

## Daily Thai News Updates: 25 October 2016

### 1. Thai mobile e-commerce serves as Asean role model

Source: **Bangkok Post** ([Link](#))

Thailand can serve as a role model for mobile business development in Asean because of its solid economic fundamentals and the presence of top global technology firms, says a technology event management company. "This is certainly a pivotal year for the Thai telecom industry with the arrival of fourth-generation wireless broadband services and the encouragement of online traders and investors," said Bart Medici, managing director of Bangkok Entrepreneurs, an organiser of networking and technology conferences. Thailand's mobile service market has been valued at 300 billion baht annually, with over 110 million mobile subscribers. Subscribers are expected to rise to 150 million this year, he said, citing figures reported by the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission. Thailand's telecom market presents huge potential as emerging economies, especially in Southeast Asia, move towards digital. Huge investment by international mobile payment providers like Alipay and WeChat provide plenty of potential, said Mr Medici.

### 2. China's Foton to make trucks in Thailand

Source: **Bangkok Post** ([Link](#))

China's car and truck maker Beiqi Foton Motor has made a foray into the Thai automotive market by setting up a wholly-owned subsidiary to handle sales and production of Foton's pickup trucks, passenger pickup vehicles (PPVs) and passenger cars in Thailand. According to Geng Chao, president of Foton Automobile (Thailand), the Beijing-based company has recently established Foton Automobile (Thailand) Co with registered capital of 102 million baht and headquarters at On Nut Road to take control both of sales and vehicle production in Thailand. Earlier, Foton's sales were handled by Thai authorised distributor, United Motors Co, formerly DFSK Thailand. United Motors, however, will remain one of Foton's dealer and a local assembler for Foton's light-duty trucks. United Motor sold 400-500 Foton trucks during 2014-16.

According to Mr Chao, the parent firm has recently signed a memorandum of understanding with Bangchan General Assembly Co (BGAC) to produce Foton's pickup trucks, PPVs and passenger cars to be sold to domestically. BGAC is a subsidiary of Phra Nakorn Automobile Co, a Thai car distributor and parts maker. It used to be the assembler for Daihatsu, Holden and Opel. Production is scheduled to begin next month with a maximum capacity of 10,000 units a year. Foton has already applied for Board of Investment privileges, with company pledging to utilise 40% local content in its production.

### **3. Foreign traders have ‘faith in government economic policies’**

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

International traders doing business with Thailand are confident they will continue to do so because they have faith in the country’s economy despite this period of great national mourning over the King’s death, according to reports from Thai trade officials overseas. Supapat Ongsangkoon, deputy director-general of the International Trade Promotion Department, said Thai trade representatives in more than 160 overseas offices had reported that foreign traders’ belief in the country had not waned as they were confident in the government’s strategies to drive economic growth. Commerce Minister Apiradi Tantraporn has told Thai trade counsellors overseas to assure trading partners that it is business as usual, which also applied to upcoming international trade fairs that the Kingdom would host as well as other business activities, with events going ahead as scheduled. From November 13-16, the ministry will stage a business-matching activity to introduce Thai tapioca and rice traders to international buyers. Almost 200 foreign traders have so far committed to the event, Supapat said. Of those, 135 are rice traders, and 64 are tapioca traders. Supapat said international buyers understood the current situation and reaffirmed that they would maintain their business plans for Thailand. Thai trade officials overseas have advised foreign businesspeople on how to dress when visiting Thailand to honour the late King.

### **4. Thai firm plans Bt5 bn distribution centre**

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

An unnamed giant Thai firm plans to invest Bt5 billion to set up a new distribution centre in Bangkok’s Don Muang district as a trading hub for the Asean market, particularly Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam. Adul Chotinisakorn, deputy director-general at the Foreign Trade Department, said the department would soon sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the private company. The aim of the centre is to help young entrepreneurs under the Young Entrepreneur Network Development (Yen-D) programme. The Yen-D programme involves about 560 small and medium-sized businesses. The distribution centre will cover 150 rai (240,000 square metres) of land in Pathum Thani province, which is near the Don Mueang International Airport. The centre will be a one-stop service for traders to shop and ship goods from Thailand to other countries easily. Adul said construction had already started and the project was expected to be complete in the first quarter of 2018. The Commerce Ministry has targeted cross-border trade

growth of 4.9 per cent this year to Bt1.47 trillion, lower than the previously set target of Bt1.7 trillion. In the first eight months, cross-border trade was valued at Bt940 billion, an increase of 2.65 per cent from the same period last year.

## **5. Farmers app aims to reap rewards**

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

The creator of Folkrice, an online trading platform designed to help farmers sell perishable products to customers directly, aims to be earning Bt24 million per year in fees within five years. Anukool Saibejra said he decided to return to his home province of Surin province several years ago after graduating with a social- science degree in international disciplinary studies from Thammasat University. There he began to grow rice on his 10-rai (1.6-hectare) farm in his hometown. Every year, he spent four months growing rice and six months doing market research. At the same time, he started working and building a network with farmers by providing them with agricultural knowledge, food-processing skills and business-management abilities, while also selling rice to some friends online. Eventually, he became aware that many of the farmers he was working with were having difficulty selling perishable products. To meet this challenge, he founded Folkrice Co Ltd early this year after securing more than 1,000 farmers nationwide in his network. The company, of which he is chief executive officer, then created an online application called Folkrice as a venue where farmers can sell their products to customers directly.

**By Nandini Malhotra**

