

Daily Thai News Updates: 10 March 2017

1. Pay 1% more in VAT, PM asks Thais

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

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha has asked Thais to sacrifice by paying 1% more in value-added tax (VAT) to reap 100 billion baht for the state coffers. The prime minister made the plea Thursday before a gathering of residents who welcomed him at Prachin Ratsadornamrung School in this province east of Bangkok. He pointed to what he insisted is the "need" to raise VAT from 7%, though the finance minister assured locals a VAT rise would not come while this government is in office. Gen Prayut argued the VAT rate has been kept at 7% for many years and only a 1% increase could generate more than 100 billion baht in additional tax revenues.

2. Consumer confidence at 14 month high – survey

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

Consumer confidence rose for a third straight month in February to its highest in 14 months, aided by improved exports, tourism and commodity prices, according to a survey released on Friday. The University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce's index increased to 75.8 points last month, from 74.5 in January. Consumers were still cautious about spending but consumption should recover in the first half of this year, the university said in a statement.

3. Lenovo moves regional hub to Thailand

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

Lenovo Inc, the world's largest computer maker, has embarked on a geographical restructuring effort as it strives to enhance operational efficiency amid a saturated PC market. The Chinese computer giant has promoted Thailand as its operations centre in Indochina, taking over the duties and responsibilities of the Singapore business unit, said Jeerawut Wongpimonporn, country manager of Lenovo Thailand. In October, Lenovo grouped its 10 business units in Asean with those in Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea, defining them a single region called central Asia-Pacific. "The restructure is aimed at increasing our operational and management efficiency in the region," said Mr Jeerawut, who also oversees Indochina business for Lenovo.

4. Government 'developing' taxi app to oust Uber

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

The government is cracking down on private car-hailing services such as Uber and plans to introduce its own taxi app to appease passengers. Transport officials said on Thursday that services using private vehicles to transport passengers, such as Uber or Southeast Asia's GrabCar, are illegal because the vehicles aren't registered for public transport. Authorities have threatened repeatedly to shut down private car ride-sharing services, and recently have cracked down by fining individual drivers. Apps that call licensed taxis such as GrabTaxi, part of the same company operating GrabCar, are legal.

5. Country partners Capella for hotel in Bangkok

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

Bangkok-based international real-estate developer Country Group Development has partnered with Capella Hotel Group to launch the Capella Bangkok hotel, scheduled to open next year. The move is in line with Capella's continued expansion in Asia. Nicholas Clayton, chief executive officer of Capella Hotel Group Asia, said yesterday that Capella Bangkok was one of three distinctive new properties it would launch in Asia within the next 15 months. Capella Shanghai will open late this spring, Capella Ubud in Bali follows in the autumn, and Capella Bangkok will welcome guests in the northern summer of 2018, he said. Capella Hotel Group, headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, offers hospitality-management services globally.