

## Thai News Update: 28 September 2018

### **1. US Tells Thailand To Allow Foreign Worker Unions**

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

The US is calling on Thailand to alter its labour laws and allow foreign workers to set up labour unions here in order to protect workers' rights. Boonyarit Kalayanamit, director-general of the Commerce Ministry's Internal Trade Department, said Lewis Karesh, assistant US trade representative (USTR) for labour, proposed during a visit on 27 September Thailand amend labour laws to let foreign workers set up unions in accordance with international labour practices.

### **2. Trade Ministers, Chief Negotiators To Hold Series Of Meetings On Rcep Trade Pact In October**

**Source: The Economic Times ([Link](#))**

Trade ministers and senior officials of RCEP member countries, including India and China, will hold series of meetings in October to iron out issues hampering negotiations over the proposed mega trade deal, an official said. The mega pact aims to relax norms and significantly cut import duties to boost trade in goods, services, promote investments, technical cooperation, and intellectual property rights. Chief negotiators will meet for a special round of talks in Jakarta from October 6-9, before the meeting of RCEP trade ministers on October 13 in Singapore. Trade experts too have expressed apprehensions that eliminating duties for Chinese goods may further impact domestic industries.

### **3. Thai–Vietnam Trade Expected To Reach \$20 Bn By 2020**

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

The Target for bilateral trade between Thailand and Vietnam has been set at US\$20 billion by 2020, said Thai-Vietnam Business Council's president Sanan Angubolkul during an interview with The Nation on 27 September. In 2017, Thai-Vietnamese bilateral trade stood at US\$16 billion in total value. Of which, Thailand exported up to US\$11 billion worth of products to the country while Vietnam exported US\$5 billion to Thailand, said Sanan, who is also chairman of Srithai Superware Plc. Thailand benefits a lot from trading with Vietnam but Vietnam also gains from

importing goods from Thailand as most of the Thai exports are capital goods, he explains. Hence, Thai exports help push the development of the manufacturing industry in Vietnam, he says.

#### **4. Thai Companies Interested In Investing In Ethiopia**

**Source: 2Merkato.com ([Link](#))**

Thirty Five Thai companies composed of food industry, auto spare part manufacturing, and construction are exploring prospective business opportunities in Ethiopia. A business-to-business meeting was held between the companies' delegation and Ethiopian business people in Addis Ababa. Speaking at the opening of the meeting, Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Association President, Elias Geneti told the delegation about the opportunities and incentives in Ethiopia. He said that Ethiopia has several sectors in which Thai companies could engage. He also briefed the companies about the country's capacity in the agricultural sector.

#### **5. Exim Funds Solar Project Of PEA ENCOM**

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

The Export-Import Bank of Thailand (EXIM Thailand) has signed a credit facility worth Bt1.15 billion with state enterprise PEA ENCOM International Co Ltd to finance its investment in the installation of 40 mega watts solar rooftop systems for industrial plants nationwide. PEA ENCOM International Co Ltd is a subsidiary of the Provincial Electricity Authority (PEA). EXIM Thailand's senior executive vice president Warangkana Wongkhaluang said that the financial support to PEA ENCOM aims to promote electricity generation from solar panels - a clean, sustainable and environmentally friendly renewable energy source with high potential.

#### **6. Tourism Minister Backs Double-Entry Visa For Chinese Tourists**

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

Tourism and Sports Minister Weerasak Kowsurat has expressed support for the idea of granting double-entry visas for Chinese tourists to encourage them to return to the Kingdom. Weerasak said on 27 September that he agreed with the proposal of the Tourism Council of Thailand Association of Thai Travel Agents (ATTA) to allow Chinese tourists to visit Thailand twice after being granted

an entry visa. Weerasak said he would coordinate with the Foreign Ministry and other government agencies concerned to have the proposal approved and implemented.

### **7. 3 Thai Cities Ranked Among Top 20 Global Destinations**

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

Thailand has continued to see significant growth in the travel sector, making it the only country with three in the top 20 global destination cities, according to the seventh annual Mastercard Global Destination Cities Index (GDCI), released on 27 September. The Index ranked Bangkok as the number one global destination city for international overnight visitors. It is the fifth time in six years (since 2012) – and the third consecutive year – the Thai capital has grabbed the top spot. Phuket and Pattaya, both popular tourist destinations, also ranked in the global top 20 destination cities at number 12 and 18, respectively.

### **8. Bot To Beef Up Protections For Car Refinancing**

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

The Bank of Thailand is set to issue regulations on auto refinancing in November aimed at standardising and creating fair practices for consumers. The regulations would help protect consumers, particularly those at the bottom rung of the economic ladder, said Daranee Saeju, senior director of financial institution strategy development for the central bank. A consultation paper was published and a public hearing on the issue was held this month. The central bank's survey found that interest rate and loan contract conditions are the key unfair factors for borrowers, who are largely lower-income earners and lack financial statements.