

Round Up

Thailand: Commemoration of the 1932 Revolution calls for more democratic constitution

Friday 26 June 2020, by [ARONPREECHAWAT Pattanun](#), [MONGKOL Chatchai](#), [YIAMYUT Sutthichaya](#) (Date first published: 26 June 2020).

The public joined the Committee Campaigning for a People's Constitution (CCPC) on Wednesday 24 June in remembering the 1932 People's Party's declaration and demanding amendments to the 2017 constitution. Meanwhile, other commemorations faced difficulties from the authorities.



The participants with a photo of the disappeared People's Party plaque.

On 24 June, the 88th anniversary of the 1932 Siamese revolution, which transformed Thailand from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy, the CCPC held a demonstration in front of Parliament House at 10:30.

The event included speeches from the CCPC, a petition to parliament's constitutional committee demanding constitutional reforms and the singing of the original 1932 Thai National Anthem.

Over 100 people, including Members of Parliament (MPs), members of the press, students, and elderly people, joined the assembly in the presence of uniformed and undercover police.

One of the organizers, dressed in the uniform of a soldier from 1932, read out the 1st People's Party Declaration, which was read at dawn on this day in 1932 and marked the regime change from an absolute monarchy to democracy.

Representatives of the CCPC, People's Party for Freedom, the 24 June Democracy Movement and the Labour Unions of the Greater Rangsit Area pointed out that the government has failed to fulfil its own policies and urged the government to listen to the people's wishes and demands. They emphasized that "the people own the country, not any particular group of powerful people."

Along with the CCPC event, six counter-protesters also gathered in front of the parliament demanding the people to return their power back to the king to let him provide the "Thai-styled constitutional democracy" that goes along with Buddhist values.

The CCPC's petition to the House Committee studying constitutional amendments details four changes to the 2017 constitution, which they said was not written to truly serve the people.

1. Amendments or a new draft constitution must be based on democracy where the supreme power belongs to the people in both process and content.
2. The House of Representatives must initiate and propose hearings under the Public Hearing Act on amendments to the constitution within this session in order to have a referendum on the constitutional amendments later this year.
3. The new constitution must provide mechanisms such as a Constituent Assembly and must amend Section 256 of the 2017 Constitution to allow amendments to be passed with the approval of not less than half of MPs.
4. The new constitution must advocate the freedoms and rights of the people. The power used in political institutions must be from the people. The Prime Minister must come from the House of Representatives who were elected by the people. Senators must be elected. Coups must not be pardoned.

Then, people sang the original (1932) version of Thai National Anthem together and chanted "Dictatorship shall fall, democracy shall flourish, the constitution must come from the people," before everyone left.

The CCPC submitted the petition demanding an amendment to the 2017 Constitution once back on March 13 [\[1\]](#).

Purinat Payanon, one of the participants, said that it takes courage to bring about change in the country where hope is scattered and the struggle needs to keep going.

"Since that day until today, there has been a determination to put power in the hands of the people. There is a power struggle where power relations are still contested. I think we still need to keep fighting until our goal is achieved — that the power belongs to the people.", said Purinat.

This event was one of over 15 events scheduled for 24 June.

At 05:40 at the Democracy Monument, Bangkok, about 50 people gathered to commemorate the 88th year of the 1932 Siamese Revolution.

The participants projected a short hologram video mimicking the declaration of the People's Party first declaration that marks the regime change from absolute monarchy to democracy which happened in the dawn of this day in 1932.

At 05:50 at the Free Democracy Bridge, Ubon Ratchathani province, people also gathered to commemorate the 1932 Siamese Revolution.

Meanwhile, the people who wanted to gather for commemorations in Yasothorn and Surin province faced pressure from the authorities that they have to minimize the event and cancel them respectively.

In Khon Kaen province, students and activists gathered at the Democracy Monument in Muang Khon Kaen district. The authorities put up fences to keep the people from the monument.

The sign stated "Sorry for an inconvenience, disaster prevention and relief drill is underway".

At 04:30, a cloth banner with the message “Inheriting the People’s Party legacy, defeating the dictator” appeared at the overpass in front of the Khon Kaen University.

Chatchai Mongkol and Pattanun Arunpreechawat

More photos are not reproduced here.

- Prachatai. Submitted on Wed, 24 Jun 2020 - 05:36 PM:

<https://prachatai.com/english/node/8608>

As democratic revolution gain popularity, state tries its best to stop them

The 24 June 1932 democratic revolution has gained wide public attention on its 88th anniversary. State reaction to the people’s movement celebrating the revolution is based on suspicion and threats, while the military glorify the rebels who tried by force to reinstate the monarchy.

The countrywide commemorations of the 24 June 1932 Siamese Revolution are recognized as the biggest for at least 10 years as many gathered in public across the kingdom to recall the overthrow of the absolute monarchy 88 years ago.

At least 12 offline events were held in many parts of the country: 3 in Bangkok, 2 in Khon Kaen and 1 each in Rayong, Nakhon Ratchasima, Maha Sarakham, Ubon Ratchathani, Songkhla, Surat Thani and Chiang Mai. There were also several online gatherings and seminars.

The hashtag #24๒๔๖๘๒๔ (24 June) also hit Thailand Twitter top trend at the dawn of the day.

The action that caught the attention of the public and media seems to be the reading of the 1st People’s Party Declaration, which was read at dawn in 1932 and marked the regime change. About 500 - 700 people gathered at the Bangkok Pathum Wan Skywalk in the afternoon to hear the reading and chant “This country belongs to the people”.

The Declaration mainly highlighted the incompetence of the absolute monarchy that required the revolution to set things rights through 6 principles of development.

Symbols of the revolution and democracy were also introduced into the activities such as the disappeared People’s Party plaque and the sculpture of the constitution on the phan (a plate-like object used mainly in sacred ceremonies).

Movement criminalized

Although nobody was arrested, the authorities’ reaction toward the commemorations seemed to be suspicious and threatening. To a certain extent, the commemorations were demonized.

The ongoing state of emergency gives the authorities legitimate cause to prohibit public gathering that risk the spread of Covid-19. However, their actions toward people are shady and threatening.

On 23 June, Pol Col Kritsana Pattanacharoen, deputy police spokesperson, gave a press briefing that

the military and police found firearms, grenades and ammunition on the Thai-Myanmar border. He cited sources that claimed the weapons would be used in political movements around this time.

This claim was scrutinized by the Myanmar news outlet the Irrawaddy which reported that the weapons were made in China and meant to be sold to armed ethnic groups in Myanmar.

Media and people were paying attentions to the commemoration activity at the Democracy Monument at the dawn of 24 June 2020.

On the same day, the people who wanted to gather for commemorations in Yasothon and Surin provinces faced pressure from the authorities to minimize the Yasothon event and cancel the one in Surin.

A source from the movement in Yasothon told Matichon that the group was contacted by the authorities not to hold the event otherwise they would face legal charges. Thai Lawyers for Human Rights reported that the event at Surin faced similar pressure from the police and Village Head.

In Khon Kaen province, students and activists gathered at the Democracy Monument in Muang Khon Kaen district. The authorities put up fences to keep people away from the monument.

Other events that were held offline faced pressure from police officers at the scene. In Surat Thani, a public panel had to be called off 1 hour before schedule as 2 administrative authorities came to check on the venue.

The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand (FCCT) also faced 2 visits from the police before a public panel about the 1932 revolution. Gwen Robinson, the FCCT President, said 12 police officers showed up at the panel. 8 remained at the venue while the manager negotiated for the others to leave.

Graffiti artist Headache Stencil has allegedly been visited by four plainclothes police officers at his condominium last night (25 June) , after he projected images of Pridi Banomyong and other members of the People's Party onto the wall of Wat Ratchanadda Temple at around 1.00 on 24 June to commemorate the 88th anniversary of the 1932 Siamese Revolution.

Parit Chiwarak, an activist from the Student Union of Thailand who organized the gathering at the Pathumwan Skywalk posted on Facebook an hour after the live video was streamed that he was being followed by plainclothes officers in cars and on motorcycles.

Piyarat 'Toto' Chongthep, an activist and former MP candidate of the Future Forward Party attended the gathering at dawn on 24 June in Bangkok and was served an arrest warrant for his part in an earlier assembly.

He decided to turn himself in at noon but during the morning, he was followed by someone who seemed to be a plainclothes policeman. The man said he wanted to take Piyarat to meet 'the boss'. He did not answer when Piyarat asked him to identify himself.

Military cherishes royalists and rebels

As the people remembered the democratic revolution of the People's Party, the Royal Thai Army (RTA) was constructing another version of history. The RTA secretariat published a press release reporting a merit-making ceremony for Prince Boworadet, who led a failed rebellion against the People's Party government led by Gen Phraya Phahon Phon Phayuhasena a year after the 1932 revolution.

The press release stated that the Prince's reason for rebelling was that the Phahon government resembled an authoritarian regime. The rebels called for a more democratic government, with the monarchy intact and a check and balance system against the government.

"The courageous heroic act and devotion of Prince Boworadet and Phraya Srisitthisongkhram [Boworadet's deputy] are worth praising as they earnestly protected the monarchy. They also wished for the country to truly remained democratic.", stated the press release.

Left to right: Rooms at the RTA Headquarters that are named as Boworadet and Srisitthisongkhram.

According to the historical record, the Boworadet rebellion had 6 demands, 2 of which relate to the distribution of power in parliament. One guaranteed that Siam will be ruled under a constitutional monarchy forever and the second granted the King the power to appoint half of the MPs.

The military have taken many measures to erase the legacy of the People's Party.

A statue of Field Marshal Plaek Phibulsongkhram was removed from in front of the National Defence College in January 2020. His museum at the artillery base in Lopburi province was also shut down.

Around the same time, a statue of Phraya Phahon was also removed from the artillery base in Lopburi. The museum, which contains his belongings donated by his descendants, was also put off-limits.

On March 2020, the Royal Gazette announced that the Artillery Centre in Lopburi, known as "Fort Phaholyothin", had been renamed "Fort Bhumibol," after King Bhumibol, King Vajiralongkorn's father. The "Fort Phibulsonggram" Artillery Brigade Camp nearby was also renamed "Fort Sirikit" after Queen Sirikit, the Queen Mother.

Yiamyut Sutthichaya

Several photos are not reproduced here.

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Footnotes

- [1] <https://prachatai.com/english/node/8405>