

Daily Thai News Updates: 24 November 2016

1. SRT plans high-speed rail talks with Malaysia

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

Thailand is preparing to sit for talks with Malaysia to discuss an ambitious initiative to build a new high-speed train system linking Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur. The planned meeting follows interest expressed earlier by the Malaysian transport minister, which drew an enthusiastic response from Thai transport officials who are thinking about an alternative to planes, appropriate train routes and the number of prospective passengers. The State Railway of Thailand has been instructed to hold initial talks with Malaysian transport officials to pave the way for high-level meetings between ministers of the two countries, Transport Minister Arkhom Termpittayapaisith said yesterday. This is an international route, so authorities need to plan carefully from the beginning and decide whether the countries will jointly study the whole route or look into sections of the rail tracks in each country separately, he said. Thailand is pushing ahead with the 165km Bangkok-Hua Hin high-speed rail route. The route is worth about 94.6 billion baht, so "we have to think about whether we'll add a rail extension [from Hua Hin in the South to Kuala Lumpur] or build a new route from Bangkok", Mr Arkhom said.

2. Economic fortification prioritised

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

The government vows to rev up economic reforms for the year ahead of the general election to focus on strengthening domestic economy. Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha ordered the cabinet at its meeting on Tuesday to expedite domestic economic development, particularly through upgrading communities' competitiveness and raising quality of life in provincial areas. The premier has threatened to reallocate investment budgets under 1 billion from state agencies who fail to sign construction contracts within the first quarter of the fiscal 2017 (ending in this December) to other provincial projects. The Budget Bureau is scheduled to report by the middle of next month investment projects of state enterprises that have not signed contracts on schedule. The cabinet has also authorised the Finance Ministry to look into the possibility of finding find more funding to finance provincial economic development. Provinces are provided annual budgets of 300-400 million baht for development, based on the size of the province. Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak said additional funding will be slated mainly for economic, education, public health and tourism development.

3. Razer plans cutting-edge entertainment

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

Razer Inc, a global gaming hardware and software company, is moving into entertainment-based games development to capitalise on this new form of gaming and expand beyond its video game base. The gaming industry is now scaling new heights with mobile gaming taking a larger share than PC games, said Tan Min-Liang, co-founder and chief executive of Razer Inc. A report by research firm Newzoo said the gaming industry shows signs of accelerated growth, driven by the convergence of games and videos on a global scale. This trend is transforming games into all-round entertainment franchises, opening up new ways of engagement and complementary revenue streams. "We want to amplify our product portfolio from a gaming audio perspective to virtual surround sound gaming-related entertainment," said Mr Tan. "We also aim to become one of the biggest entertainment companies in the world," he added. Razer last month acquired a majority stake in THX, a US audio-visual company founded by Star Wars creator George Lucas. The purchase for an undisclosed sum is expected to increase Razer's presence in movies and music.

4. FTI reports 7-month high in industrial

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

The Thai Industrial Sentiment Index (TISI) improved to the highest level in seven months in October, while industries also foresaw better sentiment for the following three months, with more orders from overseas promoting overall manufacturing growth, the Federation of Thai Industries (FTI) said yesterday. The index increased from 84.8 points in September to 86.5 last month, largely due to higher orders to serve festive-season demand in both the overseas and domestic markets during the year-end period. The future index for the next three months also improved, from 102.4 points in September to 102.9 last month – its highest level in 11 months. FTI chairman Chen Namchaisiri attributed the TISI's rise to higher demand for products for the upcoming festive season, especially from trading partners in China, Japan, Europe and the United States, which he said was driving growth of the manufacturing sector. However, manufacturers were still concerned about the cost of production, price competitiveness, financial liquidity among SMEs, fluctuating exchange rates, and uncertainty over global economic growth. Chen said industrial businesses were quite positive about domestic economic expansion, and saw better prospects for export growth after Thai shipments had returned to positive growth territory for two consecutive months.

5. Thai firm joins Kickstarter to launch kid-protection watch

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

POMO House, a Thai-owned global family technology company, has joined Kickstarter to launch its fourth generation Kid's smartwatch, the POMO Waffle. The new watch for parents to monitor their kids offers more than 15 protection, social, and real-time conversational capabilities tailored to teaching children ages five and up the fundamentals of wearable technology and creative tools. It allows parents to easily monitor and stay connected to their kids, POMO House said in a press statement. Early birds can pre-order the watch at Kickstart for just US\$99. According to the press statement, the POMO Waffle is completely customisable and is available in a variety of colors that can be personalized with additional 'toppings' and over 15 cartoon character designs to suit any personality. Parents or children can draw their own image or select a character from the group, and use their creations as the design of the watch face. Kids can easily send emoticon sticker messaging and perform group chats, play time and step count exercise tracking. Parents will be able to access a suite of safety features like the Smart Locator (instant GPS tracking of a child's location), 'Take Me Home' (offering live navigation home) and an SOS alert from a child in an emergency situation. POMO Waffle is even appealing to teachers, offering an "In-Class Mode" to prevent distracting peers when in use, the statement added.

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