

## THAILAND

**Date of Elections:** 18 April 1983

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the seats in the House of Representatives on the normal expiry of the members' term of office\*.

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The 1978 Constitution provides for a bicameral National Assembly consisting of a Senate and a House of Representatives.

The Senate is composed of members appointed by the King from among qualified persons possessing knowledge and experience in various branches of learning or affairs considered useful to the administration of the State. The number of Senators is not to exceed three-fourths of the total number of Representatives. There are currently 243 Senators, all appointed for 6 years.

The number of elected members of the House of Representatives is determined by the population of each of the country's *changwats* (provinces), with one Representative for every 150,000 inhabitants and one for every fraction over 75,000. Each province has at least one Representative. On this basis, there are currently 324 Representatives\*\*, all elected for 4 years.

### **Electoral System**

Every person who is of Thai nationality by birth and who is not less than 20 years of age on the 1st of January of the election year is entitled to vote. Disenfranchized are the insane and the mentally infirm; the deaf, dumb and illiterate; Buddhist priests, novices, monks or clergy; and persons detained by a court warrant or a legal order.

Electoral registers are compiled on the provincial level and revised annually. Voting is not compulsory.

Persons of Thai nationality by birth who are at least 25 years old on election day may be candidates for the House of Representatives. This right is nevertheless not extended to undischarged bankrupts, persons addicted to harmful drugs, persons disqualified from voting (except those detained), detained persons under sentence or order of imprisonment, and persons sentenced to at least two years' imprisonment (except for an offence committed through negligence) who were discharged of such sentence less than five years before the election day concerned.

\* See "General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections", below, for explanations.

\*\* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 14.

The mandate of Representative is incompatible with the post of national or local Government official (excluding political officials) holding a permanent position or receiving a salary, the post of official of a State agency or enterprise, membership of a local assembly, and the position of receiving a concession or benefit from a Government agency or party to a Government contract.

Senators must be Thai nationals by birth who are at least 35 years old and not members of any political party. Like Representatives, Senators cannot, while sitting as members, hold any position or have any duty in any Government agency or State agency or enterprise, or a position of member of a local assembly, local administrator or local official (except the position of Minister or any other political official); or receive any concession from the State or a Government agency. State agency or enterprise, or become party to a Government contract.

For House elections, the area of a *changwat* is generally regarded as one constituency; each constituency "shall have an equal or approximately equal number of members". There are 126 constituencies in all. Representatives therefrom are elected by simple majority, with electors having as many votes as there are Representatives from their constituency. Each candidate must have made a deposit of 5,000 *baht*.

House seats which become vacant between general elections are filled within 90 days through by-elections, unless the remainder of the House's term is less than 180 days. Senate vacancies are filled through appointment by the King.

### **General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections**

On 19 March, King Bhumibol, on the advice of Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda, dissolved the House of Representatives and called a general election for the following month in order to prevent violent political conflicts, according to the Government. The polling had originally been scheduled for June 1983, but the Prime Minister requested the change in the timetable after Parliament, on 16 March, had rejected a bill that would have given the armed forces a greater role in ruling the country. Had the House not been dissolved, Parliament, by rejecting this same bill, would have introduced a new voting system to change the way seats in the House of Representatives were awarded in a constituency, barred civil servants (including military officers) from holding political posts and prohibited Senate members from voting with the House on important issues. With the moving up of elections, the old rules remained intact.

As has become the recent tradition in Thailand, a multitude of political parties and candidates were in the running. This time, 1450 candidates representing 14 parties, plus another 412 candidates running as independents, were in contention for the newly-enlarged House of Representatives' 324 seats. Major parties included the conservative Social Action Party (SAP), led by former Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj; the Democratic Party, headed by Mr. Pichai Rattakul; and the rightist *Chart Thai* (Thai Nation), led by General Pramaru Adireksan. These three groups had been members of the outgoing governing coalition. On polling day, all three increased their House totals. *Chart Thai*, however, did not figure in the new coalition announced by Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda, a retired army general, on 7 May; this new group consisted of SAP, the Democratic Party, the *Prachakorn Thai* and the newly-founded National Democracy Party.

## Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats  
in the House of Representatives

Number of registered electors . . . . .	24,224,470
Voters . . . . .	12,295,339 (50.76%)
Blank or void ballot papers . . . . .	498,172
Valid votes . . . . .	11,797,167

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Number of Seats obtained	Number of Seats won at 1979 Elections
Social Action Party ( <i>Kij-Sang-Kom</i> ) . . . . .	253	92	<b>82</b>
Independents . . . . .	412	24	24
<i>Chart Thai</i> . . . . .	184	73	<b>38</b>
<i>Prachakornthai</i> . . . . .	IS <sup>1)</sup>	<b>36</b>	32
Democratic Party ( <i>Prachathipat</i> ) . . . . .	194	<b>56</b>	32
Free People ( <i>Pracha Saeri</i> ) . . . . .	14S	1	—
<i>Sangkom Prachatipatai</i> . . . . .	49	2	—
Thai People ( <i>Pvangchon Choathai</i> ) . . . . .	29	—	—
United Nation ( <i>Sahachat</i> ) . . . . .	3	—	—
National Democratic ( <i>Chart-Prachathipatai</i> ) . . . . .	160	<b>15</b>	—
New Force ( <i>Palang Mai</i> ) . . . . .	17	—	8
Labour Democratic ( <i>Rang-ngarn-Prachathipatai</i> ) . . . . .	6	—	—
Siam Democratic ( <i>Sayam Prachathipatai</i> ) . . . . .	99	IX	—
<i>Prachathai</i> . . . . .	9	4	—
Progressive . . . . .	90	<b>3</b>	—
<i>Saeritham</i> . . . . .	—	—	21
<i>Chart Prachachon</i> . . . . .	—	—	13
<i>Kaset Sangkom</i> . . . . .	—	—	3
<i>Kit Prachathipatai</i> . . . . .	—	—	3
<i>Ruamlhai</i> . . . . .	—	—	2
<i>Thamma-Sankom</i> . . . . .	—	—	1
Others . . . . .	—	—	3
	1,826	324*	301

\* 23 seats added since last elections.

*2. Distribution of Members of the National Assembly  
according to Professional Category*

Businessmen. . . . .	.137
Military/Police officers. . . . .	.103
Retired civil servants. . . . .	.59
Civil servants. . . . .	.58
Politicians/Political officers. . . . .	.46
Lawyers/Legal Advisors. . . . .	.39
Farmers. . . . .	.21
Teachers/lecturers. . . . .	.20
Physicians. . . . .	.16
State enterprise employees. . . . .	.12
Bankers. . . . .	.11
Local administrative officers. . . . .	.8
Engineers. . . . .	.4
Diplomatic career. . . . .	.2
Others. . . . .	.20
No indication of profession. . . . .	<u>.11</u>
	567

) *3. Distribution of Members of the National Assembly  
according to Sex*

Men. . . . .	550
Women. . . . .	.17
	567

*4. Distribution of Members of the National Assembly  
according to Age Group*

25-29 years. . . . .	.12
30-39. . . . .	.78
40-49. . . . .	.147
50-59. . . . .	206
60 and over. . . . .	<u>.124</u>
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