

## Thai News Update: 24 July 2018

### 1. Digital Asset Licences At Hand

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

The Finance Ministry's announcement on approving digital asset licensing took effect on July 24, and interested parties can apply for licences from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Existing businesses that already operate a digital asset business or newcomers interested in obtaining licences as brokerage firms, traders or trading centres for digital assets can apply for official licenses at the SEC. "The SEC is [now] open for application approval for operating a digital asset business, as the Finance Ministry's announcement on digital asset licences has come into force," said SEC secretary-general Rapee Sucharitakul. Once firms or listed companies make a filing for licence approval, the market regulator will forward documents to the Finance Minister within 90 days, starting from the day that the documents are received. Then the Finance Minister will consider licence approval within 60 days. Companies seeking a digital asset licence must ensure that there are no conflicts of interest between their other operations and their digital asset business. Appropriate mechanisms to prevent a conflict of interest must be in place, and annual financial statements approved by an auditor must be provided. The firms must also maintain capital reserves in accordance with the law governing corporate conduct.

### 2. Cabinet Mulls B59bn Of Megaprojects

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

The cabinet on July 24 acknowledged a raft of proposed infrastructure development projects worth 59 billion baht for the lower Northeast as the government concluded its two-day cabinet trip to Ubon Ratchathani and Amnat Charoen provinces in the region. Transport Minister Arkhom Termpittayapaisith said the cabinet discussed 19 projects worth 59 billion baht for four provinces -- Ubon Ratchathani, Yasothon, Si Sa Ket and Amnat Charoen. The projects will be implemented gradually from next year until 2024. Some are still at the stage of environmental impact assessment studies while others are closer to being submitted for cabinet approval, Mr. Arkhom said. Regarding a project to upgrade Ubon Ratchathani airport, the cabinet has accepted for consideration proposals from the private sector to bring forward some projects such as a new car

park building, a taxiway and two more jet bridges, said Arkhom. Government spokesman Sansern Kaewkanmerd said the cabinet has also scrutinised other private sector proposals, including one to develop water resources for agriculture and flood solutions.

### **3. Thailand Looks For Safe Economic Haven In US-China Trade War**

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

Thailand is caught in the crossfire of the trade war between China and the United States and the Kingdom's future economic relations with the two superpowers are precariously uncertain. The United States is one of Thailand's biggest investment partners. Two-way trade volume between the two countries last year totalled Bt1.4 trillion, behind China (Bt2.5 trillion) and Japan (Bt1.8 trillion). Thailand's exports to the US last year were valued at Bt898.8 billion, following China (Bt997.9 billion), according to the Ministry of Commerce. Economic relations between Thailand and the US have been strengthened since the Treaty of Amity and Commerce signed in 1833. During the post-second world war and the Cold War eras, Thailand got economic aid from the US. As the world has developed, Thailand has diversified its economy and now China is Thailand's largest export market. While China has a geographically closer trade link with Thailand, the Kingdom has a close connection with the US politically and militarily, said Teerana Bhongmakapat, economics professor and former dean of Chulalongkorn University's Economics Faculty.

### **4. Border Economies Expected To Retain High Volumes**

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

Thailand's border trade remains on course for healthy growth after rising 6.8% year-on-year in the first half of the year amid higher demand for Thai goods. According to Wanchai Varavithya, deputy director-general of the Foreign Trade Department, overall border trade, including transit trade, amounted to 679 billion baht in the first half. Transit trade comprises businesses connected with the passage of goods through a country to their destination. In the first half, border exports fetched 385 billion baht, down 0.8%, with border imports coming in at 293 billion baht, up 18.7%, yielding a trade surplus of 92 billion baht. Malaysia was the biggest partner for border trade, accounting for 50% of the total, followed by Laos (19%), Myanmar (18%) and Cambodia

(13%). Thailand's border trade with all four neighbours rose for the period, up 0.9% at 278 billion baht with Malaysia, up 6.3% at 107 billion baht with Laos, up 8.6% at 97.26 billion baht with Myanmar and up 10.3% at 70.36 billion baht with Cambodia.

### **5. Expanding Bangkok Airways To Fly New Planes, Set Up Duty Free Unit**

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

Bangkok Airways plans to spend about Bt2 billion to buy two ATR 72-600 aircraft to boost its flight network this year. Puttipong Prasarttong-Osoth, president of Bangkok Airways, said that as part of the network expansion it will increase the number of flights on its new Phuket to Yangon route to three times a week, from mid-November. The airline also aims to link with one or two airline partners for code-share agreements to meet growth in demand. As part of an effort to expand its business base, the airline would set up a duty-free business unit, said Puttipong, adding that the company was aiming for revenue growth of up to 10 per cent this year. Regarding the new aircraft, he said: “They will replace the existing two ATR 72-500 aircraft that will be discharged from service in the near future. We will provide two new Airbus 319 rental aircraft in November in order to support our new and existing routes and support our business growth. The firm expects that it will have 40 aircraft in total by the end of this year.” The company also plans to set up an aircraft repair centre in Sukhothai province on a site of around 10,000 square meters with investment of more than Bt1 billion. Maintenance and repair services at the centre are expected to start in 2020. The company has also prepared a budget of around Bt1 billion to set up another aircraft repair centre at Suvarnabhumi Airport at a later stage.