

## Daily Thai News Summary: 5 April 2016

### 1. Thailand's decision on TPP likely this month

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

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha is expected to announce Thailand's decision on whether it will join the Trans-Pacific Partnership during a meeting on international economic policy this month, after a study found that the pact would benefit the country, said Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak. He said the Commerce Ministry should propose the results of the Panyapiwat Institute study to the economic committee chaired by the prime minister so it could be announced that Thailand would join the TPP. *"As many traders and investors are looking forward to Thailand's move on whether to join the TPP, the government will make a clear decision soon,"* he said. The committee is scheduled to meet on April 29. Somkid said that despite the fact that Thailand would get great benefits from joining the TPP overall, it would result in negative impacts on some sectors. He called on the Commerce Ministry and relevant government agencies to create an understanding among those groups.

He said that should include the setting up of a working committee to talk with those sectors, such as agriculture and non-government organisations, about things like the trading of farm products and intellectual-property rights for medicines while seeking measures to counter the TPP's negative impacts. He urged the ministry to invite experts including former government officials to help consider the pact. Meanwhile, some business leaders in three industries have cut their projections for the country's export expansion this year, because of concerns over the slowing global economic recovery. But the Joint Standing Committee on Commerce, Industry and Banking has maintained its forecast for growth in gross domestic policy at 3-3.5 per cent, thanks to mega-project investments, the government's stimulus package, and rising tourism growth.

### 2. Thailand's Songkran still draws tourist despite drought

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

Despite A government campaign to preserve water because of the record drought, Thailand is still a popular destination for foreign visitors during Songkran, the water splashing festival that gushes next week, according to Skyscanner. Data from the online travel search engine showed a 48-per-cent year-on-year increase in overall searches for Thailand, with cities and islands like Bangkok, Phuket, Koh Samui, Chiang Mai and Krabi claiming the spotlight as the most popular places to visit. Searches for Phuket increased the most at 63 per cent, |followed

by Krabi at 55 per cent, Samui at 47 per cent and Bangkok 46 per cent. Chiang Mai, usually the most popular destination for Songkran, had the lowest year-on-year rise of searches at 32 per cent. The top five countries whose residents are interested in travelling to Thailand were Singapore, Australia, Russia, the United Kingdom and Germany. Singapore shows the largest increase in searches at 89 per cent, followed by Australia at 36 per cent and Russia 26 per cent.

Chiang Mai also missed the top place that Thais plan to visit. Bangkok, Phuket, Krabi, Ubon Ratchathani and Chiang Rai were the top five domestic cities preferred by Thais during this year's festival. *"It is encouraging for us to learn that Thailand continues to be a popular destination among travellers during Songkran,"* Grace Areerat, marketing manager for Skyscanner Thailand, said yesterday. *"The rise in searches year on year is in keeping with the government's efforts to boost tourism, especially during the annual New Year festival. Interestingly, Thais are also keen to explore their own back yard. The rising popularity of budget air travel has made it even more accessible for locals to celebrate the water-splashing Songkran Festival nationwide,"* she said.

### **3. Deal signed to boost utilization rate on Thaicom satellites**

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

Forever Group, Myanmar's leading media company, has signed a long-term contract to add five transponders to its existing three on Thaicom's satellite. The deal supports Forever Group's development of digital content delivery services and high definition TV in Myanmar, while helping significantly increase the utilisation rate on Thaicom satellites. *"Thaicom's satellite platform serves as an important pillar in the expansion of our digital content delivery network, which distributes entertainment, culture and news to viewers in Myanmar,"* Win Maw, chief executive officer of Forever Group, said yesterday.

The country has been one of Thaicom's key markets for over 15 years. The deal underlines Thaicom's long-term commitment to the Asean Economic Community and market strategy, said Paiboon Panuwattanawong, chief executive officer of Thaicom. The company's servicing capacity and footprint in Asia will be enhanced by upcoming satellite launches.

#### **4. Inaugural Horasis Asia Meeting to bring CEOs together in Bangkok, scheduled for Nov 27-28**

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

Some 300 Asian chief executives and current and former regional heads of state will convene in Bangkok at the inaugural Horasis Asia Meeting from November 27-28. The event is billed as a visionary community and is slated to be the biggest high-level international confab in Thailand this year. Its founder is Frank-Juergen Richter, who has worked for the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. The Thai co-chairman is Vachara Phanchet, chairman of Sittipol Holdings. Other international co-chairmen are Sidek Hassan, chairman of Petronas in Malaysia; Piyush Gupta, CEO of DBS Bank in Singapore; Lee Hee-beom, vice chairman of LG International in South Korea; Shoei Yamana, CEO of Konica Minolta in Japan; and Surin Pitsuwan, former Asean secretary-general.

The agenda comprises issues important to the future of Asia including growth, youth development, venture capital, branding, trust building, technology disruption, innovation and education, and leadership. *"This is the first time we/ come to Asia, which we believe is where the future for the global economy lies,"* Richter said recently. All of Horasis' past meetings including those on China and India have been held in Europe since its inception 11 years ago. Vachara said the event would be a high-level networking platform. It would be enormously beneficial to Thailand, which is now undergoing political and economic transformations. Among the participants and speakers will be a former Japanese prime minister, a prime minister and ministers from Asean member countries, and top executives of leading companies such as HIS, Credit Suisse, Tesco, 500Startups, Temasek Management Services, Myanmar Capital, SAP, Thien Duc Trading and Globis.

#### **5. Telecom sector leads with Bt 974m ad spending last year**

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

As Digital media play a significant role in marketing and communications, both international and local brands are allocating more advertising money to digital channels. UK-based BusinessInsider.com reported recently that Unilever, a global FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods) giant, spent about 20 per cent of its overall marketing budget in 2014 on digital, up from 17 per cent in 2013. *"From our point of view, this was a good initiative by the FMCG giant. However, digital advertising spend by Unilever (Thai) Holdings has [been less aggressive] because Thai digital consumers are in the developing process,"* Siwat Chawareewong, president of the Digital Advertising Association (Thailand), said recently. A survey conducted by the DAAT and TNS Thailand suggested that in this country, the telecommunications sector at Bt974 million led the way in online advertising spending last year,

followed by automotive with Bt918 million, skincare with Bt595 million and dairy products with Bt567 million.

To cash in on the emerging popularity of digital-media consumption, Punthree Athayuti, senior brand manager for the biscuit unit at Mondelez International (Thailand), said her company had shifted its advertising budget from print to digital media to promote the Oreo brand two or three years ago. This year, the company is allocating about 30 per cent of its advertising budget for digital marketing strategies, while the rest will be for television, which remains the key medium to reach mass consumers. *"The key online marketing strategies aim to communicate with target consumers via social media like Facebook, Line and Instagram. On top of that, the company will use an interactive online platform via [www.letwonderout.com](http://www.letwonderout.com),"* Punthree said. TOA Paint (Thailand) is among local brands keen on rolling out an online marketing strategy. Puangpen Saengphet, vice president for marketing, told The Nation that the company realised the importance of online media, so it had set aside about 30 per cent of its total advertising budget for online.

.....

**By Harsha Hazarika**