

Daily Thai News Updates: 4 July 2017

1. Big firms shrugs labour law burden

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

While most of the private sector is crying foul over tightening worker regulations, leading Thai companies say they have seen no effects from the new foreign labour law. Charoen Pokphand Foods Plc (CPF) said that its business can manage the new law, with none of its migrant workers leaving the company to return to their home countries. Thai Union Group also does not anticipate any negative affects befalling its operations. Sawang Suksri, CPF's senior vice-president, human resources, in a statement released yesterday that the company is transparent and complies with international standards when hiring foreign workers. He said that all migrant workers are treated the same as Thai employees when it comes to welfares benefits, wages, and pay rise. "The new labour law has not had any impact on the company's business operations. At present, CPF employees 8,800 migrant workers, representing 18% of the company's 50,000 employees. Of the total, 6,300 are Cambodian and the rest are Myanmar. They work in several facilities including animal feed and food processing plants. According to the latest information, no one has returned home [because of the law]", he said.

2. PM calls for upgrade unity

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

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha has called on all parties to work together to achieve the objectives of the 12th national economic and social development plan, which he said will be instrumental in upgrading Thailand to a developed nation. Speaking at the annual meeting of the National Economic and Social Development Board to 2,700 participants, Gen Prayut said the 12th plan (2017-21), which runs in tandem with the 20-year national strategy, a larger framework for the country's development, will offer the first step in transforming Thailand to a better future. The 12th plan has set a target of per capita income of US\$8,200 (286,500 baht), up from \$6,400 now, while the 20-year national strategy aims to raise per capita income to copy 2,600 by 2036. The plan aims to raise Thailand's world competitiveness ranking to 25th, with export growth averaging 4% and tourism revenue of 3 trillion baht a year. Thailand's world competitiveness ranking edged up one spot this year, helped by improvements in the economy and institutional

framework. According to the latest report from the World Competitiveness Center, a research group at IMD business school in Switzerland, Thailand's ranking rose to 27th from 28th in 2016.

3. Consumer prices drop again

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

Consumer prices, which gauge the country's inflation rate, dipped for a second straight month in June, mainly due to lower oil prices and baht gains. The drop led the government to cut its inflation forecast yesterday to 0.7-1.7% this year from a previous projection of 1.5 -2.2%. According to the Commerce Ministry's data, the consumer price index (CPI), based on 422 products and services, fell 0.05% in June from a year earlier, after a 0.04% decline in May. But on the monthly basis, the rate rose 0.02% from May due to hikes in oil and fresh vegetable prices. Core inflation, which excludes fresh food and energy products, edged up 0.45% year-on-year and reflected a 0.08% increase from May. For the first six months of the year, headline inflation rose 0.67% on an annual basis, with core inflation up 0.56% from the same period last year. Pimchanok Vonkorpon, director-general of the Commerce Ministry's Trade Policy and Strategy Office, said the inflation rate was expected to accelerate in the second half of the year, thanks to the government's investment stimuli and higher oil prices.

4. France, Thailand sign MoU on corporate partnership

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

MEDEF International, which represents French private sector organisations at an international level, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Thailand's Joint Standing Committee on Commerce, Industry and Banking (JSCCIB-Thailand) yesterday in Bangkok to promote the partnership of Thailand and French companies in four areas. The four areas of cooperation cover agribusiness, transport infrastructures, renewable energy, and "smart" city. This MoU was signed by Francois Corbin, chairman of the France-Thailand Business Council of MEDEF International, and Predee Daochai, chairman of the JSCCIB-Thailand and chairman of the Thai Banker's Association of Thailand. Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak witnessed the signing ceremony, which was followed by the first meeting of the one-day France-Thailand Business Forum yesterday. Around 90 French and Thai business leaders and representatives of both governments gathered for the forum. This meeting will launch the implementation of regular discussions between MEDEF International and the JSCCIB in order to nurture new partnerships.

“Today, with the Thailand 4.0 strategy, Thailand’s objective is to make its industrial sector more innovative. Our French firms have undeniable know-how and world-leading expertise to bring to the table,” said Corbin. “They are all committed to support Thailand in its disruptive transition that embraces all economic sectors. Past years have demonstrated how efficiently Thai and French companies and talents of the two countries are working and growing together. This MoU will bring us even closer to jointly prepare Thailand for the future,” said Corbin.

5. Court order stalls rice auctions

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

The Commerce Ministry will appeal against an order by the Administrative Court demanding that the ministry suspend auctions for 2.7 million tonnes of inedible rice. The court issued the suspension after a company, TPK Ethanol Co, filed a complaint saying the ministry unfairly banned the company from participating in the auctions in April this year. Foreign Trade department director-general Duangporn Rodphaya said the court order had forced the agency to halt its plan to auction off about 500,000 tonnes of inedible rice for industry use yesterday. She added it could deter the sale of 2.2 million tonnes of rice for the animal feed industry. The rice was already on auction last week and the winners are expected to sign contract with the Commerce Ministry soon.

6. Talent centre to help boost key industry investment

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

Agreement on the establishment of what the state bills the country's first strategic talent centre (STC) was signed by six state authorities yesterday with hopes that it will drive investment in the nation's targeted industries. The six government agencies are the Board of Investment (BOI), the Ministry of Science and Technology, the National Research Council of Thailand, the National Science and Technology and Innovation Policy Office and the Thailand Research Fund. "The STC will serve as a platform for the private sector to collaborate with science and technology specialists in R&D opportunities," said Hiranya Suchinai, secretary-general of the BOI. The STC centre is intended to enhance Thailand's competitiveness and support the development of targeted industries under Thailand 4.0 and the East Economic Corridor (EEC) project. Over 10,000 local and international specialists are forecast to provide their expertise to the science and technology

field in Thailand. Mrs Hiranya said the BOI expects investment applications totalling 600 billion baht in 2017.

7. Electronic distributors picks HSBC as corporate Promptpay service provider

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

HSBC Thailand has been selected as corporate PromptPay service provider for RS Components, the trading brand of Electrocomponents Plc, a global distributor for engineers to facilitate more convenient and cost-saving fund transfers in support of Thailand's national e-payment roadmap. RS Components is a wholly owned subsidiary of UK-based Electrocomponents, a distributor of electronic and engineering tools, components and consumables, offering more than 500,000 products to a million customers globally. HSBC has been the sole banking partner of RS Components in Thailand. Ai Chen Lim, HSBC Thailand's chief of global liquidity and cash management, said registration for business-to-business transactions began in March. "With our service, RS Components will benefit from speedy fund delivery to a single HSBC account, while its counterparties will be able to make payments via any bank with lower transaction fees," he said. "HSBC has made considerable investments in delivering the most secure and beneficial digital transaction services to customers in parallel with professional advisory services by dedicated, industry-leading practitioners. We are currently working to deliver even more services, such as Bill Payment, to our PromptPay customers, which we aim to complete in the fourth quarter this year." Patcharee Mee-in, finance manager at RS Components, said the firm was proud to assist the country in its transition to a digital economy.

8. Marriott to open 17 local hotels in 4 years

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

Marriott International seeks to ride the wave of popularity in the meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (Mice) sector by opening 17 hotels in Thailand over the next four years. Mike Fulkerson, vice-president for brand and marketing in Asia-Pacific at Marriott, said the new hotels would be operated through various (mostly luxury) brands in the company's portfolio. Some projects in the plan have already been unveiled to the public, including the Surawong Road Marriott, the Marriott at Asiatique the Riverfront, and a Marriott in Pattaya. All three developments are owned by beverage tycoon Charoen Sirivadhanabhakdi. The Sirivadhanabhakdi family recently relaunched its flagship hotel: the Bangkok Marriott Marquis

Queen's Park, formerly the Imperial Queen's Park Hotel. Queen's Park is the first Marriott in Asia-Pacific to reach the "Marquis" category, and it focuses on Mice business.

9. B2S opens first in Vietnam store

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

B2S, a leading Thai stationery chain and member of the Central Group, has opened its first outlet in Vietnam, with the launch of its store in Ho Chi Minh City's Thu Duc District. The 900 square metre four-storey centre has a wide range of stationery items used by businesses, schools, offices and other establishments. It has over 6,000 different office supplies, including writing paper, pencils, pens, pins, clips, cellophane, plastic bags, adhesive tape, glue, envelopes, cardboard bags and briefcases to tables, bookshelves, printers, computers, bar code readers, and ink cartridges. It also has home decorations, handmade products, accessories and gifts, fashion handbags, high-grade leather products, computers, electronic accessories and other equipment. Explaining the choice of location, Nguyen Thi Thuc Vy, director of B2S Vietnam, said Thu Duc was home to four large industrial parks and the country's largest "university village" with more than nine universities. By opening its first B2S centre in the district, the company can serve many clients, including office workers and young people, with trendy and fashionable products, she said.