

Thai News Update: 29 April 2019

1. DEPA Aims To Create Innovation Hub

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

State agency plans to develop a digital workforce in support of five s-curve sectors. The Digital Economy Promotion Agency (DEPA) aims to drive innovative and technology trends to support the Thailand 4.0 vision. The agency has also joined hand with international business partners to set up a digital innovation centre in Thailand. DEPA senior executive vice president Passakorn Prathombuts said the agency aims to build up Thailand as a hub of new innovation and technologies for artificial reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), robotics and mechatronics to support the Thailand 4.0 scheme, Digital Park Thailand and IOT Institute so that the country can develop its digital workforce to cater to the needs of the market. It will also develop the digital workforce to support five new s-curve business sectors in the country: robotics, aviation and logistics, biofuels and biochemical, digital and medical hub.

2. Pheu Thai Panel To Mull 6 More Projects

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

Six additional projects worth a combined 85 billion baht are expected to seek the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) committee's approval this year to proceed under the joint investment scheme. Any of the six projects that are ready for investment can be proposed to the PPP committee without waiting for a new government to form, said Prapas Kong-Ied, director-general of the State Enterprise Policy Office (Sepo). The Public Health Ministry's medical centre worth 8.22 billion baht is Sepo's priority because it will start helping people as soon as it opens, he said.

3. Hospitals Sue Over Price Curbs

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

Private hospitals have filed a lawsuit with the Central Administrative Court against the Commerce Ministry's proposal to put medical and healthcare expenses on the state price control

list. They said the proposal and ensuing attempts to control the prices of such products and services have damaged their business. Commerce permanent secretary Boonyarit Kalayanamit said the Commerce Ministry recently received a letter from the Central Administrative Court informing it that the Private Hospital Association had filed the lawsuit in the middle of this month against the Central Committee on Prices of Goods and Services, which on Jan 9 approved putting medical supplies and service charges on the state price control list as part of efforts to stem price-gouging.

4. Three New Areas In Biochemical Hub

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

The Industry Ministry is speeding up development of its biochemical hub in three new provinces -- Chachoengsao, Ubon Ratchathani and Lop Buri -- in addition to the four ongoing provinces of Khon Kaen, Nakhon Sawan, Kamphaeng Phet and Udon Thani. The bioeconomy plan was launched in 2017 for the period of 2018-27. It is part of the Pracha Rat (People's State) initiative, whereby the government will promote value-added agricultural products such as cassava, tapioca and sugar cane in order to increase household income.