

Thai News Update: 4 December 2018

1. Chinese Will Be First To Get Access To Thai E-Visa Service

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

The Consular Affairs Department will launch its first e-visa service in February, starting with it being available in Beijing with a plan to gradually expand to other countries over three years. The department announced on 3 December it had joined with Kasikornbank, which will handle the payments side, in making the service available. The e-visa service would be expanded to the United Kingdom in March and France a month later, the announcement said. All Thai embassies and consuls-general would offer the service within three years.

2. Cisco: 'Digitisation' To Be Worth \$96bn

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

Thailand's digital transformation value is expected to reach US\$96 billion (3.15 trillion baht) by 2022, driven by private organisations, says global technology firm Cisco Systems. "The majority of firms in Thailand are still in the first stage of digital transformation, which is the enabling the digitisation process," said Vatsun Thirapatarapong, managing director of Cisco Systems Thailand, who oversees the Indochina market. Of the \$96 billion, Cisco expects the private sector to make up \$76 billion and the government \$20 billion.

3. Five Thai E-Founder 'Champions For Development' Launched By Alibaba

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

Another five young Thai entrepreneurs have graduated from the UNCTAD and Alibaba Business School's eFounders Fellowship. For the fourth edition of the fellowship, the Thais joined with participants from 11 Asian countries, as 38 participants from across South and Southeast Asia were selected from over 300 applicants to take part in the intensive 14-day bootcamp. The Fellowship aims to help bridge the digital divide and enable young entrepreneurs with the right skills for their businesses, and encourages them to share their newly acquired knowledge with the communities they operate in.

4. Telecoms Regulator To Emphasise Incentives In 2019 As It Prepares For 5G

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

The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) on 4 December announced its next year's plans, which focus on extending a lifeline to the ailing digital TV licence holders and encouraging telecom operators to bid for new spectra. The watchdog will kick off the new year by holding an auction of the 700MHz band, totalling 2x45MHz of bandwidth. Part of the proceeds will be used to continue the NBTC's subsidy of the digital TV broadcasters' cost of transmitting their programmes through satellite networks. The NBTC wants to extend this subsidiary period to 2022 after the current subsidy period ends next year.

5. Ministry Hastens To Make CPTPP Deal Before February

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

The Commerce Ministry is speeding up concluding talks for Thailand to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), aiming to join this pact before the general election next February. The ministry will soon propose the pros and cons of this trade pact to Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak for acknowledgment. Sontirat Sontijirawong, the commerce minister, chaired the third round of the CPTPP working group on 3 December that considered if Thailand becomes a member. The working group sought opinions from 30 related agencies, following which the ministry will sum up all the costs and benefits for Mr Somkid's consideration.