

Thai News Update: 31 May 2019

1. Team To Zero In On Competitiveness

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

Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak has instructed the country's top planning agency to set up a high-powered team drawing on business leaders that will examine ways to boost Thailand's competitiveness amid signs of slippage on key measures. The National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) has been tasked with putting the team together with input from the Federation of Thai Industries (FTI) and the Thai Chamber of Commerce. The Swiss-based International Institute for Management Development (IMD) grades 63 economies for their economic performance, government efficiency, business efficiency and infrastructure each year. The challenge for Thailand is how to maintain its good position in the competitiveness score and increase this further, Somkid said.

2. Govt Takes Concrete Steps To Stop Overpricing At Private Hospitals

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

Private Hospitals will no longer be allowed to hit patients with huge bills after authorities introduced clear legal measures yesterday to curb hefty prices. The new regulations, controlling the price of medicines, medical supplies and medical services, went into effect on 30 May. Many patients go to private hospitals to avoid the crowds and long queues at state medical facilities, but many find themselves being "ripped off". Now, with so many complaints filed against private medical facilities, the government can no longer turn a blind eye. Earlier this year, Foundation for Consumers secretary-general Saree Ongsomwang said that in one case, the medical bill went beyond Bt23 million.

3. BBL Looks To Agents For Expansion

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

Bangkok Bank (BBL) expects to finalise its banking agent appointments this year after negotiations with several potential partners, including MAI-listed Forth Smart Service Plc, the operator of Boonterm top-up machines. The bank is considering the business feasibility of potential banking agents, particularly customer demand for transactions via the channel, as well as infrastructure base, security systems and the agent's reputation as key factors in determining whether to appoint agents, said Thaweelap Rittapirom, executive vice-president of BBL.

4. Thailand Post Upgrading Air Mail Security

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

Thailand Post is spending 50 million baht to upgrade its air mail delivery system and launch what it calls the world's first regulated postal authority that screens for unsafe and prohibited items at Suvarnabhumi airport. The mail centre meets international security standards and is certified by the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) in accordance with requirements prescribed by the International Civil Aviation Organization. The move aims to facilitate operational management for all airlines in terms of security standards at the airport and ensure timelier air mail delivery. Smorn Terdthampiboon, president of Thailand Post, said the company began developing a regulated postal authority at Suvarnabhumi airport last year with a budget of 50 million baht, investing in software and related equipment for security systems.

5. King Power Wins Suvarnabhumi Duty-Free Contract

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

King Power Duty Free Co has won the bid to operate duty-free shops at Suvarnabhumi airport for another 10 years, Airports of Thailand Plc (AoT) said. AoT executive vice-president Wichai Bunyu said of all three contenders, King Power received the top score of 90 in terms of financial returns. "The promised return is higher than what we've received and exceeds our expectations," he said. The first runner-up, a group led by Bangkok Airways, got 80 points, he said, adding AoT would submit the bidding result to its board on June 19 for approval.