

THAI NEWS UPDATE: 6 OCTOBER 2021

1. Cabinet okays six new special economic zones in EEC

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

A Cabinet meeting on 5 October has approved the establishment of six new special economic zones in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC), said deputy government spokeswoman Ratchada Thanadirek. The move was proposed by EEC Policy Committee with an aim to utilize available areas in the EEC of 15,836 rai for industrial and trading purposes,” she said. “The project will cover the areas of 5,458 rai and use a budget of Bt300.77 billion over the period of ten years (2021-2030).” The Cabinet also approved the motion to increase the areas of Thammasat University EECmd Centre, a special economic zone that serves as a medical hub in Chonburi province by 18 rai, bringing the total areas of the centre to 585 rai.

2. Phuket vegetarian fest gets underway with strict safety measures

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

Phuket’s popular vegetarian festival is being held under strict safety measures from 6 October until October 14 to curb Covid-19 from spreading further. Phuket provincial public health doctor Phadungkiet Utoksenee said the province has implemented measures to contain the spread of the disease, such as limiting the number of Chinese temple officials and visitors, conducting tests on officials using antigen kits, reducing the ceremony process and refraining from selling firecrackers (except raft-type ones).

3. Measures set to assist SMEs

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

The cabinet on 5 October agreed in principle job support measures worth 46.9 billion baht to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) retain workers and create new jobs. According to government spokesman Thanakorn Wangboonkongchana, the cabinet has acknowledged the job support measures approved last Thursday by the Centre for Economic Situation Administration (CESA). He said the measures aim to help SMEs that have 200 or fewer employees retain 95% of their workers, and encourage entrepreneurs to increase new hires. The new support measures will see the government hand out 3,000 baht a month to each worker from November 2021 to January 2022.

4. More Pfizer, AstraZeneca doses on the way

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

Thailand is to receive more than 300,000 doses of AstraZeneca vaccine under donation from Germany and 100,000 Pfizer doses from Iceland by the end of this month. Government

spokesman Thanakorn Wangboonkongchana announced on 5 October that the Cabinet has agreed to accept the Covid-19 vaccine donation from Iceland and Germany. He said that Iceland has disclosed its intention to donate 100,000 doses of Pfizer vaccine to Thailand. The donation agreement of the delivered doses is to be signed by the Public Health Minister Anutin Charvirakul.

5. Locanation – A new travel platform that offers better deals to hoteliers

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

“Locanation”, the first online travel agency that does not collect commissions from hotels, was launched this month to offer Thai travellers more choices. This platform, which is like other online travel agencies like Agoda or Traveloka, was launched on October 1 as part of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT)’s “TAT Travel Tech Startup Season 2” campaign. The platform can be reached at www.locanation.com. Locanation founder Pepe Arunanondchai said this website is better than the booking platforms he had developed before. He said Locanation is the first online travel agency that does not collect commissions from hotels and helps them communicate directly with potential guests.

6. Bid to boost tech among small manufacturers

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

The Industry Ministry is preparing to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) upgrade their factory technology to robotic and automation systems under a 2.5-billion-baht soft loan programme. Only 25% of factories in Thailand currently use robotics, automation and systems integration (SI), according to the Office of Industrial Economics (OIE). The soft loan, with an annual interest rate of 1%, will help SMEs improve and modernise their factory operations in line with the government's Thailand 4.0 scheme, which emphasises a transition to technological advances and high-level services.