

Thai News Update: 29 March 2018

1. Subregion Summit Kicks Off In Hanoi

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

A railway improvement project connecting Denchai, Chiang Rai and Chiang Khong worth more than 30 billion baht will be among 226 projects to be endorsed at the 6th Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Summit being held from 29 March until 31 March in Hanoi, Vietnam, assistant government spokesperson Col Atisith Chainuvati said on March 28. During the summit, GMS leaders including Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha are expected to endorse three important documents, namely a joint statement, the Hanoi Action Plan covering the next five years and a Regional Investment Framework over the same period. The latter comprises 226 subregion development projects worth 2 trillion baht, he said. Among the highest-value projects involving Thailand are the Denchai-Chiang Rai-Chiang Khong rail link, tourism infrastructure development worth 5.4 billion baht, and an energy project worth 2.8 billion million to support cooperation between Thailand and Laos in exporting electricity to third countries, he said.

2. Ftas To Get Input From Thai Growers

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

The government vows to seek and include comments from local farmers during any new trade talk efforts. According to Auramon Supthaweethum, director-general of the Trade Negotiations Department, officials will pay on-site visits to hear opinions and suggestions from various groups of farmers to supplement the new free-trade agreement (FTA) talks. "Currently the department is preparing information for the Thai-EU FTA talks and studying the feasibility of participating in the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)," Ms Auramon said. "The on-site visits will thus allow the department to know the genuine information from farmers before the negotiators commence any talks." Eleven Pacific Rim countries recently signed the CPTPP, which was revised after the US withdrew from the previous TPP agreement in January 2017. According to a preliminary survey, Sri Lanka needs Thai investment in agro-industrial business, gems and jewellery, tourism, consumer products, and electronics.

3. Thai Startups Join Korean Peer In Digital Currency Venture

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

Thai startups Ookbee U and Computerlogy on March 27 joined South Korean peer Yellow Digital Marketing Global (YDM) in officially launching a joint-venture company that will initiate a cryptocurrency and help foster the development of the digital economy in Thailand. The joint venture, Six Network, will offer the digital currency, called SIX, for a use as a utility token. The alliance between the partners aims to create what they call “a more transparent, fair, secure, and efficient ecosystem for all stakeholders” across all parts of the digital economy. Contributing investment of 40 per cent each in Six Networks are Ookbee U and YDM, a subsidiary of Yellow Mobile. Ookbee U is a joint venture between Ookbee and Chinese technology giant Tencent. Computerlogy put in 20 per cent of the investment. Six Network aims to create and operate SIX as a utility token for use by participants in the emerging innovative and digital sectors of the new industrial landscape – not only in Thailand, but throughout Asia and, ultimately, across the world

4. Saha Pathanapibul Banks On Partners

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

SAHA Pathanapibul Plc, one of Thailand's largest trading conglomerates, on March 28 officially announced a partnership programme under which it can help wholesalers and retailers move into the emerging area of online business-to-business transactions. The company also said it planned to invest more than Bt1 billion to set up a new central warehouse in Sri Racha. The facility will be on a 50-rai plot and provide space of about 50,000 square metres. Saha Pathanapibul operates a central warehouse in Sri Racha but, at 33,000 square metres, it is fully occupied and hard to manage. The company has also has depots in Chiang Mai, Khon Kaen, Nakhon Ratchasima, and in Romklao Road, Bangkok. Saha Pathanapibul chairman Boonchai Chokwatana said that under the partnership scheme with wholesalers and retailers, the company will be able to set and control the prices of its food and household products in the market. Participating wholesalers and retailers make sales forecast and commit to certain levels of online ordering, which will be revised every six months. They can receive privileges from the company in terms of product prices and promotions that are more generous than those afforded to other wholesalers and retailers

5. Green Bonds Pushed For Lenders, Companies As Fundraising Alternative

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

Thai Banks and companies have been urged to issue green bonds as demand for the securities rises in line with a growing awareness among investors of the need to combat climate change. “Thailand is a potential market for green bonds due to an increased awareness of environmental and corporate governance issues,” said Vincent Milton, managing director of Fitch Ratings Thailand. The global market for green bonds was estimated at US\$280 billion on January 31, Milton said. China has a top-down policy in this area as the government wants to clean up pollution, said Natalia Bogomolova, regional industry manager of East Asia Pacific International Finance Corporation. She said that the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the financial arm of the World Bank, was discussing with Thai financial institutions a plan for how they can move into green bonds. The IFC subscribed to the entire US\$150 million issuance using its own accounts. The bond will be used to finance renewable energy, industrial energy efficiency and green building transactions in the Philippines.