

Daily Thai News Summary: 17 February 2016

1. Partnership business registrations in January up 78% from December

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

The number of applicants for partnership business registrations nationwide in January was 5,749, up by 2,512 or 78 per cent over December, but 231 or 4 per cent less than in January 2015, according to Rattana Theanvisit-skool, deputy director-general the Business Development Department. Meanwhile, the number of registered businesses (juristic persons) that filed for business terminations nationwide last month was 1,469, down by 4,336 or 75 per cent from December, but up by 89 entities, or 6 per cent, over January 2015. Most of the business-termination cases were in the heavily state-regulated lottery-distribution segment that did not operate the business as intended. *"The significant increase in applications for partnership business registrations in January reflects the improving state of the economy under the government's economic stimulus measures, such as the Village Fund to strengthen the Thai economic fundamentals, and state investments in large infrastructure projects such as mass transit, which will gradually come on stream,"* Rattana said. *"The economy is projected to grow by 3.7 per cent this year, or within the range of 3.2-4.2 per cent. The Business Development Department expects at least 60,000-65,000 applications for business registrations this year in line with the improving economy."* The combined registered capital of new business registrations in January was Bt28.20 billion, down from Bt26.44 billion, or by 48 per cent, from December. This is because last month, one public company accounted for more than Bt15 billion in registered capital, an increase of Bt9.58 billion, or 51 per cent over January 2015, Rattana said.

2. NBTC may lower fee for R&D fund

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

Financially struggling digital terrestrial television stations might find some relief after their regulator said yesterday that it would start considering lowering the research and development fee from 2 per cent to less than 1 per cent. Takorn Tantasith, secretary-general of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC), said the fee reduction was the key issue in the draft rule on fee collection for the Broadcasting and Telecommunications Research and Development Fund for the Public Interest (BTFP). The draft rule will soon go for a public hearing. *"The amendment of this draft rule is expected to get final approval and take effect within five months,"* he said. Under this draft rule, a broadcaster must pay 0.1-1 per cent of gross revenue for the annual fee, which will be collected for the BTFP fund. And fee collection will not be retroactive after the implementation of this amended rule.

Under the old rule, a broadcaster has to pay up to 2 per cent of gross revenue for the R&D fund, but the NBTC has not yet started calling all 24 digital TV broadcasters to pay up.

3. Good quarter for Airports of Thailand

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

Airports of Thailand Plc (AOT)

Strong as expected. AOT reported 1QFY16 (Oct - Dec 2015) net profit of Bt4.6bn (Bt3.24/share), up 18% YoY but down 21% QoQ. Excluding extra items of FX gain/loss in 1QFY15 and 1QFY16 and non-cash reversal of accrued property tax for Don Mueang Airport in 4QFY15 shows core profit growth of 22% YoY and 50% QoQ. Profit was in line with market estimates. 1QFY16 results account for 25% of our FY2016 full-year forecast, meeting the historical average.

Highlights for 1QFY16:

Revenue was Bt11.8bn, up 12% YoY and 8% QoQ off growth in passenger service charge revenue (43% of total revenue), concession revenue (27% of total revenues) and other service charge revenue (11% of total revenue).

Revenue from passenger service charge was Bt5.1bn, up 9% YoY and 7% QoQ, backed by 28.9mn passengers, up 12% YoY and 9% QoQ. Passengers make-up was: 16.2mn international passengers (56% of total passengers), up 8% YoY and 8% QoQ, and 12.8mn domestic passengers (44% of total passengers), up 17% YoY and 10% QoQ, fuelled by strong Thai tourism.

4. Buriram Castle set to be city attraction

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

Retail property developer Siva-Bana Co hopes Buri Ram will welcome 2.5 million tourists a year after it opened the Bt370 million Buriram Castle mall last weekend, just the latest in a string of highlights established in the city. Siva-Bana chief executive officer and owner Newin Chidchob, a political big gun turned football-club owner, said Buriram Castle would be an exciting and attractive destination for visitors to enjoy delicious dining and a fun hangout all

in one place. Tourists can experience the unique beauty of ancient Khmer art and culture in an ultra-modern environment with international standards. Newin, president of Buriram United Football Club, earlier created a number of eye-catching landmarks in Buri Ram, including the I-Mobile Stadium, a Fifa-standard soccer stadium with a capacity of 32,000 seats; the Buriram United International Circuit, also known as the Chang International Circuit, for motorsport racing, the first in Thailand to meet FIA Grade 1 and FIM Grade A standards and with a huge capacity of 50,000 seats; and Amari Buriram United, Thailand's first soccer-themed hotel. *"These landmark destinations in Buri Ram have created jobs and income for people in this city. The venues have increased the value of assets in the surrounding land area by no less than 200 per cent,"* Newin said. Buriram Castle mall is located between I-Mobile Stadium and the Chang International Circuit. The design is modelled after village settlements that thrived around stone castles in the past.

5. Minor to expand globally in five years

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

To Serve Thai cuisine to global consumers, Minor Food Group has set a five-year plan to have at least 200 branches of Thai Express restaurants and other franchises both at home and overseas in line with its commitment to create more professional Thai chefs at its MSC Thai Culinary School. *"Minor Food Group wants further success on top of creating skilled chefs to meet dramatically increased demand both at home and overseas. In line with that, the expansion of Thai Express restaurants is among our priorities,"* Arth Prakhun-hungsit, chief operating officer for local franchises and Thai food concepts at the Minor Food Group, said yesterday. Under this five-year strategy, Minor Food Group will put more focus on expansion of Thai Express restaurants and other franchises such as Grab Thai, Patara and Suda. The company expects to have between 70 and 80 branches of Thai Express restaurants in China. In Britain, the company wants to have about 20 branches, which would be run under either its own brand Grab Thai - a quick service format - or its joint venture between Minor International and S&P Syndicate. This JV, Patara Fine Thai Cuisine, will develop and run new outlets of Patara and Suda restaurants in London in parallel with four existing Patara and one existing Suda currently owned and operated by S&P Restaurants.

By Harsha Hazarika