

## Daily Thai News Summary: 23 May 2016

### 1. Cross border route to link India, Myanmar, Thailand

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

1,400 km highway and other transport ties are major part of 'act east' policy, Indian ambassador says; world war II bridges being repaired. INDIA, Thailand and Myanmar are negotiating a breakthrough 1,400-kilometre highway that will link India with Southeast Asia by land for the first time in decades. In an interview with The Nation, Indian Ambassador Bhagwant Singh Bishnoi said 73 bridges in Myanmar built during World War II more than seven decades ago are being renovated with funding from the Indian government to allow vehicles to cross the highway safely. When the repair work is completed in 18 months, the highway could be opened to traffic from all three countries. The planned highway, which starts in the eastern region of India from Moreh city to Myanmar's Tamu city, has received a positive response from Myanmar's new government following the recent general election.

At this stage, negotiations are underway to conclude a tri-nation motor vehicle agreement for the use of the 1,400km road that will reach Thailand at Tak's Mae Sot district. This will lead to land transport connectivity between South Asia and Southeast Asia and increased trade and investment among all partner countries with cargo transportation being the first priority. However, there are still some security challenges for a section inside Myanmar, which will have to be resolved with the authorities. The tri-nation highway exemplifies India's "Act East" policy, under which the Asian giant aims to boost its economic and other relations neighbouring countries in the East. Myanmar's Dawei deep-sea port and industrial estate project near the Thai border is also expected to help further integrate eastern India with Asean. The planned port can be linked up with India's Chennai port as well as Thailand's Laem Chabang Port on the other side of the ocean.

### 2. Gems and Jewellery exports stay strong

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

Thai Gem and jewellery exports are expected to grow by 10 per cent to US\$7.89 billion (Bt278 billion) this year, remaining among the country's top five export products. Malee Choklumlerd, director-general of the International Trade Promotion Department, said that exports of jewellery and ornaments this year should grow strongly to many markets, as Thai gems were recognised as quality products with good designs. Last year, exports of jewellery and ornaments reached \$7.18 billion. In the first three months of this year, exports of gem and

jewellery, excluding gold, were up 3.1 per cent to US\$3.36 billion. If they include gold, shipments of gem and jewellery were up 72.3 per cent to \$4.72 billion in the first quarter.

As part of the government's plan to promote gems and jewellery, the department will this year invite Fiera di Vicenza, a famous brand from Italy, to join the Bangkok Gems and Jewellery Fair this year. Thailand and Italian brands will also cooperate on organising a gem and jewellery fair between the two countries. Malee said that she recently met with Maurizio Di Trani, marketing and sales director to Fiera di Vicenza - an organiser of Vicenzaora, a famous gem and jewellery fair in Italy - to discuss cooperation to promote each country's fairs. Many Italian gem and jewellery traders will join this year's fair, while producers of machinery for gem and jewellery enterprises will join the fair, as they want to penetrate the Thai market.

### **3. Credit Suisse sets sights on assets of wealthy Thai**

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

CREDIT SUISSE, a leading global wealth manager, aims to tap an estimated pool of US\$450 billion (about Bt16 trillion) in investable wealth currently held by more than 91,000 rich people in Thailand via its newly-opened private banking unit in Bangkok. The on-shore wealth management operation in Thailand is the second of its kind in Asean countries after Singapore for Credit Suisse, which is one of the world's top-five wealth managers. In Asia, Credit Suisse manages combined assets worth about \$150 billion - out of its worldwide assets under management worth \$688 billion. Francesco de Ferrari, head of private banking for Asia Pacific and CEO of Southeast Asia, said in an interview with The Nation that Thailand's investable wealth is comparable to those in Singapore, Malaysia and South Korea so Credit Suisse decided to open the operation here to serve Thai clients with proximity.

According to research, there are more than 91,000 Thais with investable wealth of more than \$2 million (about Bt70 million) per person and 340 Ultra High Net-Worth Individuals (UHNWI) with investable wealth of more than \$50 million each. The target groups include entrepreneurs who run their own businesses as well as those in family-owned businesses that are listed on the Stock Exchange of Thailand. About 66 per cent of Thailand's publicly traded firms with a market capitalisation of more than \$50 million are controlled by family groups so these individuals are regarded as UHNWIs, according to Ferrari. These clients need solutions for both corporate and personal needs. Credit Suisse aims to serve them with more than 200 financial products so that their money can be invested internationally in equities, fixed income and currencies as well as in more than 10,000 exchange-traded funds and other funds worldwide in addition to local Thai stocks, properties and other domestic assets.

#### **4. Thai Habel eyes ASEAN sales**

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

Thai Habel Industrial, a specialised original-equipment manufacturer (OEM) for home audio and visual products, and owner of the altron brand, has drawn up a five-year business plan aimed at exploring business opportunities in the Asean market. Narindej Thaveesangpanich, deputy managing director of the company, which was established in 1987, said the five-year plan had been divided into two phases, with the first taking three years and the second two years for implementation. *"Given that our own product brand, altron, only had a presence in the domestic market until recently, OEM business for both domestic sales and exports is now playing a vital role in our revenue, in a ratio of 30:70 [altron/OEM]. What we need to do at the moment is to focus on 'Building Strength Within' under our first-phase plan,"* he said. *"We will promote altron to grow continuously in the domestic market, as well as tapping business opportunities in neighbouring countries like Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. We aim to expand the base firmly within the CLMV area, and then move it further into other potential markets in Asean,"* he explained.

Narongdej said that in parallel, the OEM export team would secure and grow major channels in South Asia, which represents the main contribution of the company's overseas sales. The deputy MD said that as in the ultimate goal for the next five years, Thai Habel Industrial would aim to strategically grow the business in a more sustainable way by having the majority of sales derived from sales of the altron brand, both domestically and regionally. This would also minimise risk from price dumping and the intensity of competition in OEM business from China and other rivals around the world. Headquartered in Bangkok, Thai Habel Industrial operates two manufacturing facilities - in Prachin Buri and Nakhon Pathom - with more than 10,000 square metres of combined space.

#### **5. AIS and TOT set to launch service under a joint trial**

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

Advanced Info Service and TOT are expected to sign a contract signalling the launch of a joint-trial commercial service on the state agency's 2.1 gigahertz spectrum shortly after the re-auction of a 900 megahertz licence on Friday, Information and Communications Technology Minister Uttama Savanayana has said. "We're just waiting for the Attorney-General Office to approve the final draft," he added. AIS subsidiary Advanced Wireless Network (AWN) is the only bidder for the re-auction. The joint-trial commercial service between AIS and TOT will last for six months, after which they will sign other related contracts as part of their partnership to provide the 3G service on TOT's 2.1 gigahertz. In March, AIS and TOT signed a memorandum of understanding as the first part of an agreement for TOT to gain Bt10 billion a year for a 10-

year partnership covering the 2.1GHz spectrum, telecom towers and the 900MHz network. The MoU covers only the trial-service offering on the 2.1GHz spectrum without the payment condition AIS currently holds 15MHz of the licensed 2.1GHz spectrum and 15MHz of the licensed 1800MHz spectrum.

True Corp chief executive officer Suphachai Chearavanont said it was not beyond True's expectation that in the end AIS would be able to grab the 900MHz licence. However, True has a bigger spectrum portfolio than its rivals, he said. True has a total of 55MHz bandwidth, comprising 15MHz of the 2.1GHz spectrum, 15MHz of the 1800MHz spectrum, and 10MHz of the 900MHz spectrum. It also has partnered with CAT Telecom to offer a 3G service on 15MHz of CAT's 850MHz spectrum. Given the 900MHz spectrum Awn will grab from the re-auction is adjacent to DTAC's 850MHz frequency, Awn will be able to use only 7.5MHz out of the 10MHz total of this band. The remaining 2.5MHz must be technically reserved as a "guard band" to prevent any frequency interference between Awn and DTAC.

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**By Harsha Hazarika**