

THAI NEWS UPDATE: 8 MARCH 2022

1. Thailand to lead Apec task force on restoring travel between members

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

Thailand will head the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) Safe Passage Taskforce to seek solutions on restoring normal travel between the 21 member countries. The move to name Thailand as head of the task force was made during the Apec Senior Officials Meeting from February 14-25 in a bid to accelerate economic recovery, Thani Thongphakdi, Foreign Ministry permanent secretary, told Krungthep Turakij on 7 March. Meanwhile, Department of International Economics Affairs director-general Cherdchai Chaivaivid said the group has discussed various aspects of this issue, such as vaccine certificate, safe and sustainable tourism, and extension of the Apec Business Travel Card project, to strengthen travel between Apec economic areas for the long term.

2. SCG eager to embrace environmental approach

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

Green manufacturing is driving more business for SET-listed Siam Cement Group (SCG), Thailand's largest cement maker and industrial conglomerate, as it is eager to use more clean energy, develop environmentally friendly products and utilise electric vehicles (EVs). Its Cement and Green Solution Business, a unit under the Cement and Building Materials Business, is planning to increase use of renewable energy to more than 30% of total energy demand. "Now 70% of our energy comes from fossil fuel sources, notably oil and coal, but we are going to gradually decrease this share," said Chana Poomee, vice-president of Cement and Green Solution Business.

3. Centara eyes 100 new hotels

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

Centara Hotels and Resorts wants to open 100 new hotels within five years, spanning Thailand, neighbouring countries, China and the Middle East, with most of them under management agreements. The five-year plan for 2022-26 is to add 20 hotels per year, which will see the total number reach almost 200 and provide around 38,000 rooms, said Thirayuth Chirathivat, chief executive of Centara Hotels and Resorts. Half of the new properties are in Thailand, followed by the Middle East, China and Southeast Asian countries, particularly Vietnam, with plans for 20 hotels there. Mr Thirayuth said most of the new hotels will have management contracts with potential partners.

4. Thailand offers aid to stranded tourists

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

More than 7,000 tourists from Russia and Ukraine in Thailand are allowed to extend their visas without an application fee as the government is considering measures to offer humanitarian assistance to those affected by international flight cancellations. Tourism Authority of Thailand governor Yuthasak Supasorn said the Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration asked related authorities to explore the impact of the Russia-Ukraine crisis and propose to the cabinet meeting today solutions to help tourists stranded in Thailand. He said there are roughly 7,000 tourists from the two countries in four tourism areas, comprising Phuket, Koh Samui, Pattaya and Krabi. To mitigate the short-term impact, tourists can extend their 30-day visa without paying the application fee, which costs 1,900 baht for both Ukrainians and Russians.

5. Industry Ministry to soon announce EV manufacturing standards

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

Industry Minister Suriya Jungrungreangkit on 7 March said that his ministry will speed up announcements on standards related to production of electric vehicles as part of the goal to make Thailand an EV hub. Suriya said his ministry is working to realise the policy of making Thailand a key centre for the manufacture of EVs and key parts for EVs, and has so far announced 116 standards related to EV production. The Industry Ministry also is building the Automotive and Tyre Testing, Research and Innovation Centre to encourage the development and use of zero carbon emission vehicles, Suriya added. Meanwhile, Banchong Sukreetha, the secretary-general of the Thai Industrial Standards Institute, said the institute this year will announce 19 more standards related to EV production. The 19 new standards cover electric motorcycles, EV batteries, EVs to be linked to the national power grid and the mobility of EVs, Banchong said.