

## Daily Thai News Summary: 26 June 2015

### 1. Australia urges more trade liberalization under TAFTA

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

Australia is keen on liberalization of the trade in agricultural products and professional services after the Thailand-Australia Free-Trade Agreement (TAFTA) has been in effect for 10 years, while foreseeing strong trade growth between the two nations.

At an Australia-Thailand Business Forum, Greg Wallis, Australia's senior trade commissioner to Thailand, said bilateral trade was expected to grow by 20 per cent between now and 2020, thanks to closer ties and further trade liberalisation.

Australia has called for Thailand to ease its safeguards for agricultural products, while liberalising service sectors to attract more investment. With regional integration, Thailand will be considered a centre of trading and investment in ASEAN, and the Kingdom should adapt by liberalising its market more fully.

### 2. TAT scrambles for ideas to save high season amid negative factors

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

The Tourism Authority of Thailand will seek additional measures to deal with the double whammy - the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) outbreak and the civil aviation crisis - to save the coming high season.

TAT plans to hold its annual assembly to draw up marketing action plans in Chon Buri's Bang Saen beach resort. A Tourism Ministry source said some new measures should be forthcoming from the meeting and they should be implemented as soon as possible.

*"The government is pushing tourism to drive the economy and the industry should be protected from any bad issues,"* the source said. Besides marketing and business strategies to be laid out for next year, TAT and operators involved in tourism are expected to face the challenges and unexpected developments.

### **3. Red Line rail route attracts developers to Rangsit area**

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

Property developers are expanding their commercial and residential investment by more than Bt50 billion in the Rangsit area, thanks largely to the mass-transit Red Line rail route from Bang Sue to Rangsit, on which construction work has begun - with completion scheduled for 2018.

A survey by The Nation found that Central Group plans to open a shopping complex worth Bt13.7 billion on a 616-rai (98 hectares) plot in the area, which was previously occupied by the Thai Melon Polyester manufacturing plant.

Siam Future Development, owner and operator of the Mega Bangna shopping complex, also plans to develop a Bt10-billion Mega shopping complex in Rangsit after acquiring a 1,000-rai plot in the area.

### **4. Thai SMEs to be encouraged to trade on eBay**

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

eBay announced a greater focus on Thailand, with the aim of cashing in on the country's high potential for e-commerce growth.

Ekachai Rukachantarakul, eBay's head of Southeast Asia cross-border trade, said Thailand was a significant market for the company, which has been officially present here since 2009. Ten Thai businesses have sale value more than US\$1 million (Bt33 million) per year through selling products on eBay's platform.

He said eBay was a platform that enabled Thai businesses of all sizes to serve consumers easily and instantly *"eBay is the global platform for retail exporters. Thai SMEs can use eBay as the springboard to tap the global market instantly,"* Ekachai said.

He said the company would focus on encouraging Thai businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to conduct e-commerce on eBay's platform. To get started, sellers should have at least 100 stock-keeping units of their product. Then all they have to do is open an online shop on eBay and list their products.

### **5. 1.2% export growth target maintained**

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

The Commerce Ministry has maintained the export growth target for the entire 2015 at 1.2 per cent, despite the 4.20 per cent decline in the first five months of the year.

*"The target won't be adjusted for now,"* said Somkiat Triratpan, director of the ministry's Trade Policy and Strategy Office. *"It remains to be seen how the situation would be in subsequent months."* Weak global demand was attributed as the most significant factor that pulled down Thailand's exports.

Thailand's exports further slid by 5.01 per cent in May to US\$18.4 billion, compared to the same period last year, according to the Commerce Ministry. The decline continued for five months in a row.

### **6. SME measures prompt praise for govt**

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

The government's measures to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) gain access to finance are working, according to the Association for the Promotion of Thai Small and Medium Entrepreneurs (ATSME).

The measures include increasing the Thai Credit Guarantee Corporation's (TCG) budget by Bt50 billion, the policy loans offered by the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Bank of Thailand and the introduction of nano-finance.

*"Those three measures have strengthened SMEs and increased the channels through which they can gain access to capital. The one that is most effective and was truly needed by SMEs is the policy loans,"* said ATSME president Penthip Pornchaded.

The government said increasing the TCG's budget for loan guarantees was designed to increase the number of SMEs that received guaranteed support. The soft-loan policy with a 4-per-cent interest rate and a budget of Bt15 billion was coined to help small enterprises with limited collateral, while the nano-finance scheme was introduced to help start-ups gain a foothold.

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