

Thai News Update: 16 May 2019

1. Progress Seen Towards Digital Transformation

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

Thailand is emerging as a fast-growing market for the adoption of digital technology by the country's organisations and enterprises, a research company says. IDC expects that the performance of Thai organisations and enterprises will be measured by what it calls digital determination over the coming years. Jim Chin, the head of operations at IDC Thailand, said that most organisations and enterprises in the country still spend much more on hardware devices such as mobile phones, personal computers, storage items, and notebooks, with such items collectively accounting for 60-65 per cent of their total spending on information technology (IT).

2. Thailand Pulls Out All Stops To Nurture Startups

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

The startup scene in Thailand is far from thriving, but industry watchers believe the next five to 10 years will bring pivotal changes to the Southeast Asian nation. "Thailand is literally a gold mine for new opportunities," Jayden Kang, executive director of Line's startup investment program ScaleUp, told The Korea Herald during a recent interview in Bangkok. Line has a huge presence in the country - Thailand is the messenger service's No. 2 market after Japan - and it is looking to expand its services to create a "smart platform" consisting of a plethora of mobile contents including payment, games and more. Line ScaleUp plans to invest up to \$20 million (Bt630 million) in Thai startups by the end of this year with Line Ventures.

3. Mandatory Health Insurance For Retirement Visa Holders Likely To Take Effect In July

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

Foreigners aged 50 and above living in Thailand on a long-stay visa will likely have to buy health insurance from July onwards, as authorities are preparing guidelines to enforce the new rules. Approved by the Cabinet last month, the new regulation will require expats on the long-

stay non-immigrant O-A visa to have health insurance that offers Bt40,000 coverage for outpatient treatment and Bt400,000 for inpatient. The requirement was introduced because foreign expats have piled up unpaid medical bills of more than Bt300 million since 2016.

4. Spat, Uncertainty Slow Thai Growth

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

Thailand's economic growth is expected to slow in 2019 because of rising global trade tensions and domestic political uncertainty, with local business operators suffering from negative momentum from the US-China dispute, says Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak. Mr Somkid plans to meet with officials from the Commerce Ministry this month to revise the export growth target for 2019, likely to be downgraded from 8%. The US-China trade dispute is affecting Thailand's trade-dependent economy, while a hazy domestic situation has kept investors away.

5. Small Developers Urged To Maintain Liquidity And Diversify

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

The upside gain for the baht, Asia's strongest performing currency this year, is limited after rallying since the beginning of this month, propelled by the escalating trade tension between the US and China, says a senior official at Kasikornbank (Kbank). The baht's appreciation is expected to continue until the end of this month because of continuing uncertainties related to the US-Sino trade spat, said Kobsidthi Silpachai, head of capital market research at Kbank. As investors consider the baht a safe haven currency, further offshore funds are expected to flood into Thailand, with the main destination short-term bonds, he said.

6. Airport Rail Project 'Good For Country'

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

Suphachai Chearavanont, CEO of Charoen Pokphand (CP) Group, has reaffirmed the company's commitment to investing in the 225-billion-baht high-speed railway linking three major airports, despite it being considered a high-risk investment. The company will keep pushing for the project to materialise for the benefit of the country, he told a seminar in Nakhon Ratchasima attended by more than 400 business leaders from around the world. A CP-led consortium won

the concession to develop the planned rail link between Bangkok's Don Mueang airport, Samut Prakan's Suvarnabhumi airport and Rayong's U-Tapao.