

Daily Thai News Summary: 18 June 2015

1. Chamber calls for master plan for tourism, wellness sectors

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

Businesses in the tourism and wellness sectors have urged the government to set up a master plan to promote the Kingdom as a prime destination, with an emphasis on the goals of achieving sustainable tourism and the growth of small enterprises.

According to the Thai Chamber of Commerce's committee on tourism and service business, the country should no longer only go after big tourist numbers, but should also focus on how much they spend, which is of greater importance in terms of ensuring sustainable growth.

Chanin Donavanik, chairman of the committee and chief executive of Dusit International, yesterday said the country should have a master plan to promote the long-term growth of tourism, as concentrating solely on the number of tourists would not provide sufficient benefit to the economy.

2. Spectrum plan to be submitted in next two months

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

The national spectrum utilisation strategy, a guideline for the country's spectrum management, will be submitted to Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha in the next couple of months, the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) minister has said.

Pornchai Rujiprapa said the strategy would focus on the reform of the entire telecom sector, including the sharing of backbone telecom infrastructure and spectra in order to maximise the existing resources. The state telecom agencies have attempted to keep up their spectra after the concessions expire, while the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) is keen to reallocate their spectra by means of auction.

Pornchai said the new spectrum management strategy would be clearer before the NBTC starts auctioning new spectrum licences of 1800MHz in November and 900MHz in December this year. He confirmed that the new strategy would not cause the delay of the NBTC's 1800MHz auction schedule but he is not sure if it would cause a delay of the 900MHz auction.

3. ICAO to announce its decision on Thailand's safety plan

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

The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) is expected to give Thailand another four months to implement measures to improve its aviation safety standards in an announcement. Transport Minister ACM Prajin Juntong said the ICAO may or may not endorse Thailand's action plan from recent months to lift safety standards - or it could extend the timeline.

Thailand submitted its plan to overhaul aviation safety standards to the ICAO in April - two months after the agency expressed serious concerns on safety issues involving five airlines registered here. So far, the Department of Civil Aviation has been restructured with two new offices set up to improve overall licensing and regulatory work for airlines registered in Thailand, while a new director-general for the department has been appointed to speed up the work.

4. Police chief backs casinos, PM “not opposed” to idea

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

NRC member Sunghidh says Singapore has earned a huge sum from its casinos and Thailand could reap even more. Police chief General Somyot Poompanmoung yesterday backed a controversial proposal to permit legal casinos, saying he would open a website to sound out public opinions on the issue.

"I am ready to declare myself as the first national police chief to push for [legal] casinos," he said, adding that he would organise a press conference to clarify his position on the issue - one month before his retirement at the end of September.

Somyot said new casinos should be open to registered members who reside in different areas. Registered residents in the South, for example, could be allowed to enter a casino in Chiang Mai. Under a proposal unveiled earlier this week by some members of the National Reform Council (NRC), possible sites for casinos include Phuket, Ubon Ratchathani, and Koh Larn, which is situated off Pattaya in Chon Buri.

5. Mass transit drives condo development on Thon Buri side: Plus Property

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

Plus Property, a full-service professional property and facility management agency, views the expansion of public transport and railway networks as a major driving force behind the emergence of new hot spots for residential property development.

The areas around Krung Thonburi and Wongwian Yai have become new destinations for high-rise development in Bangkok, with an absorption rate of 90 per cent in 2014, while average condominium prices and rental rates have risen by 15 and 32 per cent respectively.

Poomipak Julmanichoti, managing director of Plus Property, said the expansion of public transport systems to connect various parts of Bangkok had pushed potential property buyers to seek out condominium projects situated close to Skytrain routes for extra convenience and reduced commuting expenses. This has led to the emergence of new residential property hot spots across the city.

By Harsha Hazarika