

Daily Thai News Updates: 22 September 2016

1. TOT signs six-month deal for AWN trial roaming on 2.1GHz

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

TOT and Advanced Wireless Network, a subsidiary of Advanced Info Service (AIS), signed a six-month contract on Tuesday that will see AWN trial-roaming on the state agency's 2.1-gigahertz spectrum, said a TOT source. During the trial period, AWN will provide wireless broadband service to its mobile-phone subscribers on the spectrum. The company will pay a monthly roaming fee of Bt325 million to TOT. This contract is part of a planned strategic partnership between TOT and AWN, which hope to sign an official contract after the six-month trial period. If the permanent deal is struck, AWN will pay Bt3.9 billion a year to TOT for the roaming fee. As part of the partnership agreement, AWN will create a new 2.1GHz network for TOT and will roam its subscribers on the network on a wholesale/resale basis. AWN will use 80 per cent of the total capacity under the partnership deal, while TOT will allocate the remaining 20 per cent for other interested companies.

2. Financing secured for Chao Phraya Estate

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

Bangkok-based international real-estate developer Country Group Development says it has secured project financing through China's Ping An Bank and will continue on schedule with the development of the luxury mixed-use Chao Phraya Estate. "Country Group Development is pleased to announce this financing agreement with such a well-respected financial institution," said the chief executive officer and director of Country Group Development, Ben Taechaubol. "The structure aligns perfectly with our business targets as we move ahead with the construction of all three phases of the Chao Phraya Estate. We are confident that our unique combination of Four Seasons Private Residences, Four Seasons Hotel and Capella Hotel will set a new quality benchmark for mixed-use developments globally." The agreement will in effect raise up to US\$375 million (about Bt13 billion) to ensure the successful completion of the Chao Phraya Estate to the highest specifications, the company says.

3. Bangkok beats London as world's top travel destination

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

Bangkok, projected to welcome 21.47 million international overnight visitors in 2016, is now the world's top-ranked destination city. According to the annual Mastercard Global Destinations Cities Index released today, the Thai capital edges out second-ranked London which should welcome 19.88 million visitors this year. Tourism has been one of the rare bright

spots for Thailand, which has grappled with weak consumer confidence and exports. Bangkok won the "World's Best City Award 2013" organised by Travel and Leisure magazine for the fourth consecutive year.

4. Former WTO head supports Thai policies

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

The government's ongoing efforts to reform the economic and social structure of Thai society are moving in the right direction, says Supachai Panitchpakdi, a former secretary-general of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Unctad). Nonetheless, he remains sceptical of the government's Pracha Rat (People's State) initiative, which brings about a collaborative network of the public and private sectors for the long-term development of the country, as the real benefits of the scheme may fall solely to large-scale companies, he said. Mr Supachai called on the government to ensure that the benefits would be distributed among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), local businesses and civil society.

"The current government's strong commitment on social and economic reforms, which include tackling corruption, more transparency on customs procedures, addressing human trafficking, upgrading aviation standards, revamping education and amending laws and regulations to facilitate trade, investment and the ease of doing business have been lauded in the international forum, and I personally agree and support these efforts," he said yesterday at the launch of Unctad's Trade and Development Report for 2016 in Bangkok. Mr Supachai praised the government's special economic zones (SEZs), and its promotion of 10 targeted industries, saying the policies would help stimulate investment and improve Thai industries.

5. New benchmark price for Chinese tourists

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

Members of the Tourism Council of Thailand (TCT), which includes the Association of Thai Travel Agents (ATTA) and the Thai-Chinese Tourism Alliance Association (TCTA), have agreed that the minimum price per person for Chinese tour packages should be 1,000 baht per day. The Tourism and Sports Ministry will discuss the implementation of this benchmark price in talks with the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) today. "We hope the minimum price will help tour agents thrive and stop depending on attracting Chinese tourists with zero-dollar tour packages," said TCT president Itirit Kinglek. The minimum price is expected to cover tour agents' expenses as well.

**By Nandini
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