

## Daily Thai News Updates: 29 November 2016

### 1. Bangchak, Spar team up for stores

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

SET-listed Bangchak Petroleum Plc (BCP) has tapped Spar International, a Dutch multinational retailer, to run convenience stores at Bangchak petrol stations under the Spar Fresh & Easy Food Market brand. The mostly state-owned energy firm joined with Spar yesterday in opening the first shop in Thailand on Ratchaphruek Road. President and chief executive officer Chaiwat Kovavisarach said Bangchak had set aside about 3 billion baht to open up to 300 shops by 2020. Half of them would be located at Bangchak petrol stations, while the rest would be a stand alone shops located in metropolitan areas and commercial buildings. "The fresh and convenient food of Spar will help market the chain to serve as a niche market choice for consumers in Thailand," said Mr Chaiwat. All of Bangchak's non-oil business will be run by Bangchak Retail Company Ltd (BRC), he said. Mr Chaiwat added another four shops are scheduled to be opened early next year in Bangkok and nearby areas, including Wang Noi, Kanchanaphisek Road and Rama III Road. The size of the Spar shops at petrol stations will be around 300-square-metres. They will be merged with Bangchak's existing shops such as Inthanin Coffee and Lemon Kitchens. "From now on motorists will not only be able to refuel their tanks, but their refrigerators as well," he said. Over the last several years, Bangchak has teamed up with Big C and now operates at 160 branches nationwide. "The new gas station on Ratchaphruek Road will also be renovated over the next several years, with more space, facilities and an environmentally-friendly design," said Mr Chaiwat. Other shops that have not performed as well including its 30 Bai Chak mini-marts operated nationwide will soon be shuttered. For stand-alone Spar shops, Mr Chaiwat said they will be bigger than those located at gas stations, measuring 300-700 sq m each.

### 2. Project launched to prepare firms for global market

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

Leading business groups have teamed up with the Thai Chamber of Commerce to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) enhance their skills and raise combined sales by 5 billion baht in one year. Recognised companies such as Boon Rawd Brewery Group, CP All Plc, Siam Cement Group and Toyota Motor Thailand are taking part in the Big Brother 50 project with the Thai Chamber of Commerce. The project is being sponsored by the Office of Small and Medium Enterprise Promotion to help SMEs develop their skills to survive amid intense competition. Under this project, 50 selected SMEs will be cultivated to be prepared for future expansions to Asia, said Palit Bhirombhakdi, executive vice-president of Boon Rawd Brewery Co. "We hope each SME will see revenue rise sharply to at least 100 million baht within one year after joining this training project. The coaches will give them knowledge and expertise in all aspects to help them grow," he added. The Big Brother 50 project, which was kicked off

yesterday, has the objective to assist 50 high potential SMEs to have their combined sales exceed 5 billion baht within one year. Mr Palit, who is also deputy secretary-general of Thai Chamber of Commerce, said this SME training project will support the government's Thailand 4.0 initiative that aims to help SMEs grow and contribute to 50% of the country's GDP within 2021, up from 42% currently. There are more than 2.7 million SMEs across the country in all forms, registered, unregistered, as well as start-ups, according to a survey by Thai Chamber of Commerce. There are nearly 70,000 SMEs registered with Thai Chambered of Commerce.

### **3. South Korea, Thailand set to streamline agricultural trade**

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

Thailand and South Korea yesterday agreed to increase technology transfers in the agricultural area, cooperate more closely in trade facilitation and training and promote the Thailand 4.0 Model. Agriculture Minister Chatchai Sarikulya and South Korea's Minister for Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Kim Jae-Soo signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in Sejong, South Korea to support agricultural trade, knock down technical barriers in the trading of agriculture products and facilitate investment in farming. "South Korea is categorised as an emerging country with strong economic growth. "It has high potential to forge closer ties with Thailand in agriculture in many areas including technology cooperation and transfer, trade facilitation and trading," he said. The two sides will maintain and strengthen the frequency of meetings and cooperation. They will draw up a joint agricultural development programme for the effective utilisation of resources in the agricultural field, considering especially the potential of the two countries. Besides government-to-government collaboration, the agricultural sector could be facilitated by the process of institutional cooperation between Thailand and Korea's public sectors. Areas of cooperation include the development of agriculture terrestrial animals and plants, development of farmers' organisations and cooperatives, technical cooperation on irrigation systems and agricultural land and water resources management, and enhancement of cooperation and coordination within international and regional organisations. Both sides will exchange technical officers and researchers, perform joint agricultural research and development, swap agricultural and technical information, and organise workshops, seminars and conferences on subjects of mutual interest.

### **4. Handicraft exhibition meant to widen distribution**

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

The support Arts and Crafts International Centre of Thailand (SACICT) and its partners have kicked off a handicraft exhibition at the Central Embassy shopping complex in central Bangkok. "LUX by SACICT's Living Concept", which was launched on Thursday, will run until May 17 in the Exhibition Hall on the fourth floor of the mall. SACICT has teamed up with Central Group, DHL and comGateway to hold the exhibition. Amphawan Phichalai, chief executive officer of SACICT, said the event aimed to promote products developed by designers and communities that have commercial potential. The products and home decor items are made

from green materials from the participating communities with the consideration of functionality to respond to the needs of modern lifestyles. The exhibition is aimed at elevating traditional Thai craft into contemporary art with unique designs, opening up trade opportunities domestically and internationally. SACICT believes that handcraft will be one of factors to move Thailand towards a society based on sustainable development. The products on display at Central Embassy were exhibited in September at “Maison & Objet 2016” in Paris, France, a professional trade fair showcasing internationally renowned products and home-decor items, and they received a positive response from international visitors. “LUX by SACICT: SACICT’s Living Concept” is meant to increase the distribution channels for handcraft communities. Central Embassy directly connects the sellers and buyers and handles publicity to enhance the image of Thai crafts. The targeted groups are interior designers, product designers, people with unique lifestyles and those with a passion for home decoration. SACICT hopes that Thai crafts can feature contemporary flair that consumers can use in their daily lives.

## **5. Thai economy seen growing as forecast this year - BoT chief**

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

Thailand's economy is still expected to grow 3.2% this year, as forecast, the governor of the Bank of Thailand said on Monday, in spite of slower than expected growth the previous quarter. The baht is more stable than other regional currencies, Veerathai Santiprabhob told reporters. The Thai currency traded at 33.55/56 per US dollar on Monday, having appreciated by 1.25% so far this year. The country’s export-dependent economy is still struggling against tepid global demand, sluggish consumption and high household debt. The economy grew 2.8% last year.

**By Nandini Malhotra**



