

Daily Thai News Updates: 12 January 2017

1. State to focus on four key areas

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

With about one year left in office, the government says it will focus on four areas: the digital economy, infrastructure development, agricultural reform and local economic development via 18 provincial clusters. Speaking at yesterday's seminar entitled "2017: Thailand's Turning Point" held by the Economic Reporters Association, Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak said 2017 would be a year of execution for those four areas, which are seen as instrumental in upgrading Thailand's competitiveness and strengthening the economy. "Over the last two years, the government has already laid down solid foundations for future economic and social development, especially via amendments of key existing laws to facilitate trade, investment and social reforms," Mr Somkid said. Regarding the digital economy, the government has already earmarked 15 billion baht to develop the national broadband network and submarine cable project, he said.

2. UTCC forecasts 2.8% Thai export growth

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

Thai exports are likely to expand by an estimated 2.8 per cent this year – the best performance since 2013 – due to a recovering global economy, higher oil and crop prices and the baht's depreciation, according to the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce. The UTCC forecasts that overseas shipments will grow by between 1.3 per cent and 4.2 per cent to a full-year total of US\$218.4 billion-\$224.63 billion (Bt7.76 trillion-Bt7.98 trillion), with the most likely outcome being in the middle of the range, at 2.8-per-cent growth to \$221.58 billion. "With stronger economic expansion, and especially strong cross-border trade, Thai shipments will witness stronger positive growth this year, from about 0.5-per-cent expansion worth \$215.5 billion last year," Aat Pisanwanich, director of the UTCC's Centre for International Trade Studies, said yesterday.

3. World Bank forecasts 6.2 percent expansion in Asia-Pacific this year

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

Growth in East Asia and the Pacific is projected to ease to 6.2 per cent in 2017 as slowing growth in China is moderated by a pick-up in the rest of the region, while Thailand's gross domestic product will expand by 3.2 per cent, according to a World Bank report. The report released on Tuesday said macroeconomic policies were expected to support key domestic drivers of growth despite softness of external demand and overcapacity in some sectors. Excluding China, GDP growth in the region is seen advancing at a more rapid 5 per cent rate. China alone is anticipated to slow to 6.5 per cent in the year... Among commodity importers, growth in Thailand should remain steady at 3.2 per cent in 2017, helped by improved confidence and accommodative policies.

4. Economy could grow by more than 3-4 percent: Somkid

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

Thailand's economy could grow by more than the general consensus of 3-4 per cent this year, thanks to the reforms and shoring up of the country's fundamentals in 2016, Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak said. Speaking at a seminar titled 2017 – Thailand's Turning Point, Somkid said major countries' economic recoveries could have positive impacts on Thai exports, improvement in agricultural-product prices and tourism's full recovery. Somchai Sujjapongse, permanent secretary of the Finance Ministry, said Thailand had an opportunity to grow at its full potential of 4-5 per cent, and the government would make an effort this year to make the economy grow by more than 3 per cent. Somkid said the government had set a budget for integration at the provincial level, and the key was to speed the build-up of confidence in growing the economy. If projects could achieve their goals, there would be new engines to drive the Thai economy, he said.

5. Cybersecurity spending to rise

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

Cybersecurity spending by the public and private sectors will remain brisk this year, fuelled by the national e-payment scheme and several recent hacking attacks against government websites. "The public sector, financial, telecom and manufacturing industries will continue to be the country's four biggest spenders this year," said Piyatida Tantrakul, country manager of Trend Micro Thailand, the local operating unit of the Japanese security software firm. Spending on hybrid cloud security protection for data centres, computer network defence solutions and end-user device security will be in high demand to cope with the growth of cloud computing and the proliferation of mobile devices. Khongsak Kortrakul, senior technical manager of Trend Micro Thailand, said malware or ransomware threats (in which hackers ask users for money in exchange for unlocking their computer systems) will continue to grow, as hackers can earn US\$17,000 – \$30,000/victim.

6. Thai film industry still attractive despite 2016 slump, producer says

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

Thailand's Bt4-billion film industry is still attractive to overseas investors wanting to make movies here even though last year's ticket sales were below expectations, a producer said yesterday. "Thailand is still lucrative both for international film distribution and for overseas investors to co-produce movies with local partners," said Sangar Chatchairungruang, a producer at Transformation Films. Transformation Films is an example in this regard. In 2015, South Korea-based CJ Entertainment decided to place its first footprint in Thailand through a partnership with this company. The Nation has also learned that last year, a group of Thai business people and Hong Kong-based Yin Chuang International formed a 51:49 joint venture called Thai Phoenix Culture Entertainment to co-produce films with Thai production houses for major Internet networks in China and cinemas in Thailand. Under this partnership, the JV aims to make about five to 10 movies this year with a total investment of Bt500 million.

By Rajnee Narula

