# 1. Thailand protests: State of emergency lifted after days of rallies

22 Oct 2020

BBC news <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-54641775>

Thailand has revoked an emergency decree it imposed a week ago as it tried to end months of protests against the prime minister and the monarchy.

An official statement said the "violent situation" that had led to the decree had eased.

The measures, which banned gatherings of more than four people and imposed a curfew, prompted even larger rallies.

On Wednesday protesters gave PM Prayuth Chan-ocha three days to step down or face more demonstrations.

In response, Mr Prayuth signalled he would lift the decree but asked protesters to reciprocate by toning down their "hateful and divisive talk".

The student-led movement is demanding the resignation of Mr Prayuth, a former general who seized power in a 2014 coup and last year became prime minister after a controversial vote.

They want a new election, amendments to the constitution and an end to the harassment of state critics.

They are also demanding curbs on the king's powers - a call that has led to unprecedented public discussion of an institution shielded from criticism by law.

## Why has the government lifted the decree?

A statement published in the official Royal Gazette on Thursday said the emergency measures announced last week would end from noon local time (05:00 GMT).

"It appears that the serious situation that led to the state of emergency declaration has subsided and ended. The circumstances can now be controlled by state officers," the statement said.

Last week, authorities citied the proximity of protesters to Queen Suthida's convoy as a reason for the decree. Some activists had jeered and held up their trademark three-finger salute - borrowed from the Hunger Games movie - at her passing motorcade in Bangkok.

The latest government move comes a day after protesters marched to Government House in Bangkok and gave Mr Prayuth a three-day deadline to step down or face more demonstrations.

The prime minister has refused to resign. In an televised address on Wednesday he said discussions should be held in parliament.

"I will make the first move to de-escalate this situation," said Mr Prayuth as he announced he was ready to lift the decree.

"I ask the protesters to reciprocate with sincerity, to turn down the volume on hateful and divisive talk."

An extraordinary parliamentary sitting has now been announced for Monday.

## Why have the protests escalated?

After the decree was ordered, Thai authorities arrested dozens of activists - including key protest leaders.

They also ordered investigations into a number of news outlets, suspended the online platforms of Voice TV, a local broadcaster, over its coverage of the protests and ordered internet providers to block Telegram, a private messaging app that protesters have used to organise rallies.

But the escalating crackdown failed to stem the protests. Activists ignored the protest ban and have rallied in the tens of thousands in the days since, demanding the release of those in prison.

At a large demonstration in Bangkok last Friday, police used major force for the first time in this renewed wave of protest, deploying water cannons and tear gas to break up the rallies.

Protesters have responded by employing fresh tactics, including flash mobs and calls for everyone to be a leader to avoid arrest.

## What reaction has there been?

Despite Thursday's developments, protest leaders vowed to keep up the pressure on Thailand's leaders.

Patsaravalee Tanakitvibulpon, who was arrested on Wednesday and later released on bail, told reporters that Mr Prayuth "doesn't have any legitimacy left to be prime minister".

"For the past six years he did nothing to benefit the people," said Ms Patsaravalee, also known as "Mind".

"Prayuth Chan-ocha doesn't have any trustworthiness left for us. Therefore, he must resign, along with his entire cabinet."

Fellow protest leader Sirawith Seritiwat said Mr Prayuth was trying to stay in power while ignoring the people's demands.

"The emergency decree shouldn't have been issued in the first place," he added.

#Politics #ThaiProtest #StateOfEmergency

# 2. Thailand protest: Why young activists are embracing Hong Kong's tactics

22 Oct 2020

Preeti Jha from BBC news [www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-54626271](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-54626271)

Thai democracy activists are increasingly adopting tactics used by their counterparts in Hong Kong, as they defy a ban on gatherings after months of mounting protests targeting the prime minister and king.

When demonstrators in Bangkok held up umbrellas to shield themselves from tear gas fired for the first time last Friday, it was strikingly reminiscent of the anti-government protests that shook the Chinese territory last year.

From helmets and gas masks to flashmobs and hand signals, Thailand’s student-led movement is drawing on the experience of Hong Kong’s young activists in its own fight for change.

Here are three echoes of the Hong Kong protests in Thailand.

## Leaderless movement: 'We are all leaders today’

After the arrest of many of Thailand’s protest leaders last week, activists have changed tack.

“They think arresting the leaders will stop us,” Pla, a 24-year-old demonstrator, told thousands of protesters at Bangkok’s Victory Monument on Sunday. “It’s no use. We are all leaders today.”

The absence of a centralised leadership was a defining feature of the seven straight months of protests that rocked Hong Kong - and what many say sustained the movement for so long.

While there were figureheads, decision-making was devolved with protesters commonly using online forums and the secure messaging app Telegram to organise - and gather in large numbers quickly.

In Thailand the use of Telegram has skyrocketed in recent days. Protesters have used it to co-ordinate rallies since the government ban on political gatherings of more than four people was implemented last week.

While many Thais are joining Telegram as non-protesting observers, active members use the groups to strategise - from where protests should take place to updates on police whereabouts.

Like the Hong Kong protesters, Thai activists have been putting decisions to a vote. On Monday the main Free Youth Facebook page asked supporters if they should take a break by hitting the “care” emoticon to pick a rest and the “wow” emoticon to protest. They decided to keep going.

Thai protesters are now trying to "remain as flat as possible, making leadership open and replaceable", says Aim Sinpeng, a political scientist at the University of Sydney. "This is very different from past protests in Thailand that tended to be personalised around leaders who are often influential people."

The use of the hashtag #everybodyisaleader has been growing on social media in recent days, an attempt to "re-pivot the movement... to protect itself from state persecution", says Dr Aim, whose research focuses on digital politics in South East Asia.

## A new language of protest: Hand signs and a 'jungle phone'

Over the weekend a new language evolved on the streets of Bangkok. The building blocks were borrowed from Hong Kong.

To signal they needed helmets, activists raised their hands in a triangle above their heads. By crossing their fingers they showed someone was injured. Swirling an index finger in an anti-clockwise direction was a warning to disperse.

The savvy use of hand signals was first observed in Hong Kong where they became indispensable for protesters communicating across huge crowds. Thai activists have incorporated this language of signs as well as sprouting homegrown signals shared through infographics on social media.

Since their loudspeakers were confiscated activists have also resorted to other innovative communication methods, says Wasana Wongsurawat, an associate professor of history at Chulalongkorn University.

At a protest in Bangkok on Saturday she watched activists deploy what she describes as “a jungle telephone” to signal police arrivals or request equipment such as umbrellas for those on the protest frontlines.

“Someone would shout ‘the water canons are coming’. Then people in the crowd started repeating the phrase. Within two minutes the message travelled from one end of the demonstration to the other,” Dr Wasana tells the BBC, adding the rally disbanded before the suspected equipment arrived.

## Beyond borders: #StandWithThailand

While the Thai and Hong Kong protests are both rooted in unique local grievances, their activists see commonalities in their situations.

In Thailand demonstrators are demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, a former coup leader who became premier last year after disputed elections. They are also urging reform of the country’s powerful monarchy, an unprecedented challenge to an institution shielded from criticism by law.

In Hong Kong, activists have also sought the resignation of their leader, Chief Executive Carrie Lam, as they demand universal suffrage and protest against the rising influence of Beijing in the semi-autonomous territory’s affairs.

In both places democracy campaigners have come to see their political struggles as shared in a new era of protests.

Thai protest leaders have often said the Hong Kong movement has inspired them. And Hong Kong activists have expressed their solidarity, offering tips on protective protest wear, internet security and first aid.

Earlier this year they dubbed themselves the Milk Tea Alliance - a loose online coalition of activists from Thailand, Hong Kong and Taiwan - referring to the classic drink popular in all three places.

Prominent Hong Kong activist Joshua Wong regularly tweets in support of the Thai movement with the hashtag #StandWithThailand. Last week he wrote: “People should not be afraid of their governments. Only governments should be afraid of their people.”

The new generation of protesters in Thailand and Hong Kong have stood out both for their youth and also their skill at harnessing modern technology.

“The culture of protest in Thailand in 2020 is the culture of protest of internet natives,” says Dr Wasana, pointing to how adept the activists are at spreading their messages on social media.

By borrowing from the Hong Kong playbook activists hope to sustain their movement.

"There's no other example of high school and college kids fighting water cannons and tear gas for such a long period of time," the historian adds.

The whole nature of protest is shifting across South East Asia, says Bridget Welsh, an honorary research associate at the University of Nottingham in Malaysia.

Democracy activists in Thailand and Hong Kong, as well as countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia, are "adapting to growing authoritarianism in a globalised world" with fast-changing tactics that harness the power of technology and visual representation.

Additional reporting by Thanyarat Doksone and Grace Tsoi

#Politics #ThaiProtest #MilkTeaAllience

# 3. Former transport minister named as new economy tsar

5 Oct 2020

Khosod English <https://www.khaosodenglish.com/politics/2020/10/05/former-transport-minister-named-as-new-economy-tsar/>

The Royal Thai Government Gazette on Monday has named former Transport Minister Arkhom Termpittayapaisith as Thailand’s new Finance Minister, succeeding Pridi Daochai who resigned on Sept. 1 after only 20 days in the office.

Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha late last week submitted Arkhom’s name to His Majesty King Maha vajiralongkorn for Royal approval.

Arkhom was appointed deputy transport minister in August 2014, serving in the Prayut administration, and was promoted to transport minister a year later.

Arkhom graduated with a BA in Economics from Thammasat University and a Master’s Degree in Development and Economics from Williams College in the United States.

Thai economic experts earlier noted that whoever the new finance minister is, the Thai economy heavily hit by the COVID-19 will be a huge challenge ahead.

Thailand’s central bank in late September forecasted a 7.8 percent GDP drop in the Thai economy and maintained its interest rate at 0.50.

The Bank of Thailand (BoT) said it expected that the Thai GDP would slowly recover and take at least two years to return to its pre-COVID level late last year.

#Economics #Politic #Covid19

# 4. Bank of Thailand to end debt moratorium for SMEs

17 Oct 2020

Thailand Business News <https://www.thailand-business-news.com/banking/81241-bank-of-thailand-to-end-debt-moratorium-for-smes.html#more-81241>

The Bank of Thailand (BoT) has decided not to extend a general order to suspend debt repayment by SMEs to commercial banks set to end this October 22, instructing the institutions to consider such aid on a case by case basis instead, to protect the sector from long term impact.

BoT assistant governor for financial stability and strategy Roong Mallikamas, explained why the measure assisting SMEs with a credit line of no more than 100 million baht was not being continued, pointing out that of the 1.05 million eligible accounts, worth a combined 1.35 trillion baht in debt, up to half have indicated an ability to resume debt repayment after October 22. Of the total, 950 billion baht of the debt is owed to commercial banks.

## Long term stability of financial institutions

According to a press release from the Bank of Thailand, the concern is that while most businesses can now continue payments, an extension of the assistance measure could impact the long-term stability of financial institutions.

The central bank is also worried that SMEs not affected by COVID-19 will take advantage of the measure and lose fiscal discipline. Use of the measure is estimated to wipe away 200 billion baht from commercial banks each year if maintained.

For businesses still genuinely impaired by the situation, banks will be allowed to consider their plight on a case by case basis and offer them help as needed.

## Moving from blanket to targeted assistance for SMEs

Mrs. Roong Mallikamas, Assistant Governor, Financial Stability and Corporate Strategy Group, Bank of Thailand (BOT) revealed the following progresses of the measure on loan payment holiday under the Emergency Decree on Financial Assistance to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Affected by Coronavirus Pandemic B.E. 2563 (2020) which will end on 22 October 2020.

          1. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) totaling 1.05 million accounts have availed themselves of the loan payment holiday with an outstanding debt of 1.35 trillion baht.

This figure is different from the 6.89 trillion baht outstanding debt of SMEs and individual borrowers which have been assisted by financial relief programs such as debt payment deferment and reduction, interest rate reduction, and preemptive debt restructuring.

         2. The BOT has been monitoring closely the financial impact of COVID-19, and does not anticipate any cliff effect following the end of the payment holiday due to the following factors.

1) Specialised Financial Institutions (SFIs) whose customers account for an outstanding loan of 400 billion baht, have already deferred payments for 3 – 6 months. Meanwhile, commercial banks with an outstanding loan of 950 billion baht have been closely monitoring their customers. Most of the customers indicated that they will be able to repay their debts when the loan payment holiday measure ends.

2) Commercial banks will continue to assist their customers, who are unable to repay their debts or can only make partial repayment, until their financial situations improve to be able to repay their debts. Such assistance programs include individual debt restructuring to reduce the probability of loan deterioration, interest rate reduction for credit card and personal loans, debt payment deferment, debt consolidation, and multi-creditors debt restructuring programs.

3) Only 6% of the total outstanding debt of 950 billion baht are cases where banks have not been able to get in touch or are in the process of contacting their customers.

         In addition, the lockdown measures brought about by COVID-19 have impacted businessdisproportionately. Businesses in the beverage, electrical appliance, and commerce sector are recovering near the pre-COVID-19 levels. On the other hand, businesses in the tourism sector are still slow running, particularly the hotel businessis at only 26% of the pre-COVID-19 level.

## A proactive and more targeted approach

The BOT has therefore opted for an approach away from a traditional and generic measure to a proactive and more targeted approach since the measure on loan payment holiday also has long-term negative consequences due to the following.

1) The loan payment holiday measure merely applies to a deferral of debt payment whereas interest charges continue to accrue during the holiday period. This interest payment obligation is a burden for borrowers in the long run.

2) The measure creates a moral hazard for borrowers that are in a position to continue servicing the loans. These borrowers may opportunistically decide not to service their loans.

3) **Continuation of the payment holiday poses risks to the stability of the financial institution system** as financial institutions will not be able to book the regular cash inflows. It is expected that the debt payment holiday will remove 200 billion baht from the financial system annually.

Borrowers who are capable to repay the loans are advised to continue to do so not only to reduce their burden in the long run, but also to provide financial institutions with cash flow to help other affected clients.

Borrowers who are unable to repay their debts – particularly those commercial banks have not been able to get in touch with – are advised to contact their respective banks for appropriate financial assistance.

         In addition, the BOT has allowed a standstill for financial institutions to maintain asset classification and provisioning until the end of 2020 for borrowers who are in process of debt restructuring. This is to encourage financial institutions to expedite debt restructuring with their customers. Also, the BOT has worked closely with relevant organizations, such as the Federation of Thai Industries and Board of Trade of Thailand, to identify businesses that are severely affected by the COVID-19and in need of assistance.

          Borrowers who have been unable to get in touch with their banks or unable to agree upon mutual solutions on debt restructuring with their banks may contact Debt Exit Fast Lane at <https://www.1213.or.th/App/DebtCase>to find solutions with their banks.

#Economics #SME #BankOfThailand

# 5. 'Their voice is vital' - Thai celebs break silence on democracy protests

18 Oct 2020

AFP from Bangkok Post <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/politics/2004107/their-voice-is-vital-thai-celebs-break-silence-on-democracy-protests>

A K-pop superstar, beauty queens and TV personalities are among a growing wave of celebrities backing Thailand's pro-democracy movement, sending out messages of support to millions of followers on social media.

Political statements are unusual from Thai celebs, whose lucrative endorsements rely on the billionaire clans that are a pillar of the country's establishment. But some prominent figures broke cover after police fired water cannon at peaceful protesters in Bangkok on Friday.

Thai-American K-Pop idol Nichkhun, better known as the "Thai Prince", told his 6.9 million Twitter followers he cannot "stand idly by" after Friday's scenes, an escalation after months of student-led protests.

"The use of violence is something I cannot watch and stand idly by," said Nichkhun, a member of ultra-popular South Korean boy band 2PM, in a message that was retweeted by tens of thousands within hours.

"Violence has never helped anything. I hope everyone stays safe... and take care of yourselves."

Friday's showdown was the first such use of force against the protesters, who are calling for the resignation of Premier Prayut Chan-o-cha, a former military chief brought to power in a 2014 coup, and demanding reforms to the powerful monarchy.

It followed a tense week in the Thai capital when protesters defied a ban on demonstrations, and the arrests of scores of leading activists, to return to the streets in their tens of thousands.

Nichkhun wasn't the only celebrity to speak up. Amanda Obdam, the newly crowned Miss Universe Thailand, took to Instagram with pictures of a lone protester pushing against riot police wielding their shields.

"A picture says a thousand words," the Thai-Canadian model wrote. "Your job is to protect the people not harm them."

## - 'Abuse of power' -

Previously, many stars have remained conspicuously silent on hot-button issues in celebrity-obsessed Thailand, where their careers and income are closely tied to product endorsements.

Alienating potential employers may be a reason -- especially in a kingdom where every sector hums along under the oversight of the multi-billion-dollar business empires, traditional supporters of the ultra-wealthy royal family.

But business student Min, who arrived at Saturday's protest with a helmet and a gas mask, said celebrities have a moral obligation to speak up.

"They are in the elite alongside the government," the 18-year-old told AFP. "Their voice is vital."

That voice grew louder this week. Another former beauty queen, TV personality Maria Poonlertlarp, said in a video on Facebook that the treatment of protesters was "completely unjust".

She had grown more vocal since the July disappearance of Thai pro-democracy activist Wanchalearm Satsaksit, who was kidnapped off the streets of Cambodia where he lived in self-exile.

"People have been silenced from speaking up about the double standards and the abuse of power," she said in tears, switching between Thai and English.

"We've had a lot of injustice going on in Thailand for decades, fighting against our government for democracy," she added.

Seated next to Maria in the video was her partner Wannasingh Prasertkul, a television presenter whose parents were part of a student movement that saw a massacre in 1976 by royalist forces in Bangkok.

## - 'Ignorant people are silent' -

Even some celebrities who have mixed with Thailand's leaders have spoken out. Popular girl band BNK48 visited Gen Prayut at Government House in 2018, where officially released photos showed the normally gruff premier chatting cheerfully with the group.

The visit drew ire from critics who saw it as an attempt to soften the image of the former army chief, who masterminded the 2014 coup and retained power in controversial elections last year.

But BNK48 member Milin "Namneung" Dokthian left no room for doubt about her feelings in a message urging protesters to "stay safe" this week.

"We wouldn't have to say 'be safe' if we had a true democracy," she wrote on Facebook, in a post shared by fellow band-members.

The support from some celebrities, and silence from others, are not lost on the young protesters. Juggling goggles and a helmet at Saturday's protest, 25-year-old Aim scoffed at those who refuse to speak up.

"Perhaps they are out of touch and have grown up in a (privileged) situation," she told AFP, adding that the fans are paying attention.

"We will abandon them because they are ignorant people and are silent."

#Entertainment #ThaiProtest #KPop

# 6. Sarah's holding the baby, Art on the ropes, backseat dancer

18 Oct 2020

Mae Moo from Bangkok Post <https://www.bangkokpost.com/life/social-and-lifestyle/2003935/sarahs-holding-the-baby-art-on-the-ropes-backseat-dancer>

Model's marriage plan blows up

Italian-Thai model Sarah Casinghini faces the prospect of bringing up a second child alone after her new love, Ukrainian model Vadim Ashab, insisted the pair had broken up and they had no plans to marry, despite her claims to the contrary.

Vadim's bombshell revelation last week comes after Sarah herself disclosed she was raising a two-month-old child, Emily, whom Vadim fathered after the pair met late last year.

Contacted by Thai netizens via social media, Vadim, 20, confirmed he and Sarah, 33, had been together but said they had broken up early this year at her request. They had not discussed marriage later this year and the couple were no longer together.

Vadim works as a model in China and is stuck there during Covid-19, having left Thailand in January after he and Sarah broke up. He was not present for the birth of his daughter but denies fleeing when he heard that Sarah was pregnant.

As for his status as Emily's father, he suggested her birth was an accident. "Who would want to be a father at 19," he asked, referring to his age at the time of the child's birth.

In response to a nasty remark by a member of Sarah's fanclub that he should learn how to use a condom, Vadim insisted he always wears protection. He has declined repeated invitations by Sarah's fans to contact the Thai media to give his side, saying he doesn't want any more dramas and believes many people knew the "truth" about his relationship with Sarah before he spoke out.

Vadim's revelations leave Sarah in an awkward position of possibly having to raise her young family alone. In the immediate aftermath, Sarah said she was so stressed to hear Vadim's claims that she had stopped lactating milk for Emily, and was having to console herself that everything was okay. "I try to kid myself into thinking I am fine and tell myself to smile and be cheerful, but my body shows that's not the case," she wrote on social media.

"Does anyone have advice on how to get the milk back? I feel sorry for my daughter, and want to raise her on mother's milk the way I did her elder brother," she said, referring to her young son, Maxwell, aged six. Rather than responding to Vadim's claims, she asked fans to move the debate elsewhere, as she wanted her social media space to concern itself with her experience as a mother.

Sarah's own revelation two weeks ago that she had started a second family came amid a custody and maintenance dispute with her former partner, actor Pirat "Mike" Nitipaisankul, concerning their son Maxwell.

Sarah had kept Emily's existence a secret when the row with Mike broke out last month after Mike went to court seeking to be formally recognised as Maxwell's son and joint custody rights. He said he has supported Maxwell since his birth but Sarah had started denying him access.

Sole parental rights belong to Sarah as the boy was born out of wedlock. Thai law defaults to the mother in such cases, meaning the father, while not legally recognised as such, is not obliged to pay for the child's upkeep either. Maxwell lives with Sarah's family in Phuket.

After she confirmed rumours that she had given birth to Emily, Mike promptly declared he would withdraw the court action as a decision in his favour could have obliged him to pay maintenance. He is evidently worried some of the money could end up supporting another man's child.

He said he had paid more than 10 million baht in support for Maxwell since his birth but objected to Sarah's provocative move to ratchet up demands on his finances even as he struggled to make ends meet during Covid-19.

After Sarah revealed she had a second child he wanted to be sure that any future help went directly to his son. He would withdraw the legal papers and instead start a savings plan for his son, with the goal of handing over the money when he came of age.

Mike's news that he was no longer willing to pay Sarah regular support threw her lawyer into a panic, as it raised the prospect she would have to pay for the boy's upkeep alone, though Mike said she could still ask for help if she needed it.

Her lawyer, Pramarn Laungwattanawanich, urged Mike to reconsider his decision to abandon court action, saying he could still ask for legal rights as father while scrapping his claim for joint custody. Last week he filed a formal objection to Mike's move to withdraw his case.

Presenter Panadda "Boom" Wongphudee said on Thursday she had since spoken to Mike, who told her the Central Juvenile and Family Court had put a stay on his bid to withdraw the legal action in which he sought formal recognition as Maxwell's dad while it hears Mr Pramarn's objection. Meanwhile, Mike's celebrity lawyer, Nitithorn "James" Kaewto, said he expects good news to emerge on the custody and maintenance front. The drama continues.

## ****Tough guy suffers blow to pride****

Tough guy actor Pasut "Art" Banyam, 37, is nursing a bruised face and shattered eyebrow after losing a celebrity boxing contest to an older actor last week, much to his own surprise.

Art made it into the start of the third round of his match with actor Dom Hetrakul, 44, before a live audience on Monday before the referee started the count. The two squared off in the opening bout of 10Fight10's second season on Workpoint TV.

Dom had taken flak on social media for his age, with critics predicting he would fall to the younger man's blows. He went into the match with a point to prove, as his team said later. "Dom went on attack from the start, getting in a few precision punches to the face, while Art was in defensive pose and throwing a few punches back," the Daily News said, describing the match.

"In the second round, Dom goes on the attack again, but Art, who has a bloody nose, holds his own, getting off a few beautiful punches. The fight starts to heat up by the end of this round after a volley of punches exchanged by both sides. Dom takes a few punches and staggers a bit.

"Art's handler staunches the flow of blood ringside, but as the third round opens Dom goes on the attack again, letting off a volley of punches to Art's face. The referee starts the count and calls off the bout."

The result stunned both contestants, with Art admitting Dom, despite his age, was much stronger than he thought. The head of Dom's team, Antoine Pinto, a French-Thai boxer, said they were delighted as Dom took flak for being too old.

Art suffered a bloody nose and eyebrow, the legacy of an old wound which the fight reopened. He said he also took a blow to the throat, which hampered his breathing.

The spectacle of Art taking one blow to the head after another shocked fans in the stadium, who are not used to seeing such spirited fighting. The two are not professional boxers, organisers hastened to point out, though both underwent months of training beforehand.

In a show of sportsmanship, Art prostrated himself before Dom in the ring after the result was declared. He denied he was disappointed but admitted his boxing days were over.

On Thursday, speaking on the set of a new soap opera, Art said he was surprised to be on the receiving end of so many punches. Speaking about his experience as a wild man getting into scrapes, he said he has no problem holding his own. "Normally if I fight off the ring I am the one delivering the blows. If I am to carry on I will have to get some training on what it is like to be on the receiving end, as it really threw me," he said.

Meanwhile, a day after Art's blood-spattered loss to Dom, a young singer who was pencilled in to fight later in the tournament pulled out.

Rapper Guntee Pitithan, 23, was supposed to take on singer Chatchawit "Victor" Techarukpong, 28. Apologising to his fans, he said on social media he had decided to pull out after suffering an "accident". No further details were available.

## ****Injured man stages mini-concert****

A song about misery was just the tonic for a man injured in a road accident after his girlfriend declared she was leaving him.

Suchart Wassanarungruangsuk, 48, was walking his bike across Ratchaphruek Road in Nonthaburi's Bang Kruai on Tuesday when he was grazed by a taxi. He suffered minor injuries in the scrape.

Bang Kruai police, who attended the scene, say Mr Suchart, who had been drinking, left home with his bike after his girlfriend told him their relationship was over. He was depressed about life and unwilling to get his wounds treated until police told him that if he didn't go hospital they would take him to the police station instead.

Mr Suchart, who relented, agreed to get in the back of a rescue worker's vehicle as they took him to seek care. Lying on his stretcher, however, he was still down in the dumps so the rescue workers offered to play him a humorous clip on their phone to perk his spirits up.

Warming to the idea of being entertained, Mr Suchart, however, asked if they could play him a song instead.

A clip taken by a rescue worker shows Mr Suchart jigging along, conducting and singing as he gets "in" with the light-hearted song he requested, Rork Seum Sao (Depression), by Isan singer Lamplern Wongsakorn. The song is about a young man who takes to drink to forget about his old girlfriend, but when the booze runs out gets further depressed. A rescue worker wearing a mask performs along with him.

The clip of Mr Suchart lamenting his fate but cheering to the song went viral on social media, with Thais enjoying his antics.

"The man quickly forgot his injuries, so carried away was he by the song," one news report said.

#Entertainment #LoveLife #Injury

# 7. Napa-1 satellite finally readies for Friday launch

16 Jun 2020

Wassana Nanuam from Bangkok Post <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/1935312/napa-1-satellite-finally-readies-for-friday-launch>

Napa-1, Thailand's first military satellite, is reportedly set to be launched on Friday following months of delay due to technical problems and Covid-19.

The Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) will launch it into space at 8.51am local time using an Ariane Vega rocket from the Ariane Launch Area 1 in French Guiana, South America, according to an RTAF source on Monday.

The launch has been postponed three times, first in September and then in December due to technical issues. The satellite was supposed to be launched in March, but it was put off again because of the Covid-19 outbreak.

Napa-1 is the Thai air force's first satellite. It will primarily be used to observe and survey Thai air space for defence and national security purposes. It will also be used to detect hotspots to prevent bushfires and water resources to combat floods or drought.

The source said Napa-1's cameras will play a crucial role in the RTAF's defence system, strengthening national security and preventing threats.

The air force purchased the satellite from Innovative Solutions in Space, a small satellite manufacturer based in the Netherlands.

Napa-1 is technically a CubeSat 6U model and will begin work when it finally goes into orbit approximately in the middle of this year. It will work in tandem with the Napa-2 satellite, scheduled to be launched in July.

Its cost has not been revealed but AVM Supijjarn Thamwatharsaree, chief of RTAF's Space Operation Centre (Spoc), said earlier it cost "less than 100 million baht".

Spoc was set up in August to enhance RTAF's capacity in space.

#Science #Military #Space

# 8. A simpler ingredient for a complex calculation

18 Jul 2016

**Richard J. Fitzgerald from Physics Today from** <https://physicstoday.scitation.org/do/10.1063/PT.5.7285/full/>

Walter Kohn, Pierre Hohenberg, and Lu Sham first formulated density functional theory in the 1960s. Since then, DFT has become the most popular approach in quantum chemistry and condensed-matter physics for calculating the electronic structure and ground-state properties of atoms and molecules. (See the article by Andrew Zangwill, [*Physics Today*, July 2015, page 34](http://dx.doi.org/10.1063/PT.3.2846).) The approach eases the computational burden of finding the many-body wavefunction by reducing the problem to finding the electron density. Even so, the solution entails calculating the electrons' interactions not only with any external potential but also with each other. Besides the repulsive effects of the Coulomb interaction and the Pauli exclusion principle, the interactions include collective effects—the so-called correlation-energy functional—which, even for the simple case of a uniform electron gas, must be approximated (except in the high- and low-density limits). [Teepanis Chachiyo](http://www.if.nu.ac.th/personal/teepanis) of the [Institute for Fundamental Study](http://www.if.nu.ac.th/) at Naresuan University in Phitsanulok, Thailand, has now derived a simple formula for finding the correlation energy in a uniform electron gas. With only two parameters, whose values can be obtained from fits to the high-density behavior, Chachiyo's formula yields accurate results for the mid- and low-density regimes. Indeed, for a paramagnetic system, the results are closer to the detailed simulation results than are those from standard, much more complicated formulas. Though Chachiyo's expression applies only to a uniform electron gas, it should be a useful starting point for considering the nonuniform densities in molecules and bulk solids. (T. Chachiyo, [*J. Chem. Phys*. **145**, 021101, 2016.](http://dx.doi.org/10.1063/1.4958669))

# 9. Thailand's king reinstates his consort after her fall from grace

2 Sep 2020

BBC <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-53994198>

**Thailand's king has reinstated his royal consort to the position, nearly a year after she was stripped of her titles in a dramatic fall from grace.**

King Vajiralongkorn returned Sineenat Wongvajirapakdi's rank and titles on Wednesday, the Royal Gazette announced.

Sineenat was stripped of her rank in October 2019, only months after being named as the king's companion.

The palace had said that she was being punished for trying to elevate herself to "the same state as the queen".

Sineenat was the first royal consort for almost a century in Thailand, where the term refers to a partner in addition to the king's wife.

Last year's announcement also accused her of "misbehaviour and disloyalty against the monarch". She has not been seen in public since and her whereabouts have not been confirmed.

The king's latest decision means that "Sineenat Wongvajirapakdi is not tarnished", the Royal Gazette announced.

"Henceforth, it will be as if she had never been stripped of her military ranks or royal decorations."

Born in 1985, she is from northern Thailand and worked as a nurse before entering a relationship with the then-crown prince Vajiralongkorn.

She eventually became a bodyguard, pilot and parachutist, and joined the royal guards. In early 2019, she was appointed a major-general.

She received the official title of first Royal Noble Consort in July that year, shortly after the king married his fourth wife Queen Suthida, who had been the deputy head of his personal security detail.

Just a few months later, in October, Sineenat was unexpectedly stripped of her rank and titles, sparking widespread speculation over what might have prompted the sudden downfall.

The true cause of her removal - and her subsequent reinstatement - as royal consort may never be made public, given the secrecy which cloaks palace affairs in Thailand.

Thailand's lese-majeste law forbids any criticism of the monarchy, with hefty prison sentences for offenders.

The removal of Sineenat in 2019 echoed the cases of two of the king's former wives. In 1996, he denounced his second wife, who fled to the United States, and disowned four sons he had with her.

In 2014, his third wife Srirasmi Suwadee was similarly stripped of all her titles and banished from the royal court. Her 15-year-old son has been raised by King Vajiralongkorn in Germany and Switzerland.

The king, who now spends most of his time in Germany, has seven children in total.

Queen Suthida, a former flight attendant for Thai Airways, had been seen with him in public for many years, though their relationship had never been officially acknowledged before he married her.

Even after the marriage, his consort Sineenat was a regular guest at royal events until her downfall.

Thai kings throughout the centuries took multiple wives - or consorts. But until 2019, the last time a Thai king had taken an official consort was in the 1920s and the title had not been used since the country became a constitutional monarchy in 1932.

Wednesday's palace announcement comes amid anti-government protests in Thailand, where the military has entrenched its political rule after a 2014 coup. The protests include demands to curb recently-expanded powers of the king and there have been unprecedented calls to reform the monarchy.

The protesters have challenged the king's decision to declare Crown wealth as his personal property, making him by far the wealthiest person in Thailand. It had until now been notionally held in trust for the benefit of the people.

There have also been questions over King Vajiralongkorn's decision to take personal command of all military units based in Bangkok - a concentration of military power in royal hands unprecedented in modern Thailand.

The king ascended the throne after the death of his much-loved father Bhumibol Adulyadej in 2016. King Bhumibol had ruled for 70 years, making him the longest-reigning monarch in the world at the time of his death.

#ThaiMonarch #KingRamaX #RoyalConsort

# 10. SRT eyes next stage of EEC train project

26 Aug 2020

Chatrudee Theparat from Bangkok Post <https://www.bangkokpost.com/business/1974643/srt-eyes-next-stage-of-eec-train-project>

The State Railway of Thailand (SRT) hopes to submit plans by next year for the second phase of the high-speed train route in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) that would see it extended to Trat province.

Kanit Sangsubhan, secretary-general of the (EEC) Office, on Tuesday gave an update on plans for the second phase of the key infrastructure project at the mobile cabinet meeting in Rayong province.

The SRT is drafting the blueprint for the project and preparing a cost estimate, he said, and hopes to table it for cabinet approval sometime in 2021.

If approved, the SRT would hold bidding in 2024 and it is hoped services can commence in 2028, Mr Kanit told reporters after briefing Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha and the cabinet about the rail route and progress on developing the EEC.

The route, if built, will stretch 190 kilometres from U-Tapao International Airport in Rayong province to Trat province, with a journey time of 64 minutes, Mr Kanit said.

The whole route will link Bangkok as well as the EEC with new tourism sites in Chanthaburi and Trat provinces, he said.

Mr Kanit also said the government was looking at funding a light rail-feeder linking U-Tapao station and Pattaya station to a proposed smart city in Rayong province.

Meanwhile, the cabinet on Tuesday approved a 5.4-billion-baht budget to develop a Sustainable Manufacturing Centre (SMC) for the EEC project.

The centre is tasked with helping develop aviation, robotics and artificial intelligence, healthcare, biotechnology and other industries within the EEC.

Gen Prayut also met on Tuesday business leaders from Chon Buri, Rayong and Chacheongsao to promote investment in the EEC.

He vowed the government remained determined to ensure sustained and stable development in the eastern area.

"The government will try to maintain a balance between social and economic development across the whole country," he said.

Investment in the EEC this year involved 225 projects worth 85.48 billion baht, according to the Board of Investment (BoI).

Total investment was 158.89 billion baht, down 17% from the same period last year's total of 190.33 billion baht, the BoI said.

#Economics #ThaiGoverment #Industry