

## Thai News Update: 29 August 2019

### **1. E-commerce laws to be amended: Finance Minister**

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

The Finance Ministry is looking at amending e-commerce laws to increase business opportunities for local and foreign investors looking to invest in the e-commerce industry. “Thailand will pursue greater connectivity economically in the Asean region through public-private partnership infrastructure projects and strive to become the central economic, transportation and innovation hub of the region,” said Uttama Savanayana, Finance Minister, who was speaking today at the Thailand Focus 2019 organised by the SET. Going forward, the Thai government will be looking at regulatory reform to increase the ease of doing business in Thailand which will promote investment in the country, he said.

### **2. Thailand speeds up plans to cut ocean waste**

**Source: Inquirer ([Link](#))**

Thailand is stepping up efforts to curb ocean plastic waste and conserve endangered marine life, through a comprehensive program named after well-loved baby dugong Mariam, who died after consuming plastic. The Mariam Project, which is expected to involve many stakeholders in the public and private sectors, includes initiatives to increase the number of dugongs and other endangered species, ban single-use plastic bags, straws and cups as well as styrofoam in a few years, redelineate fishing zones, collect ocean waste by boat, and build hospitals and recuperation centers for endangered species.

### **3. Agency urges government to step up EV development**

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

The Electric Vehicle Association of Thailand (EVAT) is calling for the government to take more serious action in developing the country's electric vehicle (EV) roadmap to create a local market that can catch up with rapid improvements in electrified cars globally. EVAT proposed eight

actions to promote the EV market, expecting to turn Thailand into an EV society and reduce carbon dioxide emissions from the transport sector. Yossapong Laoonual, president of EVAT, said the government will play a major role in the shift from internal combustion engine (ICE) cars to EVs, as it expects to promote Thailand as a global EV hub by 2036 with 1.2 million EVs on local roads with 690 charging stations.

#### **4. New role for trade officials**

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

Commercial affairs officials in overseas offices have been told to adjust the way they work to function more as honorary salesmen in cooperation with the private sector to help tackle export obstacles to drive shipment growth this year. Speaking at a dinner talk on the "Thai Economic Strategy Under the New Government" organised by the Economic Reporters Association, Commerce Minister Jurin Laksanawisit said such officials should veer from their traditional roles as trade negotiators or compilers of information. "Overseas officials should be well-equipped with knowledge about products we are exporting or plan to beef up so they can convince potential buyers," Mr Jurin said. "International trade negotiations with potential partners still need to be continued."

#### **5. Commerce and agriculture ministries told to lift exports**

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

The Commerce and the Agriculture and Cooperatives ministries have been told to join forces to spur exports over the remaining months of the year and pinpoint potential new buyers to ride the US-China trade war storm. In a meeting of overseas commercial affairs officials, directors of Thai Trade Centres from 58 offices worldwide and agricultural affairs officials, Deputy Prime Minister Jurin Laksanawisit said on 28 August the two ministries must team up under a "securing market before production" strategy and roll out plans to boost market access for Thai products. The Commerce Ministry reported on Aug 21 that customs-cleared outbound shipments rose 4.3% year-on-year in July to US\$21.2 billion after falling by 2.2% year-on-year in June, 5.8% in May, 2.6% in April and 4.9% in March.

## **6. New hotel and condo developments flood Phuket's property market**

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

The continuing wave of developers bringing hotel investment grade real estate to the Phuket real estate market is escalating. Notable new entries include 74 units at the Melia Phuket Karon Residences that are now for sale. Pricing for one and two bedroom units starts at 8.4 million baht. A 7% three-year guarantee is offered with 30 days owner usage. Meanwhile, at the newly launched Radisson Mai Khao, 110 condominium hotel residences range from 41-132 square metres. Prices go from 7.2 million baht with a 3 year guaranteed return of 6%. And Laguna Phuket, which is a good barometer of the island's broader resort-grade real estate sector, recently launched their Skypark entry level condominium under 3 million baht. As real estate prices shrink, so is unit size, and pressure on the once dominant villa market is mounting.

## **7. Digital ministry wants 5G in 2020**

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

The Digital Economy and Society Ministry is pushing for the adoption of fifth-generation (5G) technology by next year, especially in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC), as a way to attract global tech investment. The minister, Buddhipongse Punnakanta, said on 28 August the adoption of 5G by 2020 was in line with the government's roadmap for development of a digital economy. "By 2020 the adoption of 5G, and its use in some cases, needs to be seen in the EEC project, or some potential areas," Mr Buddhipongse said. The digital economy ministry planned to work closely with the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) to ease any existing burdens or limitations on 5G development.

## **8. AEPW commits US\$1 billion plus to help reduce plastic waste**

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

Global companies from across the value chain, including chemical and plastic manufacturers, on 28 August held the first Alliance to End Plastic Waste (AEPW) forum in Southeast Asia. The forum introduced the Alliance, a global non-profit organisation aiming to end plastic waste in the environment, especially in the ocean, to Southeast Asia and Thailand. The Alliance represents 40 companies that are headquartered in North and South America, Europe, Africa, the Middle East,

and Asia. Many of these companies have significant operations in Southeast Asia, including Thailand. The Alliance has committed almost US\$1 billion (Bt30 billion) in funds, with the goal of investing \$1.5 billion over the next five years to develop solutions that will minimise and manage plastic waste and promote post-use solutions. Alliance efforts will focus many of its efforts in Southeast Asia, where the need is greatest.