**Weekly Economic & Commercial Report (14th July - 20th July 2018)

Internal

New 2018 export target to 9 percent**
*Matichon 14.07.2018. 2018*

Mr. Sontirat Sontijirawong, Minister of Commerce revealed that the ministry will adapt the export goal of 2018 from 8% to 9% due to upturn of world economy, despite US-China trade war. Along with overall economy growth, the government also planned to encourage local economy including welfare smart card, payment application for Thong Fah (Blue Flag) project, and increasing agricultural product price with online trading channels such as the collaboration between thaitrade.com and Alibaba Group through Tmall.com which push up rice and durians selling in the website.

**Seminar on wing up SMEs to world market**
*Post Today 15.07.2018*

The Department of International Trade Promotion (DITP) and Department of Foreign Trade (DFT), Ministry of Commerce, in collaboration with the New Economy Academy (NEA), and Bangkok Post Group, hosted a seminar entitled “Giving Wings to SMEs to Fly Higher in the Global Market”, at Vibhavadee Ballroom, Centara Grand at Central Ladprao, Bangkok, on Thursday, 12 July, 2018. The afternoon session featured two panels hosted by Mr. Suthipong Tadpitalkul. The opening topic ‘Thai SMEs on the World Stage, business Opportunities in China, India and ASEAN Markets’, was addressed by penelists Ms. Sresuda Winitsuvan, Head of Public Relations and Content Partnership Department, Tencent (Thailand) Co, Ltd.

**Auctions for low-cost housing contracts in view**
*The Nation 17.07.2018*

The Treasury Department's auctions to allow the private sector to develop low-cost housing projects with 2,750 units on eight state land plots in as many provinces are expected soon. The department informed Treasury officials in related provinces to invite companies to jointly invest in the Pracha Rat (People's State) housing scheme, said director-general Patchara Anuntasilpa. Provinces that are ready to commence bidding can begin, he said. The Treasury Department plans to offer state land in eight provinces for development of low-cost housing projects, allowing low-income earners to own their own homes at affordable prices.

**VAT on e-commerce internet platforms**
*The Nation 18.07.2018*

The Cabinet yesterday approved a proposal to collect VAT from foreign|e-commerce and Internet platforms. It has also given the green light for the collection of a 7-per cent value added tax from foreign vendors and e-commerce platforms, said government spokesman Maj-Gen Sansern Kaewkamnerd. The taxes will apply to those selling goods and services on Internet platforms as well as the operaters of Internet platforms such as Google, Amazon and Alibaba. The two groups have to register their tax compliance with the Revenue Department in Thailand. The government will first forward the draft bill to the Council of State, the government legal advisory body, before submiting it to the National Legislative Assembly for a debate.

**GlobalData predicts 10% pharma growth**
*Bangkok Post 18.07.2018*

pharmaceutical market in Thailand is projected to grow by 10% a year and reach US$9.47 billion (314.8 billion baht) in 2020, driven by booming strong internal growth and medical tourism, according to analytics firm GlobalData. Compared with other Asean countries (with the exception of Singapore), the strength of Thailand’s medical tourism industry grew out of its strong leisure tourism industry and relatively well-developed hospital system, medical experts said at a Thailand innovation forum held in Boston in June. The government launched a number of initiatives such as the 11th National Economic and Social Development Plan (201216) and the Second National Plan for Older Persons (2002-21).

**Thai tourism sweeps B1trn in revenue**
*Matichon 19.07.2018*

Mr. Pongpanu Svetarundra, the Permanent Secretary of Tourism and Sports Ministry, reported overview of Thai tourists during first five months that the total number of tourists reached 35.54 million or 4.98% increase comparing to the same period last year; the total revenue reached 100.5 billion baht after local travelling promotion since 2017; highest revenue provinces are Nakhon Si Thammarat, Chiangrai, and Trat in order. The Ministry also planned to promote Tham Luang cave in Chiangrai and improve the facilities there. He also reported the overview of foreign tourists in first half 2018 that the number of tourists reached 19.48 million or 12.46% increase; the total revenue reached 1 trillion baht; Chinese tourists ranked number one both in number and Thailand’s revenue. Despite Phuket boat accident, the number of Chinese tourists does not become negative but it is expected to decelerate. The Ministry planned to improve the image of Phuket tourism after finishing providing compensation to the victims.

**Total new company in 2018 expected to reach 80k**
*Thai Post 19.07.2018*

The Department of Business Development revealed that 6,514 new registered companies registered in June or 11% increase comparing to May. Total number of out-of-business Company is 1,392 companies in June or 37% increase comparing to May. Total number of new registered company during first six months of 2018 is 37.5k companies. The Department also estimated that total new registered company number will reach 80k this year due to economic upturn.

**Google offers free public Wi-Fi**
*The Nation 19.07.2018*

Google Thailand yesterday launched a series of initiatives, including free high-speed public Wi-Fi, to enable more Thai consumers and businesses to participate in the growth of the digital economy. The initiatives were announced at the first Google for Thailand event, held in Bangkok under the theme “Leave no Thai behind”, aimed at promoting equality of digital access. Ben King, country director of Google Thailand, said at the event that the Google’s initiatives would span across the four pillars: access, education, content and products and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).“They were designed to ensure that all Thais would have opportunities and know-how to access technology and use it to build livelihoods,” he said.

**External**

**Somkid: Japan backs Thai CPTPP bid**
*Bangkok Post 19.07.2018*

Japan has agreed to support Thailand becoming a member of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), a newly formed bloc of 11 Pacific Rim nations excluding the US. Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak led high-ranking Thai officials in a meeting Thursday with Japanese counterparts led by Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga in Tokyo. Mr Somkid said Japan has agreed to Thailand's request and is willing to support Thailand becoming a member of CPTPP. Thailand plans to apply for membership later this year. On March 8, 11 Pacific Rim countries signed the CPTPP, which was revised after the US withdrew from the previous TPP agreement in January 2017. The signatories are Singapore, Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru and Vietnam. The CPTPP members welcomed interest from other economies wishing to join the trade bloc.

**Asia seen resisting pressures on growth**
*The Nation 20.07.2018*

Growth in Asia and the Pacific’s developing economies for 2018 and 2019 will remain solid as growth continues apace across the region, despite rising tensions between the United States and some of its trading partners, says a new Asian Development Bank (ADB) report. In a supplement to its Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2018 report released last April, the ADB forecasts 2018 growth for Asia and the Pacific at 6 per cent for 2018 and 5.9 per cent for 2019, in line with its previous projections. Excluding Asia’s newly industrialised economies, growth is forecast at 6.5 per cent in 2018 and 6.4 per cent in 2019, also unchanged from April.

**Bilateral**

**Seminar on “India ASEAN: Trade Relations & Way to Enhance Cooperation”***Bangkok, 18.07.2018*

India-Thai Chamber Commerce, Bangkok in collaboration with Embassy of India organized a seminar on “India ASEAN: Trade Relations & Way to Enhance Cooperation” on 18th July 2018 at ITCC Convention Hall, Bangkok. The seminar was attended by Mr. Abbagani Ramu, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, Bangkok, Mr. S.S.Phool, President, ITCC and other officers from Embassies of ASEAN countries in Thailand, ITCC members, Chambers, industrialists etc. The seminar was addressed by the eminent panelists from ASEAN countries. The panelists were: Ms. Kejpiron (Kate) Hohsuman, DDG, Department of Trade Negotiations, Ministry of Commerce of Thailand; Mr. Linga Setiawan, Minister Counsellor, Embassy of Indonesia; Ms. Nadia Sapee, Minister Counsellor, Embassy of Malaysia; Mr. Marciano, Brijmohan, Director, Singapore Thai Chamber of Commerce; Mr. Surapol Maneeping, Vice President, Thailand Cambodia Friendship Association; Mr. Rakesh Singh, Representative of Thai Chamber of Commerce; Mr. Arjan Goswami, Asian Development Bank; Dr. Amornthip Chawla, Head of Research Office, CIMB Thai Bank; Dr. Sanjay Kumar, Commercial Representative, Embassy of India. Panelists presented their views on the enhancement of India-ASEAN trade cooperation. Various dimensions of the cooperation viz trade, investment, tourism, people to people connectivity etc. were discussed. The Seminar ended with the Q&A session and was well attended by around 100 participants from Various Embassy, Trade Association and Thai and Indian business community.

**Royal Enfield kick-starts Thailand, Indonesia subsidiary talks**
*Bangkok Post 18.07.2018*

Royal Enfield, the manufacturer of classic motorcycles, is working to establish subsidiaries in Thailand and Indonesia on the wave of strong sales and growing brand awareness in Southeast Asia.The local subsidiaries will be in charge of all business aspects, said Arun Gopal, head of international business for the Indian motorcycle firm. The company is in talks with the investment bureaus of each country. "We are expanding our team and network in both countries after opening subsidiaries in North and South America," he said. "Thailand is such a mature market for premium motorcycles, while Indonesia has annual sales that are 20% less than here." The company wants to further build Royal Enfield's reputation and achieve sales on a global scale, said Mr Gopal. Indonesia has annual sales that are 20% less than here." The company wants to further build Royal Enfield's reputation and achieve sales on a global scale, said Mr Gopal.

**Thais investing in India**
*Matichon 19.07.2019*

Delta Electronics (Thailand) supported a high-level Tamil Nadu Government delegation visit to attract Thai investment to the South Indian province. The Tamil Nadu Government selected Delta as an outstanding Thailand-based investor to support its promotion activities in Thailand. The mission’s main aim is to attract international companies and investors to Tamil Nadu’s Global Investors Meet (GIM) scheduled to take place at the Chennai Trade Centre January 23-24, 2019.

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