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Aapico stock mart performance makes Malaysia proud

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AAPICO Hitech Plc, a Malaysian-controlled car parts maker in Thailand has

made Malaysia proud for being adjudged one of the best newly-listed stock

counters on the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) last month.

Its president and chief executive officer Yeap Swee Chuan said that Aapico was voted by SET as one of the three best newly-listed stock counters in July.

The other two best stock counters are Thai Stanley Electric Plc and Major Cineplex Group Plc. Thai Stanley Electric manufactures automotive bulbs and lighting equipment while Major Cineplex operates movie theatre chains as well as provides advertising services, and concession stand and

rentals in its movie and bowling complexes.

Following the recognition as the best-stock counter, Yeap said Aapico has been selected to represent Thailand's automotive sector for SET's roadshows to Europe and the US next month.

"SET is organising the roadshow from September 15 to 20 to woo funds from the US and Europe. The roadshows will have participation from the eight sectors of the stock exchange.

"They (participants) will be stopping in London, New York, San Francisco and Boston for the roadshows," he told Business Times by telephone from Bangkok.

Yeap said Thailand expects sales of vehicles to hit 510,000 units this year, with 200,000 from exports.

He said in the first half of this year, Thailand sold 250,000 vehicles, which represents a 25 per cent increase from the same period last year.

Yeap, who is also chairman of Malaysia-Thai Chamber of Commerce said he

plans to bring in at least 10 top chief executives of companies in Thailand for a visit to Malaysia.

He said that the Malaysia-Thailand consultation held in Langkawi last month has strengthened trade and investment relations between the two countries.

"We are now closer with Thailand in respect of trade and investment cooperation. I hope that the trade cooperation would be further enhanced with a trip from the Thais to Malaysia.

"I also hope that we can arrange a meeting between the Thai chief executive officers and the Prime Minister (either Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad or his successor Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi)," he said.

Meanwhile, Yeap said Aapico's share prices have been spiralling ever since the company acquired 99.9 per cent of Dana Corp's subsidiary Parish

Structural Products Thailand Ltd (PSPT) in June this year.

Its share price closed at 99 baht (100 baht = RM9.31) last Friday, up

baht, or 3.13 per cent, from 96 baht recorded last Thursday. A total of 311,400 shares were traded.

Aapico's share price was at 25 baht during its initial price offering on October 17 2003. Its shares rose 2.8 per cent to 37.25 baht when the company announced its intention to buy PSPT to the stock exchange on May 19.

Yeap said the company's financial performance has been very positive and has met its target of achieving a 10 per cent growth in profit, a month after the acquisition of PSPT in June.

Yeap did not dismiss the possibility that there will be more acquisition of companies by Aapico early next year.

On May 21 2003, Aapico signed a sale and purchase agreement with the Toledo-based Dana Corp for the acquisition of eight million shares of the latter's subsidiary, PSPT, for 2.05 billion baht.

The acquisition made Aapico the sole supplier of frames for Isuzu Motors Ltd's D-Max trucks, boosting the company's sales and profit.

Isuzu, the truck unit of General Motors, was Thailand's second largest carmaker in April with a 27 per cent market share, while Dana Corp is the world's biggest maker of light-truck axles.

Dana Corp is a global leader in the design, engineering and manufacture of value-added products and systems for automotive, commercial and off-highway vehicle manufacturers and their related after-markets.

Founded in 1904 and based in Toledo, Ohio, Dana Corp operates hundreds of technology, manufacturing and customer service facilities in 30 countries, while Aapico is owned partly by Sime Darby Bhd with an 18.29 per cent stake.