

Thai Pulse

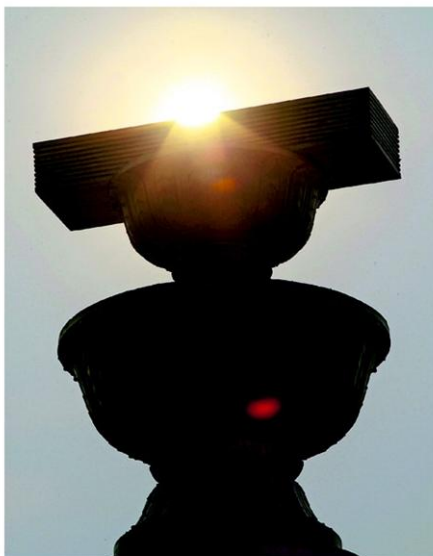
What's hot in Thai newspapers and social media

Compiled by PLOENPOTE ATTHAKOR

Meechai firms for top charter drafter job



Senior legal adviser Meechai Ruchupan, left, is a leading candidate to become chairman of the new charter drafting body. The legal expert has close ties with Bowornsak Uwanno, bottom left, chairman of the original Charter Drafting Committee and Deputy Prime Minister Wissanu Krea-ngam, bottom right.



The government is about to name the new charter drafting body early next month to ensure political roadmap meets the timeframe. PATTARAPONG CHATPATTARASILL



Meechai Ruchupan, legal adviser to the military, is shaping up as favourite for the job chairing the new charter drafting body, *Post Today* newspaper's political desk said yesterday.

Mr Meechai is thought to be half-hearted about the job, but is supposed to inform Prime Minister Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha of his decision on Oct 1, when the premier returns from his US trip.

Mr Meechai's reluctance is understandable. He must realise the tough task he faces, is similar to that endured by Bowornsak Uwanno, chairman of Charter Drafting Committee, in recent months.

Drafting the charter under the current political situation requires more than legal knowledge, but an understanding of public sentiment. Combined, this makes charter drafting a difficult task.

Mr Meechai is the most prominent of candidates mentioned as he joined the *Ruea Paeh*, a term referring to the Prayut administration, from the beginning, the desk said.

Even Pornpetch Wichitcholchai, chairman of the National Legislative Assembly who has also been named as a possible candidate, has backed Mr Meechai.

In his opinion, Mr Meechai is a good choice given his profound legal knowledge.

Mr Meechai is a former deputy prime minister who also served as Senate speaker in 1996, nominated by Wissanu Krea-ngam, then a senator.

He pushed for a charter amendment in 1991 to pave the way for the formation of a charter drafting committee which came up with the 1997 constitution, known as the "people's charter".

He was legal adviser to the military regime after the 2006 coup under Gen Sonthi Boonyaratglin. He helped scrutinise the coup makers' announcements and orders.

With Mr Meechai as chairman this time, the new charter may gain public acceptance easily, *Post Today* said, citing a Bangkok Poll which found 51% of respondents think he is a suitable choice. About 41% said they thought the new charter would win public approval in a referendum.

Mr Meechai is likely to adopt the good points of the Bowornsak charter in his draft, which could help his team meet the deadline set by the coup-makers.

Drunk cyclist in the clear

A court ruling acquitting a cyclist of a "drunk riding" charge has stirred debate on social media, MThai reports.

The cyclist, a resident of Lom Sak district of Phetchabun, was arrested on Sept 10 at a police checkpoint after a breathalyser test indicated he had a blood alcohol level beyond the legal limit.

The man was charged under the Land Traffic Act and later was sent to the provincial court which acquitted him on the grounds that a charge of drunk driving could not be applied to cyclists.

The court case was raised by a club, which provides lawyer assistance to crime victims, as an unusual case.

Net users are calling on authorities involved to clarify the law.

Police and law experts have also discussed the case and concluded that the court and police interpret the law differently.

A senior police officer said police have to respect the court ruling.

However, an officer from the prosecutor's office pointed out the case is not over yet, as it awaits a higher court's judgement.

Several net users said cyclists who are over the limit and ride should be punished as their actions can still put others at risk, even if their vehicle is not motorised.

Net user, Narong Jaiban, said drunken cyclists may ride in a dangerous way that causes



An image of police document contains details about the charge against a drunk cyclist. Below is a court ruling that acquitted him. KAPOOK

accidents. Another user, Anupong Thamdee, said police were right to act in the interests of public safety.

However, he said, the traffic law must be amended to say clearly that those who drink over the limit must not drive or ride any vehicle.

One net user, however, said police were being too strict.



A police booth in the form of a kilometre marker in Nakhon Ratchasima wows motorists and social media users. MTHAI

“What they should do is stop cyclists who are over the limit and keep them at the checkpoint until they sober up,” he said.

Stand-out police booth

A police booth in Nakhon Ratchasima that was built in the form of a giant kilometre marker is impressing motorists and the public, Sanook says.

Social media users shared the image of the booth belonging to Theparak police station in tambon Samnak Takraw of Theparak district.

The idea came from by Pol Lt Col Vorachote Sooksai, deputy superintendent at the station.

Each side of the booth contains information for travellers, including the distance to adjacent districts, similar to a conventional kilometre marker.

Services for motorists, including tyre repairs, toilets and cold drinks.

It is not known when the new booth was completed.

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