

Daily Thai News Summary: 24 February 2016

1. Global travel firm GTA, TAT to promote Thailand as upscale

Source: **The Nation** ([Link](#))

Global travel company GTA and the Tourism Authority of Thailand are collaborating on a plan to increase the number of high-spending tourists coming to the Kingdom. Ivan Walter, chief executive officer of GTA, said it would join forces with TAT to promote Thailand as a luxury leisure destination. *"Thailand is one of the world's most desired and dynamic tourism destinations. The country is surrounded by many of the influential travel suppliers, travel agents, technology partners and hotels."* He said Asia-Pacific and Middle East travel communities were strongly committed to promote the country to upscale tourists and focus more on luxury markets. Speaking at GTA's 2016 summit on "Future Outlook of Travel and Future of Travel Intermediaries" in Bangkok yesterday, Walter told travel executives from China, Australia, India, Singapore and Hong Kong that Thailand's tourism had risen dramatically in recent years. The country drew 29.9 million international visitors in 2015, an increase of more than 20 per cent compared with 2014.

2. Energy policy plan next month

Source: **The Nation** ([Link](#))

The Energy Policy and Planning Office will submit the five-year, Bt60-billion budgetary plan of the Energy Conservation Promotion Fund (ENCON Fund) to the National Energy Policy Council (NEPC) next month, said EPPO director-general Twarath Sutabutr. He said the EPPO, which is an interim administrator of the ENCON Fund, withheld its scheduled press conference at the last minute last Friday since the ENCON Fund Committee had not come to a conclusion on the fund's spending plan over the next five years (2017-2021). According to the EPPO's proposal, the ENCON Fund will increase its budget to support and promote energy conservation and renewable-energy activities to Bt12 billion annually during the next five years, up from Bt7 billion annually during the previous five-year period. However, Twarath denied a news report that the government would double the ENCON Fund's levy on local sales of petroleum products to Bt0.50 a litre.

3. Pruksa targets more recruiting income after becoming holding

Source: **The Nation** ([Link](#))

Pruksa Real Estate targets recurring income of Bt5 billion to Bt15 billion out of total revenue of Bt100 billion by 2020 after transforming itself into a holding company this year. *"We decided to restructure our business by delisting Pruksa Real Estate from the SET [Stock Exchange of Thailand] and setting up a holding company called Pruksa Holding, which will apply to be a listed company in the next step. We want to stabilise our business growth by balancing our portfolio. We want both income from the sale of residential projects and recurring income to sustain our business for the long term by targeting our recurring income at up to 20 per cent of our total revenue within five to 10 years,"* Thongma Vjijitpongpun, president and chief executive officer, told a press conference yesterday. The process of delisting Pruksa Real Estate and applying to list Pruksa Holding will be completed in November. The holding company will swap shares with Pruksa Real Estate at the ratio of 1:1. If Pruksa Real Estate's shareholders do not need to swap shares with Pruksa Holding, they can continue to hold their stake in Pruksa Real Estate. The company's shareholders will meet to approve this plan on April 28. According to the new structure, Pruksa Holding will hold 100 per cent of Pruksa Real Estate, which will continue to develop residential projects for sale.

4. CP unit partners with US Company for supply chain sustainability

Source: **The Nation** ([Link](#))

The Feed Ingredients Trading Business Group, a subsidiary of Charoen Pokphand Group, has formed a collaboration with US company AG Processing Inc (AGP), the world's largest soybean-processing cooperative, for development of a sustainable supply chain for soybean meal. Somchai Kungsamutr, chief executive of the Feed Ingredients Trading Business Group, said the partnership aimed to reinforce a sustainable and traceable sourcing policy throughout its supply chain and to promote environmental and social responsibility. *"In line with Charoen Pokphand Food's sustainable-sourcing policy and supplier-guiding principles launched at the end of 2014, the company constantly communicates with the critical or core suppliers of main raw materials such as fishmeal and maize, mostly local suppliers who are core business partners. We realise that a supply-chain traceability system is an effective tool to minimise social and environmental impacts,"* Somchai said.

According to the three-year memorandum of understanding, both parties are committed to develop jointly an acceptable process whereby soybean meal can be traced back through the supply chain, from processing plants back to the soybean-growing areas. They will develop acceptable standard measures and regulatory guidelines on labour and human-rights concerns

that will apply to the entire supply chain and are compliant with the laws of the countries where both parties conduct their business.

5. Sansiri focusing on China as it expands international

Source: **The Nation** ([Link](#))

Property firm Sansiri has geared up to open new markets in China as it continues to expand into international markets to woo foreigners to buy its condominium units in Thailand. The company this year has targeted Bt5 billion in condominium presales to foreigners, up from Bt3.5 billion last year and around Bt1.5 billion in 2014. For total sales of condominiums this year to both local and international customers, the company targets presales of Bt28 billion and realised revenue of Bt20 billion, Sansiri senior executive vice president Uthai Uthaisangsuk said recently. Of the total presale target for foreign customers this year, 25-30 per cent are expected to be to Chinese customers, he said. Last year, Chinese buyers accounted for 20 per cent of foreign presales. About 83 per cent of sales to foreign customers last year were in Asian markets, namely Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, mainland China and Taiwan. About 11 per cent of buyers were from European countries such as Russia, Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Italy, as well as Australia. Americans made up about 4 per cent. Sansiri's full expansion into the mainland China market follows its previous successes in wooing customers in foreign markets such as Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan.

6. Broadcaster regulator approves MCOT's pay-TV

Source: **The Nation** ([Link](#))

The broadcasting committee of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) yesterday voted 3-2 to approve MCOT's plan to upgrade its 2.6GHz wireless broadband technology for pay-TV services. MCOT has 144 megahertz of bandwidth on the 2.6-gigahertz spectrum, ranging from 2,536-2,690MHz, which was earlier used to operate pay-TV services under the multi-channel distribution system (MMDS). MCOT and Playwork Co have signed a contract to operate pay-TV services. MCOT earlier claimed it had the right to retain all 144MHz of its bandwidth on the 2.6GHz spectrum, and said it planned to use part of it to offer a 4G-based pay-TV service, returning the remainder to the NBTC for auction. However, the broadcasting committee has still not concluded how long MCOT can continue using the spectrum. According to NBTC regulations, MCOT may have the right to use it for no more than 10 years starting from 2012, which means it would have only five years left. Three of the broadcasting committee's five members voted to support MCOT's plan, while the other two were reportedly of the opinion that MCOT had no right to operate any of its bandwidth on the 2.6GHz spectrum.