

## Daily Thai News Updates: 20 September 2017

### **1. Cabinet allots B87bn in rice aid measures**

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

The cabinet on Tuesday approved three loan and subsidy programmes for rice farmers, to help stabilise prices and reduce oversupply of the grain. The three programmes are worth a total of 87 billion baht and include 73 billion baht for loans and subsidies for rice farmers already approved by the rice management committee earlier this month. The 73 billion baht spending programme will cover 3.7 million households and span the seasonal harvest from the start of November this year to the end of February 2018. The remaining money will be used for loans and subsidies for agricultural institutes and business to stockpile rice. The three programmes are designed to stockpile 12.5 million tonnes of rice. The measures were approved during the mobile cabinet meeting in Ayutthaya.

### **2. Chamber predicts B10bn Pattaya investment**

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

Thailand's private companies are set to pour up to 10 billion baht into improving and developing tourism-related businesses in Pattaya to tap benefits from the government's flagship Eastern Economic Corridor, says Thai Chamber of Commerce (TCC). The activity will consist of pure investment in tourism, plus public-private partnerships (PPP) in Pattaya, a city that lies within the EEC zone spanning Chon Buri, Rayong and Chachoengsao provinces, said TCC chairman Kalin Sarasin. "It will help improve the face of Pattaya, which has already become famous, as a new landmark for Thai and foreign tourists with plenty of attractive places," Mr Kalin said. He said the planned projects include shopping centres, water parks, nightlife attractions and a distribution centre for the One Tambon One Product scheme...He said the TCC has also spoken with the Japanese Chamber of Commerce (JCC) about asking the government for more flexibility in allowing Japanese investors to join in PPP investment.

### **3. Bank mull AI interaction with clients within 3 years**

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

In the next stage of artificial intelligence (AI) adoption, banks will use AI to help understand the intentions and emotions of customers and enable better interactions. A recent survey of 600 bankers that we at Accenture undertook revealed that more than three-quarters of bankers believed that AI would enable simpler user interfaces to help banks create a more human-like customer experience. In addition, four out of five bankers believed AI would revolutionise how banks gather information and interact with customers, and three-quarters believed that within three years, banks would deploy AI as their primary method for interacting with customers. The diverse needs and priorities of consumers are forcing financial services firms to redefine how they interact with them to determine the best products and services to meet needs of individual customers. AI-enabled tools can help banks identify consumer preferences and empower their workforces to react with greater insight, which is essential for the development of meaningful consumer relationships. The challenge will be how quickly banks can implement these new technologies, many of which are not compatible with their existing IT infrastructure. One of the main challenges for banking executives is to design technology to help align their products and services with what consumers want in near real-time. In traditional banks, basic transactions continue to migrate from physical to digital channels, leading to major changes as banks redesign their branch networks and enhance their digital footprint.

### **4. Rental waiver proposed to accelerate investment in SEZs**

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

The Treasury Department will propose a waiver of two years' rent for private bidders that win development projects in special economic zones (SEZs) and commence work within one year of signing a contract, in an effort to encourage faster investment in the zones. Amornrat Klamplob, deputy director-general of the department, said on Tuesday that the agency would present a committee for SEZs, chaired by the prime minister, with a proposal to provide additional privileges, including a rental waiver for SEZ developers on state land if they expedite their investment to develop projects in accordance with the stipulated schedule. In regard to the joint request by the Federation of Thai Industries and the Board of Trade of Thailand to set aside a 500-rai (80 hectares) plot in Kanchanaburi province for small and medium-sized enterprises, the

department will charge annually at the lowest rental fee of Bt1,200 per rai and a land-usage fee of Bt400 per rai, over a 30-year rental period, Amornrat added.

## **5. Tourism resilient despite baht**

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

Tourism has not yet been affected by the strong baht, with the number of tourist arrivals in August rising 8.66% year-on-year to 3.13 million. Pongpanu Svetarundra, permanent secretary for the Tourism and Sports Ministry, said visitors in August generated 163 billion baht in revenue, up 11.7% from the same month a year earlier. In August, the number of visitors from East Asia increased 10% from a year earlier to 2.26 million, with nearly 1 million from China, up 10.3%. Numbers from the Middle East rose 19.4% to 103,784 in August, while those from Europe were flat, at 437,739. Mr Pongpanu said Thailand welcomed 23.54 million foreign tourists from January to August, up 5.36% from the same period last year. Revenue from foreign tourists in the first eight months rose 7.47% to 1.19 trillion baht. The government has forecast about 35 million tourist arrivals this year, an increase from 2016's record 32.6 million. Tourism accounts for 12% of Thailand's GDP.

## **6. WHA aims to attract more aerospace**

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

WHA Corporation Plc, Thailand's biggest developer of fully integrated logistics and industrial facilities, wants to draw aerospace investors to the company's estates in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC). Chief executive Jareeporn Jarukornsakul said the government is upgrading the country's industrial sector in the three EEC provinces – Chachoengsao, Chon Buri and Rayong – affording an opportunity for the company to talk with several investors about buying land plots in WHA's industrial estates. She said the aerospace sector in particular is attractive because it is one of the 10 targeted industries classified as next-generation industries.

## **7. Fifty-three Thai designers land DEmark excellence awards**

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

The Office of Innovation and Value Creation, under the International Trade Promotion Department, has held the “DEmark Award 2017” presentation ceremony for the design excellence of 53 Thai products, while celebrating the 10th anniversary of the DEmark scheme...Of the

winning 53 design works, 17 belonged to the lifestyle products category, while the graphic design category scooped 16 awards. The furniture category landed seven awards, while packaging won five, and the industrial products and innovative fashion categories won four each. Somdet Susomboon, deputy director-general of Commerce Ministry's International Trade Promotion Department, said: "With its commitment to promote the design excellence of products and services of Thai designers as part of efforts to lift the economy and people's living conditions following the Thailand 4.0 policy, the Department of International Trade Promotion has been continually supporting and pushing Thai entrepreneurs and designers to increase their competitiveness in the global market."