

## Thai News Update: 10 August 2020

### **1. Thailand touted as medical marijuana tourist destination**

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

Thailand's ailing economy, particularly its tourism and agriculture sectors, is poised to get a boost from new rules that ease the private cultivation and sale of medical marijuana. The Cabinet amended the Narcotics Act on Aug 4, pending Parliament's approval, to allow private medical operators -- a category including some traditional medicine practitioners and farmers -- to grow and trade the crop including for both export and import. The move expands a cornerstone policy of Deputy Prime Minister and Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, who bet that the controlled legalisation of marijuana would boost the wellness, travel and agriculture sectors. The latest plan will lift limits imposed when the country in 2018 became the first in Southeast Asia to legalise medicinal use of the herb. It also follows the opening in January of a medical-marijuana clinic in the Health Ministry facilities that offer free medicine to its patients. This does not include the 147 authorised clinics in the country that are currently able to prescribe it.

### **2. Trade Competition Commission sets up protection for restaurants**

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

The Trade Competition Commission (OTC) is setting guidelines for online food delivery services to prevent unfair trade practices and keep online food delivery platforms from taking advantage of restaurants. Santichai Santawanpas, the commissioner of the Office of Trade Competition Commission (OTCC) and the office's spokesman, said the commissioners have already finished the draft guidelines to regulate online food delivery services after the business mushroomed during the lockdown starting in April. Mr Santichai said the guidelines focus mainly on governing unfair practices between online food delivery platforms and restaurant owners. The OTCC is preparing to open public hearings from stakeholders and will be open for comments on improving the draft guidelines, he said.

### **3. Joint panel plans fresh CPTPP study**

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

The Joint Standing Committee on Commerce, Industry and Banking (JSCCIB) will start a new study on the highly contentious Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) next month in a bid to renew its call for the government to join the pact next year. The group plans to hire a consultancy to do the "deepest" examination of

pros and cons of the deal, believed to help boost international trade, which could help Thailand handle the fallout from the pandemic, said the Federation of Thai Industries (FTI). The JSCCIB wants Thailand to first join negotiations on various issues, including free trade proposals among CPTPP members, to pave the way for a decision on whether to eventually ratify the pact.

#### **4. EA boss sees EV demand shooting up**

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

SET-listed Energy Absolute (EA) expects to see a significant increase in demand for electric vehicles (EVs) in Thailand within five years, citing the clean energy trend, better technology and changes brought about by the coronavirus pandemic. To catch up with the trend, some 30-50% cars on streets should be driven by electricity, said renewable energy tycoon and EA chief executive Somphote Ahunai. Many countries are developing an EV industry to replace petrol-powered cars, so Thailand should not miss an opportunity to benefit from the clean technology, he said.

#### **5. Plan to develop train transport to reduce energy bill and greenhouse gas**

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

The six mass rapid-transit lines will be developed to reduce energy and greenhouse gas emissions, while a survey found 59 per cent of city commuters don't use the electric train due to lack of good feeder service. Wilairat Sirisoponsilp, deputy director-general of the Ministry of Transport's Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning, revealed the plan on 9 August during a seminar on reducing energy usage in transportation. He said the ministry's consultant has presented the results of the energy assessment project that can be reduced by following the evaluation of the six mass rapid transit lines currently in service: Green Line (Mo Chit - Samrong); Green Line (Samrong - Samut Prakan); Green Line (National Stadium - Bang Wa); Blue Line (Bang Sue - Hua Lamphong); Suvarnabhumi Airport Rail Link Or Airport Rail Link and Purple Line (Bang Yai - Tao Poon).

#### **6. Govt pushes greater investment, skill development in automation and robot tech**

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

The Thai-German Institute has been tasked by the Ministry of Industry with promoting investment in automation and robotics technology in the industrial sector as well as developing manpower that is skilled in the production and maintenance of industrial automation systems and robots. Govt pushes greater investment, skill development in automation and robot tech. The Thai-German Institute has been tasked by the Ministry of

Industry with promoting investment in automation and robotics technology in the industrial sector as well as developing manpower that is skilled in the production and maintenance of industrial automation systems and robots. “The government wants Thai entrepreneurs to be able to design and produce automation systems and robots for industrial use by exempting import tax on automation and robotic parts to help reduce the cost,” Somwang Boonyarakjaroen, the institute president, said