

EDITOR'S NOTE

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Thailand: The Land of...

I'm sure, I'm not the only one who has been rethinking Thailand's nickname The Land Of Smiles. According to Win Lyovarin, two-time S.E.A. Write winner and 2013 National Artist for Literature, Britisher David Lander, creative director at an ad agency, should be credited for coming up with the phrase. Lander came up with the slogan in a pitch for the Tourism Authority of Thailand. Fun fact: *The Land Of Smiles* is also the title of a German operetta, which premiered in 1929.

The phrase was indirectly brought to public attention earlier this week and, perhaps, it needs a reexamination to reflect what is happening in Thailand, at the moment. Here are a few of my suggestions for your entertainment.

» The Land of Ironic Special Days

December 10 is Constitution Day. Throughout the 88-year history of Thai democracy, we have had 13 coups, according to most sources. Also, PM Prayut hasn't completely ruled out the possibility of another coup in an interview last Friday but, in his defence, he said no one wants it to happen. National Children's Day, the second Saturday of January, is more like a day to familiarise children with soldiers and tanks so they won't be upset when the next coup inevitably comes. National Science Day is on August 18 but every day in Thailand is Superstition Day. Do I really need to talk about Loy Krathong?

» The Land of Double Standards?

BMA urgently orders the BTS to increase service frequency due to concerns that the PDRC protests may worsen traffic [*Naewna* headline from Jan 8, 2014].

Lockdown? Govt orders BTS to close all stations [*Matichon* headline from Oct 17, 2020].

Urgent! BTS and MRT close 15 stations to avoid mobs [*Prachachart Turakij* headline from Oct 18, 2020].

» The Land of Two Dictionaries

Reform means reform to some but it also means abolition to others. Loan means loan to some but can also mean income for others.

» The Land of PornHub Fans

On Monday, many news outlets reported that the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society has ordered internet providers to block access to PornHub via computer and mobile devices. When you attempted to access it, a message that says the website is suspended due to illegal acts according to Thailand's Computer Crime Act and Gambling Act is displayed. [Hey, HR and IT, I visited it from my work computer for this article, okay?]. At the time of going to print, a call to protest with the #SavePornhub hashtag was announced.

Fortunately for the do-it-yourself population, ways to get around this ban have already been widely spread online. First pun intended. The government doesn't do a good job of gaining supporters, do they? Good job on getting a rise out of PornHub peeps, I suppose. Second pun intended.

The online uproar is understandable since Bangkok was revealed to be the No.10 city that visited the website the most in 2019. Also, Thai users spent time per visit on PornHub higher than the world's average. Fun fact: 11 minutes and 21 seconds in comparison to the world's average of 10 minutes and 28 seconds.

Does this mean the government will restrict our rights to play with ourselves by closing other X-rated websites, too? No Nut November, anyone? ■