

Thai News Update: 18 October 2019

1. VAT refund for tourists hiked to B30,000

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

The Revenue Department is set to raise the ceiling for value-added tax (VAT) refunds for tourists at downtown agents to 30,000 baht per traveller from 12,000 baht at present. The tax-collecting agency plans to expand cash payment services for VAT refunds to tourists at 10 international airports nationwide instead of just Suvarnabhumi and Don Mueang airports, Pinsai Suraswadi, principal adviser on strategic tax administration, said without revealing when the new rules would be applied. The additional eight airports are Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Phuket, Hat Yai, Krabi, Samui, U-tapao and Surat Thani. The Revenue Department will also soon allow foreign tourists to claim VAT refunds by cash at downtown agents across the country, Mr Pinsai said.

2. Commerce Ministry sets 4 clear strategies to boost export market

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

The Commerce Ministry has come up with four strategies to boost export next year, including plans to expand existing major markets, namely the US, European Union, Japan, China and Asean. Somdej Susomboon, acting director-general of the Commerce Ministry's Department of International Trade Promotion, said the second strategy is to seek new markets such as South Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East. The third strategy is to revive existing markets, such as the export of rice to Iraq and establishing a stronger market for Thai products in Bahrain. The fourth strategy is to boost border and cross-border trade as well as boost e-commerce.

3. Don Mueang Airport duty-free concession up for bids

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

Airports of Thailand (AOT) invited bids for concessions to the duty-free zone in Don Mueang Airport on October 17, with AOT president Nitinai Sirismatthakarn saying the concession will run from October 1, 2023 to March 31, 2034. He added that he expects at least five companies to bid for the concession. As per the terms of reference (ToR), only companies that have no court

disputes or are in arbitration with the AOT will be eligible for bids. The ToR are expected to be available from October 24 to November 8, while AOT is expected to announce the names of qualified bidders on December 11, the day bidders are also expected to submit their bids.

4. Twin TAT campaigns aim to rake in B400m

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

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) plans to roll out next month two campaigns -Visit Thailand with 100 Baht and Shocking Price Weekday Travel - hoping to generate 400 million baht in tourism income over the remaining months of this year. Thapanee Kiatpaiboon, the TAT's executive director of product promotion, said Shocking Price Weekday Travel is set to encourage Thais, especially upper- and middle-class tourists, to take more trips on weekdays and enjoy discounts of up to 80% on high-end tourism products. The nine categories of tourism products offered during this campaign include five-star hotels available Monday to Thursday, airlines, spas and treatment services, yachting, community-based activities, Michelin-starred restaurants, recreation, department stores and other special privileges from online travel agents.

5. Somkid leads China trip

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

Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak is scheduled to lead economic ministers to China next week to tie up economic relations, focusing mainly on the Greater Bay Area (GBA). According to the itinerary for Oct 20-25, Mr Somkid will meet senior executives of Guangdong and Hong Kong including Li Xi, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and Secretary of the CPC Guangdong Provincial Committee, and Carrie Lam, chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The GBA aims to promote in-depth cooperation among nine cities in Guangdong - Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Foshan, Zhongshan, Dongguan, Huizhou, Jiangmen and Zhaoqing - and the special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau, with the aim of developing a world-class city cluster via reforms, innovation and liberalisation.

6. Trade chief promotes blitz
Source: Bangkok Post ([Link](#))

The new chief of the International Trade Promotion Department vows to beef up roadshows from October to December to boost exports. Somdet Susomboon, the acting director-general, said the department is scheduled to hold more than 50 export promotion activities, including business matching programmes, trade fairs and online shopping platforms in China, the US, Asean, Japan, Europe, Russia, India, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. Mr Somdet replaced Banjongjitt Angsusingh, who retired at the end of September. His official promotion will become effective after royal endorsement. In Asean, Thailand expects to organise the top Thai brands trade fairs to introduce Thai products to the region. It is also planning mini-Thailand week events in major and secondary cities in the region to promote Thai rice, flour, vegetables, fruit, rubber products, food and beverages, hotels, construction, event organisation and content businesses.