

Thai News Update: 9 February 2021

1. New ideas eyed to aid Phuket

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

Businesses and government officials in Phuket floated a raft of new ideas to lure foreign tourists back to the resort island, as they called on the government to allow tourists who have been vaccinated against Covid-19 to enter without needing quarantine. At a meeting to brainstorm rehabilitation plans for the tourist destination, Chamber of Commerce President Thanusak Phungdet suggested local restaurants come up with new dishes and urged the provincial administration to keep public transport fares inexpensive to attract more visitors. He also suggested holding a campaign, in which hotels and other accommodation providers offer rooms and services at the same price, with the help from the private sector and the provincial administration.

2. Govt targets 30% electric-car production to tackle pollution

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

Thailand will target having electric vehicles account for 30% of car production by the end of the decade, as part of efforts to tackle toxic air pollution. The government wants to “accelerate the use and production of electric vehicles, with national strategies focusing on the environment and air pollution solutions,” Industry Minister Suriya Jungrungreangkit said in an interview. Thailand already has an advantage by being a car-production hub and it’s now time to focus on EVs, he said. While the overall contribution from vehicles to pollution is much smaller than other sources like crop burning or forest fires, a survey commissioned by Nissan Motor Co showed that 91% of Thais would buy an EV because of the environmental impact. The survey found 43% of Thai non-EV owners would consider an EV for their next car purchase within the next three years.

3. KBank setting up branch in Vietnam

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

Kasikornbank (KBank) is planning to open a branch in Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City to expand the scope of its regional banking business in a high-growth economy, covering all loan segments. KBank, Thailand's second largest commercial lender by total assets, received approval on Jan 19 from the State Bank of Vietnam to upgrade what had been its representative office in Ho Chi Minh City to a branch. The bank is in the process of setting up the new branch, with the aim of expanding its banking services more widely within the

regional market covering all customer segments including large corporations, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and retailers, said Pattarapong Kanhasuwan, KBank's executive vice-president.

4. Regulator to shift oversight of ICOs to Securities Act

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

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) plans to transfer oversight of initial coin offerings (ICOs) for investment and utility tokens to the Securities Act in order to remove regulatory overlap and promote digital assets. Nopnuanparn Pavasant, director of the Fintech Department at the SEC, said the Digital Assets Decree will be amended along with the SEC's Securities Act to ensure that Thailand's regulations regarding digital assets trading are in line with international standards. The amendments will transfer the supervision of investment tokens and utility tokens that are not readily exchangeable for services and products, previously regulated under the Digital Assets Decree, to the Securities Act.

5. Covid vaccinations under govt control: Anutin

Source The Nation ([Link](#))

In a bid to protect people, private organisations and local authorities are not allowed to purchase Covid-19 vaccines yet, Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said on 9 February. He explained that some vaccines have not undergone all phases of testing, and their efficiency and side effects are not clear as yet. He said these vaccines were being sold to countries for emergency use only.

6. China vaccine 'arriving soon' to kickstart Thailand's stalled inoculation

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

China's Sinovac Covid-19 vaccine will be delivered to Thailand as soon as possible, Chinese officials told Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha on 8 February. The assurance was given by the Chinese Embassy's chargé d'affaires, Yang Xin, during a meeting with Prayut at Government House ahead of Chinese New Year. However, no date was given for the vaccine's arrival. China's drug regulator last week gave conditional approval for the vaccine, called Coronavac, while the Thai Food and Drug Administration is currently reviewing Sinovac's application. The deal for the Sinovac vaccine has come under scrutiny amid reports it is barely more than 50 per cent effective against Covid-19.