

## Daily Thai News Updates: 29 August 2016

### 1. Plenty of room for growth in China-Asean ties, seminar hears

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

Chinese investment inflows to Southeast Asia may increase fivefold over the next five years if both sides can peacefully tackle territorial disputes and trust issues, a prominent Thai executive said. At a Bangkok Bank-hosted seminar "Partners in Growth" on Friday to mark 25 years of China-Asean relations, Sarasin Viraphol, executive vice president of Charoen Pokphand Group said manufacturing cost was the most talked-about issue in China, not international relations. As the Chinese economy slows to a "new normal" condition, promoting overseas investment and buoying domestic consumption carry more weight than export growth, he said. Last year, foreign direct investment into China was US\$120 billion (Bt4.2 trillion), lower than the \$130-billion outward investment. Of the total outward FDI, Asean attracted only \$7.8 billion or about 6 per cent. "Given that tiny amount, the opportunities are huge. In the next five years, the investment could comfortably grow fivefold," he said.

### 2. State firms plan investment spree to boost the economy

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

In the second half of this year, 55 state-owned enterprises will invest at least Bt100 billion, to add to the Bt130 billion in the first half, in order to boost economic growth by 0.3-0.4 of a percentage point. "Investment by the government and state enterprises is necessary to boost the economy while exports are down and the private sector has delayed decision-making on investment," Ekniti Nitithanprapas, director-general of the State Enterprise Policy Office (SEPO), told a seminar over the weekend.

SEPO will revise the three- and five-year investment plans of 55 state enterprises this week to consider which project can be speeded up next year. "This year, the state enterprises' investment plans total Bt300 billion, but they might actually invest about Bt230 billion. "However, I hope next year's plan will increase investment by state enterprises to Bt400 billion," he said.

### 3. Call to make Buri Ram airport international

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

Wandee Tiansawakit, former president of the Professional Tourist Guide Association in Buri Ram province, said tourism operators such as hotels and travel companies wanted the

government to promote Buri Ram Airport as an international airport as well as add a new cargo terminal to the airport in order to attract more domestic and international airlines. She said Buri Ram had for years been a famous sports destination thanks to the Buriram United football team and the team's world-class stadium. She said big matches at the stadium lured the young and families to the province while local organisations had positioned Buri Ram as a meeting and leisure destination thanks to 60 ancient castles there, its unique culture and six inactive volcanoes. "If Buri Ram Airport is promoted as an international airport with a cargo terminal and a customs office, it should attract more domestic and foreign airlines to operate flights there and it will result in the province gaining more tourism business." If the airport were upgraded, other provinces in the lower Northeast region such as Surin, Srisaket, and Ubon Ratchathani were expected to gain more visitors, especially from Southeast Asia.

#### **4. 4G partners to provide 20m users, says TOT**

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

TOT expects its proposed 4G service on the 2.3GHz spectrum to have 20 million subscribers in total within five years, most of which would be provided by prospective wholesale partners for the project, according to the state telecom agency's revised 2.3GHz business plan. Under the plan, TOT aims to wholesale between 70 and 80 per cent of its 60MHz bandwidth in the spectrum to private telecom operators wishing to provide 4G service, said Rungsun Channarukul, senior executive vice president for wireless business. "The total number of subscribers in the first year will be between 5 million and 6 million, rising to 20 million users within five years," he said.

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#### **5. NokScoot boosts fleet with eye on India**

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

NokScoot is set to strengthen its fleet and support its growth plan with the acquisition of seven more wide-body jets. The medium-to-long-haul low-cost carrier (LCC) has solicited interest from 30 parties, including airlines and lessors, to supply seven Boeing 777-200s over the next two years. The Thai-registered joint venture between Thailand's Nok Air and Singapore's Scoot intends to use the additional aircraft to support its expedited plan, mainly geared towards

tapping fast-growing Thailand-China traffic. The expanded fleet will also enable NokScoot to make its foray into India, the other prime target on its radar screen, NokScoot chief executive Piya Yodmani told the Bangkok Post.

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