

Thai News Update: 9 October 2018

1. Sugar Body Rails Against Subsidies

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

Thai sugar millers are teaming up with the Global Sugar Alliance for Sugar Trade Reform and Liberalization (GSA) to file complaints with the World Trade Organization (WTO) to seek the abolition of India's cane farmer subsidy. India's measures have brought global sugar prices to a 10-year low as by allotting US\$760 million (25.1 billion baht) to increase sugar cane prices for local farmers and subsidise transport costs to ports for 5 million tonnes of sugar exports from India. Thai sugar millers, consisting of the Thai Sugar Producer Association, Thai Sugar and Bio-Energy Producers Association, and Sugar Industry Trade Association are joining hands with GSA, headed by leading sugar producers Brazil, Australia, Guatemala, Colombia, Chile, Canada and Thailand to call for the WTO as arbitrator to act on their complaints.

2. Deductions For Political Contributions Approved

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

The Revenue Department is allowing tax deductions for contributions to political parties, with a cap of 10,000 baht for individual taxpayers and 50,000 baht for companies. The tax-collecting agency has amended the Revenue Code to enable income earners who contribute to political parties to claim a tax deduction of up to 10,000 baht, and juristic entities up to 50,000 baht per tax year, said a source at the department who requested anonymity. The amended Revenue Code, which is currently having a public hearing running through Oct 15, is to comply with Section 70 of the 2017 charter, stipulating that those who contribute to political parties can deduct income tax.

3. Tourism Department Mulls Safety Legislation

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

The Tourism Department is considering proposing a new bill for measures involving tourism safety in an attempt to restore tourist confidence. New measures are necessary after a number of tourists died in Thailand in recent months because of a lack of effective precaution measures,

especially regarding marine tourism. Many accidents have happened because of violations of travel warnings, said Anan Wongbenjarat, director-general of the department. Part of the new law will include zoning and controlling business operation hours in some areas, he said, with Phuket the primary target.

4. Commerce Studies Blockchain Benefits

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

The Commerce Ministry has launched a feasibility study to apply public blockchain solutions to copyright management, with plans to expand to agriculture and trade finance to boost the country's competitiveness and credibility, particularly for small business. Pimchanok Vonkorpon, director-general of the Trade Policy and Strategy Office (TPSO) under the Commerce Ministry, said the office has the support of the British Embassy in Bangkok to start two feasibility studies for using blockchain on IP registration and trade finance, which are scheduled to be completed in February next year.

5. Govt Pushed For More Child Subsidy

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

The Government has been urged to provide financial support to every child aged up to six years old in order to invest in human capital, as Thailand is fast becoming an ageing society. The move is also seen as helping narrow income inequality. There has long been a campaign for universal financial assistance for every child but it has not been successful, Somchai Jitsuchon, research director at Thailand Development Research Institute, wrote in an article about the issue. The government has offered two contradictory responses to the proposal. Prime Minister General Prayut Chan-o-cha has argued that the budget burden would be too high to handle should the government extend the coverage for every child.

6. EEC Interest Stirring Up Pattaya Hotels

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

The Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) is helping hotels and tourism in Pattaya and adjacent areas as the industrial zone prompts further development throughout the Eastern Seaboard, featuring

mixed industrial sites and resorts. The EEC spans over 30,000 rai in Rayong, Chon Buri and Chacheongsao provinces. In Chon Buri there are 1,046 accommodation establishments with a total 81,607 rooms. The properties include both registered and unregistered properties. One key infrastructure investment in the area has the Thai government finalising plans for high-speed rail links between U-tapao and Bangkok's two airports, Suvarnabhumi and Don Mueang, which is undoubtedly is a game changer for the Eastern Seaboard area.