

## Thai News Update: 25 October 2019

### 1. Thai ranking in Ease of Doing Business 2020 up 6 places

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

Finance Minister Uttama Savanayana announced on October 24 that Thailand's ranking in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business 2020 list has edged up from 27th to 21st this year, out of 190 countries surveyed. "Thailand's scores are 80.10 , up 1.65. This is our highest rank in the past six years, " he said. Thailand is close to catching up with Malaysia's scores of 81.50 and Singapore's 86.20. Singapore is ranked second and Malaysia 12th in Doing Business 2020, he said. Thailand has done better in dealing with construction permits by cutting 19 procedures to 14 and waiting times for approval from 118 days to 113 days, up-ranking to 34th place from 67th place previously .

### 2. Govt borrows Bt348 bn to cover fiscal 2019 deficit

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

The government collected Bt2.56 trillion in net revenue in fiscal 2019 ending in September, a 1-per-cent and Bt26.12-billion increase over the previous year, the director-general of the Fiscal Policy Office announced on October 24. Lavaron Sangsnit, who is also spokesperson for the Ministry of Finance, said the amount was 0.5 per cent and Bt13.06 billion more than targeted. The Revenue Department separately collected Bt9.14 billion (up 0.5 per cent), the Customs Department Bt8.52 billion (8.5 per cent), state-owned enterprises Bt1.15 billion (0.7 per cent) and other agencies Bt46.01 billion (32.4 per cent). The amounts were all close to those forecast by the ministry in June for the purpose of revenue monitoring.

### 3. CP group seals deal on high-speed airport rail

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

The Charoen Pokphand-led consortium and the State Railway of Thailand on October 24 signed the contract for the development of a high-speed railway linking three international airports, presided over by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha at Government House. The high-speed network will connect Don Mueang Airport in Bangkok, Suvarnabhumi in Samut Prakan and U-

tapao in Rayong. CP consortium made the lowest bid for the project. Others in the group are Bangkok Expressway and Metro Plc, China Railway Construction Corp, Ch Karnchang Plc and Italian-Thai Development Plc. The Eastern Economic Corridor Policy Committee today also signed a MoU with the SRT in support of the project's development.

#### **4. Huawei vows to boost Thailand's tech ecosystem as it marks 20 years in Thailand**

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

Huawei Thailand on October 24 announced its mission to build a thriving technology ecosystem in celebration of its 20th anniversary in Thailand. In line with the theme "Together for a Fully Connected, Intelligent Thailand", Huawei said it was committed to bringing the latest information and communications technology to the country. "This year marks a significant milestone for Huawei, as we are celebrating our 20th anniversary in Thailand," said Abel Deng, CEO of Huawei Thailand. "After 20 years in Thailand, we understand the market deeper than others and know how important innovation is for the future of Thailand."

#### **6. Thailand's strong inbound activity stands out in Asia**

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

Thailand saw a resurgence of inbound and domestic deal-making activity this year thanks robust economic performance, but the country will follow the global trend of a decline in mergers and acquisitions (M&A) by 2020, according to Baker McKenzie. A highly notable M&A deal was Hong Kong-based FWD Group's acquisition of Siam Commercial Bank Life Assurance in July. Valued at US\$3 billion (90.8 billion baht), the transaction was touted as the largest insurance M&A deal in Southeast Asia. FWD executives see Thailand as a promising insurance market because of its favourable macroeconomic environment and demographics. Thailand, alongside Indonesia and Vietnam, stood out in contrast to Asian neighbours as they saw strong inbound activity despite the region's deal-making activity as a whole, which fell from a high in 2018.

#### **7. B3bn in SME loans issued for 2020**

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

The Industry Ministry plans to provide soft loans worth 3 billion baht under the Pracha Rat scheme for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in 2020. The loan scheme is focused on businesses in the agriculture, creative and digital sectors, offering an interest rate of 1% per year

for seven years, said Industry Minister Suriya Jungrungreangkit. Each borrower can borrow a maximum of 3 million baht. The soft loan is part of the 20-billion-baht Pracha Rat fund, aimed at helping SMEs. Since 2017, the government has provided soft loans under the Pracha Rat fund to 10,567 SMEs for a combined amount of 16.1 billion baht. SMEs can apply the soft loan for investment or as working capital, starting from Dec 15, he said. There is also a 750-million-baht new development project to sharpen SMEs' competitiveness, said Mr Suriya.