

Thai News Update: 15 February 2019

1. Farms To Get B12bn For Upgrade

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

The government pledges to splurge a combined 12 billion baht to finance farm sector reform in fiscal 2020, focusing largely on the megafarm scheme in which the government procures machinery and agricultural equipment for farmers who group together to cut production costs and raise productivity. The fiscal 2020 budget is the first year in which state agencies are required to conduct a budgeting plan on an agenda basis jointly operated by seven ministries comprising agriculture and agricultural cooperatives, commerce, industry, science and technology, public health, interior, and finance.

2. KSS Allots B100m For Digital Plan

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

Krungsri Securities (KSS), a subsidiary of Bank of Ayudhya, has unveiled its 2019 business plan to invest more than 100 million baht in digital strategies to enhance customers' experience and expand the customer base. The company has 50,000 retail investor accounts, 18,000 of which are actively trading, and aims for growth to 100,000 within three years with active trading at 50%. The company plans to increase retail accounts and focus on serving investors with portfolios of 3-10 million baht.

3. BoT Uneasy Over Baht's Rapid Rise

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

Bank of Thailand governor Veerathai Santiprabhob has voiced concerns over the rapid baht run-up but confirmed that no speculation has been detected. The central bank is closely monitoring foreign fund, sources said. The central bank stands ready to cope with any irregularities in the foreign exchange market, but it must be done cautiously amid the trade spat between the US and China to prevent other countries from perceiving the action is aimed at trade benefits, he said.

4. Ministry's B20 Plan To End Surplus Issue

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

The Energy Ministry has set a new goal to make biodiesel B20 available nationwide to tackle the persistent surplus of crude palm oil. B20 is a blend of 80% diesel and 20% methyl ester content from crude palm oil. The current formulation is 7% crude palm oil for biodiesel B7. In 2019, crude palm oil output is expected to reach 2.5 million tonnes, but 2 million is the normal annual output. The 500,000-tonne surplus will need to be absorbed by other sectors. Energy Minister Siri Jirapongphan said policymakers will set long-term measures to mitigate the surplus output that takes place every year.

5. Completion Of Bids For Thai-China Rail Project Expected In March

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

Transport Minister Arkhom Termpittayapaisith is confident of completing the bids for the remaining 12 separate contracts of the Thai-Chinese high-speed rail project, with the first phase running from Bangkok to Nakhon Ratchasima, in March this year. Arkhom said, after chairing a meeting of the committee on the Thai-Chinese high-speed rail scheme yesterday, that the State Railway of Thailand (SRT) is preparing terms of reference (TOR) for five contracts of the third 144-kilometre section. Fair price is expected to be determined this month for seven contracts related to the fourth 91.25-kilometre section, also under the first phase. The terms of reference for the contracts are to be released next month. So far, construction of the first 3.5-kilometre section from Klang Dong to Pang Asok in Nakhon Ratchasima's Pak Chong district has commenced, while contract-signing for the second 11-kilometre section will take place on March