

Royal pardon for Thaksin? Or coup for the king?



Today the *Bangkok Post* [flags](#) an alternative path for former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to [return](#) to Thailand: a royal pardon.

I appreciate the appeal of the idea for any number of Thailand's key political players if they become convinced that, one-way-or-another, Thaksin is coming home. Bringing him back to the kingdom with an explicit debt to the palace and after enduring a period of ritual subservience is surely more palatable than some of the other options. It hardly resolves the issues, but it would set some new terms for the next round.

Indeed, another report this week [notes](#) that "rumours persist that the army, which has attempted 18 coups since 1932, is planning to again [seize power](#). But Thais are used to such rumours, and the talk of turmoil ahead".

So which will it be? A royal pardon? Or a coup? Or neither? *Or both?*

This seems like another one of those times when we all need to consult our favourite fortune tellers. For those intrigued about why this matters, a *New Mandala* post from back in 2009 has [historical details](#) on the role of ritual, "black magic" and astrological insights in Thai politics.