

Partners hitch ride with Mobike for bike-sharing service's Thai debut

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THE NATION

MOBIKE, operator of the world's first bike-sharing service, yesterday said it is entering the Thai market in partnership with Advanced Info Service (AIS), Central Pattana (CPN) and Bangkok's Kasetsart University.

The three partners signed memorandums of understanding with Mobike to deliver what they called "smart, sustainable mobility solutions to Thailand's residents and visitors".

The service will start at Kasetsart University in November, providing students, staff and visitors easy mobility across the campus.

Kasetsart University is one of the largest universities in the Kingdom. The so-called smart bikes will also soon be found in prime locations in cities across the country, including CPN retail properties, "where consumers will have the convenience of riding Mobike as part of the first and last mile of their shopping excursions".

Joe Xia, founder and chief technical officer of Mobike Ltd, said the operation was first launched in Shanghai in April 2016, Mobike is now in more than 160 cities across China, Singapore, Italy, Japan, the UK, and now Thailand. It is the world's biggest bike-sharing opera-

tor. "We provide the last mile solution for short trips of two or three kilometres. We are on track to enter 200 cities by 2018," Xia said.

"We believe that urban residents everywhere will embrace a quick, convenient and environmentally friendly option like Mobike for short trips, and we will consider expanding into any city where our smart-bike solution can address local transportation needs in a way that has support from local authorities."

Xia said that as with every country that Mobike has entered, the company would form strategic partnerships with local businesses and work closely with authorities to tailor a bike-share solution that meets the local regulatory guidelines and is beneficial for the local community.

"In Thailand, we partnered with AIS, CPN, and KU. In the next few years, we are committed to continually innovate our smart bike-share technology and infrastructure to provide the best service, the most convenience, and most affordable bike-share service," Xia said "We will be announcing further market launches by the end of this year."

AIS, Thailand's largest telecommunications operator, is Mobike's technology partner in extending its Internet of Things network of smart bikes in the country. AIS's next gen-

eration network with advanced 4G and WiFi technologies means Mobike's connectivity with its bikes and riders in Thailand is on the smartest and fastest network available.

"Mobike is excited to partner with leading Thai businesses and institutions to bring our smart, sustainable mobility solution into the country," Xia said. "Our success in Thailand will be driven by these partnerships, our use of the most advanced technology in the industry, and our experience leading the largest mobile-enabled IoT network in the world," Xia said, adding that Mobikes are equipped with a series of proprietary high-tech features that benefit both users and partner cities alike. Every Mobike is equipped with unique smart-lock technology and built-in GPS connected via the Mobike IoT network.

The company says this is an invaluable feature for cities that no other bike-sharing company provides. Mobike's technology monitors the location and state of each bike, as well as location-based demand for bikes, to manage supply and help solve the "last-mile" challenge.

Suvit Arayavilaipong, senior vice president for product management at AIS, said that AIS's partnership with Mobike demonstrates the company's commitment to promoting



From left: Chongrak Wachrinrat, acting president of Kasetsart University; Suvit Arayavilaipong, AIS senior vice president for product management; Joe Xia, founder and chief technical officer of Mobike Ltd; and Nattakit Tangpoonsintha, CPN executive vice president for marketing, introduce the Mobike service yesterday.

the Internet-enabled sharing economy.

Suivit said the IoT is being increasingly adopted to efficiently match consumer demand with existing market resources. The next generation economy, supporting smart sharing services, is designed to drive Thai business and improve quality of life.

Nattakit Tangpoonsinthana, CPN executive vice president for marketing, said that the company was looking to offer local consumers and tourists alike new experiences.

"We are partnering with Mobike because its innovative solution for helping people reach the 'last mile' of their journey is a proven benefit to local businesses to bring more people to browse, purchase, dine, and enjoy themselves," Nattakit said.

Chongrak Wachrinrat, acting president of Kasetsart University, said that the university and Mobike share the dream of a better, greener future with less pollution and traffic congestion in Thai cities.