

## Daily Thai News Updates: 13 July 2017

### **1. High speed rail financing takes shape**

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

The government will rely on lending by domestic and overseas financial institutions to fund the first stage of the 179-billion-baht Sino-Thai high-speed rail project linking Bangkok and Nakhon Ratchasima. According to Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak, the borrowing will be based on the principles of low interest rates, decent term loans and cooperation from international financial institutions like the World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)...The issuance of government bonds to finance the projects is one alternative, he said, adding that the Finance Ministry will consider and study all options to determine the best funding solutions.

### **2. Magazines hit hardest in ad spending's downward spiral**

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

Total media advertising spending in Thailand continued to decline in the first half of 2017 due to the still fragile economic recovery, Nielsen Thailand reports. Ad spending fell by 7.08% to 52.8 billion baht in the first half, compared with the same period in 2016. A sluggish economy has forced big advertisers to control risk by closely monitoring their budgets. Magazines and newspapers were most heavily hit. Nielsen Thailand reports ad spending on magazines dropped the most, falling 37.5% to 952 million baht in the six-month period. Newspapers, which fell 20.7% to 3.91 billion baht, followed. Radio spending slid 19.9% to 2.14 billion baht. Falling ad revenue has forced some magazines out of business, or induced them to shift online.

### **3. 24 provinces to be promoted in 2018**

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

Twenty-four second-tier provinces will be highlighted in next year's "Diversity Amazing" tourism campaign. The Tourism and Sports Ministry will continue to promote tourism in these 24 second-tier provinces, said Tourism and Sports Minister Kobkarn Wattanavrangkul. The provinces' distinct cultures and products will be the main theme of the Diversity Amazing campaign, which will drive local communities' incomes by extending tourists' stays. The Tourism Authority of

Thailand (TAT) launched a similar campaign entitled "12 Cities You Don't Want to Miss" in 2015. The programme highlighted Lampang, Phetchabun, Nan, Buri Ram, Loei, Samut Songkhram, Ratchaburi, Trat, Chantaburi, Trang, Chumphon and Nakhon Sri Thammarat. Twelve more provinces were added to the programme last year. Lamphun, Phrae, Phitsanulok, Chaiyaphum, Surin, Suphan Buri, Nakhon Pathom, Sa Kaeo, Rayong, Ranong, Satun and Phattalung were added to the previous programme, which was reintroduced as "12 Cities You Don't Want to Miss Plus". TAT governor Yuthasak Supasorn said the number of visitors to these 12 cities increased by 20% in 2015. The influx increased tourism revenue by 11% from 2014. TAT will soon evaluate the 2016 performance, he added.

#### **4. Patients from five Asian countries now eligible for 90-days stay**

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

The government has extended the stay for patients from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV), as well as those from China, who come to Thailand for medical treatment from 30 to 90 days, in accordance with its ambitious plan to turn the country into a medical hub. The extended stay will also be applicable for up to four companions per patient, officials announced Wednesday at Government House. Deputy Prime Minister Adm Narong Pipatanasai said patients from these countries are the second group to be granted permission to stay in Thailand for 90 days. The government had previously granted the longer visas to people from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The visa extension for patients from CLMV and China took effect immediately. Previously, people from those countries could stay in Thailand for only a month. The government also approves to extend long-stay visas for citizens of 14 countries to 10 years. Eligible foreigners will at first receive a permit to stay in the kingdom for five years, which can later be extended for another five years, he said. According to the deputy premier, the Public Health Ministry and the Tourism and Sports Ministry have been assigned to work together to proceed with the country's 10-year strategic plan to become a medical hub (from 2017-2026), which has been approved by the cabinet. He said the goal is to further improve the standard of medical services and to facilitate travel to Thailand for health care.

## **5. Land seizure ‘may deter progress of Thilawa’**

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

Although foreign investors continue to show interest in Thilawa, Myanmar’s leading special economic zone, land confiscation may deter them from splashing the cash, Thilawa residents warn. Mya Hlaing, leader of the Thilawa Social Development Group (TSDG), a community-based organisation, said yesterday that the government must protect residents’ rights to make the project successful. “Now it has been over one month since the latest aggressive land grab in Thilawa village. “We have sent letters of request to the authorities concerned including the Yangon Region government and the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC). But nobody cares,” he said. “We strongly demand justice to claim for our rights. We call for remedies in all cases of wrongdoing against our communities. “We believe the government has a responsibility to protect us from harms stemming from this project.” Last month, a wall was constructed around the homes of 39 families, cutting them off from surrounding areas and threatening their land rights and livelihoods. More than 100 people from the households are now suffering from the land confiscation, he said.