

## Thai News Update: 11 December 2018

### 1. Somkid Opts Out Of Trade Treaty

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

Thailand will not join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) during this government's term, Commerce Minister Sontirat Sontijirawong said. He said Deputy Prime Somkid Jatusripitak, who is in charge of the economy, cited a lack of preparation time before the trade pact takes effect on Dec 30. Oramon Saphaweetham, director-general of the Trade Negotiation Department, said Thailand would wait for clear regulations from the CPTPP about accepting new members before making its next move.

### 2. Biochemical Hubs Unfold

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

The Industry Ministry will make a proposal to the mobile cabinet on 11 December to acknowledge and approve a biochemical hub for Udon Thani province, part of efforts to raise crop prices. The biochemical project is one of five sectors in the bioeconomy scheme, together with bioenergy, food, animal feed and biopharmaceuticals. The bioeconomy scheme is part of the Pracha Rat (People's State) initiative, whereby the government will promote value-added agricultural products and increase local household incomes. The bioeconomy plan has been implemented in northeastern and northern provinces since April, when the cabinet approved the measure.

### 3. Thailand-Based Airline NokScoot Announces India Entry

Source: Business Standard ([Link](#))

Thailand-based budget carrier NokScoot announced on 10 December entry in the Indian market with non-stop flight services to New Delhi from Bangkok's Don Muang International Airport from December 19. NokScoot, a joint venture between Singapore Airlines-owned Scoot and Thailand's Nok Air, is also looking to launch another destination apart from New Delhi by the first half of the next year, it said in a release. The services on the new route will be operated by a 415-seater wide-body Boeing 777, with 24 seats in business and 391 in economy class, the airline said in a release.

#### **4. Danish Company ISS To Close In Thailand, 12 Other Countries**

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

A leading facility services company says it will shut down operations in Thailand and 12 other countries as it tries to boost growth and simplify its business. Denmark-based International Service System (ISS) says the aim of the two-year plan is "reducing complexity and risk," and once completed, the number of its customers is expected to have been reduced by half. ISS said on 10 December it wants reduce its staff by 20%, from the present 490,000 worldwide to around 390,000. It added that operations in Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Brazil, Chile, Israel, Estonia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia and Romania will be divested.

#### **5. TAT Pivots To Niche Markets Across Asia**

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

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has a new scheme to micro-target niche tourist markets like Indonesian women and Japanese students. Under the plan, the agency will focus on young tourists from Japan and India, female travellers from Indonesia, Muslim tourists from Malaysia and the high-end market from Vietnam. Moving to niche markets is part of TAT's strategy to spread visitors out of major cities into secondary provinces and promote weekday tourism.

#### **6. Ministry Seeks Extension Of Local Tourist Tax Allowance**

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

The Tourism and Sports Ministry has proposed extending the current tax allowance for local tourists who visit less-popular destinations until the end of the next year. The tax concession is scheduled to end at the end of 2018. Tourism and Sports Minister Weerasak Kowsurat said that he had proposed to the Finance Ministry to extend the tax allowance until the end of next year. "The proposal is under consideration by the Finance Ministry, which wants to introduce more measures to make it easier for travellers to get the tax allowance," said Weerasak. He claimed the tax allowance had proved effective in boosting economic activities in those provinces and it could help lower the income disparity between the rich and the poor.