

Thai News Update: 9 October 2020

1. BTS executive: Transport infrastructure key

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

Thailand is being urged to accelerate construction of infrastructure projects while the pandemic stunts other economic drivers to attract foreign investors once the pandemic ends. Rangsin Kritalug, chief operating officer of SET-listed skytrain operator BTS Group Holdings, said foreign investors will have more confidence in the country and are more likely to return if they see Thailand's transport routes and key infrastructure have improved. "It's like we temporarily closed our shop for renovation or to build something new. We should speed up this process," he said.

2. Used car traders optimistic

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

Fast Auto Show Thailand organisers expect used car trade will stand at 1.5 million transactions in 2020, a 5% dip from last year, but are still optimistic about a better outlook than for new car sales. They gave the forecast ahead of the five-day Fast Auto Show, scheduled to start on Oct 28 at Bitec. The event features both new and used cars. Despite the difficulties, the pandemic may become a new opportunity for used car dealers if they can sell more cars to prospective buyers with limited budgets, said Asadavuth Asasappakij, vice-chairman of the committee preparing for the October car show.

3. Toyota buys Egat's first REC for fuel

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

State-run Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (Egat) has started trading its Renewable Energy Certificates (REC), with Toyota Motors Thailand the first buyer to support efforts to reduce greenhouse gases. REC is an economic incentive aimed to encourage power plant owners to produce electricity from clean fuels. Each REC, which certifies the bearer generates one megawatt-hour (MWh) from renewable energy resources, can be traded as an energy commodity. This market-based instrument was first introduced at the 2015 UN Climate Change Conference, also known as the Paris Accord.

4. Foreigners told to renew work permits

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

The Labour Ministry is warning Lao, Myanmar and Cambodian migrant workers to have their work permits renewed before the Oct 31 deadline passes, or else they may face stiff

punishment and be immediately deported back to their countries. These migrant workers are required to submit their work permit renewal applications before the end of this month and there will still be a number of more processes to get done before their work permit renewals are actually approved, said Labour Minister Suchart Chomklin on 8 October. Due to Covid-19 and Thailand's shortage of migrant workers these workers are being allowed to stay on in the country even though their work permits have expired, he said.

5. Asean still attractive for European businesses, survey shows

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

The EU-Asean Business Council on 8 October released its sixth Business Sentiment Survey, which showed that most European businesses based in the region see Asean as offering the best economic opportunities and most expect to expand in the next five years. However, they cite supply chain barriers, Asean Economic Integration and FTAs as crucial areas to address. Among the key highlights of this year's survey are:

- 56 per cent of EU businesses plan to enter Asean markets, a slight drop from 61 per cent in 2019.
- 65 per cent of respondents favour Thailand as the second-best alternative for expansion and EU-Asean free-trade agreement, similar to previous years.

6. GPO to produce masks, PPE in preparation for second Covid-19 wave

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

Dr Sopon Mekthon, chairman of the Government Pharmaceutical Organisation (GPO), said on 8 October that the agency has taken steps to deal with a possible second Covid-19 outbreak, so there are no shortages in masks and protective gear this time. He said medical and N95 masks as well as top level personal protective equipment (PPE) can now be produced domestically. Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul's policy is that we have to be self-sufficient. We plan to start producing medical masks this year and N95 masks by mid-2021," Dr Sopon said.

7. SME D Bank teams up with GEC to help enterprises on e-commerce

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

The Small and Medium Enterprise Development Bank of Thailand (SME D Bank) has joined forces with General Electronic Commerce Services (GEC) on improving SMEs' e-commerce potential via The Hub Thailand platform to increase their market channels and revenue. After presiding over a memorandum of understanding signing ceremony, Industry Ministry permanent secretary and SME D Bank chairman Kobchai Sangsitthisawat said that as the Covid-19 crisis has severely impacted SMEs, the bank aims to enhance their potential to

expand market channels, especially the e-commerce market which is witnessing high growth, to boost their revenue in this new normal era.

8. CPF pitches "Cheeva Pork" under U Farm brand of biochemical-free meats

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

Charoen Pokphand Foods (CPF) has introduced its "U Farm" brand of meats that are free from biochemicals for consumers conscious about food safety and animal welfare, chief executive officer Prasit Boondoungprasert said. "Under the U Farm brand, Cheeva Pork is high quality meat that contains a high volume of good fat and Omega 3 for health conscious consumers. It is now available at selected retailers including Central, The Mall, Foodland, Villa and CP Fresh Mart," Prasit said. "Next, we will push for export of Cheeva Pork to Hong Kong and Japan, markets where we had previously successfully penetrated with U Farm's Benja chicken meat and processed pork," he said.

9. Thai Smile to add four new routes as demand starts to go up

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

Thai Smile Airways, a subsidiary of Thai Airways International, plan to fly on four new routes in the last quarter of this year, chief executive officer Charita Leelayudth said. The routes are: Suvarnabhumi-Nan, Suvarnabhumi-Nakon Panom, Nakhon Si Thammarat-Chiang Mai and Nakhon Si Thammarat-Udon Thani. Charita said that the airline had witnessed an increase in passenger numbers after the resumption of operation on domestic routes since June 1. She said that the airline saw new potential customer segments, including retirees.