

RANKINGS

Competitiveness rises six notches to 31st place

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Despite the political strife crippling the country's economy for almost five months through May, Thailand's competitiveness jumped six slots to 31st in the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2014-15 thanks to improvements in the ranking of macroeconomic environment.

Thailand scored 4.7 out of seven points, up from 4.5 last year.

The report noted all the data used in its assessment were collected before the most recent developments took place including the May 22 military coup of May 2014.

"Despite its prolonged political crisis, Thailand advances six places to the 31st position. The country moves up 12 places in the macroeconomic environment pillar and now ranks 19th, its best showing among the 12 pillars," said the report.

"In 2013, Thailand almost balanced its budget and reduced inflation to 2%. Public

debt remained stable and the savings rate was high. Thailand continues to do well in financial development (34th) and improves its already strong showing in the market efficiency pillar (30th, up four spots). However, market competition remains limited by a number of barriers to entry, especially those affecting foreign investments."

This year's report provides an overview of the competitiveness performance of 144 economies compared with 148 economies in last year's report.

The rankings are based on the Global Competitiveness Index introduced by the WEF in 2004, with factors that determine the level of productivity of a country covering 12 main pillars such as institutions, infrastructure, health care, education, innovation and financial market development.

But the report said considerable challenges remained in other areas for Thailand, notably those related to governance.

Political and policy instability, excessive red tape, pervasive corruption, security

concerns and a high level of uncertainty in property rights protection seriously undermine the institutional framework, the report said.

Thailand's ranking fell eight slots to 93rd in terms of public institutions.

The country ranked near the bottom end of the scale in terms of the level of trust in politicians at 129th place.