

## THAILAND

**Date of Elections:** April 4, 1976

### Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of the House of Representatives following the premature dissolution of this body on January 12, 1976. Previous general elections had taken place on January 26, 1975.

### Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of Thailand, the National Assembly, consists of a House of Representatives and a Senate.

The House of Representatives is composed of not less than 240 and not more than 300 members elected by the people for a period of 4 years. The number of Representatives elected in each of the country's 71 provinces is determined according to population, with one Representative for every 150,000 persons and one for every fraction over 75,000. Each province has at least one Representative. On this basis, the present number of Representatives is 279.

The Senate is composed of 100 members appointed by the King for 6 years from among persons who are at least 35 years of age and possess knowledge and experience in various branches of learning or affairs considered useful to the administration of the State.

### Electoral System

All citizens not less than 20 years of age on January 1 of the election year are entitled to vote unless they are members of the Buddhist clergy, insane, deaf and dumb and illiterate, or under detention by warrant of a court.

Electoral registers are revised annually. Voting is not compulsory.

Qualified electors who are 25 years of age or more and belonging to a political party may be candidates to the House of Representatives. This right is nevertheless not granted to undischarged bankrupts, persons addicted to harmful habit forming drugs, detained persons under sentence of imprisonment, and persons sentenced to at least two years imprisonment (except for an offence committed through negligence) who were discharged of such sentence less than five years before the election day concerned. Government officials and local government officials (excluding political officials) holding a permanent position or receiving a salary, officials of a State agency or State enterprise, certain persons receiving a concession or benefit from a government agency or party

to a government contract, and members of the armed forces cannot simultaneously be members of the National Assembly.

Any Thai citizen who is 20 years of age may form a group of not less than 15 persons with the purpose of setting up a political party. These founding members may invite others to join them and, once having 1,000 members, may register with the Ministry of Interior. A registered party is then considered a legal person.

A candidate for election to the House must make a monetary deposit equivalent to US\$250, which is forfeited if he does not obtain 10% of the votes cast in his constituency.

As mentioned above, the number of Representatives from each of Thailand's 71 provinces depends on that province's population. A province in which not more than 3 members are to be elected is regarded as itself forming one constituency; a province returning 4 Representatives is divided into 2 constituencies, each with 2 members; and a province which cannot be divided into constituencies with exactly 3 Representatives each is first split into constituencies having 3 members and thereafter into ones having at least 2 members.

A total of 119 constituencies were delimited for the 1976 elections. Representatives therefrom are elected by simple majority, with electors having as many votes as there are Representatives from their constituency.

By-elections are held to fill Representatives' seats which become vacant between general elections, unless the remainder of the term of the House is less than 180 days. Vacancies in the Senate are filled through appointment.

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

The National Assembly was dissolved by King Bhumibol at the request of Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj less than one year after it had been elected in January 1975 under the terms of the Constitution of 1974\*. The Prime Minister had considered the dissolution necessary because of the uncertain stability of his 16-party coalition Government.

A total of 39 different political parties (3 less than in 1975) and more than 2350 candidates participated in the election campaign, with the leading party in the outgoing House, the moderate Democrats of Seni Pramoj, the Prime Minister's brother, presenting the most candidates — 260. The Prime Minister's Social Action Party and the Thai National Party had the next highest numbers.

On polling day, only 45% of the electorate cast votes. The four major parties won 87 % of the House seats, and the Democrat Party's total of 114 seats enabled it to assume the leading role in forming a government. The Thai National, Social Justice and Social Nationalist parties, all members of the

\* See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections IX* (1974-1975), p. 81.

previous Government, agreed on April 17 to join the Democrats in the Cabinet, which meant that Prime Minister Seni Pramoj controlled at least 206 out of 279 seats.

Statistics

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

Number of registered voters. . . . .	20,791,018
Voters. . . . .	9 084,104(45.7%)
Blank or void ballot papers. . . . .	456,056
Valid votes. . . . .	8,628,048

Political Group	Number of Candidates	% of Votes cast	Number of Seats in House of Reps	Number of Seats won at Previous Elections	Number of Seats held at Dissolution
Democrat Party . . . . .	260	40.86	114	72	72
Thai National Party . . . . .	215	20.07	56	28	2S
Social Action Party. . . . .	234	16.13	45	18	IS
Social Justice Party . . . . .	203	10.04	2S	45	45
Social Agrarian Party. . . . .	76	3.21	B	19	lit
Social Nationalist Party. . . . .	100	2.87	S	16	16
New Force Party. . . . .	204	1.07	3	12	12
Socialist Party of	151	1.07	3	2	2
Provincial Development Party. . . . .	125	0.71	2	15	15
New Siam Party . . . . .	VA	0.36	2	3	3
Thai Protection Party . . . . .	71	0.36	—	—	—
Democracy Party . . . . .	16	0.36	—	2	2
Thai Social Party . . . . .	lit	0.36	—	—	—
Social Progressive Party	6	0.36	—	—	—
Labour Party. . . . .	49	0.36	—	1	1
United Democratic Front	87	0.36	—	—	—
Dhammacracy Party . . . . .	110	0.36	—	—	—
United Socialist Front . . . . .	37	0.36	—	10	10
				25	25
			279*	269	269

\* 10 seats added since last elections.

*2. Distribution of Representatives  
according to Professional Category*

Businessmen . . . . .	82
Retired officials . . . . .	45
Lawyers . . . . .	33
Teachers . . . . .	24
Former politicians . . . . .	21
Civil servants . . . . .	17
Farmers . . . . .	16
Doctors . . . . .	10
Journalists . . . . .	6
Others . . . . .	25
	<b>279</b>

*3. Distribution of Representatives according to Sex*

Men . . . . .	272
Women . . . . .	7
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*4. Distribution of Representatives  
according to Age Group*

25-29 years . . . . .	12
30-34 . . . . .	26
35-39 . . . . .	45
40-44 . . . . .	62
45-49 . . . . .	55
50-54 . . . . .	28
55-59 . . . . .	24
60 and over . . . . .	27
	<b>279</b>