

**POLITICS**

# Akkaradej offers censure ammunition

**AEKARACH SATTABURUTH**

Akkaradej Wongpitakroj, a Democrat MP for Ratchaburi, said he is ready to supply information to the opposition if it wants to target Deputy Prime Minister and Energy Minister Supattanapong Punmeechaow over runaway fuel prices in the upcoming no-confidence debate.

Mr Akkaradej earlier urged opposition lawmakers to use the debate to grill Mr Supattanapong over the crisis. He said several coalition MPs were unhappy with the government's handling of the issue and hoped the opposition would consider adding the minister to its list of targets. "I have information ready to give if the opposition wants to use it as material for censuring [the minister]," Mr Akkaradej said.

His actions drew criticism from Sayan Yuttitham, a ruling Palang Pracharath Party MP for Nakhon Si Thammarat. Mr Sayan said that since the Democrat Party is part of the coalition government, it was wrong for one of its MPs to suggest the opposition add the minister to the list of censure targets. "This is a breach of political etiquette," Mr Sayan

said. In response, Mr Akkaradej yesterday insisted the public interest must take precedence. "Mr Sayan should not protect a cabinet minister who has mishandled [the energy situation]," Mr Akkaradej said.

He said he wanted the opposition to remove Labour Minister Suchart Chomklin from the censure list and add Mr Supattanapong to it instead. "Mr Suchart has performed well, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic," Mr Akkaradej said.

In its motion filed with House Speaker Chuan Leekpai last week, the opposition named Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha and 10 other ministers as censure debate targets. Mr Suchart, one of the ministers, accused the opposition of submitting the no-confidence motion without the consent of MPs and said the motion was illegal. He claimed his name had been added at the last minute without the knowledge of opposition MPs who supported the motion.

Prasert Chantararungpong, secretary-general of the main opposition Pheu Thai Party, said it was perfectly legal for more ministers to be added.