



World Eye Reports

THAILAND

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The Asian Face of Energy

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Solid Thailand: Open for business

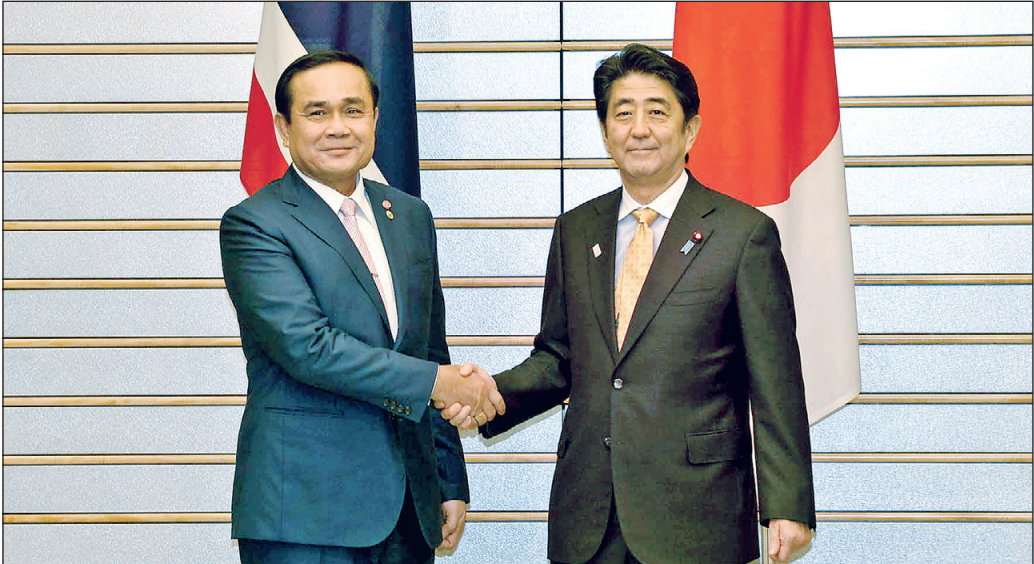
Over the past decades, Thailand has been an Asian success story of consistent and resilient development, overcoming periods of global economic difficulty or national political turbulence. Today, having gone through profound reform and adjustment spearheaded by its new administration in partnership with the country's robust private sector, Thailand is poised to surge forward as an economic powerhouse in the heart of an increasingly integrated ASEAN and the global growth engine that is Asia.

"Since the new fiscal year in October 2014, we've been able to spend our budget efficiently and swiftly to encourage short term economic stimulation," says Sommai Phasee, Thailand's minister of finance. "Infrastructure development projects are key, especially our north-south and east-west transport corridors that will greatly improve our connections with our neighboring ASEAN countries and China."

"Six special economic zones will be established in border areas, focusing on high-tech and renewable resource industries, which enjoy special privileges," he adds.

“Six special economic zones will be established in border areas, focusing on high-tech and renewable resource industries, which enjoy special privileges.”

— SOMMAI PHASEE
Thailand's Minister of Finance



Japan-Thailand Summit Meeting held last Feb. 9 between Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and General Prayuth Chan-ocha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, during his visit to Japan

With the launch of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015, Thailand is strengthening



MINISTRY OF FINANCE

its position as an ideal business hub and strategic bridge to the Southeast Asian region, especially for Japan. "The 630 million people of the AEC is a huge potential market in which Thailand can play a key role," notes Isara Vongkusolkrit, chairman of the Thai Chamber of Commerce. "Member countries will further complement each other in the use of resources and production, which will benefit wealth distribution along the economic corridors."

Vongkusolkrit emphasizes the steps Thailand has taken towards this goal, such as the IHQ initiative, which encourages companies to establish international headquarters in Thailand through tax incentives. Thailand's Board of Investments privileges are also being boosted and aimed at encouraging Japanese SMEs to

participate in joint ventures in service, agriculture and high value-added sectors.

"In 2014, according to the Japanese Chamber of Commerce Bangkok, their registered companies in the service sector in

“The 630 million people of the AEC is a huge potential market in which Thailand can play a key role.”

— ISARA VONGKUSOLKRIT
Chairman
Chamber of Commerce of Thailand

Thailand rose from 746 to 828," remarks Masayasu Hosumi, JETRO Bangkok's president and chief representative for ASEAN & South Asia. "That is an increase of 82 companies compared to just 6 in the manufacturing sector in the same period. Compared to earlier years, there is a much wider range of companies investing in the country from Japan, which makes for a deeper and broader business relationship between the two countries."

Thailand and Japan's long-standing close ties in all areas of cooperation have been critically important for the bilateral development of the two countries. Thai Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha's visit to Japan in February has also reaffirmed the bilateral relationship and plans for regional cooperation.

"We intend to continue engaging ourselves with the new Thai government so we can promote constructive and cooperative relationships between our two countries," says Shigekazu Sato, Japan's ambassador to Thailand. ♦



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Fund house is growth engine for national development

Thailand's robust financial market is one of the strongest in Southeast Asia. From 2013, it has had the largest trading volume and market capitalization in the region, surpassing even Singapore's. Krung Thai Asset Management (KTAM), the country's third largest fund house, is bullish on Thailand's continuing trend of growth and development — especially in the new ASEAN Economic Community (AEC).

"The asset management industry is growing every year — through thick and thin with the economy," says Chavinda Hanratanakool, KTAM's CEO. "Since 2008, the assets under management of the company have grown strongly."

"The impact we have on our market comes from our educating investors to improve their understanding and knowledge of complex investments," she continues. "This is how we have expanded our client base. Looking at Thailand's developing investment scene and the average deposit-to-investment ratio, we still see plenty of room for this trend to continue."

KTAM, under the Krung Thai Bank (KTB) umbrella, has captured a large provincial market outside Bangkok, and is Thailand's leader in the property funds segment with a 30 percent market share. "We have the right product," asserts Hanratanakool. "With KTB, we have one



Chavinda Hanratanakool, CEO of Krung Thai Asset Management

of the largest branch networks in the region."

A winner of numerous awards such as the Stock Exchange of Thailand Excellence Award, KTAM continually innovates with new investment products that are unique to the market. "This year we expect to launch the wholly state-owned enterprise fund, the first of its kind. With a potentially more favorable tax environment for institutional investors, the government will be able to fund their infrastructure projects without increasing public debt," she adds. "We want to become a leader in this as well."

The creation of the AEC is spurring KTAM to lure offshore investors who want to use Thailand as their base. They also hope to cover bordering countries such as Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam through KTB's expansion and by finding potential partners.

"Our goals moving forward are to train our people, improve our skills and be more internationalized to capture the offshore market," Hanratanakool concludes. "We want to maintain and improve our fund performance as we seek to be more dynamic and flexible." ♦ www.ktam.co.th

People-centered approach produces fast food success

After nearly three decades of working for the world's largest fast food restaurants, Hester Chew is an industry veteran who has played a pivotal role in expanding the business throughout the region. Currently chairman and chief executive of McThai, the sole McDonald's franchise in Thailand, he remains bullish about doubling business from 200 stores to 400 by 2020.

"We took over management of McThai in October 2006, and as we celebrate its 30th anniversary in 2015, I am optimistic," says Chew. "The fast food market is still underpenetrated here, given the competition from street vendors — but the population and purchasing power continue to rise."

McThai has always maintained a long-term perspective to ensure profitable growth for its stakeholders — its employees, shareholders, and suppliers. It is likewise always open to opportu-

“McThai believes in having good people that can deliver beyond what is expected, providing good food that is safe and affordable.”

— HESTER CHEW
Chairman and Chief Executive of McThai



McThai

nities for further growth within Thailand and its neighbors. In 2011, it was recognized by Aon Hewitt as one of the best employers in Thailand. Two years later, it was voted "Best of the Best" in the same category, and most recently McThai was once

again recognized as the 2014 Aon Hewitt Top Company for Leaders in Southeast Asia.

"We share our vision with our team, and we try to create an environment for them to give their best," Chew explains. "We have about 9,000 employees, and this

is at the core of everything we do. Our restaurant development includes a road map that involves people-building in which commitment and sincerity are all-important. This is the strength of our corporate culture."

As part of McThai's pioneering initiatives, the head office is known as the "restaurant support center." Restaurant managers are replaced to serve customers. In fact, once a year, all of McThai's department heads — including Chew — run a restaurant shift for one day to appreciate and maintain a better understanding of restaurant staff and their work.

"Ultimately, McThai believes in having good people that can deliver beyond what is expected," says Chew, "providing good food that is safe and affordable. We also emphasize the importance of being good neighbors — with our Ronald McDonald House charity and medical missions throughout the country." ♦ www.mcthai.co.th

Ideal location is key factor for regional expansion

Conveniently located in Chonburi, Thailand's auto sector hub southeast of Bangkok, Calsonic Kansei Thailand (CKT) has more than 2,000 employees producing such key car components as climate control systems and instrument panels.

And, despite past and current challenges, Hironori Kimura — CKT's president — remains optimistic about the company's potential to expand, especially in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC).

"Our management focus is to raise sales volume and prioritize our performance," he says. "It's not just about cost competitiveness, but also about maintaining our quality. This is a key time for our growth and long-term vision, considering the coming changes in the region."

In particular, Kimura aims to



Hironori Kimura, President of Calsonic Kansei Thailand

firmly establish CKT in both the local Thai market and the global Calsonic Kansei network. His goal is to reach sales of \$900 million for the region by 2016. To achieve this, they have identified collaborative management

between Thais and Japanese, as well as material localization, as priorities.

CKT considers it vital to share a long-term vision with its customers, which include Nissan, Isuzu, GM, Mitsubishi, Mazda

and Suzuki. The company also exports products to Calsonic Kansei's global network, notably in the U.S. and Japan. Recently, CKT has developed an exclusive cockpit module for Nissan.

Kimura is also Calsonic Kansei's vice-chairman for the ASEAN region and India. He points out that Thailand's unique automotive ecosystem and strategic position makes it an ideal base for the group's expansion in the rest of the region. Heading into the creation of the AEC this year, he is targeting exponential growth for the Calsonic Kansei group as a whole, with CKT playing its part in leading the region. ♦


www.calsonickansei.co.th

Celebrating 25 years of support for Asian manufacturing

OTC Daihen Asia, a specialist in advanced welding, cutting and robotic systems, achieved its 25-year milestone of supporting the manufacturing sector in Thailand this year. Today, its management is optimistic for further growth in Asian markets with the planned ASEAN Economic Community (AEC).

Founded in 1989, OTC Daihen is based in the Navanakorn Industrial Estate in the central province of Pathumthani. From there, it covers demand in Southeast Asia, Oceania and South Asia, including India and Pakistan.

"We have a good chance of expanding business in the coming years," says the company's president, Kosaku Yamaguchi. "On the sales side, AEC integration will ease export transactions in tax and communication. For our manufacturing activities, it will help reduce material and intermediate costs between

jobs — allowing us to increase efficiency and production with our current assets. Improving efficiency is one of our top priorities moving forward."

The company's strict focus on premium quality and close partnerships with clients has allowed it to increase market share despite the decline in auto production in Thailand in recent years. In 2013, OTC Daihen opened a strategic service base and distribution warehouse in the Hemaraj Eastern Seaboard Industrial Estate, an auto industry hub 150 km from Bangkok, to enhance service for customers in Chonburi and Rayong provinces.

"We set up our technical service centers and distribution facilities in Thailand to be close to our customers," notes Naotake Arioka, its executive vice president. "We know our customers need immediate support after having been in the market for years and we are quick to re-



Kosaku Yamaguchi, President of OTC Daihen Asia

spond to our clients. Our focus has always been on them. Our strong customer support with our distributors and our premium-quality products are aimed at satisfying the expectations of our customers so they continue to work with us on future projects."

"The industry is becoming more global, so there are many opportunities," says Yamaguchi. "Where our clients expand, we may look into expanding as well such as in Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos to continue to provide excellent support." ♦ www.otcdaihenasia.com

Japan partners with Thailand for new era of ASEAN economic integration

The Asian financial crisis of the 1990s was a turning point for Thai banks, which are now healthy, well capitalized and prepared to support rising flows of trade and investment under the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) that begins this year. Japanese banks and economic organizations, which played a vital role in the growth of Thailand, are now joining with Thai financial institutions to support the economic development of other countries in the region.

Bangkok Bank, which celebrates the 60th anniversary of its first branch in Japan this year, is positioning itself as the ideal partner for Japanese companies in Thailand and Southeast Asia.

Bangkok Bank is positioning itself as the ideal partner for Japanese companies in Thailand and Southeast Asia.

It also has an extensive international branch network throughout the region — covering nine out of ten AEC countries.

To help Japanese SMEs expand in ASEAN countries, Bangkok Bank is working closely with the Japan Finance Corporation (JFC), Shoko Chukin Bank and other Japanese financial institutions while also further boosting its own services to Japanese businesses.

Since the Asian financial crisis



With a local network of almost 1,200 branches, and the largest overseas branch network of any Thai bank — Bangkok Bank is ready to serve its customers anywhere in the region.

of 1997, the Bank of Thailand and the country's Ministry of Finance have taken extra care in guiding the Thai banking system with prudent measures for long-term sustainability and stability. These steps have included international standards such as Basel II and

Basel III, and the measures have maintained Thailand's economic resilience through the global financial crisis that started in 2008.

These strong fundamentals mean that Thai banks have the strength to help Thai enterprises grow and expand in this time of

opportunity. Many Thai companies are looking to Myanmar and other neighboring countries for

Over the years, Bangkok Bank has been committed to supporting and expanding the strong links between Thailand and Japan. This year, its Tokyo branch celebrates its 60th anniversary with its success in Japan attributed to the bank's long-term vision and key ground staff.

growth and Bangkok Bank has positioned itself to support them amidst expectations of easier capital flows and greater banking service requirements across the region.

As well as being Thailand's largest bank and the market leader in corporate and SME banking, Bangkok Bank is a major regional bank. It has a wide local network of almost 1,200 branches, and the largest overseas branch network of any Thai bank with 30 offices in 14 economies — including wholly owned subsidiaries in Malaysia and China and a representative office in Myanmar.

The Myanmar office opened in 1995, and Bangkok Bank was the first Thai bank to establish a presence there. Last year it became the only Thai bank to be granted a banking license in the country. Bangkok Bank also recently opened a new overseas branch in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

"We follow our customers," says Chertsiri Soponpanich, the bank's president, who has led its expansion since taking the helm in 1994. "We began by establishing our footprint in Hong Kong in 1954, then Tokyo in 1955 and

many others in the region — following the trade flows between these countries and Thailand. We

provide our clients with comprehensive banking services and work with them as their partner, with a geographic presence that extends across East and South-

east Asia."

"This coverage has been useful to support our customers in the region, including local and regional companies such as the Japanese enterprises operating across borders," he adds. "Increasingly, we are serving Thai customers seeking trade and investment opportunities across the region."

Over the years, Bangkok Bank has been committed to supporting and expanding the strong links between Thailand and Japan. This year, its Tokyo branch celebrates its 60th anniversary with its success in Japan attributed to the bank's long-term vision and key ground staff.

"We see Japan as a very important contributor to economic growth in Thailand and the ASEAN region," Chertsiri com-

We also see significant movement of Japanese companies establishing themselves in the region, and we would like to support these companies through our branch network, and in cooperation with Japanese banks."

— CHARTSIRI SOPONPANICH
President of Bangkok Bank



Bangkok Bank continues to invest in its staff's technical expertise and provide its customers with the best products and services in the market.

ments. "We also see significant movement of Japanese companies establishing themselves in the region, and we would like to support these companies through our branch network, and in cooperation with Japanese banks."

As the third tier of Japanese investment comes to Thailand, comprised of SMEs spanning a wider range of industries and services, Bangkok Bank aims to play a major role within this developing ecosystem by continuously investing in its managerial and technical expertise as well as fostering a collaborative corporate culture in the company.

"Our vision for Bangkok Bank is to be a leading financial service entity with long-term partnerships and clients throughout the region," concludes Chertsiri. "The prosperity of the region — including Thailand — will grow significantly. We want to be a part of that success." ♦

www.bangkokbank.com

Powering Southeast Asia, from Thailand to Laos

Born out of the CH Karnchang PLC Group's established leadership and expertise in power project development, acquisition, construction and operation, CK Power PLC (CK Power) serves as the holding company for the group's investments in the power sector. Involved in power generation, CK Power has a diverse portfolio ranging from renewables such as solar and hydroelectric to cogeneration.

CK Power is well-positioned to take advantage of the regional growth and greater demand for infrastructure that the upcoming ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) should bring about. Already, it has several pioneering projects both in Thailand and in Laos, where its 615 MW hydroelectric power plant — Nam Ngum 2 — started commercial operations in 2011.

When CK Power listed on the Stock Exchange of Thailand in July of 2013, it became the first listed Thai holding company with its core asset in Laos, serving as a template for investors to tap into one of the developing markets of the region.

"Both the stock exchange and

With the AEC coming, Japanese see that Thailand can serve as an important hub or a link to the growing markets in Southeast Asia, and they are discussing with our group, regarding potential projects in Laos and Myanmar amongst others..."

— SUPAMAS TRIVISAVAVET
Managing Director of CK Power



the government of Thailand were quite excited about our IPO because they want to prepare for the AEC, and they want Thailand to be one of the open platforms for foreign investors to get exposure into neighboring countries such

as Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam and Cambodia," explains Supamas Trivisavavet, managing director of CK Power. "Investors can gain a better understanding and have more confidence by investing through us. We have a proven

track record in Laos, and are very comfortable with our local partners there."

She emphasizes that clean and renewable energy is important for decreasing Thailand's current reliance on gas-fueled power

plants — roughly 60 percent of the country's energy supply — and is hopeful that the new Power Development Plan (PDP) will continue to provide appropriate policies and incentives to promote cost-effective, stable and sustainable energy.

The company has a solid road map for growth both in the long and the short term. Currently, it has two new hydropower projects in Laos under development: the larger Xayaburi Hydroelectric plant, with an installed capacity of 1,285 MW, is approximately 40 percent completed and is set to be operational by 2019. In the short term, CK Power is developing its second 120 MW cogeneration power plant and also tapping into solar and wind energy sources in Thailand to augment its three existing solar power plants there.

"With the AEC coming, Japanese see that Thailand can serve as an important hub or a link to the growing markets in Southeast Asia, and they are discussing with our group regarding potential projects in Laos and Myanmar amongst others, where we can go and invest together as partners," concludes Trivisavavet. ♦

www.ckpower.co.th/en/

Food sustainability makes Thailand a global base for quality products

Founded in 1981, GFPT is a fully integrated food company that specializes in chicken production, processing and distribution for both the local Thai and international markets. Through the latest production technology, the company ensures quality, freshness and safety to its global customers. It is currently growing, with the goal of becoming one of the top three chicken producers in Thailand in the next few years.

Japan and the EU account for 95 percent of GFPT's exports, so Japan's lifting of its ban on fresh chicken from Thailand on Feb. 1, 2014 has opened the door for more opportunities for the company.

"From Japan, we are expecting initial demand of 80,000 metric tons, eventually reaching 200,000 metric tons of fresh Thai chicken," says Anan Sirimongkolkasem, GFPT's chairman of the executive committee. "We are very confident of this, and our Japa-

nese importers have expressed their optimism as well. It makes good business sense for Japan because of better logistics compared to its other major supplier of chicken, Brazil."

Sirimongkolkasem also believes the two countries are ideal business partners, given Thailand's long-standing relationship with Japan. "The Japanese have always believed in the Thai industry," he comments. "They understand the Thai market, and have shown their trust and commitment throughout the years — as you can see from their investments. Another area in which we work very closely with them is R&D, to ensure our products are appropriate for Japanese tastes."

Sirimongkolkasem notes that GFPT has always believed in creating synergies with its partners to attain excellence in meeting clients' demands. For example, he has been partners with Nichirei — one of Japan's top producers of frozen foods — for 20 years. In 2008, GFPT started a joint venture company with Nichirei. Another of the company's key joint ventures is its partnership with McKey Food Services, together with the U.S. company Keystone, which supplies chicken to McDonald's Japan.

"Our partners' confidence in our production system is very important," he explains. "They see the merit of our involvement from end-to-end in the supply chain. We own the feed mill, farms and processing facilities — so our quality and stan-



Anan Sirimongkolkasem,
Chairman of the Executive Committee of GFPT

dards are maintained throughout the whole process."

One area in which Sirimongkolkasem is very passionate is food sustainability in light of the world's growing population and limited resources. In recognition of his efforts in this respect, GFPT has been nominated for The Stock Exchange of Thailand's Company Performance Award, while Sirimongkolkasem has also been nominated for the Best CEO award.

Additionally, analysts have promoted GFPT stock as a top pick for its profitability and stable performance. "This has been important so that the public can see our transparency and how we run the business — that is why analysts are comfortable with us and we've had astounding stock performance in 2014," Sirimongkolkasem concludes. ♦

www.gfpt.co.th

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PREMIUM WELDING SYSTEM

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Building the ASEAN distribution network from Thailand

For more than 130 years, Berli Jucker (BJC) has stood on the frontlines of Thailand's most dynamic corporations. A leader in commercial development in the region, BJC has carefully selected and nurtured local and international partners.

The company acquired the agency of the then Hong Kong Shanghai Bank in Thailand in 1885. In the 1950s, BJC acquired agencies for major manufacturers from Europe such as Sandoz, Agfa-Gevaert, Leitz, Geha and Scott and MAN.

A trailblazer in heavy industry and in cooperation with foreign companies in Thailand, BJC eventually formed a joint venture with Australian Consolidated Industries in 1951 to manufacture glass containers locally.

Today BJC is proud to be a leading provider of marketing, sales and distribution services in Southeast Asia, managing one of the region's most efficient manufacturing operations. BJC's product portfolios are diverse — ranging from fast-moving consumer products, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, to packaging products such as glass containers and aluminum beverage cans.

Partnering with the world's leading beverage container manufacturers — Ball for aluminium cans and Owens-Illinois for glass — BJC owns and operates one of Southeast Asia's largest beverage packaging assets.

The company pioneered its regional business in 1914 when it expanded its activities to Saigon and Singapore. It started its business operation in Burma in 1934 to distribute maritime equipment, newsprint and pharmaceutical products. After World War II, BJC returned to the country and set up a representative office in Yangon to supply medical equipment, printing machines and consumer and packaging products.

"We have always looked at our neighbor countries as our market, with Southeast Asia as our area of focus," says Aswin Techajareonvikul, CEO and president of BJC.

“We would like to have more business with Japanese corporations. We are eager to spearhead new product alliances and joint ventures with Japan. BJC can be the platform of choice for Japanese companies interested in doing business in Southeast Asia.”

— ASWIN TECHAJAREONVIKUL
CEO and President of Berli Jucker



tion of goods and services in the Southeast Asian region. We need to connect all parts of the supply chain to create a single platform. Our strategy is to first create platforms in each country, and then connect them all together.”

BJC provides access to the region for its global partners through increased collaboration and new partnerships.

As BJC broadens its attention to retail, it is also becoming more dynamic. “With today's trend in retail, customers have more specific needs,” Techajareonvikul remarks. “We need to get closer to our customers to develop more customized products for each market. Moving forward, we need to look carefully at each individual market to determine what to produce and how best to serve it.”

The advantages and expertise gained from being closer to the customer is expected not only to benefit BJC, but also its long-term alliances. BJC provides access to the region for its global partners through increased collaboration and new partnerships. Completing the chain and broadening retail reach is part of BJC's long-term vision for the ASEAN region and the AEC.

To accomplish this, BJC can draw on its own remarkable experience of more than 40 years in the health care business. This has taken the company to the forefront of marketing, distribution and servicing in the industry across Thailand and the surrounding region.

Along the way, it has built long-term strategic alliances with the top Japanese companies in the health care equipment and pharmaceutical segments. These include Hitachi, Shimadzu and Kyoto Kagaku for high-tech equipment, and the pharmaceutical leaders Astellas, Daito, Teijin and Cocokara Fine (with which BJC formed a joint venture last April).

“We would like to have more business with Japanese corporations,” Techajareonvikul declares. “We are eager to spearhead new product alliances and joint ventures with Japan. BJC can be the platform of choice for Japanese

companies interested in doing business in Southeast Asia. Given our track record and our understanding of Japanese culture and values, as well as our acquired mutual respect vis-a-vis Japanese counterparts, it would be a good opportunity for other Japanese companies to distribute their products through our Southeast Asian network.”

In pursuit of strengthening connections between Japanese business and ASEAN, BJC's CEO recognizes the challenges that lie ahead. As the AEC grows ever closer to becoming a vital unifying force for raising the economic potential of Southeast Asia, new levels of complexity arise.

“Our priority for the future is to equip our people with the ASEAN mind-set,” he emphasizes. “It is key, because the business process now has another layer of diversity — culture and language. This is important to ensure our people excel in the ASEAN business environment.”

Techajareonvikul is a graduate of Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He has received multiple business leadership awards, both at home and abroad. In 2012, Techajareonvikul was named Thailand's Business Leader of the Year in the CNBC 11th Asia Business Leader Awards. In 2014, the World Economic Forum recognized him as one of the Young Global Leaders. ♦ www.bjc.co.th

Capturing Asian markets through localized strategies

With four decades of experience, five manufacturing sites and more than 1,500 employees, DSG International (DSGIL) is firmly established in Asia. A holding company for baby and adult diapers, DSGIL operates through its two major business entities in the region. Founded by its current chairman, Brandon Wang, in 1973, DSGIL serves the East Asia region — mainly covering Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland. In turn, DSGIL supports Southeast Asian markets through a publicly listed subsidiary, DSG International (Thailand), otherwise known as DSGT.

Owing to market fundamentals such as the growing birthrate, aging population and increasing consumer affluence, DSGT is further strengthening its presence throughout Asia while recognizing market segmentation. DSGT promotes brand consumption for existing products and creates more with value-added specifications.

DSGT maintains brand equity for its disposable baby products, with such trusted Asian brands as “BabyLove” in Thailand, “Fitti” in Indonesia and “PetPet” in Malaysia. For adult incontinence products, its “Certainty” brand has been a market leader in Thailand for many years.

Achieving rapid growth since its inception in 1994, DSGT has almost tripled its revenue in five years, from \$110 million in 2009 to about \$300 million last year.

“We continually improve tape and pant products, and launch new ones every 12 to 18 months with unique consumer benefits,” says DSGT's CEO Ambrose Chan.



Ambrose Chan, CEO of DSGT

“In fact, we were the first in Asia to introduce baby diapers for night-time use.”

DSGT now sells its products through multiple channels, including stores, retail outlets and hospitals. Over half of its sales come from Thailand, and the rest from Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and export markets. DSGT is now looking into the sizeable markets of Indonesia, Vietnam and China for potential strategic partnerships.

“We look forward to creating synergies with local players with extensive sales and distribution capabilities to complement our marketing, product development and technology expertise,” says Chan. “Such partnerships will enable us to accelerate growth through portfolio expansion in line with market demands, and through geographical expansion to reach under-penetrated emerging markets.” ♦ www.dsgap.com



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Ambitious new kid in town has roots in Thai icon

After more than 80 years in business, Boon Rawd Brewery — makers of Thailand’s iconic Singha Beer — is diversifying into the real estate sector. In April last year, the vision of its Group Chief Executive, Santi Bhirimbhakdi, to expand into non-alcohol markets was finally achieved through

strong background in finance and development, Cheykin aims to transform Singha Estate into a premium real estate brand. “In my previous job, everything was already in place — so I’m looking forward to taking on the challenge of growing the business,” he declares. “Bhirimbhakdi has set a goal of ac-

the holding company and driving force for these assets. The first property in its portfolio is the Santiburi Beach Resort in Koh Samui, which has already undergone a \$15 million renovation. A second hotel property — the Outrigger Phi Phi Village — was acquired in December 2014, while deals for the third, fourth

from scratch, while keeping everything in line with our vision of creating a premium brand,” he continues. “In addition, joint ventures and acquisitions will be key for our residential and commercial developments, and several deals are already underway.” On the retail side Cheykin draws inspiration these days from lifestyle concept malls rather than from conventional and predictable department stores and shopping centers. “I’ve talked to a number of progressive companies from Japan on possible joint ventures,” he explains. “We envision a convenient and welcoming location where you can shop for your groceries, eat and accomplish banking and other household transactions without the hassle of traffic and huge crowds. Our idea is to build five to 10 of these new-style shopping centers conveniently located around the country and in quite a short period of time.”

“For Singha Estate and Boon Rawd, quality comes first,” emphasizes Cheykin. “And since we consider Japanese quality control as possibly the best, we would like to bring our local knowledge and capabilities and gain know-how through technology transfers and collaborations.” Aside from being a rich source of potential partnerships — Japan is also an important client market for Singha Estate’s residential, industrial and commercial projects. Cheykin believes the company’s flagship project in Bangkok — the Singha Complex — is destined to become a leading world-class office and mixed-use development in the heart of Bangkok and would be suitable for many Japanese companies in Thailand. Construction on this iconic landmark is planned to begin in mid-2015. Interestingly enough, the site was the former location of the city’s



“Singha has always had a very close relationship with Japan and its people, and we envision the Singha Complex as offering a comfortable workplace in the heart of the Japanese community of south Sukhumvit...”

— NARIS CHEYKIN
CEO of Singha Estate



Located at the former site of the Japanese Embassy in south Sukhumvit, the Singha Complex offers a comfortable workplace in the heart of the Japanese community in Bangkok.

the acquisition of Bangkok-based Rasa Property Development. The resulting company was renamed Singha Estate, and it has already become one of the biggest players in the Thai property sector, with plans to invest no less than \$3.3 billion in development projects over the next five years. The new company is led by Naris Cheykin, previously CFO of Central Pattana (CPN), which is the largest company in the property sector on The Stock Exchange of Thailand. After 16 years of experience in operations, marketing and leasing sales and a

counting for a fifth of Boon Rawd group’s total revenue within the next five years.” “When we first took over our bottom line was negative because we had prioritized investing, but for 2015 our main objective is to start achieving returns,” adds Cheykin. “We’re also focusing on opening the company to the market and informing investors of our newly-launched products and future plans.” The Boon Rawd Group plans to develop residential, hospitality, commercial, retail and industrial properties throughout Thailand, and Singha Estate will be

and fifth are currently in the pipeline. The idea is to develop these properties into either listed hotel subsidiaries or inject them into a newly set-up real estate investment trust. “We want to create our own Thai hotel brand — one that is luxurious and unique,” says Cheykin. “We plan to offer four-star hotels which can compete with Anantara or Centara properties, and which will set new standards for guests and attractive returns for investors.” “We intend to achieve this rapid growth by acquiring hotels rather than building them

Boon Rawd’s vast existing network is key to Singha Estate’s main strategy in finding the best locations for its properties. With an established network of agents nationwide covering every province in Thailand, it aims to provide leading-edge design and construction techniques and to co-invest with local landlords and developers to share the profits. Singha Estate looks to Japanese companies as ideal partners for its developments, and is now seeking to collaborate with Japanese developers for its residential and industrial property projects.

Japanese Embassy at the junction of Asoke and Phetchaburi roads. “Singha has always had a very close relationship with Japan and its people, and we envision the Singha Complex as offering a comfortable workplace in the heart of the Japanese community of south Sukhumvit near the city center,” Cheykin says. “We are also building a residential tower not far from the complex, so it will be very convenient for Japanese companies to use these condos for their executives while locating their offices in the complex.” Cheykin clearly aims to boost

the local real estate industry and further encourage investment from Japan into many parts of Thailand through Singha Estate. With the coming ASEAN Economic Community, he considers Thailand to be the ideal gateway for Japanese investors to set up regional operations in Asia, and

is working to help make this happen. “Thailand is still the best place to do business, and is fully worth study and exploration by Japanese companies and individuals,” he concludes. “With our established infrastructure and logistics, it is an ideal center

for supervising operations, trade and distribution throughout the region. Though the country may have experienced its share of challenges recently, we’ve remained a stable investment opportunity for Japan — today and for the future.” ♦ www.singhaestate.co.th



Singha Estate’s flagship project in Bangkok — the Singha Complex — is destined to become a leading world-class office and mixed-use development. The construction of this iconic landmark is set for mid-2015.



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SINGHA ESTATE PCL.
968 U Chu Liang Building, 20th Floor, Rama IV Road, Silom, Bangrak, Bangkok 10500 Thailand
Tel: (+66) 2632-4533, Fax: (+66) 2632-4534 www.singhaestate.co.th

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