

Thai News Update: 22 January 2019

1. Foreign Visitors Increasingly Use Airbnb During Major Tourism Events

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

New data shows that travellers to Thailand are increasingly turning to Airbnb for accommodation during big tourism events, according to a report released by the hosting company on 21 January. Last year, Thai Airbnb hosts welcomed more than 100,000 guests and earned Bt380 million combined over three of the Kingdom's largest tourist events: Chinese New Year, Songkran and Golden Week. Family travel made up a significant proportion of all bookings during these periods, comprising about 15 per cent of the total. As Thailand gears up for Chinese New Year with the Tourism Authority of Thailand's anticipated 8-per-cent increase in traveller numbers this year, more Thais are listing their homes with Airbnb to welcome local and international guests for this auspicious holiday.

2. Survey Finds Thailand Strong For M&A Investment

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

MERGER and acquisition activity in Thailand has risen consistently over recent years. As an established destination for inbound foreign direct investment, Thailand's M&A will remain strong due to a number of tailwinds including the government's "Thailand 4.0 Economic Plan", the ongoing integration of the Asean Economic Community and the country's continued development from an emerging economy to a stronger regional and global player. The significant increase in outbound M&A by a variety of Thai conglomerates is further testament to the strength of businesses in Thailand. Those businesses remain attractive to multinational corporations from developed economies seeking growth, along with private equity funds that see Southeast Asia as an increasingly attractive destination.

3. Panel Approves West Section

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

The Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Committee has approved the Orange Line's 235-billion-baht western section, stretching from Bang Khun Non to Min Buri, under the fast-track joint investment scheme. The western section's investment will be in the form of the net cost PPP model, whereby the government will be responsible for land expropriation fees and the private sector will invest in the rail system and provide operating and maintenance, said Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak, who chaired meeting on the 21 January. The new section will help commuters travelling from both Bangkok's western and eastern districts to the capital's centre after it completely connects with the eastern section, running from Thailand Cultural Centre to Min Buri, he said.

4. Hotels Urged To Cut Plastic Use

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

Incentives have been offered to encourage local hotel operators to use less plastic and join the Thai Hotels Plastic-Free Project. The project has worked cooperatively with the Tourism Authority of Thailand and the Thai Hotels Association (THA) towards the objectives of preserving the environment and promoting sustainable tourism in the long run. The THA is one of several tourism-related bodies that signed memorandum of understanding with the TAT last July to reduce single-use plastic materials by 50% by 2020 under a campaign called "National Cleaning Declaration".