

## Daily Thai News Updates: 31 January 2017

### 1. FPO raises growth forecast for GDP

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

The Fiscal Policy Office (FPO) has painted a brighter outlook for the economy this year, raising its GDP growth forecast to 3.6% but marginally cutting its estimate for last year to 3.2%. Contributing to this year's better economic growth will be an acceleration in state spending, higher farm income in line with rising commodity prices, improving private consumption, the still-solid tourism sector and an export rebound, said FPO director-general Krisada Chinavicharana. The latest 2017 economic growth forecast has already taken into account the impact of deadly floods in Thailand's South. The Finance Ministry said recently that the economic damage from the southern floods would be minimal. The ministry's think tank earlier predicted GDP growth of 3.4% this year and estimated 3.3% for last year.

### 2. D8ii promotes bold plan for Bangkok

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

D8ii, a British consultancy and tech research company, is gearing up to promote its Bangkok office as a development centre for mobile applications and the digital workforce. Commonly known as D8, the company is in the process of raising new funding in a Series A round worth US\$3 million. D8 expects to receive the proceeds within the next nine months. The cash raise will fund the development centre and future business expansion, said founder and president Jayson Ho. The investors in the Series A round will be led by Kuvera Capital Group, a Bangkok-based investment company Mr. Ho said.

### 3. Fingerprint ID mandatory to register SIMs

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

Mobile virtual network operators (MVNOs) will have to use an online fingerprint ID system for new prepaid and postpaid mobile SIM card registrations by March without exception, says the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC). An MVNO is a company that provides mobile service but does not have its own mobile network. MVNOs have called on

the regulator over the past several months to exempt them from the rule, saying the system will impose additional cost burdens on them and make it difficult for them to compete with major mobile operators. All mobile operators will have to introduce the online fingerprint ID system by March, but mobile users can choose whether or not to put their fingerprints in the system for their own security. "Any violation will face penalties ranging from a fine, to a ban on receiving new mobile numbers from the regulator, to a licence revocation," said NBTC secretary-general Mr Takorn.

#### **4. SCG releases details on diversification plan into small-parcel express delivery**

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

Siam Cement Group yesterday disclosed details on its plan to enter the express-delivery market through a joint venture with Yamato Asia, better known as “Black Cat” in Japan. Nithi Pattarachoke, vice president for the domestic market at SCG Cement-Building Materials, said the joint venture, SCG Express, aimed to open 110 service outlets by the end of the year. The company is introducing its service in Bangkok and vicinity (including Pathum Thani, Nonthaburi and Samut Prakan), with its first service centre already up and running in Bang Sue. The joint venture represents a diversification of SCG, Thailand’s leading industrial conglomerate, into the express-delivery industry.

#### **5. Centara, PayPal team up to streamline bookings**

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

Thai-based Centara Hotels & Resorts is collaborating with PayPal, the global online payment system, to make online hotel bookings easier. The travel industry is changing rapidly as more tourists make reservations online through digital devices such as smartphones and tablets, said Tom Thrussell, Centara's vice-president for branding, marketing and digital. "We want to provide customers the best online booking experience, and the collaboration with PayPal will ensure that we have very secure and suitable payment solutions for them," he said. Thailand is a tourism hotspot for travellers from around the world. The local hotel industry has grown steadily, recording a 13% rise in hotel occupancy and revenue per available room in 2015.