

Daily Thai News Summary: 26 February 2016

1. ASEAN transport link plans boost property prices

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

Property prices continue to rise in Southeast Asia, especially in Thailand, Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar, driven largely by plans to develop the countries' infrastructure to link their transportation systems and serve demand under the Asean Economic Community. In Thailand, land prices close to the mass-transit system in Bangkok have risen over the past five years around the existing BTS Skytrain and MRT underground rail routes, as well as along the new mass-transit routes that will be completed this year and next - the Purple Line from Bang Sue to Bang Yai, and the Blue Line from Bang Sue to Tha Pra, respectively. In the latest appraisal by the Treasury Department, effective for the 2016-2020 period, land prices across the Kingdom are on average 27.27 per cent higher than under its previous appraisal, which expired in December.

The price of land located close to the Skytrain mass-transit system on Silom Road through to Saladaeng is now appraised at Bt1 million per square wah (4 square metres), up 17.65 per cent from the appraisal price of Bt850,000 at the end of last year. The highest market price for land successfully sold is for 3 rai (about half a hectare) on Chidlom Road, located close to the Orakarn building and BTS Chidlom station, worth Bt2.3 billion in total or Bt1.9 million per square wah.

2. Russia-Thai trade set to increase five-fold

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

Thailand's Commerce Minister Apiradi Tantraporn recently discussed with Russia's Deputy Minister for economic development Alexey Likhachev, while proposing a target of trade between the two countries to increase fivefold within five years. A committee consisting of deputy prime ministers has also been proposed to drive both countries' economic cooperation in trade of products, services and investment. Both also agreed to accelerate completion of their cooperations, including in agriculture and fisher, prior to a meeting of leaders of Russia and Asean in May 2016. Thailand-Russia trade, for the past three years, averaged US\$4 billion per year. Last year, the figure was \$2.4 billion or 0.56 per cent of Thailand's trade.

3. Thailand beats French benchmark in digital TV coverage, NBTC says

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

DIGITAL terrestrial TV will cover 93 per cent of households nationwide this year, faster than France's analog-digital TV transition, which was used as Thailand's benchmark, according to the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission, which has come under attack for perceived slow deployment. *"Our mission is on the right track. The roll-out by major providers of digital terrestrial TV networks is expected to reach 95 per cent of the 22.3 million households by June next year after the completion of 93 per cent this year,"* Natee Sukonrat, chairman of the NBTC's broadcasting committee, said yesterday. Six years after France launched 24 digital TV channels in 2010, its coverage was just 94 per cent of households. But Thailand will reach 95 per cent in four years.

To ensure that all households can still access free-to-air TV channels, which are considered national broadcasting services, the "must carry" rule will continue to be applied, Natee said. All cable and satellite TV platforms are required to carry every digital TV channel, as more than 70 per cent of households watch free TV via cable or satellite. The broadcasting committee still believes that the penetration of terrestrial-based digital TV receivers will rise after increased sales of integrated digital TV sets as well as smart devices.

4. Sino-Thai rail project "to start in May"

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

Ground breaking for the Sino-Thai medium-speed railway project is still set for May as planned, according to Transport Minister Arkhom Termpittayapaisith. Meanwhile, people in Khon Kaen called on the government at a public hearing yesterday to ensure they participate in the project so as to share in its benefits. It was the third public hearing on the project. The first two were in Bangkok and Udon Thani. China and Thailand are still working out the details of their joint 873-kilometre railway project, but its estimated cost has swelled to Bt500 billion from Bt400 billion as originally expected. The railway will be a dual-track project with a 1.435-metre gauge carrying trains at speeds of up to 180km/h on the Bangkok-Kaeng Khoi-Nakhon Ratchasima-Nong Khai and Kaeng Khoi-Map Ta Phut routes. Arkhom said the 10th round of meetings of the steering committees of the two nations in Beijing at the end of this month would focus on finalising the project design details. But he declined to disclose the exact date and time of the meeting. He said the meeting was expected to discuss again the investment proportions of both sides, as Thailand has recently proposed a 60:40 Thai-China joint venture.

5. Thais included among young innovators

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

Five Thais are included on Forbes' inaugural "30 under 30 Asia" list featuring 300 young innovators, entrepreneurs and leaders across Asia in 10 categories who are under 30 years of age and who are transforming business, technology, industry, media, culture and more. They include four executives - Nikki Lohitnavy, Amarit Charoenphan, Lusrun Silpsrikul and Korawad Chearavanont, and Tada Hengsapkul - in the art and style and food and drink categories.

6. Khao Yai welcomes Swan Lake Residences

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

Elysian Development Co has introduced a new condominium project, Swan Lake Residences Khao Yai, in Nakhon Ratchasima province with project value of Bt3 billion and prices starting at Bt11.4 million per unit. The low-rise project has 59 units. Two-bedroom units have usable space of 90-145 square metres, three-bedrooms are between 157 and 167 square metres, the four-bedrooms have 247sqm of usable space, and the penthouse has 358sqm. Elysian says the project has been based on the concept of "giving you more", including a green paradise with more than 50,000 large trees, a 4-kilometre-long tree tunnel, and a 5km jogging and cycling track, a great addition for exercise lovers.



By Harsha Hazarika