

## Thai News Update: 11 June 2019

### **1. Thailand Seeks Restart Of Trade Negotiations With EU**

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

Thailand is ready to resume negotiations for a free-trade agreement (FTA) with the European Union (EU) once the new government is established, as officials seek to offset the decline in global trade, according to a leading trade official. Thai trade officials have been juggling for a negotiating slot with the EU, after talks for a Thai-EU FTA were halted back in 2014 following the military coup. Thai and EU trade officials will meet today in Brussels, Belgium to discuss the possibility of revitalising the talks. However, as Thailand is in the process of forming a new government, specific details related to a potential trade deal will not be discussed at the upcoming meeting, said Auramon Supthaweethum, director-general of the Commerce Ministry's Department of Trade Negotiations (DTN).

### **2. Thailand, EU To Discuss Brexit, Renewing FTA**

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

Thailand is scheduled to discuss with the EU the impact of Brexit as well as revive Thai-EU free trade agreement (FTA) talks at the 14th meeting Thailand–EU working group set for June 14. Auramon Supthaweethum, director-general of the Trade Negotiations Department, said she will act as negotiator in discussions with Peter Berz, acting director for trade with Asia and Latin America at the European Commission. The meeting is scheduled for Brussels, Belgium on June 14. The issues include the impact of Brexit, the world's economic situation, reform of the World Trade Organization, and an attempt to revive the long-stalled negotiations on a Thai-EU FTA. Initially, Thailand would exchange data with EU representatives to prepare for the FTA talks once a new government is in place, said Mrs Auramon.

### **3. Dusit To Add Up To 7 Hotels**

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

Dusit Thani Plc has committed to investment expansion this year with a plan to add 5-7 new hotels abroad over the second half of 2019. The expansion follows the company's strategic plan of opening 10-12 new hotels under Dusit International, both domestically and overseas, annually from 2019-2020 to take advantage of growing global tourism. The company has new properties scheduled to open in Singapore, Bahrain, the Philippines and China later this year, said Suphajee Suthumpun, group chief executive. In the first quarter, the company already opened two new hotels in the Philippines (Dusit Thani Mactan Cebu and dusitD2 Davao) and Dusit Doha Hotel, marking its first hotel in Qatar.

### **4. Agency Raises Tax Issue**

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

The Revenue Department is calling on the new government to seek measures to compensate foregone tax revenue if populist campaign promises of lower taxes are realised."Tax reduction certainly lowers the cost of living, but we also need to consider how to offset the forgone revenue," said Ekniti Nitithanprapas, director-general of the Revenue Department. The department offers a raft of tax allowances, including investment of up to 500,000 baht each tax year in long-term equity funds or retirement mutual funds, but no more than 15% of annual assessable income, whichever is lower. There are income deductions of 50% for up to 100,000 baht, and deductions for insurance premiums of up to 100,000.

### **5. Digital Economy Ministry Calls For Data Protection Officers**

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

The Digital Economy and Society (DE) Ministry is calling for mandatory appointments of data protection officers (DPOs) at every organisation that processes or stores personal data from EU citizens to comply with the nation's Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) and the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Running afoul of the GDPR could mean the EU imposing heavy fines on companies outside the bloc that handle the data of EU citizens. Only half of big corporations in Thailand have been preparing their operations to deal with implementation of the

data protection regime, said Chayathawatch Atibaedya, senior adviser to the DE Ministry. Small and medium-sized enterprises are concerned about compliance with data protection rules that could be costly and complicated.