

Robinson plans 10 new stores in 2013-14

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THE NATION

Robinson Department Store plans to open five stores in both 2013 and 2014 after its sales this year were forecast to surge by 20 per cent to Bt20 billion.

Nujjaree Sunthadvanich, financial controller, said yesterday that Bt15.2 billion in sales had already been achieved in the first three quarters and the current fourth quarter was expected to do even better.

"We expect our gross profit to reach 24.4-per-cent growth this year despite the slight decline in the third quarter, as consumers had less confidence in the economy and flooding was a possibility, which resulted in some reduction in their expenditures.

"However, we believe that spending will be back again in the fourth quarter, which is the high season," she said.

"We also expect to maintain our growth at 20 per cent next year. We plan to open five stores next year, consisting of three department stores in Kanchanaburi, Ubon Ratchathani and Sakhon Nakhon and two lifestyle centres. Five more stores are planned for 2014. The investment will be Bt800 million to Bt1 billion per branch.

"We will focus on expanding in the provinces to serve the country's economic growth. We are still considering our overseas expansion, which is under a feasibility study, as we expect saturation of the retail market in Thailand to be achieved in the near future," Nujjaree said.

President Preecha Ekkunagul said he was quite confident in the growth prospects of the local retail industry next year. Two new stores were opened this year, which are Robinson Surat Thani and Robinson Bang Khae, while Robinson Lampang will follow next month.