

Thai govt considers allowing foreigners to buy own property more easily



Thai business media has said that their sources in Thai government are suggesting that laws relating to the Condo Act of 2008 and rules about owning land and houses are about to change.

It would mean foreigners with at least 10 million baht could buy and own a house - and even the plot of land it sits on.

The amount of foreign owned condos in a building is also set to increase well above the 49% ceiling though they would not have voting rights. In addition leases are set to increase from 30 to 50 years or more. However, any changes in the law are likely to be temporary for the next 3-5 years as a post Covid stimulus package.

The Thai media said that at a recent seminar called "Thailand Moving Forward" the energy minister Suphattanapong Panmechao had said that the country has the attributes - food and healthcare in particular - to attract foreigners. He said that new investment opportunities need to be created to encourage foreigners to buy second homes in Thailand and he also wanted to attract retirees. These people have savings as well as their pensions, he noted, plus they usually have health insurance. He intimated that the government needs to change laws to encourage condo purchase and the buying of free standing houses.

Sources at government house confirmed this tantalizing prospect.

Firstly the Condo Act of 2008 is set to be changed, they suggested. At present 49% of condos in a block can be owned by foreigners according to law. This is set to change to somewhere between 70% and 80% though those above 49% who are foreign would not have voting rights at Juristic Person meetings. This is to protect Thai interests, said the sources.

House ownership has been a bugbear of foreign investors for years with only those prepared to invest 40 million baht up able to buy a house on land - and even then it comes with the need to seek ministerial approval. The plan now is to drop that threshold down to properties between 10 million and 15 million baht. This would only apply to property in housing estates and even then, foreigners could only buy 49% of property in any one estate.

Also it is planned to increase those buying on lease from 30 years to 50 years plus 40 years. The source indicated that changes to all these regulations would only be temporary for the next 3-5 years. They are seen as necessary post pandemic to stimulate the economy and encourage foreign investment.