

THAI NEWS UPDATE: 7 OCTOBER 2021

1. New excise tax structure for cigs gets cabinet nod

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

The cabinet has approved the new excise tax structure for cigarettes, expected to come into effect on 8 October, according to a Finance Ministry source. The source said that all details will be disclosed by the Excise Department on 7 October at 4pm, after the new tax rate is published in the Royal Gazette. At present, a 20% tax rate is applied to the retail price for cigarette packs costing up to 60 baht. The source said that the cabinet agreed to raise the tax rate from 20% to 25% including the 40% tax rate, together with an adjustment of the retail price which is at least 60 baht.

2. Baht strengthens as investors eye Thai stocks

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

The baht opened at 33.83 to the US dollar on 7 October, strengthen from Wednesday's closing rate of 33.92. Poon said the baht would continue fluctuating against the greenback. Also, he said, the flow of foreign funds has slowed down because foreign investors are waiting for an improvement in the market before spending on Thai stocks. The baht will strengthen if the Asian market opens for more risk. The baht will not strengthen much because investors are waiting for the Nonfarm Payrolls (NFP) report. The baht's key support level would at 33.70, the level some importers are waiting for so they can buy dollars, he added.

3. PTT, Tokyo Gas Engineering Solutions to set up JV

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

A subsidiary of state-owned energy group PTT Public Co and Tokyo Gas Engineering Solutions Corp will set up a joint venture to enter the on-site energy business involving liquefied natural gas supply in Thailand. The wholly-owned unit of Japanese utility Tokyo Gas Co said it has agreed with Siam Management Holdings Co to form the venture, PTT & TGES Optec Co, in Bangkok in November with the start of operations planned for the January-March quarter of next year. Capitalized at 60 million baht, the new firm will be owned 51% by Siam Management Holdings and 49% by Tokyo Gas Engineering Solutions. Its business will centre on offering an "advanced energy service" with a combination of LNG supply by lorry and various types of generation systems using solar, biomass and thermal power, among others, according to the Japanese company.

4. Thai envoy hopes for progress on Bangladesh FTA

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

The newly appointed Thai ambassador to Bangladesh, Makawadee Sumitmor, has expressed hope that a free trade agreement (FTA) can be signed to create more business opportunities between the two countries. Mrs Makawadee discussed the prospects for a trade pact during a recent meeting with the board of directors of the Bangladesh-Thai Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BTCCI). Chamber members also offered proposals for enhancing the bilateral trade and investment relationship between the two countries during the meeting at the Royal Thai Embassy in Dhaka. They said the two countries should consider working together on the creation of a Thai Special Economic Zone in Bangladesh and the relocation of labour-intensive industries such as woven textiles.

5. Thailand to revive its medical tourism sector amid COVID pandemic

Source: Asia Nikkei ([Link](#))

With the Thai government planning to reopen the country to foreign tourists as part of its strategy of learning to live with COVID, Thai businesses aim to offer COVID-related services as well as revive medical tourism. The upscale Bumrungrad International Hospital has launched its first COVID-19 recovery clinic, offering all COVID solutions to affluent Thais and foreigners, as the government prepares to reopen the country roughly by November. Bangkok Dusit Medical Services, Thailand's largest private health care group, also provides a high-end alternative quarantine resort in the heart of Bangkok. Starting on Oct. 1, it offers quarantine packages of seven, 10 or 14 days, depending on the traveler's vaccination status.