

Daily News Monitor: 26 October 2015

1. KBank Asian growth plan takes in India

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

Kasikornbank (KBank), the country's fourth-largest lender by assets, is exploring business opportunities in India and considering whether to expand its network there to capitalize on one of the rare bright spots in the global economy. With burgeoning trade between Thailand and India, the bank is expecting more openings in the world's second-most populous country. KBank has already hired some Indian staff for its world business division, said senior executive Vice-President Pipit Aneaknithi.

2. Index Creative Village to tap Cambodian market next year

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

Index Creative Vilalge, the country's leading event management company, will expand its business into Cambodia next year by organising trade fairs in response to its clients' need to capitalise on the Asean economic integration. *"Cambodia will be our next destination after establishing business units in Myanmar, Vietnam and Malaysia over the last couple of years. This neighbouring country has the potential to grow mainly driven by young consumers. This also offers a huge opportunity for Thai businesses,"* Kriangkrai Kanjanapokin, co-chief executive officer of Index Creative Village, told The Nation early this month. He explained that trade fairs are a platform to facilitate an engagement between Thai enterprises and Cambodian traders and consumers.

In line with the implementation of the Asean Economic Community this year, this is the right time for Thai brands to make a move to Cambodia, where Thai products are well-recognised by the 15.67-million population. He said his company would meet its clients' need via trade fairs and marketing activities in Cambodia. *"We will extend and duplicate our best practices at home to the neighbouring country,"* he said. Cambodia will be the fourth market into which Index Creative Village has expanded. In 2012, the company officially entered Myanmar by forming a joint venture firm with Yangon-based media company "Forever Group" in an attempt to raise the bar of event organising in Myanmar. In the same year, the company also established "TVM Index" in Vietnam. In 2013, Crave Index was launched to provide a full-service digital agency in Malaysia.

3. RCEP members agree to eliminate tariffs on 65% of trade in goods.

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

The Commerce Ministry said last week that the 16 countries in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) had finally agreed to eliminate tariffs on 65 per cent of trade in goods among them, creating huge benefits for all and helping to compensate for potential losses as a result of Thailand's current non-involvement in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

The RCEP agreement is expected to be signed during the Asean leaders' summit to be held in Malaysia in November, and enforced next year. Commerce Minister Apiradi Tantraporn said the accomplishment of waiving tariffs for 65 per cent of trade in goods - equivalent to 8,000-9,000 items - represented the greatest start to full market liberalisation between the pact's signatories. The RCEP should help compensate for the potential loss arising from Thailand not yet having joined the TPP, she said. "The RCEP is a great pact and the biggest market liberalisation, larger than TPP as it includes China and India and covers almost half of the world's population," she added.

Under the agreed first step in RCEP trade liberalisation, tariffs covering 65 per cent of trade will be immediately cut to zero following the pact's implementation. In the next phase, tariffs on another 20 per cent of trade in goods will be gradually reduced to zero within 10 years, while import duties for the remaining 15 per cent will remain in place or be gradually reduced to 5-10 per cent, as those products comprise the list of sensitive goods drawn up by member states.

4. Thai firms embracing cloud services

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

Thailand's "digital economy" initiative will create new business opportunities using cloud computing technology for both start-ups and established companies, according to Rick Harshman, Amazon Web Service's head of Asean markets. He said the Thai policy would bring about a new competitive advantage for the country, which was one of the five key markets for AWS in Asean. *"We've seen a big demand for our training programme for cloud services in Bangkok,"* he said, adding that AWS is also providing training and certification on the latest technology in Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Singapore and Manila. He said the demand for cloud services, in which computing capacity, storage and related information-technology services are provided and paid for as a utility like electricity, is evolving rapidly in the 10-country Asean market.

Among the benefits of cloud technology are speed, agility, and lower cost for users, as they do not have to invest substantially upfront in IT infrastructure to start Internet-based or

digital businesses. In Thailand, Ascend of the Charoen Pokphand Group is one of the major users of cloud services for e-commerce, e-payment, financial and other digital services. In Malaysia, iFlix, a movie-streaming subscription service, has also turned to cloud technology to serve various markets in Asean, including Thailand. Harshman said a Singapore-based shipping company had moved its on-premise IT infrastructure to the cloud, while Singtel was providing on-demand TV using cloud services.

5. Robinson to open stores in SEZs

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

Robinson Department Store, a unit of Central Retail Corporation (CRC), plans to open stores in special economic zones (SEZs) in line with the government's policy to promote cross-border trade in those areas.

Alan Thomson, president of Robinson Department Store and international business director of CRC, said Robinson would continue to expand in Thailand wherever the company sees a good opportunity. However its expansion is now slower and its focus is more on its existing stores. Last year, the company opened a Lifestyle Centre in Mukdahan on the border with Laos and this year on December 18, a new Lifestyle Centre will be opened in Mae Sot in Tak province. *"These stores are being built to take greater advantage of cross-border trade. SEZ projects are good initiatives but will take time to develop and for us to realise any opportunities,"* Thomson said. He said Robinson had four major business units, which are department stores, Lifestyle Centres, shop-in-shop stores for international fashion brands, and department stores in Vietnam.

By Harsha Hazarika

