

## Daily Thai News Updates: 9 March 2017

### 1. Prayut vows digital transformation by 2021

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

The government has pledged to complete its digital transformation journey by 2021 as part of the state's efforts to reform Thailand's economy and society into Thailand 4.0. To achieve the goal, the state will begin implementing a digital transformation programme by June, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha said. The programme is aimed at boosting digital literacy and ICT skills among government officials and ensuring state agencies provide more effective services and improve user-friendliness to provide access across different digital platforms. "State officials with digital skills will be the key factor to help the government achieve success in its digital transformation," Gen Prayut said yesterday at a forum entitled "Digital Government: The key success to Thailand 4.0".

### 2. Airport Dept promises nationwide upgrade

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

The Department of Airports (DOA) wants to upgrade its 28 airports and finish construction of a new one in Yala's Betong district at an estimated total cost of 36 billion baht to meet an expected surge in passenger numbers over the next 10 years. The move is in line with a plan to improve the country's aviation industry to make Thailand a key regional aviation hub, recently approved on Monday by the so-called mini-cabinet. The mini-cabinet is the government's strategic national administration committee, chaired by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha. Under the plan, a total of 39 airports nationwide will be developed to handle an expected 277 million passengers annually within the next 10 years.

### **3. Airbus weighs up Thai investments**

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

Airbus Group is considering investing in an aircraft maintenance centre in Thailand in a move seen as a vote of confidence in the country's aviation industry and government plans to boost the industrial technology base. The European plane maker signed a memorandum of understanding to conduct a feasibility study with Thai International Airways on opening a regional hub for aircraft repair, maintenance and overhaul at U-Tapao International Airport in Chon Buri. The deal was inked after Airbus Commercial Aircraft president Fabrice Bregier visited Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha yesterday. Deputy government spokes-man Weerachon Sukhon-thapatipak said Airbus was encouraged by the country's Thailand 4.0 vision for technological development and the application of this policy in the aviation industry. Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak suggested the maintenance centre could serve as a hub within the Asean region. Prayut said the government placed great value on the development of the country's transport infrastructure system and, in particular, the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) project.

### **4. Exim Thailand to open Yangon rep office by April**

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

Export-Import Bank of Thailand (Exim Thailand) is opening a representative office in Yangon by April. This followed the Central Bank of Myanmar's presentation of the license on March 6. Exim Thailand President Pisit Serewiwattana was in Nay Pyi Taw to receive the license from CBM Governor Kyaw Kyaw Maung. Pisit said the next step is to apply for a permit to trade and registration of the representative office from Myanmar's Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development. The office will work in collaboration with Thailand's relevant government agencies as part of the "Thailand Team" in promotion and support of Thai trade and investment in Myanmar by facilitating both start-up and expansion endeavors of Thai entrepreneurs. "Exim Thailand is ready to support Thai entrepreneurs wishing to expand their export markets or relocating their factories to Myanmar with a view to lowering their production and transportation costs and better serving their consumers, both the Myanmarese and foreign investors whose business operations in Myanmar have been on the rise. This is also a move in response to Myanmar's burgeoning urbanisation, infrastructure and manufacturing development, while nurturing social and economic development of Asean as a whole," said Pisit.

**5. Booking.com, Bangkok Airways join hands**

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

Bangkok Airways has announced a partnership with Booking.com to connect travelers with a wide selection of places to stay through the airline's website. The partnership sees Booking.com's full selection of more than 1.1 million global accommodation options made available to online customers of Bangkok Airways. Booking.com promises its users a best-price guarantee, no booking fees, free cancellation for most properties and around-the-clock multilingual customer service. People travelling to Bangkok Airways' range of domestic and international destinations will be able to choose from more than 30 accommodation types, from apartments and homes to hotels, bed-and-breakfasts, villas, hostels and more. 'Experience the world'