

Thai News Update: 16 October 2019

1. New controls on three toxic agri-chemicals take effect on October 20

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

A number of ministers and officials are vowing to continue pushing for a ban on three controversial agri-chemicals – Paraquat, Glyphosate and Chlorpyrifos – all still widely used in Thai agriculture. Meanwhile, strict measures on using the three chemicals, announced on April 5 and set take effect on October 20, have brought cheers from consumers and NGOs but protests from some farmers, who claim they still need to use the such chemicals. When the new measures come into effect, farmers will have to provide certification that they have been trained on how to properly use the pesticides and herbicides, the crops they will be used on, and the area – all to calculate the amount of chemicals to be purchased.

2. CP set to ink airport link deal

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

Charoen Pokphand (CP) Group has confirmed its consortium will sign a contract to develop the 224-billion-baht high-speed train project linking Don Mueang, Suvarnabhumi and U-tapao airports on Oct 25 as scheduled. The contract signing date was earlier set for on 15 October, but it was deferred to Oct 25 after all members of the State Railway of Thailand (SRT) board stepped down on Oct 1. The cabinet on 15 October approved the new SRT board members, clearing the way for the planned signing of a public-private partnership agreement. The new board is headed by Chirute Visalachitra, director-general of the Department of Land Transport (DLT).

3. Thailand's corporate confidence index falls for 7th consecutive month

Source: Thai PBS World ([Link](#))

Thailand's corporate confidence index has fallen for the seventh month in a row, dipping to 46.2 points in September from August's 46.5 points due to export contraction, trade tensions between China and the US, protests in Hong Kong, recent flooding in the north-eastern provinces and PM2.5 dust problems in Bangkok and surrounding provinces. Mr. Thanawat Pholvichai, director

of the Economic and Business Forecast Centre of the Thai Chamber of Commerce University said, however, that there were positive factors during the same period. He cited the government's Chim-Shop-Chai (Eat, Shop, Spend) program which, he claimed, received an overwhelmingly positive response from the public, generating increased spending by both the government sector and the public.

4. Rice price guarantee seeded with B9.4bn

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

The rice price guarantee scheme started on 15 October, with eligible farmers set to receive the difference when market prices fall below the predetermined benchmark. Commerce Minister Jurin Laksanawisit said the state-owned Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC) transferred 9.4 billion baht in compensation directly to the accounts of 349,000 registered farmers. The compensation will be paid mainly to growers of white rice paddy and fragrant Pathum Thani rice paddy if the market prices stay below a certain level. Mr Jurin said the government is scheduled to pay the compensation every 15 days until the end of the harvest season.

5. Hospital rankings begin

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

The government on 15 October unveiled 164 private hospitals rated "green", meaning they offer friendly medicine pricing for patients. According to Whichai Phochanakij, director-general of the Internal Trade Department, the 164 hospitals out of 354 nationwide were assessed using three criteria: prices charged of up to 100% higher than the average retail price; prices 50% lower than the average prices of similar items sold by private hospital peers; and no price complaints within the past one year. The names of the green-rated hospitals were displayed on the department's website on 15 October. They included Saint Louis Hospital, Thonburi Hospital, Hua Chiew Hospital, Vichaiyuth Hospital, Bangkok Christian Hospital and Nawamin 9 Hospital.

6. Government to expedite studies on Thai-EU FTA

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

The government pledges to speed up studies on the opportunities and challenges in reviving long-delayed trade talks between Thailand and the EU after the Council of the EU said in a

statement on 15 October the bloc aims to resume negotiations with Thailand on a free trade agreement (FTA). Auramon Supthaweethum, the director-general of the Department of Trade Negotiations, said the studies on a Thai-EU FTA could possibly be submitted to the cabinet for approval next month. The department is scheduled to hold public hearings nationwide this month and next. Hearings were set for Oct 22 in Chiang Mai, Oct 28 in Songkhla and Nov 7 in Khon Kaen.

7. PM expects contract on high-speed train linking three key airports to be signed on Oct 25

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

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha said on 15 October 15 that he expected the State Railway of Thailand (SRT) and the Charoen Pokphand-led consortium to sign a contract on October 25 to develop a high-speed train project linking three major international airports. The Cabinet on 15 October approved the list of the new SRT board of directors after it was proposed by the Transport Ministry. The approval will pave the way for the signing of the contract. Department of Land Transport director-general Chirute Visalachitra has been named as chairman of the new board. The contract signing between the SRT and the CP-led consortium could not take place on October 15 as the previous SRT board resigned en mass on October 1.