

## Thai News Update: 25 July 2019

### 1. Rice exports down on strong baht

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

Rice exporters on 24 July lowered their target for the year from 9.5 million tonnes to 9 million, after a sharp fall in first-half shipments due to the strong baht and ample global stockpiles. Thailand's rice exports from January to June this year fell 19.6% compared with the same period last year, the Thai Rice Exporters Association said. "With volumes of shipments constantly declining from January, our best performance would be 9 million tonnes," Charoen Laothamatas, president of the exporters group, told reporters. The new target is about 20% less than the 11.23 million tonnes that Thailand - the world's second-largest rice exporter after India - shipped out in 2018.

### 2. Thailand aims to become regional aviation hub

Source: Vietnam Plus ([Link](#))

The Thai government is striving to make the country a regional aviation hub, and the industry continues to grow by 10 percent a year, said new Transport Minister of Thailand Saksayam Chidchob. Speaking at the Third International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Global Aviation Cooperation Symposium held in Phuket from July 22-24, Saksayam said the government has pledged its full support for the country's 20-year national strategy for the development of the aviation industry. To achieve this goal, Thailand is speeding up developing its aviation infrastructure, and will turn Rayong province's U-Tapao airport into the country's aviation centre in the East, he said.

### 3. Rail unions want 3-airport link panel set up

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

Rail unions have called for a House committee to be formed to study the terms and conditions of the high-speed railway project linking three major airports, a contract awarded to a Charoen

Pokphand Group (CP)-led consortium. The network of unions comprising those attached to the State Railway of Thailand (SRT), the electric trains and rail workers met with Chinnaworn Bunyakiat and submitted a letter calling for the establishment of the standing committee on 24 July. The contract governing construction of the high-speed railway line linking Don Mueang, Suvarnabhumi and U-tapao airports in Samut Prakan, Bangkok and Rayong respectively, requires close scrutiny for the sake of the public interest, the unions said.

#### **4. Meeting held to draw EEC investment from Hong Kong**

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

Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak held a meeting on 24 July with a private business mission from Hong Kong, led by chairman of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council Peter Lam, on the prospects of investment in the Eastern Economic Corridor. Somkid revealed after the discussions that Lam had led the leading businessmen to Thailand as they were interested in exploring investment opportunities in the country, especially the innovation and digital zones of the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC). The first meeting between Thailand and Hong Kong on their cooperation in the 'Thailand Cyberport' project will be held in October in Hong Kong.

#### **5. Kasikornbank splashes another Bt300m on startups to boost business**

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

Kasikornbank has announced plans to invest Bt300 million in four startup firms by the end of this year, with the aim of improving its financial service to clients. The move is in line with a policy to add value to the business beyond banking. The bank is also cooperating with Big C Supercenter to launch new automatic self-service payment machines at stores in October. Thanapong na Ranong, managing director of Beacon Venture Capital, a subsidiary of Kasikornbank, said the company would by year-end invest in four more startups, both local and overseas, having already backed two startup firms – Jitta and Horganice – in the first half.

#### **6. TAT turns to bloggers to lure young**

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

Some 44 bloggers from 17 countries are vying for a chance to promote Thailand as a preferred destination to millennial tourists worldwide. The bloggers, shortlisted from 1,423 contestants in

86 countries, are aged 18-35 and must create travel stories for 22 villages across Thailand. The campaign, called Thailand Village Academy, is hosted by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), the Cultural Promotion Department, Thai Airways (THAI) and Thai Smile airline. It aims to improve the social and creative economy for local communities. Thapanee Kiatphaibool, executive director for tourism products at TAT, said the campaign allows story curators with social media skills to create inspiring stories during their exploration of one of 22 designated communities. Tassachon Thepgumpanat, an adviser at the Cultural Promotion Department, said the programme will connect the wisdom of each village to the digital world.