

**Thailand to Hold General Election Middle of Next Year - Gen Prayut
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BANGKOK, Jan 26 (Bernama) -- Thailand's military-led government will adhere to its roadmap and hold the general election in the middle of next year even if the draft constitution it proposes is rejected by the referendum, said Prime Minister Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha.

The army general, who wrested control of the country from politicians through a coup two years ago, reiterated that he did not want to stay any longer in power.

"I already set the plan for it (2017 general election) since May 2014. I do not want to stay any longer in power and do not want to gain any personal benefits," he told the media after the weekly cabinet meeting here, today.

Nevertheless, he said, the question on whether the country would go for the general election in the middle of next year depended on the people and the scheduled referendum to pass the draft constitution.

The scheduled referendum on the draft constitution was set to be held on July this year, as laid out by the roadmap.

He said he entered politics and assumed the leadership of the country in May 2014 to unlock its problems which had driven Thailand to the brink of becoming a "failed state".

"The previous (civilian-led) government failed to govern the country and could not disburse the budget," he said, adding that the Thai people needed to stop listening only to politicians as the country did not rely on politics alone.

The country, said Prayut, needed the cooperation of all sides.

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