

# BBC to launch online Thai news service after coup

July 9 2014

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People leave the BBC building in West London on March 21, 2005

The BBC said Wednesday it will launch a new social media service in Thailand to offer people another source of information at a time when the junta has imposed widespread censorship over domestic media.

The BBC World Service operation will cover local and international news in Thai and English for an initial period of three months, the

British broadcaster said, launching on Facebook at 6.30 pm (1130 GMT) Thursday.

Thailand's military rulers have suspended democracy since seizing power on May 22, imposing martial law, banning public rallies and censoring the [media](#) to stifle any dissent.

"One of the fundamental principles of the World Service is to bring impartial and accurate news and to countries when they lack it," Liliane Landor, head of language services at the BBC World Service, said in a statement.

"We think the time is right to trial a new Thai and English digital stream to bring trusted news and information to people inside Thailand."

Thai junta spokesman Werachon Sukondhapatipak said he was happy to help the BBC "better understand the situation in Thailand".

"We don't have any problem as long as they don't send any provocative information that is negative or impacts the stability of the country," he said.

Last month the junta said it would set up five panels to monitor national and international [news](#) organisations as well as [social media](#) in its latest attempt to control the press.

The coup in Thailand follows years of political divisions between supporters of fugitive former Thai prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra and a royalist establishment backed by parts of the military and judiciary.

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Citation: BBC to launch online Thai news service after coup (2014, July 9) retrieved 20 March 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-07-bbc-online-thai-news-coup.html>

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