

Thai News Update: 2 August 2018

1. ASEAN Must Stay The Course And Press On With Economic Integration And Innovation: PM Lee

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

As the rules-based multilateral trading system comes under pressure, Asean has to stay the course and press on with economic integration, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said on August 2 in Singapore. "It is important that Asean continues to support the multilateral system and work with like-minded partners to deepen our web of cooperation," he said in a speech to foreign ministers from all 10 Asean countries and diplomats at the opening ceremony of the Asean Foreign Ministers' Meeting at Singapore Expo. And with the fourth industrial revolution underway, the region must make full use of technology to bring Asean closer together, embrace innovation, build up digital connectivity and prepare itself for the future, Mr Lee added. The country will enhance its support for the Initiative for Asean Integration (IAI) in a bid to boost regional economic integration and adoption of technology, and upgrade its IAI centres in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos to Singapore Cooperation Centres (SCCs).

2. Prayut Touts EEC For Prosperity

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

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha reaffirmed on August 1 that the key to ensuring Thailand escapes the "middle-income trap" and transforms into a high-income nation means sticking to the 20-year national strategy and Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) project. Speaking at an event feting the 72nd anniversary of the Bangkok Post, Gen Prayut said his government has been working tirelessly to reform the country since the regime rose to power four years ago so it can keep pace with global developments and change. "We have to move Thailand forward and escape the middle-income trap, so the important thing is a long-term national development plan. You can see that the words 'national strategy' were introduced for the first time by the current government," he said during the event held at Bangkok Convention Centre at Central World. Gen Prayut said in the past Thailand only had development plans from the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESBD), which have never been fully implemented.

3. Tourism On Three Wheels

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

The Ayutthaya provincial administration is holding a tuk tuk rally on August 18 and 19 to promote tourism to the historical site. Ayutthaya governor Sujin Chaiyachumsak said 250 teams of contestants can take part in the rally, for which the application fee is Bt1,000. At least one member of the team must be dressed in an Ayutthaya period costume, the governor added. Each team will be driven in a tuk tuk around sites to solve various puzzles during which the contestants will learn about the traditional lifestyles of the Ayutthaya people in bygone days. The locations include Wat Phra Sri Sanphet, Wat Mongkol Bophit, Wat Mahathat, Wat Ratburana and Wat Chai Watanaram, the governor said.

4. Thailand Invites Norway To Join Development Efforts In Rakhine State

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

Thailand has invited Norway to join “friendly help” trilateral development projects in Myanmar’s conflict-torn Rakhine state, Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai said on 2 August. The proposed projects cover infrastructure, public health, community-based development and vocational education, Don told reporters after meeting with his Norwegian counterpart Ine Marie Eriksen Soreide on the sidelines of the 51st Asean Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in Singapore. Thailand, China and Japan have all expressed economic interest in Myanmar’s western coastal state. Last month, Myanmar and a Thailand-based business institute discussed recruiting investors for large-scale projects while China is eyeing the possibility of developing a deep-sea port as part of a special economic zone. The economic schemes will help lubricate the economy, benefiting not just local residents but also the Myanmar government, which is being held responsible for the purges against hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas in the same state.

5. Southern Economic Corridor On Agenda

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

The government looks set to introduce the Southern Economic Corridor development scheme, which includes a high-speed rail network, a double-track rail system, road construction and an upgrade of Ranong port. The development plan is scheduled to go before the mobile cabinet's Aug 20-21 meeting in Chumphon. According to Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak, the

National Economic and Social Development Board is conducting a development plan for the Southern Economic Corridor. Mr Somkid said the government aims to develop the Southern Economic Corridor to spur economic growth in the southern provinces, which have room for investment in local raw materials such as rubber and palm to create value-added products.