

Thai News Update: 20 February 2018

1. BOT Clarifies Banking Agent Plans After Social Media Report Leads to Bank Licence Misunderstanding

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

The Bank of Thailand (BOT) on 19 February clarified its planned new regulations regarding licensing in the banking sector, after many people had mistakenly understood that it would be granting a new banking licence to the 7-11 convenience-store chain. Assistant Governor Somboon Chitphentom told a news conference that the misunderstanding had arisen after Japan's Seven Bank was mentioned in posts on social media. Seven Bank is a subsidiary of Seven & I Holdings, which is also the parent of 7-Eleven Japan. However, the BOT only plans to allow banks to appoint banking agents in remote areas where people find it hard to access financial services, and has no policy to issue further banking licences as such, he stressed.

2. EEC Aerotropolis Study Likely to Wrap Up in 2019

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

The government expects the EEC aerotropolis' feasibility study to be completed in the next 18 months, says EEC Office secretarygeneral Kanit Sangsubhan. The aerotropolis will cover 6,500 rai between Rayong and Chon Buri in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC). The 250-billion-baht project will be financed through a public-private partnership (PPP) scheme. The government said it will announce the terms of reference for the project this month, aiming to sign a contract in December. The government allocated 7 million baht for the first phase of the feasibility study and 10 million for the second phase. The government recently announced its infrastructure development plans, which include 168 projects worth 988 billion baht. PPPs will provide 59% of the capital (583 billion baht); the government's annual statement of expenditure will contribute 20% (296 billion); state enterprises will contribute 10% (98 billion), and the navy will contribute 1%.

3. Digital ID Project to Boost Online Transactions

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

The government is steering work on a National Digital Identity (Digital ID) project to increase the range of digital transactions and reduce fraud in online payment channels. Some eight groups have been identified as stakeholders and will begin participating in the project in June. The Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA) expects that it will have around 10,000 Digital ID registrations under the first phase of the project. ETDA executive director Surangkana Wayuparb said the agency has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Omise to develop the Digital ID platform as a means of enabling Thais to more securely identify themselves when making online transactions. The project will make use of a number of means such as facial recognition, a one-time password and fingerprint recognition.

4. Data Reinforces Optimism for Economy

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

Growth in the country's economy is on track to accelerate this year after a strong final-quarter performance to close out last year, the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) said on 19 February. Gross domestic product expanded 4 per cent in the last quarter of 2017 from the same period a year earlier, helping full-year growth to come in at 3.9 per cent, up from 3.3 per cent from 2016, said Poramatee Vimolsiri, secretary general of the agency-level state think-tank. Seasonally adjusted, the economy in the fourth quarter expanded 0.5 per cent quarter on quarter, suggesting sustained expansion, he said. Although the economic expansion from October to December decelerated from a 4.3 per cent rise in the third quarter, Poramatee said the 4 per cent gain showed that "growth remained robust". A contraction of 1.3 per cent in farm sector output, caused by widespread floods and amid volatile weather conditions, was largely to blame for the quarter-on-quarter easing in GDP growth for the final three months of 2017.

5. Bata's new Thailand Boss Eyes Dramatic Expansion

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

International shoe manufacturer Bata has named Paolo Grassi as managing director for Thailand just as the company marks its 88th anniversary in the Kingdom. Grassi has more than 22 years' experience with Bata and spent the last 11 years as managing director in Singapore, Italy and

Malaysia. He oversaw retail networks, franchising and wholesale and streamlined team structures and business processes. “Thanks to my strong and experienced team, I am confident we will be able to achieve our goals and keep the brand at the top of customers’ minds,” said Grassi. At Bata Thailand, Grassi is working on making the company the leading international fashion retailer in Thailand by providing high-quality, stylish and comfortable shoes at affordable prices at the 251 Bata stores countrywide.

6. Anlene Milk Set For Major Relaunch after 22 Years

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

Anlene, an “adult milk” brand under New Zealand-based dairy nutrition company Fonterra, has reappeared on the market for the first time since 1996. It is targeting 15-20-per-cent growth by the end of 2018 with new product Anlene MovMax, said to build healthy bones, joints and muscle for better mobility. “Across Southeast Asia, dairy consumption is rising, with dairy demand growing by 4-5 per cent every year,” said Fonterra Brands (Thailand) managing director Paul Andrew Richards. “On top of that, we see some growing consumer trends in Thailand on which we are well placed to capitalise, with consumers placing more focus on better nutrition and healthier lifestyles through different stages of life.

7. ICO and Cryptocurrency Rules to Debut in March

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

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is set to introduce new regulations to supervise initial coin offerings (ICOs) and cryptocurrency in March, while reiterating that investment in such financial instruments carries hefty risks, especially for small investors. The SEC expects to issue the regulatory framework over the next 2-3 weeks to supervise funding raised via ICOs and cryptocurrency, SEC secretary-general Rapee Sucharitakul said on Feb 19 after a joint meeting with representatives from the Finance Ministry, the Bank of Thailand, Stock Exchange of Thailand and the Anti-Money Laundering Office, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak. Firms that trade ICOs are also required to disclose information showing the fundraising has no connection to money laundering and does not intend to deceive investors.