By Mei Vandenberghe

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BANGKOK (Reuters) - Video-sharing Web site YouTube has agreed to block four clips Thailand says insulted its revered king, the latest twist in a spat that has stirred fierce debate about freedom of expression on the Internet.

However, in a letter to Communications Minister Sitthichai Pookaiyaudom, YouTube owner Google said two other videos that had incurred the wrath of Thailand's military government would stay as they did not break lese majeste laws.

"They appear to be political comments that are critical of both the government and the conduct of foreigners," the letter said.

"Because they are political in nature, and not intended insults of His Majesty, we do not see a basis for blocking these videos."

Insulting royalty is a serious offence in Thailand, but the generals who ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra in a military coup in September have also used the strict lese majeste laws to stifle criticism of themselves or their actions.

Sitthichai, who blocked the entire YouTube Web site last month when clips mocking King Bhumibol Adulyadej first appeared, gave copies of the letter to reporters on Friday.

The letter was on Google-headed paper and signed by senior company lawyer Kent Walker. The company could not immediately be reached for comment.

The letter said Thailand had sent YouTube bosses a list of 12 video clips it deemed offensive. Six of the clips had already been removed by their creators or because they violated YouTube's "code of service," it said. Sitthichai, who threatened to sue Google earlier in the week, said he no longer wished to take legal action but did not say whether the company's concession was enough for him unblock YouTube for Thai Internet surfers.

"The Thai police will not take any action against any company. Instead they will look into
ways of fighting the person who uploaded the video onto the Web site," he told a news conference.

The first king-bashing clip appeared a few days after a 57-year-old Swiss man received a 10-year jail sentence for spraying graffiti on pictures of the king on his birthday in December -- a rare conviction of a foreigner.

Bhumibol, the world's longest-reigning monarch who has been on the throne for more than 60 years, has since granted a pardon and the Swiss man has been deported.
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