

Thailand Morning Cuppa

Top Story & Bulletin

STOCK/SECTOR

NEWS

Finance

Banks

At yesterday's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting, the committee voted unanimously to maintain the policy rate at 0.5%. Given the high level of uncertainties, Bank of Thailand (BoT) maintained GDP growth forecast at 0.7% for FY21, but revised up slightly to 3.9% (from 3.7%) for FY22.

The economic outlook is improving gradually, with rising vaccination rates allowing for easing of containment measures. The central bank believes the country has passed the worst in 3Q21. In addition, BoT is also of the view that other financial measures will be more effective than further cuts in the policy rate, which is already at a low level.

The key risks being monitored: The pandemic situation, COVID-19 mutations, and containment measures. (BoT)

COMMENT

The MPC's decision to maintain the policy rate will be positive for investor sentiment on banks, in our view. This eases concerns over further downside to loan yields, which have already been impacted by rate cuts in 2020. We believe the policy rate has bottomed, given BoT's comments that there may be more other financial measures to spur economic recovery, as well as expectations that the US Federal Reserve will start to raise rates from late 2022.

BoT's upgrade of FY22F GDP, albeit slightly, should also be a positive for banks and non-bank financial institutions or NBFIs. This signals the central bank's optimism that the economy is on a better footing for a recovery, which should also mean improving prospects for financial institutions. Bank stocks, which have enjoyed positive re-rating since August, will likely grind higher.

That said, we believe the share price performances of the NBFIs will be range bound. We expect NBFIs' cost of funds to gradually rise sooner or later – in line with expectations of rate hikes – while their loan yields are not likely to inch up much due to rising competition. NBFIs also have to contend with rising competition in the industry, given the JV between Srisawad Corp (SAWAD, NR) and Government Saving Bank, as well as SCBX's soon-to-be launched Auto X and Card X units. We believe this may dim NBFIs' growth prospects and ROE improvements over the longer term. We retain our sector calls.

RATING

Sectors: Finance: NEUTRAL

Banks: NEUTRAL





Note: *As at 29 Sep 2021 closing

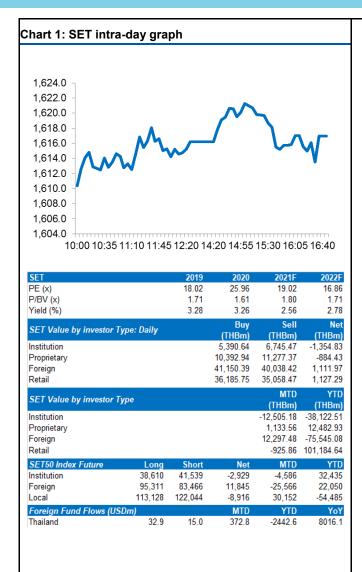
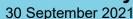


Table 1: Key market indices (30 Sep 2021) Index Chg Chg (%) YTD (%) Thailand (SET) 1616.98 0.48 0.03% 11.6% Thailand (SET50) 971.85 -1.10 -0.11% 6.7% Thailand (SET100) 2212.02 -1.14-0.05% 8.6% USA (Dow Jones) 34390.72 90.73 0.26% 12.4% USA (S&P500) 4359.46 6.83 0.16% 16.1% USA (Nasdaq) -34.24 -0.24% 14512.44 12.6% UK (FTSE) 7108.16 80.06 1.14% 10.0% Singapore (FSSTI) 3074.31 -3.38-0.11% 8.1% Hong Kong (Hang Seng) 24663.50 163.11 0.67% -9.4% 29544.29 -639.67 -2.12% 7.7% Japan (Nikkei) 0.05% Malaysia (KLCI) 1547.65 0.83 -4.9% China (SHANGHAI SE) 3536.29 -65.93 -1.83% 1.8% Indonesia (JCI) 6162.55 49.44 0.81% 3.1% Foreign Exchange Rates / Oil Market USD Closed Chq Chg (%) Baht (Onshore) 33.94 -0.02 0.06 Yen 111.90 -0.06 0.05 0.00 1.16 0.02 Euro Oil Price (USD/barrel) 78.39 -0.01 -0.01 Nymex-Crude Light 74.76 -0.07-0.09



Note: *As at 29 Sep 2021 closing







| Top BUYs | | | |
|---|-------------|---------------|---|
| | TP (THB) | Upside (%) | Catalysts |
| Airports of Thailand (AOT TB) | 73.50 | 18.55 | 3QFY21 (Sep) is likely the weakest quarter, as domestic aviation has led AOT's performance and the severe COVID-19 third wave may dampen local tourism activities. Cost optimisation efforts have been implemented effectively since 3QFY20, but variable expenses rose in tandem with a recovery in aeronautical activities post lockdown Regarding the Government's border re-opening scheme from Jul 2021 onwards, we expect some positive sentiment on the Phuket Sandbox Model towards AOT, as Phuket International Airport is its third-largest property As the first-tier tourism player, AOT may strongly underpin the revival of the tourism industry, while the weakening short-term sentiment and earnings present investors with an opportunity to BUY |
| Home Product Center (HMPRO TB) | 18.00 | 32.35 | Expecting normalising earnings in FY21 – to be supported by full-year operations of all stores and retail malls vs a temporary closure from late March to mid-May, with profit margins approaching pre-pandemic levels HMPRO's investment in Vietnam may strongly benefit growing urbanisation and a potential rise in the construction sector Quarterly earnings momentum will continue its upward trajectory in 1Q21 Rapid improvement in sustainability development may allow the stock to continue trading at a premium |
| Kasikornbank (KBANK TB) | 150.00 | 9.09 | One of opening theme plays, given the highest exposure to the small & medium enterprise or SME portion among the banks we cover or TH Banks Investors should look forward to an eventual recovery, as the recovery in the short term is likely to be uneven and take time before reaching pre-COVID-19 levels The bank trends to disrupt itself with new technologies. We believe this strategy will help the bank to improve profitability and quality in the long run FY21F earnings outlook is forecasted to rebound 8.5% in line with sector earnings. This is due to lower provisions and a rebound in net fees income Our valuation is conservative and its share price is trading below -1SD from the historical mean, which is compelling |
| PTT Exploration & Production (PTTEP TB) | 132.00 | 10.92 | We like PTTEP as a good proxy to stronger commodity prices 2Q21 earnings are expected to register stronger results on the back of stronger sales volumes and crude prices |
| PTT Global Chemical (PTTGC TB) | 73.00 | 15.42 | Bumper 1H21 earnings expected from robust petrochemical product spreads to translate into a strong FY21F rebound in YoY performance Current uptrend in oil prices also expected to see PTTGC regain its gas-based crackers' relative cost advantage over industry peers operating naphtha-based crackers |
| Siam Cement (SCC TB) | 500.00 | 24.38 | Petrochemicals is currently in an upcycle. HDPE-naphtha spread in 1Q21 should remain as high as levels recorded in 4Q20, while the polypropylene-naphtha spread reached another high in 1Q21. SCC's polyolefin sales volumes returned to normal levels after the turnaround of the Map Ta Phut olefin cracker was completed in 4Q20 The improvement in cement & building materials business should be noticeable in 1Q21, with cement demand growing 1-2% in Thailand. This would be due to stronger demand from the residential property sector in provincial areas, and continuously solid demand stemming from government infrastructure projects FY21 will start out with strong earnings growth in 1Q21, while the petrochemical division may be driven by higher production volume after de-bottlenecking the Map Ta Phut olefin cracker finishing 2Q21. For 2H21, we expect a brighter outlook for the cement & building materials business especially in ASEAN, when construction activities resume to normal |
| Tisco Financial (TISCO TB) | 111.00 | 20.00 | Superior asset quality to peers and strong capital base – highest among TH Banks – made TISCO deserve to trade at premium valuation. Its c.7% dividend yield is compelling and relatively highest among TH Banks, with full-year payment basis. We believe TISCO's conservative strategy amidst the pandemic will be proper, allowing the bank to survive post COVID-19 FY21 earnings is expected to rebound 7%YoY mainly on lower provisions and a rebound in net fees income, despite moderated NII and a slight increase in overheads |





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