



Press Release

Unveiling Cyber Threats in the ASEAN+3 Forum

Indonesia Faces Data Breaches, AI-Generated Fake News Disrupts Elections

The Thailand Consumers Council, with ASEAN+3 consumer organizations, has launched the forum "Strengthening The ASEAN+3 on Consumer Protection in the Digital Economy and AI." It focuses on national cooperation to reduce risks and prevent cybercrime. This has resulted in over 69 billion baht lost to fraud, while Indonesia deals with data leaks and AI-generated fake news affecting elections.

Ms. Boonyuen Siritham, Chairperson of the Thailand Consumers Council, highlighted that the rapid growth of technology and artificial intelligence (AI) has positively impacted Thailand's digital economy. In 2023, the digital economy's value reached 36 billion USD, a 16% increase from 2022, making Thailand the second-largest market in the ASEAN region after Indonesia, whose digital economy was valued at 82 billion USD. Vietnam's market was valued at 30 billion USD, the Philippines at 24 billion USD, Malaysia at 23 billion USD, and Singapore at 22 billion USD. Projections suggest that by 2025, Thailand's market value will increase to 49 billion USD.

Despite these economic gains, AI has also caused significant harm to consumers worldwide, including in Thailand. Issues include scams, the spread of false information, privacy violations, and monopolistic practices by platform providers. According to the Royal Thai Police, from March 1, 2022, to July 31, 2024, there have been 612,603 cases of online fraud reported in Thailand, leading to a total loss of 69.186 billion baht—an average of 78 million baht per day. The most significant issue was fraudulent sales or service transactions, accounting for 296,042 cases (44.08% of all complaints), with losses totaling 4.311 billion baht. Employment-related scams followed,



with 82,162 cases (13.46% of complaints) leading to losses of 10.173 billion baht. Loan fraud ranked third, with 63,878 cases (10.47% of complaints) and losses amounting to 3.102 billion baht.

The Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA) reported 11,629 complaints, primarily related to sales issues (5,300 cases, 45.7% of all complaints). Other complaints involved illegal websites like gambling sites (4,100 cases, 35.4%) and issues such as investment scams, online work fraud, and personal data problems (2,200 cases, 19%). The Thailand Consumers Council recorded 1,386 complaints in the first half of 2024, emphasizing the urgency for all sectors to address cyber threats promptly.

Ms. Saree Aongsomwang, The Secretary-General, Thailand Consumers Council (TCC), stated that the Thailand Consumers Council, in collaboration with the Indonesian Consumers Foundation (YLKI), the Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (FOMCA), and consumer organizations from the ASEAN+3 region, including Cambodia, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Singapore, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Indonesia, South Korea, China, Hong Kong, Japan, and Thailand, is organizing the first regional meeting under the "Strengthening The ASEAN+3 on Consumer Protection in the Digital Economy and AI." from August 29-30, 2024. The objective of this meeting is to discuss challenges, exchange new information, and seek new collaborations within ASEAN+3 to collectively address holistic solutions to consumer rights violations in cyberspace, especially cross-border online crimes, as these issues cannot be resolved by any single country alone.

In recent years, Thailand Consumers Councils and consumer organizations in ASEAN have intensified cooperation to combat cybercrime across various levels, including ministerial levels such as the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime, the Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime, and the ASEAN Telecommunications and Information Technology Ministers Meeting. Multilateral efforts include the ASEAN Regional Forum on Political and Security



Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific and collaborations with partners like China, Japan, South Korea, the United States, Australia, and Russia. Additionally, ASEAN has developed instruments such as the ASEAN Declaration to Prevent and Combat Cybercrime.

Ms. Andjani Widya, an educator at the Indonesian Consumers Foundation (YLKI), stated that YLKI plays a crucial role in protecting consumer rights in Indonesia’s rapidly expanding digital economy and AI sector. Their focus is on ensuring consumers are protected, informed, and empowered to make choices that benefit their well-being. Indonesia faces rising threats of data breaches, misuse of personal information, cybersecurity challenges, and scams. For instance, in May 2022, a significant data breach at the Indonesian Health Insurance Administration led to the sale of millions of citizens' personal information on the dark web. Additionally, AI-generated fake news and false information emerged before Indonesia's 2024 general elections.

Currently, Indonesia lacks specific regulations concerning artificial intelligence. Nevertheless, YLKI actively engages in projects to educate consumers about their rights and potential risks. They also collaborate with policymakers to develop regulations that protect consumer rights and ensure a safe digital environment. Furthermore, the meeting seeks to establish stronger cooperation with various countries. Strengthening The ASEAN+3 on Consumer Protection in the Digital Economy and AI serves as a platform to develop more effective tools for consumer protection in Indonesia.

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