

## Daily Thai News Summary: 18 February 2016

### 1. EXIM Bank loan offer to help boost exports

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

The state-owned Export-Import Bank of Thailand (Exim Bank) is offering 15 billion baht in loan facilities at annual interest of 3.99% to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to help improve their financial liquidity. Of that amount, 10 billion baht will be used to support their exports and 5 billion for export bill negotiation or discounting, chairman Manas Jamveha said. Export bill negotiation with banks arises when shipments are on a letter-of-credit basis, while export bill discounting takes place where no letter of credit is involved. The bank has set the ceiling for credit facilities for each SME operator at 20 million baht. Exim Bank's prime rate is 6.5%, but each of its borrowers is charged at different rates, depending on their risks -- for instance, SMEs operators with good credit ratings will be charged 1.5% minus the prime rate.

### 2. Japan's Bravis International opts for Thailand as its first ASEAN operation

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

Japan-based Bravis International, a company specialising in packaging design, as well as corporate identity, corporate brand identity and naming, has chosen Bangkok for the opening of its first operation in Asean. The move forms part of the company's vision to become the No-1 player for brand and packaging design in Asia. Fumi Sasada, president and chief executive officer, said yesterday that the Bangkok office would be the third office owned by Bravis outside Japan. After opening its Tokyo headquarters in 1996, Bravis International moved abroad for the first time with the opening of an office in Seoul in 2006, and another in Shanghai three years ago, employing 10 and seven staff, respectively. *"For Thailand, we will officially open Bravis International (Thailand), located on the 30th floor of Bhiraj Tower at Emquartier, on March 17, starting with six people, of whom three are designers and the rest are marketing officers. The opening of the Bangkok office will be in line with the company's vision to become the number-one player in brand and packaging design in the Asia region,"* he said.

### **3. Year's first rice auction attracts 31 bidders**

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

The government's first rice auction this year drew active interest from potential buyers, with 31 qualified bidders proposing to buy a combined 397,639 tonnes for 3.31 billion baht. The proposed purchases account for 70% of the total 570,000 tonnes of rice put up for the latest auction called early this month by the Commerce Ministry, a mix of grains for human consumption and industrial use. Foreign Trade Department director-general Duangporn Rodphaya said 16 qualified bidders proposed buying 245,262 tonnes of rice for industrial use from 64 state warehouses, worth 1.53 billion baht.

### **4. Thai Life Assurance Assoc hopes for higher growth this year**

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

The Thai Life Assurance Association (TLAA) hopes that an improving economy will support the growth of the life-insurance industry, but it will closely monitor purchasing power after the prolonged economic slowdown and the high household debt. Last year, total premium income of the life-insurance industry grew by 6.7 per cent, lower than the target of 7 per cent because of lower purchasing power. However, the TLAA hopes that the expected GDP growth of 3.7 per cent this year will help boost premium income by 9 per cent, said association president Sara Lamsam. Based on the growth target of 9 per cent, total life-insurance premiums will reach Bt585.7 billion.

In past years, the industry enjoyed double-digit growth. Sara noted that purchasing power was an indicator of whether the industry would return to that level of growth, and the TLAA would closely monitor household debt and living costs, which can affect purchasing power. This year, premium income from first-year policies is targeted at Bt130 billion, representing growth of 9 per cent year on the year. Income from single-premium policies is targeted at Bt53 billion, representing growth of 3 per cent, and new-business premium income is projected at Bt183 billion, growth of 7 per cent. Renewal premiums are targeted at Bt402 billion, growth of 10 per cent.

## 5. Tax income expected to beat target

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

The Excise Department's tax revenue is likely to reach 500 billion baht, surpassing the 496-billion target for this fiscal year, on the back of the improving economy, its chief says. The forecast has not taken into account additional revenue of about 12 billion baht to be derived from the recent cigarette excise tax rise, director-general Somchai Pulsawas said. The tax increase, aimed at discouraging smoking, became effective last week, almost immediately after being approved by the cabinet. Cigarette brands taxed on value hit a ceiling of 90% of ex-factory prices, while those on volume face a rise to 1.1 baht per gramme from 1 baht.

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