

## Thai News Update: 24 May 2018

### **1. Fuel Services Operator Keen On U-Tapao Business**

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

Bangkok Aviation Fuel Services Plc (BAFS) has expressed an interest in investing in aviation fuel service at U-Tapao airport and expects to finalise its model by the end of the year. Prakobkiat Ninnad, managing director, said the company had proposed the plan to the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) Committee and Royal Thai Navy which operates the airport. The company is exploring the possibility of a role in oil depot, aviation fuel or fuel pipeline services. Once the EEC and U-Tapao Airport have been completed, about 34 million passengers are expected at the airport annually, with the estimated number close to that at Don Mueang International Airport which uses 1,100 million litres of aviation fuel a year, Prakobkiat said. Aside from U-Tapao Airport, BAFS is also interested in providing services at other local airports which have been upgraded by the Department of Aviation, including Krabi, Udon Thani, Nan and Phrae. Each airport may take as long as a year for a study on a joint investment plan, Prakobkiat said. He said the BAFS is expected to post growth in income of about 4-5 per cent this year as more airlines have received licences to operate after the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)'s removal of Thailand's red flag and the expansion in tourism. In March, 16 airlines obtained licenses and about five airlines are being considered.

### **2. High-Speed Airport Link Auction Shapes Up**

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

The terms of reference (ToR) for the 224.54-billion-baht high-speed railway linking Don Mueang, Suvarnabhumi and U-tapao airports to serve the much-touted Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) scheme are scheduled to be unveiled on May 24. Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak said interested private firms will be allowed to buy the ToR next week after May 24 joint announcement by the EEC Office, the Transport Ministry and the State Railway of Thailand. The railway project entails extending Bangkok's Airport Rail Link, which runs to Suvarnabhumi airport in Samut Prakan province, to connect to Don Mueang airport in northern Bangkok and U-tapao airport in Samut Prakan province, to connect to Don Mueang airport in northern Bangkok and U-

tapao airport in Rayong province. The entire route will stretch 220km, with the train reaching a maximum speed of 250kph. The route comprises nine high-speed stations: Don Mueang, Bang Sue, Makkasan, Suvarnabhumi, Chachoengsao, Chon Buri, Sri Racha, Pattaya and U-tapao. The project is expected to become operational in the next five years. Industry Minister Uttama Savanayana said bidding will next be called for the third phase of Laem Chabang port and the expansion of U-tapao airport.

### **3. Thaibev Launches ‘Borderless Trade’ System**

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

A new application is at the centre of ThaiBev Group’s 2020 vision core strategy to strengthening sales and distribution. At the recent ICT Excellence Awards 2018, Thai Beverage Plc was recognized for its new Van Sales and Merchandising System (VSMS), under the Core Process Improvement Project category. ThaiBev said the accelerated process has been streamlined to accomplish the core mission of the group as well as to support Thailand 4.0 development strategy. Ueychai Tanta-Opas, senior executive vice president of route to market at Thai Beverage said that the VSMS enables its salesforce to sell product, perform merchandising activities and gather market information at the same time. Ueychai said the application on mobile devices (smart phones or tablets) supports both pre-selling and van-selling processes. The app supports multiple payment method including cash, cheque, or credit card. Management can control pricing, promotion and data gathering for each retail outlets, and the app also supports assets management, and stock management. VSMS supports both online and offline operation mode. Once network failures occur, the salespersons are able to sell the products, and survey market as usual and upload information when the system is online. The application has been deployed in 22 companies of Thai Beverage Group, Sermsuk and F&N.

### **4. No Ban On Controversial Toxic Agriculture Chemicals**

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

The Use Of Controversial agricultural chemicals like paraquat, glyphosate and chlorpyrifos will continue to be allowed, but with tighter regulations and controls. Industry Ministry deputy permanent secretary Somboon Yindeeyoungyuen, as chairman of the Hazardous Substance

Committee that made the decision May 23, said the three main agro-chemicals will not be banned despite demands from various quarters, but the Agriculture Department will have to come up with control regulations within two months. Somboon said 18 out of the committee's 24 members approved the continued use of herbicides paraquat and glyphosate, and pesticide chlorpyrifos, but with more restrictions and safety regulations. The committee members decided not to ban the three farm chemicals, as their impacts on health were still debatable and the arguments were not strong enough to warrant a ban. He also said the alternatives to these three chemicals were not effective. "The Agriculture Department will have to draft measures to control the use of paraquat, glyphosate and chlorpyrifos and place it before the Hazardous Substance Committee within the next two months," he said. "After the committee approves these control measures, they will be announced and enforced nationwide. The Agriculture Department will be the regulatory agency and have the responsibility of controlling the import, distribution and management of these chemicals." He revealed that the criteria for the restrictions would be on where these chemicals could be used, the amount of import and distribution, the amount of use and management, and the qualifications of the users.

## **5. Somkid: Oil Prices Won't Hurt GDP**

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

Rising oil prices are unlikely to create a major headwind for the country's ongoing economic growth, a sharp departure from the financial turbulence experienced after oil prices hit US\$100 a barrel for the first time in 2008, says Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak. Mr Somkid's position, however, has sparked a wave of scepticism from the private sector and government agencies. The National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), meanwhile, said higher oil prices present a challenge to the country's economic growth. The Commerce Minister will meet consumer product manufacturers tomorrow to discuss the impact of higher diesel and LPG prices, as well as explore measures to ease consumers' plight. Mr Somkid said higher oil prices are unlikely to obstruct the country's ongoing economic growth, while insisting the government itself is looking for ways to ease the impact of the hike on low-income citizens. According to Mr. Somkid, the wealth accrued from economic growth over the past few years will allow the government to introduce measures to reduce the impact of higher oil prices.

## **6. China Focus: Stinky Fruit Brings Sweet Smell Of Success To Thai Planters**

**Source: Xinhuanet ([Link](#))**

Durian, a tropical fruit famous for its spiky shell and pungent smell, is winning the hearts of Chinese consumers and bringing profits to planters in Southeast Asia. At the recent 2018 Shanghai Thai Festival, Chinese foodies were given four types of Thai durians to test their preferences in flavor, smell and appearance. Thanks to the popularity of durians in China, Thailand plans to introduce more varieties of the fruit to the Chinese market this year, said Aschariya Juntaravong, Consul of the Agriculture Section of Thailand's Consulate-General in Shanghai. Thailand produces four main durian varieties. The Monthong, widely known as the "golden pillow," is the most popular variety available on the Chinese market, according to Juntaravong, who added that Chinese consumers are eager to try out more flavors. The festival attracted more than 50 exhibitors. Besides fresh durian fruit, products such as durian cakes and durian coffee also received a warm response. "Durian tastes best when it's just ripe. Unripe durians have an astringent taste, while over-ripe ones get bitter and give off a wine smell," said Mr. Li, a durian-lover in Shanghai. Despite its intimidating hard shell, the stinky fruit is highly sensitive to temperature and has strict requirements for transportation. In temperatures exceeding 30 degrees Celsius, 5 to 10 percent of durians will go bad when exposed to the sun for two hours. Even at a stable temperature of 13 degrees Celsius, a durian can only keep fresh for 10 days.