

Daily Thai News Updates: 7 December 2016

1. Phuket hotels ready for influx after airport upgrade

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

Upgrades at Phuket's airport and an increase in direct international flights are set to further stimulate growth of the island's tourism industry. Pobchai Jivavisitnon, the owner and managing director of Novotel Phuket Resort and Novotel Phuket Vintage Park, said the renovation of old terminals at Phuket airport will accommodate an influx of arrivals at the luxury tourism destination. Airports of Thailand (AoT) reported that passenger traffic at Phuket airport leapt 19.6% year-on-year to 11.3 million in the first nine months of 2016. Mr Pobchai said greater coverage by international airlines such as Malaysia-based Malindo Air, which offers direct flights from Kuala Lumpur to Phuket. Mr Pobchai said greater coverage by international airlines such as Malaysia-based Malindo Air, which offers direct flights from Kuala Lumpur to Phuket. "These developments will widely benefit every stakeholder in Phuket, including my two hotels in Patong district," he said. In addition, the addition of more international direct flights and improvements from airport renovations will also indirectly support the government's policy to push Phuket to be a destination for meetings, incentive travel, conventions and exhibitions (Mice) in Thailand.

2. Trip Advisor: Thailand leads in 'popular attractions'

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

Thailand had the greatest number of attractions in Southeast Asia as measured by traveller interest in September and October. Five attractions in Thailand made it to the top 15 list compiled by travel site tripAdvisor, based on the percentage increase in search sessions during the period. On the list are Nong Nooch Tropical Botanical Garden near Pattaya, the Bua Thong waterfalls in Chiang Mai, the Cartoon Network Amazone water park at Jomtien Beach, Monkey Hill in Phuket and Krabi's weekend night market. The other four Asean countries on the list are Indonesia and the Philippines, each with four attractions, and Vietnam and Malaysia, each with one. TripAdvisor has provided the following descriptions for the five Thai attractions and why they are attracting interest.

3. Mall Group upbeat stimulus will spur shopping

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

The Mall Group, one of Thailand's leading retailers, is optimistic that the government's upcoming stimulus schemes will spur a shopping spree during the holiday season, driving sales to reach 54 billion baht as expected. Chamnarn Maytaprechakul, executive vice-president of The Mall Group, said he expects the scheme called "Shop Chuay Chat", offering tax breaks to stimulate shopping during the festive season, will be a plus for sales at the group's retail properties which TheMall, The Emporium, The EmQuartier, Siam Paragon and Bluport Hua Hin. He said under the scheme, sales at these shopping centers are set to grow by 20% versus the same period last year. Big spending by foreign tourists particularly from Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Myanmar has contributed largely to its sales. A market analyst said the overall retail market in Thailand in the first nine months grew about 3%, driven by the continuous expansion of new stores in each retail format by retailers.

4. Chinese is 30 millionth visitor to Thailand in 2016

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

The lucky visitor setting this record was Huang Junyi, a Chinese national who flew in to Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport from Guangzhou on Monday. Yuthasak Supasorn, governor of the tourism authority of Thailand, said it had been an amazing year for tourism in "amazing Thailand" as shown by the huge numbers of visitors. The country has reached the 30-million mark and the high season has only just kicked off. "Thailand has so much to offer the world and we know that the Thai people make every visitor feel as welcome as we [were] made," Huang said as she received a certificate naming her as "Thailand's Luckiest Visitor". She will be awarded two economy-class return tickets to Thailand from her original destination, which is valid for a year. She will also be given a voucher for a five-night stay in one of Thailand's luxury hotels in Bangkok, Pattaya or Hua Hin as well as a mobile phone with a fourth-generation SIM card and seven days of Internet usage. The "Thailand's Luckiest Visitor" campaign was launched last year to welcome and reward every millionth visitor from June to December.

5. NSF to seek better investment return

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

The National Savings Fund will start taking positions in SET 50 companies early next year after its board gives the green light to expanding options for realising a better return on investment. Somporn Chitpentom, secretary-general of NSF, said yesterday that return on investment should reach 5-7 per cent next year, up from 2-3 per cent currently, when it can invest in the stock market. Somporn Chitpentom, secretary-general of NSF, said yesterday that return on investment should reach 5-7 per cent next year, up from 2-3 per cent currently, when it can invest in the stock market. NSF was launched in August last year to serve as a retirement safety net for 25 million self-employed workers not covered by a pension fund, Social Security or a provident fund. People aged 15-60 are eligible to apply for NSF membership. NSF now has three state-owned banks as partners – the Government Savings Bank, Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives and Krungthai Bank. NSF has added the Government Housing Bank as the fourth channel to accept fund members and deposits from self-employed workers.

By Shreya Chopra

