

Daily Thai News Summary: 4 August 2016

1. Industrial Clusters for Thailand's economic future

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

The new investment promotion policy for industrial clusters has included conditions for promoted companies to collaborate with academic and research institutions or Center of Excellence, in order to enhance cooperation in the areas of science and technology through research and development. This will contribute to raising the levels of innovation in the country. Activities eligible for investment promotion from the industrial clusters policy must fulfil three conditions as follows: (1) utilization of advanced technology, (2) locating in designated areas and (3) collaboration with academic and research institutions, or Center of Excellence, on designated areas. This policy will develop human resources in high-tech industries and help the country move towards the goal of Thailand 4.0.

2. Tisco to enter digital banking arena next year

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

TISCO Financial Group will roll out its first digital-banking operations early next year in a move that is expected to help the group expand its customer base, as well as lower operating costs in the long run. Group chief Oranuch Apisaksirikul said yesterday that the bank had completed changes to its core banking to accommodate the move to digital banking. Although Tisco is currently the only listed bank not to have any digital-banking operations, Oranuch said it had had a policy to enter the digital arena for a number of years, while it should be noted that it had fewer branches than its peers in the sector. *"Our digital banking will be developed on cloud computing. Our back office has been revamped for the upcoming digital banking,"* she said. Tisco's mobile banking will be launched early next year, with the bank then gradually developing additional features as its mobile banking will eventually be a channel for lending applications, apart from servicing transactional banking, she explained. She added that the bank hoped that digital banking would help lower its operating expenses in the long run, and that mobile banking would enable it to expand the customer base to mass-market clients.

For Tisco's deposit and investment products, middle-to-upper-market customers form its key client base, while its retail lending customers are in the auto-loan segment. Tisco, which is the third-largest auto lender in the banking industry with a portfolio of Bt180 billion, expects its outstanding auto loans to show flat growth next year, after a further fall this year due to repaid loans remaining higher than new lending, the group chief said. The level of new auto loans will

return to normal in 2017 and 2018 after buyers under the previous elected government's first-car tax-break scheme begin to trade their vehicles in after owning them for five years, she added.

3. BCPG poised for major “Green” power expansion

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

BCPG, a green-power subsidiary of Bangchak Petroleum, has set a target of achieving 1,000 megawatts of installed capacity by 2020, as part of its business expansion after going public. “The renewable power we have developed is now running at a combined capacity of 400MW ... This will be the challenge for us,” BCPG president Bundit Sapiachai said.

At a press conference held by the company yesterday, BCPG announced that the proceeds from its upcoming fund-raising via 590 million initial-public-offering (IPO) shares would partly be used as working capital for business expansion, as it aimed to diversify into biomass power business. The remainder will be used for debt repayment. Emerging as a solar-power unit of Bangchak Petroleum in 2011, BCPG was spun off and incorporated in July last year with an initial 38MW under operation. The company has taken over the solar-power business and assets of its parent, while developing further by purchasing solar business in Japan. Currently, BCPG operates renewable-power business with a contracted capacity of 418MW in total, Bundit said, adding that about 194MW is the aggregate contracted capacity of solar power in Japan, and 130MW in Thailand.

4. MPC keeps policy rate at 1.50%

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

The Bank of Thailand’s Monetary Policy Committee yesterday voted unanimously to leave the benchmark interest rate at 1.50 per cent, said Jaturong Jantarangs, Secretary of the MPC. The MPC believes that monetary policy should remain accommodative, and the committee stands ready to use an appropriate mix of available policy tools to ensure that monetary conditions are conducive to the economic recovery, while ensuring financial stability.

5. Ecovacs Robotics aims to clean up in Thai market

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

To cash in on the growing trend of urbanisation and the use of robotics technology, not only in the manufacturing and service industries but also in household work, China-based Ecovacs Robotics is eyeing a significant expansion of its business into Thailand and other potential Asean markets. The company - one of the world's top three home-robotics manufacturers - has appointed Mentagram as the sole importer and distributor of its home products in the Kingdom, with a strategic plan to launch a strong line-up of several in-home robotic cleaners on to the market in the near future. Among these offerings, Ecovacs Robotics' Deebot floor-cleaning robot features self-emptying rubbish bins, mopping systems and the company's Smart Move technology.

Meanwhile, the company's Winbot, an award-winning window-cleaning robot, is equipped with patented Smart Drive technology, advanced cleaning systems and safety mechanisms. *"In Southeast Asia, Thailand for instance is an advanced market, besides Singapore. Thailand is one of the biggest markets and most advanced countries in Asean, and has a strong case to be the centre of robotics technology in this region, with its great manpower and knowledge,"* said David Qian, president of the international business unit of Ecovacs Robotics. Thailand could become the top country providing all the business potential for leading robotics brands from around the world, he suggested.



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