

מחלקת הכלכלה  
מחלקת הכלכלה  
מחלקת הכלכלה

2542

(1999)



①

## Headlines

### Honourable title for Thanom draws flak

POLITICAL action groups on Sunday threatened a crusade against the appointment of former dictator Thanom Kittikachorn as an honourable royal guard, warning that the issue could doom Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai who controls the Defence Ministry.

Thanom was one of the three "tyrants" of the regime, the others being Gen Prapass Charusathien and Thanom's son, Narong Kittikachorn, which was brought down by the students' uprising on Oct 14, 1974, when scores of students were killed by soldiers during their battle for democracy.

Thanom's appointment as the special royal guard of the 31st Infantry Division has taken effect since Jan 1 and was published in the Royal Gazette on Feb 2. Chuan, in his capacity as defence minister, signed the appointment order, which has just been spotted by the mass media.

Chuan on Sunday declined to explain why he had proposed Thanom's appointment for royal approval. The prime minister has always stood up against dictators and repeatedly said that the dictatorial era of the 1970s left a deep impression on him.

"Please go ask the military agency which made the proposal. I simply counter-signed the appointment," Chuan said on Sunday.

Pipop Thongchai, chairman of the Campaign for Popular Democracy, said on Sunday that his group would consult with other action groups on Monday or Tuesday for a plan to campaign against Thanom's appointment as a special royal guard.

Amorn Amornrattananon, a member of the October Network, said his network would join other action groups to protest against the appointment until it is revoked. Amorn also warned that the issue could be a harbinger of the fall of the Chuan administration.

The Student Federation of Thailand, meanwhile, issued a statement to denounce Thanom's appointment and strongly criticised Chuan over the issue. The statement said Thanom was a dictator and a criminal against society so he did not deserve such an honour.

The SFT urged pro-democracy activists to hold a mass demonstration against the appointment in front of Government House on Monday.

Along with Thanom's appointment, Maj-Gen Manoonkrit Rupakachorn was also made a honourable royal guard of the 4th Cavalry Division. Manoonkrit had taken part in an abortive coup.

Gen Pallop Pinmanee, assistant secretary to the defence minister, said on Sunday that then army chief Gen Chettha Thanajaro proposed the appointment to the defence minister before his retirement last September.

Defence Ministry spokesman Lt-Gen Sanan Kachornklam said on Sunday that each year military units proposed over 100 posts of honourable royal guards for their retired bosses.

The spokesman said the proposed positions had been scrutinised by a committee, headed by Army Chief of Staff Gen Charn Boonprasert, and passed all normal procedures.

Cabinet secretary-general Vishanu Krua-ngarm said the appointments of such special military officers were not sent to the Cabinet for approval but were usually submitted by the defence minister directly to the prime minister.

Vishanu said the proposals are made by the military units to their respective armed forces and go to the permanent secretary who passes them on to the defence minister.

Vishanu said such special officers receive no money but are only allowed to wear the uniforms of the military units who sought the special positions for them.

"The purpose of the appointment is to allow the retired officers a chance to wear the units' uniforms," Vishanu said, adding that Thanom has earlier been made an honourable royal guard for several other military units.

But the political action groups said on Sunday that it was intolerable to allow the former dictator another social status.

"We must ask Chuan why he gave the status to the former prime minister who was behind the regime which killed the people," Pipop said.

---

"This shows that Chuan does not have a democratic conscience. It shows he has no

- sincerity towards the people. He secretly signed the order without even consulting the people first."

Amorn said he was puzzled by Chuan's order to approve the appointment.

"I don't understand how he could issue such an order. He used to say he had been affected by the dictatorial regimes," Amorn said.

BY PRAKOBPONG PANAPOOL

The Nation

## Headlines

# PM defends decision to honour Thanom

CONFRONTED with mounting criticism, Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai yesterday said he was responsible for the appointment of Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachorn as an honorary officer, arguing that his decision had been based on established military procedures.

Meanwhile, political activists orchestrated a demand to rescind the appointment on the grounds that it offended public sentiment against the former military dictator, who was responsible for the bloody suppression of the Oct 14, 1973 democracy uprising.

Chuan's military aides pleaded against politicising the appointment, saying that Chuan was uncomfortable with the decision but had had no alternative and that the order was only to allow the only living field marshal, Thanom, to dress up once a year for his Royal audience.

Chuan conceded that he had countersigned the Royal command to appoint Thanom an honorary officer of the 31st Infantry Regiment of the Royal Guard.

In the same command, Maj-Gen Manoonkrit Roopkhachorn, a former coup mastermind, was also appointed honorary officer of the 4th Cavalry Battalion of the Royal Guard.

Chuan insisted that he had approved the appointments of Thanom and Manoonkrit after requesting a review of procedures and receiving military confirmation of the appointment recommendations.

He said that despite public criticism he would not review the appointments as the Royal command had already been issued and that the military should be in a position to justify such appointments.

Lt-Gen Kittisak Ratprasert, a staff officer attached to the defence minister, revealed that the Army, under then Army commander Gen Chettha Thanajaro, had last year initiated the appointments of Thanom and Manoonkrit.

Kittisak explained that in the case of Thanom the 31st Infantry Regiment had wanted to honour him as its founder and an exemplary infantryman.

The honorary appointment was done for sentimental reasons between military subordinates and a former military commander, he said, adding that the true meaning of this appointment was to allow Thanom to dress in a Royal Guard uniform when he attended the military parade in honour of His Majesty's birthday.

He pointed out that Chuan did not fully agree with honouring Thanom, though he had to act in accordance with established procedures.

"The public should not mix politics with military sentiments about an old commander," he said.

In a news release, the Army explained that the appointment of Thanom had been made in accordance with rules and regulations. It further pointed out that the appointment did not bestow any rights or privileges on the recipient.

Gen Naruenart Kampanartsaenyakorn, secretary to the defence minister, said Thanom and Manoonkrit had been honoured purely in recognition of their past military achievements.

Thanom founded the infantry regiment while Manoonkrit was the first commander of the cavalry battalion when it was upgraded to a Royal Guard unit.

Naruenart said that although everyone was saddened by what had happened as a result of past political conflicts, bygones should be bygones as culprits in the military crack-down had not escaped justice.

He added that Chuan had approved the appointments because he viewed the military as an honourable institution.

"The Army is the primary unit insisting on honouring past commanders. If Chuan had refused to endorse the recommended appointments, would the public be prepared to see a mass resignation of military leaders?"

He claimed that the debate on the appointments was irrelevant, noting that Thanom, who had to pay Bt80,000 for the new uniform out of his own pocket, did not aspire

to the honour.

The Student Federation of Thailand yesterday held a rally at Government House to oppose the military appointments.

Uchen Chiangsaen, a student leader, said political and student activists would today petition the prime minister to cancel the appointments within three days.

Uchen also invited opponents of such appointments to a meeting today to map out a strategy should the government fail to meet the deadline.

Another student leader, Chatuporn Phrompan, condemned Chuan for taking a stand opposite to that of democracy advocates.

He claimed that Deputy Interior Minister Chamni Sakdiseth, a former student activist during the October 1973 uprising, had changed tack when he said no one had been right or wrong about the tragic incident.

Lamiad Boonmak, wife of a victim who died during the military crack-down, said Thanom had clearly been a tyrant and wondered why society was willing to forget his past so easily.

"So many people were maimed or died as a result of Thanom's military suppression, and the present government has the cheek to honour such a person!" she lamented.

Amorn Ratananon, a democracy advocate, warned of a possible confrontation if the government refused to revoke Thanom's appointment.

Chronology of the honorary awards

Chronology of how Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachorn and Maj-Gen Manoonkrit Roopkhachorn, a military dictator and a coup mastermind, won appointments as honorary officers of the 31st Infantry Regiment of the Royal Guard and the 4th Cavalry Battalion of the Royal Guard, respectively:

---

- Aug 11, 1998 -- Gen Chettha Thanajaro, then Army commander-in-chief, initiates the appointment process about two months before his retirement.

- Oct 9, 1998 -- Defence Ministry's Secretariat  
Department submits appointment recommendations with  
the defence permanent secretary.
- Oct 13, 1998 -- The defence permanent secretary  
reports to Defence Minister Chuan Leekpai, seeking his  
approval for the appointments.
- Oct 30, 1998 -- Chuan sends back the report,  
requesting a review on procedures relating to the  
honorary appointments.
- Nov 20, 1998 -- The defence permanent secretary  
reports back after the checking of appointment  
procedures, reiterating reasons for the appointments.
- Nov 27, 1998 -- Chuan acknowledges and approves  
the appointments.
- Dec 3, 1998 -- The deputy defence minister reports to  
the prime minister, requesting the PM's Office to  
process the Royal command for the appointments.
- Jan 21, 1999 -- The Cabinet secretary-general notifies  
the Defence Ministry of His Majesty's endorsement of  
the Royal command dated Jan 1.
- Jan 25, 1999 -- The secretary to the defence minister  
informs the defence permanent secretary of the issuing  
of Royal command.
- Jan 29, 1999 -- Defence Ministry's Secretariat  
Department submits a report to the defence permanent  
secretary regarding the public announcement of the  
appointments.
- Feb 2, 1999 -- The Royal command for the  
appointment of honorary officers is published in the  
Royal Gazette, under the instruction of the defence  
permanent secretary.
- Feb 4, 1999 -- The military distributes a circular on the  
appointments.

The Nation

---



## Editorial & Opinion

### **EDITORIAL: Gross mistake to honour coup leaders**

IF Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai is criticised for being indecisive, aloof or dithering, a large number of heads would nod quickly in agreement. But any charge of serious lapse in judgement or outright insensitivity to public sentiment would not have been well founded -- until the weekend.

That was when newspapers reported that the Democrat leader had appointed two controversial retired military figures -- Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn and Maj Gen Manoonkrit Roopkachorn -- as honourable royal guards and special officers. The two men are about two decades apart in age.

The ageing ex-supreme commander, ex-prime minister, ex-defence minister, has attained the honourable status under the 31st Infantry Division, while Manoon is attached to the 4th Cavalry Division. The two units were formerly their springboards for career advancement as decorated officers among their peers.

There is a remarkable resemblance in the roles of the two, though. Field Marshal Thanom, now in his 80s, is among the few surviving members of the military dictatorship of the 50s and 60s until his downfall in 1973. As a military officer, he had supported and played a key role in coups d'etat against civilian and military governments, including his own when he was prime minister in 1971.

There were two major events of bloodletting in the city streets involving Thanom -- October 1973 and October 1976. Those were the darkest days in the country's history and even Chuan's life was in peril.

Maj Gen Manoonkrit had been the ring leader in coup attempts in the 1980s. While as junior commanding officer, he had played a part in exerting pressure on government leaders and influencing their decisions. Even now, he serves as a key adviser to Interior Minister Sanan Kachornprasart.

They had been granted amnesties and their past roles

in causing changes of government by undemocratic means could not be subject to legal proceedings. Whatever they had done, compared with other military officers who had not actively engaged in coups d'etat, it is very hard for the public to think that they deserve the honourable status approved by Chuan, who is also defence minister.

The appointments were signed on Jan 19, but retroactive to the first of the month. The whole issue, however, only became known about three months later. The public certainly want to know whether Chuan raised an eyebrow after he spotted the two names.

Actually, he did. But when reporters asked why he still approved the nominations, the prime minister gave a typical Chuan-style response -- "you should ask the people who submitted the proposal". The public now ask him: Did he ask any questions himself? Was he satisfied with the answers? Was his conscience and the idea of cherishing democracy disturbed at all?

It was learned that ex-army chief Gen Chettha Thanacharo was behind the proposals. Chuan once sent them back for review but the retired general continued to push for approval. It was then that Chuan signed on the dotted line.

Whether he was pressured or otherwise, the public certainly expects the prime minister to be especially prudent and sensitive in the case involving Thanom. He should have foreseen what kind of negative reaction he would expect after the matter became public. He should have stood up and resisted the pressure, however severe it was.

Didn't he remember that Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, while as prime minister, had to rescind his own order to restore pension benefits to Thanom's son, Col Narong Kittikachorn following a public uproar?

The victims of the two bloodbaths have not forgiven Thanom for his tyrannical role. Until this day, he still adamantly insists that he had done nothing wrong despite the scores of dead bodies in the streets. Why should there be anything honourable for the field marshal whose exercise of dictatorial powers was dishonourable in every aspect?

---

Chuan as defence minister has clearly acted against

public sentiment. Doubly wrong is that as prime minister, he has given it further endorsement. He will find out soon enough what kind of public displeasure knowledge of his decision is going to draw.

Another big mistake, still, is that he refuses to accept that it was a serious error in judgement. His inability to stand up to pressure only compounded it.

The Nation

## Headlines

### **Chuan stands firm as marathon protest looms**

PRIME Minister Chuan Leekpai has ordered a check on past appointments of honorary royal guards after the ceremonious award for former dictator Thanom Kittikhachorn has created a political storm.

But as democracy activists yesterday threatened a marathon protest against Chuan, the prime minister still defended his approval for Thanom's appointment and insisted there would be no change.

"The prime minister wants to know who else has been appointed and when," said Cabinet secretary-general Vishnu Krua-ngarm.

Chuan's confrontation with the activists could be fuelled by the fact that Thanom's son, Gen Yutthipong, who is Air Force chief adviser, has been part of Chuan's military advisory team studying a restructuring plan for the armed forces.

Chuan took pain to defend his decision yesterday, saying "no matter how I felt", he chose not to "politicise" the military by trying to block Thanom's nomination for the royal guard title.

"If I made a judgment based on my feelings which of course were political, it would be tantamount to bringing politics back into the military," he said.

"I faced direct consequences of Field Marshal Thanom's rule and I had to run for cover. But in this current position [as defence minister] I have to base my judgment on other things than that. And keeping the military out of politics has been part of my mission."

Chuan, who also explained his decision at a Democrat meeting yesterday, said Thanom's nomination was approved after a three-month consideration.

A legal academic yesterday urged him to give up his appointment to thwart a confrontation.

A group of 30 activists and relatives of victims of the military crackdown petitioned Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai to rescind Thanom's appointment as the honorary officer of the 31st Infantry Regiment of the Royal Guard.

They said in a statement that they would keep on

protesting if the government refused to meet their demand within three days.

"We would oppose [the appointment] with our utmost strength, aimed at upholding social standards of what is right and wrong," the statement said.

"Culprits should be punished and historical records should be preserved and not distorted for our younger generation."

The activists made no mention about the concurrent appointment of Maj-Gen Manoonkrit Roopkhachorn, a former coup mastermind who was not involved in the suppression of two democracy uprisings, as an honorary officer of the 4th Cavalry Battalion of the Royal Guard.

In accepting the petition on Chuan's behalf, Deputy Defence Minister Gen Wattanachai Wuthisiri said he would promptly forward the petition to the prime minister.

Wattanchai noted that it might not be proper to cancel a Royal command right after it was issued, although future developments would indicate whether a review was necessary.

He also blamed the retired Army commander, Gen Chettha Thanajaro, for showing insensitivity to public feelings.

"The Army initiated the appointment process and politicians are not the judge of its decision," he said. "Anyone interested in questioning the social implication of this decision should ask Gen Chettha."

Vishanu Varanyu, a legal academic at Thammasat University, suggested that Thanom and Manoonkrit should volunteer to decline the appointments so as to demonstrate remorse for their past acts.

"Both Thanom and Manoonkrit were implicated in coup plots and the use of force to suppress political activism," he said.

Vishanu said Chuan must answer to the public on how he planned to shoulder the responsibility for creating social divisiveness over the honouring of such men.

Chat Pattana Party deputy secretary-general Sunai Jullapongsathorn commented that Chuan had over-emphasised the legal aspect of the controversial appointments while ignoring public sentiment.

Thanom was one of the culprits blamed for causing much bloodshed in both the Oct 14, 1973, and the Oct 6, 1976, uprisings, he said, warning that Chuan's approval of the honour for him would be seen as a move to mend ties with a tyrant.

"If Chuan is seen as moving closer to the former military dictator, people will now start to believe allegations that the prime minister is selling out the country to foreigners," he said, referring to the economic reform package which allegedly works in favour of foreign investors.

Deputy Interior Minister Chamni Sakdiseth, a former activist during the October 1973 uprising, said he wouldn't forget Thanom's abuse of power, though his appointment should be viewed in a different perspective.

Gen Yuthasak Sasiprapa, retired defence permanent secretary, denied that he had any influence over the decision to appoint Thanom.

Yuthasak, a son-in-law of late Field Marshal Prapas Charusathien, the second ranking member of Thanom's clique, said he had retired before Chuan ordered the review of procedures for the appointment, showing the reluctance to approve it.

The military had reviewed but insisted on its recommendations to honour past commanders, Thanom and Manoonkrit.

The Nation

## Headlines

### Thanom resigns military appointment

FIELD Marshal Thanom Kittikhachorn yesterday resigned his appointment as an honorary officer of the 31st Infantry Regiment of the Royal Guard in a move to defuse tension after widespread protests by democracy advocates.

Maj Gen Manoonkrit Roopkhachorn, a coup mastermind, also declined his honorary position in the 4th Cavalry Battalion of the Royal Guard.

The appointments, approved by Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai, have provoked an outcry against the government for honouring the former military dictator.

Meanwhile Pipop Thongchai, a democracy advocate, said regardless of Thanom's decision, Chuan must be held accountable for his decision to endorse the honouring of the dictator.

Pipop called for a public rally tomorrow for the people to air their views and feelings on Chuan's insensitivity to public sentiment against dictatorship.

Key opposition members Chaturon Chaisaeng and Chalerm Yoobamrung attacked Chuan for showing arrogance in defending his decision on Thanom.

"A prime minister should not escape responsibility for his decision by citing military procedures," Chaturon said.

Chalerm echoed Chaturon by saying that Chuan, who was not forced to make his decision, had the discretion to review whether to go along with the military recommendations.

Thanom said in his resignation letter that he would like to avoid a social divide resulting from his honorary commission as the country was in the grips of an economic crisis.

"With deepest gratitude, I'm honoured by the Royal command to appoint me an honorary officer, although some groups of people have voiced opposition by turning it into a political conflict," the statement said.

"I would like to resign my appointment so as to avoid possible unrest and an embarrassment for the government which is focusing on tackling the

economic problems."

Thanom voiced appreciation for Chuan in reviewing his appointment with fairness.

He announced his resignation at a press conference after a brief meeting with Gen Naruenart Kampanartsaenyakorn, secretary to the defence minister.

Naruenart and other military aides of Chuan last night met Pipop and other action group leaders trying to explain the controversy, Pipop said, adding that the groups would not stop the campaign to hold Chuan responsible.

Chuan, also the defence minister, Naruenart and other ranking military officers held a meeting earlier on how to defuse mounting tension arising from the appointment of Thanom.

Participants at the meeting agreed that political tensions had increased after Chuan reiterated his decision not to review the appointment.

Naruenart, acting as a go-between, then consulted with Thanom, resulting in the voluntary resignation.

In confirming Thanom's resignation, Cabinet secretary general Vishanu Krua-ngarm commented that it was the first case of someone declining a military honorary appointment.

Speaking after his press conference, the former dictator said he was no longer involved in politics and that he would like to stay at home in peace.

He also revealed that the honorary appointment was his first and only award from the military, recognising his leadership in regimental command in 1948.

Suvit Yodmanee, Thanom's son-in-law, said Thanom made his own decision to resign.

Suvit claimed that honouring Thanom was purely a military consideration in recognition of a former commander.

"The award for Thanom was considered an honour for both the former commander and his military unit but politics has confused the issue," he said.

Suvit insisted that Thanom was not a culprit for causing bloodshed in the Oct 14, 1973, democracy-uprising.



"Most culprits are now dead and it is pointless to blame the dead, so Thanom has kept quiet and has not defended himself for the sake of social peace," he said.

In an opinion survey, 68.49 per cent of 1,431 respondents voiced opposition to honouring Thanom, citing his bad record.

The Suan Dusit poll also revealed that 59.84 per cent wanted the government to cancel the appointment.

Respondents blamed the person who initiated the appointment process for being responsible (33.83 per cent), followed by the government (31.70 per cent), the prime minister (24.21 per cent) and all parties concerned (10.26 per cent).

Kanin Boonsuwan, a political activist, said Chuan should show responsibility by quitting the defence portfolio even though Thanom had now declined the military award.

"Chuan's decision is a betrayal of the people, of democratic principles and of himself," he said.

BY PIYANART SRIVALO

The Nation

## Headlines

### **No apology for Thanom's honour, says Chuan**

PRIME Minister Chuan Leekpai yesterday refused to apologise over his approval to honour former dictator Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachorn, insisting that he had done nothing wrong.

Chuan was commenting on a demand from democracy advocates, calling for his public apology for being insensitive to public sentiment.

Democracy advocates said they plan to hold a rally tomorrow at Sanam Luang to demand a public apology from the prime minister.

Chuan said he considered the controversy closed as Thanom had already resigned his honorary position in the 31st Infantry Regiment of the Royal Guard. "The Defence Ministry has closed the case," he said. "I insist that we have acted in accordance with established procedures."

Chuan voiced regret, however, if his decision had been hurtful to some groups of people who "genuinely" opposed the military honouring of Thanom.

In explaining his decision-making process, he said that when the appointment of Thanom was presented to him, he had a choice of either to approve or to reject it. "I have to act either way. If approved, I must have a reason," he said. "Likewise I must be able to justify if I was to turn down the military recommendation."

The prime minister went on to say that he could not overrule the military if its recommendation conformed to criteria for honorary appointments.

Furthermore, he denied the allegation that he had sent a high-ranking military officer to pressure Thanom into resigning in order to thwart a looming confrontation.

Cabinet secretary general Vishanu Krua-ngern confirmed that he had submitted Thanom's resignation with His Majesty the King's principal private secretary for the issuing of a Royal command to approve it.

Meanwhile, political activists called for a review of historical records relating to the Oct 14, 1973 uprising. Chaiwat Surawichai, a former student activist, said history should be clear on who were dictators, and who were culprits for causing the bloodshed.

Chaiwat said his fellow democracy advocates would press on with their demand for Chuan's apology.

A group of northern activists yesterday issued a call for Chuan to admit his responsibility within two days. Representing the group, Chaipan Prapasawat said Chuan should at least apologise to the people.

In commenting on the call for Chuan's apology, Interior Minister Sanan Kachornprasart said forgiveness was a virtue of Thai society. He argued that the debate on Thanom's appointment was a military matter which should not be confused with politics.

Meanwhile, Prachakorn Thai Party leader Samak Sundaravej criticised political activists, saying they had shown disrespect for a Royal command.

"Some people are so eager to fight on regardless of the fact that Thanom has resigned," he said. "They have also overlooked the Royal command for the appointment."

BY PIYANART SRIVALO

The Nation

## Headlines

### Family shows documents to back Thanom

THE family of Field Marshall Thanom Kittikachorn has released a set of documents from the police showing that the former dictator did not order the shooting of students and other protesters in the Oct 14, 1973, bloodbath.

Thanom's daughter, Khunying Suda Yodmani, said last night the family was considering whether to hold a press conference soon to reveal the contents of the documents.

The family move came after Thanom resigned from his appointment as honorary officer in the army's Royal Guard following a public protest, which was also directed at Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai for approving, in his capacity as the defence minister, the recommendation of previous army chief Chetta Thanajaro.

The documents distributed include a "highly confidential" order from former Field Marshall Prapas Jarustien through the Defence Ministry dated Oct 11, 1973, to a group of army units not to fire at the protesters until further orders unless more than 10 soldiers die from weapon wounds or from grenades.

There is also a 43-page document from the police dated Dec 3, 1976, on charges of manslaughter and attempted murder against Thanom, Prapas and Nong Kittikachorn as a commander of the 11th Infantry of the Royal Guard.

According to a testimony given by former deputy Supreme Commander, ACM Thawee Julasalp, neither Thanom nor Prapas ordered any killing and both were "acting within the law". But the police investigation into the conduct of Thanom's son, Narong Kittikachorn, did not take place because it was the responsibility of the army.

---

BY KONGDEJ PARNPITRA

The Nation

## Headlines

# Chuan refuses to make full apology as Thanom furore grows

THAMMASAT University vice-president Wanida Pankaew yesterday said she would ask the lecturers' council to adopt a stand on student demands to punish Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai over his decision to honour former military dictator Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachorn.

Thammasat University student activists moved to petition for the removal of Chuan from the university's administrative council and for the cancellation of the Democrat Party's plan to organise its caucus for party members on the university's grounds next month.

At a rally involving about 1,000 people, democracy advocates yesterday expressed their outrage and moved to solicit 50,000 signatures to pressure Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai to issue a public apology.

Meanwhile Chuan, saying the situation was under control reiterated his refusal to apologise for the decision to appoint Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachorn as an honorary officer.

"I have been honest with the people and my thoughts always focus on the public interest," he claimed.

Chuan said Thammasat University had the discretion to review the demands calling for his removal from its council and to bar the Democrats from using the university grounds to hold its party meeting.

He explained that he was awarded the council membership by the university and that the Democrats had struck a deal to hire the university's sports field for its caucus.

At the Sanam Luang rally, activists distributed a questionnaire aimed at soliciting signatures and opinions on how Chuan should deal with accepting the responsibility for making the decision:

---

The questionnaire asked people to vote on what Chuan ought to do from the following options:

- \* Make a public apology.
- \* Resign from the defence portfolio.
- \* Resign from the premiership.
- \* Dissolve the House.
- \* Others (specified).

Deputy Interior Minister Chamni Sakdiseth said political and student activists should not link the Democrat Party with the controversial decision to award Thanom an honorary position.

Chamni pointed out that the party had sought and received the university's approval to hire a sports field at the Rangsit campus to hold the party's caucus.

Problems would become more complicated if the protest against Chuan's decision attracted other demands unrelated to the debate, he warned.

He said Chuan had already explained the reason for his decision and the prime minister had voiced regret if his decision was hurtful to some groups of people.

He added that the prime minister also shared the feelings of the people who participated in the Oct 14, 1973 uprising.

Commenting on a possible demand for Chuan to relinquish his defence portfolio, the deputy interior minister said that the demand was not warranted.

Interior Minister Sanan Kachornprasart voiced confidence that the Sanam Luang rally would be peaceful, as activists expressed their constitutional right to air differing opinions.

Democrat MP Amnuay Suwankhiri said Chuan had predicted a public outcry if Thanom were accorded the military award.

When the military recommendation on Thanom was presented to Chuan, he ordered a review, Amnuay said. But the military insisted on the award, pressuring Chuan to give his approval for the sake of bureaucratic morale.

Maj Gen Manoonkrit Roopkhachorn, who concurrently was appointed and resigned from his honorary military position, said that democracy advocates should not confuse bureaucratic procedures with politics.

"Established procedures, such as the appointment of an honorary royal guard, should not be interpreted as a fight between democracy and a dictatorship," he said.

Manoonkrit argued that the prime minister had no other option but to process the honorary appointment for a Royal command.

The Nation

## Headlines

### Chettha tells public 'blame me not Chuan'

FORMER army chief Gen Chettha Thanajaro yesterday urged the public to go easy on Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai and blame him [Chettha] instead for the nomination of former dictator Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn to an honorary officer's position in an infantry regiment.

The appointment has provoked an on-going outcry from the public, activists, academics, and the opposition, some of whom called on Chuan to make a public apology.

"I'm ready to take responsibility for the prime minister because I was the one who proposed his [Thanom's] name for such an honour," Chettha said.

"I didn't realise it would have any impact and neither did I have any ill intention toward the public," he said.

Chettha's nomination of Thanom is being deemed as a setback for the former army chief who is toying with the idea of entering politics.

He dismissed suggestions that the appointment would erase or undermine the horrific past for Thais who took part in the pro-democracy uprising.

Thanom last Wednesday rejected the appointment and urged the public to "avoid possible unrest and an embarrassment for the government".

Chuan refused to apologise for the appointment. The decision was made in his capacity as defence minister who has to take into consideration a number of factors other than politics, he said.

PM'S Office Minister Jurin Laksanavisit told a press conference after a meeting of government whips yesterday that they had agreed to an opposition motion calling for a special session during the House meeting on Thursday to debate Thanom's appointment.

Jurin, also the chief government whip, said related



government agencies and the prime minister would answer the opposition's questions during the session.

Meanwhile, the Network of Committees Campaigning for Democracy said yesterday that it would soon start a nationwide campaign to sound out the public about the calls for Chuan to publicly apologise over the matter.

Suvit Watnu, secretary-general of the group, gave the premier and Interior Minister Sanan Kachornprasart until May 17, the seventh anniversary of the popular uprising against the Suchinda Kraprayoon government, to make the apology. He warned of "total chaos" if the demand was not met.

Leaders of the Students Union of Thammasat University, meanwhile, filed a petition with rector Naris Chaivasut and his 10 deputies, calling for the university to ban the Democrat Party from holding its annual assembly at the university's gymnasium. The students held the ruling Democrats responsible for the Thanom controversy.

The university executives later resolved that the campus would go on with its approval for the party to hold its assembly on April 2 and 3. The rector said the university was obliged to allow its property for public use.

Naris' deputy, Kaewsan Atipho, said that was the executives' decision but the Council of Faculties would meet today to make the university's stance.

Another deputy rector, Somyos Chuathai, said the university would guarantee the students' right to protest during the Democrats' assembly.

Kaewsan, Somyos and other deputy rectors said they made yesterday's decision in their capacity as university executives and it did not necessarily reflect their personal views.

BY PIYANART SRIVALO

The Nation

---

## Politics

### Thammasat ignores student demands

THAMMASAT University, long renowned for its pro-democracy stance, has decided to ignore its students' calls to cancel the school's agreement with the Democrat Party for the use of its Rangsit compound for a caucus in the wake of the Thanom controversy.

But the Democrat Party faces a tough choice when it has to decide at a meeting today whether to change the caucus venue. Informed party sources said key Democrats were divided over the issue, with some believing a retreat could be interpreted as an admission of guilt while others warning against provoking a confrontation.

The students have been up in arms after Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai insisted that he had done nothing wrong in appointing former dictator Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn to a special military position.

Last week, the former dictator officially "resigned" from what is widely-regarded as a ceremonial military position. However, the Thammasat students, led by Banpot Kaewsawang, want Chuan to apologise to the public over the move. They also called Chuan a dictator who had "kowtowed" to a "tyrant".

The students also called on the university to cancel a deal it had concluded with the Democrat Party, by which the university allowed the party to utilise its Rangsit compound for political activities.

"Every square inch of this university's compound stands for liberty. We do not welcome a political party whose behaviour contradicts the principle of government and we [the students] hope the pittance the party agrees to part with will be regarded as a poor match with the honour and prestige that is part of this university."

Thammasat University Rector Assoc Prof Narit Chayasut said yesterday that the university will honour its commitment with the Democrat Party.

House Speaker and Parliament President Wan

Muhammad Noor Matha, of the opposition New Aspiration Party, yesterday called on Premier Chuan to do something to end the standoff he and his party are involved in with democracy groups.

He also provided some advice to the government.

"The government should learn a lesson from the incident. A government should avoid moves that irritate public sentiment even when they are lawful and principled, or when they conform with the established rules," he said.

He said it was up to the premier to decide on how to end the standoff.

The Nation

## Politics

### Family sets record right on Thanom

THE long-held popular belief that former dictator Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn ordered the bloody crack-down on pro-democracy protesters on Oct 14, 1973, is a gross misunderstanding, his relatives told a press conference yesterday.

Thanom's son, ACM Yuthapong Kittikachorn, denied the press conference was the result of heavy lobbying by certain key government figures. He also said that Thanom's decision last week to reject his appointment as an honorary royal guard was of his own making.

Thanom's son-in-law, Suvit Yodmani, told the press conference that a police investigation team set up after the incident had cleared Thanom of the allegations and public prosecutors had not taken legal action against him, owing to strong evidence in Thanom's favour.

He said the misunderstanding might have been caused by a statement by the Prime Minister's Office dated Nov 8, 1973, which said that Thanom, Field Marshal Prapass Charusthira and Thanom's son Col Narong Kittikachorn had "violated the law and acted vengefully" in dealing with the mass protest. The statement cited an investigation by the Defence Ministry.

Thanom, Prapass and Narong were then referred to as the "Tyrant Trio".

Suvit said the late ACM Dawee Chullasapya, who was then serving as defence minister, had testified to investigators that the statement was the result of a Cabinet resolution aimed at reducing public pressure. In fact the Defence Ministry had never conducted an investigation into the incident, Dawee was quoted as saying.

"The results of the actual investigation have never been available to the public," Suvit told the press conference, at Thanom's house on Soi-Ranong 2.

"I won't say whether Field Marshal Thanom was right or wrong in how he dealt with the incident. I just want the

public to know that he did not order the killings of students and the public," he said.

He also said that a government investigation committee had found that Thanom had recorded details of the spending of secret funds allocated for use under his sole authority, although this was not strictly required.

Suvit, answering questions from reporters, said that assets and property belonging to Thanom totalling some Bt36 million had been seized by a later government. He said the former premier and his wife Jongkol were relying on their children for financial support.

ACM Yuthapong told the press conference that there had been no lobbying or pressure from the government for Thanom to reject his appointment as an honorary royal guard.

"Dad decided to quit on the night of March 23 and drafted the resignation letter himself. I believe the prime minister is too honourable to send anyone to lobby my father," Yuthapong said.

He also said that the copies of the investigation report Suvit referred to, which were distributed to reporters at the press conference, were not concocted. He added that the probe had been conducted when Thanom, Prapass and Narong were in exile after losing power and therefore it was unlikely that they could have interfered with it.

Yuthapong also defended Narong, his elder brother, against allegations that the former colonel had machine-gunned protesters from a helicopter. He said Narong had merely been on an observation flight and that the investigation had later found that the real culprits had been snipers who had fired from the roofs of nearby buildings.

"These people were arrested but later released," Yuthapong said.

The Nation

## Editorial & Opinion

# THAITALK: Yes, Mr PM, it's okay to apologise

PRIME Minister Chuan Leekpai may be surprised to learn that it is, in fact, okay -- even praiseworthy -- for him to issue an official apology over his decision to sign an order to name Thanom Kittikachorn an honorary royal guard.

What is not okay is his argument in the past week that he has done nothing wrong.

It's a clear blunder and the quicker he apologises for the oversight, the better for him politically -- which seems to be what he cares most over this incident. Had he not considered it a political issue, he could have just acted like a statesman and declared: "I am sorry I goofed. I thought I could get away with it. All I wanted was not to offend the army -- not to please Thanom."

It was vintage Chuan once again when, confronted with a demand to explain how he could have done anything to vindicate a former military dictator, the prime minister threw himself into semantics: "If I have done anything wrong, I would be ready to say sorry. But I haven't done anything wrong." His political footwork was out of tune. His posturing was clearly disturbing.

Chuan's argument was flawed from the outset. He was trying to justify his action by drawing a line between him -- a civilian defence minister -- and the professional army. In other words, he was indicating that the proposed appointment of Thanom as an honorary royal guard was an "internal affair" of the army and he, being an "outsider", simply had to go along with the nomination. In fact, Chuan defended his decision by revealing that he had in fact sent the suggestion back three times to the army for reconsideration. And when the army refused to scrap the idea, the defence minister simply had no choice but to put his signature on that document.

---

The logic was bizarre, if not blatantly twisted. For one thing, Chuan isn't only a defence minister. He is also the country's prime minister. He decides what's good for the country -- not what pleases a particular vested interest

group at a given time. And even on occasions when he places political consideration over principle -- as is obvious in the case of the Thanom incident -- Chuan still didn't sound very convincing when he tried to tell us that it was the army's very own tradition and deep-rooted loyalty that he had to respect in reaching that controversial decision.

When it comes to public issues, there is no such thing as an "internal affair" of the army, just as there is no such thing as an "internal affair" of a political party. It is hard to accept that Chuan -- who himself went through the trauma of the Thanom-Prapass regime -- doesn't appreciate this universal political fact today. Of course, there is no denying that in principle he knows where the buck stops. But political expediency probably brought about a temporary blurring of his otherwise brilliant comprehension of history.

A more charitable interpretation would be that Chuan didn't want the army to feel that a civilian defence minister was interfering with its own ways of doing things. But then, Chuan could be totally wrong on that count. The army leadership might have in fact welcomed a firm rejection by Chuan in this case had he explained the possible social and political implications of appearing to whitewash the dictatorial rule of the Thanom regime.

Had Chuan demonstrated his national leadership instead of hiding behind "traditional military norm", he would have set a new precedent. He would have in fact set the pace for real reform within the ranks of the armed forces.

After all, when Chuan decided to hold the extra defence portfolio apart from being prime minister this time, the implied message was that he was serious about creating a new mind-set in the military establishment about democracy, civilian leadership and political transparency. This latest incident only goes to prove that it's all wishful thinking. It's still very much a "live and let live" relationship.

The desperate efforts on the part of the premier's aides to come to his rescue have made things worse. Deputy Interior Minister Chamni Sakdiseth (who himself was an Oct 14, 1973 anti-Thanom activist) made a fool of himself by likening the naming Thanom an honorary royal guard to the conferring of honorary degree by a

university. Again, he was trying to make this national issue an "internal affair" of an institution.

Deputy Premier Sanan Kachornprasart shot himself in the foot yet again. He had the effrontery to put Thanom in the same historical context as Pridi Panomyong. Again, the same ludicrous argument was implied -- that if Thammasat University could honour such a controversial figure as Pridi, the army could also offer a similar gesture to Thanom.

Sanan not only shamelessly distorted history but also made a mockery of the sacrifice by those who were killed in their fight to overthrow dictatorial government in 1973.

If Chuan didn't hasten to teach a few valuable lessons of political history to his underlings, he would soon be forced to issue not one apology for his own blunder, but many more for the absurd, self-serving excuses made by his Cabinet members.

For the prime minister, the situation has gone beyond the point where saying sorry would suffice to pacify public anger over the clear attempt to vindicate Thanom. He will have to come clean with the public with an official apology. Chuan should be gratified that the Thai people's memory isn't as notoriously short as it has always been portrayed to be -- not when it's a question of democracy versus dictatorship or the despots against the oppressed anyway.

He is probably surprised that the people are in fact telling him that it's okay to apologise -- he won't lose face or votes or even his political convictions. Quite a few who have closely followed his political career are even waiting anxiously to forgive him once that big A word is pronounced without conditions attached.

Unless, of course, the man who has vowed to fight dictatorship throughout his political life has changed his view on history regarding the the Oct 14, 1973 uprising. Then again, even an apology now would be too little, too late.

BY SUTHICHA YOON

The Nation



## Headlines

# Student hero attacks unrepentant Chuan

FORMER student leader Thirayuth Boonmee yesterday echoed mounting calls for Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai to apologise over his decision to rubber-stamp the appointment of ex-dictatorial premier Thanom Kittikhachorn as an honorary royal guard.

Pressure against Chuan over the matter has increased despite Thanom's announcement last week that he would reject the honour. The premier has refused to apologise, saying he has done nothing wrong.

Meanwhile, Thanom's relatives will go ahead with plans for a press conference today to counter allegations that he was responsible for the Oct 14, 1973, bloody crackdown on pro-democracy protesters when he was prime minister.

"The prime minister has to formally apologise to the public. He was wrong when he said that his decision did not affect the public and he did nothing wrong," Thirayuth, who led the democracy uprising in 1973 which overthrew Thanom's regime, said in his first public response to the controversy.

He said Chuan in fact had caused damage, politically and socially.

"He [Chuan] sticks too much to the procedures and is too self-confident," Thirayuth said, adding that it might be because Chuan has been in power for a long time.

The premier's decision had a negative impact on the respect to historical events and the fighting spirit for democracy, he said.

"The Democrat Party and Chuan have always claimed to be democratic. They have preached to people to stick to principles. That's why when the prime minister made the mistake, he came in for a lot of criticism," Thirayuth said.

---

Thirayuth, now a lecturer at Thammasat University's Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology, also criticised

Democrat secretary-general and Interior Minister Sanan Kachornprasart for comparing Thanom to the late statesman Pridi Banomyong.

Sanan said the Army's respect for Thanom was the same as Thammasat University students' respect for Pridi.

Thirayuth said while Pridi had brought many benefits to the country, such as introducing democracy, leading an underground movement against the Japanese occupation during World War II and establishing Thammasat University, Thanom had associated himself with dictatorial regimes.

"Sanan's words have caused pain and division in society," he said.

Thirayuth called on former Thammasat students to boycott Sanan and the Democrat Party if they did not apologise.

Meanwhile, Thanom's daughter Khunying Songsuda Yodmani confirmed yesterday that the press conference to "unveil the facts about the Oct 14 incident" will be held today at Thanom's house at 10 am.

She said the press conference was called because her family had received several calls from the public asking them to confirm the claim by her husband, Suvit Yodmani, that Thanom did not order the crackdown on protesters. She added that Thanom had been informed of the press conference.

"If we don't call this press conference, allegations against dad will continue and people will think what Khun Suvit said is a lie," Songsuda said.

She complained that "ungrounded" allegations had been directed against her father, including through the mass media. But she said she would not take legal action against the accusers.

In a related development, the results of a survey showed citizens wanted Prime Minister Chuan to apologise to the public over Thanom's appointment.

---

Asked what Chuan should do to show responsibility over the matter, 40.4 per cent called for his apology, 14.2 per cent wanted him to resign as the defence

minister, and 6.9 per cent wanted him to quit as the prime minister, the Abac-KSC Internet Poll said yesterday.

Of those surveyed, 15.4 per cent said Chuan need not be responsible for the matter, 4.7 per cent wanted dissolution of Parliament, and 21 per cent did not express their views.

When asked about the level of their confidence in the prime minister after the Thanom issue, 42.4 per cent said it was lower, 46.8 per cent said it remained unchanged, and 1.7 per cent said it was higher.

The survey covered 1,150 people in Bangkok and the surrounding provinces.

The Nation

## Headlines

# Students keep heat on PM for apology

THAMMASAT University's student union yesterday issued a protest over Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai's approval of a military honour for Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachorn, demanding the premier issue a public apology and reconsider his role as a member of the university's council.

Union leader Banpot Kaewsawang called on Chuan, in his concurrent capacity as defence minister, to apologise to the people for having approved the appointment of the former dictator as an honorary royal guard.

The student organisation, he said, will also hold a public hearing on whether Chuan, a Thammasat alumnus, should be dismissed from his position as an honorary member of the university council because of Thanom's appointment, which he described as running counter to democratic principles.

Banpot said the group feels that the university should not allow the Democrat Party, with Chuan at its helm, to use the main auditorium at Thammasat's Rangsit campus as the venue for its general assembly on April 3. The university will receive Bt1 million for the use of the auditorium.

"Our university has always upheld democracy and we should not support a politician who promotes a dictator," he said.

The student union will submit an official letter to the rector today to ask the university to reconsider allowing the party to use the auditorium, he said.

The group will also go public against Chuan's decision in this case by organising an exhibition and distributing leaflets detailing background information about the Thanom regime and reasons why he must not be honoured, Banpot said.

---

"We will consider subsequent action if the university maintains its position," Banpot said.

## ปชป.'จนตรอก'บีบชวนขอโทษ

### - เมหาหมัดจวก'ธีรยุทธ'อคติ - อ้างนายกฯลาออกแล้วแต่มธ.ยั้ง

ลูกพรรคประชาธิปัตย์ อึดอัดใจที่นายชวนกอดหลักกฎหมาย ไม่ยอมกล่าวคำขอโทษต่อประชาชน หวั่นสร้างปัญหาเสียฐานเสียงใน กทม. จี้หัวหน้าพรรคยอมขอขมาประชาชน

ขณะเดียวกัน ที่ประชุมพรรคประชาธิปัตย์มีมติย้ายที่จัดประชุมใหญ่ไปที่โรงแรมรอยัลริเวอร์ อ้างเสียงเผชิญหน้า พร้อมโต้ "ธีรยุทธ" อคติต่อพรรคประชาธิปัตย์ เผยนายกฯแสดงความจำนงลาออกจากการเป็นกรรมการสภามหาวิทยาลัยแล้ว แต่ธรรมศาสตร์ยั้งเอง

นายสาทิตย์ วงศ์หนองเตย รองโฆษกพรรคประชาธิปัตย์ แถลงภายหลังการประชุมพรรคเมื่อเย็นวานนี้ว่า ที่ประชุมได้พิจารณาเกี่ยวกับการเปลี่ยนแปลงสถานที่สำหรับการประชุมใหญ่สามัญประจำปีของพรรค จากศูนย์กีฬามหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์ รังสิต ไปเป็นโรงแรมรอยัลริเวอร์ โดยคณะกรรมการจัดงานได้ชี้แจงถึงเหตุผลของการเปลี่ยนแปลง ซึ่งสมาชิกก็เห็นด้วย

ทั้งนี้ เหตุผลที่คณะกรรมการจัดงานนำมาชี้แจง คือ 1.องค์การนักศึกษามหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์ หรือ อมธ. ซึ่งเป็นหนึ่งในประชาคมธรรมศาสตร์ ไม่เห็นด้วยกับการที่พรรคจะใช้สถานที่ของมหาวิทยาลัย ทำให้ความเห็นของประชาคมธรรมศาสตร์ไม่ตรงกัน พรรคจึงได้ตัดสินใจเปลี่ยนแปลง เพื่อไม่ให้เกิดความขัดแย้งขึ้นภายในมหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์

2.ทางพรรคเห็นว่า ขณะนี้สังคมมีการเผชิญหน้ากันอยู่แล้ว หากมีวิธีใดที่จะลดการเผชิญหน้าได้ ทางพรรคก็จะตัดสินใจทำ จึงได้เปลี่ยนแปลงสถานที่จัดการประชุมดังกล่าว พร้อมทั้งเปลี่ยนแปลงกำหนดการเดิมที่วางไว้ด้วย โดยงดการปราศรัยใหญ่ในเย็นวันที่ 2 เม.ย. จะมีเพียงงานเลี้ยงต้อนรับผู้เข้าร่วมสัมมนาเท่านั้น แต่กำหนดการในวันที่ 3 เม.ย.ยังเหมือนเดิม รวมทั้งจะมีการถ่ายทอดสดทางสถานีโทรทัศน์ช่อง 9 อ.ส.ม.ท. ในช่วงเวลา 14.30-15.30 น. ซึ่งเป็นการปราศรัยของนายชวน หลีกภัย นายกรัฐมนตรี และหัวหน้าพรรคประชาธิปัตย์

นายสาทิตย์แถลงต่อว่า การเปลี่ยนแปลงสถานที่ประชุมดังกล่าว ทำให้ค่าใช้จ่ายได้ลดลงถึง 1 ใน 10 จากเดิมที่ต้องจ่ายถึง 1 ล้านบาท รวมทั้งลดเวลาถ่ายทอดสดทางโทรทัศน์ 30 นาที แต่หากได้จัดที่ธรรมศาสตร์ ก็จะไม่ดีกว่า เพราะสมาชิกทั่วประเทศ แสดงความจำนงจะเดินทางมาร่วมประชุมด้วย

นายสาทิตย์กล่าวอีกว่า ทางพรรคคงจะพยายามชี้แจงทำความเข้าใจกับประชาชนเกี่ยวกับการแต่งตั้ง จอมพลถนอม กิตติขจร เป็นนายทหารพิเศษรักษาพระองค์ หากยังมีผู้สงสัยอยู่ ส่วนจะมีการขอโทษประชาชนหรือไม่ ขึ้นอยู่กับดุลยพินิจของหัวหน้าพรรค

ด้าน นายนพพล ปัทมะ รองโฆษกพรรคประชาธิปัตย์ แถลงว่า นายกรัฐมนตรีได้แจ้งความจำนงต่อสภามหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์ ว่าหากการปฏิบัติหน้าที่ในการเป็นกรรมการสภามหาวิทยาลัย เป็นการสร้างปัญหากับสภามหาวิทยาลัยและมหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์ ก็ประสงค์จะลาออก โดยมอบหมายให้ดร.วรารักษ์ สามโกเศศ รองเลขาธิการนายกฯ ไปแจ้งความจำนงดังกล่าวต่อกรรมการสภามหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์

อย่างไรก็ตาม สภามหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์ได้พิจารณาแล้วเห็นว่า ควรให้นายกรัฐมนตรีเป็นกรรมการสภามหาวิทยาลัยต่อไป เพราะที่ผ่านมานายกฯ ได้ทำหน้าที่อย่างดียิ่ง

ขณะที่ นางลดาวัลลิ์ วงศ์ศรีวงศ์ โฆษกพรรคประชาธิปัตย์ ได้แถลงตอบโต้คำแถลงของนายธีรยุทธ บุญมี อดีตผู้นำนักศึกษาในเหตุการณ์ 14 ตุลา ๒๕๑๖ ที่ระบุว่าเมื่อวันอาทิตย์ที่ผ่านมานี้ พรรคประชาธิปัตย์ได้ยื่นใบลาออกแล้ว แต่พรรคพลังประชาชนกลับไม่รับใบลาออก และยังคงมีมติให้พรรคประชาธิปัตย์เป็นฝ่ายชนะการเลือกตั้ง



นายเสถียร เศรษฐสิทธิ์ กรรมการ อมร.ปี 2519 กล่าวว่า ในการยื่นหนังสือจะให้สภามหาวิทยาลัยหาทางออกให้ด้วย ขณะเดียวกันในเร็วๆ นี้ อาจมีการไปยื่นหนังสือถึงพรรคประชาธิปัตย์ว่า ยังยืนยันสนับสนุนทราจหรือไม่ หากมีนโยบายสนับสนุนต่อไป ก็จะได้แนะนำพรรคประชาธิปัตย์ ให้บรรจุนโยบายสนับสนุนทราจไว้ในนโยบายของพรรคต่อไปด้วย

ส.ศิริรักษ์ขอให้ถนอมไม่ให้เกียรติ

นายสุลักษณ์ ศิวรักษ์ หรือ ส.ศิริรักษ์ นักวิชาการทางสังคม ยืนยันว่า จอมพลถนอม คือเผด็จการที่แม้เขาจะขอให้ได้ แต่จะพูดว่าเป็นคนดีและรับเกียรติไม่ได้ เพราะเกียรติของคนเหล่านี้ได้มาด้วยการประหารผู้คน โก่งกิน จอมพลถนอม รับใช้จอมพลสฤษดิ์ ธนะรัชต์ อดีตนายกฯ แต่หักหลัง เพราะเมื่อจอมพลสฤษดิ์ตาย จอมพลถนอมก็เปิดโปงและยึดทรัพย์จอมพลสฤษดิ์

นายสุลักษณ์ยังเรียกร้องให้นายชวนออกมากล่าวขอโทษประชาชน แทนคำว่า เสียใจ ที่ไม่ใช่ธรรมเนียมไทยใช้กัน

"ถ้ายังตะแบงต่อไป เรื่องไม่หยุดง่าย ๆ อาจารย์ประเวศ (เวส) ก็ออกมาพูด จังจกหักคนยังฟัง นี่ราษฎรอาวุโสของประเทศและประชาชนเป็นหมื่นๆ ทัก คุณชวนควรฟังและขอโทษประชาชน ไม่เช่นนั้นคุณชวนไม่ใช่นักการเมือง เปรียบเหมือนเพียงหัวหน้ากองในกระทรวงหนึ่งเท่านั้น"

นายสุลักษณ์กล่าวว่า นอกจากขอโทษแล้วจะต้องลาออกจากตำแหน่ง รมว.กลาโหมด้วย

1999/01/11 นานาชาติ 11/01/99 11:09 PM

## Headlines

### Top Democrats hit by Thanom honour

SENIOR Democrats have begun to feel the heat of public uproar over the Thanom controversy, and many believe it was a good idea for him to apologise to the public, party sources said yesterday.

But the MPs did not dare to bring up the issue during a party meeting yesterday.

"Prime Minister Chuan talked about everything but the Thanom issue during the meeting, and nobody was brave enough to raise it," said a source.

"The issue has been a cause for concern among many senior party MPs, especially those who have strongholds in Bangkok. Some of them now want the prime minister to issue a public apology, because this is a very sensitive matter."

Pressure continued to grow yesterday. Demonstrating its solidarity with democracy advocates, Thammasat University Teachers' Council yesterday called on Chuan to issue a public apology for his controversial decision to honour a military dictator.

The council also welcomed the Democrat Party's decision not to use the university's Rangsit facility for a caucus next month. The ruling party yesterday confirmed the change of venue, which will force it to cut down the number of participants from 5,000 to just a few hundred.

The council explained that an apology from Chuan would lead to a quick end to the social divisions arising since the appointment of Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachorn as an honorary officer of the 31st Infantry Regiment of the Royal Guard.

However, it stopped short of calling for the removal of Chuan from the university administrative council, saying that the matter was beyond its jurisdiction.

Council chairman Voravuth Hiranyarak said that the council had issued a resolution reaffirming its stand to fight for justice and democracy. The resolution also pointed out that Chuan's decision should serve as a



reminder that democratic compatriots who had suffered from the Oct 14, 1973 military crack-down had not forgotten their bitter experiences, he said.

"Anyone attempting to distort history will certainly face stiff opposition," he warned.

The council voiced regret that Interior Minister Sanan Kachornprasart had tried to compare the honour accorded to the late statesman Pridi Banomyong with the military award to Thanom, though the minister later denied having made such a comparison.

It welcomed the Democrat Party's decision to relocate the party annual convention, which it had planned to hold at a sports field on the Rangsit campus.

Meanwhile the Thammasat University students' move to rally the opposition against Chuan seemed to taper off yesterday when only 20 students signed their petition calling for the Democrats to hold their caucus off the campus. However, the students' union devised a new strategy yesterday, planning to mobilise all former heads of Thammasat students from 1973 to submit a letter to the university council calling for Chuan's removal as a Thammasat councillor.

Banpot Kaewsawang, chairman of the Thammasat Students Union, insisted that his protest would not be over until Chuan agreed to apologise to the people. He said that he planned a move to solicit 1,000 signatures supporting the call to remove Chuan from the university administrative council, stating that such a move would not be necessary if Chuan owned up to his political mistake.

Pipop Thongchai, a democracy advocate, commented that it was unacceptable for former Army commander Gen Chettha Thanajaro, who had initiated the honour for Thanom, to take responsibility on behalf of Chuan. "A politician should concede his mistake if the political landscape is to be truly improved," he said.

Pipop also said the claim by Thanom's relatives that the military dictator had not been the culprit for ordering the crack-down was irrelevant. "Suvit Yodmani, Thanom's son-in-law, invited me to review exclusive evidence not made available to the press to vindicate Thanom, but he was not making any sense," he noted.

"People who were shot at have already been victimised by the event. Now the culprits are trying to blame one

another for who exactly ordered the shooting, while people have long ago given their verdict that Thanom, his son Col Narong Kittikhachorn and Field Marshal Prapas Charusathien have to take collective responsibility for the bloodshed," Pipop said.

Meanwhile Communications Minister Suthep Thaugsuban confirmed that the Democrat Party had decided to move its annual convention to the Royal Riverside Hotel from Thammasat University.

The decision to change the venue, made by the party caucus organising chairman Banyat Bantadtan, was aimed at keeping a peaceful environment for the meeting, Suthep said.

He also suggested that democracy advocates should hear what Chuan had to say in Parliament tomorrow before making any further moves.

PM's Office Minister Jurin Laksanavisit explained that the Democrats were aiming to avoid any confrontation over the venue of their annual convention, though they voiced appreciation for Thammasat University administrators who had reiterated their permission for the party to use the university grounds.

Democrat MP Sathit Wongnongtoei said the sudden change in the party convention venue would cause some inconvenience, especially the cancellation of attendance by some 4,000 observers owing to lack of space.

"The party can now allow only 300 key members to attend the convention to elect the new 49-member executive committee," he said.

This means a political caucus on April 2 is cancelled. However, on the following day Chuan is still scheduled to deliver a speech, and the session will be broadcast live on Channel 9 from 2.30 pm.

Deputy Defence Minister Gen Wattanachai Wuthisiri speculated that the controversy over Chuan's decision to honour Thanom might be prolonged indefinitely as "no disputed parties had yet realised the true story behind the award".

---

Sulak adds to chorus

KHON KAEN -- Social critic Sulak Sivaraksa yesterday joined the growing calls for Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai to apologise to the public for rubber-stamping the Army's appointment of former dictatorial premier Thanom Kittikachorn.

He said Chuan should heed the calls made by tens of thousands of Thais, including many respected figures.

"I think the public is ready to forgive him," he said.

Sulak added that if Chuan did not want to apologise, he should resign as the defence minister. "That's the custom in a democracy."

He also said that as the defence minister and prime minister, Chuan has the power to reject such proposals from permanent officials.

Salak warned that if Chuan remains adamant on the issue, public disappointment with him would grow and result in "chaos".

The social critic also criticised the relatives of Field Marshal Thanom who on Monday called a press conference to deny his involvement in a bloody crackdown on protesters on Oct 14, 1973.

Thanom's son-in-law, Suvit Yodmani, told the press conference that Thanom did not order the crackdown. He produced the results of an investigation into the incident, which cleared Thanom due to a lack of evidence.

Sulak said yesterday that dictators rarely order a crackdown in writing, and that if they do, they always issue a general amnesty for themselves afterwards.

He said Thanom not only presided over a dictatorial regime, but also served the late ex-premier Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, "an evil dictator who damaged democracy and the monarchy with his claim of loyalty".

"I can forgive [Thanom] but will never honour him," Sulak said.

The Nation