

Daily Thai News Updates: 12 April 2017

1. Clarity sought on EEC administration

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

The cabinet yesterday approved in principle the State Council's draft bill for the Eastern Economic Corridor development project but could not agree on the structure of the EEC's administration, said Kobsak Pootrakool, vice minister for the PM's Office Minister. Ministers want to have a clear plan on how concerned ministries co-ordinate their responsibilities in order make the EEC administrative office lean and effective, said Kobsak. "The EEC administrative office should be lean but at the same time should be able to provide a one-stop service for investors. Therefore, it requires close co-operation with other state agencies," said Kobsak. Kobsak said it may take about a month or two before the State Council could re-send the draft bill to the Cabinet for approval. The Cabinet in November last year approved the first draft of the bill and forwarded it to the State Council. If the Cabinet approves the bill in the next few months, it would then be forward to the National Legislative Assembly (NLA), Kobsak said.

2. Thailand warned of changes in Japan's agricultural policies

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

A senior official in Thailand's embassy in Tokyo has warned the Kingdom to prepare for the impacts of Japan's plan to cut around 400 Thai agricultural products from the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) two years from now. Choltisak Chawpaknum, minister counsellor in the Office of Agricultural Affairs at the Thai Embassy in Tokyo, said the Japanese Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries had decided to bring its agricultural policies more into line with domestic consumption behaviour and institute reforms to improve domestic agricultural productivity. Japan is a big market for Thai agricultural products under the Japan-Thailand Economic Partnership Agreement (JTEPA). "This policy adjustment aims to lessen Japan's reliance on imported foods and to shift its status from an importer of agricultural products to being an exporter," Choltisak said. Japan targets increasing the annual value of its agricultural exports from 450 billion yen (Bt140 billion) now to 1 trillion yen by 2020. It hopes to include Thailand as

a destination for these exports, while ensuring that Japanese agricultural products are recognised for high safety standards.

3. Business buys bright spot in dim computer market

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

Lenovo and HP were essentially tied in shipments at the top of the PC market, with China-based Lenovo having a 19.9 percent share and US-based HP having 19.5 percent. The personal computer market limped along in the first quarter of this year, its footing aided a bit by businesses buying gear, according to a pair of industry trackers. Gartner Inc. estimated that 62.2 million personal computers were shipped worldwide in the first three months of this year, marking the first time in about a decade the quarterly number has dropped below 63 million. International Data Corporation put the figure lower in a Worldwide Quarterly Personal Computing Device Tracker report, saying a total of 60.3 million desktop, notebook and workstation computers were shipped. But, while Gartner said the number was down from the same quarter last year, IDC said it inched up a fraction of a percent by its calculations. What strength there was in the PC market came from businesses purchasing new machines while consumers remained on the sidelines, evidently happy with smartphones, tablets or older computers. The traditional PC market has been going through "a tough phase," with competition from tablets and smartphones as well as machines having life cycles lengthened by users who wait longer to upgrade, according to IDC research manager Jay Chou.

4. Huge potential in southern Thailand-Malaysia cross-border trade

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

The cross-border trade between southern Thailand and Malaysia has the potential to grow about 400,000 20-ft equivalent unit (TEUs) of cargo per annum. Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Othman Aziz said the current trade volume was 120,000 TEUs per year. "Rail operators should take advantage of the double-tracking system in the country, as it is only 20% utilised," he said. He said this at a briefing after launching the 200th intermodal chartered train services by Trili Maju Sdn Bhd. Othman said since the double-tracking system was under-utilised, Keretapi Tanah Melayu Bhd (KTMB) should review its business plans. "This will include exploring potential joint-ventures to maximise usage. KTMB should submit to us its business plans," he added. On

opening the Bukit Kayu Hitam border checkpoint for 24 hours, Othman said the issue was not just about facilitating the movement of cargo.

5. Lotte enters Thailand's duty-free market

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

South Korea's Lotte Duty Free is making a footprint in Thailand with its first duty-free shop, scheduled to open at Show DC mall on Rama IX Road in July. Although it is new to the Thai duty-free market, the Korean player vows to compete with King Power, the country's dominant operator, by using its iconic Korean cosmetics to draw customers. It expects to generate 50 million baht of revenue this year. Sanga Ruangwattanakul, director of Lotte Duty Free Thailand, a Thai subsidiary of Lotte, said the company invested over 8 billion baht to open its duty-free shop covering 10,000 square metres at the Show DC mall. The shop already has Thai products in stock, while imported goods have been ordered. The imported products are expected to be delivered to the shop within two months. The new shop will offer more than 20,000 products from over 100 international brands, mostly from South Korea.