

Almost 90% to vote in referendum: survey

NEARLY HALF OF RESPONDENTS PLAN TO BACK CHARTER DRAFT NEXT SUNDAY BUT OVER A THIRD CLAIM TO 'REMAIN UNDECIDED'

THE SUNDAY NATION

NEARLY 90 per cent of people surveyed said they intend to cast their ballots in next Sunday's referendum, with almost half of them planning to approve the draft constitution, a survey has found.

A total of 87.8 per cent of respondents said they would go to vote and only 6.2 per cent said they did not intend to do so, according to results of the survey conducted by Bangkok University's Research Centre.

More than 48 per cent said they would vote for the draft, compared to 7.7 per cent who said they would reject it and another 8.5 per cent who would abstain, it was found.

However, as many as 35.4 per cent said they were still undecided.

The poll was conducted on 2,810 people nationwide between July 26

to 29, or about one week before the voting day next Sunday.

Despite widespread concern about insufficient dissemination of the charter draft content, more than 65 per cent of the surveyed said they were well satisfied with the Election Commission's (EC) work on educating them about the charter. Only about a quarter expressed little satisfaction while some eight per cent said they were unsure of the matter.

Asked whether they were worried some people would instigate unrest or incite violence, more than three quarters said no and some 20

per cent said yes.

The poll results were revealed yesterday. The referendum law, however, prohibits publication of any referendum-related survey data during the last seven days ahead of the plebiscite. Violations are a crime punishable by up to three months in jail and/or a fine of up to Bt6,000.

Meanwhile, the EC aims for at least 80 per cent of the eligible voters to turn out. Relevant agencies such as those under the Ministry of Interior currently are working to promote the referendum, disseminate the charter content, and encourage the public to take part in referendum or charter debates.

Government Spokesman Maj-Gen Sansern Kaewkamnerd yesterday said the state had provided stages for the public to exchange their views on the constitution draft nationwide from Friday until Wednesday.



Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha would like to see the people active and well-informed about the referendum and the charter, the spokesman said.

He reiterated that the state never wanted to limit freedom of expression and always supported constructive debates. However, he asked that everyone follow the rule and not distort the facts or be vulgar.

In a related development, spokesman of the Constitution Drafting Commission (CDC) revealed that during the last week before the referendum, the drafters might appear live on some television channels to explain about the charter draft, especially on the controversial points about which many people have wrong notions.

In the meantime, he said that they were also working to disseminate information by travelling to provinces and explaining to the community leaders so they could help pass on the information.

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