

## Daily Thai News Updates: 28 April 2017

### **1. Somkid targets 70% Hong Kong market share for Thai rice**

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

Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak has targeted that Thai rice will secure 70 per cent of the Hong Kong market this year. Commerce Minister Apiradi Tantraporn said on Thursday that during Somkid's four-day visit to Hong Kong that began on Wednesday, he and the Thai delegation that accompanied him were holding talks with four of the city's rice associations on ways to expand Thailand's mark. Somkid set the target market share at 70 per cent this year, up from 68 per cent last year. Hong Kong imports 300,000 tonnes of rice from Thailand annually, of which most is Hom Mali rice.

### **2. Candidate urges worldwide cooperation for sustainable tourism**

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

Individual nations should work together as a community in order to achieve sustainable tourism, said Alain St Ange, the Republic of Seychelles' candidate for secretary-general of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). He said the biggest challenges of today's travel and tourism industry were safety and security. "We need to bring all countries of the world together. Today, Singapore, [the] USA, Australia, Great Britain and more are not [members of the] UNWTO. We need everybody around the same table because we have only one tourism industry. "We can talk and plan together to ensure that tourism continues to be consolidated. They should be involved as the community of nations to address together any tourism-related issue," St Ange said. St Ange is one of six candidates for UNWTO secretary-general. The election will be held on May 12 at the organisation's headquarters in Madrid, and will be voted on by ministers of tourism from 34 countries. Besides St Ange from Seychelles, the other candidates are from Zimbabwe, also in Africa, Brazil and Colombia in South America, Georgia and South Korea. St Ange also said individual nations should work together to promote the development of sustainable tourism.

### **3. Trump tax-cut plan will not hurt Thailand, says expert**

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

The Trump administration's plan for the biggest tax cuts "in history" is unlikely to affect Thailand, say senior officials and an analyst. The cuts, rather, would provide a windfall for large Thai conglomerates with investments in the US. US President Donald Trump on Wednesday unveiled a massive tax-cut plan that includes slashing the corporate tax rate to 15% from 35%. The plan would further reduce the number of tax brackets from seven to three, with new rates of 10%, 25% and 35% -- down from a ceiling rate of 39.6%. Mr Trump has also proposed waiving tax on earnings from the overseas investments of US companies. Krisada Chinavicharana, director-general of the Fiscal Policy Office, said that even if US legislators vote in favour of Trump's tax-cut plan, it is unlikely to have any negative impact on Thailand.

### **4. ICAO: Asean's airports subpar for tourist economy**

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

Asean countries need to accelerate investment in basic infrastructure development to accommodate the 6.5% annual growth in international tourist arrivals, says the head of International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). "Despite Asean being featured as the fastest-growing tourism market in the world, the region still lacks proper airports to support an adequate tourism economy, including Thailand and Indonesia," ICAO regional director Arun Mishra said yesterday on the second day of a global travel and tourism summit in Bangkok. With the continuing influx of foreign tourists in recent years, he said all Asean countries should comply with the Asean Open Sky policy or Asean Single Aviation market to increase regional and domestic connectivity and support airlines based in Asean member states to fly freely throughout the region.

### **5. Bangkok gets the traffic, Singapore gets the buck**

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

Bangkok may be the most visited destination in Asia-Pacific among foreign visitors, but it is Singapore where they spend the most. The latest findings by Mastercard showed that over the past two years (2015-16), Singapore tracked strong 18% growth in total visitor spending. One of only five destinations of the top 20 by total expenditure to reach minimum spending of US\$200 (6,926 baht) per day, Singapore attracted the highest-spending visitors at \$254 last year, followed by Beijing (\$242), Shanghai (\$234), Hong Kong (\$242) and Taipei (\$208). Bangkok was at copy45, according to the global payment service company. Spurred by Asia-Pacific's burgeoning middle class, overall tourism expenditure in the region jumped from copy42 billion in 2009 to \$245 billion in 2016. Moreover, Asia Pacific's top 20 source markets contributed \$202 billion to the region's tourism revenue in 2016. The Mastercard analysis said that last year was an exciting period for tourism in Asia-Pacific.

### **6. FPO projects 3.3% export uptick**

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

The Fiscal Policy Office (FPO) has raised its 2017 export growth forecast to 3.3% but is maintaining its economic growth projection at 3.6%. The upward revision of its 2017 export growth forecast from 2.5% predicted in January should have minimal effect on the overall economic growth estimate, said director-general Krisada Chinavicharana. The 160-billion-baht mid-year budget to be pumped into the rural economy through provincial clusters and Village Funds will be the determinant factor if economic growth can reach 4%, he said. If the mid-year budget is totally drawn down this year, it will have a big impact on the Thai economy, said Mr Krisada. The FPO estimated only 60% of the budget will be taken out. He said 74 billion baht of the 160-billion budget has already been allocated, while 10 billion has been disbursed.

**7. Government allots B30bn for welfare e-payments**

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

The government estimates it will spend an annual budget of 30 billion baht to finance welfare provisions and subsidies for the poor through the national e-payment system. Even though the budget for the poverty schemes is higher than in the past because a higher number of people are being offered welfare, the amount is lower on an individual project basis as the welfare and subsidies will be directed to recipients through the national e-payment system instead of blanket offers used in the past, said Finance Minister Apisak Tantiworavong. Registration for the scheme, starting from April 3, will run through May 15 at Krungthai Bank, the Government Savings Bank and the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives. The government recently estimated 14-15 million low-income earners will sign up for the assistance scheme. Mr Apisak said the government will kick off offering welfare and subsidies to those who qualify on Oct 1. Recipients will obtain cards to get discounts for trains and free utilities up to a certain limit of electricity usage such as 90 units, he said.