

Daily Thai News Updates: 18 September 2017

1. Thailand 4.0 promises huge savings, CO2 reductions, says GE

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

The “Thailand 4.0” initiative could help bring about multibillion-dollar savings and a significant reduction in carbon emissions in the energy sector, energy firm GE said on Monday. The adoption of the latest digital technologies to enhance and optimise Thailand’s energy assets and networks, combined with deployment of the most efficient gas turbines, critical coal technology and the upgrading of existing plants and transmission and distribution networks, are together expected to provide Thailand with substantial savings and enormous reductions in carbon emissions, GE said. They will “go a long way to achieving Thailand’s goals for energy efficiency, reliability and sustainability”, it said.

2. China’s Alipay cooperates with Thai commercial bank

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

China's Alipay and Thailand's Kasikorn Bank said on Saturday that they would enhance their cooperation in promoting QR code payment in Thailand. The Thai Bank has already developed a mobile app which supports QR code payment for the Thai market. Chinese tourists can use Alipay app to scan the QR code generated by the Kasikorn app to complete the buying with Thai sellers. "Chinese accounts for the majority of my customers and we just began to use the Kasikorn app a few days ago and we hope it will make buying more convenient for the Chinese customers," said Piyanas, a woman selling clothes at the Jatujak Market...During a press conference held inside the Jatujak Market, a tourist hotspot in Bangkok, Pipavin Sodprasert, Thailand country manager for Ant Financial, which operates Alipay, told Xinhua that there are some 20,000 Thai businesses using their service and they aim to provide the convenience of QR Code payment, enjoyed by many Chinese now, to Thais, which is consistent with Thai government's target of cashless society.

3. India set to replace China as growth engine in Asia

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

India is poised to emerge as an economic superpower, driven in part by its young population, while China and the Asian Tigers age rapidly, according to Deloitte LLP. The number of people aged 65 and over in Asia will climb from 365 million today to more than half a billion in 2027, accounting for 60% of that age group globally by 2030, Deloitte said in a report Monday. In contrast, India will drive the third great wave of Asia's growth – following Japan and China -- with a potential workforce set to climb from 885 million to 1.08 billion people in the next 20 years and hold above that for half a century. “India will account for more than half of the increase in Asia's workforce in the coming decade, but this isn't just a story of more workers: these new workers will be much better trained and educated than the existing Indian workforce,” said Anis Chakravarty, economist at Deloitte India. While the looming ‘Indian summer’ will last decades, it isn't the only Asian economy set to surge. Indonesia and the Philippines also have relatively young populations, suggesting they'll experience similar growth, says Deloitte. But the rise of India isn't set in stone: if the right frameworks are not in place to sustain and promote growth, the burgeoning population could be faced with unemployment and become ripe for social unrest. Deloitte names the countries that face the biggest challenges from the impact of ageing on growth as China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, Singapore, Thailand and New Zealand.

4. Cigarettes hardest hit by new excise taxes

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

Cigarette prices will face the highest increases under the new excise tax law that took effect on Saturday, with tax rates now at 20% and 40%, followed by imported wine. The tobacco tax in terms of volume has been increased to 1.20 baht per cigarette from 1.10 baht, while an additional levy based on value consists of two rates — 20% of the suggested retail price for cigarettes that were priced below 60 baht per pack and 40% for those priced above 60 baht. Previously, low-priced cigarettes, most of them local brands made by the Thailand Tobacco Monopoly, were subject only to the tax rate based on volume. But two years from now, both types of cigarettes will be subject to the same tax rate of 40%, said Somchai Poonsawat, director-general of the Excise Department.

5. Hopes for better rating in US review

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

The government expects a better rating from the US Trade Representative (USTR) on the latest evaluation of Thailand's crackdown efforts on intellectual property (IP) violations, which may persuade the US to remove it from the Priority Watch List. Being delisted could help Thailand escape being slapped with non-tariff barriers on trade by the US. Thosapone Dansuputra, director-general of the Commerce Ministry's Intellectual Property Department, said it has gone to great lengths to show it is serious about stopping IP infringements and it will present this information to the USTR during its out-of-cycle review in October. He said the department is amending its IP regulations related to the online market and e-commerce to modernise them because violators now distribute IP online instead of making unlawful hard copies. The amendments will include a method for owners of IP, goods or advertisements to force internet service providers (ISPs) to take down all posts that infringe on their rights.

6. Edged out by automation

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

As the era of digital transformation accelerates, digitisation, automation, and tech-literate personnel are becoming more crucial for the economy. The government needs to support new business models and remove outdated rules and regulations that act as barriers to innovation. Research shows that disruptive technologies -- predictive analytics, artificial intelligence, additive printing, the Internet of Things (IoT), nanotechnology, automation and robotics -- are not only becoming better, but are also being integrated into each other. Decreases in costs and increases in their accessibility promise future prosperity and the creation of new jobs. Simultaneously, these technologies challenge existing workplace configurations, forcing dramatic changes at alarming speeds. According to International Labour Organization paper titled "The future of jobs at risk of automation", 56% of all employment in Asean-5 is at high risk of displacement due to technology over the next decade or two. Five Asean countries -- Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam -- are analysed in this study. Combined, these five economies account for approximately 80% of the entire ASEAN workforce. In Thailand, the automation risks are notably acute for almost 1 million shop sales assistants, 624,000 food service counter attendants, 606,000 cooks and more than 800,000 combined office clerks and accounting

associate professionals. Thailand Development Research Institute director Somkiat Tangkitvanich says education and government are the two most important issues for digital transformation and they are likely to be the country's bottleneck in digital transformation. Poor quality of education in the country makes human development difficult, impeding the progress of the digital transformation.

7. New focus on Thon Buri

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

The western part of Bangkok, which most people refer to as the Thon Buri side of the Chao Phraya River, has seen only a few large-scale infrastructure development projects and limited major investment by the private sector compared with the eastern or Phra Nakhon side of Bangkok. This is no surprise given the way the capital has evolved over the years. Thon Buri is far from the central business district (CBD) and so mass transit that has developed over the past two decades has focused mainly on the east side of the river. So far, only one BTS line (with six stations excluding the Purple Line) operates west of the river, making the area less appealing to prospective residential or prospective residential property buyers and developers...But after the BTS skytrain crossed the river and the first two stations opened at Krung Thon Buri and Wong Wian Yai in 2009, the area around these two stations became a hot location. The condominium market on the Thon Buri side gained further momentum in 2013 with the opening of the Talat Phlu, Pho Nimit and Wutthakat stations as the BTS pushed farther west...However, the Thon Buri side is becoming more interesting for developers as construction begins on the Blue Line routes along Charan Sanitwong and Phetkasem roads, with completion expected in 2019 to 2020. The area along Charan Sanitwong Road close to the Pin Klao intersection is attracting the most activity as many condominiums have already been launched and some developers have already acquired land plots and are waiting to launch new projects in the future.