

Thai News Update: 11 November 2019

**1. From January 1, 46 shopping centres and convenience chains stop giving out single-use plastic bags**

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

From January 1, 2020, major shopping malls and convenience chain stores will discontinue providing single-use plastic bags to customers. The Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment launched a campaign on Silom Road, Bangkok, promoting the scale-up of the plastic bag ban. The Department of Environmental Quality Promotion invited private companies in the parade to promote the initiative to discontinue the offer of single-use plastic bags. The parade took place in front of the United Centre building on Silom Road, and along Soi Lalai Sap, encouraging the general public to carry multiple use tote bags when they do their shopping, instead of receiving single-use plastic bags from the stores each time they make a purchase.

**2. RCEP nears completion**

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

Notoriously labelled a ceremonial "talk shop" without any tangible outcomes, the latest Asean Summit in Bangkok finally proved critics wrong as regional leaders made progress in settling a mammoth trade pact despite India's departure. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a proposed free-trade agreement between the 10 member states of the Asean and six dialogue partners: China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand. While India's recent decision to pull the plug on joining the RCEP may cause frustration among remaining countries, the move is unlikely to abort the trade pact after reports that the agreement is likely to be signed early next year. If India were included, the RCEP would cover roughly 30% of global GDP (US\$27.3 trillion) and half the world's population, making it the largest trade bloc.

### **3. Cabinet to adopt development guideline for Dawei SEZ link**

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

The National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) will ask the cabinet to adopt its guidelines on infrastructure development on 12 November, as the government seeks to start working on the long-awaited link that will connect the Dawei Special Economic Zone in Myanmar with Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC). A source said the NESDC wants ministers concerned to stick with the guidelines when approving budgets and projects which will link Myanmar, Thailand's Central Plains and EEC on the Eastern seaboard. According to the source, the NESDC's guidelines were meant to "set the tone" for the infrastructure projects, with the ultimate aim of turning the three regions into a hub for border trade, agricultural production, environmentally-friendly industries and eco-tourism. "The points on railway and motorway construction are central to the NESDC's guidelines, as once completed, these projects will play a key role in transporting goods and people from Dawei in Myanmar all the way to the EEC," said the source.

### **4. PTTGC ups overseas capex**

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

State-owned PTT Global Chemical Plc (PTTGC) aims to boost its overseas investment portfolio to above 50% of total capital expenditure by 2030, up from 30%, to reduce its reliance on domestic oil supply and invest in lucrative foreign markets. The company expects to increase the share of overseas revenue from 50% to 60% after 2030. While not finalised, overseas investment is expected to range between 150 billion and 200 billion baht, excluding loans, said newly promoted president and chief executive Kongkrapan Intarajang. PTTGC has long focused on the domestic market, but it started investing in the US and EU markets over the past six years.

### **5. Consultations ending on restart for Thai-EU trade talks**

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

The Commerce Ministry is preparing to wrap up consultations with relevant agencies and organisations across the country on a proposal to resume free-trade talks with the European Union. Auramon Supthaweethum, director-general of the Department of Trade Negotiations, said a summary of opinions would be submitted to a committee on international economic policy chaired by deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak. Auramon said many parties support the

resumption of trade talks, but concerns were expressed over the possible influx into Thailand of products such as wine and liquor on a zero-per-cent tariff if a trade pact were ultimately to be signed. Some parties were worried that access to cheaper wine and liquor would have an adverse impact on public health. The European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which represents Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, has yet to be consulted as to whether it wishes to resume talks with Thailand.