

Thai News Update: 15 November 2019

**1. PM proposes holding world music festival to woo tourists**

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

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha has suggested that Thailand organise a music festival featuring the world's leading musicians in order to woo music-loving tourists to the Kingdom. He added that he had pondered on this matter for a long time. The premier made the remark after a meeting with the Board of Trade of Thailand on November 14 on the issue of promoting tourism.

**2. Investors keen on EEC, but funding still limited**

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

Requests for support in investing in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) increased by 37 per cent in the first nine months of the year, expanding from 262 projects to 360, the Board of Investment (BOI) said this week. But investment funding plummeted 23 per cent in the same period, from Bt2.3 billion to Bt1.67 billion, due to the limited number of large projects undertaken thus far, said Deputy-Secretary General Narit Therdsteeerasukdi. He said the automotive and electronics industries still have a key role to play in developing the EEC, primarily in the construction of a high-speed railway connecting three airports and Map Ta Phut Port Phase 3

**3. Google firm on "leaving no Thai behind"**

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

Google has reaffirmed its commitment to "Leave No Thai Behind", highlighting initiatives that will help more Thai people and businesses participate in the growth and opportunities of the digital economy at the second annual Google for Thailand event on November 14. Google's initiatives span across four pillars: access, digital skilling, localised content/local products, and SMEs - designed to ensure that all Thais would have equal opportunities to access technology and use it to unlock digital opportunities. Another major announcement is Google's expansion of

its research into harnessing AI for detecting diabetic retinopathy. There are 4.5 million diabetic patients in Thailand, but only 1,500 eye doctors can detect the disease.

#### **4. Major hotels planned for Phuket, Pattaya seen as boon for MICE trade**

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

Integrated lifestyle real-estate group Asset World Corp (AWC) and Marriott International will bring three global brands to Pattaya and Phuket, aiming to create a new destination of world-class MICE (Meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) hotels and facilities for both business and leisure travellers. AWC Centre Pattaya will combine facilities for meetings, conventions and accommodations with luxury shopping and spaces for inspiring art and entertainment. It will consist of the Pattaya Marriott Marquis Hotel and JW Marriott the Pattaya Beach Resort & Spa.

#### **5. Government confirms 2020 ban on single-use plastic bags**

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

In a move that some would say has been a long time coming, the Thai government has announced that single-use plastic bags will be banned at shopping malls, convenience stores, and supermarkets from January 1, 2020. Thai Residents says the ban was confirmed by government spokesperson Traisulee Traisoranakul, who says the move is part of Thailand's plans to eliminate plastic garbage by 2030. The ban on single-use plastic bags had earlier been approved by the National Environmental Committee (NEC) in September and is expected to lead to a reduction of 225,000 tons of garbage a year.

#### **6. Thailand's beaches now more expensive than European resorts – report**

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

The cost of a holiday in popular Thai beach resorts is now on par with, or even higher than those in Greece, Italy, Spain, Turkey, and Egypt – all closer to home for Europeans with lower flight costs and less travel time. Diethelm Travel Group report that the cost of a five-star resort in Koh Samui, Koh Phangan and Koh Samed, for example, has now reached around US\$500 per night for a standard room, including American breakfast. This report says that is similar to the cost of a five-star beach resort in Greece, Italy and Spain, and dearer than a comparable property in Turkey or Egypt – around US\$350 a night.