

## Daily Thai News Updates: 24 March 2017

### 1. Bangladesh seeks to boost relations with Thailand

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

Bangladesh has called for the resumption of Joint Commission (JC) meetings with Thailand to forge cooperation and consult on issues left unresolved years after the previous meeting, as Dhaka expresses interest in closer ties and more action on issues of mutual interest with the Kingdom. The JC, a high level mechanism co-chaired by foreign ministers of the two countries, oversees bilateral relations in various aspects including politics, economics and security. “This joint commission is long overdue. We want a discussion on more political interaction between the two governments,” said Bangladesh’s Ambassador to Thailand Saida Muna Tasneem. The last JC meeting in Bangkok was held in 1998 so Dhaka was looking forward to the visit of Thai Foreign Minister Don Pramuwainai, who had agreed in principle to visit Bangladesh by the second quarter of this year, she said. The meeting will take place by the end of April or early May, she added.

### 2. Finance Ministry plans reforms in five areas

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

The Finance Ministry is going ahead with economic reforms in five areas, while standing ready to invest in infrastructure in the hope of making Thailand a transport hub for the CLMV (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam) sub region. Speaking at an event called “SET in the City 2017” yesterday, Finance Minister Apisak Tantivorawong said the economic reforms would target national infrastructure, the manufacturing sector, taxation, wealth inequality, and fiscal stability. The infrastructure reform is an important issue, particularly regarding transportation, which will be a key driver to enhance Thailand’s competitiveness, he said. At present, the Thai transportation system lags behind other countries’. Apisak said he hoped Thailand would become the transportation centre for CLMV. Apart from a plan to make Thai trains capable of speeds of 100-120km/h to lower transportation costs, he said Thailand would be developed as an aviation hub after being ranked the world’s second to third place in terms of the number of airlines passed.

### **3. Free flow of foreign currencies to be allowed in EEC zone**

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

Speaking at the Thursday's forum "CLMVT" , Kobsak Pootrakool, vice minister for office of the Prime Minister, said the Thai government will not push for baht currency domination in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam but wants to support these neighboring countries to use their own currencies. Currently, Cambodia widely uses dollar because its own currency has not yet been recognized. "We're rather support them to have their own local currencies which widely accepted, and we support a usage of both Thai baht and currencies of neighboring countries for business transactions among people living in border provinces," Kobsak said. He told reporters later that free flow of foreign currencies is expected to be allowed in the Thailand's Eastern Economic Corridor development project. "The government plans to drawn foreign investors to establish regional and international headquarters, treasury center and trading center ,so free flow of foreign currencies is a necessary," Kobsak said.

### **4. Somkid urges unified CLMVT**

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

Deputy PM calls for joint master plan based on 'trust' between 5 Southeast Asian neighbours. Thailand and neighbouring countries should pursue a common regional economic and geopolitical strategy to capitalise on their potential as one of the world's highest-growth regions, according to Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak. He also made a passionate call for "trust" among leaders and citizens of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam and Thailand (CLMVT), whom he asked to come together and develop a joint regional master plan. Somkid's speech at a business forum organised by Nation Television yesterday was the clearest sign yet of how the Thai government wants its neighbours to pursue a joint economic strategy to deal with the "policy disruption" caused by the new US Trump administration and rapid technological change. "The days when we [CLMVT] saw each other as competitors are gone," he said. "The combined 230-million population has the scale with good economic growth potential to become a world attraction. Asean will also benefit from this," Somkid told an audience of 300 at Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre in Bangkok.

**5. Dusit seeks bigger global role**

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

Dusit International, a leading Thai hotel management chain, plans to operate 46 new hotels in 21 countries within three years. Suphajee Suthumpun, chief executive of Dusit International, said the chain will strengthen its footprint overseas to expand its revenue stream and reduce dependency on hotel operations in Thailand. This should help the hotel chain achieve sustainable growth while maintaining Thai authenticity. "We're not going to be a regional brand, but rather tap into the global market as we represent Thai hospitality," she said. Dusit will mainly focus on its hotel management business because developing new hotels on its own is time-consuming and takes a while to grow revenue. Among the 46 new hotels in the pipeline, Dusit expects most of them to be in the Middle East, Europe, Africa and Asia, especially China, Ms Suphajee said. Among the first will be a joint venture in Kyoto, Japan, with Japan-based Colour International. It is expected to start construction soon.

