



Towards the 21st Century

by
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IN THIS WEEK'S HRI-POST CO-OPERATION COLUMN, Dr. Chira offers some last minute thoughts on the election and how it might change the political landscape, and also describes an inspirational visit to a provincial high school.

At the time of writing, there is only one more week to go before we know which political leader will emerge to take the most important position in Thai politics, that of our new prime minister.

There is a striking paradox in that while the general public and mass media seem to devote so much attention to the election, according to a recent Bangkok Post poll, the percentage of people likely to vote in the 2 July election in Bangkok may be as low as 34%.

Two things are clear about this election. Firstly, it is clear that information is playing a significant role. We can call this electioneering and the third wave. Television and radio seem to be doing a good job in providing a great deal of valuable information to the people, so it is odd that so few people are expected to vote.

This makes me wonder to what extent the issues will play a part in each person's decision to vote. I suspect that even in Bangkok, the so-called hardcore voters will continue to cast their votes according to personalities and what their community leaders say.

Secondly, another interesting contrast to the previous election is that the platforms and agendas of the various political parties have begun to show some sharp differences, and the mass media seems to be quite effective in criticizing these differences. The posters have also become more issues oriented, as opposed to just showing the photos of the candidates.

Whatever the outcome of the election, I hope our democracy will prove sustainable, and that there will be more discussions of political reforms to try to eliminate money from playing too dominant a role. And if our politics can't deliver an efficient and effective government, then we certainly must think about a restructuring of the political system very carefully. For one thing, we very much need checks and balances within the system.

Let me now turn to some of the work we are currently engaged in at the HRI. The first thing to tell you is that our senior management course in HR Strategies III, has taken a new initiative. Last weekend, while we are in Kanchanaburi conducting our mid-term workshop, a group of 40 senior managers and myself paid a four hour visit to the local high school.

It was an interesting diversion. Firstly, it enabled leaders from the private sector to learn first hand about the very low quality of our education. And secondly, we were able to talk about the changes taking place in the world, especially in terms of economics, management and HR without borders, so bringing matters which will certainly affect the students in later life to their immediate attention. So it was also a good example of distribution of knowledge from urban people to provincial people, and we hope to do more of this type of educational project in the future.

As a result of our visit, I would recommend to readers whose organisations decide to send them on a workshop outside Bangkok to spend just 3 or so hours at a local school to learn first hand about their educational problems, and give them some idea about the kind of knowledge your organisation has.

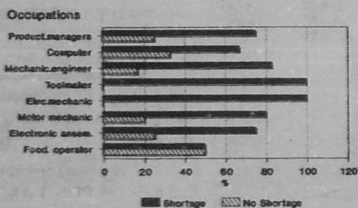
As for the HRI, we are now planning to invite 20 school teachers to attend a management seminar, who because of budget constraints would otherwise never have an opportunity to attend a good course in Bangkok. In addition, we hope to do more training of school teachers and provide some fax machines and personal computers for them. This will also help the HRI expand its knowledge beyond urban Bangkok. Our next such project will be at a school in Petchburi.

Last week the HRI was very honoured to have Dr. Vali Jamal, from the International Labour Organisation and Dr. Phasuk Pongpaichit from the faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University come and discuss 'World Employment 1995' at Thammasat University. This report was excellent and it captured the long term paradox of growth and employment in the world. The speakers showed their understanding of world trends which allow competition to move forward, but pointed out that the government and others will have to adjust in order to cope with the widening income distribution gap.

I also want to inform our readers that the HRI has launched a television documentary series of 50 programmes entitled 'People First'. The programmes will appear at 11 o'clock on Channel 11 every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. The documentaries are about several aspects of human resources in society, culture, economics and management. Please have a look at them.

See you next week!

Supply Situation of Instructors



Source: Pilot Survey HRI, 1995.