

Thai News Update: 26 July 2018

1. SCG Ramps Up Investments By 20%

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

SIAM Cement Group (SCG) plans to boost its 2019 investment budget by 20 per cent from this year to Bt60 billion, the group's vice president-finance and investment and chief financial officer, Chaovalit Ekabut, said on July 25. Up to Bt20 billion of the total investment budget for next year will go towards construction of a petrochemical plant in Vietnam, with the remainder earmarked for mergers and acquisitions and the maintenance of its manufacturing plants in Thailand and other Asean countries, Chaovalit said on the sidelines of a company press conference. He said that in the first half of this year, the group spent Bt18 billion of its investment budget on mergers and acquisitions and plant maintenance. Some Bt32 billion of its total investment budget of up to Bt50 billion for this year will be spent in the second half of this year. As with the first half, the funds will be spent on the maintenance of production plants and mergers and acquisitions with a focus on three categories: petrochemicals, construction raw materials, and packaging in the domestic and Asean markets.

2. Thai Internet Use Booms: Study

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

The Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA) said Thais use the internet for an average of 10 hours per day, increasing from 3 hours and 40 minutes last year. This was a result of increasingly digital lifestyles, said ETDA chief executive officer Surangkana Wayuparb. Social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Pantip, is used for as long as 3 hours and 30 minutes per day. Users also stream videos through YouTube or Line TV for an average of 2 hours and 35 minutes per day, according to the Thailand Internet User Profile 2018. Chat applications, such as Messenger and Line, averages at 2 hours, playing online games at 1 hour and 51 minutes, and reading articles or books online takes up 1 hour and 31 minutes per day. The survey warned that they were at risk of data violations: 43 per cent do not change their passwords every three months; 45 per cent reveal their real birthdays on social media, 44 per cent neglect to check whether a website address starts with "https://" when making payments; 43 per cent open emails

or click on links that are of an unknown origin; and 36 per cent upload pictures and videos onto social media immediately after taking them.

3. Thai, Singapore Stocks Lead Southeast Asian Peers

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

Most Southeast Asian stocks rose on July 25 tracking strong broader Asia, with Thai and Singapore shares leading the markets. Asian shares ex-Japan rose for a second straight session boosted by an upbeat Wall Street overnight and on hopes that Chinese government spending would spur growth. The Stock Exchange of Thailand index rose 15.86 points or 0.95% to end the day at 1,690.08, in turnover worth 57.54 billion baht, with all sectors ending in the positive zone. Energy and consumer staples were the top gainers on the benchmark, with top contributor PTT Plc rising on higher oil prices. Singapore shares extended their upward run into a second session and ended 1% higher led by blue chips Oversea-Chinese Banking Corp, United Overseas Bank and DBS Group Holdings. Financial shares accounted for more than half of the gains on the index, with Metro Pacific Investments Corp and BDO Unibank each rising by over 4% ahead of earnings.

4. Government Cooks Up Plan For Northeast Food Production

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

Four provinces in the lower Northeast will be grouped to set up a new business model to develop and market organic agricultural products as part of a government plan to turn the region into a national centre for innovative food. The so-called hub, which will centre on modern techniques to process farm produce and other products including cosmetics, is being pushed amid a current trend in which more and more Thai and foreign consumers are turning to chemical-free farming produce. Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha has told authorities to "set goals that most fit market demand", Industrial Minister Uttama Savanayana said on Wednesday, referring to the premier's intention to develop food processing based on organic farming. Gen Prayut told the Industry, Agriculture, Commerce and Education ministries to work together to make the lower Northeast, known locally as Isan Tai, a model centre of this new food processing.

5. Boi Gives Blessing To B30bn In Plans

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

The Board of Investment (BoI) on July 26 approved promotional privileges for four large-scale investment applications worth nearly 30 billion baht, including those for two Japanese carmakers worth 16.78 billion for electric vehicles (EVs). Secretary-general Duangjai Asawachintachit said the board meeting chaired by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha signed off on promotional privileges for EV investment projects for Nissan Motor Thailand and Honda Automobile Thailand, worth 10.96 billion and 5.82 billion baht, respectively. The BoI has also approved privileges for six projects worth 5.4 billion baht to make high-density batteries, as well as those for battery electric vehicles (BEVs). In related news, the board on July 26 approved promotional privileges for Thai AirAsia X, the long-haul low-fare airline, to expand its aviation service, worth 9.25 billion baht. The investment will be allocated largely to rent six Airbus A330s with 377 seats each. The company also plans to roll out new aviation routes at home and abroad, including for China, Hong Kong and Australia.