

Daily Thai News Summary: 1 August 2016

1. Mercedes-Benz leasing sees good growth

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

Despite the flat overall auto leasing market that is anticipated for this year, the value of leasing loans for the financing of luxury vehicles is expected to show tremendous growth due to the limited impact on the high-end segment from economic and political difficulties. Mercedes-Benz Leasing (Thai-land), which controls almost 50 per cent of the market for leasing finance granted to Mercedes-Benz vehicles, yesterday announced 15-per-cent growth in its car leasing portfolio in the first six months of the year to Bt30.2 billion, against Bt26.2 billion in the same period last year. Managing director Supavut Jiramanusnakorn said overall new lending of Bt600 billion is expected to finance the auto leasing market this year, which would be flat - or could even decline - in comparison to last year's performance. The forecast is in line with the roughly 800,000 new vehicles expected to be sold by all auto-makers in Thailand this year. Between 18,000 and 19,000 of new vehicle sales are expected to be luxury cars priced more than Bt2 million each, he said.

2. German tyre maker mulling Thailand for new plant

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

German Automotive group Continental will decide by the end of this year whether to choose Thailand as its new tyre-manufacturing site. Sirivan Koo-Amphorn, general manager of Continental Tyres Thailand, said she was scheduled to meet with the Thai authorities next week to hear what incentives and support the government could offer to the proposed project, in addition to the Board of Investment's privileges. The proposed tyre project would serve not only the Thai market but would also be for export to other countries in the region, she said. Sirivan said Continental hoped to win support from the government considering the fact that tyre manufacturing is one the targeted industries that the government has decided to promote because of its benefit to rubber planters. Sales of Continental tyres in Thailand have grown fourfold since 2012, though its market share is still less than 3 per cent. The German automotive group aims to double its market share from an original target if it has a factory here. The company will also set up its first two "ContiShops" in Thailand, as well as start penetrating the pickup-truck, sport-utility and van tyre markets next year. It currently focuses only on the high-inch tyre segment (16-inch rim and up).

3. SIPA backs new online platform for tourism SMEs

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

The Software Industry Promotion Agency (SIPA) and its business partners have announced the “Tourism Thailand Open Platform” (ToTOP) as a tool for the tourism industry, to be officially launched in October. Supachai Jongsiri, acting president of SIPA, said ToTOP would enable small and medium-sized enterprises to provide alternatives to their customers and create business opportunities. The agency expects to invite more than 300 tourism agencies, both domestic and international, to participate. The ToTOP platform includes hotel channel management, a business-to-business agent, and a system of codes for tourist destinations.

Hotel channel management is an e-business platform and mobile application that provides information on hotel reservations and tourism supply chains such as souvenir shops, car-rental services and The B2B agent will allow small and medium-sized tourism businesses to offer their services online domestically and internationally to expand their client base, enhance their productivity and improve the quality of their service. The code system will make it easy for business and customers to access and search for tourism information and destinations by using abbreviations. For example, WSASTH is Thailand and WSASTHHKT is Phuket.

4. Hotel group Evergreen aims to tap tourist surge

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

EVERGREEN PLACE CO, a local hotel-chain operator, is developing more hotels and residences in Bangkok to cash in on the growing tourism industry. Over the past seven years, the company has developed or renovated four hotels and one office building in Bangkok with a total investment of more than Bt400 million. The first property that became a full hotel operation was Evergreen Place in the Ratchathewi area. The company currently is developing two more mixed-use projects - Ari Hills and Ladprao Hills - at a combined cost of Bt1.8 billion, making the group's overall investment Bt2.2 billion since 2010. Managing director Wutthiphon Taworntawat said Ari Hills would be a mixed-use project on Phaholyothin Road and will consist of office spaces, retail shops and 200 hotel rooms. It will be the group's highest investment at Bt1.3 billion. *"This project is a joint venture with a local landlord. It is scheduled to be completed within the first quarter of 2018,"* Wutthiphon said. He added that the second mixed-use project called Ladprao Hills would also consist of office spaces, retail shops, and 200 hotel rooms. The project, with an investment of Bt500 million, is set to open in the first quarter of 2018. This will be a renovated hotel on a 30-year rental contract.

5. Banpu accelerates social enterprise growth

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

Banpu has spent more than six years incubating social enterprises under the “Banpu Champions for Change” programme. As a leading Asian energy company, Banpu says it has worked towards social sustainability, and organised "Banpu Champions for Change: Keep on Growing", a special event that provides business-pitching opportunities for Banpu Champions for Change alumni members. The alumni are able to present their business progress and acquire additional support as well as expert counselling to improve their social enterprises.

Five social enterprises were selected.

A-Chieve Social Enterprise Ltd is an agency created to educate students on career opportunities through its website, career camps and workshops to help students plan relevant career paths effectively. Local Alike Ltd is a responsible tour operator that focuses on community-based tourism, which allows local residents to be involved while emphasising community development funded through generated revenue. Nokhook Group Co is an alternative marketing channel that works by matching agricultural outputs from organic farmers directly with customers following fair trade principles. The enterprise also provides farmers with support on product development and short-term working capital. Ma:D is a co-working community for social entrepreneurs where they can network, learn from others, exchange ideas, inspire one another, and have an impact on society. Toolmorrow by Surasek Ltd is an online TV programme that presents teenagers' false beliefs through various social experiments and video packed with fun and thought-provoking content aimed at building positive morals and ethics among teens.

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