

Daily Thai News Summary: 3 July 2015

1. Govt braces for EU blitz on fishing

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

The government has stood firm on its efforts to end illegal fishing as the country prepares for strict scrutiny by European Union officials. EU officials will arrive next month to gather information in assessing the country's efforts to tackle the problem.

Agriculture and Cooperatives Minister Pitipong Phuengboon Na Ayudhaya said that the government is making good progress in enforcing measures to curb illegal fishing. They include the new fishery law, which was enacted in April, and a national plan of action to deal with illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

2. Global risks pressure GDP predictions

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

Greater internal and external downside risks threatening the economy have raised concerns that this year's annual growth may come in below the Bank of Thailand's 3% forecast, says a senior central bank official.

Don Nakornthab, director of macroeconomic policy, said the 3% baseline growth projection had not taken recent negative developments into account. Additional negative factors are the International Civil Aviation Organization's decision to place a red flag on Thailand's aviation safety, the first case of Middle East respiratory syndrome (Mers) here, harsher-than-expected effects from the drought and Greece's debt default to the International Monetary Fund.

3. Pickup truck makers target exports

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

While the domestic pickup-truck market has shrunk by more than 20 per cent so far this year, automakers are trying to maintain production by increasing exports. Toyota, the largest auto producer in Thailand, yesterday staged the export ceremony for its redesigned Hilux pickup truck, which will be shipped to more than 130 countries, with the first batch of 2,700 units sent to South America from Laem Chabang Port.

The Hilux is the main product from Toyota's IMV (Innovative Multipurpose Vehicle) project that also includes the Fortuner PPV (pickup passenger vehicle) and Innova pickup-based minivan (which is produced in Indonesia).

According to Wichien Emprasertsuk, executive vice president of Toyota Motor Thailand Co, Toyota has raised its pickup-truck export ratio from 50 per cent last year to 60 per cent in 2015 to cope with the slump in the domestic market. Toyota has invested more than Bt50 billion to start up production of the new Hilux at the Samrong and Ban Pho plants with a combined production capacity of 450,000 units per year, including the Fortuner.

4. Singaporean casino operator interested in investing in Thailand

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

Marina Bay Sands Singapore, the flagship integrated resort of Las Vegas Sands Corp, is interested in running a casino and convention complex in Thailand. *"We want to invest in Thailand if we are given permission. It must be the [same] kind of integrated resort as in Singapore,"* Krist Boo, vice president for communications, said yesterday.

The casino would be combined with a venue for the meetings, incentive travel, conventions and exhibitions (MICE) business. However, it all depends on the Thai government and the decision of the Thai people. The group spoke of its intention to Thai journalists visiting Singapore at a time when the Thai government reportedly is considering the issue. *"We have been searching for new investment not only in Thailand but also all places. Although Thailand has no casino act yet, if this about to happen, it is very interesting,"* she said.

5. Trilateral pact set to kick off Dawei project

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

The long-delayed Dawei development project will finally be ready to kick off after Japan, Myanmar and Thailand sign a memorandum of intent (MoI) on Saturday during the seventh Mekong-Japan Summit in Tokyo. Japan's interest in the mega-project is part of its aim to have a stronger presence in the Mekong region, comprising Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam and Thailand, tightening its relationships with those five countries, where China is also playing a bigger role.

The Dawei project is also part of the Southern Economic Corridor and thus fits in with Tokyo's new strategy for Mekong-Japan cooperation. *"The MoI signing ceremony on the Dawei development project among the three countries will take place on Saturday afternoon after joint remarks to the press,"* Tetsuji Miyamoto, director of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs'

First Southeast Asia Division, said at a press briefing yesterday. The project is to cover about 200 square kilometres, eight times the size of Myanmar's Thilawa special economic zone. It will establish an SEZ in Dawei in southeastern Myanmar.

By Harsha Hazarika