

## Thai News Update: 7 October 2020

### **1. Pattaya light railway plans take shape**

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

A feasibility study on a light rail network for Pattaya is nearly complete and will be submitted to the city's council and the cabinet for consideration soon, the study's coordinator said. According to Siraphop Suwannakase, the study and public hearings have concluded that a monorail would suit Pattaya the most rather than trams. Designs for the network and the routes were currently being looked at. Pattaya deputy mayor Kiattisak Sriwongchai said the city would want to keep land appropriation to a minimum.

### **2. Thai hotels in Maldives report on reopening**

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

While Thailand is speeding up a reopening plan this month, Thai hotel companies that own properties in the Maldives are shedding light on the first-hand experience of the Indian Ocean country's challenges since reopening on July 15. The Maldives was the first tourism-led nation to reopen for international tourists with hassle-free entry and no testing requirements or mandatory quarantine. After allowing tourists to visit without testing results for less than two months, a spike in the number of cases from tourists prompted the government to tighten the restrictions by requiring negative test results 72 hours before arrival from September onwards.

### **3. Franchise system the main path for operators**

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

Major food operators are tapping the franchise system and opening street food stalls outside retail malls to prepare themselves for booming online delivery and to reduce the impact from the prolonged Covid-19 pandemic. Khiang street food brand under Zen Corporation, the operator of Zen Japanese restaurant, for the first time launched the Khiang brand via the franchise system in December 2019, with 70 branches. Now, Central Restaurants Group (CRG), Food Passion and Chester's are jumping on the bandwagon of franchising in Thailand's street food market.

### **4. Govt panel mulls ways to facilitate visits by foreign business people and investors**

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

The Centre for Economic Situation Administration (CESA) is holding discussions on further opening the country to foreign business people, while the Finance Ministry is planning new

measures to stimulate the domestic economy. Government Spokesman Anucha Burapachaisri said that the CESA would discuss on 7 October the details of rules and regulations for more entrepreneurs and foreign investors to enter the country. Special Tourist Visa (STV) details may also be considered to allow more foreigners to enter Thailand. The major issue of debate is how to facilitate travel by entrepreneurs and foreign investors, as this group would be inconvenienced by 14 days of quarantine for a short-term visit.

#### **5. Cabinet gives nod to Thailand's Bt62 billion medical excellence strategy**

**Source: The Naiton ([Link](#))**

The Cabinet on 6 October gave the green light to spending Bt62 billion over the next five to 10 years on building six medical excellence centres nationwide. The strategy aims to boost the country's medical competitiveness and its public health system as well as reduce disparity in medical service accessibility among Thais. Of the total budget, more than Bt19 billion will be spent on the project during the current fiscal year, over Bt16 billion in the next fiscal year, more than Bt13 billion in 2022 and over Bt14 billion between 2023 and 2027.

#### **6. Competitive EV pricing targeted**

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

The Industry Ministry is pushing ahead with its ambitious plan to bring prices of electric vehicles (EVs) closer to those of traditional fuel-powered cars by reducing the import duty on auto parts used to assemble EVs in Thailand. The Office of Industrial Economics has been assigned to conduct a feasibility study of tax reduction options and forward its findings to the National Electric Vehicle Policy Committee, known as the EV board, for consideration this month. Industry Minister Suriya Jungrungreangkit expects the taxation measure to help increase demand in Thailand for EVs, which are still costly, and at the same time support state measures to curb hazardous PM2.5 dust emitted by old car engines.

#### **7. Cabinet assigns over Bt5 billion for construction of new Interior Ministry complex**

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

The Cabinet has agreed to earmark Bt5.57 billion for the construction of a new Interior Ministry complex covering 18-rai in Bangkok's Banglamphu area, government spokesperson Anucha Burapachaisri said on 6 October. This land comes under the jurisdiction of the Royal Household Property Bureau. The Budget Bureau has approved the project and will allow the disbursement of Bt900 million from the 2020 budget.