

Thai News Update: 1 May 2018

1. 'Kai Fak' Draft Gets Green Light

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

In the latest effort to protect small-scale land owners from loan sharks, the government has approved a draft bill on sale with the right of redemption (kai fak). Kobsak Pootrakool, the Prime Minister's Office Minister, said the steering committee on the government's policy acceleration approved the draft bill on sales with right of redemption, one of two new laws aimed at protecting low-income earners. The other new law allows people who grow high-value trees such as teak, Siamese rosewood and Burmese rosewood on their own land to harvest them for income and promote reforestation. Sale with right of redemption is a contract of sale wherein the seller who owns the real estate has a legal right to redeem his or her sold property within an agreed period. With this method, the seller transfers ownership of the property to buyer at the seller's expense. The redemption takes place upon reimbursement of the entire amount by the buyer, including all related fees incurred in the process. Transfer of ownership back to the original owner takes place only when the buyer gets the money back on agreed date. Right of redemption is not a financial debt. This method is widely used in Thailand as an alternative to mortgages. "Thailand has a total of 300 million rai of arable land, 150 million of which is farmland, and half of the remaining 150 million rai is land farmers rent from landlords. That means farmers have completely lost ownership of farmland.

2. Alibaba Pact Sees Big Data Shape Travel Choices For Well-Heeled Chinese

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

A Partnership between the Thai tourism authorities and Fliggy, the online travel platform of e-commerce giant Alibaba, is aimed at harnessing Big Data to target big-spending Chinese tourists with precision marketing, said Yuthasak Supasorn, governor of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). The focus on those Chinese tourists deemed to be of quality and with high purchasing power coincides with a plan to promote as destinations those cities seen as lagging on the second tier of tourism appeal. The TAT plans to kick off the promotional campaign on Fliggy, a leading Chinese online travel service provider, after June, Yuthasak told The Nation in an interview. The

collaboration is part of the partnership struck between the Thai government and Alibaba last month, when the TAT signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Fliggy to promote Thailand to Chinese tourists and encourage them to spread out beyond the country's main tourism centres. The capability will allow the TAT to learn more about Chinese tourists, in terms of how much they spend, what products and services they like, and how long they stay and where they do so, along with their activities and their favourite places and the like, Yuthasak said. "We want to know where their money is spent and who benefits from this spending," he said. Under the pilot project to start after June, a laggard city in terms of visitors would be selected for promotion on Fliggy, with a range of features including trip planning, booking services and tourist reviews. With the MoU, the TAT will provide tourism information such as POIs and accommodation choices, tourism services such as spas, local tours and transport options in the chosen city.

3. New Data Law Aimed At Ensuring Privacy

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

Thai citizens' data privacy is expected to be secured with the Data Protection Act's enforcement this year after being approved by the cabinet this month. The Electronic Transactions Development Agency will be responsible for the temporary Data Protection Knowledge Centre to educate the public about data privacy protection. Prior to the Cybersecurity Act, ETDA will also act temporarily as the National Cyber security Agency. The new law clearly defines data protection, covering three categories of data owners, data controllers and data processors. The proposal follows the revelations that mobile phone operator True Move exposed some 46, 000 records-identity, addresses, scans of ID cards and passport but faces no punishment. Dhiraphol Suwanprateep, partner and senior associate for technology, media and telecommunications at Baker McKenzie, said the new bill encompasses data processor concept, additional consent exemptions in the case of public interest and legitimate interest, revised the structure of the commission, and removed imprisonment.

4. Huawei's Honor Breaks Into Thailand

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

Honor, a leading smartphone e-brand under the Huawei Group, is investing some US\$4 million (126 million baht) in its first year of operation, aiming to join the top-three players in Thailand by 2020. The move is in direct competition with e-brand Xiaomi and Chinese smartphone makers Oppo and Vivo. "We believe consumers have different brand preferences and choices, similar to classic cars, and that's why we came out with dual smartphone brands: Huawei and Honor," said Akin Li, Honor's Southeast Asia president. The company has set high ambitions to be among the top five smartphones producers within three years globally and top three in five years. In Thailand, it hopes to be in the top three in 2020 by securing 10-15% market share within that time. Honor is mainly focusing on smartphones below 8,000 baht, which make up over 60% of the 18 million smartphones in use. The company has introduced three models to the Thai market -- the Honor 9 Lite Quad-Lens, the gaming smartphone Honor 7X, and the budget-friendly Honor 7C, priced at 5,000 baht.

5. Unilever Rides Market Shifts

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

UNILEVER Thailand said it aims to boost people's livelihoods while pursuing growth in the Thai market and reducing environmental impacts under a strategy it hails as 2022 Growing Together. Robert Candelino, head of Unilever Thailand, said that outlook for the consumer market in Thailand is tough. "I think the consumer market is desperate for new excitement and more energy. I think there are so many changes happening that have never been before in history. This includes in media, retail, consumer habits, buying preferences, demography and society – colliding all at once," Candelino said. "This is why it's important to have a purpose at the core to go through this storm and to understand what you stand for in your values, the people you hire, the type of initiatives and what principally we want to do as a company." Unilever's Sustainable Living brands deliver over 60 per cent of the company's total growth, and grew more than 50 per cent faster than the rest of the business in 2016, Candelino said. Unilever aims to offer consumers improved well-being on a daily basis. The Unilever Sustainable Living Plan (USLP) applies to all Unilever employees and contributes to the company's business practices to drive business growth while

supporting communities. Unilever is also committed to reducing its environmental footprint and increasing its positive social impacts, the chief executive said.

6. Legislation On Way To Boost Data Security

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

The Ministry of Digital Economy and Society will submit a draft bill on data protection to the Cabinet with the aim of securing approval for the legislation by the end of this month. If the draft bill clears the Cabinet, the resulting Data Protection Act would likely be unveiled to the public before the end of the year. In related moves, the ministry also will set up a Data Protection Knowledge Centre as a resource to boost people's data literacy. Pichet Durongkaveroj, the Minister of Digital Economy and Society, said that if the draft bill gained approval, it would move on to the Council of State and the National Legislative Assembly as the next steps in the approval process. The draft bill on data protection covers issues such as the ownership of data, the controls of over this information and data processing. The proposed legislation seeks to protect citizen's data and their privacy. The ministry will also set up a committee and an advisory to support the new law in the near future. He said the Data Protection Knowledge Centre would help underpin the broad thrust of data protection efforts in the country with its focus on education.

7. B1.67bn For Rice Barn Loans Okayed

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

The government has approved credit worth 1.67 billion baht for farmers and agricultural institutes to build rice barns to help store rice, delaying paddy sales to stabilise rice prices. Boonyarit Kalayanamit, director-general of the Internal Trade Department, said the national rice policy committee, chaired by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, yesterday endorsed the loan scheme to build rice barns for farmers and agricultural institutes. Of the loan amount, the state-owned Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC) will offer 150,000 baht to each eligible farmer, and 3 million baht to each farm institute. The scheme targets 10,000 borrowers, while the government help subsidise 3% of the interest rate per year. Mr Boonyarit said the committee on May 30 also approved the plan to dispose of 2 million tonnes of state rice stocks within this year. He insisted the disposal plan will not impact market prices as only 40,000 tonnes of the total are edible, with the rest are fit for animal feed production, and for fuel or energy

production. Adul Chotinisakorn, director-general of the Foreign Trade Department, said recently authorities handling the rice sales will call bids on a gradual basis in May and June and possibly until September to sell existing stocks that are estimated at 2.04 million tonnes.

8. HSBC Backs ASEAN's 'World-Leading' Initiative On Smart Cities

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

HSBC is supporting the 10-member Asean governments' endorsement, announced overnight, to enter 26 cities from across the region into the Asean Smart Cities Network (ASCN). The ASCN will enable Southeast Asia to sustainably develop its cities, further optimise the region's burgeoning internet economies, and elevate Asean's international relevance. As part of the concept note, released by the Asean secretariat, governments will develop a platform to share best practice, link member cities with private investment, and secure funding from multilateral funding institutions. HSBC's global head of Client Digital Coverage, Danielle Walsh, on 1 May described Southeast Asia's approach to smart cities as "world-leading". "The formation of the ASCN means that Asean's smart-city initiatives will become greater than the sum of its parts and catapults the region into the upper echelons of smart-city advancements, globally," she added