

## Daily Thai News Updates: 27 April 2017

### 1. Prayut asks for quality tourists

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

The prime minister has urged the private sector to help drive the tourism industry towards high-quality, sustainable growth. Speaking on the first day of the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) Global Summit 2017, Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha said yesterday Thailand's tourism sector has expanded rapidly for years to become a major source of the country's revenue and economic growth, but quality is still a concern. "There are several factors affecting global tourism, especially rules and regulations. Attendants should take this opportunity to discuss practical solutions that can help develop tourism to its full potential and make it last," said Gen Prayut. He said rapid changes in advanced digital technology have made Thailand a top travel destination, but the same technology could become a national security threat. "Though advanced technology can enhance tourism competitiveness, people in the industry should focus more on quality tourism. We should have a screening system to ensure we attract quality travelers. This will genuinely benefit the country in the long term," said Gen Prayut.

### 2. Franchises projected to grow 10%

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

Thailand's franchise industry is expected to grow by at least 10% this year, as the business has proved lucrative and profitable, notably in the food and beverage, services, beauty and spa, retail and education sectors, says the head of the Business Development Department. Banjongjitt Angsusingh, director-general of the department, said the country's franchise prospects remain promising, with the industry expected to grow to 330 billion baht this year from about 300 billion in 2016. More importantly, the government is committed to supporting and promoting Thai franchises to expand overseas, particularly in Asean, said Ms Banjongjitt yesterday at the "Franchise B2B 19 Fair", held on April 26-27. There are 29 Thai franchises operating in 38 countries, including Black Canyon, Index Living Mall and Wongpanit, while there are 55 foreign franchises operating in Thailand, largely in the food and beverage sector. Overseas franchises are estimated to earn Thailand some 70-80 billion baht from management fees and franchise costs, mainly in the food and drinks, bakery, beauty and education sectors.

### **3. World-changing benefits of travel touted at tourism summit**

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

World leaders, globalisation scholars and advocates for sustainable tourism urged the business world to conduct longer-term thinking in a bid to tackle global issues at the two-day World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) Global Summit that began in Bangkok yesterday. Former British Prime Minister David Cameron, one of the personalities, pundits and industry leaders joining the summit alongside Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, who presided over the opening, voiced concerns on global problems that demand immediate attention from those in the tourism world. “Tourism can transform countries. Governments and those in the business world should work together to tackle the threat of Islamist extremism while preserving the benefits of globalisation,” Cameron said during a session titled “Altered States: Has Globalisation Had Its Day?” David Scowsill, president and chief executive of the WTTC, opened the summit by highlighting the need for the tourism industry to lead the way in transforming the world given tourism’s transformational power. He said travel and tourism stimulated the economy by generating more than US\$7.6 trillion globally and supporting more than 292 million jobs, or one in 10 jobs worldwide. The sector has grown faster than the global economy consistently over the last six years.

### **4. Innovative products in focus as SCG mulls new investments in EEC**

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

Siam Cement Group (SCG) is studying expanding in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) through three core businesses – petrochemicals, packaging, and building materials – with the focus on innovative products. “We are looking at the incentives and the infrastructure around the project before making a decision on investing in EEC. This may be ready when the government announces its investment to develop infrastructure in this area,” said Roongrote Rangsiyopash, president and chief executive officer of SCG. The group is also branching out into Asean countries, with its eye on the petrochemical industries in Vietnam and Indonesia. The group had budgeted Bt15.3 billion for Asean in the first quarter of this year, with almost all going to its cement business in Vietnam – Vietnam Construction Materials JSC. About Bt300 million was earmarked for its packaging business, Indocorr, in Indonesia. Its total 2017 capital-expenditure budget is up to Bt70 billion. As

the next step in Asean, the group will finalise its further investment in Vietnam's first integrated petrochemical complex by midyear.

### **5. Bangkok 'most visited destination' in Asia Pacific**

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

Bangkok remains the most visited destination in Asia Pacific while Singapore continues to lead the Thai capital in total visitor expenditure, according to the latest findings from the Mastercard Asia Pacific Destinations Index 2017 shared at the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) Global Summit in Bangkok. Over the past two years (2015-2016), Singapore has tracked a strong 18 per cent leap in visitor spending. One of only five destinations of the top 20 by total expenditure to reach a minimum spend of US\$200 (Bt7,200) per day, Singapore attracted the highest spending visitors at \$254 per day, followed by Beijing (\$242), Shanghai (\$234), Hong Kong (\$242) and Taipei (\$208). According to the Index's findings, 2016 was an exciting year for tourism in Asia Pacific. Fuelled by increasing consumer wealth amongst Asia Pacific's emerging markets, the region's thriving tourism industry continues to show vigorous progress. It is the world's fastest-growing region for international tourism by GDP contribution, with tourism making up 8.5 per cent of Asia Pacific's GDP and 8.7 per cent of total employment last year. Overnight arrivals make an unprecedented jump. Half of the top 20 most visited destinations in Asia Pacific saw more than 10 per cent growth in international overnight arrivals from 2015 to 2016. Destinations that benefited the most from this growth include Northeast Asian and Southeast Asian markets – Seoul (32.7 per cent), Osaka (23.8 per cent), Bali (22.5 per cent), Tokyo (22.2 per cent), Hokkaido (21.9 per cent), Chiba (21.5 per cent) and Pattaya (20.6 per cent).