

Thai News Update: 12 January 2018

1. Govt 'Needs Plan' to Cope With Age of Technology

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

Citing the economic integration brought about by the the Regional Comprehensive Economic Cooperation pact, the free-trade agreement of the Asia-Pacific, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank as well as anti-globalisation trends such as Brexit and the "America First" policy among recent changes, Mr Surakiart said Thailand needs to set strategies to adapt to the changes. The government needs to know how to adapt to the age of technology and innovation, former deputy prime minister and foreign minister Surakiart Sathirathai told an international conference on Jan 10. Mr Surakiart, now chairman of the Asian Peace and Reconciliation Council, emphasised participation of all stakeholders in forging a way forward. e suggested short training courses be organised for Thais to match workers with jobs in the workforce that are needed in the modern era. The government could take care of those affected over the long term.

2. IDC Trumpets Key to Hitting B440bn Target

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

Digital transformation and smartphone sales will be key to reaching Thailand's IT spending target of 440 billion baht for 2018, says global IT research firm Internet Data Center (IDC). Spending is projected to rise 2.8% from 2017 and continue growing in the single digits to 471 billion by 2021. "Smartphones will account for 35-40% of total IT spending in Thailand from 2017 to 2021," said Jarit Sidhu, head of operations at IDC Thailand. Cloud 2.0, distributed and specialised cloud computing services, will be another trend to watch in the years to come, he said. By 2021, spending on cloud services and cloud-enabling hardware, software and services will reach 48 billion baht.

3. Thailand Should Take Advantage of the ‘Asian Century’

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

Thailand will benefit from China's long-term economic stability in terms of both trade and investment expansion. China will also open its vast domestic market of 1.3 billion consumers wider, a key asset for Thailand and other trading partners. Besides the multiple infrastructure mega-projects spanning the borders of participating countries, China will shortly organise a Belt and Road exposition at which Thailand and other member-countries are invited to sell their goods and services to Chinese consumers. Regarding the Thai-Chinese high-speed railway, construction of the first section from Bangkok to Nakhon Ratchasima was recently kicked off at a ceremony chaired by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha. This rail transport project will link Thailand with Laos and southern China, where four special economic zones will be set up to connect Thailand's Northeast to the two neighbouring countries. This will also lead to other development projects along the high-speed rail route terminating at Nong Khai, where the system will be connected with another high-speed train system crossing Laos, on which construction is already underway. Later, the southern region and the rest of China will be connected by rail with Laos and Thailand, which is situated at the centre of mainland Southeast Asia.

4. SET Reaches All-Time High of 1,802.80

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

The Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) index closed at an all-time high Jan 11, finishing at 1,802.80 points, with analysts pointing towards the bullish rally going forward thanks to sanguine economic prospects. Fiscal stimulus policy, amendments made to business law aimed at facilitating investment in the Eastern Economic Corridor, and prospects of an increase in the daily minimum wage are key attributes helping propel the country's economic growth outlook in 2018, said Isara Ordeedolchest, senior vice-president of the investment strategy department at SCBS. “Thailand's economy this year will be driven by government expenditure and private consumption, together with the slated general election,” said Mr. Isara.

5. Private Investment to Spur 2018 Growth

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

The Ministry of Finance expects private investment to lead growth of the Thai economy this year, following 10,411 business operators exercised 1.5-time tax deduction on investment worth about Bt281 billion, an all-time high. In 2017, Revenue Department launched its tax incentives to promote investment, allowing companies or juristic partnership to deduct its investment expenditure in assets paid in the year by 1.5 times. Pornchai Thiraveja, Finance Deputy spokesman, said the amount of private investments last year was much higher than the department's target of Bt8 billion. Out of the Bt281 billion investments in 2017, more than Bt100 billion were invested in machinery and buildings. When combined with investments in equipment, tools and machines, the figure accounted for 80 per cent of the total. Pornchai said that the Fiscal Policy Office (FPO) was taking into account private investments in its economic forecast for 2017, expecting last year's economic growth to be higher than its previous estimate of 3.8 per cent. The FPO will announce 2017 economic figures at the end of January.

6. IP Website Goes Live to Promote Use

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

The government yesterday launched the first-ever IP Mart, an intellectual property e-marketplace, aiming to promote the commercial use of existing copyrights, patents and geographical indications (GIs). According to Deputy Commerce Minister Chutima Bunyapraphasara, the IP Mart at www.thaiipmart.com will function as the central website for innovative Thai products, patents, petty patents and GIs. Inventors, investors and entrepreneurs who are interested in creative ideas or innovative products are eligible to buy from or develop businesses for the owners of IP rights. “This offers a good venue or small and medium-scale entrepreneurs who have good ideas and innovations to sell their ideas or IP products,” Ms Chutima said.