

World's longest-serving head of state

Thailand's King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who is accorded God-like status among his people, marks the 60th anniversary of his accession on June 9. His reign has coincided with a period of huge political upheaval, which has seen more than 20 prime ministers, 16 constitutions, and 17 coups

Dec 5, 1927: Born in U.S. while father, **Prince Mahidol**, is studying medicine at Harvard. Educated mainly in Switzerland

1946: Accedes to throne on mysterious death – possibly murder – of older brother **King Ananda Mahidol**

1950: Marries distant cousin **Sirikit** (below right), daughter of Thai ambassador to France. Crowned king after completing studies in politics and law, but has little real power under country's military rule

1957-63: Monarchy revitalized under dictatorship of **Sarit Dhanarajata** – Bhumibol becomes revered figure

1973: Amid massive pro-democracy protests, king makes first intervention into politics by withdrawing support for military rule of **Thanom Kittikachorn**

1980s: Gradual democratisation process overseen by king and army chief, General **Prem Tinsulanonda**



Royal Standard

1987: Thai people accord him honorary epithet **"the Great"**, given to only eight other monarchs since foundation of first Siamese kingdom

1992: King again intervenes to restore democracy, allaying fears of return to military dictatorship after 17th coup in 60 years

2004: Bhumibol's 21-year-old grandson killed in Asian tsunami

2006: King calls on judiciary to resolve political crisis in wake of snap poll called by embattled premier **Thaksin Shinawatra**, who steps down temporarily. Election later annulled, fresh polls due in October



Jun 12-13: Royalty and heads of state from 30 nations attend two-day celebrations to mark diamond jubilee

