

Daily Thai News Summary: 29 April 2016

1. Tourism and fiscal stimulus expected to fuel 3.3% GDP growth

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

The Fiscal Policy Office (FPO) has expressed confidence that gross domestic product (GDP) will grow by 3.3 per cent this year, driven by expanding tourism and fiscal stimulus measures. Kulya Tantitemit, deputy spokeswoman for the Finance Ministry, said GDP was expected to grow within the range of 3.0-3.6 per cent in 2016. Last year's growth was 2.8 per cent. Aside from rising tourism, state spending is tending to rise, particularly on transport infrastructure, water management and road-transport development, she said. In March, the number of foreign tourists climbed by 15.4 per cent year on year and by 15.5 per cent in the first quarter. Consumption and private investment are expected to make gradual recoveries on satisfactory farm income and employment, drops in crude-oil prices and low interest rates. The government's stimulus measures could also help promote expansion of domestic spending.

2. Cape & Kantary to invest Bt7 bn on nine new hotels

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

CAPE & KANTARY plans to open nine hotels by 2020 with an approximate investment of Bt6.5 billion to Bt7 billion to cash in on the growing tourism industry in the long term. The group this year will open four hotels, with a total of 483 rooms. They are Somewhere Koh Sichang in Chon Buri province, Kantary Korat in Nakhon Ratchasima, Kameo Amata Nakorn in Bang Pakong, Chon Buri, and one on Koh Yao Noi in Phang Nga province. The group is investing Bt2 billion in the four projects. Five more hotel projects with a total of 400 rooms are in the pipeline and scheduled to open by 2020. Three will be located in Pattaya and two on Koh Samui.

Poomiphat Navanukroh, the group's director for travel industry, said yesterday that 2016 would see the biggest expansion for the company, with the opening of four hotels as well as creation of a new brand - Somewhere. He said the company currently operated 18 hotels with 3,178 rooms. The number of rooms will increase to 3,611 by the end of this year after the opening of the four new hotels and will reach 4,000 rooms by 2020. Part of Kasemkij Group, Cape & Kantary Hotels is eyeing more investment in hotels and related businesses such as cafes and bakery shops as well as negotiating with foreign investors for future development.

3. Nissan opens ASEAN R&D hub in Samut Prakan

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

NISSAN Motor Asia-Pacific (NMAP) has launched a test centre in Thailand that will serve as the carmaker's main research and development hub for Asean to address customer needs in the region and align more quickly to market requirements. The Bt1-billion test centre in Samut Prakan province is Nissan's first overseas R&D vehicle-test facility in the Asean and Oceania region, Hiroshi Nagaoka, corporate vice president of Nissan Motor, said yesterday. The scope will be enlarged from quality assurance for product launches to the upstream product-development phase of evaluation tests for trial prototypes. It will primarily serve the five Asean countries of Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam and Thailand while also providing testing services for more than 90 countries around the world.

With the establishment of the test centre, NMAP will now be responsible for the physical stage of development and assume responsibility for the evaluation test stage and production stage. *"This work will be transferred from Japan to Thailand in order to ensure our products are aligned with market needs. And our vision is to further expand responsibility into the upstream phase of vehicle planning through taking a role in the digital stage,"* he said.

The R&D centre boasts industry-first testing facilities in Thailand - an anechoic (echo-free) chamber, an acoustic chamber and a vibration simulator with an environment chamber. By the end of fiscal 2016, a total of 330 staff will be employed, with Thai engineers trained in Japan to attain professional skill sets in order to operate the 6,600-square-metre facility.

4. One Asset Management joins TMB Open Architecture

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

TMB Bank has brought One Asset Management aboard as the sixth partner in its "TMB Open Architecture" to strengthen its fund-management business and drive its assets under management (AUM) up 20 per cent to Bt220 billion this year. Roel Huisman, chief retail banking officer of TMB, said yesterday that the addition of ONEAM would help give the bank's customers a variety of investment choices. The slogan of TMB Open Architecture is *"Great range of quality funds from famous brands is here"*. Owned by KGI Securities, ONEAM is part of an international group. In Thailand, ONEAM has the most AUM of all securities houses not owned by banks. The exceptional strength of ONEAM lies in its excellent approach to risk management, Huisman said. ONEAM is offering One-Ultra, a fund that invests 15 per cent in stocks, 40 per cent in property and 45 per cent in debt instruments. One-Ultra aims to generate a 6-per-cent yield annually through cautious management and the minimisation of volatility. Another condition of One-Ultra is that free health insurance will be available to investors buying a sizeable number of the fund's units. Coverage provides benefits to both outpatients of up to

Bt2,000 per medical visit and outpatients of room fees of up to Bt4,000 per day, a surgeon fee of Bt35,000 and other medical expenses of up to Bt35,000.

5. AIS, DTAC back start-ups to acquire innovative technology

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

Advanced Info Service (AIS) and Total Access Communication (DTAC) aim to transform themselves into digital service providers by backing innovation through accelerating start-ups. DTAC has spun off DTAC Accelerate as a start-up investment and incubation business, while AIS has expanded AIS The Start-up into a digital-partner programme called AIS The Start-up Connect. Sompoat Chansomboon, director of DTAC Accelerate, said DTAC aimed to build up the best Thai start-ups to go global. DTAC Accelerate, started in 2013 as an in-house project, was spun off as a company last year to invest in and incubate start-ups. DTAC Accelerate this year has doubled its investment and incubation budget to Bt100 million from between Bt50 million and Bt60 million in 2015. From 2013 to 2015, DTAC Accelerate groomed 11 start-ups, and its Batch 4 is ongoing with 11 teams.

Around 70 per cent of its 11 start-ups have raised funds from overseas surpassing US\$5 million (Bt175 million), while total valuation is now above Bt1.2 billion. DTAC Accelerate offers investment and incubation as well as co-working space. Its investment focuses on pre-seed funding of between \$20,000 and \$50,000 each. DTAC Accelerate, which is 100 per cent invested by DTAC Trinet Network (DTN), is with an investment-business holding company. *"The benefits of DTAC Accelerate are not only financial gain but also adding innovation to DTAC's services,"* Sompoat said. He said the potential areas for start-up innovation were financial technology, health tech, agri-tech, Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, and virtual reality. Suvit Arayawilaipong, senior vice president for product management at AIS, said the company took in start-ups as digital partners to offer innovative services to its customers. Therefore, AIS yesterday officially announced AIS The Start-up Connect to welcome as partners start-ups that already have products.

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