

# THAI ELECTION FOR DUMMIES: GUIDE TO THE PARTIES



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# THAI ELECTION FOR DUMMIES: GUIDE TO THE PARTIES

- There were **77 parties** contesting the **March 24 election**, but only about a dozen are expected to make a showing.
- Connect the dots between the logos, candidates, policies, allegiances and support for military rule in this handy list based upon **their size, past performance** and overall hype.
- Don't see a candidate from your favorite one canvassing on your street?
- Keep in mind that only the largest parties are competing in every constituency.
- Names all sound similar?
  - *Chart/chat* means “nation,”
  - *pattana* is “development”
  - *pheu* is “for”
  - *phalang* is “power.”

# Pheu Thai



This is the OG Redshirt party, the latest in a line originally founded by former premier Thaksin Shinawatra that has won every election since 2001.

**PM Candidates:** Former health and agriculture minister Sudarat Keyuraphan, former transport minister Chadchart Sittipunt and former justice minister Chaikasem Nitisiri.

**Policies:** Pheu Thai is focused on an economic platform, which includes policies to **increase minimum wage, strengthen private businesses, boost tourism, support farmers, expand public healthcare, abolish the military draft and slash defense spending.**

# Phalang Pracharath



A proxy party for continued military rule, Phalang Pracharath has been accused of poaching politicians, campaigning unfairly and benefiting from gerrymandering of the electoral map.

**PM candidate:** Gen. Prayuth “Big Tuu” Chan-ocha. The coupmaker, general and songwriter who’s governed since the 2014 coup.

**Policies:** To “foster a democratic administration with His Majesty the King as the head of state. The state system will not be changed.” The party also pledges to **expand welfare programs**.

# Democrat



ประชาธิปัตย์  
DEMOCRAT PARTY

The country's oldest party hasn't come out on top in an election since 1992. Though its democratic bonafides have been damaged by supporting past military interventions in civilian governance, some in the party have said they will not support further rule by Prayuth. Which way they go remains to be seen – even the junta leader has said he expects them to fall in line.

**Leader:** Abhisit “Mark” Vejjajiva, who served as prime minister from 2008 – 2011

**Policies:** Pro-market, pro-monarchy. Promises include **price guarantees for cash crops** such as rice, cassava, corn, palm and rubber; **free hospital emergency care** and **a state-guaranteed minimum annual wage of 120,000 baht.**

# Future Forward



พรรคอนาคตใหญ่

Founded one year ago by a billionaire progressive to contest the election, Future Forward is short on experience but long on ambitions.

**Leader:** Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit, the billionaire CEO of Thai Summit auto parts, who was a student activist in his youth. He also once served on the board of Matichon Group, which owns Khaosod English.

**Policies:** **Openly defiant of military rule**, the party says it will **empower citizens to draft a new constitution** to replace that written under the junta. Its liberal policies include **government transparency**, **decentralizing power to the provinces** and **LGBT rights**. It wants to pay for **expanded healthcare** and **social security programs** by **cutting defense spending**.

# Action Coalition for Thailand



The ACT is led by Suthep Thaugsuban, the head of the whistleblowing protests which paralyzed Bangkok in 2013-2014 and helped annul an election by blocking polling places in the name of implementing unspecified national reforms. Suthep pleaded with Prayuth to stage a coup – and got just that in May 2014.

**PM Candidate:** Supports Phalang Pracharat's Gen. Prayuth Chan-ocha.

**Policies:** Tackling corruption and upholding the monarchy, Suthep said upon launching the party this past June.

# People's Reform



“We humbly receive Lord Buddha’s teachings,” reads posters by the party stacked with pro-establishment politicians and activists who led the 2014 street protests alongside ACT’s Suthep Thaugsuban. Enraged Buddhists accused of exploiting religion for political gain, but it was cleared of **wrongdoing**.

**PM Candidate:** Supports Phalang Pracharat’s Gen. Prayuth Chan-ocha

**Notable party members:** Former monk Mano Laohavanich and former Senator Paiboon Nititawan.

# Thai Raksa Chart



Thai Raksa Chart has been **disbanded**.

# Bhumjaithai



**Leader and PM Candidate:** Anutin Charnvirakul

**Policies:** Bhumjaithai has gone all in on popular measures, including the full **legalization of marijuana**, **ride-sharing service Grab** and **homestay service Airbnb**. The party is also **calling for four-day weeks for workers and students to decrease car pollution**, along with construction of a public co-working space in each of Bangkok's nearly 200 subdistricts.

# Chartpattana

The sports party, Chartpattana is now headed by sporting officials and brothers Suwat and Tewan Liptapanlop. They have utilized athletes in their campaigns and recruited an Olympic taekwondo bronze medalist to run for Bangkok's Bang Khae district. Its power base remains in the rural east.



**PM Candidates:** **Suwat Liptapanlop**, Deputy PM from 2004 to 2006 and president of the Lawn Tennis Association of Thailand; his younger brother **Tewan Liptapanlop**, chairman of the Nakhon Ratchasima Football Club; and former Energy Minister **Wannarat Channukul**.

**Policies:** “Using sports to build people, build the nation, and create teamwork and cooperation to end conflict,” reads one of their taglines. Proposed policies include: **mini sport complexes in every district nationwide, alternative energy sources, eliminating smog, aid for people with disabilities.**

# Chartthaipattana

The Silpa-archa clan's conservative party was first led by Chumpol Silpa-archa, younger brother of Banharn Silpa-archa, the 21st PM known for developing his home of Suphan Buri. The party continues to have a strong following in the area.



**PM Candidate:** Kanchana Silpa-archa, daughter of the late Banharn Silpa-archa.

**Policies:** With its stronghold in the northern central provinces, Chartthaipattana is appealing **to farmers in the area on familiar planks of decentralization** and **technological development of agriculture and education.**

# Puea Chat

Puea Chat is one of the four Pheu Thai spinoffs.  
(See: Thai Raksa Chart)



**PM Candidate:** Supporting Pheu Thai's candidates.

**Policies:** Populist policies such as **improving provincial healthcare, urban transportation, the environment and lowering agricultural transport taxes**

# Prachachart

With its base in the Deep South, Prachachart is a pan-Muslim party running on a platform of peaceful religious coexistence, finding solutions to the 15 years of insurgent violence that have **wracked the region** and **cracking down on drugs**.



พรรคประชาชาติ  
PRACHACHAT PARTY

**PM Candidate: Wan Muhamad Noor Matha**, the first Thai Muslim to serve in parliament and leader of the Wadah Group, a coalition of southern Muslim politicians.

Though widely seen as another Pheu Thai ally, the party said in September upon its founding that it was **open to supporting** Gen. Prayuth Chan-ocha's nomination.

# Seri Ruam Thai (Thai Liberal)

Seri Ruam Thai is centered around the brash personality of former police commissioner Gen. Sereepisut Temeeyavets, with an ardently anti-junta support base in the capital and some central provinces.



**PM Candidate: Police Gen. Sereepisut Temeeyavets.** Under his tenure as chief in 2007-2008, he was known for purging mafia bosses. Today he's known for his brash, outspoken criticism of the ruling junta. "I would have **shot him in the head** if I was there,"

**Policies:** Anti-military policies such as **downsizing the armed forces** and **relocating them out of the capital**, as well as **developing provincial economies by decentralizing power**, **cracking down on corruption** and **solving the deep south conflict**.

# Thai Local Power

An unconventional band of colorful personalities, Thai Local Power is largely a cult of personality built around its candidate for the premiership. The party launched with an LGBT-lit party on Bangkok's Silom Road.



พรรคพลังท้องถิ่นไท

**PM Candidate: Chatchawal Kong-udom**, a former senator, newspaper owner and business tycoon. He's more commonly known as "Chat Tao Poon," a reference to his status as a godfather-type figure in Bangkok's Tao Poon neighborhood

**Policies:** Bolstering the provinces and decentralizing Bangkok's power to decrease the need to find work in the capital through policies such as cracking down on drugs, improving language education and boosting rubber prices.