

## Daily Thai News Summary: 16 May 2016

### 1. Foreigner wedding bells toll for Thai destinations

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

Seventy-Three buyers from 15 countries met with 116 local operators last week, promoting wedding business with the goal of making Thailand one of the top global destinations for the sector. The Tourism Authority of Thailand held "Amazing Thailand Romance Trade Meets" events in Bangkok and Krabi from May 11-13, in order to promote the country as a truly major destination for wedding and honeymoon couples, said Juthaporn Rerngronasa, TAT's deputy governor for International Marketing (Europe, Africa, Middle East and Americas). The Kingdom already ranks as a top-six global market for weddings and honeymoons, as well as being the most popular destination for such business in Asia, and an emerging destination among the Middle Eastern and African markets, she said. *"This year, there is a strong record for selling weddings and honeymoons from major source markets such as the United States, Canada, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, France, the United Arab Emirates, Australia, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia and Indonesia,"* she added.

Representatives from these markets last week joined networking and business sessions with 64 local sellers at the Bangkok event, representing hotels, resorts, destination management companies and event planners based in Thailand. At the Krabi event, held two days later, they met Thai sellers from 52 companies - mainly resorts in the South. Operators focusing on the Indian market were not at the events because they had their own agenda and plans, Juthaporn said. Weddings and honeymoons are billion-dollar earners for Asia's tourism industry, and Thailand is emerging as one of the region's top spots for tying the knot, she said. According to the TAT, wedding business worldwide is valued US\$298 billion (Bt10.56 trillion), with \$80 billion coming from overseas weddings. Amnart Laosirimongkol, director of operations at the Nakamanda Resort and Spa Krabi, said the property was built 13 years ago specifically to cater to weddings and honeymoons.

### 2. Ambassador notes Netherland's strong business role in Thailand

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

With more than 300 companies operating in Thailand, the Netherlands with a population of 17 million often sees itself as a "small country with big business". Among the well-known names are Royal Dutch Shell Group in the energy sector, Philips for consumer electronics, Unilever for food and consumer products, Heineken for beverages, and ING Bank, which holds a

major stake in TMB Bank. Ambassador Karel Hartogh said in an interview to mark the Netherlands' King's Day that diplomatic relations between Thailand and the Kingdom of the Netherlands dated back to the 17th century when Ayutthaya was still the capital. In 2004, Queen Beatrix, who abdicated the throne three years ago, visited Thailand to mark the 400th anniversary of Thailand-Netherlands relations. The ambassador said economic and business cooperation between two countries figured prominently in the bilateral relationship as evidenced by the long-standing presence of many Dutch companies in Thailand.

In other words, the Dutch population may be small, but its economic and business footprint is not, considering the global scale of Dutch multinational firms operating here. For example, Shell is one of the world's biggest energy firms, while Unilever is one of the world's leading food and consumer-goods companies. This has made the Netherlands one of the European Union's leading investors in Thailand. In terms of bilateral trade, exports from Thailand to the Netherlands amounted to 2.3 billion euros (Bt92 billion) last year, while Dutch exports to Thailand amounted to 1.07 billion euros. The Port of Rotterdam plays an important role as a port of transit for Thai export products. Dutch companies are also active in Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar, which are overseen by the Dutch Embassy in Bangkok. Many of these firms have adopted corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a significant policy, with Pactics, a specialist in micro-fibre accessories, one of the good examples in Cambodia. Another example is DiepVu Laos (DVL), a garment manufacturer that specialises in the production of work-wear garments and laundry wear for leasing purposes. Both companies have integrated the concept of CSR in their respective business models, which has not only contributed to the success of their businesses, but also benefits the local communities and environment.

### **3. Banks chip in with new cards**

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

Banks will not only launch the chip debit card today to comply with the chip-based system of the Bank of Thailand but have also added new features to attract customers and enhance debit card spending. As the new chip card system for debit and ATM cards is introduced across the country, existing magnetic strip cards are being phased out. Customers can ask their banks to change to the new chip debit card without paying the joining fee of Bt100. Banks are using the switch as an opportunity to target new customers. Under the second phase of the National e-Payment, the consortium banks will gradually expand the number of electronic data capture (EDC) units to 2 million from the current 300,000. Thanachart Bank will highlight 0.75 per cent cashback for very purchase of more than Bt100 using its chip debit card. Anurak Tantipattana, senior vice president of TBank, said that the bank will promote the cash-back debit card together with Freeever savings account, with customers applying for the account exempted from an annual debit card fee. As customers enjoy both annual debit card fee waiver

and cashback, the bank is targeting 500,000 cashback debit cards a year from a total of 2 million cards. He said that the bank wants to enhance debit card spending while the cashback debit card will take advantage of the opportunity of increased EDC when the National e-Payment is implemented.

Siam Commercial Bank (SCB) is highlighting its S Smart debit card by adding wallet protection with maximum coverage of Bt5,000 if debit S Smart cardholders are victims of a robbery. The customers will have to pay an excess of Bt500 on any claim, said Phanporn Kongyingyong, head of Retail Segment. She said that the bank is targeting new customers for the S Smart debit card and has reduced the annual card fee to Bt250 from Bt300 until July 31. SCB is only bank offering the wallet protection to the basic debit card, which in case of the customers require higher protection, the bank will recommend S Smart Plus, S Mart Extra Plus and S Smart Super Plus. But the annual fees will be Bt599, Bt999 and Bt1,599 respectively. The bank will introduce the S Smart debit card today and projects 200,000 new cards this year. Kasikornbank will highlight its chip debit card as a lifestyle debit card, by offering a free online service for movies, e-books and music for the K-My Play debit card. However, an application fee/card replacement fee is charged at Bt150, up from Bt100 for the basic K-Debit Card, while the annual fee of K-My Play is Bt350 compared to Bt200 for the K-Debit Card.

#### **4. Sky is the limit for India's best connected airline**

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

With Jet Airways becoming the largest Indian airline to fly between India and Bangkok, its senior vice president Colin Neubronner talks about the carrier's commercial developments in the region, including Thailand.

#### **WHAT ARE THE MAJOR RECENT COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS OF JET AIRWAYS IN INDIA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA?**

**Colin Neubronner:** *As India's premier international airline, Jet Airways recently expanded its operations to Bangkok with the launch of new daily flights from its hubs in Mumbai and Delhi. With the introduction of these new frequencies, it has become the largest Indian airline flying between India and Bangkok. On March 27 this year, Jet Airways launched a third daily frequency from Mumbai to Bangkok, making it the airline with the maximum number of daily flights between the two cities. On the same day, the airline also launched a second daily service from Delhi to Bangkok, offering greater choice to guests travelling between the two capital cities.*

*These new services from the hubs in Mumbai and Delhi will further strengthen the airline's growing network and significantly enhance flight options and connectivity for passengers. In addition, guest will be able to make convenient onward connections from Bangkok to destinations in the Asean region with Jet Airways' code-share airline partners.*

## **5. Central Group announces the purchases of Zalora Thailand**

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

Central Group yesterday officially announced the 100-per cent acquisition of Zalora Thailand, the leader in fashion e-commerce in Southeast Asia. This deal will advance the e-commerce market and stimulate the economy in Thailand. Retailing channels will be enhanced for Thai fashion SMEs, suppliers, and manufacturers of all levels who will experience an increase in sales on both the offline and online realms, which is all in keeping with the government mandate to support businesses of all sizes.

Pornchanok Tanskul, president of COL, an e-commerce arm of Central Group, said that with the acquisition of Zalora, Central Group will be able to help in stimulating the Thai economy by promoting increased domestic consumption through e-commerce, which is a retail channel growing in popularity. Furthermore, the acquisition will increase confidence amongst our trade partners and suppliers of all levels by giving them an additional retailing channel which is not limited to the traditional offline model. This will increase our partners' and suppliers' revenues, create demand for more consumption in Thailand, and will give consumers greater choice and quality. "The trend in Thailand is shifting towards an era where social media will have a greater influence on the behavior of consumers," she said. PwC conducted a retail market survey across 25 sample countries which showed that social media has an influence on around 80 per cent of consumers globally meanwhile currently around 51 per cent of Thai e-commerce occurs through social media platforms, the highest in the world, with the main factors behind online consumption being convenience and prices of items. In this day and age, consumers are able to find detailed descriptions and can compare across many products quickly, allowing them to make purchasing decisions very quickly whether it be on their smartphones, tablets or computers. Therefore, the company is confident that the online retailing market will continue to grow considerably.

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**By Harsha Hazarika**