

Daily Thai News Updates: 16 August 2017

1. BOI sees Thai investments in Asean reaching \$10 billion this year

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

Thais continue to invest “substantially” in other Southeast Asian countries, drawn by their faster economic growth and rising middle classes, a Board of Investment director said on Wednesday. Deputy Secretary General Chokedee Kaewsang made the observation at the Thailand Overseas Investment Forum jointly hosted by the BOI and Thailand Development Research Institute. Thai investment in the region in the past five months totalled US\$5.5 billion (Bt183 billion), he said. It’s expected to reach \$10 billion by year’s end. Chokedee said Thai investment in the region rose to \$14 billion last year, up from just \$1 billion 10 years ago. The BOI is currently encouraging Thais to invest in Vietnam, Indonesia, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and the Philippines.

2. State seeks speedy One Person Company Act passage

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

The Commerce Ministry is accelerating the draft process of the One Person Company Act and expects the proposed law to help promote small businesses and boost the country's economy. Banjongjitt Angsusingh, director-general of the Commerce Ministry's Department of Business Development, said the draft received cabinet approval earlier this year and is now being looked at by the Council of State. "We are revving up the drafting process, aiming to push it through the NLA [National Legislative Assembly] and enact it by the end of this year," Ms Banjongjitt said. She said the One Person Company Act would allow one person to create his/her own business, compared with the existing law that stipulates that at least three people have to register as a juristic person, or a company. The proposed law will allow one person who has a small amount of capital to start a business under a legal framework. That would make it easier for the government to track small businesses and collect annual tax, as well as lend support in the form of soft loans or other financial help to small companies, which are mostly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

3. E-commerce sees gain in popularity

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

E-commerce is one of the top five most popular activities of Thai mobile users, according to a survey by the Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA). Conducted in July with 10,000 respondents, the poll found that e-commerce cracked the top five for the first time, said ETDA chief executive Surangkana Wayuparb. "Changing consumer behaviour and e-commerce ecosystem development in the country including mobile payment platforms are key factors in the shift," she said, adding that e-commerce value this year is forecast to grow by 20%. For years, the five most popular activities on mobile devices were communications, entertainment, gaming, online news and information searches, and e-learning and education. E-commerce replaced e-learning in the latest poll. The e-commerce market in Thailand was valued at 2.2 trillion baht in 2014 and was projected to exceed 2.5 trillion in 2016. The 2016 figure has not been released by the ETDA yet. "About 60% of e-commerce transactions in the country are made on the mobile platform," Mrs Surangkana said.

4. Cabinet OKs rules for exploration and production deals

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

The cabinet on Tuesday gave the nod to four ministerial regulations that will set criteria for production-sharing contracts (PSCs) and service contracts (SCs) as alternatives that would allow society as a whole to benefit from the petroleum business. The move would also pave the way for the government to proceed with opening the 21st round of bidding for oil and gas exploration and production (E&P), a crucial aspect of the national energy plan. According to Kobsak Phutrakul, assistant minister to the Prime Minister's Office, the four ministerial regulations will be submitted later to the Council of State for vetting and are expected to come into force by October. The criteria will be applied to the 21st round of petroleum bidding, he said. According to Mr Kobsak, the ministerial regulations will call for SCs if an oilfield could potentially produce more than 300 million barrels of oil per oilfield or 4 million barrels per oil well.

5. Rail and Post to use IoT, blockchain

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

The State Railway of Thailand (SRT) and Thailand Post will apply the Internet of Things (IoT) and blockchain technology to improve their logistics services. "The SRT will invest 1 billion baht over the next three years to upgrade its information and communications technology," said Sirima Hiruncharoenvate, the SRT's chief information officer...With IoT on trains, railway stations will know the exact time trains are arriving and people in stations can be informed of train delays. "It will also improve the logistics service of goods delivery," Ms Sirima said. In the event of accidents, the IoT device connects with the Railway Signalling system, allowing authorities to stop the train in time. Ms Sirima said the SRT will also implement a new online ticketing system that enables users to purchase train tickets online. "We may use a QR code or e-ticketing system, as seen in air ticketing systems," he said. Thailand Post director Thitipong Nandhabiwat said the company plans to adopt blockchain technology to use for high-value parcels such as luxury items by end of this year or early next year.

6. Pattaya smartens up

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

In the month since the US federal government announced its decision to drop out of the Paris Climate Accord, the rest of the world has stepped up. In India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has vowed to exceed his country's climate goals. China and Japan both committed to continue efforts to combat climate change. Europe is holding fast to the principles of the agreement. Even several US states have announced their own plans to adhere to the Paris agreement. In Southeast Asia, we need to look no further than Thailand's eastern seaboard, where Pattaya is rolling out one of the region's best energy savings programmes via its "smart grid" and "smart meter" projects. The project is being led by the Provincial Electricity Authority (PEA) of Thailand, which has confirmed plans to implement a 20-year smart grid project for 2015 to 2035 in five cities, those cities are Pattaya, Chiang Mai, Phuket, Nakhon Ratchasima and Hat Yai. Total investment in the project is Bt2 billion and the project will start by connecting homes and small businesses in Pattaya. It includes installation of 100,000 meters, which will digitally send meter readings to energy suppliers and provide households and small businesses with data that shows them their consumption and costs in real time. The implementation of the smart grid project is expected to be

complete within the next two years in the five cities. The Pattaya project is scheduled to start within the next few months...Thailand is quickly stepping into the future of energy consumption – and is setting an excellent example for countries in the Asean region who seek to move from passive consumption of fossil fuels to the smart, active consumption of electricity. By this time next year, the people of Pattaya will be able to see their electricity consumption in real time, which will allow them to make decisions about energy use that will promote cost savings, and thereby, energy efficiency.

7. 5G switch, digital literacy key tasks

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

The regulatory challenges of the existing and new broadcasting and telecom regulators range from how to usher Thailand into the wireless broadband 5G era to how to further promote digital literacy, said commissioners of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) yesterday. NBTC vice chairman Settamong Malisuwan said the preparations for the country's transition to the 5G wireless broadband era, from the 4G landscape, were a key challenge. He told a seminar that he expected to see trials of a 5G service this year or the next. The six-year terms of the existing NBTC commissioners will end on October 6...The 5G technology and the uptake of the Internet of Things (IoT) in Thailand would bring tremendous changes to the country, he said in the NBTC seminar that covered the regulator's oversight of the telecommunications industry's development over the past six years. He noted that South Korea had announced the country was ready to launch commercial 5G services next year. IoT refers to everyday physical objects connected to the Internet and which are in turn able to connect with other devices.