**The Cabinet met on Tuesday, November 28, 2017, at the cabinet retreat held in Songkhla province. Some of the resolutions are as follows:**

**Title: Draft Royal Decree on Tha Sadet National Park - Phangan Islands B.E....**

The Cabinet approved in principle the Draft Royal Decree on Tha Sadet National Park - Phangan Islands B.E....as proposed by Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, and ordered for it to be forwarded to the Office of Council of State for consideration and proceed accordingly. The Draft is to declare an area of forest in Koh Ngan, Ban Tai, Surat Thani as a national park.

**Title: Request for approval on Framework for additional staffs in higher education institutions in the three southern border provinces for fiscal years 2018-2021**

The Cabinet approved the Framework for additional staffs in higher education institutions in the three southern border provinces for fiscal years 2018-2021, as proposed by Ministry of Education. A total of 374 additional staffs for Princess of Naradhiwas University, Yala Rajabhat University, and Prince of Songkla University Pattani Campus was approved, consisting of 271 academic positions and 103 administrational positions, for the total budget of 138,882 million Baht. Bureau of Budget is to allocate the budget accordingly.

**Title: Overview of Transport Infrastructure Development Framework in Southern Thailand under Ministry of Transport**

The Cabinet acknowledged the overview of Transport Infrastructure Development Framework in Southern Thailand as proposed by Ministry of Transport.  The Framework consists of 4 major development directions, which have either already been implemented or are to be implemented, as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Development Directions** | **Projects in the South** | **Projects in Southern Border Provinces** |
| 1. Development / improvement of road infrastructure facilities to ensure road safety and to accommodate future economic development.   | - Highways linking Malaysia (Songkhla province) - Transport enhancement of Petchkasem Road, linking Phuket, Phang Nga, Krabi and Trang provinces | - Two Bridges crossing River Kolok in Tak Bai district and Su-ngai Kolok district- Road construction route Leng Tai-Kota Bharu (including two bridges crossing Sai Buri River and Kolok River |
| 2. Development of transport networks to accommodate leading tourist destinations. | - Western coastal road construction project in Rayong and Chumphon provinces - Feasibility Study and survey on design of cruise ports in Krabi and Koh Samui - Development and improvement of airports in Hat Yai, Phuket, Krabi, Surat Thani, Trang and Nakhon Si Thammarat. | - Narathiwat and Betong Airport Development and Improvement Project |
| 3. Development of water transport network as a gateway for trade and investment. | - 2nd Songkhla Deep Sea Port construction project | - Dredging and Maintenance of Pattani Bay Coastal Shore - Pattani coastal pier improvement project, and feasibility study on expansion of Pattani coastal pier |
| 4. Development of Railway Transport Network for public facilitation | - Six dual-track railroad projects, such as Chumporn - Surat Thani, Surat Thani - Hat Yai – Songkhla, and Surat Thani - Phang Nga - Phuket. - Phuket Mass Transit System  | - Hat Yai - Padang Besar dual-track rail project  |

**Title: Development direction of the South and Southern border provinces under the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan (B.E. 2560-2564)**

The Cabinet acknowledged development direction of the South and Southern border provinces under the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan (B.E. 2560-2564), as proposed by Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) as follows:

1. **Development Direction of the South**

**Potential and Opportunity**:

Many popular tourist destinations are situated in the south of Thailand such as Phuket, Krabi, Phi Phi, Samui and Phangan. The beaches and upper islands of the region can be connected with the development of the Royal Coast of the central region.

The South is rich with wide-ranging natural and historical attractions. It is the region of rubber, palm oil, and tropical fruits cultivation. Its estuary is also suitable for coastal aquaculture. Pak Phanang and Songkhla Lake areas are significant rice growing areas.

Rubber City is located in the southern province of Songkhla, which is an industrial estate focused on rubber production and processing, and the border economic zone, which has the advantage of developing intra-regional and external trade links.

**Development Approaches**:

1. Tourism development in the South to become world’s leading tourist attractions
2. Development of rubber and palm oil processing industry in the country
3. Development of key agricultural products in the region
4. Infrastructure development to accommodate tourism, industrial zone development, and global trade connectivity

1. **Development Direction of the Southern Border Provinces**

**Potential and Opportunity**:

The southern border provinces are the major area of local cultivation, especially rubber, palm oil, and fruit trees, as well as a major fishing area. There are many tourist attractions such as Bala-Hala Forest and border cities. The region boasts its multi-cultural identity with peaceful co-existence. Their famous food, e.g., Betong Chicken, watercress, river carp and Indian salmon, can be developed for culinary tourism. The region has high proportion of children and young people who have potential to develop into skilled workforce for local economic development.

  D**evelopment Approaches**

1. Development of Agro-Industry and Agro-Processing Industry to ensure stability in production sector
2. Development of Su-ngai Kolok District, Narathiwat as a city of border trade and special economic development; and Betong District, Yala province as a sustainable border town
3. Community empowerment