

National Broadcast
by
General Prayut Chan-o-Cha, Prime Minister
17 October 2014

Good evening, dear Thai citizens.

Firstly, I would like to congratulate the Thai pilgrims who travelled to Mecca, Saudi Arabia for the Hajj. This journey was undertaken with the support from the SBPAC's project to promote good and virtuous citizens. The Thai pilgrims have returned safely after accomplishing what they set out to do.

October 13 was the 99th commemoration of the National Police Day. I offer my compliments and congratulations to everyone within the police force. I also offer my moral support to them, and ask that police officers continue performing their duty as protectors of civilians' well-being, and to continue being an agency that the public can depend on, in accord with their sworn oath.

Let us address the result of my visit to Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Last week, I travelled to our neighbouring country Myanmar for an official visit. In each of my foreign visits, I shall consider myself to represent all Thai people and the interests of the nation. I would like to take this opportunity to inform my dear Thai citizens of the results of the recent visit to Myanmar. I met with President Thein Sein and we exchanged ideas on many issues. His Excellency, President Thein Sein spoke of the close, brotherly relations Thailand has shared with Myanmar. Thailand is considered Myanmar's key trading partner with the highest trade value and investment value, after China.

On security affairs, we discussed preparations to handle all kinds of challenges that Thailand and Myanmar are currently facing or those we may have to face in the future. On the narcotics problem, we agreed that more collaboration is needed and procedures must be simplified. Both demand and supply issues need to be tackled if we are to yield sustainable results. Thailand is ready to provide input towards supporting the cultivation of alternative and replacement crops.

On the issue of human trafficking and migrant labour, I reasserted the Thai government's commitment to caring for Myanmar workers. I asked the Myanmar government to help encourage its workers to get registered in accordance with the law. I also suggested the use of smart cards, if possible, for the border passes of both daily and seasonal workers; the permanent workers already possess work permits. More discussions will be held on regulations abatement or measures that foster the safety of migrant workers; oversight in the matter of fairness, justice and well-being of the workers; and oversight on the matter of healthcare. The Thai government places importance in these issues of human rights, which

concern international covenants. This would also prepare us for the integration into the ASEAN Economic Community in the near future.

As for the issue of refugees, the Thai and Myanmar governments agreed to set up a joint working committee to make preparations in advance of the refugees being returned to their countries. This collaboration will also be extended to include the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Both governments need to talk among themselves first, before we take the matter to international organizations.

On the matter of economic cooperation, there were discussions about developing transportation linkages in certain routes such as the Myawaddy-Tanaosri mountain range-Kawkareik road and the construction of the 2nd friendship bridge that would link Mae Sot to Myawaddy. The parties discussed the development of special economic zones at border areas to promote investment and create employment. Both countries' citizens stand to benefit if these links with Myanmar become realized. This effort will be effective if the undertaking can be pursued simultaneously by both parties.

We have long been in discussions about the Dawei special economic zone. We have come to agree that this project will be of benefit to both countries. Myanmar will initiate the first phase of the concession granting period in the month of November—this is another matter, one that concerns investors. Firstly, we need to come to agreement about how to create interest in the project among foreign investors. It is likely that many countries will join in to invest in the project, Japan being one of them.

On the matter of financial collaboration, I have expressed appreciation toward President Thein Sein for Myanmar authorities in allowing Bangkok Bank to open branches in Myanmar. I also asked the Myanmar authorities to consider supporting other Thai banks in a similar manner, and to promote the exchange of the Thai baht and the Myanmar kyat.

On the matter of energy, Thailand asked for Myanmar's support in energy-related investments, especially alternative energy and hydro power generation at Salawin River. There will be further discussions on this topic, either on adopting the joint investment model or on enacting an agreement on the purchase of electricity. All developments are subject to the joint committee's verdict, and the need to ensure equal benefit for both countries that will strengthen our respective energy security conditions.

For the matter of agricultural commodities, I proposed that both countries seek collaboration in accordance with the ASEAN framework as well as the bilateral framework, for the purpose of improving the prices of important agricultural products such as rice and rubber.

On the issue of education, Myanmar expressed appreciation for Thailand's invitation to Myanmar representatives to observe educational affairs in Thailand. Myanmar authorities also expressed gratefulness for Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn's continual support in education affairs.

On the topic of the environment, both parties agreed to pursue collaboration on conserving and expanding forest areas, especially along the shared border, for the purpose of retaining ASEAN's natural resources. We are looking to preserve the ecosystem and bountifulness of the ASEAN region.

Both countries will try to do away with unnecessary bureaucracy within the civil service system. For working committees that process matters through many levels, we will consider reducing the steps by scaling down the levels within the working committees' organization. Both parties will then be able to work together more easily, quickly and efficiently. We will try to first address whichever problem that can be quickly solved. An example would be the issue of border demarcation. There already exists a joint working committee on border demarcation, and the committee will promptly consider demarcation at the spots that do not present a problem. As for the spots that are still problematic, we must consider economic activity as priority and not let the demarcation issue hinder trade, development and commute between the peoples of both nations. We shall not take the opening of a border point to mean that the demarcation of that particular spot is complete; rather, we shall view it as a matter of collaboration. Myanmar has agreed to this concept. The local communities on both sides of the border stand to benefit. Both countries will address any matters that were lingering as hindrances to collaboration. Communications between officials of both sides will be improved at all levels – from central government officials all the way to local officials. This would help reduce conflicts; we have been pursuing this drive and it has clearly proven to be beneficial. We are trying to open more border points, but consideration must also be given to the readiness of both countries. Vendors and traders will be able to do business more easily, but opening too many border points would be too taxing on the available officials. Nonetheless, we will try to open as many as we can, for the benefit of both countries' citizens.

On this occasion, my wife received the honor of presiding over the opening of the 'Thai Corner' at Yangon University of Foreign Language: YUFL, which was a joint pursuit between the university and the Thai embassy in Yangon. I was informed that the university has started teaching Thai language to students, and that there were a large number of people who expressed interest. This is another useful project for the integration into the ASEAN Economic Community. It encourages each country's citizens to learn the language, culture and traditions of their counterparts and, in effect, promote understanding between the peoples of ASEAN. There is a need for ASEAN citizens to be able to communicate when they make exchanges. Thailand needs to promote the learning of both Thai and foreign languages. People in many local communities are already able to communicate using more than one language. However, we need to strengthen this ability to communicate among the general populace as well.

During this visit, the President and I discussed many matters that will benefit not just Thailand and Myanmar. We need to foster benefits for our multilateral partners in ASEAN – eventually the benefits would also reach countries outside the bloc. We must quickly work to achieve integrity within ASEAN.

On the issue of mitigating the effects of the 2014/2015 drought season, the Cabinet has approved a budget for assisting 398,347 farmers in 26 provinces in the Chao Phraya and Mae Klong river basins whose off-season rice paddies will be afflicted by drought. The total growing area amounted to 11.97 million rai. The money – 2.401 billion baht in total – will come from the normal budget of the 2015 fiscal budget, the economic stimulus budget approved by the Cabinet, and the central budget.

Measures to address this problem comprise one primary measure and six supplementary measures. The primary measure involves the hiring of labour to undertake maintenance work on waterways. The elderly should avoid this labour – younger folks should come and earn extra income for their family. If you come together and join in, then we have income to offer – much like the old days when we came together and contributed our labour to road constructions. Those who are too old need not come; please stay at home to take care of the house and send the younger folks for the work. This is only a short-term measure. If things get better in the future then you would not have to do so much labour. If we have a good supply of water and other resources then we can undertake as much cultivation as before. We need to provide an alternative source of income in case there is not enough water.

The six supplementary measures include the training of locals and the provision of factors of production in fisheries and livestock; jobs training related to the agriculture sector and outside of the agriculture sector; provision of seeds of plants in the legumes (food grain) family; and promotion of the use of fresh fertilizer for growing crops. These voluntary undertakings will provide alternative or additional income sources for farmers.

Farmers are asked to contact state agencies to receive such services and assistance, starting from now on. I must thank the various media and farmers' associations for relaying information on the government's drive to address the plights of farmers and on the developments that would benefit the society. One of such developments was the 'rice tiffin carrier (lunch box)' project that drew inspiration from an activity hosted by a small school that sought to have its students learn about rice growing and the way of life of Thai paddy farmers. The school purchases all yields from its paddies, which were produced by the rice growers who also took care of the paddies. The yields were then sold at the school's cooperative.

The 'rice tiffin carrier' project matches city dwellers with farmers' households that grow organic or pesticide residue free rice. The aim is to encourage the cultivation and consumption of organic rice, which would improve the quality of life of both rice growers and rice consumers. There are many benefits to be had from this project, such as improvement of farmers' income by directly linking them with customers; reduction of costs through the use of natural substances against pests; the breaking of the cycle where farmers spend much of the money from rice sales to buy fertilizer and chemicals; boosting health and reducing exposure to chemicals; reducing the gap between city and country dwellers – the project also promotes exchanges of views between the rice growers and the consumers. I

would like our younger generation to be aware of the rice growers' way of life. Importantly, it promotes pride among rice growers, who receive visits by people who appreciate their contribution and what they do, and also want to learn from them. Please support this project. Any of us who are interested in this project can participate at a personal, team-based or even business-based level. I would like the media to help publicize this kind of useful project so the public would be informed and have the opportunity to support the Thai way of life, and in turn, help contribute to the sustainable development of the nation.

I would like to mention the need to promote organic fertilizer production by farmers or agricultural cooperatives. I would like local administrative bodies to support the production of organic fertilizer through facilitation of exchanges or the creation of fertilizer banks, etc. This would allow farmers to save on fertilizer expenses and also improve on the well-being of the public and the environment. I have also been informed of many current initiatives to promote organic fertilizers.

Let us turn to the topic of the government's work in progress. In Tuesday's meeting of the Cabinet, I ordered for improvements be made to the public participation process, including mechanisms for the public in the proposing of laws – such proposal are to be made through the law reform committee. Priority will be given to the draft bills proposed by the public, in order to reduce social disparities and the gap between those with different income levels. In the event that a Parliament is dissolved, pending a new House of Representatives to come into being, the Cabinet at the time will need to send the publicly-proposed draft laws to Parliament for deliberation. The law reform committee for year 2013 had already made into law a total of 11 bills, aimed at promoting equality and reducing disparities.

On the matter of preventing and controlling the spread of the Ebola virus, all responsible agencies have been making preparations and have also readied themselves to provide assistance to West Africa. The Cabinet has endorsed each agency's measure to prevent and control the Ebola virus. An example is the procurement of 5,000 sets of protective equipment for medical personnel; the Cabinet has already approved the budget for this purchase – 29,640 more sets will be purchased later. These preparations will not be just for Ebola; there may be other epidemics that arise in the future. There have been past epidemics, such as that of AIDS, which highlight the need to be more prepared in terms of equipment, knowledge and medical personnel.

We will contribute equipment and other factors to West African countries. Before that, we need to be sure of safety and guard against any outbreaks in Thailand. We have also been commended for our screening process at airports, which has so far kept the number of infections in Thailand at zero.

I must warn against negligence; although the virus is still under control at present, there are many channels for it to be transmitted. We need to implement stringent monitoring on individuals arriving from countries with an outbreak and also monitor both domesticated and wild animals that can potentially become the channel of transmission in the future. We must

ensure that people are informed of what to do and where to go to when they find themselves with symptoms.

As for humanitarian assistance, many countries are now providing doctors to help the countries of outbreak. We are not yet able to provide that level of assistance; we have to make extra preparations to consider the safety precautions of our medical personnel beforehand. The government will look into what can be done in this aspect. As for now, I would like to ask the public to contribute toward expressing Thailand's willingness to help by providing donations of money or items. Our public and private agencies must prepare to facilitate these forms of assistance, as we work to scale up our aid measures.

On the matter of productive land for people to make their living on, the Cabinet has endorsed a regulation of the Prime Minister's Office which concerns the national land policies committee. The regulation stipulates that the committee comprise representatives from related state agencies and those from the private and civic circles in each locale. The committee has 7 seven principle roles that include the stipulation of policies and management plans for land and soil resources, and advising the Cabinet on executive decisions. The committee will utilize the principles of political science and the principles of law in tandem, in order to allow for aid and rehabilitation to be provided to low-income locals who would otherwise be afflicted. The locals need to have income and a good quality of life. I do sympathize for the Thai citizens who are being afflicted by the re-organization of land and the drive against forest encroachment. We must understand that forest encroachment cannot be allowed. However, it is the government's obligation to look after the locals' well-being. We are not able to find land to allocate to every single family, due to the fact that our population has grown while our land area remains the same. We are also experiencing a shortage of water – Thailand has only rainwater as source. I must stress that we do not want to create further woes for the poor, but we need to rigorously deal with influential figures and financiers. The latter group must stop encroaching on the forest – doing so triggers a new cycle of locals being forced to encroach on forests.

Let us now turn to government's and independent agencies' policies or projects that are meant to help the public, such as the assistance schemes for farmers and the distribution of coupons for digital TV. The responsible state agencies have been told to increase scrutiny and prevent graft or exploitation of the public from taking place. I have heard of many stories; these agencies must investigate whether they are true. Responsibility must be taken along the entire chain of command; civil servants who still allow graft to take place will be held accountable. I warn again that civil servants must avoid exploiting members of the public. Exploitation schemes have started resurfacing again. The Ministry of Interior, the police, the military and the NCPO will work quickly to investigate these irregularities and deal with the offenders who exploit the NBTC's distribution of set-top box subsidy coupons. Any irregularity discovered will be processed under judicial procedures. The public must help monitor against irregularities but must also take care not to make false accusations without evidence. We will not allow wrongdoings to occur in the same manner as in the past. Every

single project by this administration is subject to scrutiny at all levels. These new projects are subjected to the justice process, just like previously initiated projects.

The cabinet has approved, in principle, the royal decree and ministerial regulation proposed by the Ministry of Finance, concerning tax incentives for the purpose of promoting tourism and the holding of seminars inside Thailand. Income tax will be waived for certain types of companies or partnerships. This applies to expenses arising from holding seminars domestically during the first day of the decree's enforcement until December 31, 2015. Money that an individual pays to tour businesses and guides, and money paid to hotels, may be used to deduct from the individual's revenue tax. Basically, we want to stimulate tourism and make up for some of the income lost by the sector. Again, the aid would be limited due to our budget constraints.

The ministerial regulation applies to domestic tourism only, and it will only have effect on expenses paid from the first day of enforcement until December 31, 2015. I would also like the quality of tourism to be improved along with quantity. The tourism ministry has already been told to review the number of quality-oriented tourists and their spending in each sector; we have 6-7 service sectors. We need to create incentives for tourists while maintaining the ratio of quality tourists. There is a limited capacity to provide services, should there be too many tourists. It would be problematic if facilities such as lavatories and lodgings do not meet the standard. Tourism sites and resources also need to undergo maintenance and refurbishment, as is being practiced by many foreign countries. We must also proceed in this direction, in order to create sustainability in tourism. We need to present the good things we have. Recently I saw a TV program on tourism in Sawankhalok, which boasts sightseeing of ancient sites and the manufacturing of silver and gold wares. I would like Thais to also purchase and use these items, instead of only relying on purchases by foreigners. Please go have a look.

We need to stimulate tourism with proactive measures, especially by improving safety. Explanations and messages should also be made in Thai and in foreign languages. Officials should have response plans for instances of natural disasters. CCTV cameras will be installed to prevent crimes and to facilitate investigations. The evidence cameras provide would also improve the credibility of our justice procedure. If we fail to achieve this, foreigners would not be willing to come because they would view that nothing was reliable in terms of safety or judicial procedures. At the same time we have to be careful about presenting news pertaining to ongoing investigations this way. Let the authorities prove it first. Don't pressure the officials too much. I am not denying you the act of expressing opinions, but you must consider whether the acts of unverified reporting are worth it and whether the information was factual. As for the re-organization of tourism sites, we need to ensure that vending takes place at appropriate places and services do not end in the exploitation or pestering of tourists. Sellers need to also consider that tourists will not want to come if things were disorganized. If we can learn to share and stay within the framework of regulations, the government will have an easier time helping out. We can implement current technologies in support of the tourism sector and in facilitating convenience for

tourists. Examples would be guide books in the form of mobile phone applications, translation applications, and GPS tracking. We will try to develop some of these methods, although some of these things might have significant cost. In the meantime, incident reports or queries can be made to the 1155 call center of the Tourist Police. We are also aiming to improve on the communications system so that assistance can reach tourists quickly. This is especially important in certain locations where the mobile phone signal is not available. This development needs to be quickly realized at important tourism sites.

On the matter of safety for tourists who travel to remote locations, boats and other vehicles used for transport must be safe. Oversight will be provided by inspectors, who will now increase the area of coverage as well as the frequency of inspections. We are also striving to increase the orderliness of service venues, bus terminals, ports, tour companies and tour counters, hotels, guest houses, lodges and restaurants. You can see that they are all interconnected. The various businesses must help each other out and strive to meet the highest standards, otherwise each tourist will only come once and never visit again if they find it unsafe and if they receive bad service – or if they find the restrooms filthy. We must take all these things into account. Meanwhile, state agencies need to synergize and not let the responsibility fall on just one agency. The military is also ready to help out with any issue. We also need the collaboration of the general public that can help publicize improvements in the tourism sector and boost confidence, rather than publicizing attacks that affect the country's credibility. The tourists will not want to come when they hear these sorts of things. Most importantly, we must prevent incidents from happening to tourists.

We are looking for volunteers to help us warn tourists in terms of disasters. Authorities need to be on 24-hour alert to prevent losses. We have to be fully equipped and ready to respond to certain situations.

As for travel insurance, there might have been problems as some travel insurance companies don't offer deals that cover travelling to the kingdom. However, the NCPO has allocated 200 million baht to offer travel insurance to all tourists wishing to visit Thailand. Please disseminate this information, so that foreigners are more confident in the country. This insurance offers many types of coverage while travelling in Thailand, especially during the time when martial law is in effect. The government needs help from all sectors in regaining foreigners' confidence.

At this juncture we have to be extra careful in order to prevent politically-motivated conflicts and violence from recurring. I'm asking all insurance companies and travel agents to understand closely monitor the situation while offering the best deal to their customers.

We are renowned for being the "Land of Smiles" because of the outstanding characters of the Thai people as being kind, generous and pleasant. This has been embraced by our visitors and is an attraction for many tourists each year. Apart from natural attractions which we already have, I want to see all Thais be good hosts and create good impressions.

In terms of cooperation, I want all people to understand that there are a lot of problems existing in the Thai society. The NCPO and the government have been trying to build a strong foundation for Thailand during the past five months. If we don't work together now, we might not get another chance later. We cannot just wait and hope for true democracy to suddenly be transplanted and solve all the problems. We must move forward step by step before sustainable democracy can be restored in Thailand. The government needs to use the power it has right now to reform all sectors and revise laws that will benefit the country as a whole. I'm not trying to discredit any politicians, but it is normal that there are both good and bad in one society. I do believe that there are a lot of people who put the country's interest first, who actually have good intentions towards the country. I want to see all politicians be selfless and do things for the sake of the people. I wish that politicians help solve inequality in this society and find a way to help enhance the quality of life of low-income earners. How can we reduce this huge social gap?

I want former politicians to help me figure out a solution to such problems. I will be open to all suggestions. I want all politicians to stop using the law as a way to violate others, as it causes trouble for everybody in the country, including me. I don't want to make things worse than it already is. It is time that all Thais helped address all existing issues and took a step back to allow reform. If everyone allowed this process to happen, it would be the country that benefits – all of us.

You all know that the problem of corruption is an enormous obstacle holding us back and incapacitating budget disbursement. This problem has manifested for many years and still exists until today. Since we took over national administration, we have been working hard to ensure that corruption is fully eradicated. We will bring all perpetrators to justice and respect the judicial process.

The government is also tasked with bringing an end to inequality while developing the country as a whole. It is impossible for the government to fund every single project in the country as we cannot risk being in a huge amount of debt, but the government is willing to give financial assistance to all in need.

As for the matter of narcotics - it is a threat to national security, because it damages the people and the nation in all aspects. We would not be moving forward if our people were drug addicts. Please don't fall victim to drug abuse. Most of the perpetrators detained in jail nowadays were victims of drug abuse. We need to think of a way for these prisoners to have their life back and provide them with jobs, so that they will not go back to getting involved with drugs again.

This is a task that requires cooperation from all ministries and departments. The drugs problem is actually a lot closer than we think - as it exists in all levels of society. It is a very sensitive issue that has to be dealt with in a peaceful manner. I call those who produce, sell, and smuggle drugs selfish, whereas those who consume illicit drugs need to be wiser and have self-control.

The government will implement all measures to prevent and crack down on drug smuggling while focusing on rehabilitation. As for those drugs smuggled from other countries, we will ask our neighbours to help us fight off this threat. I do believe that there are more good people than bad people, but the question is how the good ones can be victorious.

Again, I'm urging Thailand's neighbouring countries to draw up concrete measures to help Thailand resolve this issue.

As for the matter of criminality throughout the country and unrest in the southern border provinces, this particular issue is still a big problem for the country as it sabotages the country's tourism in all regions and affects local businesses. I'm sure these local business operators are willing to improve themselves while the government will lend a hand. I have asked the Interior Ministry and the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of national security to bring development in all areas and create better understanding among the Thai people.

Today, the Royal Thai Army led by the Army Chief launched the "Tung Yang Daeng" model in order to bring reform to all parts in the south, so that authorities can work together more efficiently and in order to achieve that, all policies need to correspond. I want the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) to be in charge of this matter with an aim to restore peace in the violence-torn south. We have to be more united and work hand in hand to achieve this goal.

Speaking as both head of the ISOC and prime minister, I want to have all areas reformed such as human resources, operational plans, and the fiscal budget. I want to see the Tung Yang Daeng" model adopted in other areas as soon as possible. There are only a few places that are still at risk today. We cannot assume that all areas in the southern border provinces are life-threatening, because it would create the wrong image for the whole region. This is why we have not seen a lot of investments in the south for the past three years. We cannot keep spreading this kind of news and conveying wrong information among the investors. Who would want to go and invest in a place where lives can be taken? We have troops stationed in all risk-prone areas to protect lives and properties. We have to admit that it is very difficult to provide safety for everyone when these insurgents are waiting days and nights for opportunities to attack, but I can assure you that authorities as well are working days and nights to prevent these attacks.

As for tourism, it is a key factor that drives the country's economic growth. We do not need to make a lot of investments in this sector as we already possess a high number of attractive tourist destinations.

The problem that I want to address over this issue is management. We need to heed more public opinions as the government has set up numerous working committees in the southern part of Thailand to promote public participation and work in collaboration with state units. If we are committed to solving problems in the south, violence will surely be reduced over a

period of time. Members of the public cannot let authorities work by themselves. Please be eyes and ears for us and we will do our best to bring peace back to your hometown. If they use violence against civilians, we have to condemn these perpetrators of violence, not blame all incidents on authorities. I never asked the authorities to sweep every village and look for these perpetrators of violence, because doing so would create more conflicts and misunderstanding. The media as well needs to help build confidence among the public and foreign countries.

International organizations understand the government's approach and see that we are moving in the right direction. They even commend our working strategies. So what I don't understand is that why the media keeps on criticizing these strategies. I'm not asking you to stop presenting the news. I'm just asking you to present truth and facts that actually benefit the nation. We need to give moral support to one another as we are all Thais. I'm not blaming the media for what has been going. But members of the media need to realize that what they present has influence on the audience. And it is the media that plays an important role in steering this nation to peace, growth and prosperity.

In order to ensure safety and stability, the government, the private sector, and the public must join hands. All ministries, including the Interior Ministry and the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry, need to urgently implement measures to in all regions across Thailand.

As for education, there is no need to change our educational structure. All we need is a push for more effectiveness. We are fully ready in terms of human resources, but we need to set a clear guideline for Thai education. We need to truly understand our educational system and adjust it according to the people, society, and the budget we have. I'm not saying that we are not smart enough. All I'm trying to say is that we have to be able to adjust ourselves to the changing world. Everyone in this sector as well needs to be more united. This is why a reform is crucial in all areas. Many developed countries around the world have been through this stage of reform, while it is necessary that Thailand learn from these countries. We also need to emphasize on our fellow educators, because they are the ones who guide our children, whereas all children need to have equal access to education. Education is the most important part and is the foundation of the country's growth. We cannot just come up with some solution out of thin air. We must learn for other countries. Furthermore, it is a must for Thai education to be adjusted according to our society. Thai people need to be on the same page and agree on solutions that truly solve the existing problems. Sometimes we need to look over little things and see a bigger picture.

In addition to this, Thailand needs to prepare itself for future threats, both domestic and transnational. If the Thai people are not strong, how can the country be strong? And how can other countries rely on Thailand? We have to improve ourselves as soon as possible. I have already instructed the Education Ministry to lay out urgent plans to uplift the potential of the people. It will take some time before this segment can be overhauled.

The government is keen to build a strong economic foundation, so that Thailand will be able to compete in the international arena. Now, Thailand needs to think of new products and improve its technology for future economic growth as competition will be fiercer and more intense. I'm urging all relevant agencies to make sure that Thailand's economy will grow in a sustainable way. I can ensure that every ministry and department is working hard to reach this goal. We must ensure that we just don't just talk without taking action. I spend a lot of time thinking and making sure that all measures are implemented according to plan.

There is a way we can create sustainability in economic growth which is to come up with products that the world demands while coming up with ways to cut costs and increase production. All Thais must have equal access to four requisites which comprise food, shelter, clothes, and affordable medication.

I am very much concerned about the quality of life of the people. I'm talking about the poor who don't have equal access to medication as the rich do. We have to help these people as well, as it will lead to national development for the country.

The government has adopted His Majesty the King's principle of Sufficiency Economy which aims to enhance the quality of life and the potential of the people. This principle will lead us to prosperity. HM the King teaches us to consider a method of development based on moderation, prudence, and social immunity - one that uses knowledge and virtue as guidelines in living. I consider this principle as a gift from His Majesty.

As you all know, the government is adamant to have all sectors reformed and have all frauds and acts of corruption eliminated from Thai society. This problem prompted us to enforce strict laws against all perpetrators of corruption and this is why martial law needs to remain in effect to ensure national stability and to resolve problems for the people. I'm urging all members of the public to stop believing to those attempting to defame the government.

As for the problem of bid rigging, I think this problem is deep-rooted. We have to revise the law and change the way that auctions are being conducted in this country. A cost estimate needs to be determined ahead of the real auction in order to prevent bid rigging and frauds. However, some products do not have a cost estimate. This is why the government has to award contracts through bargains and negotiations. I personally do not want to see corruption take place throughout this process.

The Justice Ministry has already proposed 11 private and independent organizations for the government to consider. Once selected, these organizations will be in charge of cracking down on and preventing bid rigging and other corruption acts. Furthermore, stricter laws will be imposed and stronger punishments will be introduced. And these laws and punishments apply to all perpetrators with no exceptions. Meanwhile, authorities will always abide by the rule of laws as human rights should always be respected.

I think all Thais need to find common ground. Both the government and the NCPO have already come up with a vision which is "Thailand Forward 2025", with an aim of turning Thailand into a developed country by the year 2025. Other countries also have this kind of vision, but they might call it differently. However, "Thailand Forward 2025" might be just a temporary name. We might come up with another name that best suits the country.

At the recent cabinet meeting, I instructed all working units to achieve national development in accordance with the two development plans discussed earlier. They were told to come up with plans that will yield results within 13 years. In other words, national development needs to be achieved by the year 2017.

However, this idea is still being thoroughly studied and when all things are clear, we will hand down policies that will actually yield concrete results to all governmental units. These policies will help reform many sectors such as national security, trade and investment, industry, import, and export. All of these sectors will not see improvement if Thais are not united. I don't want to sound tedious, but I want everyone in the country to stop fighting and focus on national reform.

Moving on to our next topic, I have received many complaints from the public. Many of the complaints were heard through the media. I can assure you that I heed all complaints and suggestions and carefully consider them. I want the media to act as a channel for me to talk to the people and explain how things are being done.

As for education, we already have individuals with high potential in this sector. All we need right now is better management. We can also conduct research and development (R&D) in order to improve Thai education.

We have to resolve problems that the people are faced with first, especially the prices of fuel. The energy structure needs to be readjusted. Reform must take place in this sector. I want to see Thais use low-priced fuel. The government has always been keen to stabilize the energy sector. I want to stress that prices of fuel must be readjusted according to the standard price in the world market. We don't do this to benefit ourselves, but we do this for the sake of the people.

I'm not in Thailand as you are watching this program. I'm currently on a mission to attend the 10th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Milan, Italy.

This is an important meeting as I will have an opportunity to meet with leaders from 50 countries in Europe and Asia as well as representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat.

Matters to be discussed during the meeting include regional and inter-regional connectivity as well as ways to tackle new challenges, with an emphasis on lessening obstacles of trade and investments among ASEM member countries. I will, however, explain you the details of the

meeting once I get back from Italy. I will always be patient with those who don't understand us. I am only asking you for support.

The next topic is about Thailand turning itself into kitchen of the world. We will continue this idea which was introduced by the previous government. We will do our best to promote Thai food in the world market and make Thailand the "kitchen" of the world as soon as possible.

If you want to ask questions or send in complaints and suggestions, you can do so through the media. If you ask nicely, I will answer it with respect and I will answer every question you have in mind. The reason why I talk a lot is because I want you to understand what I'm thinking. Believe me; we have a lot of teams working to resolve all problems. I promise that I will try to adjust to all circumstances while putting the national interest before anything else. Thank you for your kindness, cooperation, and understanding.

Thank you and good bye. I'll see you in the next couple of days.