

## Thai News Update: 27 June 2019

### **1. Thai PM to join G20 Osaka summit as ASEAN chair**

**Source: Thai PBS World ([Link](#))**

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha is leaving for Osaka on 27 June to attend the G20 summit which has become a highly-anticipated event this week in the wake of the lingering trade war between Beijing and Washington. For Thailand, the G20 summit this year provides an opportunity for Gen Prayut to update the other leaders about the latest developments of the 34th ASEAN summit in Bangkok last weekend as he will be attending the G20 summit in his capacity as the ASEAN Chair. Among other issues, Thailand is expected to discuss with other leaders about the proposed Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a free-trade agreement between 10 ASEAN nations and Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea. At the meeting in Bangkok, ASEAN leaders set an ambitious plan to wrap up the RCEP talks by the end of this year.

### **2. 41 percent of vegetables in Thai markets exceed contamination standards**

**Source: Thai PBS World ([Link](#))**

Pesticide watchdog Thai-PAN has on 26 June published its most recent survey, which reveals that 41% of all vegetables in Thailand's fresh markets are contaminated with chemical pesticides to a level that exceeds internationally acceptable standards. 12 types of banned chemicals were also discovered. Ms. Prokchol Ousap, coordinator of Thailand Pesticide Alert Network (Thai-PAN), reported that the organization recently collected 286 samples of vegetables in collaboration with agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), provincial health officials, Tambon health workers, members of national farmer council, consumers' association and civil society.

### **3. KResearch lowers Thai GDP growth forecast to 3.1%**

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

Kasikorn Research Centre (KResearch) has lowered its forecast for Thai GDP growth to 3.1 per cent from its initial projection of 3.7 per cent. The reduction is due to the lacklustre performance of the export sector, which has been hit by slowing global trade in the wake of a simmering trade war between the US and China. KResearch assistant managing director Nattaporn Tiratanasirikul said that global trade for the remainder of 2019 will continue to face challenges from the possibility of the Trump administration imposing tariffs on an additional US\$325 billion worth of Chinese goods.

### **4. New, shorter road to Luang Prabang now open**

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

A new sealed road from the Thai border to the Lao province of Luang Prabang has opened to traffic, reducing travel time from Nan province to Luang Prabang from nine to five hours. Perames Vudthitornetiraks, president of the Neighbouring Countries Economic Development Cooperation Agency, said on Thursday that the new 114-kilometre road runs from Hongsa district in northwestern Laos to Luang Prabang, extending the road network from the Huai Kon border checkpoint in Nan province to Luang Prabang. The two-lane road shortens the trip from Nan to Luang Prabang from nine to five hours. It is expected to draw 10-20% more visitors to the two Thai and Lao provinces, especially from China, Vietnam and Europe, he said.

### **5. PTT abandons rail project**

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

PTT Plc, the SET-listed national oil and gas conglomerate, has scrapped its plan to become a joint partner with the bidding winner of the 224-billion-baht high-speed railway linking three airports, saying it lacks expertise in such megaprojects. President and chief executive Chansin Treenuchagron said PTT revised its business plan for 2019-23 and decided to leave the railway project. "Our shareholders and directors also agree that PTT is not a professional in railway projects, which are too far from our four-decade expertise in oil, gas and power," he said. In 2018, PTT announced that it bought bidding documents for the high-speed railway linking Don

Mueang, Suvarnabhumi and U-tapao airport, but it chose not to submit the documents in November.

#### **6. Agencies push Pattaya as Mice centre**

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

The Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) has joined with the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) Office and Pattaya City to develop the resort destination into a "Mice Metropolis". Chiruit Isarangun Na Ayuthaya, president of the TCEB, said the popular city is in a strategic location to support Mice (meetings, incentives, conventions, exhibitions), thanks to its potential as a centre of commerce, investment and services. Pattaya City is one of the five main Mice cities alongside Chiang Mai, Phuket, Khon Kaen and Bangkok promoted by the TCEB, and the agency is planning to employ Mice businesses to stimulate the development of the EEC by bidding for more Mice-related events in the area, Mr Chiruit said.