

Daily Thai News Summary: 5 February 2016

1. SME sentiment ticks up as stimulus policies take effect

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

Confidence among small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) picked up in the final quarter of last, according to a quarterly survey by TMB Analytics, the research unit of TMB Bank. The optimism is attributed mainly to seasonal consumer spending and effects from the government's economic stimulus policies. SME's expectations for the first three months of this year also rose due to carry-on effect from the fourth quarter based on tourism expansion and the state stimulus package, the survey showed.

2. Three foreign funds keen on Thailand

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

Sovereign wealth funds from China, Oman and Iran have shown interest in putting one into the Thailand Future Fund, which pools the government's big ticket infrastructure investment. Oman's State General Reserve Fund, the China investment Corporation and the National Development Fund of Iran are interested, Permanent Secretary for Finance Somchai Sujjapongse said. The Thailand Future Fund is expected to be sold to both domestic and international retail and foreign investors by June. According to Finance Ministry's plan, the fund will mobilize up to 100 billion baht to invest in both green and Brownfield infrastructure projects and will be listed on the Stock Exchange of Thailand. The Ministry will guarantee a minimum return for some Greenfield projects.

3. Trade Competition Act to get revamp

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

Draft amendments to the Trade Competition Act approved by the cabinet are expected to be legally enforced this year. Wiboonlasana Ruamraksa, Director-General of the Internal Trade Department, said the draft would now go to the Council of State for vetting which is expected to take about three months. After that, the draft will be sent back to the cabinet for consideration before being submitted to the National Legislative Council for final endorsement and announced in the Royal Gazette as Law.

4. Govt hopes to cut cost of Sino-Thai railway project by BT 160 Bn

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

Thailand hopes to reduce the budget for the Sino-Thai medium-speed railway project by Bt160-billion if some parts of the line can be revised into a single track. Thailand and China agreed to build a dual-track railway with a 1.435-metre gauge carrying trains at speed of up to 180km per hour. The construction of the 873-km project, which will run from Nong Khai to Bangkok and then to Laem Chabang, is expected to cost more than Bt500 billion.

As a result of the informal negotiation in Beijing on the matter last week, Transport Minister Arkhom Termpittayapaisith said Thailand wanted to revise the project in many areas. The areas to be revised include the investment ratio from 40:60 to 30:70, the loan amount and lending rate, type of tracks and the establishment of the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV). Construction of the project was proposed to be divided into three sections to be developed in two phases: Bangkok-Nakhon Ratchasima-Nakhon Ratchasima-Nong Khai and Kaeng Khoi-Map Ta Phut. It was proposed that the Nakhon Ratchasima-Nong Khai route be developed as a single track, while the other two routes remain dual-track.

5. Sufficiency Home provides high standard of living for middle and low income earners

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

The Sufficient Home, a 2010 research and development project backed by the National Research Council of Thailand to explore affordable, energy-efficient residential typologies, was guided by His Majesty's philosophy of a "sufficient economy". The design concept for this model home originated from the principles of energy efficiency and saving. Thailand's hot and humid climate led the project's design priorities. The second was an understanding of the daily living patterns and preferences of residents. Survey results illustrate that homebuyers pay attention to usable area (35 per cent), investment costs (30 per cent), security (18 per cent), aesthetics and style (10 per cent), and energy savings (7 per cent), in that order. Unrepresented in this list is the necessity of a healthy and comfortable domestic environment.

Many illnesses stem from the effects of manmade environments. The human body's baseline level of comfort is 25 degrees Celsius at a 45 to 50 per cent range of relative humidity. These standards are commonly enjoyed in most high-end homes. The Sufficient Home Project aims to standardise these comforts in affordable homes. Conscientious design and technical know-how collaborated in generating a viable dwelling typology. Microclimate modifications such as site analysis to avoid direct solar rays and capture prevailing breezes, leveraging the shade cast by trees or the selection of materials with low-surface temperatures, were implemented to reduce ambient air temperatures and maintain an optimal level of human thermal

sensation as low as 28 degrees Celsius, down from 35 degrees Celsius. Placing a unit in an intelligent site could reduce outside air temperatures from 35 to 44 degrees Celsius. Lower outside air temperatures help reduce energy consumption in air conditioning systems. A further benefit of the shade from trees is an increase in usable area outside.

Safety is a concern for owners of individual detached homes. Steel bars are commonly installed to prevent intruders, adding to the homeowner's costs. A construction cost per square metre is also a major concern. Lastly, individual preferences for a home's aesthetics vary widely. The Sufficient Home addresses all these aspects. The basic structure has no columns, beams or roof structure, allowing for large open living spaces and opportunities for customisation, and is erected from cement blocks in a steel frame, resulting in a dead load, or the combined weight of the structure and supports, of about half that of a conventional house. Foam cement blocks twenty centimetres thick with four-inch hollow core pipes were used as exterior walls. Non-flammable expanded polystyrene foam panels were used for the roof structure and insulation, requiring no additional ceilings since the roof panel provides adequate thermal insulation.

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