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THAI CHIPS

Semiconductor International (September, 1983) described the activities of the three major semiconductor firms manufacturing in Thailand. Synertek, a subsidiary of Honeywell, employs 500 workers. The Thai facility functions as a subcontractor for the firm's larger operation in Singapore. The Thai plant assembles chips into plastic packages only. Singapore handles ceramic and hermetic devices. The company is replacing its manual wire bonders with automatic models.

Data General assembles semiconductors in Thailand for use in its own computers. It also assembles cables, produces printed circuit boards, and manufactures system assemblies there.

Signetics, the Silicon Valley merchant firm owned by Dutch multinational Philips, is by far the largest chip firm in Thailand. When it closed its Manila (Philippines) plant, it boosted its Thai workforce by two to three hundred, to a total of 2,400. (It also added about 150 workers to its Seoul [South Korea] plant.)

Signetics (Thailand) does its own equipment repair, and it tests about 90% of the chips assembled there. The company is working to reduce its cycle time from 10 days to 7 days.