

Daily Thai News Updates: 6 February 2017

1. Rice export at 9.88m tonnes in 2016, second to India

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

Thailand finished 2016 as the second largest rice exporter shipping total of 9.88 million tonnes, according to the Thai Rice Exporters Association. Association president Charoen Laothamatas said Thai rice exports rose 0.9% in 2016 over 2015, and were worth US\$4.4 billion. Vietnam finished third, shipping 4.95 million tonnes, Pakistan fourth with 4.19 million and the US fifth at 3.52 million. The US Department of Agriculture forecasts that India will remain the largest exporter this year, with 10 million tonnes, followed by Thailand 9.7 million, Vietnam 5.8 million and Pakistan 3.55 million. The global production will be at 480 million tonnes, slightly exceeding projected consumption of 477 million, according to the department. Global rice trade is predicted at 40 million tonnes. However, Mr Charoen said the Thai association predicts exports of only 9.5 million tonnes in 2017, worth around \$43 billion. Of this, around 4.6 million tonnes would be white rice, 2.4 million tonnes Hom Mali and 2 million tonnes parboiled rice. The rest would be glutinous rice and newly harvested fragrant rice.

2. Skilled workforce and strong R&D keys to Thailand 4.0 success

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

Several of the government's recent economic initiatives have the potential to kick-start Thailand's economy. To achieve the economic transformation to which the government aspires, having a skilled workforce and many more strategic investments in research and development (R&D) will be important. Following nearly four decades of impressive economic growth at 7.7% annually, the Thai economy slowed sharply to 3.3% over the last decade from 2005-15. At this rate, it would take Thailand well over two decades to achieve high-income status. A new World Bank report, "Getting Back on Track: Reviving Growth and Securing Prosperity for All", concludes that a main reason for the slowdown is a loss of competitiveness.

3. Megaprojects swell to B2.2 tn

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

The government's raft of big-ticket infrastructure projects has grown to 2.2 trillion baht in value after the Transport Ministry added 28 projects worth a combined 800 billion. After taking the 28 projects into account, 240 billion baht worth of public investment in large-scale infrastructure is expected to be disbursed and injected into the economy this year, said Finance Minister Apisak Tantivorawong. He said 10% of 800-billion-baht in projects is expected to be taken out in 2017, on top of 160 billion from 20 projects worth 1.4 trillion. State investment in infrastructure projects has emerged as the mainstay of the country's economic growth, while the recovery of several engines, including exports, private investment and domestic consumption, remain weak.

4. Ecotourism gives impetus to tourism

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

Some 800,000 foreign tourists last year came to Thailand with the specific purpose of visiting villages, natural sites, communities, and hilltribes across the Kingdom, while more than 2 million Thai tourists also pursued these interests. They mingled well with like-minded travellers who cherished the “ecotourism” theme. These destinations appealed mainly to visitors from the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France, Scandinavia, the United States, Australia and New Zealand. The number of foreign ecotourism visitors is expected to reach 1 million within the next year or two. While Thailand enjoys being one of the top 10 tourist destinations in the world, with nearly 30 million foreign visitors per year, the country now is attempting to embark on a new era in the adventure and ecotourism segment. To reach the targeted markets, the Thai Ecotourism and Adventure Travel Association (TEATA), under the direction of its new president, Neeracha Wongmasa, has mapped out strategic plans to develop ecotourism and adventure products to meet international standards and to seek new markets.

5. Shaping young minds to make the most of digital age

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

A new stage in the 20-year plan to help young Thais nationwide to cope with the learning skills and mental challenges of the 21st century has been launched by Thailand Knowledge Park. TK Park's operation plan for 2017 is based on the concept of "learning in the digital age", helping youth to think, analyse and create career development under the national scheme. The Thailand Knowledge Park will expand its network at all levels, placing special importance on the southern border provinces and supporting outside classroom learning, said Rames Promyen, acting director of Thailand TK Park. He said advanced information technology connects people, shapes development in various dimensions and helps distribute information, news, knowledge and innovation. Digital age changes are coming with new opportunities fuelling social and economic growth.

6. L'Oreal's green distribution centre aims to 'share beauty' with all

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

L'Oreal Thailand's green distribution centre at TPARK Bangna is in step with the group's mission to reduce its environmental footprint by 60 per cent. As part of a sustainability commitment for 2020, it is Asia's first LEED-certified Silver Level green distribution centre. The company's managing director Nathalie Gerschtein Keraudy said, "The opening of our new green distribution centre truly underscores our commitment to sustainability, to improve the way we do business across our value chain. "With this new distribution centre, we are driving our "Sharing Beauty With All" vision under the pillar of 'Producing Sustainably', by reducing our environmental footprint while bringing beauty to more new consumers." This new green distribution centre will support L'Oreal Group's mission in reducing the environmental footprint by 60 percent from the 2005 baseline. The distribution centre was built up in collaboration with TPARK, a leading provider of serviced rental factories, and it has received a Silver LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Certificate. The LEED rating system is devised by the United States Green Building Council to evaluate the environmental performance of sustainable buildings.

