

## Daily Thai News Summary: 19 January 2016

### 1. 12,000 Rai added for SEZ second-phase development

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

More than 12,000 Rai of state owned land in three border provinces will be added to the second phase of special economic zone (SEZ) development. Porametee Vimolsiri, Secretary-General of the National Economic and Social Development Board, said the total land approved this time totaled 12,105 Rai in three provinces: Nakhom Phanom, Chiang Rai and Kanchanaburi. The government will need to invoke Section 44 of the interim charter to revoke the public land use status of 3912 rai in Nakhom Phanom and Chiang Rai while another 8193 rai in Kanchanaburi, owned by the military, could be transferred to the Treasury Department. There are another 2,277 rai of land in Narathiwat that is suitable for industrial development, so the Industrial Estate Authority of Thailand was assigned to purchase the land from owners. The decisions were reached at a meeting of the committee supervising SEZ policy on Monday.

### 2. SEZ criteria, rents agreed

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

The Committee on Special Economic Zones Policy chaired by Prime Minister Payut Chan-o-cha yesterday approved criteria and rental fees for land plots allocated for SEZ development. The annual rental fees for SEZs planned for the first phase, comprising those in Tak, Mukdahan, Trat, Sa Kaew, Songkhla, and Nong Khai provinces, are set from Bt24,000 to Bt40,000 per rai (Bt150,000-Bt250,000 per hectare). The rates are subject to 15-per-cent increases every five years, according to a statement released by the government.

The committee also agreed on the procurements of land for the SEZs slated for the second phase, comprising 1,860 rai (297.6 hectares) in Nakhon Phanom, 2,052 rai in Chiang Rai, and 8,193 rai in Kanchanaburi. The December Thai Industries Sentiment Index for the next three months fell to 102.7 from 104.4 in November, even though the main TISI for December showed an increase for the fourth consecutive month, and monthly automobile sales exceeded 100,000 units for the first time in 24 months, according to the Federation of Thai Industries. Industrial confidence rose to 87.5 in December from 85.8 the previous month, a fourth consecutive monthly increase. The increase was due to a tax measure to stimulate consumption during the New Year festival and lower oil prices that helped reduce the cost of manufacturing.

### **3. Proposed telecom law encourages agencies to release spectra**

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

The National Reform Council (NRC) yesterday approved the revised draft of the new National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) law, which aims to encourage state agencies to release spectra for reallocation. The state agencies would be compensated by the NBTC for letting go of spectra, according to the bill. The NRC is expected to submit the new draft to the Cabinet before sending it to the National Legislative Assembly for consideration.

Air Chief Marshal Kanit Suwannate, chairman of mass communication committee of the NRC, expects the new draft to come into effect around the middle of this year. *"The new draft will help the NBTC to have more spectra to hold auctions for reallocation, which will benefit the government, especially the 2.6GHz spectrum which currently belongs to MCOT,"* according to Kanit. The NBTC plans to put the 2.6GHz spectrum up for auction for a 4G service but MCOT has said it will return only part of the spectrum if the NBTC properly compensates it. According to the new draft, the NBTC can reclaim spectra which is part of concession contracts or state ownership for reallocation, and the state agencies will get compensated after releasing them. NBTC recently gained Bt240 billion from the auction of two 1800MHz licences and two 900MHz licences, with the money to be transferred to the state coffers within four years.

### **4. Industrial sentiment up for 4<sup>th</sup> month in a row**

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

Industrial sentiment continued to improve for the fourth consecutive month in December, bolstered by the New Year shopping tax break and falling oil prices. The Thai industries Sentiment Index (TISI) rose to 87.5, the highest in eight months, up from 85.8 in November and 84.7 in October, said Suspan Mongkulsuthee, Chairman of the Federal of Thai Industries. The improvement was the result of positive factors such as the government's personal income tax breaks, especially under the New Year "Shopping for the Nation" campaign, the Motor Expo 2015 and the declining oil prices.

## 5. B58 Bn for investment in fiscal year's H2

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

A total of 58 billion baht for investment in infrastructure megaprojects is expected to be drawn down in the second half of fiscal 2016, says the Public Debt Management Office (PDMO). Borrowing, the government's expenditure budget and state enterprises' contribution are the funding sources for the expected investment budget, deputy director-general Theeraj Athanavanich said.

He said several projects' contracts will be signed in the first half of fiscal 2016, with money gradually taken out in the latter half. According to the government's infrastructure investment plan to beef up the country's competitiveness, 20 projects worth a combined 1.79 trillion baht will be launched from 2015-19. Public investment is the main engine for helping the country to fend off potentially dismal exports and the uneven global economic recovery led by China.

## 6. TCEB looks to ASEAN for MICE growth

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

The Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) expects to drive growth in the meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (Mice) sector by persuading Asean members to hold events here. *“The ASEAN Economic Community is creating a lot of opportunities for the Thai MICE business and we should attract listed companies in the region to hold some events here”*, Chairman Weerasak Kowsurat said. He said Thailand had potential as a business hub in the region thanks to its strategic location, good facilities for MICE and international hospitality standards. The TCEB will work closely with the Tourism Authority of Thailand to promote the MICE sector in ASEAN.

## 7. Soft loans for power-saving machinery find many takers

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

Despite electricity bills declining in the line with the global oil prices, businesses are welcoming the soft loans provided by the Alternative Energy Development and Efficiency Department to encourage energy consumers to switch their ageing machinery to power saving gear. Oil prices hit their lowest level in 12 years last week, nearing US\$ 25 a barrel.

The department made an official launch of the soft loans in Bangkok yesterday, providing cash from the Energy Conservation Fund to be disbursed to businesses via eight commercial

banks to the tune of 10 billion baht. The funds will be provided in terms of soft loans worth 4.5 billion baht, while the remaining 5.5 billion will consist of loans from each bank. More than 100 firms have joined the programme to receive the loans, the department said. Director-general Thammayot Srichuai said with so many new machinery models and electric appliances available on the market each year, the need for businesses to change their machinery to energy-saving ones remains high.

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