

## Thai News Update: 17 September 2018

### **1. Mixed Reactions To Digital ID Draft Law**

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

Worries over privacy and security overshadow perceived benefits for commerce, trade and prosecution cyber experts are weighing the pros and cons of a draft law about digital identification that will allow government agencies to collect citizens' digital ID. Some pointed to the benefits of the proposed new legislation for both the digital economy and society while others voiced concern over security and privacy issues. The Digital Identification Bill was approved by the Cabinet in principle last week and is expected to be passed by the National Legislative Assembly and take effect by the middle of next year, according to its drafters.

### **2. Trade Spat Perils Put Spotlight On Need For Effective Strategies**

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

Short-term challenges from the escalating trade spat with the United States have reassured Chinese officials and experts of the need to support market-oriented reform and opening-up, with a particular focus on reducing debt and limiting government intervention. That was the consensus reached by participants at a high-level forum on 16 September, during which policymakers and advisers from home and abroad gathered in Beijing. Reforms should strengthen the market's decisive role in resource allocation, optimize State-owned enterprises and reduce or eliminate direct subsidies for some industries, said Yang Weimin, former deputy director of the Office of the Central Leading Group on Financial and Economic Affairs, a top-level economic policymaking body.

### **3. Which Asian Countries Are The Most Innovative?**

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

Singapore, South Korea and Japan are the most innovative countries in Asia whereas Pakistan and Bangladesh are the least innovative, according to the Global Innovation Index 2018 report. The report analyses the energy innovation landscape of the next decade and identifies possible breakthroughs in fields such as energy production, storage, distribution, and consumption. It also looks at how breakthrough innovation occurs at the grassroots level and describes how small-scale

renewable systems are on the rise. South East Asia is at the third place globally in terms of innovation. Singapore leads the region with a high score in most of the indicators. Globally it has moved two positions up since last year.

#### **4. Avalanche Of Bills Seeking NLA Approval**

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

The Finance Ministry is pushing about 80 bills, including those involved with imposing taxes on digital platform operators and the land and buildings tax, to lawmakers for passage before next year's general election. If these bills fail to win approval from the National Legislative Assembly (NLA) under this government, they will be bounced back and must seek approval from the next government, said finance permanent secretary Prasong Poontaneat. Major bills include an amendment of the Revenue Code to collect value-added tax (VAT) from online vendors that are registered overseas but are generating income in Thailand and an e-business tax, the source said, adding that expanding the tax base to digital platforms is to help the government run a balanced budget as targeted for the next 11-12 years.

#### **5. Thailand Labelled As Having The Fastest Growing Online Wildlife Trade In SE Asia**

**Source: Chiang Rai Times ([Link](#))**

Thailand has been listed as a country with the fastest growing online trade in wildlife and endangered species in Southeast Asia, according to a recently released report from wildlife trade monitoring network [TRAFFIC](#). In the report published on September 12, [TRAFFIC](#) said that an investigation during one month in 2016, 200 species were offered online for sale, including the critically endangered Helmeted Hornbill and 25 Siamese crocodiles. Removing just one of these animals from the wild could lead to the extinction of the species, it added. The most common animal for sale is the slow loris which is illegally sold as a pet and a photo prop for tourists to Thailand. Some of the animals are native to Thailand, such as Asiatic black bear and Siamese crocodile, while others, including the Eurasian otter and black spotted turtle are not.

## **6. NCPO Slams UN Report Calling Thailand 'Shameful'**

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

Thailand was placed on the list of 38 "shameful" countries in a report issued by the United Nations assistant secretary-general for human rights because of irrelevant information, National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) spokesman Col Winthai Suwaree said on 16 September. Col Winthai was referring to the UN report which accused 38 countries of having carried out reprisals or intimidation against people who cooperated with Rights investigators. He said the report has been used by some people to discredit the government and create a negative image of the country. Some people had picked up certain angles of the report to complement their personal opinions with intent to discredit the government and the NCPO, he claimed.

## **7. Five Key Themes For Investors In The Upcoming Years**

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

Angry societies, infrastructure, technology, silver economy and millennial values will be the five key investment themes for investors in the upcoming years, said Pornchai Prasertsintanah, Thailand's country manager and head of South Asia Equities of Credit Suisse Securities (Thailand) Ltd. Credit Suisse Securities (Thailand) Ltd, has three businesses: institutional equities brokerage, investment banking and wealth management. It aims to capitalise on these investment themes to continue implementing its "One Bank" policy, Pornchai said at a press briefing recently. "Our 'One Bank' concept entails that all these three businesses of Credit Suisse support each other through finding synergies such as referring clients and research information sharing," Pornchai explained. Its equities brokerage research team was ranked No 1 in 2010-14 and in 2016-17 by the Institutional Investor. In the past 12 months, Credit Suisse Thailand has made seven deals, valued up to US\$3 billion (Bt100 billion) including equity placements and convertible bonds.