

## Thai News Update: 27 December 2018

### **1. Heightened Push For Free-Trade Agreements**

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

Thailand has set an ambitious goal to finish drafting four free-trade agreements (FTAs) in 2019, including the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) mega multilateral FTA and three bilateral FTAs with Turkey, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. As the chair of the Asean summits in 2019, Thailand has listed the completion of the RCEP negotiations as one of our 12 deliverables,” said Auramon Supthaweethum, director-general of the Department of Trade Negotiations (DTN) under the Commerce Ministry. There will be at least four meetings with each country in 2019 to finalise the terms of the three bilateral FTAs. The FTAs will address issues such as liberalising trade in goods and services, opening up markets to investors from both countries, and implementing regulations such as intellectual property protection and anti-dumping measures, she said.

### **2. Aot Expects 3.1 Million Travellers For The Holidays**

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

Airports of Thailand Plc (AoT) estimates that 3.1 million passengers will use its six international airports during the year-end holiday, with airlines set to operate a total of 18,300 flights. President Nitinai Sirismatthakarn said that from Dec 27 to Jan 2, total air passengers at AoT's six international airports -- Suvarnabhumi, Don Mueang, Phuket, Chiang Rai, Hat Yai and Chiang Mai -Hat Yai and Chiang Mai -- are expected to increase by 11.8%. The number of flights is forecast to grow by 12.6% compared with the same time last year.

### **3. Bangkok Top In ASEAN, Second In Asia For Sustainable Conference Destination**

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

Bangkok has placed second on the list of Asian destinations in the latest Global Destination Sustainability (GDS) Index. The rating, which measured social and environmental sustainability strategies, industry supplier support, and Convention Bureau strategy and initiatives. The results

also praised Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB)'s performance as a top scorer in a comparison of convention bureaux in other Asian destinations. The top five destinations recently received GDS-Index Awards from the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) to recognise their sustainable practices in the business tourism and events industry.

#### **4. Thai Oil Pushes Clean Fuel Project To Hike Production**

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

Thai Oil Plc (TOP) will invest about US\$5.16 billion (Bt168 billion) for five years starting next year, while planning to spend \$1.37 billion in the first quarter of next year on a clean fuel project (CFP). Atikom Terbsiri, chief executive officer and president of TOP, said that about \$4.7 billion, or 90 per cent of the five-year \$5.16-billion plan, would be spent on CFP, a project that will improve refinery efficiency and raise crude oil refining capacity to 400,000 barrels per day in 2023. The current refining capacity is 270,000 barrels per day. The remaining 10 per cent, or about \$400-\$500 million, will be used to finance extension projects which will develop infrastructure for the CFP. Such projects extend from ports, more crude storage tanks and office relocation.