**Daily Thai News Updates: 29 December 2016**

# 1. Thai Smile moving to SuvarnabhumiSource: The Nation ([Link](http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/business/corporate/30303046))

##  Thai Smile Airways has coordinated with Thai Airways International to use Suvarnabhumi Airport as its base to penetrate India, expand to China and serve Asean markets with all flights connecting with THAI, said Woranate Laprabang, acting chief executive officer of Thai Smile Airways. Thai Smile will remain at Don Mueang International Airport until January 15 before moving all flight operations to Suvarnabhumi.After switching to Suvarnabhumi, Thai Smile will increase daily flights to Phuket to seven, and to Khon Kaen to eight, among other changes. Combined with routes to Udon Thani, Chiang Rai, Hat Yai, Narathiwat and Krabi, Thai Smile’s domestic network will feature 10 popular destinations with a frequency of 50 times a day.

# 2. TOT, CAT eye merger of mobile phone businesses

# Source: The Nation ([Link](http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/business/corporate/30303036))

##  State telecommunication agencies TOT and CAT Telecom have discussed a possible merger of their mobile-phone businesses to help ensure their long-term survival.CAT president Colonel Sanpachai Huvanandana said recently that after the merger, the two agencies would jointly ask the government to extend the validity terms of some of their mobile-phone spectra to enable the merged entity to make money for the long term.“Executives of both agencies have discussed the merger plan and will continue to talk about the details,” he said. He said that if they were able to merge their mobile-phone services, it was highly likely that the government would consider extending the spectrum validity periods for them. Joining together would also enhance TOT’s and CAT’s business opportunities in the cellular-service market.

# 3. H&B Intertex to export Rainflower dolls to Vietnam

**Source: Bangkok Post (**[**Link**](http://www.bangkokpost.com/business/news/1170557/hb-intertex-to-export-rainflower-dolls-to-vietnam)**)**

 H&B Intertex Co, a fully integrated manufacturer of soft toys, dolls and accessories under Saha Group, plans to expand its Rainflower doll business to Vietnam next year. Managing director Jidapa Kittinanthapanya said the company is ready to start exporting the dolls to the neighboring country next year after completing an exhaustive feasibility study. The company will team up with a partner in Laos to market the Rainflower dolls in Vietnam. Initially the toys will be available at Robinson department stores owned by Central Group in major cities. H&B Intertex has been exporting Rainflower dolls to Myanmar and Laos and received good feedback from local customers. The company is interested in Vietnam because the economy is doing well and local people have high spending power and its Laotian partner is familiar with the Vietnam market. Apart from Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam, it is considering expanding its doll business.

# 4. Ministry prioritizes SMEs in farming Source: Bangkok Post ([Link](http://www.bangkokpost.com/business/news/1170405/ministry-prioritises-smes-in-farming))

 The Industry Ministry will lend support to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in food processing and agricultural products as a first priority, aiming to support the farm sector and farmers indirectly, says Industry Minister Uttama Savanayana. He said the ministry will confer with related agencies to launch a plan to promote herbal businesses as a pilot project, expecting to add higher value to Thai herbs with innovations to serve demand in the growing cosmetics industry. The Industry Ministry will initially work with the Commerce, Public Health and Agriculture and Cooperatives ministries to promote SMEs that specialise in natural herbal cosmetics. "Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha has assigned related ministries to accelerate the plan to support SMEs, especially operators that run businesses related to agricultural products," Mr Uttama said. He said the government aims to add higher value to agricultural products.

# 5. Digital Thailand will help narrow urban-rural divideSource:The Nation ([Link](http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/business/EconomyAndTourism/30303040))

#  The 20-Year, four-phase plan to develop Thailand into a fully digital country is going in the right direction, as its focus is on the relevant elements and policy thinking necessary to make “Thailand 4.0” a success and beneficial to its citizens.

##  Digital Thailand will enable ease of delivery of these social benefits to a majority of the population. Digital Thailand will pay rich dividends and provide significantly more opportunities, particularly for entrepreneurial Thais. Digital Thailand will enable new business models to evolve and be a big boost for the start-up industry.

 **By Shreya Chopra**