

Daily Thai News Updates: 28 August 2017

1. Thailand among top 20 nations focusing on cybersecurity

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

As Thailand continues to grow technologically and through more connected devices, this will naturally increase the attack surface and there could be an increase in cybercrime activity, according to a security adviser. However, Thailand was better placed than most to cope with the higher risk, said Leonard Kleinman, chief cyber security adviser of the US security solutions provider RSA. Kleinman pointed to the Cybersecurity Maturity Index, which was recently updated to promote Thailand and many other Asia Pacific countries, including Japan, into the top 20 nations for cybersecurity commitment. “This is encouraging as it says to me that the issue of cybersecurity is on their national agenda and something that nations are looking to address,” he added.

2. Bt30-bn infrastructure plan for South

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

An investment worth more than Bt30 billion from the government and private sector is intended to develop both infrastructure and industry in three southern provinces of Thailand, including Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. The government development strategy is to develop the “Southern Economic Triangle” into stable, prosperous and sustainable provinces by the year 2020, said recently Rear Admiral Somkeart Ponprayoon, deputy secretary of the Southern Border Provinces Administration Centre or SBPAC. The Cabinet in 2016 approved Bt5 billion to develop 63 infrastructure projects in the three provinces from 2017 until 2020. Already, some Bt300 million has been invested in 17 of the 63 projects this year, with the remainder gearing up over the next two years. State agencies are also planning investments...The strategy aims to increase prosperity in the three Southern provinces, making it more politically and economically stable.

3. Southern strategy boosts confidence of the private sector in Pattani

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

Private sector confidence is growing in the South thanks to investments and other initiatives under the government's Southern Economic Triangle strategy. For example, palm oil producer Palm Pattana Southern Border is negotiating with OPG Tech on a joint venture to invest more than Bt10 billion to build a refinery in Pattani province by 2020, the company's general manager Nattasasi Maneechote said. "Although Pattani still has a problem with violence, this is our home," she said. "We are confident that the government's Southern Economic Triangle policy will create stable, prosperous and sustainable provinces. This will improve the quality of life for Pattani's people and will reduce the violence."

4. Policy lagging technology, OECD warns

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

To capitalise on the transition to a digital society, nations in Southeast Asia need to close the gap between advanced technology and lagging policy, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) said last week. Despite regional dynamism, challenges remain to ensure all individuals, businesses and governments have reliable and affordable access to digital networks and services, OECD secretary-general Angel Gurría said...The region has an increasingly diversified economy, an expanding middle class and a young and literate population who are well-positioned to embrace the digital transformation. Digitalisation can spur much-needed innovation and productivity growth across many activities, transform public services and improve citizens' well-being, Mr Gurría said. A digitalisation ecosystem could shift growth from exports to rising productivity, enabling countries to move up the value chain, he added...There is also a digital divide between small and large firms in terms of internet use, as well as between urban and rural areas, reflecting challenges to their governments' policies, he said. The potential benefits of digital transformation go hand-in-hand with challenges to jobs and skills, to privacy and security, and to public institutions, said Mr Gurría.

5. Excise tax rejig looms

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

Ready-to-drink coffee and tea beverages will lose their excise duty-free privilege after the new excise law comes into effect on Sept 16, changing the tax computation base to suggested retail price. But the tax imposed on other non-alcoholic drinks will barely change during the first two

years of the law. After the new law enters into force, ready-to-drink coffees and teas will be levied a 10% tax on their suggested retail price, plus a sugary drink tax rate that depends on the sugar content of the beverage, said an informed source at the Finance Ministry. Bottles and cans of soft drinks with sugar content of 0-6 milligrams will be tax exempt, while 6-8mg will be subject to a 10-satang tax. Those with 8-10mg will be taxed 30 satang, 10-14mg will be taxed 30 satang, 10-14mg will be taxed 50 satang, and more than 14mg will be levied one baht, the source said.

6. Tax breaks offered to encourage investment

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

The government has set a goal of boosting investment in Research and Development (R&D) to 1 per cent of GDP over the next three years. Hirunya Suchinai, secretary-general of the Board of Investment (BOI), said tax incentives would be offered for businesses investing in specific categories to help improve the country's competitiveness in them. These included technology, bio-industries, creative and digital industries, high-value businesses and services and advanced manufacturing. Similar incentives will also be offered in various other sectors, including agriculture, minerals, ceramics and basic metals, light industry, machinery & transport equipment, electronics & electrical appliances, chemicals, plus paper & plastics. The BOI will provide businesses an eight-year income tax exemption in line with its seven-year investment promotion strategy (2015-2021). It will also liaise with various institutions, including The National Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (BIOTEC), Kasetsart University and the National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDS), to promote and develop core technologies.

7. Bright future seen for GMS organic food sector

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

The Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) has ample potential to become a leading supplier of organic food to the world as local processors add more value to products and ship them through regional economic corridors. A report by TechSci Research projects a compound annual growth rate of 16% for the global organic food market between 2015 and 2020. Last year, 2.3 million producers managed 43.7 million hectares of organic cultivation across the globe. North America and Europe dominated the market with a combined revenue share of 80% in 2015. Consumer demand for organic products in the US -- the biggest market in the world -- has grown by double digits nearly

every year and reached US\$43.3 billion in 2015. Euromonitor International values the global market for organic, functional, allergen-free and "better-for-you" foods at copy trillion. "The prospect for the GMS to become a major food supplier, not only in this region but across the world, is extremely bright given the existence of a number of favourable conditions," said Pavit Ramachandran, a senior environmental specialist with the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

8. Alibaba to help Thai site

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

The Commerce Ministry aims to expand its customer base in China by cooperating with e-commerce giant Alibaba to upgrade its "Thaitrade.com" site to make it more favourable to Chinese buyers. The move is part of the plan to promote Thai agriculture products as well as "One Tambon One Product" items among Chinese consumers, said Malee Choklumlerd, director-general of the Commerce Ministry's International Trade Promotion Department. She said the website would be modernised to "Thaitrade Xing Fu", with an Alipay online payment option popular in that country. The upgrade is part of a cooperation set up late last year during the visit of Thai Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak to China, meeting with Alibaba founder Jack Ma. "To penetrate the Chinese market, we need to put all our efforts into this e-commerce project to broaden our reach. That's why we cooperated with Alibaba," said Mrs Malee. The website is an initiative of the Commerce Ministry to promote Thai products and has 136,469 members. Of the total, 19,476 are sellers and exporters, while 116,993 members are buyers across the world.