

Thai News Update: 28 June 2018

1. Japan To Back Thai Entry To Trade Body

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

Japan on June 27 vowed to support the accession of Thailand to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), which Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha expressed an interest in joining during a meeting with Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono. Kono was in Thailand for the third ministerial of the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development (CEAPAD) on June 27. CPTPP is a comprehensive free-trade agreement signed by 11 Asia-Pacific countries in March after the withdrawal of the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) after Donald Trump took office. Japan took the lead in the free-trade scheme, which also included Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam. Prayut has ordered a feasibility study for Thailand to join the CPTPP, according to spokesman Weerachon Sukondhapatipak.

2. Prayut Hails EU Visit A Success After Talks On Big Business Deals

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

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha returned home from his trip to Europe yesterday after French President Emmanuel Macron called for Thailand to return to democracy. Prayut hailed his meetings with Macron and UK Prime Minister Theresa May a success after discussing business deals. The junta chief had been barred from visiting the European Union after he staged a military coup to topple an elected civilian government in 2014. The EU softened its stance in December last year to resume political engagement with Thailand at all levels. The Foreign Affairs Council of the EU said it would gradually resume political engagement since Prayut had promised that an election would be held in November this year. However, the election has been delayed, with no firm date yet established.

3. Drafted Bill On Land Tax To Proceed On Schedule

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

The government did not have a plan to postpone the legal enforcement of the drafted bill on land and building taxes, said Wisudhi Srisuphan, deputy minister of finance. This comes in response to rumours that the National Legislative Assembly (NLA) may have proposed to postpone its legal enforcement to 2020. The bill is scheduled to come into effect in 2019. Wisudhi said the Prime Minister wanted the drafted land and building tax bill to pass the NLA within his administration. After it has come into effect on January 1, 2019, local administrative organisations will conduct a survey and tax collection will be made every April, Wisudhi said.

4. Visa Brings E-Payment Options To Thailand

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

Visa, the world's leader in digital payments, is now processing debit transactions in Thailand. Visa announced last November it had received a domestic network licence from the Bank of Thailand. "By operating as a processor of domestic debit transactions, Visa is well positioned to leverage its strengths and network to continually drive innovation and expand access to electronic payments in Thailand creating a more financially inclusive ecosystem for all," Visa Thailand Country Manager Suripong Tantiyanon said. "Visa Debit will be a stepping stone for further adoption of electronic payments in the country and strengthens the country's national e-payment agenda." Through a partnership with National Interbank Transaction Management and Exchange (National ITMX), Visa is now providing banks and merchants in Thailand with a comprehensive range of debit products and resources.

5. Environmental Tax Could Cut E-Waste

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

The Finance Ministry has floated the idea of imposing an environmental tax in a bid to reduce electronic waste. For example, imported mobile phone handsets should be subject to an electronic scrap disposal tax, said finance permanent secretary Prasong Poontaneat. But taxation should be adopted in parallel with raising public awareness and encouraging recycling in a comprehensive effort to address the rising e-waste problem, Mr Prasong said. Thailand is becoming a dumping ground for electronic and plastic waste after China banned the import of such refuse last

year. According to the Customs Department, Thailand imported 212,000 tonnes of plastic waste for the five months through May, up from 145,000 tonnes for all of 2017, and 52,200 tonnes of e-waste, compared with 64, 400 tonnes last year.

6. State Agencies Pace Revenue Collection

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

The government's revenue collection outpaced its target by 4% during the eight months to May, mainly because of higher than expected remittance from state enterprises and revenue collection from other state agencies. The government gathered 1.57 trillion baht from October to May, exceeding the target by 60 billion and rising 4.7% from a year earlier, said Pornchai Thiraveja, financial policy adviser for the Fiscal Policy Office and deputy spokesperson for Finance Ministry. Revenue collection from other agencies and remittances from state-owned enterprises between October last year and May surpassed the targets by 28.9 billion baht and 25.6 billion, or by 25.7% and 25.6%, respectively. Moreover, collection of the petroleum tax, automobile tax, and tobacco tax were significantly above targets, he said.