

Over half oppose legalised casinos

Bangkok (TNA) – Slightly more than half of the total respondents in a poll conducted by Assumption University's ABAC Poll disagreed with the Thai government's plan to legalize casinos in the kingdom with the aim of attracting more foreign tourists and generating additional revenue to offset the administration's budget deficit.

The survey was conducted on 2,726 people in 18 provinces nationwide and found 56.4 per cent of respondents opposed the idea, which was floated recently by prime minister Samak Sundaravej. Those in support accounted for 31.9 per cent of respondents.

Mr. Samak has said if he could complete his four year term as prime minister, Thailand would have casinos.

The controversial issue was floated by several governments in the past, but was opposed by private organizations who said Thailand as a Buddhist country should not legalize casinos because they were against the Lord Buddha's teachings.

Despite the opposition to legalised casinos in Thailand, 55.3 per cent of the ABAC poll respondents said gambling was a normal thing and 35 per cent admitted they had gambled before.

Meanwhile the survey found the popularity of Mr. Samak, who took office early February following the December 23, 2007 general election, was at a rather unimpressive 45.3 per cent, while those against him was at 32.3 per cent and those remaining neutral at 22.4 per cent.