

## Daily Thai News Summary: 26 November 2015

### 1. Cabinet nod for fund to back 10 targeted sectors

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

Cabinet has approved in principle a Finance Ministry proposal to set up a Bt10-billion fund to boost national competitiveness and new investment projects in 10 "future" industries targeted by the government. These sectors were identified by the Industry Ministry and expected to be new engines for national economic growth. The industries consist of five sectors which will be upgraded technologically and five industrial clusters. They cover next-generation cars; smart electronics; affluent, medical, and wellness tourism; agriculture and biotechnology; food; robotics for industry; logistics and aviation; biofuels; and biochemical, digital, and medical sectors.

Finance Minister Apisak Tantivorawong said: *"The fund will be used to support our policy objective beyond what the BoI (Board of Investment) can offer to investors. There will be new legislation to implement measures under this proposed fund. Cabinet approval is expected in the next one to two weeks."* Visut Srisuphan, deputy finance minister, said funding sources include the fiscal budget and off-budget money. Details will be submitted to Cabinet shortly. Earlier, the Finance ministry proposed that surpluses from the health promotion fund and the national sports development fund should be used to finance the national competitiveness fund to upgrade industries lagging behind other nations due to sluggish new investment over the past few years. At present, health promotion and sports development funds get money from a 2 per cent earmarked tax on tobacco and alcoholic beverage sales.

### 2. TAT hopes pacts will boot the numbers of Japanese tourists

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

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) will sign separate memoranda of understanding with the Japan External Trade Organisation, the Japan Association of Travel Agents and Asahi TV during the visit of Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak to the country from November 25 to 28.

TAT governor Yuthasak Supasorn said the MoUs were for a joint cooperation to help Thailand attract 2 million Japanese tourists by 2020 or to account for no less than 10 per cent of all Japanese outbound travellers at that time. The number of Japanese tourists to Thailand peaked at 1.6 million in 2013 but it fell to between 1.2 million and 1.4 million this year because of an economic slowdown in Japan and political unrest in Thailand. Meanwhile, the Commerce

Ministry said it would bring 70 Thai small and medium-sized enterprises on the Japan trip to meet up with Japanese companies interested in importing or exporting goods to or from Thai SMEs. So far, 165 Japanese importers and exporters have confirmed their intention to join the matchmaking event.

### **3. Excise Dept expects more car tax under new structure**

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

The Excise Department expects to collect between Bt5 billion and Bt10 billion more in car taxes after the emission-based tax structure goes into effect next year. The new excise tax is based on carbon-dioxide emissions instead of engine capacity. Somchai Poolsawasdi, director-general of the department, said yesterday that the rise in revenue was expected as some car models could not meet the emission requirements. If emissions are low, the car tax will also be low. For example, a passenger car emitting no more than 150 grams of carbon dioxide per kilometre will be levied the basic rate. If it emits more than that, the rate will rise. If a pickup truck releases no more than 200 grams of carbon dioxide per kilometre, its excise tax rate will stay at 3 per cent. More than that, and the tax rate jumps to 5 per cent.

### **4. Jarken and Singapore's Consulus join forces to form design consultancy**

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

Jarken, a provider of construction, architectural and interior-design services, has linked up with a Singapore-based company, Consulus, to offer business remodeling services, hoping to make Thailand an Asean hub of business design within three years. Siritorn Sitthiwattanawong, managing director of Jarken Group, said that since 2014, the company had been a multi-disciplinary design firm offering graphic design services and consulting services to furniture and fashion companies. "We strongly believe that 'design' and 'business' are interconnected and have the ability to ensure work efficiency. The company is therefore joining hands with Consulus, a Singaporean firm that helps companies, governments and non-profit organizations achieve sustainable growth by redesigning their organizations, business models and experiences," she said.

Consulus is a global innovation and design consultancy with business-management and multi-disciplinary creative capabilities. With more than a decade of experience, the company now serves clients in 18 countries. Jarken and Consulus have decided to merge under the name "Jarken Consulus", with total registered capital of Bt10 million. Consulus of Singapore owns 49-per- cent stake in the new Jarken Consulus company.

## 5. Bt 670 billion transport investments in next 2 years

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

Deputy Finance Minister Wisudhi Srisuphan said yesterday that Bt670 billion of capital for investment in the country's transport projects would begin to pour into the economic system over the next two years. *"The stimulus measures to help low-income earners and small and medium enterprises together worth Bt180 billion, along with the measures to encourage private investment are all progressing alongside each other during the time that we are waiting for the investments in mega-projects. I believe that the government's infrastructure projects are already beginning to affect the economy. The ministry expects Bt670 billion to enter the economic system between 2016 and 2017 out of the long-term Bt1.9-trillion plan," he said at the SET Awards event arranged by the Stock Exchange of Thailand. "This includes investment in roads, electric trains, railways, water and air under the public-private partnership [PPP] investment scheme and the regular budget," he said.*

The government in March approved the Bt1.9-trillion infrastructure development scheme spanning eight years through 2022. It covers mainly the Transport Ministry's investment in transport and logistics systems. The State Enterprise Policy Office estimated in April that private investment would make up Bt380 billion or 20 per cent of the Bt1.9-trillion infrastructure projects. The fiscal 2016 budget is Bt2.72 trillion with a deficit of Bt390 billion.

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