

Thai News Update: 28 December 2018

1. Rice Exports Tipped To Fall As Rivalry Bites

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

Expectations for the country's rice exports next year have been scaled back in the face of intense competition from fellow producers. The Thai Rice Exporters Association estimates exports will come in at 10 million tonnes in 2019, shrinking from the forecast 11 million tonnes for this year. The association disclosed the forecast after a meeting of the Rice Policy and Management Committee that was chaired by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha on December 27. Association president Charoen Laothammatas said those at the meeting acknowledged that the global and Thai rice environments in 2018 and 2019 were different. Thailand, as of early December, had posted exports that had so far this year amounted to 10.2 million tonnes.

2. Cabbies Gain With Go-Ahead On Bt10-Bn Soft Loan Plan

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

Struggling taxi drivers have been heartened by a government decision to press ahead with a Bt10-billion soft loan scheme that will help the drivers own their cabs. Industry Minister Uttama Savanayana, chairing a meeting that considered the special loan proposal on December 27, said the financial burden on taxi drivers would be eased as the scheme will reduce the daily rent of about Bt800 per taxi to Bt200. Further, they can make instalments of Bt400 per taxi a day to enable them to own the cabs upon the completion of the payments.

3. Egco Signs On With Korean LNG Partner

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

SET-listed Electricity Generating Plc (Egco), the country's first independent power producer (IPP), has announced its diversification to liquefied natural gas (LNG) with SK E&S Co, South Korea's utility network service provider. President Jakgrich Pibulpaioj said the move marks the second stage of a strategic partnership after the Korean company decided to sell some assets to Egco. The

two companies are scheduled to sign an LNG business cooperation agreement in January 2019, but further business plans have not been disclosed.

4. TMB, Tbank Talk Merger

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

Talks of a potential merger between TMB Bank and Thanachart Bank (TBank), including the possibility that the finance Ministry will inject fresh funds to maintain its shareholding in TMB, are expected to be concluded by the end of January. If the deal goes through, the Finance Ministry's shareholding in TMB is likely to be diluted and it will need to pump fresh funding into the bank to retain its stake, Prapas Kong-Ied, director-general of the State Enterprise Policy Office (Sepa), told the Bangkok Post. If the deal goes through, the Finance Ministry's shareholding in TMB is likely to be diluted and it will need to pump fresh funding into the bank to retain its stake, Prapas Kong-Ied, director-general of the State Enterprise Policy Office (Sepa), told the Bangkok Post.