

Thai News Update: 20 November 2019

**1. Bangkok 12th worst city for air quality in the world today**

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

The Air Visual website is reporting that Bangkok's air pollution level stands at 136, with PM 2.5 level at 57.8 micrograms per cubic metre, making the Thai capital the 12th on the list of cities on 20 November with the worst air pollution in the world. Chinese and Turkish cities constantly rank in the top five cities in the world for poor air quality. Meanwhile, the Pollution Control Department reports that air quality in Bangkok and its perimeter is currently hovering between 'moderate' quality to 'starting to affect health'. The Thai safety limit for 2.5 micron particles per cubic metre is 50 micrograms while the safety limit for AQI is 100.

**2. Thailand gets another reprieve on WTO ruling**

**Source: Business Mirror ([Link](#))**

The World Trade Organization (WTO) has extended its review of Thailand's appeal on the ruling invalidating its customs and fiscal measures on Philippine cigarettes, effectively prolonging as well the brewing trade tension between Manila and Bangkok. In a communication dated November 8, the Appellate Body said it failed to comply with the 60-day requirement under WTO rules to come up with a report on Thailand's appeal. Further, it will not be able to complete the whole proceedings within the mandated 90 days due to the pile of cases awaiting the panel's review. "Thailand notified the DSB [Dispute Settlement Body] on 9 September 2019 of its decision to appeal certain issues of law covered in the panel report and legal interpretations developed by the panel in this case," the Appellate Body said.

**3. Thailand's Tourism Board Sets Guidelines for Guide Services**

**Source: Chiangrai Times ([Link](#))**

Thailand's board of Tourism Business and Guides has approved the guideline on minimum guide service charges for three types of tourists; – outbound tourists, inbound tourists and domestic tourists, said Thaweesak Wanitcharoen, director general of Department of Tourism. Thaweesak said the rates were in line with the policy of the Minister of Tourism and Sports. They will

prevent tourists from being exploited into spending too much by tour businesses and guides. “After the approval, the sub-committee will consider ways to improve the Tourism Business and Guide Act, B.E. 2551 (2008) in order to enforce it as a law ,” he said. The approved minimum guide service charges for outbound tourists range from Bt1,600 to 9,000 per person (three days and two nights), excluding airline ticket price.

#### **4. E-payment roadmap eyes cross-border as first order**

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

The national e-payment roadmap for 2020 prioritises cross-border payments and fund transfers, aiming to boost financial transactions via the digital platform across Asean and deepening integration of the regional bloc. Under the three-year national e-payment roadmap through 2022, cross-border transactions are the focus next year. Financial services on digital platforms are to be available regionwide by mid-2020, said Yos Kimsawas, head of payment systems at the Thai Bankers' Association. Many local banks have developed a digital infrastructure base in preparation for cross-border payments and fund transfers. Siam Commercial Bank (SCB) plans to roll out cross-border payment via QR technology under the Asean interoperability standard and cross-border fund transfers this quarter, said Srihanath Lamsam, senior executive vice-president of SCB.

#### **5. NBC unveils plans for new businesses to boost revenue**

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

Nation Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) aims to boost viewer ratings of Nation TV 22 channel to eighth place in the next few months from ninth place currently following readjustment of its TV programmes. The broadcaster's managing director, Chatchai Pokogwai, said on November 18 that Nation TV's advertising revenue had improved gradually. Currently, the channel's advertising revenue averages Bt40 million per month, up 100 per cent from before May last year. The broadcaster aims to cash in on existing businesses to launch new promising businesses next year. Among the planned ones are a tour-related business, home shopping, and event organising.

## **6. MoU on collaboration with Korean agency in EEC approved**

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

The Cabinet on November 19 approved the draft memorandum of understanding (MoU) on collaboration between the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) and the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) Office. Deputy spokeswoman Ratchada Thanadirek said the MoU will be signed by Thailand and South Korea during Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha's participation in the Asean-ROK Commemorative Summit during November 25-26 in Busan, Republic of Korea. The MoU covers collaboration between the two countries on business, industrial development in the EEC and high tech industries such as robotics, next generation automotive, smart electronics, bio technology, space technology and smart cities.