

Daily Thai News Updates: 1 March 2017

1. Revenue Dept eyes Bt100 bn in tax on online transactions

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

The Revenue Department expects to be collecting Bt100 billion from online transactions via indirect taxes over the next five years. In the same period, it will invest more than Bt2.3 billion to set up an electronic operation to support all service transactions and offer electronic versions of all traditional services. Prasong Poontaneat, director-general of the department, said yesterday that the department had budgeted Bt2.3 billion for 2016-18 to lay down digital infrastructure, digitise its operations and develop a system to support all digital transactions in the next era of e-business. The department will also announce a measure to collect taxes from cross-border electronic transactions. As an initial step, the department has signed an agreement with the e-Government Agency (EGA) and Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA) to provide tax invoices by e-mail to around 300,000 small and medium-sized enterprises nationwide with annual revenues of less than Bt30 million. This is the first e-transaction that converts traditional payment methods to the electronic system. The benefits are greater convenience, lower operating costs and increased competitiveness of Thai businesses in the digital era. It will also push forward innovation in the invoicing system. The new service will start today.

2. Minor opens its first Indian hotel in holy city of Bodh Gaya

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

Oaks Hotels and Resorts, a core business unit of Minor Hotels, has partnered with India's GP Group and Top Travel and Tours to open the first international-chain hotel in Bodh Gaya, aiming to serve the local market for Buddhist pilgrims, including those from Thailand.

Thomas Meier, senior vice president for operations at Minor Hotels, said Australia's Oaks Hotels and Resorts and India's GP Group and Top Travel and Tours had opened a 78-room joint-venture hotel – the Oaks Bodhgaya Hotel – at a cost of between Bt235.7 million in the holy city in January. “The Oaks Bodhgaya Hotel represents the first hotel in India for Minor Hotels Group,” he said. Oaks Group was acquired by Minor in 2011, making it the sixth brand in the Thai company's portfolio. Meier said the hotel would serve foreign tourists travelling to the Indian city's famous Buddhist sites, with a large proportion of the business expected to come from Thai visitors. “The Thailand market should contribute 30-40 per cent of the hotel's guests, while other strong source markets will be Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries,” he said. Thai Smile Airways operates five flights per week from Bangkok to Bodh Gaya in the northeastern Indian state of Bihar. The hotel expects to run an occupancy rate of 60-72 per cent in the first year of operation, Meier said. In 2015, more than 100,300 Thais travelled to India, with many tourists from the Kingdom and elsewhere in Southeast Asia flocking to Bodh Gaya to visit the holy Buddhist sites.

3. Playboy Cafe in the picture in Thailand

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

Lam Yook Millennium Millennium (2002) Co, the distributor of Playboy clothes in Thailand, has diversified by opening the first Playboy Cafe in Asia in a move to strengthen Playboy's brand here. The cafe was opened yesterday at the CentralFestival EastVille complex on Praditmanutham Road in Bangkok, and a second one is scheduled to open in Central Marina Pattaya in April. A budget of Bt30 million has been earmarked for the opening of some 30 Playboy Cafes across Thailand within five years. Flying in from the United States to preside over the opening, Cooper Hefner, chief creative officer and Playboy heir, said there were some 3,000 Playboy outlets selling fashion accessories and clothes in different markets across the world, particularly in Europe, Brazil, Taiwan, mainland China, India and Thailand. “In Thailand, we have a good partnership with Lam Yook Millennium, which has been with Playboy for more than 15 years. We are quite sure that Thailand has good potential for the opening of Playboy Cafe,” Hefner said.

“We are confident that the clear and unique concept of Playboy Cafe will draw Thai consumers and maintain them as our customer base,” he said, adding that the firm is confident in the strength of the brand, which is recognised by 87 per cent of the global population. Pornpat Wangworawong, chief operating officer of Lam Yook Millennium (2002) Co, said his company had outlined its plans last year after setting up Playboy outlets in five leading department stores in Thailand. It plans to open a new Playboy outlet at CentralPlaza Korat this year and will open a new business line to mark the Year of the Rooster this year.

4. Philanthropy in the DNA at DT Group of Companies

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

Naming the company after the initials of her parents, Dhanin and Khunying Tawee Chearavanont, Tipaporn Ahriyavraromp established DT Group of Companies (DTGO) with a unique organisational structure and business philosophy to allow profitable businesses to support social enterprise under one umbrella. Better known through its subsidiary Magnolia Quality Development Corp (MQDC), which is one of three partners in the Bt54-billion IconSiam mixed-use mega-development along the Chao Phraya River – the others being CP Group and Siam Pivat – DTGO has two major philanthropic arms. The Buddharaksa Foundation is responsible for corporate social responsibility programmes in Thailand, while the DT Families Foundation in Hong Kong is responsible for DTGO’s international CSR activities. Group president Raj Tanta-Nanta told The Nation in an exclusive interview that DTGO had tripled its revenue from Bt4 billion in 2013 to nearly Bt11.6 billion in 2015, and to Bt13 billion last year. Counting projects that will be completed this year alone, the group expects its revenue to increase to more than Bt20 billion by the year’s end. “We will shortly announce two or three major new projects,” he said, adding that DTGO’s revenue is expected to grow further to between Bt30 billion and Bt40 billion by the end of 2019.

5. Thai Condominium association upbeat market will pick up

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

The Thai Condominium Association, Thai Real Estate Association and Housing Business Association are confident that the real estate industry will pick up early this year, setting the mood for a frenzied 36th House and Condo Show. The annual event to be held from March 9-12 at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre promises to enthrall visitors with an impressive array of housing projects. Wichai Poolworulak, chairman of the organising committee, said today there are positive signs – political stability, still low interest rate for home loans and revival in private investment that has boosted employment and purchasing power.

The government also now has clear investment plans with steady spending on infrastructure particularly rapid transit lines. “We therefore have confidence that the House and Condo Show will win an overwhelming response from prospective homebuyers.”The organisers have received good cooperation from more than 200 developers, which will showcase over 1,100 properties across Thailand, including new launches. Financial institutions will be offering their services and credit checks. Spanning over 10,000 square metres of space, the show will feature 544 booths under the “Let’s get your bestination for your most beloved” concept. “We seek to communicate with people that the House and Condo Show is an important event for people who will start the new chapter of their life with their beloved.

By Shreya Chopra

