

## Thai News Update: 31 May 2018

### **1. Thailand 'Is New Dumping Ground For World's High-Tech Trash'**

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

Thailand is a new dumping ground for scrap electronics from around the world, say police and environmentalists, the latest country to feel the impact of China's crackdown on imports of high-tech trash. Police at Laem Chabang port, south of Bangkok, showed on May 29 seven shipping containers each packed with about 22 tonnes of discarded electronics, including crushed game consoles, computer boards and bags of scrap materials. Electronic refuse, or e-waste, is turning up from Hong Kong, Singapore and Japan, police said, some of it imported by companies without the required permits. "This ... shows that electronic waste from every corner of the world is flowing into Thailand," Deputy Police Chief Wirachai Songmetta said as he showed the containers to the media. China imposed a ban on overseas trash last year, telling the World Trade Organization (WTO) that it would stop accepting imports on 24 types of foreign waste, leading some to fear that the waste could end up in neighbouring countries. Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha vowed this week to step up nationwide inspections as part of a plan to combat illegal electronic waste. But environmentalists say they have not seen the details of how it will work.

### **2. BoT: Economy Improves, But Still Patchy; April Factory Output Up 3.99%**

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

Thailand's economy is expected to grow faster than previously projected due to strong exports, but domestic demand was not yet "broad-based" and monetary policy has to remain accommodative, minutes of the central bank's last policy meeting showed on May 30. Higher farm income was a result of a lower base of comparison in previous periods, while earnings of low-income households remained fragile, they said. Accommodative monetary policy should also help headline inflation rise to the central bank's 1-4% target in a sustainable manner. Southeast Asia's second-largest economy continues to gain traction and would grow at a higher rate than previously projected, driven by exports, tourism, and a gradual improvement in domestic demand, the minutes said. In January-March, the economy grew at its fastest pace in five years, up 2.0% on the quarter and 4.8% on the

year. In March, the BoT raised its 2018 growth forecast to 4.1% from 3.9%. It will review that at its next policy meeting on June 20.

### **3. Water Management Firm Signs Vietnam Deal**

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

WHA Utilities and Power PLC has announced the establishment of its subsidiary to invest in and operate water businesses in the WHA Hemaraj Industrial Zone in Nghe An Province, Vietnam, with a business licence for 49 years. Wisate Chungwatana, WHAUP CEO, revealed its continuous investment plan over the 498-hectare site. The demand for industrial and waste-water treatment is estimated at around 12,000 cubic metres per day and 9,600 cubic metres per day, respectively. Wisate said that the company directors approved the establishment of a new subsidiary, the WHAUP Nghe An Joint Stock Company, to invest in and operate water business in Vietnam with its first project in Nghe An. It marks WHAUP's first step to expand its business into the international market, especially in Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Myanmar.

### **4. Thai Firm Signs Laos Power Deal**

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

Ratchaburi Electricity Generating Holding Public Company Limited (Ratch) is ready for expansion into the 340 megawatt (MW) Xekong hydroelectric power project in Laos in a joint investment with the government in Vientiane. Kijja Sripatthangkura, Ratch CEO, said that the company is pursuing an 850 MW goal for 2018 with Lao World Engineering and Construction Co, Ltd (LW) and B Grimm Power Public Company Limited. They completed the feasibility study together as well as the environmental and social impact assessment that had been approved by the Ministry of Energy and Mines and Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment in Vientiane. We will start the development of a combined 340-MW Xekong hydroelectric power project with two reservoirs: 4A Xekong in Lamam district and 4B Xekong in Kaluem district, Xekong province. The company plans to talk about power purchases with the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT), under a 9GW power cooperation deal between Thailand and Laos. It expects that electricity will serve demand in northeastern Thailand," Kijja added.

## **5. Business Optimism Deepens As Economy Keeps Marching**

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

A GAUGE of business sentiment across the regions suggests confidence in the economy is increasing, meshing with other positive indicators and a key business lobby's dismissal of a potential hit on exports from Italy's political crisis. The Thai Regional Economic Sentiment Index (RSI) in May pointed to rising confidence in economy on a six-month outlook nationwide. The rise in sentiment was most marked in the Central, Eastern and Northern parts of the country, said Soraphol Tulayasathien, deputy spokesman for the Finance Ministry, May 30. For the Central region, the RSI index was 91.4, reflecting businesses' strong optimism on the outlook for the economy, driven by rising exports and an expansion in the manufacturing sector, Soraphol said. Investment also rose in the provinces neighbouring the EEC provinces of Rayong, Chon Buri and Chachoengsao. Soraphol cited the increased investment in hotels in Nakhon Nayok and in factories in Sa Kaew. Sustained increases in exports also benefitted the Northeast, with a reading of 83.2 in the confidence index. Rising prices for maize, sugarcane and cassava root contributed to the expansion of the region's economy. Another boost comes from newly built factories in Ubon Ratchathani, Kalasin and Surin. An increase in the number of foreign tourists contributed to rising confidence in the Western parts of the country. The RSI index for that region was 83.1. More tourists visited Ratchaburi, Suphanburi and Phetchaburi. Retail sales in the region also shows signs of rising.

## **6. EEC To Host Surprising Bedfellows**

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

Up to 40 Chinese executives will take part in Sino-Japanese Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) development efforts as they strive to strengthen bilateral cooperation in third-party markets. A new wave of Chinese business representatives is flocking to Thailand to explore investment opportunities, emphasising the remarkable development of economic cooperation between Thailand and China, now the No.1 trade partner of Southeast Asia's second-biggest economy. A seminar to be held in Bangkok on May 31 was organised under a memorandum of understanding between China and Japan on business cooperation in third countries signed on May 9, said Kanit Sangsubhan, secretary-general of the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) Office. The cooperation

is meant to enhance Thailand's investment climate and promote private investment in the EEC. Under the agreement, the two countries will establish a service trade cooperation mechanism to actively promote reciprocal cooperation in the service sector, Mr Kanit said. The two parties also agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation in third-party markets by establishing a cross-department working mechanism.

### **7. Thailand Post Aims To Grab Bigger Slice Of Overseas Pie**

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

Thailand Post has set an ambitious goal for its international business to achieve 4 billion baht in revenue, growth of 14%, expanding cross-border e-commerce through a partnership with the world's largest marketplace eBay. The company has added new services to help local online retailers deliver their products abroad for, on average, a 20% lower fee than its global competitors such as DHL. Thailand Post has also officially launched its ePacket service to enhance competitiveness for Thai online merchants. EPacket is targeted at merchants sending parcels weighing no more than 2 kilogrammes to 16 countries, including Japan, China, Singapore, South Korea and the US. The delivery service fee ranges from 120-1,000 baht, depending on destination. Recipients will receive the parcel within three to nine days depending on destination. Thailand Post expects its ePacket service to generate 100 million baht in revenue. Last year Thailand Post booked total revenue of 27 billion baht, of which 3.5 billion, or 13% was generated through its international services.