

Daily Thai News Updates: 26 September 2016

1. Twelve Thai firms among 79 setting up facilities in Thilawa SEZ

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

Some 79 companies from 17 countries, including 12 from Thailand, have signed agreements to set up facilities in Thilawa, Myanmar's first special economic zone. Yanai Takashi, president and chief executive of Myanmar-Japan Thilawa Development Ltd (MJTD), said those were the figures of Thursday. Japan topped the investors' list with 39 firms, followed by Thailand (12 firms). Among them, 13 firms have been granted commencement certificates by Thilawa SEZ Management Committee and they have already started commercial operations. "Both Myanmar and the Japanese government have been supporting the project well. We have been struggling to make the project successful and will continue to make the best efforts to contribute to the economic growth of Myanmar," said Takashi, who said the SEZ was showing faster-than-expected progress.

2. FTA fund to aid value-added crops

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

The free-trade Agreement Fund is helping shallot, onion, and garlic farmers penetrate overseas markets and add value to those crops, it has been claimed. After the FTA Fund allocated a budget to help shallot and garlic farmers for more than four years, it is expected that the sales of those crops will increase, allowing farmers to compete with overseas products. Duangporn Rodphaya, director-general of the Foreign Trade Department, said that the FTA Fund could support and lead to the innovation of garlic products, as the crop could be produced as powdered garlic and black garlic - offering consumers health benefits given the products' lower levels of cholesterol and anti-oxidants. The products are in high demand in many markets. Japan, South Korea, and China have placed many orders for the products due to the health benefits and the fact they can be categorised as a food supplement.

3. SCCP REIT woos investors with mixed holdings plan

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

SCCP REIT has revealed that two-thirds of the proposed Bt7.5-billion Thailand Prime Property real estate investment trust (TPRIME REIT) will be mixed with freeholding, improving its chances of yielding more benefits. "The trust is strategically set up with a combination of freehold and leasehold properties, which will help reduce the risk for unit holders from leasehold," said Suchard Chiaranussati, director of SCCP REIT as the manager of TPRIME REIT. He added: "Unit holders will gain benefits from freehold, the value of whose assets will continue growing in line with market price."

SCCP REIT filed an application with the Securities and Exchange Commission to launch an initial public offering of TPRIME REIT last month. Kasikorn Asset Management was appointed as trustee and Grant Thornton Services appointed as financial adviser. TPRIME REIT plans to raise not more than Bt5.47 billion from investors and borrow a long-term loan of not more than Bt2.15 billion depending upon the SEC's approval by this year. Thereafter, the trust is expected to list on the stock market. Proceeds from the fund-raising will be used to invest in freehold of Exchange Tower and leasehold of Mercury Tower building, including land, with combined investment not exceeding Bt7.22 billion.

4. New Thai-developed technology helping visually impaired

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

About two years ago, Nuntipat Narkthong and a group of students at King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi invented a gadget for the blind so they could earn a bachelor's degree in computer engineering. Together with a classmate, Nuntipat, who is continuing his studies for a master's degree at the same university, later launched a tech startup, Visionear, to commercialise the gadget. The co-founder of Visionear, which stands for "vision" and "ear", said he was inspired by the difficulties faced by blind people on a daily basis when it came to discerning common objects such as a can of soft drink in a refrigerator or a banknote or clothing. His solution is an electronic gadget equipped with tiny cameras and headphones that helps visually-impaired persons live a better life. "We talked to a lot of blind people and found that they need some help in discerning objects around them. For example, blind persons need others to help them at home to get the right stuff in their fridge," he said. "Visionear allows them to live a more independent lifestyle. There are now about 300,000 blind and visually-impaired persons in Thailand. In fact, this gadget was our senior year's project that we thought we could turn it into a commercial product."

5. Proud in joint venture with Canadian water park firm

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

Proud Real Estate Ltd will expand its water theme park business by teaming up with White Water, a leading water park equipment manufacturer in Canada, to offer turnkey solutions to other water theme parks across Asia. A joint venture, White Water Southeast Asia, was recently set up to facilitate design, construction, equipment installation and theme park management. The two companies hold an equal 50% stake each in the venture. Pasu Liptapanlop, executive director of Proud, said the partnership came about after he purchased equipment for Vana Nava Hua Hin Water Jungle. The success of Vana Nava in its first year led him to explore further opportunities in this market, leading to an alliance with the Canadian partner. "We are focusing more on expanding our water theme park business because we specialise in this field. We didn't want to enter and compete in sectors that other companies already perform well in, because that would reduce our value added," he said. Since introducing its turnkey solution for water theme parks, White Water Southeast Asia has been contacted by

companies in several countries, including Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia to design their water theme parks.

By Nandini Malhotra