



CITYWIRE BANGKOK FORUM

05 NOV, 2025

Citywire Bangkok Forum: Sticking with US...but divided on private credit

Thai investment chiefs remain upbeat on US equities and AI themes while tilting toward Asia for value, but views on private-market allocations are split.

BY JAMES PHILLIPPS

Thailand's top investment chiefs are keeping faith with US markets and AI stocks, while views diverge on the best opportunities in private markets.

'We've recommended clients to be fully invested in US and global equity since early 2024 and we still recommend to them do so,' said Taweesak Paopanlop, head of CIO office at Kiatnakin Phatra Securities, at last week's Citywire Bangkok Form.

The S&P 500 has surged 38% since Liberation Day, while the Nasdaq has leapt more than 56%. But Paopanlop argued the 'stars are aligned for the US. We have rate-cutting, the big beautiful bill and big AI spending' powering the market.

Yingyong 'Frank' Chiaravutthi, head of investment at Eastspring Asset Management (Thailand), echoed short-term optimism.

'On a short-term, three-month basis, our house view is still positive on US equities and risk assets. But for the longer period, we are more neutral, more concerned on US equity,' Chiaravutthi said, citing tariff risks.

AI still the core play

Artificial intelligence remains the core US play for many. The panellists recommended against chasing speculative, unprofitable names, where some valuations have gotten excessive, but dismissed growing comparisons with the 2000 dotcom boom.

'In AI, I don't believe in one big bubble,' said Jaturun Sornvai, chief global investment officer at Krungsri Asset Management. 'I believe that there are some areas that have bubbles.'

Kean Tan, head of investment solutions at SCB Julius Baer, highlighted the difficulty of unpicking valuations. He pointed out some technology-related stocks, like Apple, which is up around 10%, have actually lagged the market and names such as Walmart this year.

'Valuations-wise, it doesn't help us find a floor,' said Tan. 'How we like to continue to play this story is actually not through some of the hyper-scalers, but through the infrastructure chain, as well as the semiconductors in the hardware space.'

Chiaravutthi favours large-cap tech US equities with strong cash flows, and opportunities in the semiconductor value chain. He noted Amazon and Alphabet both healthily beat expectations last week, underlining their earnings power and driving further strong share price gains.

With the market having rallied so hard, Sornvai recommends clients to look beyond the US if they want to add to tech exposure. He is becoming 'more cautious' on US AI, pointing to Chinese tech.

Asia, Europe gain favour

More broadly, Sornvai is favouring opportunities in Asia, where valuations remain more attractive.

'We're advising clients to increase exposure to regions with more reasonable valuations, with clear catalysts, such as new leadership or fresh policy initiatives, like Japan and Korea,' he said.

Tan is also positive on Japan, believing the ongoing drive to improve shareholder returns 'has got a long runway to go'.

The market has been on a tear this year, overcoming the geopolitical uncertainties to gain more than 30%. The Nikkei 225 smashed through the 50,000 barrier for the first time last month.

'The recent election of the new prime minister in Japan gives new breathing space to their fiscal expansionary policies that probably will create another leg up,' Tan said.

Chiaravutthi sees India's valuations increasingly attractive after lagging this year, with the country's long-term growth fundamentals intact.

Europe was singled out by Paopanlop for the EU bloc's fiscal loosening, which has not yet been fully priced in. 'The fiscal is the game-changer, with a lot of spending on defence and infrastructure. We think investors still underappreciate what Germany or Europe can do on this front,' he said.

Alts flows

Flows into alternatives remain robust at most firms. Hedge funds have been 'selling like hot cakes,' Paopanlop said, noting 40% of new money at Kiatnakin Phatra went into private markets and hedge funds over the past year.

Tan has also seen strong demand for hedge fund products, while flows into private credit have fallen noticeably.

'We have seen a bit of the demand dry up for private credit. There's been a little bit of a scare around this space in the last couple of weeks, but we're not seeing clients panic,' he said. 'Most who are already in the product, or should be in the product, are already in that space.'

Eastspring is eyeing up private credit, however, as Chiaravutthi noted the asset class's defensive characteristics.

'We are looking more closely at private credit and if people can get around 8-9% income, it's pretty attractive,' he added.

Latest News

PEOPLE MOVE | 04 NOV, 2025 | STORY BY CHERYL HENG

Exclusive: Julius Baer hires senior RM for Southeast Asia from UBS

The new joiner was previously a team leader at UBS, where he was employed for close to two decades.

PRIVATE MARKETS | 04 NOV, 2025

Carlyle wealth boss says Thailand and Malaysia new growth frontiers

EARNINGS | 05 NOV, 2025

Apollo CEO says daily NAVs needed to win over traditional managers