

Former Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva rallies at KKU campus, is met with Red Shirt resistance

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KHON KAEN - Former prime minister Abhisit Vejjajiva and former secretary general Suthep Thaugsuban spoke at a Democratic party rally at Khon Kaen University's Golden Jubilee Hall Saturday evening in an effort to garner party support from the Northeast, an overwhelmingly Red region.



Democratic party supporters shower the former prime minister with flowers and scarves

With the campaign slogan of 'pha kwam jing,' or 'cutting through the truth,' Mr. Abhisit spoke against Thaksin's legacy and the current government's amnesty law. Additionally, the former prime minister scrutinized the Pheu Thai government's loan policies, specifically in regards to the rice pledging policy that has received much criticism from the opposition since its implementation. "We are here to bring the truth to the people," Mr. Abhisit said to a fiery crowd. "We want to show that Thailand is not one of Thaksin's possessions. We want to protect our democracy and our king."

Abhisit thanked KKU for hosting the rally, praising it as a 'colorless university,' though most consider it to lean Yellow in a densely Red region.

But while thousands of Democrat supporters showered the opposition leader with flowers and adorned his waist with layers of Isaan scarves, about 500 Red Shirts gathered outside in protest of Mr. Abhisit's visit.

Among pick-up trucks fastened with loudspeakers, local Red leaders set up their own rally, fervently hailing abuses at Mr. Abhisit for his role in the 2010 April-May military crackdown and for his alleged bias against the rural poor.

The Red Shirt contingency remained outside the convention hall under the watch of the 300 police officers brought in to ensure the event proceeded without incident. The rally continued as planned and the protesters remained outside until rain forced them to disperse.