

Daily Thai News Updates: 7 September 2017

1. 40 tonnes of smuggled Indian meat seized

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

Customs officials have seized 40 tonnes of smuggled buffalo meat worth about four million baht from a cold storage facility in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya district. Worawut Wiboonsirichai, director of the Customs Department's investigation and suppression office, led the team that searched the Kamal Meat Product Co Ltd cold storage facility in tambon Lumphi on Wednesday. The raid followed an investigation into reports a large amount of frozen meat had been smuggled from India and stored there. The search found many packs of frozen buffalo meat, totaling 40,000kg, in the cold storage. The meat was seized and would be destroyed, Mr Worawut said. It was the largest seizure of smuggled meat this year. It is the fifth time smuggled meat has been seized from KMP, but the company appeared undeterred, officials said.

2. Government eager for new World Bank ranking

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

An ambitious goal to move Thailand into the top 10 of the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business ranking is achievable under the current government because the administration has a clear agenda to remove investment obstacles, the finance minister says. The government can move on its agenda unopposed, in particular focusing on sustainability, said Finance Minister Apisak Tantivorawong. Thailand ranked 46th in the World Bank's 2016 Ease of Doing Business report, which measures 190 economies. This year's report will be announced next month, and Mr Apisak voiced optimism that Thailand's ranking would improve. In the 10 areas the report measures, Thailand apparently improved in four: starting a business, registering property, protecting minority shareholders and resolving insolvency, he said.

3. Digital economy master plan among tech projects approved

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

The Digital Economy and Society Committee has approved the National Digital Economy Master Plan, the National e-Commerce Master Plan and a plan to develop seven smart cities around the country. Digital Economy and Society Minister Pichet Durongkaveroj said both master plans

cover the five years from 2017-21. The plans aim to usher the country into the Thailand 4.0 era and break the country free from the middle-income trap. With the e-Commerce Plan, the ministry will order Thailand Post to provide e-payment and e-logistics services so that grassroots people and small and medium-sized enterprises in communities nationwide can distribute their products via an e-marketplace and expand their customer base. The committee also assigned the ministry to set up and supervise seven smart cities in the country to support the digital economy.

4. Commerce Ministry wraps up business strategy for services

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

The Commerce Ministry has completed the drafting of “Thailand's Service Business Strategy”, which aims to help steer the country towards becoming the hub of services sector in Asean. Among the four components of the strategy is the creation of what it calls Service 4.0 Warriors, the creation of innovation-based services, and the connection of Thai services businesses with the world market, as well as the upgrading of related laws and a services database. Commerce Minister Apiradi Tantraporn said that according to the World Trade Organisation, Thailand's export of services was ranked in 11th place last year, up from 21 in 2015. Meanwhile, the Commerce Ministry aims to increase the trade value of organic farming by more than 20 per cent a year from a market value Bt2.7 billion, Bt1.6 billion of total trade in the domestic market and Bt1.1 billion of total trade value from the export market, she said.

5. Regulators slashes license fees

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

The telecom regulator's board yesterday approved halving operating licence fees for telecom companies to encourage competition and strengthen small and medium-sized companies. The new operating fees will help reduce operating costs for telecom players in the market and promote healthy competition. The adjustment of licence fees also paves the way to promote newcomers to the industry, along with digital economy development such as Internet of Things (IoT) providers...The new operating fee structure will be effective end of this year, and will impose a fee rate of 0.125% of total revenue for operators who earn revenue up to 100 million baht a year, 0.25% for total revenue of 100-500 million baht, 0.5% of 500 million to 1 billion total revenue, 0.75% of 1-5 billion total revenue, and 1% for total revenue over 5 billion baht. All telecom operators have to continue paying the USO fee at the existing rate of 2.5% of total revenue.

6. Call for Thai investors to cash in on Tokyo Olympics in 2020

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

Thai investors are being urged to put their money into Japanese property, especially in hotels and elderly care centres, as demand is forecast to surge with the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. Yoshihiko Oda, president of Kagaya Hotels Corporation, which operates five ryokans (traditional inns), said Japan still needs more investment to accommodate growing tourism. Japan aims to attract 27-28 million international arrivals this year, up from 24 million last year. The country expects foreign visitor numbers to nearly double to 40 million in 2020, when it hosts the Olympic Games, and will therefore need more facilities to accommodate them...The Japanese government is soliciting investment at home and abroad under the campaign "Invest Japan," to restore the economy and strengthen long-term tourism growth.

7. Bandwidth approved for rail projects

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

The government agreed yesterday to allocate frequency bandwidth for International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT) to support the ambitious double-track and high-speed rail network nationwide. The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission had earlier proposed that the Transport Ministry be allowed to use a bandwidth on the 800-900MHz spectrum for a wireless railway communication system. The proposal was approved at a meeting of the National Digital Economy and Society Committee yesterday chaired by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, said Digital Economy and Society Minister Pichet Durongkaveroj. The committee also approved a request to allocate the 400MHz band for the communication network of a planned Thai-Japanese high-speed railway project.

8. Households allowed to sell solar power

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

The government will end the decade-long restriction on households and commercial buildings selling power generated by their solar rooftops to state utilities in the fourth quarter of the year. The government will end the decade-long restriction on households and commercial buildings selling power generated by their solar rooftops to state utilities in the fourth quarter of the year. The buying rate is being fixed at below 2.6 baht per kilowatt-hour, according to the Energy Ministry...Energy

Minister Anantaporn Karnchanarat said the government is considering granting licences to residents and building owners. The total capacity to be allowed, however, has yet to be finalised.