

Daily Thai News Summary: 8 August 2016

1. Seven cities in South to get economic boost under Ministry plan

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

To stimulate the regional economy, the Commerce Ministry has drawn up a plan focused on seven cities in the South, expecting to help increase the incomes of local people. The seven cities are Hat Yai in Songkhla, Muang Pattani, Muang, Tak Bai, Sungai Kolok in Narathiwat, Yala town and Betong. Commerce Minister Apiradi Tantraporn said that this year the ministry was focusing on developing key economically important cities nationwide, including the seven key hubs in the South. Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha and Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak have announced plans to promote economic growth in the South under the "*Triangle of stability, prosperity, and sustainability*".

The ministry will concentrate on developing the economies of the selected seven cities in the south. They are considered high potential cities for trading, as they are travel centres for Thais and Malaysians. The government will develop those cities to become a centre of trading in the border southern provinces, to be an industrial centre, a production centre for agricultural products in terms of volume and value, a centre for quality food manufacturing, and halal food production. Under the plan to develop the seven cities, the ministry will focus on human resources, support logistics linkage, and promote investment and trading.

2. Mario Maurer invites Filipinos to visit Thailand

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

Actor Mario Maurer is the new tourism ambassador of Thailand and he's inviting his Filipino fans to visit his country. Thai superstar Mario Maurer has extended an invitation to his Filipino fans to visit his home country Thailand as its new tourism ambassador. In a press event on Saturday, the Thai actor made his pitch on why should Filipinos visit Thailand. "*I will do my job to introduce Thailand to my Filipino fans. Thailand is a place where you have many beautiful destinations and a local experience and I will offer Thai hospitality to my Filipino fans,*" Maurer said. The actor, who has endeared himself to Filipino fans by starring in the 2012 film "Suddenly It's Magic," said that Thailand can be the go-to destination of Filipinos all-year round. "*Thailand can be visited all-year round. If it's your first time there, I recommend that you visit the major city such as Bangkok. Because in Bangkok, you have many places to explore—old temples, the food, the people. If you have free time, you can go to Chiang Mai. And of course, they have a lot of elephants there. We have Thai nature which is very beautiful. If you*

want to go the sea and the beaches, we have Pattya," he said. Aside from offering a glimpse of the beautiful destinations that can be seen in his country, Maurer also said that Filipinos will be able to experience the brand of hospitality that made Thailand one of the most-visited countries in Asia.

3. Bid to create 10,000 online community shops

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

THE Information and Communication Technology Ministry intends to create 10,000 community online “shops” nationwide under its digital community-centre project. Their transaction value is expected to reach Bt120 million by the end of this year. The ministry is in the process of upgrading 600 out of the existing 2,280 community ICT centres nationwide to become digital community centres.

ICT Minister Uttama Savana-yana said the digital centres would promote community products like rice, silk, crafts, food, and tourist areas via the online channel. They would also be a venue where community members can come to acquire knowledge. *"We have learnt that more and more people have their own smartphones and are starting to join online e commerce; they need wireless access to search for more information and sell their products online. So we'll provide free Wi-Fi access to each of these digital centres,"* Uttama said. The ministry will provide to the digital centres high-speed free Wi-Fi, a computer set for graphic design, printer, a TV and media box to watch educational channels, as well as meeting desks. Free Wi-Fi would be offered for one year. Initially, the ICT Ministry will send experts to the digital centres to teach the communities how to sell their products online via [Facebook](#) and Instagram, plus how to create packaging, and state regulations on e commerce. Each centre will have one leader to administer and manage the centre so as to become a self-supporting centre in the next year.

4. M Fitness sets Bt 700m for expansion over five years

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

M FITNESS CO LTD, a Thai-owned operator of fitness centres, announced yesterday that it will invest at least Bt700 million to increase the number of gyms from three to 10 in the next five years. Visuth Surachalermkul, managing director of M Fitness, said the estimated investment in each M Fitness branch will be between Bt9 million and Bt25 million. The company's aim is to provide integrated health clubs in response to a boom in the well-being trend and with state-of-the-art facilities as well as design following the standalone concept, it is bound to attract the attention of health lovers. *"We focus on 'tailor-made' strategy, embracing trendy design, space, facilities, exercise class and reasonable prices to ensure the satisfaction of each*

targeted community. Occupying 1,200 square metres, the third and latest branch in Taksin is ready to offer a better health experience. The club targets to expand into 10 branches in five years and acquire 5,000 members," he said.

The company spent over Bt25 million to launch what can be considered a very advanced and integrated health club covering 1,200 square metres in Taksin. The club features a sky running track in order to offer customers an experience that is very different from a simple treadmill. The first M Fitness branch was opened in late 2015 in Mahachai, near Ekachai Hospital, for holistic health lovers, and thanks to the great response, it opened a second branch on Rama II Road early this year.

5. CT Asia aims to double revenue as it sells 500 elderly care robots this year

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

CT ASIA Robotics Co expects to sell at least 500 Dinsow Mini elderly-care robots this year, which will help double the company's income. Pravee Chanatchavarin, assistant chief executive officer, said the company would sell the robots in Thailand and Japan this year, after the first lot of product comes out in November. *"Many private hospitals, a big Thai family with senior people living with them, and Japanese [buyers] have already ordered a total of 500 Dinsow Mini robots from the company. As a result, the company expects its income this year will double from less than Bt20 million last year," she said.*

Next year, CT Asia Robotics expects to sell more than 1,000 Dinsow Minis as Thai society pays more attention to elderly care and this robot is affordable for middle-income families. Dinsow Mini costs Bt85,000. It was developed from the company's Dinsow 3 model, which is larger. Dinsow Mini has various functions that can serve elderly people who are alone at home. It can provide a motion-monitoring notification, make emergency calls, remind users to take their medication, and measure blood pressure. Its database contains a photo gallery, music and brain exercises. Pravee said some private hospitals had ordered Dinsow Mini as an assistant to nurses looking after patients in private rooms. The company has foreseen a bright opportunity for more orders from private hospitals as well as from government hospitals, and middle-income families who have little time and too few people to take care their elderly folk.



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