

Thai News Update: 14 January 2020

1. Kanchanaburi, Phuket turn to luring Indian subgroups

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

Local operators are pinning their hopes on Indian travellers to offset dependence on the Chinese market. Thailand welcomed 11 million Chinese tourists in 2019, six times more than India's projection of 1.9 million. The gap is narrower than in 2016, which was seven times. Speaking from Delhi while attending SATTE 2020, the biggest travel trade show in India, Suchin Jienjiltert, assistant managing director of River Kwai Village Hotel in Kanchanaburi, said the main focus is Indian student groups, who can take longer trips during school breaks. He anticipates that students will stay at least three nights, while Indians overall stay less than two nights per trip on average. The extended stays could lead to outdoor activities and adventures in nature, which is a strength of Kanchanaburi province.

2. BoI: Chinese in the lead

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

In 2019, Chinese investment applications in Thailand surpassed those made by Japanese companies for the first time, worth almost four times as much at 262 billion baht, says the Board of Investment (BoI). Japanese investment applications tallied 73.1 billion baht, while Hong Kong investors were in third place with a value of 36.3 billion. Duangjai Asawachintachit, the BoI's secretary-general, said Chinese investors applied for the government's investment incentives to avoid the continued US-China trade war. Chinese companies have to seek countries to move their production facilities, with Southeast Asia and Thailand in particular favoured, she said.

3. Tourism operators call for inclusive policies

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

While Thailand is leveraging up community-based tourism (CBT) as a new tool to dissolve the congestion of mass tourism, local operators are urging tourism-related agencies to join hands in creating more inclusive and sustainable policies. Concrete plans are needed and should include all stakeholders in the supply chain, from upstream to downstream, to enhance the capability of

local communities to lure more tourists from the beach to villages, said Don Limnunthaphisit, president of the Phuket Old Town tourism community. Potential communities include Phuket Old Town, Ban Tha Chat Chai, Ban Bang Rong, Ban Kha Naen and the Islamic community at Ban Bo Rae. To achieve that goal, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) should invite inbound agents, aiming for high spenders such as cruise tours, to inspect local activities, increasing the likelihood they will be featured in tourism brochures, which strengthens their marketability, said Mr Don.

4. Investment applications reach B756bn in 2019

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

Investment applications in Thailand reached a total 756 billion baht worth of projects in 2019, down about 16% from the previous year but slightly beating a target, the state investment agency said on 13 January. The agency targeted 750 billion baht in investment pledges last year, down from 902 billion baht recorded in 2018. In 2019, Thai and foreign firms submitted 1,624 projects in Southeast Asia's second-largest economy, the Board of Investment (BOI) said in a statement. Of those, about 445 billion baht of planned projects was for the Eastern Economic Corridor, a centrepiece of the government's policy to spur growth and attract hi-tech industries such as robotics and aviation.

5. Drive for investment amid strengthening baht

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

Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak on January 13 instructed the Board of Investment (BOI) to work with the Finance Ministry on measures aimed at encouraging businesses to accelerate their investments in the next six months, taking advantage of the strong baht. He added that the measures should focus on drawing investors to take advantage of the strong baht in the imports of machinery and capital goods as it will help stem rise of the Thai currency. The two state agencies were told to submit their proposals for consideration by the BOI's board next month.

6. Japanese investors run more than 6,000 businesses in Thailand

Source: Pattaya Mail ([Link](#))

Japanese investors have run more than 6,000 businesses in Thailand and won approval for direct investment projects worth 62 billion baht in the first nine months of last year, Industry Minister

Suriya Jungrunreangkit said. Japanese investors were arriving in Thailand and Japan remained as the biggest investing country, Mr Suriya said. According to him, from January to September last year, permission for foreign direct investment went to Japanese investors' projects with a total estimated investment amount of 62 billion baht. That formed 27% of all foreign investment in the country. The Industry Ministry was developing close ties with the central government of Japan and its local administrative organizations, streamlining regulations and constructing infrastructures, including those in the Eastern Economic Corridor scheme, to attract foreign investment, he said. (TNA)