

Daily Thai News Summary: 18 May 2016

1. Thailand, India to step up bid for FTA

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

Thailand has encouraged India to wrap up some parts of their long-awaited comprehensive free-trade agreement after protracted negotiations on some topics including the liberalisation of services. After her recent meeting with India Ambassador Bhagwant Singh Bishnoi, Commerce Minister Apiradi Tantraporn said yesterday that both countries agreed to accelerate the completion of the Thai-India FTA after implementing the Early Harvest Programme back in 2004 covering 82 items. *"With disagreement on some topics, Thailand thinks both countries should finalise the agreement in some parts and continue negotiating on the remaining topics,"* she said. In the meeting, Thailand asked for India to solve problems in gold exports to India in regards of rule of origin certification. Thailand has also shown strong interest in joining the Indian government's "Make in India", "Smart Cities" and "Economic Corridor" schemes. Many Thai private enterprises would like to join those projects as they see greater businesses opportunities arising amid the strong growth of India's economy, she said. Interesting industries for Thais to invest in in India are construction, food, tourism and many service businesses. India and Thailand have also agreed to support the Asean-India FTA and the negotiation of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership by this year.

2. HK Council to bring Chinese investors interested in Thai food processing

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

The Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) plans, for the first time, to bring investors from China to meet with food processing companies in Thailand to boost investment as part of the Belt and Road initiative. Raymond Yip, deputy executive director of HKTDC said it would bring 20 companies from Fujian province in China to meet 100-200 food-processing and agricultural companies in Thailand in October this year. He said it would be the first time that HKTDC and the private sector in China would be joining forces for trade and investment overseas. This is a joint project of the "In Style Hong Kong" campaign and China's Belt and Road initiative created to expand business cooperation between East and West, including Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia. *"Twenty companies in Fujian are interested in buying food from Thailand. We expect to invite 100-200 companies in Thailand for the talks,"* he said. He added that HKTDC also planned to organise a similar event in Jiangsu province. Hong Kong and China are working on the second project.

According to Raymond, Hong Kong is set to celebrate the first year of the Asean Economic Community. In Thailand, it will organise a large-scale signature event to promote mutual cooperation and tap the growth in this dynamic region, and opportunities in Asia as a whole. The event will include a services symposium, discussing a range of important issues such as enhancing logistics competitiveness, access to finance, marketing capability, successful selling to China, and others. There will also be a series of citywide promotions to engage Thai consumers.

3. Thailand first ASEAN market for Taiwan's E-commerce firm

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

Taiwan based PC Home Online, which sees the C2C (consumer-to-consumer) e-commerce platform as having high potential across Southeast Asia, has reaffirmed Thailand as its first operational market in the region for C2C business. PC Home Online, a large e-commerce operator, in fact established a subsidiary - PC Home Thailand - via the joint-venture model with Cal-Comp Electronics (Thailand) early last year. The Thai unit yesterday revealed plans to penetrate the local e-commerce market, initially focusing on C2C e-commerce aimed at encouraging individuals and small businesses to benefit from PC Home's platform.

The e-commerce platform is set to be a comprehensive website offering C2C e-commerce for individual users for selling unique and varied products; B2C (business-to-consumer) for brands selling general products; and B2B2C (business-to-business-to-consumer) for small and medium-sized enterprises. Its C2C e-commerce offers a comprehensive website designed to offer 12 main product categories, with over 1,000 sub-categories as well as the provision of 300,000 Taiwanese products. Jason Huang, director of PC Home Thailand, said the company would bring its successful model from Taiwan to develop the C2C, B2B and B2B2C segments, but providing C2C service first. Huang said the company regarded Thailand as a high-potential market for e-commerce business, with the country's overall online retail sector recording healthy growth of 30 per cent last year with a total value of Bt46 billion.

4. New hotels aims for officials, MICE visitors

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

Best Western Hotels and Resorts has opened the Best Western Plus Wanda Grand Hotel to serve officials and MICE travellers. Located on Chaeng Wattana Road north of Bangkok, the hotel is close to the government complex, Impact convention centre, World Medical Centre, several major retail and entertainment areas and Don Mueang International Airport. Best Western's fifth property in Bangkok joins the Best Western Plus At 20 Sukhumvit, Best Western

Premier Amaranth Suvarnabhumi Airport, Best Western Klassique Sukhumvit and Best Western Premier Sukhumvit. The group plans to expand further in the capital, with the first two Vib hotels in the country entering Bangkok in 2018. Olivier Berrivin, managing director of Asian operations, said yesterday that the new hotel would bring a vast array of international amenities to north Bangkok. *"With Thailand 's largest convention centre and the seat of the Thai government nearby, we expect this exceptional hotel to become a favourite with the corporate, government and meeting, incentive, convention and exhibition (MICE) and medical and retail services,"* he said.

The hotel features a selection of accommodations. The 30-square-metre superior king and twin rooms are ideal for short-term business and leisure stays. They are equipped with floor-to-ceiling windows, large work desks with power outlets, flat-screen TVs with satellite channels and complimentary Wi-Fi. The hotel is expected to become a hub for the meetings and events market. With a wide range of fully equipped function spaces spread across four floors, it can cater for corporate and social events of all types and sizes.

5. Big C set for Bt 6 BN expansion

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

The New board of Directors of Big C Supercenter, controlled by Berli Jucker Group, has approved the plan to allocate Bt5 billion-Bt6 billion for store expansion in Thailand this year, focusing on "blue ocean" locations, including subordinate and border provinces, and major districts. The company on Sunday opened its 126th hypermarket in Ranong, which is also the first Big C to be launched this year. The single-storey, 10,000-square-metre complex with 4,000m² of sales space aims to attract about 10,000 shoppers a day, of whom 60-70 per cent will be Myanmar people, both merchants and migrant workers living in the province. Traffic will increase 30 per cent on weekends. Located about one-and-a-half kilometres from the heart of the city, Big C Ranong also houses a three-screen Major Cineplex cinema, which is the first cineplex in the province. The total investment of Big C Ranong is Bt400 million-Bt600 million.

Songsak Wijaithammarit, assistant vice president for operations, said yesterday that under the plan presented to the annual shareholders meeting two weeks ago, Big C will open six hypermarkets this year, mainly in "blue ocean" locations in the Northeast and South. Three Big C Market stores will be opened upcountry, including in the Northeast. About 75 Mini Big C stores will be also opened this year, of which 50 will be through franchising. *"Our shareholders were impressed by the new major shareholder of Big C, which is Thai. BJC will help strengthen Big C via its diversified products and in the area of logistics. It may help the company to speed up its expansion in the future,"* he said. The investment plan continues to be set year after year, but the current speed of expansion is highly satisfactory.