

## Daily Thai News Updates: 20 March 2017

### 1. Prayut touts 'Thailand 4.0' for farmers

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

Thailand 4.0 is a great opportunity for labourers and farmers to develop and improve their career paths to obtain higher incomes and a better quality of life, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha says. The government's concept of Thailand 4.0 illustrates its efforts to explore the usage of science, technology and innovation to boost the country's economy, focusing on industrial and agricultural sectors, medical technology and public health, together with the global trend for a robotics industry, he said. Gen Prayut said 14 million Thais aged over 18 are expected to register as low income earners. Those earn less than 100,000 baht a year and most of them work as farmers and labourers. He said the government needs to design appropriate assistance to help them. "We have been in the middle-income trap for over three decades and it is moving nowhere. It is the right time for all sectors, especially the farming sector, to change and adapt to the world's fast-changing trends. Increasing incomes will reduce the financial gap in society," he said.

### 2. What Thailand can learn from Mexico on energy reform

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

As has been done for almost 80 years, Mexico last Saturday commemorated the so-called "Oil Expropriation Day", a national holiday marking the nationalisation of the Mexican oil industry by the government of President Lazaro Cardenas in 1938. But this year's celebration was particularly at odds with the energy reform that is taking hold in the oil-rich country. Prior to the expropriation, Mexico was the world's second largest producer of oil. Back then the oil industry in Mexico was dominated by foreign oil companies, which were accused of exploiting the country's resources and were an object of widespread resentment. Declaring that all mineral and oil reserves found in Mexico belonged to the government, President Lazaro Cardenas signed a decree that expropriated the facilities and assets of all foreign oil companies and later created Petroleos Mexicanos (PEMEX) as a state-owned firm that was to have monopoly over the country's oil industry. So for decades, March 18 was considered a day of pride by Mexicans who believed that they had become

a master of their own national resources. A monument to commemorate the oil expropriation was even erected in the centre of Mexico City where the historical event has been celebrated annually.

### **3. Roadmap for elderly care**

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

The Finance Ministry is to lay out a roadmap to deal with the advent of an ageing population, also setting up a fund to provide an additional living allowance for poor elderly people. The Fiscal Policy Office (FPO) was delegated by the government to discuss drafting of the roadmap with related ministries, including the Public Health, Social Development and Human Security, Labour, Education and Interior, said FPO director-general Krisada Chinavicharana. Measures to care for the growing number of elderly is among the government's priorities, aimed at allowing them to live comfortably in post-retirement life and alleviating the government's financial burden as the population ages. In 2015, the government successfully pushed for the establishment of the National Savings Fund (NSF), a voluntary retirement safety net for 25 million non-formal workers. The cabinet last year also approved a package allowing companies that hire ageing workers with salary of 15,000 Baht a month or less to be eligible for a double corporate tax deduction an expenses incurred.

### **4. Problem of producing cheap biofuel from cassava solved**

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

The state's research agency and energy policymakers have finally discovered a way to produce biofuel from cassava at a competitive cost, says a senior Energy Ministry official. Previously the use of cassava in ethanol production was not viable despite the abundance of the shrub, because the production costs were far higher than those for fuel derived from molasses, the by-product of refining sugarcane into sugar. After 18 months of research and experiments, the Thailand Institute of Science and Technological Research (TISTR) has found that they can use a species of yeast named *Saccharomyces Cerevisiae* in the cassava fermentation process, resulting in ethanol with a far lower per unit cost.

**5. Tech agency prepares for 10 trends this year**

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

The Electronic Government Agency (EGA) has announced 10 technology trends that will be promoted to support government services this year. It will announce the national data set platforms to support developers for future development in the second half this year. EGA president Sak Segkhoonthod said the agency has announced the technology trends that will support government services and agencies, including citizen eID. Government agencies will be able to provide their services by using eID to support the smart citizen. Another technology trend is use of Big Data analytics on citizens' personal data such as integrated social benefits and providing universal benefits card, epayments for government to support a cashless society via the PromptPay project, Blockchain designed for healthcare data management. The fifth is a data centre to provide cloud facility for government agencies nationwide. 'Work with government partners' "In the initial stage, the EGA will work with government partners and expects that in the second half of this year around 900 national data sets, with a total of around 10,000 within five years," said Sak.

