

## Thai News Update: 8 July 2020

### **1. Applications for new Thai passport to be accepted from today**

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

The new version of the Thai passport will be available from July 8 onwards at passport offices nationwide, the Department of Consular Affairs announced on Tuesday (July 7). The cover of the new passport has been designed to reflect Thai art and culture. The latest technology is being used to protect personal identities. While the earlier passports used face and fingerprint recognition, the new passport will use the "iris scan system". The waiting time will be shorter, too, although the department did not unveil the timeframe for issuance of the new passport.

### **2. Ministers to push help for SMEs**

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

A full meeting of economic ministers will be held on 10 July to discuss ways to revitalise the economy battered by Covid-19, with measures to help more than 3 million small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) high on the agenda, a senior government official said. Kobsak Pootrakool, deputy secretary-general to the prime minister for political affairs, said on Tuesday that the economic cabinet meeting is very important as economic ministers from all coalition parties will attend the meeting to look at ideas on how to address the economic woes caused by Covid-19. The full meeting will be the first since March following the outbreak of the virus.

### **3. Bids for EEC's Digital Park to be sought soon**

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

The Digital Economy and Society Ministry is expected to sell bid documents this month to develop Digital Park Thailand in the much-touted Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC), the ministry's permanent secretary Ajarin Pattanapanchai said. The ministry had initially started making the documents available in June last year, but no bidders picked them up as they were reportedly waiting to see progress in the high-speed railway project linking three international airports.

### **4. Added local travel perks shaping up**

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

The Finance Ministry is poised to launch a fresh package to encourage domestic travel on weekdays, aiming to boost the country's GDP by 0.2-0.3 percentage points. The Fiscal Policy

Office (FPO) is sorting out measures to prod people to travel more on weekdays to comply with Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak's policy to add value to the domestic tourism stimulus package focused on encouraging people to travel on weekends, said director-general Lavaron Sangsnit. "We're thinking about how to make people travel on both weekends and weekdays," he said. "The measures must be proposed to policymakers first."

#### **5. Thailand, New Zealand in bubble talks**

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

The Industry Ministry has discussed working with New Zealand on what it calls an "industry bubble" with the aim to share knowledge, technology and innovations for the agriculture sector in support of farmers from both nations. Like a travel bubble, which links countries with low risk of coronavirus infection, the industry bubble is also based on the selection of certain countries for a close business cooperation. According to the Industry Ministry, partner countries are required to ensure that they can carry out economic activities together without concern of a viral outbreak in their lands.

#### **6. Institutional investors keen on PTT debentures**

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

National oil and gas firm PTT received a warm welcome as it issued debentures for the first time since 2015, with institutional investors showing huge interest by offering 65 billion baht. The figure, more than four times the sales volume planned by PTT, was reported during the booking period before the company officially sold the corporate bonds last Thursday. The overwhelming demand led the company to increase sales, originally set at 15 billion baht, by 5 billion baht, PTT chief executive Auttapol Rerkpiboon said, calling the turn of events a reflection of investor confidence. "The corporate bond sale also comes at the right time as the market creates investment mood," he said.

#### **7. Memorial Bridge to become major attraction**

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

The government is floating an idea to make the 88-year-old Memorial Bridge, or Saphan Phut, into a new landmark for Bangkok to attract tourists from around the world. The idea was unveiled on 7 July by Pathom Chaloeuywares, director-general of the Department of Rural Roads. Mr Pathom said Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha conveyed his vision to him to see the bridge become a new attraction. The premier also ordered the department to find out how to reimplement the practice of using drawbridge designs. In the old days, Saphan Phut was able to lift its span to let large ships pass. The practice ceased several years ago.

**8. Thailand's Gulf Energy buys 50% stake in German wind farm for about \$631 million**  
**Source: Reuters ([Link](#))**

Gulf Energy Development Pcl said on 7 July it acquired a 50% stake in a German offshore wind farm for about 558 million euros (\$631.10 million) in the latest overseas investment by Thailand's second-largest power producer. Gulf Energy said acquiring the stake of the Borkum Riffgrund 2 Offshore Wind Farm (BKR2 Project), which has an installed capacity of 464.8 megawatts (MW), was in line with the company's strategy to expand its renewable energy business. Earlier this year, the Thai company had purchased a 100-MW wind project in Vietnam and also increased its stake in a gas-fired power plant infrastructure project in Oman.