

Daily Thai News Updates: 28 December 2016

1. BCPG starts 'community' solar farms

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

BCPG Plc, the power arm of SET-listed Bangchak Petroleum Plc (BCP), has started commercial operations of two solar farms under the government's scheme for solar farms development with local agriculture cooperatives. The two solar farms have a combined power-generating capacity of seven megawatts. President and chief executive Bundit Sapianchai said BCPG was the first company among those that won the draw on April 26 to develop solar farms with local agricultural cooperatives to commence operations according to schedule. "We started operations on Dec 23 and the power plants will help generate revenue for local communities," he said.

2. Border trade to grow on regional demand

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

Thailand's border trade is expected to continue growing by at least 3% next year, driven by the growing economies of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam and the popularity of Thai products in those markets. Adul Chotinisakorn, deputy director-general of Foreign Trade Department, said border trade prospects remain strong and promising. "Next year, the department vows to come up with new strategic plans to drive border trade, including new border checkpoints at Ban Laem and Ban Pakkard border passes in Pong Nam Ron District to link Thailand's Chanthaburi to Cambodia's Battambang province and Pailin province, Prachuap Khiri Khan's Sing Khon border pass to Myanmar's Myeik and Loei's Tha Li border pass to Laos," he said. "Business networking and partnership between Thai entrepreneurs along the border provinces and neighbouring counterparts will be also be beefed up to maximize distribution of Thai products."

3. National Housing Authority eyes B100bn in housing

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

The National Housing Authority (NHA) is moving ahead with plans to develop 100 billion baht worth of housing developments in accordance with the government's 10-year residential strategic plan ending in 2025. Newly-appointed governor Tachaphol Kanjanakul said one of the key residential projects under the plan will be in the Din Daeng area, where it will develop high-rise residential buildings worth 35 billion baht to replace the old Din Daeng flats. "The Din Daeng site will be our flagship next year. After the phase-one development plan starts, we will propose a master plan and funding for phases two to four in August of next year," he said.

4. Govt approves legal farming of hemp under new drug plan

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

People in parts of the North will be able to start farming hemp – legally – from next year. "The Cabinet has already approved hemp as an economic plant," Sirinya Sittichai, secretary-general of the Narcotics Control Board, said yesterday. "The Thailand Tobacco Monopoly will buy the harvest from growers." The plantation areas are 15 districts in six provinces – Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Nan, Phetchabun, Mae Hong Son and Tak. The permitted species of the herb must contain less than 1 per cent of THC.

5. Agency fillip for e-commerce

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

The government will develop an all-in-one, integrated e-commerce platform next year in order to foster the adoption of e-commerce. Digital Economy (DE) and Society Minister Pichet Durongkaveroj said his ministry has designated the Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA) as the core agency to work with other related state authorities and the private sector to jointly develop the e-commerce platform. The all-in-one platform is aimed at encouraging e-commerce activities among Thais. The platform will offer the full range of online marketplaces, logistics channels, packing and payment systems through the digital network.

By Shreya Chopra

