

Thailand's Medical Hub golden opportunity

Another well-received "5 First S-Curve Virtual Conference" was webcast on December 4, 2020. The second episode in the series was headed, "Thailand Medical Hub: New Center of Thai Economy". The conference discussing a promising industry was joined by experts in various fields representing public and private sectors. They included: Theetanun Rattanasanyanuphap from the Office of the National Broadcasting & Telecommunications Commission (NBTC); Pongpat Patanavanich, M.D., from TPP Healthcare International Co., Ltd. and MedPark Hospital; Kamthorn Kanchanavatee, Managing Director, Supreme Products Co., Ltd.; Naritcha Torsutkanok, Vice President of Medical & Health Device Manufacturer Industry Club, Federation of Thai Industries; and Nuchada Paradevisut, Director of ExpoSis Company Limited.

Organised, as previously, by Bangkok Post Group in collaboration with Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) and Thai Chamber of Commerce (TCC), the conference started with a public lecture on "Comprehensive Medical Care: Value, Wealth, and the Economy of Thailand" presented by Dr. Somsak Akksilp, Director General of Department of Medical Services.

Ms. Theetanun then kicked off a panel discussion, saying that the NBTC has contributed to the foundation of the country's telecommunications infrastructure to drive toward the goal of Thailand 4.0. He said digital economy development and strong telecommunications foundations in accordance with government policy will help Thailand develop a comprehensive medical care industry and become the medical hub of Asia ahead of its ten-year target.

"As one of the targeted 'new economy' industries, the government wants to push the country's medical industry to become the Asia Pacific medical hub. Thailand's strengthening telecommunications foundation is a catalyst to accelerate the plan, especially adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) and Data Analytics in medical services provided by leading hospitals. The plan is also in line with 5G technology development whereby NBTC held an auction for 5G licenses earlier this year."

Dr. Pongpat commented on technology



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Mr. Chana Wanichapun (Moderator).

research and development, saying that while there is intense competition in other countries, Thailand is mostly an importer. Therefore, instead of focusing on research or innovation, the country should concentrate on efficient technology management such as developing the ability to analyse results rather than developing new technology.

Mr. Kamthorn recognised that Internet of Things (IoT) will also help Thailand become a medical hub. Home care smart device development such as heart pulse monitoring that does not require patients to go to hospital is one example. Other examples include queuing, telemedibot, and drive thru pharmacy.

Mr. Naritcha noted that disruption results in digital changes that in turn generate more efficient consumer products at more reasonable prices. Besides the medical technology trend, collaboration between organisations enables various innovations to be accepted by people in medical fields. This leads to an ecosystem for developing



Mr. Chana Wanichapun (Moderator), Naritcha Torsutkanok, Vice President of Medical & Health Device Manufacturer Industry Club, Mr. Montri Itvarakorn Director and Secretary, Committee on Exhibition and Business Matching, The Thai Chamber of Commerce, Mrs. Sirima Limviriyalers, Senior Executive Vice President of Bangkok Post Public Company Limited, Theetanun Rattanasanyanuphap, Director of the Telecommunication Policy and Management Bureau, Mr. Salanroj Sutaschuto, Director, Central & Eastern Regional Office, TCEB, Kumthorn Kanchanavatee, Managing Director, Supreme Products Co.,Ltd.



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medical devices that cements Thailand's position as a well-accepted medical hub by international communities.

Ms. Nuchada shared her insights into the exhibition industry, noting that exhibitions have traditionally been staged face-to-face. However, she said that in the current situation everyone has to adapt. In the medical arena, people want to experience the products. Virtual models can be developed to enable this but this takes time because they require some experimentation in order to reach an understanding of the product. Sometimes samples must be sent for trial. This makes closing a deal more difficult and poses one of the greatest challenges the industry faces.

Stay tuned for complimentary live streaming of "5 First S-Curve Virtual Conference" Episode 3 on the robotics industry on December 16, 2020, from 13.00-16.00 hours at Post Today and Bangkok Post Facebook pages. More information, please visit posttoday.com.

