

Daily Thai News Updates: 13 December 2016

1. Thai Union signs fair labor pact

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

SET-listed Thai Union Group Plc (TU), the world's biggest producer of canned tuna, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the World Tuna Purse Seine Organization (WTPO) to cooperate on ensuring fair labor practices. The move is part of measures by the Thai government and private fisheries firms to improve their labour practices. Darian McBain, TU's global director of sustainable development, said the MoU aims to establish a high-level framework for discussion and development of policies and rules for ethical crew employment and fair labour practices. Those policies include training, social responsibilities and rules for sea-based operation in the tuna purse seine industry. "As the largest seafood producer in the world, Thai Union Group is committed and focused on reform efforts in the fishing industry and has taken significant steps to promote safe and legal labour," Ms McBain said. TU and the WTPO have agreed to exert earnest efforts to ensure the viability and success of this project, and to adhere to the principles of good faith and fair play in all transactions relating to its implementation as well as in dealing with one another, she said. Beyond the MoU, TU is considering a 1-billion-baht investment in a second research and development house, expecting it would start operation by 2018. The new R&D facility would focus on animal nutrition .

2. Ministry to implement 'Agoda style' networking for SMEs and start-ups

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

The Commerce Ministry plans to use the "Agoda model" to help develop businesses in Thailand, a senior official says. Banjongjitt Angsusingh, director-general of the Department of Business Development, said her department will soon start to implement the concept used by the hotel-booking website to connect new entrepreneurs or start-ups with small and medium-sized enterprises, or between SMEs. She said: "Similar to Agoda, which has gathered a network of hotels worldwide, the networking concept can help businesses expand faster than each doing it alone.

The DBD will help form networks and match small businesses that can complement one another. For example, there is a start-up that has developed an application that allows customers looking for transport for its goods to book trucks. But it faced the problem of finding enough trucks to service its customers. The DBD has helped link the start-up with transport and logistics providers that have passed a training workshop with the department. “Today, this start-up has a network of transport services throughout the country, and it has grown fast,” she said. The DBD will execute the plan by examining the list of start-ups that have gone through training or development courses provided by the government and educational institutions, including the Commerce, Industry, and Science and Technology ministries, which total about 300 at present.

3. Jubilee Enterprise plans stores for two diamond brands

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

Jubilee Enterprise, a listed diamond-jewellery retailer in Thailand, has revealed a plan to open physical stores under two strategic brands. Chief executive officer Unyarat Pornprakit said Jubilee Enterprise was currently managing two brands, Jubilee Diamond and Forever mark. “Jubilee Diamond is a diamond-jewellery brand that the company owns, which is currently the No 1 diamond-jewellery brand in Thailand, with the largest number of outlets, more than 120 branches across the country,” she said. “Meanwhile, Forever mark is a diamond brand owned by De Beers Group for which Jubilee Enterprise is Thailand’s exclusive authorized retailer. “The business plans for the two brands are different in direction and each will contribute to the company in a different way. “Forever mark has so far been in Thailand for less than a year but is the No 1 diamond brand in the world. Forever mark has a unique diamond selection process and works exclusively with top-class diamond cutters, which results in all Forever mark diamonds being stunningly beautiful. The difference is so obvious we can experience it with the naked eye. “‘Beautiful’ is one of the promises of the Forever mark brand, where other promises are ‘rare’ and ‘responsibly sourced’. Therefore the plan for Forever mark involves brand education and outlet expansion. “We currently only have three doors [outlets] for Forever mark but all of them perform quite well. We plan to have at least three and as many as five more doors [outlets] by the end of 2017. We see potential in more locations within Bangkok as well as other major cities,” Unyarat said.

4. Government aims to turn Kingdom into Asean's No 1 cassava producer

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

The Cassava Management and Policy Committee has introduced new strategies for developing Thailand as the leading Asean cassava producer using innovation and technology. The strategy will be implemented from 2017-2026. After chairing a meeting of the committee, Commerce Minister Apiradi Tantraporn said the vision for developing Thailand's cassava industry with innovation and technology development would add value to cassava products, and result in Thailand. "The 10-year strategy will ensure a balanced supply of and demand for cassava for the long term, while continuing to emphasise Thailand as the centre of cassava production and trading with innovation and value added for the product," she said. Various strategies covering production, processing and marketing will be implemented during the 10-year period. The first strategy is to manage a cassava-growing area of 8.5 million rai (1.36 million hectares) and set up zoning for the most efficient production and quality. It is also expected that demand for cassava in many industries will be increased, mainly in the glue, paper, textile, sweetener, and pharmaceutical sectors.

5. AIS sets sights on True teen subscribers

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

Advance Info Service (AIS) will strive to woo teen subscribers to its fourth-generation service, attracting them away from True Corp's mobile-phone network, as these youngsters have the potential to become a major revenue source in the future. Pratthana Leelapanang, AIS' acting chief marketing officer, said there were around 900,000 teens with the potential to become AIS premium customers when they grow up, and a number of them were students at well-known schools in Thailand. He estimated that 20 per cent of those 900,000 young subscribers were in the AIS network, most were in the True network, and the rest with Total Access Communications (DTAC). Most of them are still prepaid users, as their parents control their spending. AIS aim to secure at least half of these 900,000 teens next year, Pratthana said. He said AIS would use aggressive marketing campaigns and capitalise on its strong 4G network to win them over.

He added that the AIS Play mobile application was one of the key tools to woo these teenagers because of its appealing and unique content, including Japanese cartoons, music, and sports content. AIS Play next year will focus on offering live-broadcast content and TV series. AIS has found that most teenagers use True's mobile-phone service as the company offered bundled packages to their families, combining the True Visions pay-TV service with a free 4G mobile-phone SIM card containing a certain monthly airtime value.

By Shreya Chopra

