

Thailand's Path To Election Continues To Face Obstacles

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BANGKOK, May 14 (Bernama) -- Thailand's Election Commission's (EC) target to hold a general election on July 20, faces further setback when a scheduled meeting with the caretaker government today had to be postponed due to security concerns just hours before it was to take place.

"The government informed us at 11.30am that they would like to change the place from the EC office to the Royal Thai Air Force Academy, but it was too sudden to change. It is not because the EC wants to stall for time," said Somchai Srisitthiyakorn, the EC secretary-general at a press conference, here, Wednesday.

Acting caretaker Prime Minister Niwatthamrong Boonsongpaisarn was supposed to meet with members of the EC at 2pm today.

The meeting will now take place at 10am tomorrow at the Royal Thai Air Force Academy, which Somchai expects to last for about two hours.

He said the government asked for a change of venue for safety reason as the EC office, located at the Government Complex, is near the anti-government protest site. The anti-government protesters who have camped near the Government Complex is headed by a senior monk, Buddha Issara.

The date July 20 for the general election was announced before the removal of former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, but no royal decree has been issued yet for the election.

Yingluck's Pheu Thai Party is eager to have the election as soon as possible and while they are still in control of the caretaker government, while the anti-government protesters have been demanding a postponement.

The anti-government protesters under the People's Democratic Reform Committee headed by Suthep Thaugsuban want the caretaker cabinet replaced and reforms, which are likely to weaken the influence of the Pheu Thai before an election is held.

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