

Daily Thai News Updates: 12 December 2016

1. Ambitious plans for Phuket

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

Newly Appointed Phuket Governor Chockchai Dejamornthan has mapped out a security, resources and logistics plan for the famous resort-island, aiming to make it a safe destination for international tourists. Chockchai said he planned to kick off at least five major projects on the island: developing a taxi-boat service, tightening up security, sourcing more clean water, producing more energy, and flood-prevention measures. The previous provincial governor had already endorsed a number of action plans to tackle and reduce prolonged problems, including cracking down on illegal business operations at beaches, remanagement of public taxis and transportation, and confronting local mafia gangs. “I was appointed to oversee the province just a month ago, and I have done my homework to see what I can add [to my predecessor’s plans] in order to improve Phuket into an even better destination,” he said. Under Chockchai’s framework, a new taxi-boat service is an urgent requirement to deal with traffic chaos on many of the island’s roads. The project would link the province’s main entry point, Phuket Airport, with major tourist areas such as Patong and Surin beaches, as well with the neighbouring provinces of Krabi and Phang-Nga.

2. Cambodia: Rail link to Thailand on schedule

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

Cambodia and Thailand will be linked by railway by the end of 2016 as planned. Minister of Public Works and Transportation Sun Chanthol said this week that the official railway link will be made by the end of this year. Prime Minister Hun Sen and Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha had agreed to get in a train together to cross the border at the official inauguration ceremony, according to Mr. Chanthol. “We hope that by the end of this year the railway line from the border with Thailand to Sisophon will hopefully be completed. Step-by-step we will restore the remaining rail track from Sisophon to Battambang and from Phnom Penh to Battambang,” he said. The agreement to link railways between the two countries was made by Mr. Hun Sen and Gen Prayut in late 2015 and aims to boost trade and travel. It is hoped it will boost bilateral trade to up to \$15 billion by 2020, according to a report in [Khmer Times](#). Mr Chanthol said that the rail link from the northern part of the country and the already operating

Phnom Penh-Sihanoukville line would improve efficiency of the logistics sector.

3. American Chamber of Commerce Thailand honors 62 companies for their CSR initiatives

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

The American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM) in Thailand honored its members' corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes at a ceremony presided over by US Ambassador Glyn T Davies. The 10th annual AMCHAM CSR Excellence (ACE) Awards recognized 62 companies for their exemplary programmes and for their dedication to investing in their communities. In recognition of the 10th anniversary of the CSR Awards and the 60th anniversary of AMCHAM Thailand, four new awards were introduced this year. The Best in Class awards for both multinational companies and small and medium-sized enterprises were presented to Chevron and Top Scholars respectively. The Sufficiency Economy Philosophy Award, in honor of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, went to Chevron, while Laguna Resorts won the US Ambassador's Award for its "Seedlings Phuket". Davies congratulated the winners and applauded their innovative programmes aimed at bolstering the communities in which they operate. "AMCHAM Thailand members are exceptionally important architects of diplomacy, prosperity, and friendship between Thailand and America," he said. "American businesses contribute to Thailand's development by continuously expanding their investment and operations, increasing their employees' skills, and giving back to the communities where they live and operate."

4. Organic products firm plans rapid expansion

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

Suan Nguen Mee Ma Co, an organic products trading firm, plans to open seven more Organic Stations in Bangkok and other provinces over the next six months in a bid to increase its trading value by 10 times by 2017. "The company [Suan Nguen Mee Ma] has initiated a business models called Community Support Agricultural [CSA] and Participatory Guaranty System [PGS] to help small independent farmers enter the organic market efficiently. We work with farmers by providing them agricultural knowledge, building marketing networks and logistic systems, and help them open organic shops under the brand Organic Station," he said. The company expects to open seven more shops over the next six months in areas such as Thong Lor, Sampeng 2, and Deves. "From rapid expansion, I hope that sales of organic products through the company will

increase from an expected Bt500,000 this year to Bt5 million by next year – an increase by ten times,” he said Over the past three years, the company said it had built networks with 142 farmers in seven provinces – Chantaburi, Samut Sakhon, Samut Songkhram, Sing Buri, Tak, Saraburi, and Nakhon Pathom. Some of them have received CSA and PGS certifications, meaning they can supply organic products to Organic Stations.

5. 400,000 units eyed for elderly

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

The Finance Ministry plans to initially build 400,000 units in senior housing complexes as part of measures to prepare for the rise in the elderly population. More units will be built in the future as the number of elderly increases, said Warotai Kosolpisitkul, deputy director-general of the Fiscal Policy Office. There are more than 10 million Thais aged 60 and older, he said. The Treasury Department plans to use state land in four provinces -- Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Chon Buri and Nakhon Nayok -- to build senior complexes, which are living facilities that include healthcare for the elderly. The department is likely to open bids to develop the first land plots in Chiang Rai and Nakhon Nayok as senior complexes. The department's plan calls for residences in senior complexes to be rented for 30 years with a renewal option of 30 years. Tenants are required to pay a lease, monthly rental fee of one baht per square wah, and a fee of double the rental fee. Mr Warotai said some private hospitals including Bangpakok Hospital have expressed interest in jointly developing senior complexes. Senior complexes are part of a series of measures approved recently by the cabinet to prepare for an aged society.

By Shreya Chopra

