

Daily Thai News Summary: 1 March 2016

1. Thai Airways plans service to Russia, US after good Q4/2015 results

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

Thai Airways International plans to resume flying to Russia and the United States as part of its plan to boost revenue after seeing cheerful results in the final quarter of last year. The national airline will also help its budget carrier Nok Air, which has called mass cancellations of flights while sorting out internal problems. THAI president Charamporn Jotikasthira said yesterday that the company has no plan to sell its stake in Nok Air, despite the issues besetting the budget airline. Moscow will be added back to the schedule in October - the beginning of the high season for Thailand's tourism industry. The airline also expects to return to the US market next year. It will add more routes or increase frequencies in Asean countries this year as part of tourism-recovery plans being pushed by the Tourism and Sports Ministry and the private sector.

2. Thaicom 9 satellite plans up in the air as orbital slots withdrawn

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

THAICOM'S plan to launch Thaicom 9 satellite has hit a snag, as the Information and Communications Technology Ministry has informed the International Telecom Union (ITU) that it will withdraw its recent filings to reserve three orbital slots, of which one was for the planned Thaicom 9 satellite. A ministry source said the ministry had asked the ITU it was withdrawing reservations for orbital slots 50.5 degrees East, 78.5 degrees East, and 119.5 degrees East, the last originally reserved for Thaicom 9.

The withdrawal targets only future satellites to be positioned there, not the existing satellites on these slots. The ministry said it wanted to wait for a new and clear government policy on satellites, as reason for this move. The source added that while Thaicom could ask the ministry to make such a reservation filing again, each filing process takes time. A Thaicom source said Thaicom is ready to explain to the ministry that reserving the orbital slots for future satellite launches protects national interest. The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) has already granted the licence for the planned Thaicom 8 and Thaicom 9 satellites. Thaicom is seeking a manufacturer to build the Thaicom 9. It plans to launch Thaicom 8 to a position 78.5 degrees East by the middle of this year.

3. Thai jewellery workers among the world's best

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

Thailand has the world's most skilled workers in the jewellery industry, on par with the best in Europe, says Basel Jaradeh, the Syrian owner of Palaces Jewellery, whose manufacturing base is located in Bangkok's Gemopolis Freezone. Palaces, which began its manufacturing operations in Bangkok in 2013, and exports more than 90 per cent of its output, took part for the first time in the Bangkok Gems and Jewellery Fair that concluded yesterday at Muang Thong Thani. *"It was a tremendous experience taking part in the fair,"* said the Dubai-based Basel, who flew down for the fair. *"After this experience, we'll ensure our presence at all such events in Thailand."* Basel is 100-per-cent owner of the Board of Investment privileges company that also has offices in Canada, UK, Geneva and Dubai. Buoyed by the response at the fair, Basel, who learned the jewellery craft from his father at the age of 10 in Damascus and was selling his own creations by the age of 13, is also looking at tapping markets in [Asean](#) and Asia.

4. TAT plans special fund for tourist during crises

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

The Tourism Authority of Thailand is planning a "Tourism Response Fund" to defend the industry from political unrest and other crises, TAT governor Yuthasak Supasorn said yesterday. The agency is at the final stage of a study on the plan and hopes to launch the fund this year. *"The sector needs to have a special financial-assistance unit in order to help build the country's image, deal with crises, and assist tourists on a large scale in case of big problems. Tourists visiting the Kingdom during or after a crisis will be covered with a safety package, including during periods of martial law,"* Yuthasak said. TAT will ask the government for a budget of Bt200 million to run the fund in the first year. Earlier, TAT established a Tourist Assistance Centre to help foreign tourists, mostly individuals on a case-by-case basis, when they suffered serious injuries or were killed. The unit also facilitated other minor requirements such as translations, medical services, and complaints. The Tourist Assistance Centre has been transferred to the Ministry of Tourism and Sports. Yuthasak said TAT would continue to promote Thailand as a quality leisure destination and increase the proportion of high-spending tourists from the current 40 per cent of total arrivals to 60 per cent.

5. BOI approves tax breaks under One Tambon One Manufacturer

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

The Board of Investment yesterday approved three- and five-year tax exemptions for local investment under the “One Tambon One Manufacturer” scheme. The three-year break is for big corporations interested in supporting local business, especially agricultural processors, while the five-year waiver is for farmers and local people who join together to build an agricultural processing plant in their district. Hiranya Sujinai, secretary-general of the BOI said after the agency's meeting that the projects could get a tax exemption of up to 100 per cent of their investment, but they must apply this year and start operating next year. This incentive will cover agriculture processing, tourism and One Tambon One Product (Otop) operators. The board also approved investment incentives for three super-clusters - Food Innopolis, an airline super-cluster and a robot super-cluster. Food Innopolis and the airline super-cluster will offer a tax exemption for eight years and also extend a discount of half of corporate taxes for the next five years.

6. CEOs see reason for a better economy this year

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

Corporate Captains still have confidence in economic growth while bracing for challenges such as weak purchasing power and global economic volatility, according to the “Krungthep Turakij 100 CEOs” survey of business directions for 2016. Krungthep Turakij, The Nation's sister newspaper, and Mirum (Thailand), the local unit of a global digital agency, last month surveyed local entrepreneurs from various backgrounds including real estate and construction, finance, technology and communications, agriculture and food, logistics, tourism and recreation. Most of the entrepreneurs believe economic indices will be able to improve slightly this year. About 31 per cent put growth of gross domestic product at 2.5-3 per cent, while 30 per cent expected 2-2.5 per cent, lower than last year. The remaining 19 per cent were looking at 3-3.5 per cent. The National Economic and Social Development Board forecasts a wide range of 2.8-3.8 per cent with the median at 3.3 per cent.

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