

Daily Thai News Summary: 8 September 2015

1. New batch of stimulus measures focus on SMEs

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

A new round of stimulus measures to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) will include 100 billion baht in soft loans, tax cuts to 10%, tax exemptions for start-ups, a 100-billion-baht credit guarantee and a 6-billion-baht venture capital fund in another effort to revive the faltering economy.

The measures will be submitted for cabinet approval today. Under the package, SME start-ups will receive a five-year corporate income tax exemption, while existing SMEs will see their tax burden reduced to 10% for two years for net profit of more than 300,000 baht, a Government House source said.

To be eligible for the tax cuts, SMEs must have a single account. SMEs with registered capital of up to 5 million baht and revenue of 30 million are currently subject to a tax waiver for net profit of up to 300,000. They are taxed at 15% for amounts over 300,000 baht but not exceeding 3 million and at 20% for amounts over 3 million. The source said the tax cut might be extended after the two-year period has lapsed if it succeeded in drawing more SMEs into the formal tax system and encouraged them to pay tax bills correctly.

2. Boosting tourism between Laos and Thailand's Loei

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

Thailand's designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA) is coming up with a plan to improve infrastructure and prepare routes to cash in on the growing traffic with Laos. The move is aimed at drawing visitors, particularly adventure-seeking and high-spending tourists, from the two nations and also from third countries into the region.

Viroj Jivarangsan, governor of Loei province, said yesterday that DASTA, the tourism coordinator, was working with authorities and the private sector in the border city of Loei and Luang Prabang in Laos on plans to improve tourism infrastructure, air connectivity, and land and water travel, including a new loop of the two cities. The discussion is an extension of an agreement that the two nations entered to co-develop cross-border travel between four provinces in Thailand - Loei, Nong Khai, Udon Thani and Nong Bua Lamphu - and four areas in Laos - Vientiane, Vientiane prefecture, Xayaburi and Luang Prabang.

The Cabinet approved the plan to link Loei and Luang Prabang and passed it on to DASTA for implementation. DASTA's office in Loei is transforming the province into a special area for the development. Also, the National Tourism Committee has vowed to support the project.

3. Foreign chambers see continued political stability after charter rejection

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

The Foreign business community in Thailand has expressed optimism that political stability will continue despite the National Reform Council's rejection of the constitution draft on Sunday. Stanley Kang, chairman of the Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce in Thailand, said the chambers believed that there was no immediate cause of concern regarding the Kingdom's political situation. *"The government should continue to ensure the transparency and the efficiency of its policies in the coming year, as those are the most important elements, and it should continue with the strong anti-corruption measures to help increase business confidence here. The JFCCT also wants to see continuity in the process to return Thailand to a democratic system,"* he added.

Darren Buckley, president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand, said the fate of the new charter could only be decided by the Thai people, but the international community still wanted to see continuity in political stability and for the military government to follow its road map of returning democracy to Thailand. *"In terms of the economy, foreign investors and the international community hope that the stimulus measures of the new Council of Economic Ministers will be able to revive economic growth in the next period,"* he said.

4. Ford looks to Thailand for insights into new innovations

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

Ford Motor's Global Consumer Trends and Futuring team yesterday met with seven Thai thought leaders as part of its study of global consumer trends. Sheryl Connelly, manager of the project, said Bangkok is an interesting city and also an important city in the Asean region. Ford would like to get in-depth insights into consumer trends in the city.

"I have jotted down the interesting things from the discussion with the Thai experts in the seven key areas. It is not promised that all the ideas we got will become final products from Ford, but they are the interesting ones. They will be a part of developing the Global Consumer Trends for 2016," she said.

5. Boost to technology start-ups

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

Thammasat University, in cooperation with the Institute for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ISMED), has announced its partnership with Silicon Valley-based Spinta Global Accelerator to provide a boost to Thai technology start-ups and help them globalise their businesses.

Along with Thammasat and ISMED, Spinta will help various innovative technologies developed at the university to be converted into viable businesses, while also inspiring other Thai entrepreneurs to convert their scalable and innovative ideas into world-class start-ups. Professor Doctor Somkit Lertpaitoon, rector of Thammasat University, said one of the three major policies to which the university is highly committed was promoting itself as a leading international research university, building on its efforts to provide higher-level education in a wide array of disciplines ranging from science and technology to health sciences, social sciences and humanities.

By Harsha Hazarika