

Daily Thai News Summary: 25 June 2015

1. Prime Minister Prayut slams lid on casino legalization talk

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

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha on Wednesday slammed the lid on the idea of legalising casinos in Thailand and ordered the national police chief to stop talking about it. For the first time, Gen Prayut made his position clear on the issue, saying he believed casinos were not supported by the public and therefore would not become legal during his time in office.

2. Future's bright for economy, capital market

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

The Thai economy and capital market outlook are expected to be better in the second half of the year while the US and EU markets are appealing, with healthcare leading the way, according to Krungsri Asset Management. *"The Thai capital market is performing in a positive direction, so investors do not have to be bearish on Thai equities,"* Alan Cam, director of KSAM, said yesterday.

Investors with Thai equities in their portfolio should hold onto them, while new buyers should seek companies that are inclined to give good returns within three to five years. These companies need to have strong fundamentals. Companies involved with petroleum production, energy and consumer goods are expected to have a bright future.

3. HSBC cuts growth forecast to 3.1%

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

HSBC has lowered Thailand's 2015 economic growth forecast further to 3.1 per cent from 3.6 per cent, taking into consideration the weak economy recovery and persistent negative risks for exports. But it raises the 2016 forecast slightly to 3.3 per cent from 3.1 per cent.

In the first quarter, the economy grew 3 per cent compared to the same period last year and sustained four straight quarters of expansion in sequential terms. Nevertheless, the pace of growth remained slow, and actually decelerated to 0.3 per cent q-o-q from 1.1 per cent in the fourth quarter in seasonally-adjusted terms. Real exports of goods have been the main drag,

given weak demand in East Asia. From zero growth last year, exports are expected to increase by 2.4 per cent in 2015 and 4.2 per cent in 2016.

4. ITD calls for adjustment of rules to facilitate expected rise in regional FDI

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

More foreign direct investment (FDI) is expected to flow into Thailand and other countries in East and Southeast Asia following emerging growth of the regional economy and infrastructure development. Thailand, meanwhile, should amend and adjust its laws to facilitate increased FDI and ensure fair benefit for all involved, according to Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol, executive director of the International Institute for Trade and Development (ITD), referencing a UN Conference on Trade and Development (Unctad) report.

The amendments required concern laws related to the prevention of money laundering and tax avoidance, while the Kingdom should also take further steps to ensure sustainable growth and environmental protection, according to the report. Unctad's "World Investment Report" shows that in spite of a decline in global FDI last year, inflows are projected to grow by 11 per cent to US\$1.4 trillion (Bt47.3 trillion) in 2015, with most of the investment growth going to East and Southeast Asia.

5. Transport Ministry plans to build Bt 1 Billion ferry ports

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

The Transport Ministry plans to build ferry ports worth about Bt1 billion in the eastern coast to help boost tourism and transport. Transport Minister Prajin Juntong said that the prime locations are Laem Bali Hai in Pattaya and the Khuk Samet Pier in Chon Buri province.

The project will cost about Bt1 billion, Prajin said, and he will forward the project to the National Council for Peace and Order for approval. The ports will have a railway connecting to Pattaya, and the capacity to handle a large influx of tourists.

6. Ratch-PTT deal spans 3 nations

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

SET-listed Ratchaburi Electricity Generating Holding Plc (RATCH) and PTT Plc have announced a joint venture to develop power and gas businesses in three countries with a combined investment of US\$2.85 billion over the next five years.

Ratch is Thailand's biggest private power producer, while PTT is the national oil and gas conglomerate. The two energy giants signed three memoranda of understanding (MoUs) yesterday in Bangkok to develop four projects in Myanmar, Vietnam and Indonesia.

Two of the projects are ready for construction, while the other two still need licences from the various governments. The MoU signing ceremony was presided over by Energy Minister Narongchai Akrasanee.

By Harsha Hazarika