

## Thai News Update: 3 October 2019

### **1. Fitch upbeat on nation's short-term prospects**

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

Despite uncertainty from a potential global economic slowdown and US-China trade tensions, Fitch Ratings has a positive outlook on Thailand's credit rating and economy in the near future and could possibly upgrade the country's ratings in the next few years if positive economic fundamentals are maintained. Thailand has a BBB+ sovereign rating from Fitch and could see an upgrade in the next 12-24 months if it continues with its economic framework and enjoys political stability. Among emerging markets, Thailand and Vietnam alone have a positive outlook from Fitch.

### **2. Thai hotelier Centara, Japan's Taisei, Kanden to build \$300 mln hotel**

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

Thailand's Centara Hotels & Resorts and Japanese firms Taisei Corporation and Kanden Realty & Development signed a 9 billion baht (\$293.64 million) agreement to build a luxury hotel in Osaka, Centara's chief executive said on 2 October. The 34-story Centara Grand Hotel Osaka, slated to open by 2023, will be the company's first hotel in Japan and is part of the its strategy of doubling the number of proprieties under management by 2022, Thirayuth Chirathivat said in a statement. The deal is the latest in Thai hospitality firms investing in hotels abroad. In September, Singha Estate Pcl opened a \$300 million 11,000 square meter resort and entertainment venue in the Maldives. Last year, Minor International Pcl completed a 2.3 billion euro acquisition of Madrid-listed NH Hotel Group SA.

### **3. Nam dok mai mango finally finds its way to US shelves**

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

Dr Suvit Maesincee, Minister of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (NIMT), said this week that Thailand had finally been able to export the gold-hued Nam Dok Mai mango

to the US after 12 years of trying. Ripened mangoes had long faced export problems due to the different import regulations imposed by various countries to prevent disease and keep out insects. Since 2007, the US Agriculture Ministry has only allowed in mangoes that passed the gamma radiation test. Several start-ups working in collaboration with 7 universities in Thailand's north, including Recute, a recycled garbage system company, NU Bio Bag, a bio-plastic bag maker, and TRIBES, distributor of tea and coffee products from hilltribe minorities in Chiang Rai, Suvit added.

#### **4. Cabinet approves Amlo's funds scrutiny draft regulation**

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

The cabinet has approved a draft regulation which would allow financial institutions to scrutinise their customers' sources of money, in a move to combat money-laundering and terrorist financing. Deputy government spokeswoman Rachada Dhnadirek said the cabinet on 1 October approved the draft regulation proposed by the Anti-Money Laundering Office (Amlo), which is intended to bring its performance at par with international standards. The regulation would require financial institutions and business operators as listed under Section 16 of the Anti-Money Laundering Act to thoroughly assess their customers' activities in order to reduce the risk of money laundering and/or terrorist financing.

#### **5. Saksayam eyes hybrid e-car, tax cuts**

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

Transport Minister Saksayam Chidchob has floated the idea of reducing taxes and registration fees for environmentally-friendly vehicles, to combat the ultra-fine PM2.5 smog blanketing the city. Long-term measures to curb haze also include raising taxes and fees on vehicles which fail exhaust emissions tests. Among the eco-friendly vehicles subject to the proposed lower tax rate are electric and hybrid cars. For short-term measures to combat smog, the ministry is working with the Pollution Control Department (PCD) to tighten emission tests on public buses and lorries in Bangkok and 15 surrounding provinces at locations where PM2.5 air pollution exceeds the safe level.

## **6. KBank sets B50bn digital loan target**

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

Kasikornbank (KBank) aims to expand digital loans aggressively by 50 billion baht next year, mainly focusing on online merchants amid the high growth potential of the country's e-commerce business. The number of online merchants has continued to increase, supported by positive growth of the country's e-commerce business and e-market platforms. KBank has a client base of online merchants of around 1.2 million, representing the industry's largest share of this customer segment, said co-president Patchara Samalapa. A large customer base of online merchants will ensure the bank's digital loan expansion via the mobile banking app, K-Plus. A partnership strategy under collaborations with several international marketplace platforms will also support the bank's digital lending.

## **7. Central Group readies IPO for retail division**

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

Central Retail Corporation Plc, the retail arm of Central Group, the country's biggest mall operator, is offering a combined 2.23 billion shares, 1.62 billion of which will be new ordinary shares, as part of an initial public offering (IPO). According to the company's filings submitted to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on 1 October, 1.62 billion IPO shares will be offered by Central Retail Corporation to the public, cornerstone investors, company executives and management and/or the company's employees, as well as to related persons and via share swaps with Robinson Plc, another SET-listed retail unit of Central Group.

## **8. ADB and DHD sign \$37m loan agreement for Southeast Asia's floating PV solar project**

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

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Da Nhim – Ham Thuan – Da Mi Hydro Power Joint Stock Company (DHD) on October 2 signed a US\$37 million loan agreement to finance the installation of a 47.5MWp floating photovoltaic (PV) solar power facility. The system, situated on the man-made reservoir of DHD's existing 175MW Da Mi hydropower plant, is the first large-scale installation of floating solar PV panels in Viet Nam and in Southeast Asia. DHD, a subsidiary of the Vietnam Electricity Power Generation Corp 1, currently owns and operates four hydropower

plants with total generation capacity of 642.5MW, about 17 per cent of Viet Nam's total generation capacity.