

Thai News Update: 12 February 2018

1. New Welfare Benefits Total B12bn in 4 Months

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

Almost 12 billion baht was disbursed during the first four months of the government's welfare and subsidy scheme for the poor, according to the Comptroller-General's Department. Yanee Sangsrichun, the department's deputy director-general, said a total of 11.94 billion baht was spent between October 2017 and last month under the scheme which saw 11.4 million low-income earners sign up. Of the disbursed amount, 11.8 billion baht was paid to Thong Fah Pracha Rat shops, 65.3 million baht in train services, 38.2 million baht for bus services and 14.3 million baht for cooking gas. Under the subsidy scheme worth about 41.9 billion baht a year, the government transfers 200-300 baht each month to welfare smart cards handed out to recipients.

2. Infinix Makes Exponential Growth

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

China-based smartphone maker Infinix Mobility has set an aggressive sales target of 300,000 unit this year, 10 times higher than last year. Infinix has been in the Thai market for only five months, but the company is confident of achieving its target sales this year, helping it secure 1% of the market. Chullada Sapsarasin, head of Infinix Thailand, the marketing arm of Infinix Mobility, said the company will spend 40 million baht on marketing this year, running both offline and online campaigns, including viral marketing and product reviews. The company will launch four other models this year, and also plans to establish an after-sales service centre at Lak Si Plaza department store.

3. Rail Project Pitched at Japan Investors

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

Thailand is seeking to have Japan's Kyushu Railway Co come on board for the proposed Bangkok-Rayong high-speed train service and join the bidding for the key project when it is opened to investors, Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak said. The 300-kilometre route will connect

three key international airports: Don Mueang and Suvarnabhumi in Bangkok, and U-Tapao in Rayong province. This project is one of the major transport infrastructure projects planned for the country's Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC). Somkid said that the bill on the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC), which gained approval from the National Legislative Assembly (NLA) on Feb 8, will improve investors' confidence in the EEC plans. The passage of the legislation will speed up both the drafting of the terms of reference for the big infrastructure projects in the EEC and the opening of the bidding for these projects.

4. The Coming Battle for E-Commerce

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

With the Bank of Thailand issuing regulations to govern financial institutions engaged in the e-marketplace, the domestic e-commerce arena is poised for local firms to battle it out with foreign e-commerce behemoths. Effective from Jan 16, the central bank is requiring financial institutions interested in operating in e-commerce to provide notice of at least 30 days before setting up shop. Five of the institutions in the e-marketplace are banks and the sixth is the nonbanking subsidiary of a bank. Banks do, however, have a natural advantage in the payment systems sector, but even here they face stiff competition from technology giants like Alibaba and Apple.

5. TAT Steps up Outreach with Kyushu Signing

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

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has inked a letter of intent (LOI) with Japan's Kyushu Tourism Promotion Organization hoping the collaboration will boost tourism in Thailand's secondary provinces. The letter said the Kyushu Tourism Promotion Organisation will help promote Thai attractions and tourism events in seven Kyushu cities: Fukuoka, Saga, Nagasaki, Kumamoto, Oita, Miyazaki and Kagoshima. The top destinations for Japanese tourists in Thailand are Bangkok, Chon Buri, Phuket, Chiang Mai and Ayutthaya. The campaign is intended to introduce brand-new products to visitors and reveal new aspects to well-known destinations. The TAT further aims to attract more repeat visitors as well as those coming to Thailand for the first time.