

Daily Thai News Updates: 5 April 2017

1. PM not worried about Trump trade policies

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

Thailand should remain calm about new US trade policies, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha said yesterday, adding that he has assigned relevant ministries to study the issues. He also noted the 180 years of relations between the two countries. Also yesterday, Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak briefed ministers at the weekly Cabinet meeting on key trade issues between Thailand and the United States, a major trading partner, according to a source. Potential issues that the US could raise with Thailand were protection of intellectual-property rights (IPR), alleged manipulation of the baht, and the arms trade, the source quoted Somkid as saying. The government and the private sector are bracing for impacts after US President Donald Trump vowed to punish countries that have trade surpluses or committed trade abuses against the United States.

2. Major airports expects over 5.3 million arrivals for Songkran

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

More than 5 million passengers are expected to arrive at Thailand's six main airports during the Songkran Festival this year. Airports of Thailand (AOT) president Nitina Sirisamatthakarn said the AOT expected more than 5.36 million arrivals during the water splash festival, Thai National News Bureau reported on Tuesday. From April 5-18, the AOT expects 32,357 flights to land at six airports, averaging about 2,312 flights a day, Nitina said. Inbound flights to these six airports increased by 7.22 per cent compared to the same period last year. The AOT has prepared measures to assist passengers by keeping the facilities clean, increasing the number of baggage carriers and providing additional shuttle buses from the airport.

3. Business France Thailand, NIA push IoT innovation

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

The National Innovation Agency is working with Business France Thailand to promote the Internet of Things (IoT). Pun-arj Chairatana, director of the NIA, said the collaboration would enable the creation of IoT and other innovations to support the establishment of smart cities and “innovation districts”. The collaboration will focus on three areas: start-ups, business matching, and technology and innovation. Meanwhile, it will facilitate business matching between French and Thai businesses for technology transfer and joint investment. “We will act as facilitators to help both French and Thai start-ups run their businesses in Thailand so that they will be able to improve their efficiency and productivity,” Pun-arj said. He added that the collaboration would also create business and innovation clusters between French and Thai businesses to support various projects such as start-up districts in Bangkok and upcountry. The NIA plans to develop 13 innovation districts by utilising technology and innovation engagement.

4. Tica ramps up Mice push

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

Thailand Incentive and Convention Association (Tica) says it will make an aggressive push for the country to be a top destination for meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (Mice). President Sumate Sudasna said although Mice sentiment was muted during the mourning period late last year, it has recently been strong. Thailand offers practical Mice infrastructure for event organisers, while the costs of organising big events here are attractive, he said. Moreover, the government, through the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB), offers strong support to the Mice industry. "Fundamentals underlying the Mice business here are strong, so visitors always return in greater numbers," said Mr Sumate. While Bangkok is a primary destination for Mice business, he said Pattaya and Phuket are increasingly popular as seaside venues and are showing very healthy ratings among Mice destinations worldwide.

5. Thailand vulnerable to 'boiling frog' crisis

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

Economic experts have urged the private and industrial sectors to quickly modernise and ease the impact of the Thailand 4.0 economic development model. Apichat Satitniramai, a lecturer at Thammasat University's Faculty of Economics, said 70% of Thai factories lack innovation and are not manufacturing local brands, so are heavily affected during world economic slowdowns. In addition, a decline in foreign investment in Thailand was the result of a lack of competitiveness when vying with other countries in the global market. To address the problem, the government should expedite efforts to boost the country's industrial infrastructure such as skilled labour as well as better technology and innovation which would help persuade foreigners to invest in Thailand. Even though the global economic situation is better, the country's economy is expected to grow by only 3% because of a failure to meet present-day demands, he told a recent seminar on Thailand's economic situation and workforce. "Twenty years ago, we faced the 1997 'tom yum goong' financial crisis due to uncontrollable rapid economic growth. However, from now on, Thailand will encounter the 'tom kob' [boiled frog] crisis, or sluggish economic growth, instead," he said. He compared the economic situation with a frog being boiled alive.