

Thai News Update: 24 April 2018

1. Thai Cos Keen To Invest \$ 3 Bn In Indian Infra Projects

Source: The Hindu, Business Line ([Link](#))

Several Thailand-based companies which are operating in India plan to invest around \$ 3 billion in the next three years period in the areas of green and brown field projects including energy, infrastructure and metals. “The Thailand based companies see good opportunity here and are looking to invest around \$ 3 billion by 2020. The fast growing Indian market remains attractive for Thai investors given the opportunities in green and brown field projects including energy, infrastructure and metals,” Thai Trade Center executive director and consul Suwimol Tilokruangchai told PTI in Mumbai. “We are looking towards India with a great interest from last seven decades and plans to enhance the bi-lateral trade thanks to the positive approach of both the Thai and Indian governments,” she added. Over the decades, nearly 30 Thai companies are active in the field of infrastructure, real estate, food processing, chemicals, hotel and hospitality sectors in India. Currently, Thai goods have benefited from the second FTA agreement with 10 members of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) region with India. Thailand holds the second largest economy in the region. Since the Thailand too falls under ASEAN group, Indian traders and importers can benefit from these FTA, Suwimol added. The Thai government has also invited Indian companies to investment in the growth of Thailand. At present around 40 Indian companies have made an investment of around \$ 2 billion in the areas of software, agri chemicals, electric car development in Thailand.

2. Thailand Not A Currency Manipulator, Says Central Bank Chief

Source: Nikkei Asian Review ([Link](#))

Thailand does not intervene with foreign exchange rates to gain competitiveness in trade, its central bank chief said on April 23, amid rising concerns that the country may become the first in Southeast Asia to be placed under trade scrutiny by the U.S. In an interview with the Nikkei Asian Review, Bank of Thailand Governor Veerathai Santiprabhob stressed that the Thai baht had been moving in line with market supply and demand, pointing out that the currency had been strengthening in the past year or so to become one of the best-performing currencies in the region

due to capital inflows from advanced economies. "We have no policies of fixing exchange rates at a particular level or manipulating exchange rate to a particular level," he said. With a huge current account surplus accounting for 10.8% of its gross domestic product in 2017 and a trade surplus with the U.S. topping \$20 billion, Thailand has already filled at least two of the three criteria that the U.S. Treasury uses to designate a trade partner a currency manipulator. In the U.S. Treasury's latest report earlier this month, Thailand was not put on its watchlist due to its small trade volumes, but it has hinted it will expand the list of countries under scrutiny in its next report expected in October. Thailand's foreign reserves at the end of 2017 totaled \$202.5 billion, a growth of nearly 20% year-on-year. The sharp rise hinted at baht-selling and dollar-buying by the Bank of Thailand.

3. New Oil-Field Bid Process For 'Benefit Of Public'

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

Politicians And bureaucrats will play a bigger role in the decision-making process for oil and gas production in the Gulf of Thailand under new bidding terms and conditions approved by the National Energy Policy Committee (NEPC) April 23, according to industry sources. Prime Minister General Prayut Chan-o-cha said after chairing the NEPC meeting that the new round of bidding for both Bongkot and Erawan fields will be done with transparency for maximum public benefits and fairness for the private sector. The new Production Sharing Contract (PSC) method will be used for the first time in the bidding for rights to explore and produce oil and gas from the huge offshore Bongkot and Erawan fields, which account for as much as 75 per cent of Thailand's total gas output. The upcoming bidding, in which winners will have to invest tens of billions of baht annually for exploration and production work, is expected to attract both Thai and foreign petroleum giants, including PTT Exploration and Production (PTTEP), Chevron of the US and Mubadala of the United Arab Emirates. Petroleum industry sources said the switch to the PSC method in the new round of bidding, replacing the previous concession method, had followed years of heavy lobbying and public protests by non-government groups such as one led by former Bangkok senator Rosana Tositrakul who asserted that the public would gain more from the PSC method.

4. TOT, Teleassets And Dtac Trinet Join Forces For First 4G LTE-TDD Network

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

TOT, TeleAssets and dtac TriNet on April 23 signed agreements to launch the country's first 4G LTE-TDD network, on the widest bandwidth of 60MHz in the 2300MHz spectrum. One of agreements is for the lease of telecommunication equipment, and the other for a domestic roaming service. The deal is a major breakthrough for Thailand's digital infrastructure to materialise the "Thailand 4.0" vision endorsed by Prime Minister General Prayut Chan-o-cha to reduce inequalities and promote universal access as per the 20-year national economic and social development plan. The new collaboration will also serve the rapid growth of the country's mobile users and stimulate a long-term business opportunity for state enterprise TOT. Under the collaborative framework, which lasts through 2025, TOT will lease telecommunication equipment from TeleAssets – a subsidiary of dtac TriNet – to build a network for broadband wireless access, including fixed wireless broadband and mobile broadband. TOT will use a portion of the network capacity to provide its services to customers and to drive the government's digitisation policy. The remaining network capacity will be used by dtac TriNet through the roaming agreement, under which TOT will receive an annual revenue stream of Bt4.51 billion, said TOT president Montchai Noosong.

5. Thaibev Joins Sabeco Board After Gov't Steps In

Source: Vietnam News ([Link](#))

Shareholders of the Saigon Beer-Alcohol-Beverage Corporation (Sabeco) voted to add three new members to the management board, including one from Thai Beverage Public Co Ltd, at an extraordinary general meeting on April 23. Koh Poh Tiong, a Singaporean national, is chairman of the Thai Beverage-owned Beer Group, which owns a 49 per cent stake in Vietnam Beverage. Malcolm Tan Tiang Hing, CEO of Shanghai-based alcoholic beverages distributor Dxccl International, and Sunyaluck Chaikajornawat of Thai law firm Weerawong Chinnawat & Partners Ltd, were elected as independent members. The meeting was held after the Ministry of Industry and Trade had told Sabeco to "tackle its personnel matters" after ThaiBev sent a letter to the Government expressing concern that it has not been directly involved in Sabeco's management until now despite owning 53.59 per cent of its charter capital