

## Thai News Update: 30 September 2019

### **1. BoI begins railway perks**

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

The Board of Investment (BoI) is offering investment packages for rail operators to support a new supply chain for train and railway components in the future. The government is expanding railway megaprojects such as mass transit monorail, as well as intercity high-speed and double-track railways. Bongkot Anuroj, the BoI's deputy secretary-general, said Thailand should be the hub of an Asean railway system, connecting with neighbouring countries and improving transport and logistics systems.

### **2. Tourism to surge in Phuket during vegetarian festival**

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

Despite the strong value of the Thai baht, an upcoming vegetarian festival in Phuket is expected to attract a large number of Chinese tourists and bring the resort island province about 2 billion baht in tourism-related revenue, said the Phuket Tourist Association, the province's main association relating to tourism business operators. The vegetarian festival, which will run from 228 September until Oct 7, will draw a large number of Chinese tourists since this period coincides with celebrations of China's national day, said association president Bhumikitti Ruktaengam on 27 September. The province is also expecting to welcome an unusually high number of visitors from neighbouring Singapore and Malaysia during the same period

### **3. Marginal increase in new companies registering in the EEC**

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

The number of new companies registering in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) from January to August this year rose 2.03 per cent year on year to 4,976, according to the director-general of the Department of Business Development, Vuttikrai Leewiraphan. Their total registered capital was Bt17.462 billion, up 38.05 per cent year on year. The top three business

sectors were: real estate companies totalling 829 companies, with total capital of Bt2.364 billion, followed by building construction companies (398) with Bt661 million, and restaurants (183) with Bt438 million. Foreign investment via their joint ventures with Thai partners (foreign shareholding at 49 per cent) in the EEC stood at Bt752.780 billion. Japanese investors pledged Bt375.907 billion, followed by China Bt67.872 billion, Singapore Bt42.358 billion, US Bt27.908 billion and those from the Cayman Islands at Bt23.169 billion.

#### **4. Economic ministers to discuss tourism, exports at Oct 7 meeting**

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

The council of economic ministers will meet on October 7 to discuss the current economic situation and also seek solutions for obstacles facing the tourism industry, Kobsak Pootrakool, deputy secretary-general to the prime minister for political affairs, said. The ministers will also discuss the country's export situation, he added. The Commerce Ministry will present the latest export report to the meeting as well as the measures to boost exports for the rest of this year. He added that the council wants to tackle all problems in the tourism sector, which is entering the high season. The meeting will also focus on gross domestic product this year meeting the target of 3 per cent.

#### **5. Airbus investment in EEC hinges on thorny PPP issue**

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

Airbus' commitment to invest in the Eastern Economic Corridor could materialise next month if a thorny issue were to be resolved, according to a source at the Eastern Economic Corridor Office (EECO). The European aircraft manufacturer and Thai authorities have still not agreed on the framework of investment in a maintenance, repair and overhaul of aircraft (MRO) at U-tapao International Airport in Rayong province, according to the source at the EECO. The Thai side insists that the joint venture between Airbus and Thai Airways be a public-private partnership (PPP) as a public infrastructure project whose assets would be handed over to the government after 50 years of operation.

## **6. Dust pollution surges in greater Bangkok**

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

Fine dust levels breached the safety threshold in greater Bangkok on 30 September morning, with the worst air in the city's Bang Kholaem district. Pralong Damrongthai, director-general of the Pollution Control Department, said the levels of particulate matter of 2.5 microns and less in diameter (PM2.5) were unhealthy in Bangkok's Bang Khen, Bang Kholaem, Bang Khun Thian, Bang Phlad, Bang Rak, Bang Sue, Bangkok Noi, Bung Kum, Chatuchak, Din Daeng, Khlong San, Khlong Toei, Laksi, Pathumwan, Phasi Charoen, Phaya Thai, Samphan Thawong, Sathon, Thon Buri, Wang Thong Lang and Yannawa, districts. Unsafe levels were also detected in Nonthaburi's Bang Kruai and Pak Kret districts, Pathum Thani's Khlong Luang district, Samut Prakan's Muang and Phra Pradaeng districts, Samut Sakhnon's Krathum Baen and Muang districts, and Nakhon Pathom's Muang district.

## **7. Thailand welcomes Chevron's resumption of talks to resolve energy dispute**

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

Energy Minister Sontirat Sontijirawong on 29 September welcomed a decision by US energy company Chevron to continue negotiations rather than seek arbitration to resolve a dispute over who should pay for removing offshore oil and gas platforms. Thailand wants Chevron to pay the full decommissioning costs, estimated by a local newspaper at around \$2.5 billion, for infrastructure at the Erawan gas field, which it is due to hand over to PTT Exploration and Production Plc in April 2022 when its concessions expire. Reuters first reported last week that the US company had "temporarily suspended" a plan to seek arbitration in order to allow more time for talks with the Energy Ministry, but that arbitration was still a possibility "within weeks" if talks do not succeed.