

## Daily Thai News Updates: 24 April 2017

### **1. Thailand 'well suited' to host global tourism conference**

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

Yuthasak Supasorn, governor of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, talks with The Nation on Thailand's readiness to host the World Travel Tourism Council (WTTC) Global Summit, which will take place in Bangkok from Tuesday to Thursday next week. The summit will be a platform for Thailand to present itself as a hub for tourism and sports before the eyes of more than 700 top executives from 140 companies, representing 30 per cent of the entire travel and tourism sector. Key speakers at the forum include former British Prime Minister David Cameron, WTTC president and chief executive officer David Scrowsill, United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) secretary-general Taleb Rifai, Thai Tourism and Sports Minister Kobkarn Wattanavrangkul, and Siam Piwat CEO Chadatip Chutrakul.

### **2. Aditya Birla affirms Thai base, looks to China**

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

Aditya Birla Group, a leading India-based industrial conglomerate, says it will continue to expand in Thailand as well as the region, especially in China, to maintain its dominant position in the industries it operates. "We are absolutely committed to this country. We have had a very good experience in terms of the people, the work culture, the legal system," Kumar Mangalam Birla, chairman of the group, told the Bangkok Post. "It has been a very good journey for us here in Thailand, and Thailand remains a very important destination for us," he said, as the group looks to celebrate its 50th year in Thailand in 2019. Thailand was the first country Aditya Birla ventured into in the 1960s, gradually increasing its presence over the years. The group has two listed companies on the Stock Exchange of Thailand: Thai Carbon lack Plc and Thai Rayon Plc. Thai operations accounted for UScopy.1 billion in turnover out of the \$42 billion the group recorded last year. Mr Birla said he is looking at various expansion options, including investing in areas Thailand wants to promote.

### **3. Krabi coal plant up in the air**

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

The government's plan to build a coal-fired power plant in the coastal province of Krabi has once again been put on hold after Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha scrapped the previous environmental health impact assessment (EHIA) and ordered the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (Egat) to conduct a new one with greater input from nearby communities. According to Egat, it will take 18 months to two years to conduct a new EHIA, leaving the plan to secure power in Thailand's southern region in limbo. However, it is unclear whether the project will be delayed for two years or indefinitely since opponents of the plant have sworn to continue fighting even if the new EHIA is approved. That has raised concerns among investors about possible power shortages, which would deter new investment in the region. It also leaves policymakers fewer options in helping secure energy for the South, where power demand has been rising by 5% a year.

### **4. E-work permit smart card get roll-out**

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

The Labour Ministry has begun issuing e-work permit smart cards to migrant workers to make it easier for officials to verify the workers' information and stamp out falsified documents. According to ministry officials, the cards will be easier to carry and hard to falsify. It would also be more convenient for officials to check the workers' information by using their smart phones to read the QR code embedded in the cards. The card features a photo and contains the profile of the migrant worker as well as information of his or her employer and workplace, according to officials. The QR code, meanwhile, contains related information, including immigration records of their departures and arrivals in the country as well as any change of employer. The cards were first issued at the Post-Arrival and Reintegration Centre for Migrant Workers in Mae Sot district of Tak. They were distributed to newly-arrived migrant workers under a memorandum of understanding (MoU) requiring joint supervision of the workers' employment contracts between Thai authorities and the workers' countries of origin.

## **5. Commerce officials braced for new Trump measures**

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

The government is scheduled to hold a joint meeting between the state and the private sector on Wednesday to discuss possible adverse impacts from executive orders signed recently by US President Donald Trump. Commerce permanent-secretary Wiboonlasana Ruamraksa said the ministry will also hold separate meetings with operators in individual industries such as food, automotive and parts, computers, gems and jewellery, and electronics, as well as with the Thai Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Thai Industries. "We need to discuss the overall impact of Mr Trump's executive orders for trade in services and investment. Key products exported to the US belong mostly to US or foreign companies operating in Thailand," she said. "Once all information is available, the commercial counsellor in Washington will be tasked with explaining to the US Department of Commerce on May 18." Mr Trump signed a pair of executive orders in late March calling for an investigation into US trade imbalances and vowing to reverse the country's trade deficit. One of the orders gives the US Commerce Department 90 days to produce a report on the factors behind the trade deficit, while the second seeks to increase the collection of tariff duties on imports...Thailand's exports to the US represent only 10% of the total, mainly for electronics parts, which are bought by US firms operating in Thailand. Those parts are mostly shipped back to be assembled in the US, creating jobs and income for the US.

## **6. Producers unite to boost rubber prices**

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

Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia are cooperating to ensure stability of world rubber prices, which continue to fluctuate after signs of recovery. Titus Suksaard, governor of the Rubber Authority of Thailand, said the three countries, which account for 70% of the world's natural rubber supply, recently held a meeting to discuss the situation. They agreed that rubber prices will continue to rise because of several factors, including lower supply due to heavy rainfall and flooding in the South of Thailand. However, the big players in the natural rubber industry see prices as still volatile. As a result, the three countries have agreed to increase domestic demand as much as possible. They will meet again in July to discuss the issue again and see whether prices are still fluctuating; if so, the group might consider controlling rubber exports to tamp down prices. Malaysia, Indonesia and India implemented policies to reduce rubber plantations in a bid

to curb production and boost market prices, said Mr Titus. Meanwhile, the Natural Rubber Policy Committee has approved to extend a rubber price subsidy scheme worth 20 billion baht to bolster rubber prices in the country.