

Thai News Update: 17 July 2018

1. Trans Fats Ban Could Burn Small Businesses: Expert

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

Thailand's Ban on trans fats is being applauded by consumer protection activists and nutritionists but a food-industry expert says the government action could lead to chaos in small bakeries and dairy beverage businesses. The ban will be enforced on January 8 next year, six months after the Public Health Ministry implemented a ministerial regulation to ban the production, import, and sale of products with partially hydrogenated oils. Those oils are the main source of trans fats, and medical researchers say their elimination will reduce people's risk of cardiovascular disease. Nutritionist Sanga Damapong on July 15 said trans fats can be found in crispy snacks, french fries, cookies, shortening, margarine, non-dairy creamers and dry fast foods. "Trans fats can cause many deaths because they contribute to the risk of cardiovascular disease," he said. Sanga said trans fats, a type of unsaturated fat, were first industrially produced from vegetable fats 50 to 60 years ago. They greatly reduce the cost of manufacturing some food products while extending their shelf-life, eliminating odour and arguably making food tastier.

2. 'Positive Signal' From European Parliament About Thailand's IUU Status: Deputy PM

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

The European Parliament has sent a positive signal about the European Union upgrading Thailand's status in regard to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing from the current 'yellow card' slapped on the country by the EU in 2015, Deputy Prime Minister Chatchai Sarikulya said on July 16. A member of the European Parliament hinted to such effect during a session to exchange views on IUU with Virachai Plasai, Thai ambassador to the US and head IUU negotiator, last Wednesday, he said. The Kingdom has attempted to resolve its IUU problems ever since the EU issued the yellow-card warning against the Thai fisheries sector three years ago. Virachai has updated the European Parliament's Fishery Committee about the work the country has done so far to improve practices in its fishery sector, the deputy PM said after a meeting on the matter on July 16. The meeting had endorsed the project to remove illegal trawlers from the sector, he announced. Under the fishery management plan approved by the Cabinet in November 2015, the authorities

will allocate Bt3 billion to buy 680 fishing boats, thus taking them out of the industry in order to enable effective regulation.

3. Smart Kiosks Give Students Easier Way To Check Loans

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

The Digital Government Development Agency (DGA) has joined with the Student Loans Fund office (SLF) to allow its borrowers to check their loan status via 56 so-called smart kiosks set up by the government nationwide. The DGA expects to establish more than 120 of the kiosks by the end of next year. Airada Luangvilai, senior executive vice-president of the DGA, said that the agency has collaborated with SLF in order to allow its student borrowers to monitor their loans. Under the service, the students can print out a QR code that they can use for loan repayments via KTB's mobile banking application or on the KTB Netbank platform. Airada said the agency had established the 56 smart kiosks in Bangkok and in provinces such as Phuket, Chiang Mai and Khon Kaen. The kiosks provide 18 government services, including for social security information and healthcare. The agency also expects to round out this offering to 24 services, such as for utility payments and police orders, by the end of this year.

4. Motorcycle Tax Hikes Will Leave Riders Unscathed: Yamaha

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

Thai Yamaha Motor Co, the local unit of the Japanese motorcycle maker, forecasts the new excise tax structure for motorcycles will increase retail prices in all segments, but believes buyers will not be affected. The Excise Department has yet to make a decision on the new excise tax structure for motorcycles, but the calculation should be on par with the car tax, recalibrated from engine sizes (cubic centimetres) to CO2 emissions, effective from early 2016. The department plans to give motorcycle manufacturers a one-year grace period to prepare themselves for the new tax structure before it is enforced, said director-general Krisada Chinavicharana. The new tax rate means motorcycles sold in Thailand with higher CO2 emissions will be subject to higher tax rates and retail prices. Larger engines typically release more emissions. Phongstorn Ermongkonchai, Yamaha's chief of commercial operations, said it projects the effective period for the new tax

coming sometime in 2019, with the government designing the new structure after receiving feedback from manufacturers and distributors.