

Thai News Update: 9 December 2019

1. Thailand tipped to become Chinese cruise hotspot

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

The world's biggest cruise-ports operator is looking to expand in Southeast Asia, a budding hotspot for Chinese voyagers that could eventually rival the Caribbean and Mediterranean. Global Ports Holding Plc wants to acquire docks in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam to add more destinations for cruises based out of Singapore, currently the company's sole Asian port and the continent's second-biggest embarkation point, Chief Executive Officer Emre Sayin said in an interview. Demand for cruising, once confined largely to retirees, is outpacing the rest of the leisure sector as keener prices and a wider range of stopoffs and activities broaden its appeal. A growing middle class has led the number of Chinese tourists taking to the seas to triple in four years, putting the country on course to overtake the US as the world's biggest cruise market by 2030.

2. Thai ambassador spots 'huge' trade potential with Jordan

Source: MENAFN ([Link](#))

Thailand is Jordan's largest trading partner among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations countries, and potential remains 'huge' for further growth, according to Thai Ambassador to Jordan Pornpong Kanittanon. Bilateral trade exchange, which is in favour of Thailand, stands at about JD130 million, the ambassador said in a recent interview with The Jordan Times on the occasion of Thailand's national day, which the embassy marked on Thursday, noting that increasing the volume of trade exchange requires more promotion and business to business networking. 'There is large room for boosting trade exchange,' he said. The ambassador, who noted that Thailand is a large importer of potash, phosphate and fertilisers as it has a 'large and growing agricultural sector', indicated that increased efforts are required by Jordan to promote further cooperation in this field and explore the Thai market.

3. TAT keen to entice high-income Lao tourists

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

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) will continue to push health and wellness tourism and shopping to draw high-income tourists from Laos. The agency identified politicians, government officers and a new generation of businessmen as the drivers of Thai tourism from Laos, one of the top potential short-haul markets. Napasorn Kakai, director of the TAT's Ho Chi Minh City office, which is responsible for Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, said the population of Laos is 6.8 million, of which about 100,000 are tourists with high income. Tourists in this group spend a high of 40,000-50,000 baht per trip per person for a stay of four days, three nights, she said. They often come for shopping and beauty services. A normal tourist spends an average of 30,000 baht per trip with the same length of stay.

4. Tesco may sell Thailand, Malaysia businesses

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

Britain's biggest supermarket chain Tesco said on 8 December it had started a review of its businesses in Thailand and Malaysia, including looking at a possible sale. It said in a statement that "following inbound interest, it has commenced a review of the strategic options for its businesses in Thailand and Malaysia, including an evaluation of a possible sale of these businesses." "The evaluation of strategic options is at an early stage, no decisions concerning the future of Tesco Thailand or Malaysia have been taken, and there can be no assurance that any transaction will be concluded. A further announcement will be made if and when appropriate," it said. The deal could value the operations at as much as \$9 billion (273 billion baht), Dow Jones reported earlier, citing people familiar with the plan. Tesco spokesman Simon Rew declined to comment on the valuation.

5. FTI, BoT support SMEs' overseas ambitions

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

The Federation of Thai Industries (FTI) and the Bank of Thailand have agreed to launch new measures for Thai small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to encourage them to expand overseas. The two parties will select 50 competitive companies from five industrial sectors: auto parts, rubber, food and processed food, home appliances and electronics, and furniture. The firms have to be capable of developing a foothold in other countries. Kriangkrai Tiannukul, vice-

chairman of the FTI, said the measure is a pilot project to support Thai SMEs in overseas investment aspects such as finance, marketing and regulation.

6. India's exit from trade deal negotiations moves closer to reality

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

The withdrawal of India from the negotiations for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership free trade deal (RCEP), which has involved the participation of 16 countries, including Japan, China, South Korea and members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), is seemingly coming closer to reality. Japan intends to continue efforts to persuade India to remain in the initial 16-country framework for the agreement of the regional trade talks. However, as there is still strong opposition to the RCEP within India, it remains to be seen whether the negotiations will go smoothly