



HOME BREAKING NEWS NATIONAL / POLITICS OPINION BUSINESS LIFE TECH

TRAVEL WORLD VIDEO PHOTO WEBLOG CSR FORUM CLASSIFIEDS LITE VE

OPINION »

Share |



WATCHDOG

## 'Lucky' Thailand must not give up on building a real democracy

TEXT SIZE +

By Nophakhun Limsamarnphun  
nophakhun@nationgroup.com  
Published on May 21, 2011

**The July 3 general election will provide a fresh opportunity for Thai voters to chart their future - but all politics is local, so many voters may be shortsighted.**

### Ads by Google

#### Thailand Lawyers

US, UK, Aus, German & Thai Lawyers. For All Your Legal Services Needs.  
[www.siam-legal.com](http://www.siam-legal.com)

#### Northpoint Pattaya Condo

Raimon Land's Award-Winning Condo Ready to Move In. From 5.5 MB.  
[www.RaimonLand.com](http://www.RaimonLand.com)

#### Virtual Office in Bangkok

Office Address, Meeting Room Receptionist. Only 1,700 Baht p/m  
[www.thaiexecutiveoffice.com](http://www.thaiexecutiveoffice.com)

Handy in this will be all the populist promises made by the major and medium-sized parties contesting a total of 500 House seats in this critical national poll.

The ruling Democrat Party has pledged to increase the minimum wage by 25 per cent within two years and to continue a long list of subsidy programmes if re-elected.

Similarly, the opposition Pheu Thai Party has promised a wage hike, and credit cards for farmers to buy fertilisers and farm equipment if it wins a majority.

In other words, there is no big difference between the major parties' economic policies, as both focus on handouts and subsidies to win votes.

Regarding the political platform, Pheu Thai, backed by fugitive ex-premier Thaksin Shinawatra, is different from the Democrats, as the main opposition party has also touted an amnesty bill for all banned politicians as a key election pledge.

According to long-time resident David Lyman, chairman of international law firm Tilleke & Gibbins, Thailand is an incredibly lucky country.

"It always seems to eventually land on its feet after dealing with adversity piled upon adversity.... Is Thailand still a paradise? The answer is yes for many but not for all, particularly the poor, both rural and urban, some of the sick, the elderly and children."

Lyman, who has lived in Thailand for the past 40 years, wrote recently that Thais are not pathfinders as they prefer to take low-risk strategies. For example, the country has been slow in adopting the 3G mobile network, lagging behind neighbours like Laos and Cambodia.

In education, Thais are also slow or even ignorant of the need to modernise the national education system, especially in terms of quality.

In environmental areas, reforestation and other preservation programmes are hard to implement, while the country is also moving very slowly in meeting other environmental needs.

Yet, Lyman said: "Thais will eventually do the right thing after they have exhausted all other possibilities. Though this appears to the contrary and except for a detour here and there, Thai politics is certainly heading towards the right direction with regard to addressing the country's ills and misfortunes and healing its wounds.

"Thailand is a stumbling but functioning multi-party democracy with real politics at district, local, regional and national levels.

"The road to democracy in any country is fraught with potholes, diversions, blockades, reversals and dead-ends. It's a painful process, never completed and never totally satisfying.

"It's certainly not the ideal form of government, but it's the most acceptable until mankind can develop and adhere to a better form.

"So just because Thai politics and some political parties as well as politicians are motivated by greed and self-interest rather than sound nation-building is no reason to give up on the democratic process.

"If the political infighting is repressed and those in the seats of power, on all sides of the political spectrum, finally begin to look outside themselves to what is in the best interests of the nation, then Thailand can focus on reinvigorating its development and addressing the short- and long-term social welfare of citizens."

The July 3 election is certainly another major test of whether Thais will be lucky once again.



Double click on any word for a Macmillan Dictionary definition. [Click here for details.](#)

## Do you like this story?

ถูกใจ

One like. [ลงทะเบียน](#) to see what your friends like.

### Ads by Google

#### The River Condominium

Bangkok's finest waterfront freehold condo. From 5.9 MB.  
[www.RaimonLand.com](http://www.RaimonLand.com)

#### คอนโดเดอะนิช โปรฯ ดีๆ

สามารถเลือกได้ ดอกเบี้ย 0% 2ปีครึ่ง หรือ เลือกของแถมจาก 100 รายการ  
[www.TheNicheCondo.com/T.1775](http://www.TheNicheCondo.com/T.1775)

#### Chiang mai Luxury Homes

Buy a luxury home/villa/house in beautiful Chiangmai  
[www.thelagunahome.com](http://www.thelagunahome.com)

#### French Restaurant Bangkok

Live lobster, beef specialist Set lunch from 180 Baht  
[www.parisbangkok.com](http://www.parisbangkok.com)

#### Thai Retirement Visa

Full Immigration Office Support 100% Success Record! Learn How  
[www.tilalegal.com/retirement-visa](http://www.tilalegal.com/retirement-visa)

[Horoscope](#)

[E-Card](#)

[Newsletter](#)

[SMS](#)

[Digital service](#)

[Fa](#)



Great Deals on **Kindle** Accessories  
Save on covers, sleeves, and more

[Classifieds](#)

[Jobs](#)

[Phuket Gazette](#)

[E-newspaper](#)

[E-commerce](#)

[Krungthep turakij](#) [Kom Chad Luek](#) [Nation Weekend](#) [247 Friend](#) [BizBook](#) [Nation Chanr](#)