

## Challenges faced by Democracies: Thailand: Revolving Door of PMs

August 20, 2024

August 20, 2024: Bangkok, Thailand: **Paetongtarn Shinawatra** became **Thailand's** Prime Minister after receiving a royal letter of endorsement on Sunday, August 18, 2024.



**Paetongtarn Shinawatra** (b. August 21, 1986), **Thailand's** 31<sup>st</sup> Prime Minister, with **Thaksin Shinawatra**, her (the PM's) father

(Reference: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C94hRYNTBUb/?hl=en>)

Paetongtarn Shinawatra graduated (2005–2009) from Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, and University of Surrey, Guildford, England. She has been Leader of the **Pheu Thai Party** (PTP) since 27 October 2023.

Her father, **Thaksin Shinawatra** (b. 26 July 1949) was the 23<sup>rd</sup> Prime Minister of Thailand from 9 February 2001 to 19 September 2006. He was Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand from 13 July 1995 to 8 November 1997. He served as Minister of Foreign Affairs from 25 October 1994 to 10 February 1995.

**Thaksin Shinawatra** founded and led Thai Rak Thai Party (TRT; in Thai: *"Thais Love Thais Party"*) from 14 July 1998 to 2 October 2006. From 2001 to 2006, TRT was the ruling party.

The **Pheu Thai Party** (PTP; in Thai: *"For Thais Party"*) is a major Thai political party and is the 3<sup>rd</sup> incarnation of the Thai political party founded by **Thaksin Shinawatra**.

In the coalition, which is the current ruling party of Thailand, PTP is the largest party. The party is more popular in the North and North-East of the country. It won 141 seats in the 2023 Thai general election, making it the party with the second largest number of seats in the Thai House of Representatives.

PTP was founded on 20 September 2007, as an anticipated replacement for the **People's Power Party** (PPP), which the Constitutional Court of Thailand dissolved less than three months later after finding party members guilty of electoral fraud. PPP was itself a replacement for **Thaksin's** original TRT, dissolved by the Court in May 2007 for violation of electoral laws.

**Pita Limjaroenrat**, 43, has resigned as the Leader of the **Move Forward Party** (MFP, August 20, 2024), so that a new Leader of MFP can be elected and the position of the **Leader of Opposition** (LoP) can be filled up.



*Move Forward Party Leader: **Pita Limjaroenrat***

In a statement, Pita said, "The role of opposition leader is greatly important to the parliamentary system, and is supposed to be held by the leader of the main opposition party in Parliament, which currently is Move Forward. The LoP is like the prow of a ship that directs the opposition's performance in Parliament, performs checks and balances in the government and pushes for agendas of change that are missing from the government's policy."

MFP is likely to elect its new leader on September 23, 2023.

**SPEAKER** of the House of Representatives: **Padipat Suntiphada** had been selected for the post while MFP was seeking to form a government.



**Padipat Suntiphada**, the First Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of Thailand

But the rules bar members of parties leading the opposition from holding speakers' positions in the House.

**Chaithawat Tulathon**, the MFP's Secretary-General, said Padipat's status will be determined by the party's new leaders.

[www.DiGiNews360.com](http://www.DiGiNews360.com) had reported, on September 1, 2023, about denial of power to the largest party in the House of Representatives at the elections of May 2023 at <https://diginews360.com/thailand-military-helps-the-2nd-biggest-party-capture-power/>. This happened due to the Transitional Provisions of Thailand's constitution of 2017, which created an Upper house (Senate) of 250 Members, who were all Military Officers. The House of Representatives has 500 Members and the new MFP, had won 151 seats and was the largest party in the House. Its leader elections. Mr. **Pita Limjaroenrat**, the Leader of MFP had formed a coalition of 8 parties with 313 Members. The Constitution requires the Prime Minister's name to be approved by a joint sitting of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Pita's name was not approved due to en bloc opposition by 250 Members of Senate. [www.DiGiNews360.com](http://www.DiGiNews360.com) hopes that with regular provisions of the 2017 constitution, such difficulties may not arise

Secondly the Constitutional Court suspended **Pita Limjaroenrat** from being a Member of Parliament since he had not disclosed that he had shares of a defunct broadcaster ITV, earlier known as **Siam Infotainment Company Limited**.

In such a situation, **Srettha Thavisin** of the **Pheu Thai Party**, which is the second largest party with 141 seats, formed a coalition of 9 parties, which excluded MFP and included two parties of ex-Military Officers. On August 22, **Srettha** was able to win the approval as the next Prime Minister at the joint sitting of the two Houses

of the Parliament. However, the position of the Leader of Opposition remained vacant since the Leader of the MFP had been suspended as an MP.

[www.DiGiNews360.com](http://www.DiGiNews360.com) applauds the commitment to democracy of **Pita Limjaroenrat**. *We hope the Constitution of 2017 and the Rules of the Constitutional Court will be modified by following due processes so that democracy in Thailand can be strengthened and the distortions introduced into the Constitution can be removed.*

---- **Thailand:** A Brief BACKGROUNDER on the MOVE FORWARD Party ----

The party was officially founded on 1 May 2014 as the **Ruam Pattana Chart Thai Party** (in Thai: "*National Development Party*").

In the 2007 Thai general election, the advisory chairman of the party was Wannarat Channukul. His brother-in-law, the party's chairman Suwat Liptapanlop, was however its de facto leader. The party had most of its vote share focused in **Nakhon Ratchasima** province. (Please locate it in the Central part of the MAP, showing all the provinces, on page 8. **Nakhon Ratchasima** is shown in green color.)

In early 2020, the party became a de facto successor to the Future Forward Party, which had been dissolved by a controversial Constitutional Court order, as following the decision, 55 of Future Forward's 65 MPs (led by Pita Limjaroenrat) announced their plan to join. They vowed to continue the progressive and anti-junta agenda of Future Forward. The party's name was then changed to Move Forward, along with the release of a new logo similar to that of Future Forward.

**2023 ELECTION:** The party won 36.23 percent of the vote in the 2023 general election, gaining 151 seats and becoming the largest party in the House of Representatives, which caused a major electoral upset. **FIRST ATTEMPT:** Following this success, MFP and seven other parties announced the formation of a coalition aiming to form a government with Pita as prime minister. While the coalition controlled a majority in the lower house, this was not enough to secure the premiership as under the military-drafted constitution, the prime minister is elected by both the elected lower house and the military-appointed senate. Pita lost his bid to become prime minister on 13 July 2023 after failing to secure enough votes in Parliament. He received 324 votes, 51 votes short of the 375-vote threshold. He also received 182 votes against him with 199 abstentions. In the

Senate, where he faced the most opposition, he received 13 votes. Shortly after this, several protests were held in Bangkok in support of Move Forward and Pita, with smaller protests taking place in Phuket.

On 19 July, Pita was suspended from being a MP by the Constitutional Court of Thailand over his shares in the defunct broadcaster ITV he inherited from his father Pongsak Limjaroenrat. While this did not disqualify him from becoming Prime Minister, Parliament decided on the same day that parliamentary regulations did not allow re-nomination of a failed candidate.

Move Forward had previously stated that should it become clear it will not win, the party would instead allow coalition partner **Pheu Thai Party**, who won the second most votes in the 2023 election, to nominate their own candidate, most likely **Paetongtarn Shinawatra** or **Srettha Thavisin**.

After holding talks with other parties, who expressed unwillingness to support any coalition including Move Forward, **Pheu Thai** announced that it would break up the eight-party coalition and instead attempt to form a coalition that excludes Move Forward.

On 15 August, **Chaithawat Tulathon** announced that the party would not vote for a **Pheu Thai candidate** for Prime Minister. This was a result of **Pheu Thai** planning to expand its coalition to include more conservative parties, such as **Bhumjaithai**, and parties that supported the military junta, such as **United Thai Nation** and **Palang Pracharat**, with Move Forward stating that it was not the will of the people.

RESULTS of ELECTIONS of 22<sup>nd</sup> AUGUST 2023: The House of Representatives has 500 seats. The people have shown that they want a change after about two decades of voting for **Pheu Thai** Party (PTP). PTP tried to find a way for a more democratic governance. But the military-backed conservative and royalist party, which had been ruling for most of the time, except about 6 years of rule by PTP, proved to be inflexible.

Throughout much of its coup-prone modern history, Thailand has been run by a small but powerful clique that maintains deep ties to the military, royalist and business establishments.

In May's election, progressive parties swept the board with voters delivering a powerful rebuke of the military-backed leaders that have ruled Thailand for nearly a decade since a 2014 military coup.

It was also the first time a party linked to Thaksin had lost an election in more than two decades. This was because PTP had always sought a compromise solution in the interest of continuing with democracy, even with constitutions, which did not provide an equal chance to all the parties and were slanted towards military-backed parties.

Newcomers, the **Move Forward Party**, had gained a huge following among young Thais for its reformist platform, which included **changes to the military**, the **economy**, the **decentralization of power** and radical plans **to amend** the country's strict **lese majeste laws** despite the taboo surrounding any discussion of the royal family in Thailand.

Table: Thailand General Election, 2023

#	PARTY	%age Vote	Number of Seats	Remarks
1	Move Forward	38.01	151	
2	Pheu Thai	28.86	141	
3	Bhumjaithai	3	71	
4	Palang Pracharath	1.42	40	Military-backed party
5	United Thai Nation	12.55	36	Military-backed party
6	Democrat Party	2.44	25	
7	Prachachart	1.59	9	
	Other smaller parties have ONE Seat each.			

1. The United Thai Nation Party (in Thai: “RTGS: *Phak Ruam Thai Sang Chart*”) is a major Thai political party registered on 31 March 2021 by Seksakon Atthawong, former Deputy Minister to **Prayut Chan-o-cha**, who had become the Prime Minister in the military's Government after the coup d'état. Before the 2023 General Election, the incumbent Prime Minister **Prayut Chan-o-cha** joined the party on 9 January 2023, and, was declared as RTGS's candidate for the PMship. The party emerged as the fifth largest party in Thailand, winning 36 seats in the

House of Representatives and 12.55% of the vote. The party is conservative, and both pro-military and pro-monarchist.

2. Bhumjaithai Party (BJT; “*Phak Phumchai Thai*”- in Thai: '*Thai Pride Party*') was founded on 5 November 2008, in anticipation of the 2 December 2008 Constitutional Court of Thailand ruling that dissolved its "de facto predecessor", the Neutral Democratic Party, along with the People's Power Party (PPP), and the Thai Nation Party. After the dissolutions, former members of the Neutral Democratic Party and former members of the PPP faction, the Friends of Newin Group defected to this party.

Bhumjaithai has a populist platform, since some of the platform was drawn from Thaksin Shinawatra's populist Thai Rak Thai party and the People's Power Party. The party has a strong base in **Buriram Province**.

CHALLENGES: Thailand has encountered several challenges in establishing stable governments.

1. Inexperienced Leadership: Fast change of Prime Ministers has resulted in inexperienced leadership, with lack of practical knowledge of good governance.
2. Stalled Policies: Signature policies championed by previous leaders, such as a digital wallet scheme, have remained stalled. These unfulfilled promises create challenges for the new administration .
3. Vote Buying and Corruption: The practice of vote buying in rural areas and widespread perceptions of corruption persist, impacting political stability.
4. Bureaucratic Resistance: Bureaucratic resistance to decentralization initiatives envisioned in the constitution poses challenges. Implementing reforms faces obstacles from entrenched administrative structures.
5. Economic Challenges: Thailand grapples with a weak economy, declining exports, and youth unemployment. Addressing these issues requires stable governance.

On 22 August, 2023, Tuesday, the Thai Parliament voted for **Srettha Thavisin**, 60, of the populist **Pheu Thai party** to be the country's 30<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister. **Srettha**, a political newcomer ,60, received 482 votes out of a possible 747 in both houses of Parliament, far more than the majority needed to secure the premiership. He

entered into a governing coalition with its longtime military enemies to end 3 months of deadlock, when a majority could not be worked out.

**Srettha Thavisin's COMPROMISE – NOT APPROVED** by PEOPLE: On 25 August, 2023, Sripatum University and D-vote published a poll results conducted between 22 and 24 August 2023, on the topic of "If there is an election today, Which party will you vote for?". Move Forward has gained a significant amount of support by over 62.39% since Pheu Thai split with Move Forward in the government formation and formed a government with pro-junta parties.

---- A Brief BACKGROUNDER on the POLITICAL SYSTEM in **Thailand** ---

(Reference: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8ej89c>)

Thailand is a constitutional monarchy led by a dynasty founded in 1762. Its royalist military has ruled for most periods with a few interludes since 1947, when the first post-World War II military coup happened. A new constitution was adopted in 2017.

The constitution provides for a House of Representatives (500 seats and direct elections) and Senate (200 seats and a complex election process).

The Prime Minister is the *Head of Government*.

The monarch (currently King **Vajiralongkorn**) serves as the *Head of State*.

The king's role includes nominating the Prime Minister based on the House of Representatives' advice.

The General Election of 2023 happened in the background of a youth-led pro-democracy campaign of about two decades. In June 2024 Last month what political analysts called the "world's most complicated election" to the Senate of Thailand.

A coup d'état

---- A Brief BACKGROUNDER on a PRIMATE CITY ---

(Reference: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primate\\_city](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primate_city))

Urban Primacy or Urban Macrocephaly: A primate city is a city that is the largest in its country, province, state, or region, and disproportionately larger than any others in the urban hierarchy. A primate city creates a **statistical king effect**.

The *Law of the Primate City* was first proposed by the geographer **Mark Jefferson** in 1939.



DEFINITION: A Primate City is "at least twice as large as the next largest city and more than twice as significant." Aside from size and population, a primate city will usually have precedence in all other aspects of its country's society such as economics, politics, culture, and education. Primate cities also serve as targets for the majority of a country or region's internal migration.

There is debate as to whether a primate city serves a **parasitic or generative function**. The presence of a primate city in a country may indicate an imbalance in development—usually a **progressive core** and a **lagging periphery**—on which the city depends for labor and other resources.

Many primate cities gain an increasing share of their country's population. This can be due to a **reduction in blue-collar population** in the hinterlands because of **mechanization and automation**. Simultaneously, the number of educated employees in **white-collar endeavors such as politics, finance, media, and higher education** rises. These sectors are clustered predominantly in primate cities where power and wealth are concentrated.

EXAMPLES: Some global cities are considered national or regional primate cities.

**Istanbul** (Population (*Estimate 2015*): 14 Mn) is the **primate city of Turkey** due to the unmatched economic, political, cultural, and educational influence that the city possesses in comparison to other Turkish cities such as the *capital Ankara* (Population: 4.6 Mn), **Izmir** (Population: 2.85 Mn) or **Bursa** (Population: 1.86 Mn).

**Mexico City, Paris, Cairo, Jakarta, and Seoul** have been described as primate cities of their respective countries.

However, **USA** has never had a primate city on a national level due to the **decentralized nature of the country**. **Los Angeles** (Population (*Estimate 2022*): 13 Mn), is not far behind the country's largest city, **New York City** (Population (*Estimate 2022*): 19 Mn), in either population or GDP.

---- A Brief BACKGROUNDER on the CONSTITUTIONAL COURT of **Thailand** ---

The Constitutional Court of the Kingdom of Thailand is a Thai court, which has jurisdiction over the constitutionality of parliamentary acts, royal decrees, draft legislation, as well as the appointment and removal of public officials and issues

regarding political parties. The current court is part of the judicial branch of the Thai national government.

The constitution does not give the Constitutional Court the authority to overrule a final judgment of the Supreme Court. An affected party, or a court, could request the opinion from the Constitutional Court if it believed a case involved a constitutional issue. The court where the initial action was pending would stay its proceedings until the Constitutional Court issued its decision. Constitutional court decisions would have no retroactive effect on previous decisions of the regular courts.

The constitution also does not give the Constitutional Court the authority to rule on any case in which the constitution did not specifically delegate an agency the power to adjudicate.

The constitution allowed individual justices to be the subject of impeachment proceedings with the vote of one-fourth of the members of the House or with the approval of 50,000 petitioners. A vote of three-fifths of the Senate is required for impeachment.

The constitution gave the judiciary a strong influence over the composition of the Constitutional Court.

*(Reference: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitutional\\_Court\\_of\\_Thailand](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitutional_Court_of_Thailand))*

APPOINTMENT of the CONSTITUTIONAL COURT: Under the 2007 Constitution, the Constitutional Court has nine members, all serving for nine year terms and appointed by the King with senatorial advice:

1. Three are SCJ judges and are selected by the SCJ plenum through secret ballot.
2. Two are SAC (Selection Assembly Committee) judges: The Thai Senate selects two persons, recognized as legal practitioners in Thailand, as judges by secret ballot.
3. Two are experts in law approved by the Senate after having been selected by a special panel.

The Special Panel is composed of the SCJ president, the SAC president, the president of the House of Representatives, the opposition leader and one of the chiefs of the constitutional independent agencies (chief ombudsman, president of

the election commission, president of the National Anti-Corruption Commission or president of the State Audit Commission).

4. Two are experts in political science, public administration or other field of social science and are approved by the Senate after having been selected by the same panel.

CONSTITUTION of THAI SENATE, also known as the Council of Senators: The Senate consists of 200 members. Senators serve a 5-year term. <https://www.firstpost.com/world/has-thailand-militarys-hold-on-its-senate-weakened-or-is-it-as-strong-as-ever-13788484.html>

To be eligible for the Senate, a candidate must:

- i. Be at least 35 years old.
- ii. Hold Thai citizenship.
- iii. Not be a member of the House of Representatives.

All the candidates run as Independent nominees, though they can come from any of the leading political parties that contest the general election, where common voters participate.

Every candidate running for the Senate must also pay a fee of \$68 to be eligible for the contest.

Activist Groups can run campaigns, urging Thai professionals to register themselves for the election in large numbers.

The Transitional Senate of 2019: All 250 members were appointed by the military in 2019, when the Senate was first formed. The term of the Transitional Senate was to expire on May 10, 2024.

The Transitional Provisions (*Under the 2017 Constitution, which was promulgated in the aftermath of the 2014 Thai coup d'état*):

Senate of 2019: The Transitional Provisions provided for a 5-year transitional Senate appointed by the **National Council for Peace and Order** (NCPO), the military junta that governed Thailand from the coup in 2014 until 2019. The term of the Transitional Senate was till May 10, 2024. Thereafter will follow Senates, elected under the regular (*and not Transitional*) provisions.

The Transitional Senate is composed of 250 members. All the Members were appointed by NCPO. The Transitional Senate had the power to vote for Prime Minister, alongside members of the House of Representatives.

The Transitional Senate voted overwhelmingly for **Prayut Chan-o-cha** in 2019 and for **Srettha Thavisin** in 2023.

This provision of the Transitional Senate came under intense public scrutiny during the 2023 Prime Ministerial election, when Senators refused to back the election of **Pita Limjaroenrat**, despite a large majority of the House supporting his candidacy.

After the Transitional Senate expires on 10 May 2024, the following Senates are indirectly elected via an election system, intended to produce a technocratic institution. The 2024 elections are the first to use this system.

The regular (*and not Transitional*) Senate will not have the power to vote for Prime Minister.

The Process of Election to the Thai Senate (using Internet): After the election schedule is announced, any number of candidates can name themselves for the Senate election, provided they have professional experience in one of the 20 stipulated sectors — including government, education, public health, gardening, industry, fishery, freelance work, communications and tourism.

These candidates, who could be in thousands, vote for one another in several rounds to determine who all get eliminated until 200 — 10 from each of the 20 sectors — are left on the list. They are the new Senators of Thailand.

Senate elections were held in Thailand from 9 to 26 June 2024, the first of its kind under the 2017 Constitution. Under the Constitution, the transitional Senate of Thailand expired on 10 May 2024. Afterwards, a regular (*and not Transitional*) Senate will be a 200-member body and have no power to elect Prime Ministers.

RESULT of JUNE 2024 ELECTION to SENATE: As Thailand's Election Commission confirmed, candidates belonging to **Anutin Charnvirakul's Bhumjaithai Party**, the 3<sup>rd</sup>-largest in the Lower House, have secured 123 or over 60 % of the seats in the Upper House. This shows that the military continues to hold its sway over the Senate, albeit less than 100%, as in the Transitional Provisions.

Secondly, the regularly elected Senate has limited powers compared to the House that the military had nominated in 2019. One key restriction is that the new Senate will not be able to elect or block a Prime Minister. The new Senators, however, can

scrutinize and endorse bills, vote on constitutional amendments, and endorse candidates to offices such as the Election Commission of Thailand, the Constitutional Court, or the National Anti-Corruption Commission.

The official news, released by Thai **Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)**, says that General **Kriangkrai Srirak**, former Assistant to the Army Commander and former Commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> Army, is likely to be the Senate President. The release said **Kriangkrai** received the most votes among the Senate candidates in the ‘Administration and Security Group from Surat Thani Province’ and has “a chance of being elected Senate President”.

General **Kriangkrai Srirak** is known as the “Iron-Bone General” after he miraculously survived a helicopter crash in 2022. **Kriangkrai** stepped down as advisor to Interior Minister **Anutin Charnvirakul** to join the Senatorial election under the ‘Governance and National Security Group’.

#### ---- A Brief BACKGROUNDER on Thailand ----



**Kingdom of Thailand**, (“**Siam**”: the official name until 24 June 1939),  
76 provinces and 1 Special Administrative Area (Bangkok, the capital),  
Population (Estimate 2024): 66 Mn (22<sup>nd</sup>); Density: 132.1/Km<sup>2</sup> (88<sup>th</sup>);  
GDP (Estimate 2024): \$549 Bn (26<sup>th</sup>); GDP/capita: \$7,812 (88<sup>th</sup>);  
Currency: Thai baht (฿) (THB); \$1 US = 34.45 THB approximately, on August 19, 2024.

The name **Siam** originates from Sanskrit श्याम (“dark”). Shan and Assam also come from Sanskrit श्याम.

Thailand is ruled since 1782 CE by



**Rama I**, the founder of the **Rattanakosin** (in Sanskrit means “*treasure of diamonds*”; now “*Bangkok*”)

and the first King of Siam from the reigning **Chakri dynasty** (from 1782).

**Thongduang** (b. 20 March 1737; d. 7 September 1809), took the full title of “Phra Bat Somdet Phra Paramoruracha Maha Chakri Boromanat Phra Phutthayotfa Chulalok”,

following the deposition of **King Taksin of Thonburi**. **Rama I** is also celebrated as the founder of **Rattanakosin** (“*Bangkok*”) as the new capital of the reunited kingdom.

The father of **Thongduang** served in the royal court of the Ayutthaya (in Sanskrit “*Ayodhya*”) Kingdom. **Thongduang** and his younger brother **Boonma** served **King Taksin** in wars against the **Burmese Konbaung dynasty** and helped him in the reunification of Siam. During this period, **Thongduang** emerged as **Siam's** most powerful military leader. **Thongduang** was the first *Somdet Chao Phraya*, the highest rank the nobility could attain, equal to that of royalty.

The Historic City of Ayutthaya (founded in 1350 CE) was attacked by the Burmese army in 1767 who burned the city to the ground and forced the inhabitants to abandon the city. The city was never rebuilt in the same location and remains known today as an extensive archaeological site.





*World Heritage Site of **Ayutthaya**, after its repair*

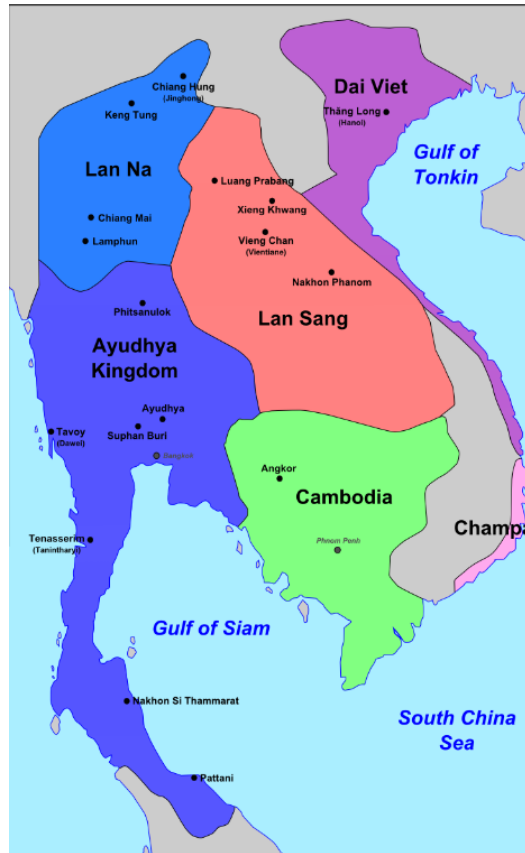
**Ayutthaya** was the second capital of the Siamese Kingdom. It flourished from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, during which time it grew to be one of the world's largest and most cosmopolitan urban areas and a center of global diplomacy and commerce. **Ayutthaya** was strategically located on an island surrounded by three rivers connecting the city to the sea. This site was chosen because it was located above the tidal bore of the Gulf of Siam as it existed at that time, thus preventing attack of the city by the sea-going warships of other nations. The location also helped to protect the city from seasonal flooding.



The MAP: Ayutthaya at the center, surrounded by **Lopburi**, **Pa Sak** and **Chao Phraya** rivers.

(Reference: [https://www.ayutthaya-history.com/Essays Waterways.html](https://www.ayutthaya-history.com/Essays%20Waterways.html))

**Sukhothai** was the first capital of the independent kingdom of Siam, which included a good part of today's Thailand. The **Sukhothai** - based kingdom lasted for only about 200 years. Its successor kingdom, with its capital at **Ayutthaya**, situated in the rich rice plains of the **Chao Phraya River** basin, about 90 Km North of present-day **Bangkok**, lasted more than 400 years.



The Kingdoms of **Ayutthaya** and mainland Southeast Asia in 1540 CE.





The MAP: showing 76 provinces and the Capital region

The Ayutthaya Kingdom, which existed from 1351 to 1767, was centered around the city of Ayutthaya in present-day Thailand. Its territory extended over most of modern Thailand, except for the far-East and far-North. Additionally, it included areas along the **Bilaukaung** and **Dawna** ranges, which are now part of South-Eastern Myanmar.

Specifically, the Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province corresponds to the heartland of the ancient Ayutthaya Kingdom. It is one of the central provinces of Thailand, bordered by **Ang Thong**, **Lopburi**, **Saraburi**, **Pathum Thani**, **Nonthaburi**, **Nakhon Pathom** and **Suphan Buri**. (Please see the province of **Ang Thong**, shown in white color and of a small size. The other provinces, mentioned in the above few lines, are surrounding **Ang Thong** in the Central part of Thailand.)

In the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, **Ayutthaya** was one of the **three great powers of Asia** alongside **Vijayanagar in India** and **China**. **Angkor Wat** had become a vassal state of **Ayutthaya**. Many of the bronze statues in **Ayutthaya** had been brought from the great temple of **Angkor Wats**.

The kingdom of **Ayutthaya** won the Burmese–Siamese War of 1785–86, which was the last major Burmese assault on Siam.

\*\*\*\*\*