

## Thai News Update: 23 May 2018

### 1. Government To Cap Diesel Price

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

The government will cap the diesel price at 30 baht per litre as part of efforts to ease the impact from increasing world oil prices. The Energy Ministry announced the move May 22, saying world oil prices have fluctuated greatly for two months. The price of Dubai crude rose US\$5.30 (490 baht) per barrel on May 19 to cost more than \$77. The spike in the crude oil price resulted in the price of diesel in Southeast Asia soaring by about 7% to \$93.24 per barrel. This resulted in the price of diesel in Thailand jumping by 3.82 baht per litre in one day. "The prime minister [Prayut Chan-o-cha] is very concerned about the impact steady increases in world oil prices have had over the past two months," Energy Minister Siri Jirapongphan said. As a result, the Energy Ministry will use the State Oil Fund to cap the diesel price at not more than 30 baht per litre until the development of B20 fuel reaches commercial viability. As of May 22, the local diesel price has reached 29.79 baht per litre, he said. In Thailand, diesel is the main fuel for the transport and manufacturing sectors. The higher fuel price will force up the cost of services and production. Under the scheme to ease fuel price impacts, the State Oil Fund will subsidise 50% of the price increase. For example, if fuel prices increase one baht, the fund will cover 0.5 baht, said Mr Siri.

### 2. Thailand Takes No.2 Line Today Spot With 32m Users

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

Line Today has secured 32 million users in Thailand after two years of operations, making it the service's second-largest market after Japan. Line Thailand plans to adopt artificial intelligence (AI) technology, offering personalised content to attract more young people via a variety of content formats. "With 32 million users, accounting for 71% of Thailand's 45 million mobile internet users, we believe Line Today has shown the highest growth rate among news portals," said Kawin Tangudaisak, content business director. The service has grown steadily to 1 billion page views a month, making Thailand the portal's No.2 market. The service was introduced in Thailand at the same time as Indonesia, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Mr Kawin said Line Today aims to help

publishers increase their revenue and boost traffic to original websites. Online readers can also get access to trusted, quality content, he said. Print publishers have faced a decline in advertising revenue, with the market contracting 20% over the past several years to 10 billion baht. Charath Petthongchai, head of Line Today, said its survey found the top reasons people use the news portal are quick updates, the already installed Line application and ease of use. Fast, frequent updates, word choice, clean layout and exclusive content were listed as the top factors driving users toward news portals.

### **3. Factors Align For Surge In Exports**

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

Economic researchers are rewriting their forecasts for the performance of the export sector, flagging growth of as high as 8.9 per cent this year on the back of global economic expansion. The optimism is shared at research units across state and private organisations and is also based on the strong demand for Thai products and the rising prices in oil-related commodities. The low end of the forecasts is for an increase in the value of shipments of 7.5 per cent. TMB Analytics' growth forecast sits at the high end of the range, at 8.6 per cent citing the higher prices for agricultural products and oil-related products and the sustained expansion in the economies of Thailand's trading partners. Given the higher global demand for products in light of the world's impressive economic growth in 2018, Siam Commercial Bank's Economic Intelligence Centre (EIC) forecasts exports to expand 7.5 per cent this year. It also pointed to the higher prices of oil-related products as a result of expected continued rises in crude prices, Kasikorn Research Centre is looking at export expansion of 8 per cent this year, highlighting the growth in global trade. Exports could improve in light of the estimated expansion in the global economy and import, led by the United States, the euro-zone countries, the Asean-5 states and CLMV countries (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam), the research house said.

### **4. Bt100 Bn To Aid Poor**

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

The Cabinet on May 22 approved a supplementary mid-year budget of Bt100 billion aimed at boosting the livelihoods of low-income groups through the Thai Niyom Yangyuen project,

according to the ministers of interior, finance, agriculture and cooperatives, tourism and sport, energy and the prime minister's office in a press conference. Under the programme the government will inject Bt200,000 in each village nationwide. The move came after three surveys on people's demand and problems. After consideration by the district and provincial committees, funds will be transferred to the village committees through the projects each ministry is responsible for, such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and Ministry of Tourism's OTOP, village fund and Pracha Rath cards. The government says the Thai Niyom Yangyuen project will strengthen the country by generating and distributing incomes and offering hope for the future. Meanwhile, the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC) expects two million people to start occupational training this June.

#### **5. Alibaba Business School Joins Forces With Agencies In Courses For Thai Entrepreneurs, Students And Govt Officials**

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

Alibaba Business School, the Industrial Promotion Department (IPD) and the International Trade Promotion Department (ITPD) have begun a long-term joint e-commerce training programme that seeks to develop a digital mindset among aspiring entrepreneurs, government officials, college lecturers and students across Thailand. The programme is part of Alibaba Group's commitment to Thailand under the scope of four memorandums of understanding signed in April between the China-based giant and various units of the Thai government to drive development in e-commerce, digital logistics, tourism, and the entrepreneurial talent pool. Under the programme, Alibaba Business School together with IPD and ITPD will host a broad spectrum of online and offline training sessions that serve the needs of different target audiences. In addition to e-commerce and entrepreneurship topics for start-ups, retailers, exporters and agricultural industry practitioners, the programme will also present government officials with an opportunity to discover how technology can help create a better and smarter society, while college students can sign up for courses that delve into the core skills required for success in the digital-economy era.

## **6. LMC: ASEAN Sales To Surge**

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

Light vehicle sales in Asean are expected to show healthy growth this year, led by a rosier outlook for Thailand, but there are gloomier prospects for other key markets, according to research firm LMC Automotive. LMC reported sales across the region rose by 3% to 829,307 units in the first quarter, counting only passenger cars and light commercial vehicles, albeit with mixed results across the five regional markets. Thailand and Vietnam both posted strong double-digit growth, while sales in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines remained cloudy. Indonesia, the region's largest vehicle market, saw a 1% increase to 267,828 units, but sales began to fade in February. The two markets to register declines in the first quarter were Malaysia, down 5% to 132,873 cars, and the Philippines, with a 8% drop to 96,763 cars. Thailand is the largest vehicle production and the second-largest vehicle market in ASEAN.