

Daily Thai News Summary: 4 March 2016

1. Thai Oil says new LAB plant should boost 2016 margins

Source: **Bangkok Post** ([Link](#))

Thai Oil Plc, the country's top oil refiner said it started operations at the country's first linear alkyl benzene (LAB) plant in late February, which should help boost margins this year. LAB is an organic compound used as an intermediate in the production of surfactant or detergent. The US\$400 million plant is also the first fully-integrated LAB plant in Southeast Asia, chief financial officer Pattaralada Sa-ngasang told reporters Thursday. Thailand imports about 70,000-80,000 tonnes a year and domestic LAB demand is expected to reach 79,000 tonnes in 2016, she said, adding that Thai Oil is targeting a domestic market share of 70-80%. Thai Oil, through its wholly owned unit Thai Paraxylene Co, joined with Japan's Mitsui & Co to form a joint venture, Labix Co, in 2013 to build the LAB plant at Chon Buri province. The plant has production capacity of 100,000 tonnes a year and the refiner plans to export half of the output to India and other Southeast Asian countries, she said.

2. Govt's Q4 property incentives boost 2015 results of listed developers

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

The country's top 10 listed residential developers have posted combined revenue of Bt237.94 billion for last year, up 21.92 per cent from Bt195.16 billion in 2014, thanks largely to strong demand in the final quarter following the government's measures to boost the property market. Their net profit for 2015 came in at Bt37.75 billion, some 7.27 per cent higher than the level achieved the previous year. The 10 developers' average net profit ratio for the year was about 15.8 per cent. The companies' combined revenue of Bt237.94 billion accounted for 72 per cent of a residential market estimated by the Real Estate Information Centre to be valued at around Bt330 billion in Bangkok and its suburbs last year. Pruksa Real Estate reported strong year-on-year growth of 19.54 per cent, achieving Bt51.43 billion last year. The company's performance was down to strong residential demand in the last quarter, when the government introduced incentives to boost the property market by cutting transfer and mortgage fees and also offering a special interest rate for mortgages on homes priced up to Bt1 million from the Government Housing Bank, said Pruksa's president and chief executive officer, Thongma Vijitpongpun. Sansiri posted 30.25-per-cent revenue growth, generating income of Bt38.45 billion over the course of the year.

3. Govt to organize two major events to help SMEs

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

Isara Vongkusolkrit, chairman of the Board of Trade who is also chairman of the private-sector side of the Pracha Rath Project, said the government would invite newly established firms across the country to join the "Start-up Fair" to help them sell their products. The venue and date of the event will be announced soon. The "Business Matching" event will take place at Bangkok Convention Centre in Lat Prao on April 26. The event aims to help small operators meet giant consumer companies, including department stores, retail shops, and traders. *"These two big events are aimed at helping local businesses sell their products,"* he said. He added that Thai entrepreneurs have a chance to expand into Southeast Asia, particularly the CLMV (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam) markets.

Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak, who is overseeing the Pracha Rath Project, yesterday met with the public and private sectors to follow up on the progress of the three-month campaign. Pracha Rath projects are on track and are close to achieving their short-term targets. The project was launched in January this year to stimulate domestic consumption and to strengthen the country's economy as the slow global economic recovery is expected to hurt the Thai economy this year. The government has appointed 12 co-working groups from the public and private sectors to initiate strategic plans to drive their sectors.

4. Bangkok to host international beauty trade fair in September

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

Bangkok is set to host an international beauty trade fair in September. *"Beyond Beauty Asean-Bangkok" will be held at Impact Exhibition and Convention Centre from September 22-24. BBAB 2016 has secured 10,418 trade professionals from 56 countries and 308 exhibitors from 16 countries. This will be the largest international beauty trade show in Southeast Asia, covering the fast-growing Asean market. We look forward to many more successful editions to come,"* said Kim Sang-wook, executive vice president of Kintex (Korea International Exhibition Centre), the organiser.

Claudia Bonfiglioli, international director for the Informa Beauty cluster, said: "BBAB 2016 is moving at a rapid developmental pace since its first edition and the exciting new initiatives presented by the show reflect the leadership of the show in leading the region in future trends, ensuring exponential growth opportunities for the beauty business community. "This is especially important with the Asean Economic Community in effect, which presents greater trade opportunities for the entire Southeast Asian region." BBAB 2016 will serve as a platform for small and medium-sized enterprises in the Asean beauty industry to access the trade, networking and knowledge opportunities present at this international trade show, which could

boost their growth potential in view of the growing competitive landscape of the global beauty industry. Chernporn Tengamnuay, vice chairman of the Federation of Thai Industries, said newly established start-ups had become more efficient thanks to the opening of the AEC.

5. Dinosaur Planet theme park to open in Bangkok on March 25

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

Dinosaur Planet, a dinosaur theme park in downtown Bangkok, will be officially opened on March 25, after more than Bt500 million was spent on the venture. The theme park is expected to cater to more than 15,000 visitors a day, while giving Thai and foreign tourists another reason to visit Bangkok besides shopping. The one-year project was a collaboration of major Thai partners, comprising Fresh Air Festival, Workpoint Entertainment and Rightman. The three partners joined forces under a company named FWR Co specifically for this project. More than 12,000 square metres of space at The EmSphere in The EM District, between Sukhumvit Sois 22 and 24, has been transformed into Dinosaur Planet. Kriengsak Tantiphipop, chief executive officer of The Emporium Group, said this dinosaur theme park was the first of its kind in Thailand.

Kriengsak, who is involved in the "Pracha Rath" project initiated by the government and the private sector to generate income and stimulate spending in the country, said he had proposed two key ways to raise tourism revenue. They are the reduction of import duty on luxury products, which would make Thailand a real shopping paradise, and the creation of man-made attractions to lure more "quality tourists" from all over the world. *"In Thailand, the import duty charged on luxury products is now as high as 30-40 per cent. The country would be able to compete neck-to-neck with duty-free [markets] such as Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong if the government reduced the duty to not more than 10 per cent,"* he said. *"The tourism authority anticipates about 32 million in-bound tourists visiting Thailand this year. With a revamp of the import duty, I expect the country would gain another 20 million foreign tourists. It would also encourage Thai shoppers to spend their shopping money in Thailand."*

.....

By Harsha Hazarika