

Thai News Update: 23 October 2018

1. Panama Backs Kra Canal As Right Move For Thai Growth

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

Building a channel linking two major seas would boost Thailand's role in global connectivity, said Panama's Vice President Isabel de Saint Malo de Alvarado, whose country has played a similar role for over a century since it opened the Panama Isthmus in 1914. "I think it is very powerful in every way for connectivity in the future. It's a huge potential for growth for Thailand," de Alvarado replied when asked if the Kingdom should go ahead with plans to build the Kra Canal linking the Gulf of Thailand with the Andaman Sea. "I think that is the correct direction." When asked if security was ever a concern for Panama, she said security is always a concern, but strong cooperation with regional allies had helped her country stay secure.

2. Three Palm Oil Proposals To Target Slump

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

The Commerce Ministry is proposing three measures to the cabinet over the next few weeks to tackle the domestic oil palm price slump. The ministry also plans to call a joint meeting with modern trade operators to scrap sales promotions for bottled palm oil for cooking. Commerce Minister Sontirat Sontijirawong said the measures include a request for a central budget set aside for emergencies worth 525 million baht to subsidise participating exporters who agree to increase shipments of 300,000 tonnes of crude palm oil within 3-4 months. The ministry is also committed to promoting the use of B20 biodiesel among heavy trucks and agricultural machinery and working closely with the Energy Ministry to address obstacles.

3. Exports Contract In September

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

Amid the escalating US-China trade war, Thailand's exports fell in September for the first time in 19 months as shipments of automobiles and gold declined and Thailand's trading partners shifted to new markets, the Commerce Ministry said. Pimchanok Vonkorpon, director-general of the

ministry's Trade Policy and Strategy Office, said Thai exports in September shrank 5.2 per cent year on year to US\$20.699 billion (Bt678 billion) and imports rose 9.9 per cent to \$20.212 billion, yielding a trade surplus of \$487 million for the month. Shipments of automobiles and gold contracted by \$900 million, or 5.3 per cent, due to last year's high base, while the Sino-US trade spat resulted in a contraction of 8 per cent in Thai exports, worth \$402 million. Thailand's trading countries also turned to new markets, dragging Thai exports down by 1 per cent or \$190 million.

4. Dell Thailand Recognised As One Of Most Powerful Brands In Thailand

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

Noppadol Punyatipat, Country Manager (right), Dell Corporation (Thailand) Co., Ltd received "The Most Powerful Brand of Thailand 2018" award in the Computer category for Laptops and Notebooks from Sakon Varanyuwatana, Vice Minister for Commerce (left) at The Most Powerful Brands of Thailand 2018 Awards recently, organized by the Chulalongkorn Business School. The Most Powerful Brands of Thailand is organised every two years

5. Norway's Yara Cultivates Tech-Savvy Thai Farmers

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

Yara, a Norwegian fertiliser maker, is working to bring Thai farmers into the digital age with a broad spectrum of education and outreach programmes. In conjunction with the government's Thailand 4.0 initiative, Yara uses a collection of smartphone apps, as well as boots on the ground, to promote modern farming techniques to the nation's roughly 12 million farmers. Yara offers four different apps that provide educational information, plus services to gauge the nutrient levels in farmers' crops. One app lets farmers determine the nitrogen status of their crops by taking pictures on their smartphone and analysing the photos on the app.

6. Businesses Rip North Border Crossing Rule

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

Representatives of Chiang Rai's business community plan to ask the government to ease cross-border travel regulations at a planned mobile cabinet meeting on 29 and 30 October. Pornthep Inthachai, president of the Chiang Rai Chamber of Commerce, said authorities should review and

revise regulations that are impeding the region's economic growth, especially now that the necessary infrastructure has been built. Among the regulations that needs to be reviewed is the one on cross-border travel by foreign tourists, especially from China, he said. Mr Pornthep also called for the set-up of a one-stop service centre in the border district of Chiang Khong.