

Digital-based economy

Govt will push for a digital-based economy: Pridiyathorn

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The government plans to push for a digital-based economy for long-term economic development and expects to see concrete results within one year, Deputy Prime Minister MR Pridiyathorn Devakula said yesterday.

Pridiyathorn said the digital-based economy was a very difficult part of government administration but it was vital, given it is fundamental for sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, services, finance and banking.

It might be late for Thailand to push for a digital base, but it is not too late to start it, he said.

"A digital-based economy is not only about hardware or software, but also a new economic base for other sectors to grow," he said.

In banking, transactions are now based on the digital system, he said.

Pridiyathorn also plans urgent economic measures and has set a target of doing this within the first three months of this administration.

The moves will focus on government policy to enhance the country's economic capability, and accelerating disbursement of the rest of the fiscal 2014 state budget and the 2015 budget efficiently. The ministry plans to review applications for private enterprises and investors, help farmers generate proper income, reduce obstacles to exports, search for new export markets, and persuade more foreign tourists to come to Thailand.

One of Pridiyathorn's priorities among the urgent economic measures is boosting employment within the next three months.

He said Thailand had plenty of talented people compared with other countries, but many were "headhunted" by firms in other economies.

Measures that need to be discussed with economic ministries before details are declared include the need to promote Thai industries and enlarge the service sector. All of the measures will be disclosed to the public after they get Cabinet approval.

"We do not have high expectations on figures for gross domestic product or the

policy interest rate for this year's economic targets, while exports depend on external factors. However, economic stimulus can be done from within," Pridiyathorn said.

After short-term economic stimulus, the existing problem - distortions in the economic structure - would be solved. Such distortions include the energy structure, tax system, and manufacturing and agricultural "structures".

Laying out Thailand's economic foundations would take a certain time, Pridiyathorn said, noting that this government had to draw out directions for major issues, such as developing the country's transport infrastructure, for the next government.