

## Thai News Update: 16 February 2018

### **1. Thailand ‘Least Miserable’ Country on Earth**

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

Thailand has been ranked as the least miserable country out of 66 economies for a fourth consecutive year, according to Bloomberg's Misery Index for 2018. Thailand again claimed “least miserable” status, though the nation's unique way of calculating unemployment helps give it the edge over the next least miserable, Singapore. The island state claimed least miserable status in 2014. Venezuela marks its fourth year as the world's most miserable economy, with a score that's more than three times what it was in 2017. The Bloomberg Misery Index relies on the age-old concept that low inflation and unemployment generally illustrate how good an economy residents should feel.

### **2. Thai Power Industry Invited to Exhibition in India**

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

An Indian electrical exhibition has reached out to particularly invite the Thai power industry to this year's annual exhibition in Delhi, highlighting the trade opportunities in electricity-associated industries for both countries. “Thailand will need to invest significantly in its energy system over the coming two decades as it has set a new renewable energy target of 30 per cent of total final energy consumption by 2036,” said Harish Agarwal, vice president of the Indian Electrical & Electronics Manufacturers' Association (IEEMA), which organises Elecrama 2018, one of the world's largest electrical exhibitions.

### **3. Laos Seeks Thai Support on New Mekong Bridge**

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

The Lao government has approached Thailand for financial support for the construction of a new bridge connecting the two countries. “It depends on the Thai side to consider which form of financial support -- the form of a 30-70 grant, low-interest loan or full grant,” the source said. “After working with the Thai authorities, a full grant is unlikely,” the source added. The 1.35-

kilometre-long bridge over the Mekong River will link Bung Kan province and the central Lao province of Borikhamxay. The construction cost is estimated at 3.8 billion baht, with Thailand spending 2.6 billion baht and Laos taking care of the rest.

#### **4. Cambodian Rail Line to Thai Border Ready for Test**

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

The section of the western railway line linking Poipet in Banteay Meanchey province to Battambang is now ready to be tested after the train stations were connected on Feb 13, with trial runs likely to happen before Khmer New Year, according to the Cambodian transport minister. Minister of Transport and Public Works Sun Chanthol also announced that Thai counterparts have finished work on the section of the line that runs in Thailand, from Aranyaprathet district in Sa Kaeo province to Bangkok, the *Khmer Times* reported on Feb 15. He added that is now time to test the section of the railway that goes from Poipet to Battambang through Sisophon, with test runs already scheduled to take place sometime before Khmer New Year in mid-April.

#### **5. Standard or Itemised Deduction: A Choice For Self-Employed Income Taxpayers**

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

The March 31, 2018 deadline for filing the 2017 individual income tax return is fast approaching and one of the key changes to the personal income tax regime, which is effective from the 2017 tax year onwards and will impact self-employed income taxpayers, is the reduction of the standard expenses deduction. While the recent changes in law increased the standard expenses deduction for employment income taxpayers, the opposite is true for self-employed income taxpayers where the new law provides for a reduction of the standard expenses deduction. In 2016 and prior years, self-employed income taxpayers were entitled to claim the standard expenses deduction up to 85 per cent of their income.

#### **6. PROEN Delivers Thailand's First Cloud-Based SD-WAN Service**

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

PROEN has tapped the SD-WAN market by offering Thailand's first cloud-delivered SD-WAN service, enabling businesses to accelerate digital transformation by enhancing their networking infrastructure for faster connectivity between branch offices and using a wide range of applications

more efficiently. Kittipan Sri-bua-iam, Chief Executive Officer of Proimage Engineering and Communication or PROEN Internet, one of the first service providers of complete internet data centre in Thailand, said PROEN is the first service provider to offer software-defined WAN or SD-WAN as a hosted solution in Thailand. Customers pay a flat monthly subscription fee, without investing for equipment and maintenance.

### **7. Strategy for Sufficiency Economy to Come Into Force in July**

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

Thailand's draft national strategy for stability, sustainability and wealth under the sufficiency economy philosophy is expected to come into force July with an annual assessment, according to National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB). The announcement came after national strategy committee meeting chaired by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha on Feb 15. The NESDB will coordinate with the Federation of Thai Industries, the Board of Trade of Thailand, the National Farmers Council and ministries to include the national strategy and reforms into training courses for more understanding.