

## Thai News Update: 19 June 2019

### 1. Suu Kyi to attend ASEAN summit in Bangkok

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

Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi plans to travel to Bangkok to attend this weekend's summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, at which the Rohingya refugee crisis is expected to be a topic for serious discussion. State-run media reported on 18 June that Suu Kyi will be attending the summit at the invitation of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, who is hosting the two-day event as chair of the 10-member grouping this year. According to the draft of a chairman's statement to be issued at the end of the summit, Asean leaders will reaffirm their desire to facilitate the safe, secure and dignified return of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh to Myanmar's Rakhine state from which they fled.

### 2. OTP pushes B1.2 trillion of motorways

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

The Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning (OTP) has floated seven motorway projects at a cost of 1.27 trillion baht. The projects, covering 2,796 kilometres, are included in the country's motorway development masterplan, which would be handed to the Transport Ministry to consider, putting them in the national strategy, OTP deputy director Chayathan Promsorn said. The North-Northeast route is divided into three sections -- Tak-Phitsanulok, Phitsanulok-Phetchabun and Phetchabun-Khon Kaen. The Central Plains-North highway is divided into three parts -- Nakhon Sawan- Phitsanulok, Phitsanulok- Uttaradit and Uttaradit-Lampang.

### 3. Master water plan given green light

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

The cabinet has given the go-ahead for a 20-year master plan for water management, aimed at solving Thailand's chronic drought, flood and wastewater problems. The plan is the "second of

four pillars" which set concrete targets for officials, Somkiat Prachamwong, secretary-general of the Office of National Water Resources (ONWR) said after a cabinet meeting on 18 June. The plan targets supplying clean water to 75,032 villages by 2030, solving floods and droughts in 66 areas covering 34.6 million rai, building more than 541,000 small dams, and restoring 3.5 million rai of watershed areas. These targets are based on six strategies. They are the management of water use; security of water production; inundation control; water quality conservation; afforestation in watershed areas; prevention of soil damage; and managerial approach.

#### **4. Health Ministry postpones pot farm plan**

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

The Public Health Ministry has postponed growing marijuana for medical and research purposes due to a delay in the paperwork required to allow two universities to legally grow marijuana in the Northeast. The farming is now expected to begin next week or early next month. Rajamangala University of Technology Isan's (RMUTI) Sakon Nakhon campus and Kasetsart University's Chaloe Phrakiat campus in Sakon Nakhon were yesterday due to begin growing marijuana to supply the Phra Achan Fan Acharo Hospital in the same province to produce medical cannabis, said Dr Marut Chirasetthasiri, director-general of the Department of Thai Traditional and Alternative Medicine (DTTAM), on 18 June.

#### **5. \$200m contribution set for ACMECS fund**

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

The Cabinet on 18 June decided to set aside a budget of US\$200 million (Bt6.4 billion) as contribution for the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) fund within five years. Nattaporn Jatusripitak, spokesman for the deputy prime minister in charge of economic affairs, said "a budget of US\$40 million, for this year's contribution, will be allocated from the central budget and those for the remaining four years will be from the annual budget". ACMECS is a grouping of five countries – Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. Although ACMECS was born in 2003, there is no financial

mechanism to raise capital to finance development projects, which have been normally funded through borrowings and aid from partner countries.

## **6. Thailand hopeful of RCEP deal despite scant progress**

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

Commerce official confident of negotiations being completed by November in boost for the principle of 'Asean centrality' Despite only bleak chances of concluding negotiations on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) by the end of this year considering little tangible progress has been made in the past six months, Thailand maintains the historic deal involving 16 economies can be finalised by November. Experts and observers believe a breakthrough in concluding the world's biggest trade deal would showcase the success of 'Asean centrality'. Asean economic ministers will meet during the 34th Asean Summit from tomorrow to Sunday to discuss the RCEP negotiations. The RCEP has been envisioned as a 16-country mega-trade pact encompassing 10 Asean nations as well as India, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. Negotiations have been going on for seven years.