

## Thai News Update: 27 May 2019

### **1. Alibaba in talks for WHA EEC land**

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

Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba Group is vying to build up its footprint in Thailand by negotiating with WHA Corporation for the latter's industrial estate land in Chachoengsao. The move would be Alibaba's second major investment in Thailand and would leverage its supply chain in Asean. Last year Alibaba invested 11 billion baht in the government's flagship Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) scheme for the first phase of the Smart Digital Hub. Alibaba wants to use the investment to drive its core e-commerce business by supporting the group's online payment platform Alipay, marketing technology platform Alimama, cloud computing firm Aliyun, and logistics firm China Smart Logistics Network.

### **2. Betagro depends on exports in 2019**

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

Betagro Group, one of Thailand's biggest agro-industrial and food companies, seeks sales growth of 15% this year from the food business, led by processed food and exports. Somsak Boonlarp, chief operating officer for food of Betagro, said the company expects sales from its food business will top 53 billion baht this year, up from 49 billion last year. Some 30% of total sales will stem from exports, up from 24% last year. Betagro aims to increase export volume by 12% this year to 97,580 tonnes at year-end, mainly for frozen cooked chicken and chicken raised without antibiotics under the S-Pure brand.

### **3. EA readies EV, PCM projects**

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

SET-listed Energy Absolute Plc (EA) has earmarked 9.2 billion baht in 2019-20 after it commenced commercial operating dates for five wind power units in Chaiyaphum province. The 260-megawatt project consists of five wind power units in two districts -- Bamnet Narong and

Thep Sathit -- with an investment cost of 18 billion baht. Omsin Siri, vice-president for corporate communication, said the new budget is for two plans -- electric vehicles (EVs) and lithium-ion energy storage, and bio-based phase change materials (PCMs). With the 9.2-billion-baht investment, EA plans to expand expertise, financial capabilities and human resources.

#### **4. Thailand passes ICAO inspections**

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

The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) said Thailand achieved an effective implementation of standards score of 65.07%, which exceeds the minimum pass threshold of 60% set by United Nations' aviation watchdog. The score was awarded after a full team of ICAO officials carried out a Coordinated Validation Mission on Thailand's civil aviation standards between May 13-22, Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) chief Chula Sukmanop said on 27 May 2019. Thailand was red-flagged by the ICAO in June 2015 for failing to adequately deal with "significant safety concerns [SSCs]" within the specified time frame.

#### **5. Customs Dept eyes fresh incentives for EEC investors**

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

The Customs Department is ready to offer investors more incentives, should the new government introduce new policies related to the junta-led administration's Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) initiative, customs executives said. The new government, likely to be led by pro-junta Phalang Pracharat Party, is expected to continue the ambitious EEC project. The aim of the initiative was to upgrade the economy. Kanit Sangsubhan, secretary-general of the EEC Office, said he wants initial investments to be directed towards the expansion of the Laem Chabang Port and U-tapao Airport before the EEC Office calls on the new government to offer more incentives for investors to put money into the project.

#### **7. Robotics firm announces academic alliance to prepare for future jobs**

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

Asean UiPath, a leading robotic process automation (RPA) company, has announced an academic alliance programme in Asean, following partnerships with leading institutes of higher learning, including in Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand. Through the academic alliance,

UiPath will work with educational institutions to equip students with critical automation skills, teach them how to leverage RPA in the workplace and prepare them to work alongside software robots. UiPath aims to train over 50,000 Asean students and professionals over the next three years for the automated workforce of the future. The academic institutes will include King Mongkut's University of Technology Ladkrabang (KMITL) in Thailand. In addition to Thailand's KMITL, the institutions will include Singapore's Nanyang Polytechnic, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Republic Polytechnic, Institute of Technical Education, ITE College West, and the Philippines' Asia Pacific College (APC).

#### **8. Project launched to introduce low-carbon rice farming**

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

The Thai Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and the German government's international co-operation agency on 24 May announced the launch of a joint public-private project aimed at transforming the central plains of Thailand to low-carbon rice farming. The goal is to boost rice-producing capacity and add value to Thai rice and penetrate new markets. Agriculture and Cooperatives Minister Grisada Boonrach said his office had joined with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, which is the German federal enterprise supporting sustainable development worldwide, to carry out the project, called Thai Rice NAMA (Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions).