

## Thai News Update: 22 October 2019

### 1. Bangkok tops travel index 4 years in a row

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

Bangkok has been ranked No.1 in the Mastercard Global Destination Cities Index (GDCI) for international overnight visitors for the fourth straight year, and the sixth time in the past decade. Thailand is the only country in this year's GDCI with three cities in the global top 20 for international overnight visitors (Bangkok, Phuket and Pattaya) and two cities in the global top 10 for spending by international overnight visitors (Bangkok and Phuket).

### 2. Exports post slight dip

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

Exports shrank by 1.39% year-on-year in September but improved from the 4% plunge in August, boosted by higher shipments of industrial products. The Commerce Ministry said customs-cleared outbound shipments fetched US\$20.5 billion in September, down 1.39% from the same month last year, with those in baht terms totalling 626 billion baht, down 7.76%. Pimchanok Vonkorpon, director-general of the Trade Policy and Strategy Office, said September's exports grew in terms of product and market dimension. Some industrial goods recorded growth, such as automobiles and parts, and electrical circuits.

### 3. Thailand's EGAT to import first spot market LNG cargo in December

Source: Reuters ([Link](#))

State-owned Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT) will import its first spot market cargo of liquefied natural gas (LNG) in December, the Thai Energy Ministry said on 21 October. The utility will import two LNG cargoes, each of 65,000 tonnes, one in December and the second in April, Energy Minister Sontirat Sontijirawong said in a statement. He said December spot prices were “not that high” and the first import would serve as part of an initial test run. EGAT said this month that about 40 companies had expressed interest in supplying Thailand with spot LNG. EGAT now buys gas from a state-owned unit of PTT, Thailand’s sole

gas supplier and LNG importer. EGAT finalised a deal this year with PTT LNG for 1.5 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) of regasification capacity at Thailand's sole LNG receiving terminal.

#### **4. CP to ink rail deal on Thursday**

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

Transport Minister Saksayam Chidchob has confirmed Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha will preside over the signing of a deal to build the rail system connecting the country's three main airports with the Charoen Pokphand Group-led (CP) consortium on 24 October. He said the signing of the 224-billion-baht rail project will take place at 1.30pm at Government House. After the signing, the transport permanent secretary will draft a plan to expedite the handover of land for the project. Details of the deal and documents appended to the contract will be given to the media for distribution later, Mr Saksayam said. Kanit Sangsubhan, secretary-general of the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) Office, said the signing was brought forward from Friday, although the consortium originally expressed a wish to ink the deal tomorrow to coincide with the auspicious Chulalongkorn Memorial Day.

#### **5. Somkid cosies up to Chinese investors**

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

Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak on 21 October called on Chinese electrical appliance and air conditioner manufacturer Midea Group to expand investing in Thailand, especially for R&D and human resource development. Mr Somkid told executives of the Chinese firm during his visit to Guangdong that Thailand is geographically positioned as a gateway to Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam, which have a combined population of over 240 million. He said the government is looking for more in-depth and concrete cooperation between Thailand and Guangdong province, particularly China's Greater Bay Area (GBA) initiative and Thailand's Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC).

#### **6. Hong Kong unrest sees interest in Thai condo market rise**

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

Several Hong Kong citizens have bought condominiums along Sukhumvit Road, eager to take advantage of its central location and ease of travel for foreigners who aren't familiar with Bangkok. The most demanded units are priced between Bt5 – Bt10 million and have one or two

bedrooms, Wongsakorn Prasitwipat, managing director of Property Perfect, said. Even though the actual number has yet to be assessed, customers appear more interested in buying condominiums than usual and developers should prepare for a potential increase in demand. Hong Kong is not a big market but buyers want to live in the centre of the city, unlike mainland Chinese buyers who willingly buy condominiums in the outskirts of Bangkok to take advantage of cheaper prices.

#### **7. Thailand's biggest mutual fund company embraces AI**

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

SCB Asset Management Co, the country's biggest mutual fund company, will start offering more equity funds using artificial intelligence technology to identify investments as it seeks to lure new customers and retain clients. New investment tools such as AI, data analytics and program trading will enable SCB Asset to later this year start selling its own funds to invest in overseas equities, said Narongsak Plodmechai, who oversees about 1.5 trillion baht of assets as chief executive officer of SCB Asset. The new funds would allow the company to command higher fees, he said.

#### **8. Cyber security, fintech at core of Thai-Russian MoU on cooperation**

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

Bank of Thailand Governor Veerathai Santiprabhob signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation with Elvira Nabiullina, Governor of the Central Bank of the Russian Federation on October 18 at the IMF-WBG annual meetings in Washington, DC. The agreement aims to strengthen bilateral ties and cooperation between the two central banks through exchanging views and experiences on central banking functions and policies such as monetary policy, banking supervision, payment and settlement systems, fintech innovations, cyber security as well as promoting other financial cooperation leading to further economic and financial connectivity between the two countries, according to a BOT statement issued on 21 October.