

## Thai News Update: 31 July 2019

### **1. PM to head Thai government's economic team**

**Source: Thai PBS World ([Link](#))**

After having delegated responsibility for running the country's economy to Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak for the past five years, the Prime Minister has decided to replace Somkid and head the economic team himself. However, Dr. Somkid and the other four deputy prime ministers are still part of the economic team and they have been assigned to oversee specific ministries. Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha told his cabinet at their first meeting on 30 July that there must be no corruption in his government. He also reminded his ministers, representing the coalition parties, of the need for them to work as a team to translate government policies into action, likening his government to a rowing boat in which everybody must row together and in the same direction.

### **2. Minister weighs raising speed limit to 120km/h**

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

The new transport minister says he will increase the speed limit to 120 kilometres per hour from 80km/h and restrict the time transport lorries can use Bangkok roads to four hours a day. Saksayam Chidchob told reporters on 30 July evening one of his urgent policies was to solve traffic congestion. "We'll start with raising the speed limit on four-lane roads nationwide to 120km/h from 80km/h and 90km/h on motorways," he said. The new speed limit will apply to passenger cars and public transport vehicles, including vans, buses and taxis, he said.

### **3. Thailand's chance to match gastronomy with services**

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

It's mindboggling that the below average level of service that is offered for Thailand's tourist gastronomic visitors in the F&B (Food and Beverage) industry is being generally accepted. Customers are getting tired from the very beginning of their experience when they are trying to

make a reservation and the restaurant staff can't even communicate with them properly. This is the predominant reason behind why your reservation is often nowhere to be found when you arrive at your chosen dining establishment.

#### **4. Govt sets January launch for child, birth benefit plan**

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

The government expects to introduce in January next year the manda pracharath, a new welfare package targeting pregnant women and mothers of small children who are low-income earners. The benefits, which includes financial help for pregnant women and allowances for mothers with children up to six years of age, were promised by the Palang Pracharath Party (PPRP) during the election campaign. PPRP deputy leader Suvit Maesincee said the relevant state agencies are studying who will be eligible for the benefits. Recipients will be those not currently eligible to receive state welfare cards allocated to the needy but who face financial difficulty rearing children."But we expect to begin with low-income earners before expanding the welfare coverage to other groups," said Mr Suvit, who is also the higher education, science, research and innovation minister. Currently, the welfare card scheme covers 14.5 million poor people whose annual income do not exceed 100,000 baht. The cards give them monthly subsidies including 1,500 baht for public transport. To provide the welfare, officials need to carefully plan the budget allocation.

#### **5. Thailand's border trade rises 1.16 pct year-on-year**

**Source: Xinhua Net ([Link](#))**

The value of Thailand's border trade increased slightly in the first half of 2019, said the Department of Foreign Trade under the Ministry of Commerce on 30 July. Adul Chotinisakorn, director-general of the Department of Foreign Trade (DFT), told a press conference that the value of border trade in the first half of 2019 amounted to 686.44 billion baht (22.27 billion U.S. dollars), rising by 1.16 percent year-on-year. A press statement by the DFT said the amount consisted of 381.70 billion baht (12.39 billion U.S. dollars) worth of exports and 304.73 billion baht (9.89 billion U.S. dollars) worth of imports, resulting in a trade surplus of 76.97 billion baht

(2.49 billion U.S. dollars). Malaysia was Thailand's biggest trading partner for border trade, followed by Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia, the statement said.

## **6. Mitsubishi ships its 4 millionth vehicle from Thailand**

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

Japanese car maker Mitsubishi Motors Corporation on 31 July exported its 4 millionth Thai-assembled vehicle through Laem Chabang port in Chon Buri province, bound for Europe. It was a Thai-made Triton pickup. Osamu Masuko, chairman of Tokyo-based Mitsubishi, was in Thailand to witness the historic shipment. Morikazu Chokki, president and chief executive of Mitsubishi Motors Thailand, said pickups accounted for 70% of the vehicles the company exports from Thailand. Thai-made eco-cars make up 22% of the total. Passenger vehicles account for 5%, with the remainder comprising other vehicles. In 2018, Mitsubishi exported 287,000 completely built units, down 0.7% from a year before.

## **7. KBank's digital push focuses on startups**

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

Kasikornbank (KBank) plans to turn its focus to adding more startups to its digital banking roster to increase user activities and income, while searching for new business opportunities after teaming up with three online platform giants: Grab, Line and Facebook. The bank believes its three major app partners should help it leap forward in digital banking as it continues to expand cooperation with local and overseas startups, co-president Patchara Samalapa said in an exclusive interview with the Bangkok Post. The country's largest mobile banking service provider, with 11 million users, has joined hands with 18 startup partners to provide financial solutions to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) under the K-SME Digibiz programme through the online-to-offline (O2O) platform. Small merchants and online shopping are the key targets.

## **8. Lazada, Shopee lead the pack in e-commerce race**

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

Giant online platforms Lazada and Shopee are riding high in Thailand's e-commerce market, cashing in on the growth potential of Thai consumers' shift towards digital-related activities. Krungthep Turakij newspaper reported that Lazada and Shopee have now gained a combined share of between 80 and 90 per cent of the e-market in Thailand. According to the Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA), under the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, the market value of Thailand's e-commerce is worth more than Bt3 trillion a year and expected to see a significant growth of 20 per cent this year. Thanawat Malabuppha, president of Thailand e-Commerce Association, and CEO & co-founder at Priceza, said there were more than 20 million online shoppers in Thailand in the first six months of this year with more than 50 million products on sales on online platforms. It will increase to about 62 million products by the end of this year.