

# CyberPlanet plans realty development in Hokkaido

## PROPERTY EXPECTED TO SURGE IN VALUE DURING 2020 OLYMPICS

**SUCHAT SRITAMA**  
THE NATION

CYBERPLANET Interactive, a Thai real-estate and power-industry holding company, yesterday announced a plan to buy a plot of land on the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido, the country's second-largest, for potential development.

Noppol Milinhanggoon, newly appointed chief executive officer of CyberPlanet, said the company planned to buy 20-30 rai (3.2-4.8

hectares) of land in the city of Niseko for a development project. However, he declined to reveal further details on the development as the firm still needs to complete a feasibility study, including examination of Japan's investment laws.

A plan to sign a memorandum of understanding with the company's Japanese partner, Asension Trading Ltd, yesterday was postponed because executives were unable to travel from Japan to Bangkok because of temporary airport closures in their country.

"We will sign the MoU with Asension Trading later," he said.

He added that this would be his company's first overseas expansion, and would be considered a pilot project. If it is successful, more developments could follow, not only in Japan, but also in other countries.

Noppol said this year was a very good time to invest in Japan because of many supportive factors. For one thing, the yen has depreciated, making foreigners' funds more valuable.

Land in Niseko is cheaper than in



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Bangkok, averaging about Bt15,000 per square metre. The group has reserved cash of Bt2 billion for new expansion or investment.

CyberPlanet is interested in Niseko as it is a year-around tourist destination. The city offers a range of activities including hot springs, skiing, golf, and views of the iconic Mount Yotei. Hokkaido is also one of the most popular destinations for Thai tourists, particularly during the cool season. Thai Airways International operates direct flights from Bangkok to the island.

The number of tourists visiting Japan has increased dramatically over the past few years as the government promoted inbound tourism. Also, Japan is scheduled to host the Summer Olympic Games in 2020, which is expected to drive the need for more accommodations and facilities.

Given these factors, CyberPlanet is well aware that giant investors from Singapore, the United States and China are eyeing the area. The group

is confident that real-estate prices will increase in the long term, especially

during and after the Olympics. In London, return on investment in land development jumped by 150 per cent in 2012 when the British capital hosted the Games, higher than the annual 20-per-cent growth during the preceding decade.

"We hope that will happen in Japan in 2020," Noppol said.

At home, CyberPlanet aims to continue to invest in unique high-end real-estate projects as well as looking for opportunities overseas. It is also on the lookout for projects in the power industry. Noppol said the group saw unsatisfactory financial performance last year.