

## Thai News Update: 1 February 2019

### **1. Thailand Faces Tough Job As Asean Chair Amid Trade Conflicts, Forum Hears**

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

As Asean chair this year, Thailand must enhance the region's cooperation amid growing US-China tensions that threaten to go beyond mere trade conflicts, international-relations experts said at a peace forum in Bangkok 31 January. "The tension between China and the US is unlike the tension between the US and the Soviet Union during the Cold War," said Yan Xuetong, chief of the Institute of International Relations at Tsinghua University. He is also secretary-general of the World Peace Forum in Beijing. Yan was speaking at a forum titled "An Uneasy Peace: China in a Divided World", where he addressed the changing geopolitical dynamic between China and the US, and what that entails for Asean. "Instead of focusing on military accumulation, ideological conflicts and nuclear threats, competition between the superpowers China and the US will be in the realms of economics and technology," Yan said, calling the rivalry an era of "uneasy peace".

### **2. CP Group, Govt Continue Talks On Rail-Link Project**

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

State agencies and the Charoen Pokphand Group are continuing their negotiation on the high-speed railway project which will link up Thailand's three main international airports, said Kanit Sangsubhan, secretary general of the Eastern Economic Corridor Office. The mega project requires negotiations in details. The CP Group has over 100 conditions up for discussions with the government, he said. So far, most of negotiations have centred on land and land transfers. For example, work at Makkasan station could start when transfer is made on 50 per cent of the land required.

### **3. Somkid Reassures Investors Of Continuity On Policies Despite Major Events**

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

IT WILL be business as usual for entrepreneurs and investors in Thailand despite the staging of what the government is calling three transition periods this year, said Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak, who is promising continuity in government policies. Somkid told Japanese investors that the three transitions were the royal coronation of HM King Maha Vajiralongkorn, the general election next month and Thailand's chairmanship of Asean this year. He gave the reassurance to the investors in updating them on Thailand's political developments at an event in Osaka. He was seeking to persuade these investors in the government's targeted industries to view Thailand as their long-term base. More than 500 investors attended the event, entitled "Advance Asean – Japan", which was staged by the Board of Investment (BOI) in Japan's second city.

#### **4. French-Thai Forum Hails Bilateral Ties**

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

The France-Thailand Business Forum (FTBF) says it continues its support the government's Thailand 4.0 policy by attracting French investment. The FTBF, created by the Joint Standing Committee on Commerce, Industry and Banking and MEDEF International, said it continues to enhance economic co-operation between France and Thailand, promoting five targeted industries to boost economic growth in Thailand and reinforcing investment in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC). A French business delegation including representatives of leading French companies, led by Francois Corbin, co-chairman of the FTBF, chairman of the France-Thailand Business Council of MEDEF International, and vice president of Michelin (one of the top French investors in Thailand with six factories), are visiting until February 1. Their agenda includes meeting the prime minister, a government and private sector meeting, a visit to the EEC mega-project sites and participating in the second France-Thailand Business Forum, which aims to promote ties between France and Thailand by business collaboration through innovation and advanced technology.

#### **5. Thailand Edges Up In Liveable Cities Survey**

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

Thai cities have slightly improved their liveability scores, with Bangkok remaining the most liveable city in Thailand for East Asian expats, according to a survey by ECA International. The

majority of Malaysian and Thai locations saw scores improve and liveability rankings increase. Bangkok was the highest-rated Thai city at 89th in the rankings, while George Town and Kuala Lumpur rose to 97<sup>th</sup> and 98<sup>th</sup>. Singapore retained the top spot as the best city for expats in Asia, while Hong Kong dropped 12 places to 41st.

## **6. BoT Reduces Local Owner Requirement For Transfers**

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

The Bank of Thailand has eased qualifications for international money transfer operators to attract new players and increase competition, which in turn should lead to lower fees. The central bank has relaxed requirements on the percentage of Thai nationals needed as shareholders of cross-border money transfer providers, lowering the threshold to 25% from 75% in an effort to lure new operators to the business, governor Veerathai Santiprabhob said in a release. The new regulation took effect on 31 January. According to World Bank 2018 Migration and Remittance data, the fee for sending US\$500 (15,614 baht) from Thailand averages 7.28%, well above India at 1.24%, Malaysia at 3.09% and the average global rate of 4.64%.