

Thai News Update: 31 January 2020

1. U-Tapao Airport and AIS cooperate to develop the next level Smart Airport Terminal

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

U-Tapao Airport and AIS have joined forces under a memorandum of understanding on cooperation to expand the development of Smart Airport Terminal to the next level by studying and testing 5G technology and AI robotics. The aim is to elevate U-Tapao Rayong-Pattaya International Airport's Passenger Terminal 2 to be a smart terminal. It will also develop the passenger terminal in the upcoming airport to support economic growth, investment, tourism, and transportation, according to the EEC Eastern Special Economic Zone plan under the Thailand 4.0 policy.

2. Economic cabinet ready to okay aid for ailing firms

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

The economic cabinet looks set to approve aid measures at its meeting tomorrow for tourism operators battered by the coronavirus outbreak. Kobsak Pootrakool, deputy secretary-general to the prime minister for political affairs, said the measures include principal loan payment suspension for six months, an income tax payment suspension for six months and a 10-billion-baht soft loan programme. Mr Kobsak said the government will settle the proposed measures on 31 January and propose them to the economic cabinet for consideration and approval on 31 January.

3. Thai PBS, think tank IPPD collaborate to develop data-driven society

Source: Thai PBS World ([Link](#))

The Thai Public Broadcasting Service (Thai PBS) and newly-founded think tank Institute of Public Policy and Development (IPPD) signed a memorandum of understanding on 29 for cooperation aimed at fostering data system for public policy through greater public collaboration and participation. The agreement focuses on practical research, big data management and communication on public policy for Thailand's sustainable development. Thai PBS Director General Assoc. Prof. Wilasinee Phiphitkul said that Thai PBS consistently develops its contents

based on research studies and public consultations. Its media lab collects data and public feedbacks to be analysed and translated into various categories of contents on Thai PBS's different media platforms. "In working with IPPD, we will be able to access greater and valuable research-based data. As a result, our audiences will benefit from contents that are relevant and meaningful to their lives," she said.

4. Uttama ready for all budget possibilities

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

Finance Minister Uttama Savanayana was quick to settle fears by saying the government has prepared plans to dole out the investment budget after the Constitutional Court's decision to accept a petition asking for a ruling on the validity of the 2020 budget bill. Regardless of the court's ruling on the case, the government has prepared a contingency plan, but how long the budget bill will be put off is unknown, he said. The law allows regular and obligation budgets to be doled out based on the previous year's budget if the legislative process for the annual budget bill is incomplete before the fiscal year starts, said Mr Uttama. The investment budget for fiscal 2020 is 600 billion baht. Half is already committed to contractors and the remainder is for new projects.

5. Agriculture Ministry to distribute 1 million seedlings to fight air pollution

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

The Agriculture and Cooperatives Ministry is launching a campaign to tackle the air pollution problem and high levels of particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter. The campaign is in cooperation with the National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT), the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and the private sector. Agriculture and Cooperatives Minister Chalermchai Sri-on said on January 30: "This project is called the 'Green City Initiative by MOAC' and will be kicked off on February 9 at Siam Paragon Shopping Complex. We plan to distribute seedlings of six plants that are known to be effective in absorbing air pollution."

6. Egat prepares to bring in third LNG shipment

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

The Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (Egat) is planning to procure and import more liquefied natural gas (LNG) in accordance with Energy Ministry policy. Egat deputy governor Tawatchai Jakpaisal said this week the new shipment would be fed into its three power plants –

Bangpakong, Wangnoi and South Bangkok. The state enterprise is determining the LNG volume each will use, expected to be not more than one million tonnes this year. He added that Egat expected to import the new lot in the second half of the year.

7. PTTEP net profit surges 40% from strategic acquisitions

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

PTT Exploration and Production (PTTEP) reported a net profit of US\$1.569 billion last year, representing an increase of 40 per cent year on year, due mainly to growth in sales volume and capacity following new acquisitions and the purchase of additional stakes in the Bongkot field. The reserve-to-production (R/P) ratio also rose to 7.5 years, ensuring steady growth of the company and energy security of Thailand in the long run. PTTEP targets to raise sales volume by 11 per cent in 2020. Phongsthorn Thavisin, president and chief executive officer, said total revenue last year amounted to \$6.413 billion, increasing from \$5.459 billion in 2018 or a rise of 17 per cent, resulting mainly from the acquisitions of Murphy Oil Corporation's assets in Malaysia and Partex Holding BV.