

Thai Parliament Prepares To Elect First Woman PM On Friday
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BANGKOK -- Thailand's parliament will hold a vote on Friday, to select the nation's Prime Minister to lead a new government, secretary-general of the House of Representatives Pitoon Pumhiran confirmed Wednesday.

The vote will take place from 9.30a.m. (local time), Thai News agency quoted Pumhiran as saying.

Yingluck Shinawatra, the 44-year-old sister of self-exiled former premier Thaksin Shinawatra, will be the candidate for the Puea Thai Party, which won the July 3 election in a landslide.

Puea Thai has agreed to form a coalition with five other parties and together they have 300 of the 500 seats.

Outgoing Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva, who celebrated his 47th birthday on Wednesday, may contest the vote on behalf of the opposition, which is dominated by his Democrat Party, the second-biggest party in parliament.

He stepped down as leader of the party after losing the election but is expected to be re-elected by party members.

The winning candidate must receive at least 251 votes in order to become prime minister. The result is subject to endorsement by King Bhumibol Adulyadej, which is expected within one day of the vote.

In another development, officials from the Secretariat of the Prime Minister arrived at Pheu Thai Party headquarters in Bangkok, will prepare for a ceremony in which Yingluck would receive the royal endorsement of her premiership.

(Bernama)