He was previously transport minister for the post-coup junta.

5. Egat partners Mitsubishi Motors for converting electric vehicle battery energy to electrical system

Source: The Nation ([Link](#))

The Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (Egat) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Mitsubishi Motors to develop a business model for converting electric vehicle battery energy to home electrical system, aiming to expand electric charging stations across the country. Egat and Mitsubishi Motors (Thailand) signed an MoU on energy conversion between electric vehicles (plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) with electrical systems and power control from the National Power System Control Centre.

6. EGCO Group powers up Gangdong power plant in South Korea

Source: The Nation ([Link](#))

Electricity Generating Public Company (EGCO Group) kicked off operations at its 19.8-megawatt Gangdong fuel-cell power plant in South Korea on Thursday. EGCO Group powers up Gangdong power plant in South Korea Electricity Generating Public Company (EGCO Group) kicked off operations at its 19.8-megawatt Gangdong fuel-cell power plant in South Korea on 1 October. “The 19.8MW Gangdong power plant operated by Paju Energy Service, in which EGCO holds a 49 per cent stake while SK E&S holds the rest, commenced commercial operations on October 1,” said Thepparat Theppitak, EGCO Group’s president. “The plant will sell electricity to the Korea Electric Power Corporation, the sole buyer of wholesale power generation in South Korea, through the Korea Power Exchange.

7. Energy Ministry re-enters talks with Chevron over gas-field dispute

Source: The Nation ([Link](#))

The Energy Ministry said its decision to restart talks with Chevron over who should remove offshore gas platforms in the Gulf of Thailand will not affect the country’s energy security. Chevron Thailand Exploration and Production Ltd decided to re-enter the arbitration process a year after breaking off talks to resolve a dispute over decommissioning of its assets in the

Erawan gas field. The company said it was seeking more transparency on the responsibility for removing platforms in the field before it is handed back to the government. Last year, Thailand asked Chevron to pay decommissioning costs of around \$1.5 billion before the field is handed back to PTT Group when Chevron's concession comes to an end in April 2022. PTT is planning to build a liquefied natural gas (LNG) receiving terminal in the field to handle 19 million tonnes of LNG per year.