

Washington Post: Thaksin is an undemocratic leader tolerated only because he follows U.S. orders

January 3, 2004

Categories: Thai Secret Prison, The Thaksin Years

Last week we pointed out the unflattering article the *Washington Post* featured about Thaksin ([‘Our Man in Bangkok’](#), full text also below) which portrays Thaksin as an undemocratic leader tolerated only because he does what the U.S. orders. Today the *Post* has a rebuttal to this article by Thailand’s Ambassador in Washington:

[‘OUR](#)

[Man in Bangkok’](#): Thailand’s Response – *Washington Post*, January 1, 2004

The Dec. 26 editorial “Our Man in Bangkok” made troubling assertions.

First, the general election three years ago that gave Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra’s party a landslide was conducted freely and fairly, with the results endorsed by the Election Commission of Thailand, an independent body mandated by the kingdom’s 1997 Constitution.

Second, while Mr. Thaksin may have been accused of not fully disclosing his assets, The Post did not inform readers that he was subsequently cleared by the Constitutional Court, an independent national body created by our new Constitution.

Third, Thailand’s economic recovery is the result of many factors, including the government’s dual development policy of opening our market to foreign trade and investment while strengthening the domestic economy.

Fourth, Thailand has long had one of the freest presses in the region, if not the world.

Fifth, while several deaths occurred during the government’s campaign against narcotic drugs, most of the alleged extrajudicial killings were murders committed by criminals trying to avoid arrest. Extrajudicial killings have never been and are not sanctioned by the government.

Last, ties between our two countries have continued to strengthen not solely because of the security issues The Post cited, but because of a maturing partnership on all fronts — political, economic and social.

SAKTHIP KRAIRIKSH

Ambassador

Embassy of Thailand

Washington

The original article from the Post: [Our Man in Bangkok](#) – *Washington Post*, December 25, 2003

The Bush administration has been strongly criticized for the gratuitous damage it has done to U.S. relationships with a number of foreign governments in the past year. Less attention has been paid to the friends the administration has been making — but here, too, there is reason for concern. Though he has delivered several speeches promising to put democracy promotion at the center of U.S. foreign policy, President Bush has been building relationships with several leaders who appear to be moving their countries in the opposite direction. The best-known of these is Russia’s Vladimir Putin. But another disturbing case is emerging in Thailand, where a populist prime minister’s steady accumulation of power has come in tandem with steadily warming relations with Washington.

Thaksin Shinawatra came to office under a shadow just under three years ago: The election was marked by allegations of vote-buying, and Mr. Thaksin, then Thailand’s richest man, was accused of illegally hiding assets. Now, thanks partly to a flood of state spending that has pushed the economy into overdrive, Mr. Thaksin is very popular. He is expected to win reelection in the coming year by an overwhelming margin. But a clear majority in a pluralist system does not seem to satisfy the Thai prime minister, who aspires to succeed the retired authoritarian leaders of Singapore and Malaysia as a regional leader. Through the state or his own companies, he has taken over all of Thailand’s television channels and has used legal and commercial levers, including numerous lawsuits, to intimidate critics in the press and parliament.

This year Mr. Thaksin launched a “war on drugs” that led to the killings of some 2,500 suspected dealers; human rights groups charge that many were the victims of extrajudicial assassinations by officially sponsored death squads. Rejecting proposals for constitutional reforms meant to prevent him from accumulating too much power, he recently declared that “democracy is only a tool” for achieving other ends.

A U.S. administration intent on promoting democracy might be expected to quickly distance itself from such a leader. Instead, the Bush administration has embraced Mr. Thaksin. Thailand was recently designated a “major non-NATO ally” of the United States, entitling it to enhanced military cooperation, and invited to follow Singapore in negotiating a bilateral free trade agreement. Not only did Mr. Bush heap praise on Mr. Thaksin’s government during a visit this fall to Bangkok but the regional director of the Drug Enforcement Administration, William J. Snipes, recently endorsed the brutal anti-drug campaign, saying that “we look at it as successful.”

It’s not hard to understand how Mr. Thaksin won this treatment. After distancing himself at first from Thailand’s longstanding alliance with the United States, he abruptly reversed course. According to press reports, he has [permitted the Pentagon to use Thai bases and allowed the CIA to transport high-level al Qaeda prisoners to Thailand for interrogation](#). He sent several hundred Thai troops to Iraq, and last August his security forces captured the most wanted terrorist in Southeast Asia, the Indonesian native Hambali, and delivered him to U.S. custody.

The day before Hambali’s arrest, Mr. Thaksin pushed two tough anti-terrorist measures into law by decree, prompting widespread protests from parliament. The rapidly weakening opposition warned that the laws should have been subject to a democratic decision and could be used, as in Singapore and Malaysia, as a pretext for suppressing internal dissent. Mr. Thaksin ignored the objections. His new friends in Washington, after all, were entirely supportive.

Thailand seeks press gag in Cambodia

January 3, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Thailand](#)

[seeks press gag in Cambodia](#) – *The*

Straits Times, January 3, 2004

Thailand has asked Cambodia to curb its press from spreading alleged remarks by a Thai professor which Bangkok fears could reignite anti-Thai sentiment that led to the torching of its embassy in Phnom Penh last January. A Cambodian newspaper article said the academic allegedly proposed that the Thai government claim Cambodia's famed Preah Vihear temple to compensate for damage to the embassy.

Photos of Wat Thammakai

January 3, 2004

Categories: Buddhism



(Photo: Nils)

Photos of Wat Thammakai – January 3, 2004

Nils reports: *This might be of interest: I took these photos of Wat Thammakai in Pathum Thani when living there for a short time... (near Nawanakhon – the pics were taken looking the southeast...). You once mentioned the strange Dhammakaya/Thammakai cult on your site. I have been there once and it was really quite strange – the giant assembly hall and the spaceship-like structure. (BTW: I wonder if no pilot ever complained about the bright light – it's exactly in the path of landing planes, 15 km north of Don Muang!)...*

Earlier: More on Dhammakaya – August 4, 2002

We've had lots of email about the [Slate article](#) on the odd Thai cult of Dhammakaya. Terry King alerts us to the [weird claims](#) the cult makes about the bombing of Bangkok during WWII: *At that time the inhabitants of the neighbourhood gazed up at the skies and were surprised to see large numbers of nuns from Wat Paknam floating in the air, intercepting the bombs dropped by the bombers and patting them with their bare hands to fall harmlessly in the water or uninhabited areas of forest.* It is also claimed that the Allies were going to test the first Atomic bomb by dropping it on Bangkok and that meditation by holy men prevented this.

[Making fun of Dhammakaya](#) – July

31, 2002

Another example of how things Thai are reported overseas:
a slate.com writer visits the Dhammakaya temple: *What
if today is ritual mass suicide day?*



(Photo: Nils)



(Photo: Nils)

'World's largest snake' shrinks to half reported size

January 4, 2004

Categories: Wildlife and Nature

['World's largest snake' shrinks to half reported size](#)

– *The Guardian*, January 4, 2004

The Guardian did exactly what 2Bangkok.com would have done if the giant snake were in Thailand—they went over and measured it themselves: *If Fragrant ever extends to 14.85m long he will be the most mind-boggling animal on earth because I measured him at somewhere between 6.5 and 7m... None of the pythons Shine has encountered weighed more than 100kg; he described the allegation that Fragrant weighs up to 447kg as "delightful".*

...Barker has two theories to account for the evolution of the record claim. They both centre on an allegation by Darmanto that Fragrant is in fact the spiritual ruler of the Kubu, a remote Sumatran tribe that shuns the outside world, and it took a year of negotiations with the elders before he could take it away. "If this is a spiritual ruler snake then perhaps it really can stretch and change size," Barker says. "The other is that the true giant snake remains in the jungle with the admiring tribe and it took them the year of negotiations to find another reticulated python] large enough to give to the government."

Earlier: [World's longest snake goes on show at tiny Indonesian zoo](#) –

AFP, December 30, 2003

Also: [World's Largest Snake Caught](#) – AP, December 29, 2003

Indonesian villagers claim to have captured a python that is almost 49.21 feet long and weighs nearly 992.07 pounds, an official said Monday. If confirmed, it would be the largest snake ever kept in captivity...

Thai islands transformed as Asia's rich live dream

January 4, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thai islands transformed as Asia's rich live dream](#)

– Reuters, January 4, 2004

... "In those days, people gave land away," said Chavalit as he smoked a cheroot and gazed from his durian and rambutan groves over Samui's forested hills down to the sea. "Who could know people would travel thousands of kilometers to lie on the beach?" ... "Traditionally, the mountain land was given to the favorite boy and the beach given to bad boys," said Ribail. "Now the bad boys are very rich because they sold to Bangkokians, foreigners or large hotel groups..."

January 5, 2004
Categories: Master Plans

The reality: The [comprehensive Thai map](#) (240kb) for the new lines in the next 6 years as well as the line in the next 20 years (shown as white dots). Probably better to check out the [Bangkok future mass transit map](#) created by Chatchawal Phansopa.

However, the former BMA governors insisted that "elevated mass transit system is the only option available." Governor Samak countered that "a 23 km elevated section to get 600,000 passengers a day is not

possible. It needs extensions to the suburbs to reach such a high goal—at least 30 km for each line " and nobody listened to him.

The results (for the Skytrain):

2000: 120,000 passengers a day

2001: 180,000 passengers a day

2002: 300,000 passengers a day

2003: 330,000-360,000 passengers a day

This resulted in 5 million baht for daily expenses and 4 million baht daily revenue—a loss of 1 million baht a day (2002). Even this year BTSC managed to get a marginal first profit of 0.7 million baht, it is not good enough. The interest rate payment of 0.8 million baht a day will put BTSC in serious trouble.

Even the first day as BMA Governor, Samak tried to carry on the policy to deal with Samrong and Taksin Extension which requires approval from the Traffic Policy Office. Even the URMAR done by foreigners is not good either—only 4.3 km (after Taksin Intersection) with a price tag for initial investment of 0.9 billion baht and 2 billion baht (65% Central – 35% BMA) is not good at all since it gives us four stations. Samak tried so hard to get the Samrong extension going, but with so much red tape has barred him from doing so by delaying the project four times.

He also asked the central government to support six extensions and new lines to the suburbs and neighbor provinces as well as the line to Rattanakosin Island according to BMA initiatives:

- 1) Mahachai (28 km – Southwest – Via Maeklong Railway -> Taksin Intersection – Talad Plooi -Mahachai)
- 2) Nakhon Pathom (56 km – West via Southern Railway -> Mochit – Bang Sue – Talingchan Nakhon Pathom)
- 3) Nonthaburi (14 km -> Mochit – Kaset – Kae Rai – Nonthaburi)
- 4) Pathum Thani (33 km Northwest-> Mochit – Kaset – Khae Rai – Pakkret – Pathum Thani)
- 5) Chacheongsao (45 km – East – Onnut – NBIA – Chacheongsao)
- 6) Samut Prakarn (25 km – South -> Samrong and Paknam Extension)

For the case of the Rattanakosin Extension, it will go from National Stadium to Charoenphong Intersection and then go along Saensab Canal and Mahanak Canal via Bo Bae Market before heading to Phan Fah Bridge. After that, it will go along Klong Lord of Wat Ratchanadda to BMA Office before ending up at Rattanakosin Hotel near Sake lane near Sanam Luang. This version will have no detrimental effect on Rattanakosin Island since it would be hidden by surrounding buildings.

However, the Traffic Policy Office has meddled by asking BMA to dig tunnels to extend the line across the Chao Phraya River and those damn NIMBYs around Thammasart and Thonburi came to meddle with the project as well. Thus the plan to go across Rattankosin been effectively aborted.

For the case of Phaholyothin Extension (from Mochit to National Memorial and then going along Lam Lookka Road to downtown Lam Looka at Klong 16), the Traffic Policy Office has allowed us to extend up to Donmaung—even though those who live around Rangsit from Klong 1-Klong 4 are waiting for this extension. If the Samrong Extension is finished sooner, the Park and Ride at Bang Na (near BITEC) will be a big boon to those who live around Bangna. The extension to either downtown Paknam or Thai Ban (near the Gulf of Thailand) will help those who live in Samut Prakarn.

For the case of Mahachai, Governor Samak tried to rent SRT land along Mahachai Line so BMA can construct the the new line parallel with Maeklong Railway. However, those damn Traffic Policy Office and MRTA people conspired to ask BMA to end the line at Bang Wah (Phetkasem Road)—even though MRTA Subway has not extended to Bang Khae yet.

BMA even asked Shanghai Metro to make three surveys for the route from Onnut to NBIA (23 km – 21 km in Bangkok and 2 km in Samut Prakarn) to please those who live around Onnut area as well as those who live in the eastern suburbs. However SRT and the Traffic Policy Office are standing in his way.

Even the 80 km ring line to connect all three sections of the Skytrain has not been approved since it has not had feasibility studies.

For the metro with 50 districts and the area of 1568 sq km, there are lots of people scattered around the metro area as well as in the surrounding six cities. If there is a place for the center station, Victory Monument is the only option now as it was ten years ago.

What Governor Samak can say for now is that if could do what he planned with support from the central government, he would be able to set opening dates for the routes that were planned.

Notes:

- 1) That is the same problem that plagued Tokyo Municipal Subway line (TOEI). It was TRTA (Teito Rapid Transit Authority) vs TOEI (Transportation Bureau of Tokyo Metropolitan Government) and TOEI Vs JREast. However, JREast and TRTA could work together though.
- 2) Every subway system has to be allowed to grow to meet demands. I have never heard that any city in the

world can build mass transit systems and then stop.

3) For the integration with other systems, the link at Bangwah is necessary. SRT will not allow BMA to extend the skytrain along the SRT routed unless SRT gets a share of revenue from BTSC and BMA. Renting will not be enough.

4) So many political struggles between those in Thai Rak Thai and BMA office... It is hard to say anything will happen until Thai Rak Thai have consolidated their power in the BMA office.

5) For the elevated train system in Chicago, they are back and better then ever... thus the claim for the shortened the elevated line in invalid.

6) System integration is necessary. Just take a look at Kuala Lumpur's PUTRA and STAR as a good example.

Trink did retire

January 6, 2004

Trink did retire

– January 6, 2004

Despite the deadly quiet from the *Bangkok Post* over the end of the Night Owl column (they were similarly quiet when the [Insider column was canned](#) after making fun of the [Paragon project](#)), the Asian edition of *Time* magazine reports Trink is gone and even gets a quote from the normally tight-lipped *Bangkok Post* editors:

[RETIRED.](#)

[BERNARD TRINK, 72](#), revered and reviled newspaperman whose "Night Owl" column extolled for nearly four decades the sybaritic pleasures available to expatriate men in Thailand's capital; in Bangkok. The Brooklyn-born Trink covered the city's go-go bars, massage parlors and pubs, making the rounds with his Thai wife in tow, owl medallion around his neck and maroon polyester pants hitched up to his chest. He wrote in a retro style in which prostitutes were "demimondaines," and press releases were preceded by the phrase, "The tom toms have it ..."
His signature sign-off was, "But I don't give a hoot."
The column was one of the most popular on the Bangkok Post's website—on average, 30,000 readers logged on to digest it every week—but the Post has decided to drop it.
Said editor Veera Prateepchaikul: "Do you want something that's modern, or something from 30-40 years ago?"

Foreigners see backlash at Pakistan religious school

January 7, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Foreigners](#)

[see backlash at Pakistan religious school](#) –

Reuters, January 7, 2004

Interesting story about Pakistani Abu Bakar Islamic University—thought to be a breeding ground for extremists—where 68 Thais are studying:... *After the students had left the room, members of the teaching staff expressed strongly anti-Semitic views, even to the point of voicing sympathy with Hitler...*

An expensive flight for Angkor Wat visitors

January 9, 2004

Categories: Cambodia

[An expensive flight for Angkor Wat visitors](#) –
KhmerIntelligence.org, January 9, 2004

The direct flight to Siem Reap is one of the most expensive in the world: *...it costs USD 270 to flight a distance of about 500 km in about in 45 minutes with a return ticket in economy class... Following the well-organized demise of national flag carrier Royal Air Cambodge in October 2001, Bangkok Airways and Siem Reap Airways obtained the monopoly for the fast-expanding and very lucrative Bangkok – Siem Reap flight after inheriting Royal Air Cambodge's precious flying rights.*

It goes on further to allege that Bangkok Airways pays 'commissions' to the Hun Sen government as well as shares in the airline. That information from Khmer Intelligence with a grain of salt. Sometimes they have great inside info that we have been able to verify—other times they go way over the top with anti-Hun Sen musings.

On top of the Royal Charoen Krung Tower

January 11, 2004

Categories: Buildings



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Thai Wah II from street level



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: State Tower (formerly RCK Tower)

Battle for the world's highest

outdoor restaurant – January 11, 2004

Sources inform us of the impending competing advertising campaigns between the Vertigo Restaurant on the roof of the Thai Wah II building and the newly opened Sirocco Restaurant on the rooftop of the State Tower (formerly RCK Tower). Vertigo often claims to be the world's highest outdoor restaurant, but Sirocco may be a bit higher—they are on the 62nd and 63d floors of their respective buildings. The respective restaurants are conducting studies to get figures to back up the claims.

Earlier: [Vertigo Restaurant on top of Thai Wah II Tower](#)

Update:/span> RCK

Tower renamed State Tower – December 24, 2003

The 68-storey, 330,000-square-metre Royal Charoen Krung Tower (RCK Tower) has been renamed "State Tower" and is being managed by the revitalized Challenge Group (controlled by arms dealer and property development magnate Rasri Bualert). The Challenge Group intends to make State Tower a top dining and entertainment complex which includes corporate facilities. The restaurant on the 64th floor is open. Rangsan Torsuwan was the original architect and developer of the RCK Tower (he also designed the Amarin Plaza

at Rajadamri and the 36-storey Bangkok River Park Condo in Chinatown). The tower was originally named Silom Precious Tower.

UPDATE: *The Nation* reported on January 26, 2004 that the registered name of the building remains Royal Charoen Krung Tower.

[Condos at State Tower](#) – *Bangkok Post*, January 26, 2004

...Originally called Silom Precious Tower, the five-rai site was renamed Royal Charoen Krung Tower or RCK Tower, before it became State Tower last month. The registered name though remains Royal Charoen Krung Tower.

On Top of the Royal Chareon Krung Tower
Last updated June 30, 2002



Inside the three-story dome—the tracks for a revolving restaurant.



The Chao Phraya River winds out to sea.



RCK's unfinished smaller twin—this derelict building is visible at the end of Sathorn Road as you drive toward Taksin Bridge. In the lobby of Royal Charoen Krung (RCK) Tower is a drawing of this building completed with a gold dome.



Another view of the Taksin Bridge leading to the new Skytrain extension.

The [Phaseecharoen Elevated Way project](#) that has been converted into a [Skytrain](#) extension.



Straight down– Centre Point Building is at the top.
The road is Charoen Krung Road.



Looking back up the river– In the foreground is the antenna on top of the Communications Authority of Thailand (CAT) building.
In the upper right is the [Rama VIII Bridge](#).



The green area is one of the few large forested areas in Bangkok. The river wraps around it.



Looking upstream...



Into the city—the Silom and Sathorn areas. The tall structure on the left in the distance is the Baiyoke II, Thailand's tallest building. The Skytrain tracks can be seen on the right side going along Sathorn Road.

Here's the [Royal Charoen Krung Tower website](#)

Below: Towards the sea—the Chao Phraya River meanders out of town on the right side, passing the Thai Farmers Bank Tower (the black building in the distance in the middle right) and then twists around the green area on the left and eventually meets the sea. The sea was just visible from the top of RCK, but is not really visible in any of these photos. The expressway (in the middle) goes to the Rama IX Bridge, but the bridge not really visible in this photo.



On top of the Royal Charoen Krung Tower

January 11, 2004
Categories: Buildings



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)
Above: Thai Wah II from street level



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They envy us

January 11, 2004

[They](#)

[envy us](#) – *Hi Pakistan*,

January 11, 2004

Despite the often myopic complaining that goes on about everything in Thailand, the reality is that the rest of the developing world regards Thailand with envy. This is especially true of India and Pakistan where frequent editorials lament the lack of public planning and good government services that exist in Thailand: ...*There can be no hope because there is no law. Someone who bumped into a major's car – heavens must have caved in at that moment in time, had to rough it out in a jail for two nights. The major had the clout; the civilian could only beg for mercy. Those who ask for a citywide train network, a sky train like the one that's rescued Bangkok's millions are laughed away...*

A Thai Marxist's view on politics

January 16, 2004

Categories: Thai Politics

[A](#)

[Thai Marxist's view on politics](#) –

The Irrawaddy, January 16, 2004

Professor Ji has established a reputation as a dissenting voice in modern Thai society. His Marxist-influenced perspective has been rigorously applied to Southeast Asia has helped prevent his analysis from veering too far into the theoretical. While few in Thailand agree with him, many at least have become aware that he offers an alternative view...

How others see Thailand

January 17, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

How others see Thailand

– January 17, 2004

Get ready for more articles like this one: [Rebel](#)

[raids see new challenge for Thailand's 'scary'](#)

[leader](#) (*Sunday Herald*, January 17, 2003). These

days, Thaksin's main sin is his cooperation with the U.S.'s

war on terror: *Last November, Shinawatra prepared Bangkok*

for a Pacific nations summit by cramming hundreds of Cambodian

beggars on military aircraft home, and concealing slums

behind billboards. "I like Shinawatra," said one

Thai shopkeeper. "But he scares me." ... Shinawatra,

whose policies are still backed by more than 80% of polled

voters, seems to want the unchallenged authority he has

in his own party. He also controls all television stations,

and promotes his relatives to top military jobs.

Since Thaksin came to power there have been a couple bursts

of [negative news](#) from the foreign

press.

Cabinet meet a sorry spectacle

January 17, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Cabinet](#)

[meet a sorry spectacle](#) – *The Nation*,

January 17, 2004

The Nation has a blistering assessment of the live cabinet meeting: *Columnist Pliew Si-ngern of Thai Post was spot on. We should scrap the term "Cabinet resolution" and replace it with "Thaksin says". What we saw from the "historic" live telecast of the Cabinet meeting on Tuesday tells us as much... But if every closed-door Cabinet meeting is like this one, then God help Thailand. When the ministers opened their mouths, it was either to express total agreement with the leader or for the sole purpose of flattering him...*

Various Chao Phraya bridge plans

January 20, 2004

Categories: Bridges



(Photo:
2Bangkok.com)

The Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road (southern section)
completion bridge

(from a [Ministry of Transport and Communications](#)
display at the Intertraffic Asia 2002 convention – June 12-14, 2002)

Details of the new Chao Phraya River bridges

– translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thairath*,
January 20, 2004

For the four newly proposed bridges across the Chao Phraya, it will
use 70% central government funds and 30% BMA funds. BMA will handle
the construction since all bridges are within the jurisdiction of BMA.

1) **Kiakkai Bridge** to connect Thaharn Road with Local Road along
the Southern Railway – 4.4 billion baht -> 2.4 billion baht for land
expropriation and 2.0 billion baht for construction.

2) **Tha Ratchawongse Pier – Tha Dindaeng Bridge** to relieve traffic
from Memorial I Bridge and Phra Pokklao Bridge, increase the capacity
to handle the traffic across the Chao Phraya and cut traffic by 5% –
1.020 billion baht -> 0.1 billion baht for land expropriation, 0.9
billion baht for construction and 0.02 billion for design.

3) **Lad Yah – Mahaphruttharam Bridge** to relieve traffic along
Rama 4 Road and allow the rail link between Hua Lamphong and Wongwian
Yai and eventually the Taksin Transportation Center in the same way
as the original Rama 6 Bridge before conversion into a railway bridge
– 2.4 billion baht -> 0.8 billion baht for land expropriation and
1.6 billion baht for construction.

4) **Chan Road – Charoen Nakhon Bridge** from Charoengkrung Pracharak
(near MEA Yannawa Office, Thanon Tok) to go across Chao Phraya and then
to Charoeng Nakhon Road before ending up at Ratboora Road – 3.260 billion
baht -> 1.5 billion baht for land expropriation and 1.76 billion
baht.

Traffic Policy Office has asked for 180 million baht to deal with design
detail:

- 1) Kiakkai Bridge -> 60 million baht
- 2) Ratchawongse – Tha Dindaeng Bridge – 20 million baht
- 3) Mahaphruttharam – Lad Ya Bridge-> 50 million baht

4) Chan Road – Charoeng Nakhon Bridge -> 50 million baht

Here's *Bangkok Post's* article on the subject: [Four](#)

[new bridges in 3 years](#) – *Bangkok Post*,

January 17, 2004

...The project consists of a 2.6km four-lane bridge in Kiakkai, a 450m four-lane bridge from Song Wat road to Tha Din Daeng pier, a bridge from Chan road at Charoenkrung Pracharat Hospital to Charoen Nakhon road, and a six-lane bridge from Maha Phruttharam road to Lat Ya.

New bridge across

Chao Phraya River at Pakkret – translated

and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi and 'Prin' from *Dailynews*,

November 27, 2003

The bridge and Industrial Ring Road at Pakkret Junction are being built. The Rural Highway Department has transferred the area to TNN and Kajima-Tokyu consortium, the contractors for the construction of the bridge for the Industrial Ring Road. Now it is 10% done (pillars and foundation pins). The project has been delayed and extended to 2005 since the Rural Highway Department just finished removing the old piers to the new sites. If contractors still get the job done late, they will pay a fine of 1 million baht a day per contract (3 million a day for the whole project).

The project has two contracts. The first contract (east-west) is the elevated way and the bridge over the Chao Praya river from Pakkret-Cheangwattana Intersection. The second contract is the road from Rattathibet to Highway 345. Both contracts have been signed on September 26, 2003 and the construction will be started on December 1, 2003 – to be done in early 2006. The budget is 3,000 million baht. After it is finished it will help the traffic situation at Changwattana Road, Pranangkaow Bridge, Nonthanuri Bridge and also Rattathibet Road.

The East-West road will be named "Nakhon In Road" and the North-South road will be named "Ratchaphruek Road". Ratchaphruek Road will also be covered in the second contract of Pakkret Bridge. Therefore Ratchaphruek road will be in two sections, the first one from Phetkasem to Rattathibet and the second one from Rattathibet to Highway 345. The Rural Highway Department asked the Department of Fine Arts to give a name to the new bridge—either "Phachomklao Bridge," "Phra Chulachomklao Bridge," or "Chaloemraj 72 Phansah." So far, the Department of Rural Highways prefers "Chaloemraj 72 Phansah" as the most appropriate name.

Four projects will support Suvannabhum Airport. The project will start in 2004 and include improvements on four roads: Wat Sriwarenoi Road -> Wat Sriwaree Noy (Wat Sriwaree Noy is the temple nearest the airport) Thepraj-Ratkabang -> Thepharak – Ladkrabang (the road to Kin Kao intersection), Baan Poo, and Niyomyatra. The budget is 300 million baht.

21-km

Bangkok southern bypass to be reviewed – *Bangkok Post*, February 5, 2003

More on the background of the ring road project is [here](#).

Outer ringroad bridge –
September 26, 2006



Jerry reports: *Here are some pictures of the outer ringroad bridge tower I took yesterday. A board displaying the completion date in 2550 (next year).*

(Photo: Jerry)



(Photo: Jerry)

Bridge for the Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road (southern section)

This bridge crosses the Chao Phraya River to complete the existing ring road loop. This smaller bridge is part of the Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road (southern section). Thus far, the southern section of Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road runs from Bang Bon Interchange to Suksawat Road. The Highway Department is trying to find a contractor for the bridge and the rest of Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road. All of the following drawings and maps are from a [Ministry of Transport and Communications](#) display at the Intertraffic Asia 2002 convention (June 12-14, 2002). This bridge would simply cross the Chao Phraya River.



(Photo:
2Bangkok.com)



(Photo:
2Bangkok.com)

Under the Chulachomklao Bridge

January 21, 2004

Categories: Bridges, Laos

[Thai-Lao](#)

[Friendship Bridge to open to traffic in July](#) – VNA,

May 20, 2004

The 2nd Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge will open to traffic in July as 67 percent of the construction has completed.

The bridge will connect Thailand's Leoi province with Lao province of Chayaburi over the Heung River. It is one of Leoi province's border trade strategies, Governor Samrerng Chuachavalit told Thai National News Bureau. The bridge will strengthen the relationship between Thailand and Laos, as well as boost border trade and support the tourism industry between the two countries. It will be the gateway to Luang Prabang, the world heritage site.

[Bridge](#)

[and highway news from TAT](#) – January 21, 2004

From a Tourism Authority of Thailand press release on new bridges and highways:

2nd THAI-LAOS FRIENDSHIP BRIDGE

The first Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge across the Mekong River opened in April, 1994, after a three-year construction period funded by the Australian Government. Linking the Thai province of Nong Khai to the Laotian capital of Vientiane, it has become the most important source of visitors to Laos. This year, construction is to begin on the second Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge across the Mekong, linking the northeastern Thai province of Mukdaharn and the western Laotian province of Savannakhet. Scheduled for completion in 2005, the 1.6 kilometre bridge is being partially funded by the Japanese government.

...it will link with Highway No. 9 in Laos at Savannakhet and beyond to the central region of Vietnam, opening up road access to major cities like the former Vietnamese capital of Hue, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the port of Danang.

THIRD THAI-LAOS BRIDGE

A third bridge linking Thailand and Lao PDR across the Huang River, one of the tributaries of the mighty Mekong, is due to start in early 2004. Thailand will bear the 70.75 million baht (about US\$ 1.8 million) cost of the 3.3 kilometre bridge which will link the northeastern province of Loei, Thailand, with the province of Sainyabuli, Lao PDR.

...Although the bridge will not immediately have an international immigration checkpoint, that is a logical next step for governments to discuss after it is opened.

...There is yet another bridge across the Mekong River, the Lao-Nippon Bridge funded by the Japanese, in the Laotian province of Pakse. This opened in August 2000 but is located entirely in Laotian territory while the other three are cross-border bridges.

THAILAND-INDIA HIGHWAY LINK VIA MYANMAR

A critical section of the long-standing Asian Highway project has come closer to completion with an agreement by the governments of Thailand, Myanmar and India to develop a US\$700 million 1,360-km highway linking the three countries...

The highway will link Moreh in the West Indian state of Manipur with Mae

Sot district, Tak province, in Northwest Thailand, passing through the historic temple city of Bagan in Myanmar.
The first phase of 263 kilometres from Mae Sot to Thaton in Myanmar will begin in early 2004 and is expected to cost US\$45 million or 1.8 billion baht...

[Bridge](#)
[to link Mae Sai and Tachilek](#) – *The Nation*,
May 20, 2003

[New bridge](#)
[to Laos on the Huang River at Loei Province](#)
– MCOT (beware, this is a slow site), February 18, 2002

The bridge that gambling built
– 21:19, April 4, 2002
AFP – [Cambodia](#)
[opens its longest bridge, links with Thailand](#)
MCOT – [Thailand-Cambodia](#)
[have new bridge linking the two neighbouring countries](#)
From the [Post](#)
[website](#) – *A new bridge linking Trat province with Ko Kong in Cambodia will be opened by Supreme Commander Narong Yuthawong, representing the defence minister, and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen tomorrow.... The 200-million baht bridge spans the Krang Kruen river. Construction was funded by Pat Supapa, owner of Casino Koh Kong International.*

Questions remain over Thai competence

January 21, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Questions](#)

[remain over Thai competence](#) – foodproductiondaily.com,

January 21, 2004

While this article uses many quotes from the *Post*, it has some interesting perspective of how the food industry views the bird flu in Thailand: *But not everyone is as confident in Thai assurances that the country remains free from the virus. "Thailand's leaders characteristically express over-confidence and premature over-reassurance in the face of the unknown and unproven," Jody Lanard, a US-based risk communication consultant told FoodProductionDaily.com. "They have done the same thing regarding SARS preparation, and regarding terrorism."*

Latest on TRF and NRCT

January 22, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

Latest on TRF and NRCT

– January 22, 2004

Latest inside info: High academics are still recommending that TRF (Thai Research Fund) not be merged with NRCT (National Research Council of Thailand) or that NRCT be recreated outside the civil service with a separate entity be created for coordinating everything.

Politicians and other big men have been lobbying Thaksin about how bad TRF is because those big men would have to depend on TRF to fund their pet projects or pet people. NRCT will do that for politicians, but TRF will not. Probably there is an element of trying to keep TRF from being too sure of themselves and too independent—to make them realize that politicians are ultimately the bosses.

More on the NESDB –

December 20, 2003

For whatever reason, quite a few people are interested in the coming change at NESDB. Suthichai Yoon wrote an editorial

([End](#)

[of NESDB's role: should we laugh or cry?](#), *The Nation*,

December 11, 2003) complaining about the impending

change. Porametee Vimolsiri, Executive Director of

Macroeconomic Office, NESDB, wrote a rebuttal to to this editorial

([Khun](#)

[Suthichai Yoon: Neither laugh nor cry](#), *The Nation*,

December 20, 2003). This is the kind of thing *The Nation*

has been asking for—a dialogue with those it criticizes instead of pressure to stop its criticizing.

Porametee writes: *On Friday, in the article "End of NESDB's Role: Should we laugh or cry?" you bemoaned the changing role of NESDB based on the new administrative framework...*

Is it possible for the politicians to have total control of planning and to write whatever they wish into the new plan?

I believe, despite the half-baked political system you have described, it is not so easy nowadays to write a poor or devious national plan which the people and international investors cannot spot.

Earlier: Who will fund research – December 17, 2003

This info was passed to us by a concerned reader: *The end of independence in many things... The Nation newspaper published an article* ([End](#)

[of NESDB's role: should we laugh or cry?](#) *The Nation*,

December 11, 2003). *It says that, on the basis of a government*

draft to be finalised next January, the Thai Research Fund will be probably dissolved and pass under the direct control

of a new unified centralized research agency led by the Government through the people now at the NRCT (National Research Council of Thailand).

...as far as I know (but I might be wrong!) it has always been in practice impossible (for individual researchers without direct links to the Ministries) to get grants under the (five years!) plans of the NRCT ... it seems that, also for Thailand, the end of independent funding for research has finally arrived! FYI, NRCT (National Research Council of Thailand) is known for being very bureaucratic, riddled with favoritism, with poor quality control, and outdated in general. Pure civil service mind. In contrast, TRF funds based on output in terms of patents or international journal articles, in any field, so in that sense is strictly accountable.

Cambodian hybrid motorcycle/WiFi network

January 26, 2004

Categories: Cambodia

[Cambodian](#)

[hybrid motorcycle/WiFi network](#) – New

York Times, January 26, 2004

News from our neighbors: *In Cambodia, WiFi-equipped motorcyclists pull up to schools, download all the email, drive to the next village, and dump off copies of locally-destined mail, picking up that community's load and delivering it along to the next town.*

Is your motorcycle stolen?

January 26, 2004

Is your motorcycle stolen?

– January 26, 2004

Rumor has it that many bikes for sale in town can be found on this list: [Stolen Motorcycles Register and Recovery](#).

Does Thaksin face a credibility crisis?

January 26, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

Does Thaksin face a credibility crisis?

– January 26, 2004

Despite the editorials gleefully chastising the Thaksin administration for getting caught trying to cover up the avian-flu crisis, the reality is that the average Joe (or Somjai) on the street completely sympathizes with the concept of covering things up to protect the country. Other nations already understand that promises that "there is no problem" are just the way things are done here until the real facts are known or it is impossible to keep it a secret. No one was really shocked by this or should be too excited by this non-scandal.

On the set of Alexander

January 27, 2004

Categories: Film and TV

Shooting *Alexander*

January 27, 2004

Here are some photos from Oliver Stone's new film, *Alexander*, part of which was shot in Lopburi province, Thailand. Anyone have shots of the big battle scenes?

Also: What things cost –

February 5, 2004

Oliver Stone's *Alexander* is shooting at Pha Taem National Park. The park would receive a fee of 50,000 baht from the movie producer. ([Close eye on Oliver Stone](#), *Bangkok Post*, February 5, 2004)



(Photo: Marcus Edwards)



(Photo: Marcus Edwards)
Makeup tent for extras



(Photo: Marcus Edwards)



(Photo: Marcus Edwards)

Extras in their costumes



(Photo: Marcus Edwards)



(Photo: Marcus Edwards)
Extras on horseback



(Photo: Marcus Edwards)
Someone from the crew named Darwin



(Photo: Marcus Edwards)
More extras on horseback



(Photo: Marcus Edwards)

More on the online Bangkok maps

January 27, 2004

Categories: Maps

More on the online Bangkok maps

– January 27, 2004

Chatchawal Phansopa writes: ...*The Singapore Government-affiliated National Trade Union Congress (NTUC), together with a few other Singapore companies, was recently ordered to remove maps that it had illegally taken from streetdirectory.com and put it onto its website. Besides, the maps of Bangkok featured on www.streetdirectory.com was obtained from Bangkok Guide (they look exactly identical to printed copies of Bangkok Guide maps), for which I believe Bangkok Guide received some royalty fees.*

Earlier: Free Bangkok maps – January 26, 2004

Being in the map business must be tough these days... Peter pointed out these [free Bangkok maps](#).

Burma's Communist Party launches a new website

January 27, 2004

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[Burma's](#)

[Communist Party launches a new website](#)

– *The Irrawaddy*, January 27, 2004

The Communist Party of Burma recently launched its new website, in preparation for "the last battle"

in the decades-long conflict between the country's military rulers and the people, [according to the website](#)...

The Communist Party of Burma, or CPB, collapsed in 1989 after many of its members mutinied against their leaders. Today, most of its members live in Chinese towns bordering northern Burma and deeper inside China...

The party was founded in 1939 by young dissidents who played a key role in Burma's fight against British colonial rule, including independence hero and national leader Aung San, father of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

The party took up arms against Rangoon in 1948. It also took part in the 1988 pro-democracy movement and many activists were jailed for having suspected links to the party.

Thai baht for regional trade

January 27, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Thai](#)

[baht for regional trade](#) – *The Irrawaddy*,

January 27, 2004

*Thailand wants to use its currency instead of US dollars
for trade with Burma, Cambodia and Laos.*

The Bird Flu Scare

January 27, 2004

Categories: Health, The Thaksin Years

The government strategy for the bird flu was to deny there was any bird flu at all despite evidence to the contrary:

Earlier: Roasting the PM – January 27, 2004

The foreign press is going all out in predicting the PM's downfall ([Bird flu outbreak may be downfall of Thai PM](#), *ABC Online*, January 27, 2004). However, there is nothing in the article that might lead one to believe that the PM is in trouble. The reporters are clearly having a good time questioning him though:

JOURNALIST 2: How can you say that, how can you be so confident Prime Minister? THAKSIN

SHINAWATRA: I know what I'm doing.

Earlier: [Questions remain over Thai competence](#) – *foodproductiondaily.com*, January 21, 2004

While this article uses many quotes from the *Post*, it has some interesting perspective of how the food industry views the bird flu in Thailand: *But not everyone is as confident in Thai assurances that the country remains free from the virus. "Thailand's leaders characteristically express over-confidence and premature over-reassurance in the face of the unknown and unproven," Jody Lanard, a US-based risk communication consultant told FoodProductionDaily.com. "They have done the same thing regarding SARS preparation, and regarding terrorism."*

Earlier: From *The Onion*: ["Thai Premier Eats Entire Bucket Of Chicken To Calm Bird-Flu Fears"](#) – February 26, 2004

Thai Premier Eats Entire Bucket Of Chicken To Calm Bird-Flu Fears

To allay concerns about the safety of Thai poultry following an outbreak of the H5N1 bird virus, Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra ate an entire 15-piece bucket of fried chicken on live television Monday. "See, it's fine, this chicken," Shinawatra said as he tore into a leg. "You are all worried for nothing. It's delicious." In a Carson's Group International poll taken after the broadcast, 63 percent of viewers said they wouldn't be afraid to eat chicken raised in Thailand, but 94 percent said they were afraid of Shinawatra.

Photos from the world record parachute drop over Sanam Luang

January 28, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News



(Photo: Marcus Edwards)

Photos from the world record
parachute
drop over Sanam Luang – January
28, 2004

Right: Caught in a tree

Left: Parachutist dangling
over the roof of a car parked at Sanam
Luang



(Photo: Marcus Edw



(Photo: Marcus Edwards)

Above: Some of the 672 sky drivers heading
towards Sanam Luang



(Photo: Marcus Edwards)

Left: Another parachutist caught in a tree.

Below: This parachutists just missed coming down on the spikes on a fence at Thammasat University.



(Photo: Marcus Edwards)

Earlier: [Photos from the mass parachute drop](#) – January 27, 2004

The interesting one is this [great photo](#) of the drop site.

Earlier: Details of the mass parachute drop on Saturday – January 23, 2004

Local papers only gave the vaguest details, so here are all the specifics: 672 parachutists are planning to land in Sanam Luang at 10:30am on Saturday. The website for the project is theworldteam.com:

The World Team '04 international contingent of 430+ skydivers will join 240+ elite Thai skydivers to set a new World Record Mass Freefall Jump in downtown Bangkok at the Sanam Luang Royal Ceremonial Grounds, near the Royal Palace, on 24 January 2004. Six Royal Thai Air Force Hercules C-130's will fly in loose formation at 2,200 meters / 7,200 feet over the Sanam Luang Royal Ceremonial Grounds and drop 672 skydivers to set a new Guinness Book World Record.

Lamenting Trink in The Nation

January 28, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Lamenting Trink in *The Nation*

– January 28, 2004

Love him or hate him or just wonder what the fuss was about (he was, after all, reduced to reviewing the prices of grocery items), it is strange that the *Post* has brooked no discussion of Trink's departure. *The Nation* however has been having fun poking fun at this. The latest is a letter to the editor in *The Nation* (January 28, 2004):

Silence after Night Owl's fall

I was no fan of Bernard Trink's Night Owl Column in the Bangkok Post, but after his forced departure recently I was expecting to read an avalanche of mail in the Postbag. Instead we readers were treated to an Orwellian silence.

Which is why I'm posting this comment here.

Frank Capalupo

Bangkok

Indeed, many readers have commented on the increasingly bland tone of the news in the *Post*.

Tibet film divides Bangkok press

January 28, 2004

Categories: Film and TV

[Tibet](#)

[film divides Bangkok press](#) – *Hindustan*

Times, January 28, 2004

Cry of the Snow Lion, which was in the making for 10 years, does not skirt around the political questions that lie at the heart of the Tibet problem. The director addresses the issues head-on and comes up with a cinematic tract that makes no bones about taking sides. That, more than anything else, explains the less than friendly treatment Peosay got from the pro-China section of the press here...

When headline writers fail

January 29, 2004

When headline writers fail

– January 29, 2004

The AP has an article about Indonesia not killing birds to halt bird flu. Unfortunately, this is the title of the article: [Thailand Defies WHO Order to Kill Poultry](#). (*Associated Press*, January 29, 2004).

More on the party cars

January 29, 2004

More on the party cars –

January 29, 2004

Earlier this week BoingBoing.net pointed out how some people in San Francisco have [parties in the last car of the subway](#). Now the *New York Times* has an [article](#) on it.

Civil servant ID smart card

January 31, 2004
Categories: 2Bangkok News

Civil servant

ID smart card – January 31, 2004

Chatchawal Phansopa writes: *You might have seen the prototype of the new smart identity card in today's newspaper. That is for civilians. This one (right and below) is for civil servants. Source: OCSC (Office of the Civil Service Commission)*



UPDATE Conor writes:

There are a number of problems with the new smart card prototype:

- (1) The typesetting is poor in that the Thai diacritics are floating high instead of rising and falling with the text under them. Look at the “mai-tho” over “jao-nah-thee” in the top line for example. The cause of this is using a software/OS combination which does not fully support Thai.*
- (2) Line spacing, indentation, font sizes, and distance from text to edge of card could be made more consistent and improved.*

- (3) The translations are suspect: “Thai National Officer” does not seem a natural or logical translation. “Government official” (or “Govt. official” to fit) or even “Civil servant” (is that different?) would be clearer. It would also be clearer and more consistent to have “first name” or “given name” instead of just “name”. You could also make a case for standardizing transliterations of names into English (the “c” in the sample person’s surname would normally be “kh”) and rearranging the card to be more/completely bilingual.*

Another mall in the ‘Crucible’

February 7, 2004

Categories: Buildings



(Drawing: S.P.C. Properties
and Development Co., Ltd.)

Another mall in the ‘Crucible’

– February 7, 2004

Yes, there is another huge shopping mall being built in

[Bangkok’s](#)

[Crucible of Construction](#). It is the Platinum Fashion

Mall developed by S.P.C. Properties and Development Co.,

Ltd. They are preparing a website, but it is not up yet.



(Drawing: S.P.C. Properties and
Development Co., Ltd.)

Thai Transport Website Watch

February 7, 2004

Categories: Mass Transit

Website watch

– February 7, 2004

Chatchawal Phansopa notes: *On February 6, the BMRT pages at the Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning website have been restored ([Development](#)*

[Plan for Bangkok Mass Rapid Transit](#) (BMRT) and the [map](#).

The MRTA's official website

at www.mrta.or.th is

still down. It website has disappeared since the New Year.

UPDATE: Justin informs us: I

think they changed it to <http://www.mrta.co.th>.]

Also the government has unveiled the [Thailand](#)

[Knowledge Center](#). Like most

government sites, it is up one day and down the next.

Dawn at the Vertigo

February 8, 2004

Categories: Buildings



(Photo: Rapee)



(Photo: Rapee)



(Photo: Rapee)



(Photo: Rapee)



(Photo: Rapee)



(Photo: Rapee)



(Photo: Rapee)

The amazing 'field of pipes'

February 8, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

The amazing 'field of pipes'

– February 8, 2004

After ncr [mentioned](#)

[this on the forum](#), we went to investigate. Between pillars 96 and 106 along Ngam Wongwan Road (east of Phahon Yothin Road) is a huge bog filled with termite mounds and hundreds (perhaps over 1000) of pipes or pilings of some kind driven into the ground. There is no sign nor access road into the site. Anyone know what these things are?



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



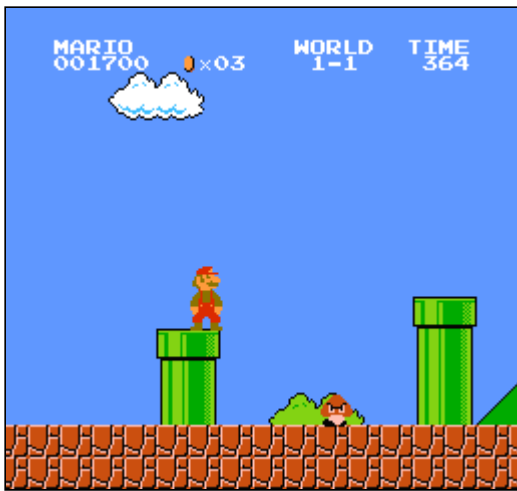
(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Pipe mystery

solved? – February 14,
2004

Pook started a [thread](#)

at Pantip.com about the field of pipes.



Above and below: After photo enhancement, Pantip-ers made some startling discoveries...

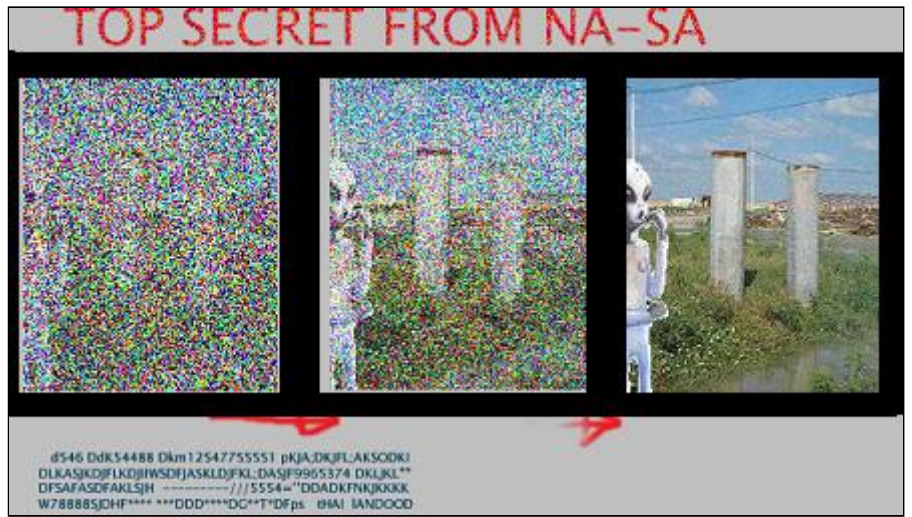


These
'pipes'
might
be for
ground
preparation
or testing.
There were



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

quite a few
(right)
around the
[new
airport
construction
site](#).
However,
readers
on
Pantip.com
also feel
these are
part of the
alien
conspiracy
(right).



Construction of the Suvarnabhumi Airport

February 9, 2004

Categories: Airports and Airlines

February 9, 2004 – CONSTRUCTION AT THE SUVANABHUMI AIRPORT

Also: [August 3, 2003 construction photos](#)

Also: [June 7, 2004 construction photos](#)

Also: [August 31, 2004 construction photos](#)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Main terminal building—all the Supertrusses are up.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Some of the internal structures in the main terminal being constructed.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

A sense of scale—notice the crane on top of one of the structures being constructed in the main terminal.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Detail of a Supertruss with connecting roof supports.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

One of the concourses



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

One of the concourses with various roof supports in the foreground.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Closeup of some kind of guard stand with an umbrella over it.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

The same shot as above, but a wider view.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

End of the main terminal where it connects to the concourses.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Another shot of the end of the main terminal.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Viewing stand on the north side of the main terminal.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Internal structures being constructed in the concourses.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Dusty view of more external work being done on concourses.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

In the foreground workers construct the extensive drainage channels that crisscross the site.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

View of the main terminal building from the north.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Elevated entrance roads to the site have yet to be constructed.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Meteorological Services Center on the far east side of the site.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Eaves ready to be installed on the building.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Truss sections that will stretch between the Supertrusses.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

More eaves pieces in front of Concourse C.

**More airport info
on 2Bangkok.com**

[August 31, 2004 construction photos](#)

[June 8, 2004 construction
photos](#)

[February 9, 2004 construction photos](#)

[August 4, 2003 construction photos](#)

[Airport
Rail Link news](#)

[Bangkok
Airport Watch – When will it be completed?](#)

[Airport Quick Facts
Background/History of the Project](#)

[Latest News](#)

[Diagram and model photos](#)

[Links](#)

Microsoft develops XP 'Light' for Thailand

February 9, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Microsoft develops XP 'Light' for Thailand](#) –

February 9, 2004

From /.: GoatJuggler writes with this Bangkok Post report that "Microsoft announced plans to develop a discounted, slightly crippled version of Windows XP for Thailand."

Another North Korean attempted kidnapping in Thailand?

February 13, 2004

Categories: North Korea

Another North Korean
attempted kidnapping in Thailand?

– February 13, 2004

Don pointed out this [mention](#)
of an attempted North Korean kidnapping in Thailand last
month: *Kim said North Korean agents tried to kidnap
the younger Kang in Thailand in late January, in what
the activist said was a failed attempt to retrieve some
of the documents. Christian Solidarity said the younger
Kang later went into hiding. Kim said Chinese authorities
arrested the older Kang, his wife and a younger son at
the border with Laos. The activist said it wasn't clear
whether China had sent the family members back to North
Korea or was still holding them.*

ATM troubles?

February 13, 2004

ATM troubles?

– February 13, 2004

Without any prompting, we have heard the same story from three people in the past three weeks—they tried to withdraw money from a Bangkok Bank ATM, a message on the screen said "Out of order," they did not get any money, but later found the money they requested had been deducted from their account. After reporting the incident to Bangkok Bank, their money was cheerfully returned. All three people felt lucky they had closely checked their balance or they might not have realized the money was gone. More on this story is in the [forum](#).

News site registration examined

February 16, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

News site registration examined

– February 16, 2004

Earlier this month, the *Bangkok Post* moved to a registration system for their website. [Techdirt](#) has an interesting thread on why registration for news sites never work: *...sites that require registration and/or demographic info tend to get many fewer visitors and a ton of bogus data... This certainly doesn't help them get more advertising, but the fewer readers does mean they'll get less advertising...*

Earlier: Breaking links – February 5, 2004

If you notice, the *Bangkok Post* today moved to a php-based link system—breaking all existing links yet again.

Earlier: [The](#)

[Bangkok Post and urban legends](#)

AOL, Earthlink Sue Spammers

February 19, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[AOL, Earthlink Sue Spammers](#) – February 19, 2004

...AOL alleges that two other members of the spam ring are Thailand residents Jonathan Beyer and Joseph Conrad. AOL alleges that Beyer, a U.S. citizen residing in Thailand, headed the spam ring and, in addition to spamming, also operates a number of adult Web sites. AOL alleges that Conrad, also a U.S. citizen residing in Thailand, assisted in establishing and running Beyer's Internet operations. AOL has already taken legal action against Beyer and Conrad in a lawsuit filed in April 2003, now pending in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia.

Bangkok Post editor Veera Prateepchaikul is fired

February 20, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Bangkok Post

editor Veera Prateepchaikul is fired –

Reuters & The Nation, February 20, 2004

...Bangkok Post reporters said Veera, a long-serving journalist at the paper and its editor for the past 21 months, had resisted management efforts to have the paper soften its critical coverage of government policies of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. "He has in effect been sacked despite the beautiful words given by the management that the decision is a promotion," said Bangkok Post reporter Ampa Santimatanedol. "The management may have been concerned that the newspaper's editorial policy under Veera has frustrated their business interest by its constant attacks on the government," she said.

...Some Bangkok Post reporters said some of their earlier stories had been withdrawn apparently over concerns that they would make major shareholders unhappy. Post Publishing is 30 percent owned by the family of retail business tycoon Suthikiart Chirathivat, 20 percent by the SCMP Group, publisher of Hong Kong's South China Morning Post, and 3.7 percent by Thailand's Bangkok Bank PCL.

Earlier: What happened to the Insider column in the *Bangkok Post*?

– April 25, 2003

Several people have asked what happened to the beloved Insider column in the *Bangkok Post*. When 2Bangkok.com first mocked the Paragon website (someone has mirrored the original Paragon website [here](#)),

we also challenged the local press to do the same. The Insider took up the challenge and [poked](#)

[fun](#) at the English used on the site. 2B learned that the Insider article resulted in a warning from powerful people involved in both the *Post* board and the [Paragon development](#) not to make fun of the Paragon in the future.

Then doing the Insider column was "not fun anymore."

The Insider was offered a new job within the newspaper that conveniently made it not possible to continue the column.

Also: [Insurers](#)

[Shun 'Sick Note' Politicians](#) – *Reuters*, February 20, 2004

Insurers are refusing to give health care cover to Thai politicians because many are checking into hospitals instead of hotels during trips around the country and then claiming the money back, the parliament's speaker said.

Cambodian logs to Thailand

February 20, 2004

Cambodian logs to Thailand

– April 6, 2004

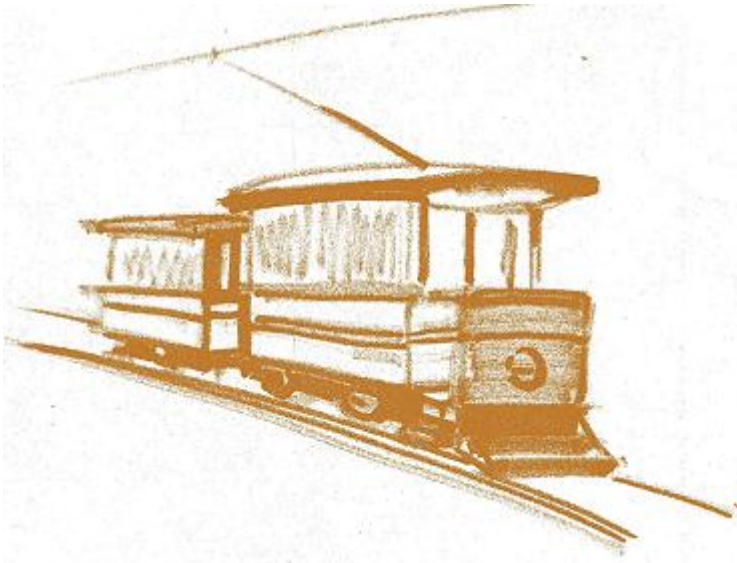
Global Witness was expelled from Cambodia for bringing to light activities like this (from a press release from Global Witness, 'Laundering of illegal timber undermines forestry reform in Cambodia,' February 20, 2004): *In 2000, the Thai company Thitikarn Ltd. obtained a permit authorising it to collect "branches and tree stumps" in Oddar Meanchey province. Instead, it purchases square logs from military-supervised illegal logging operations which focus on stripping out the province's remaining stands of luxury timber trees. In mid 2003 the company was each month exporting 600 cubic metres of luxury wood, worth approximately \$345,000, to Thailand. Thitikarn operates under the protection of Oddar Meanchey Governor Lay Virak and deputy governor Mao Tim, as well as units of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces, police, military police, border police, customs authorities and Ministry of Environment officials.*

Amidst a recent high-profile crackdown on luxury timber dealers in Siem Reap and Oddar Meanchey provinces orchestrated by the Forest Administration, Thitikarn continues to operate uninterrupted. As of the end of January, its compound in O'Pouk village, near O'Smach, contained at least 700 cubic metres of illegally-harvested luxury wood, guarded by Battalion 42 soldiers commanded by Colonel Meak Vong.

The impunity which Cambodian officials grant Thitikarn contrasts with the action taken by Thai authorities in August 2003, when Thai Forestry Police raided a Thitikarn warehouse in Bang Na, Thailand, seizing luxury wood from Cambodia and Laos worth around \$250,000. Protesting the raid, Thitikarn publicly defended its plunder of Cambodia's natural resources; claiming that by confining its operations to Cambodia, this would help reduce illegal logging in Thailand.

Rusting Trams

February 23, 2004
Categories: Trams



[Back to the main tram page](#)

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(Photo: Nils)

Small German steam locomotive built by Krauss
in Munich circa 1903

Rusting mass transit – February
23, 2004

Nils reports: *I have attached 4 pictures from the Science Museum in Ekkamai taken around May 2003. [You once posted photos by Reiner](#). I think, of how the tram has been moved out of its shelter and is rotting away in front of the planetarium. [My pics](#) show the poor old tram and small German steam locomotive built by Krauss in Munich circa 1903, plus an old RTAF DC-3 and another dilapidated, American-built steam engine ('Pacific' type/axle configuration) on the other side of the building. They also exhibit some ancient machinery once used for road construction works, such as an English steam roller, still under a protecting roof. The museum is certainly worth a visit, though it can be sad to see these interesting technical artifacts in such a condition....*



(Photo: Nils)

A dilapidated, American-built steam engine (‘Pacific’ type/axle configuration)



(Photo: Nils)

A tram car (in 1990 it was in great condition—see below)



(Photo: Nils)

An RTAF DC-3

Historic
trams being neglected? – May 11, 2002

Reiner has alerted 2b about the state of the tram exhibit at the Ekamai Museum. He sent a series of photos showing the state of the exhibit over the years:



(Photo: Reiner)

August 11, 1990 – All exhibits, including ex-Meklong stream locomotive (Krass of Germany/1903) are well housed. The tram is in good condition, including the oblique movable 1st/2nd-class partition gate.



(Photo: Reiner)

July 18, 1998 – All exhibits have been painted grey. The partition gate is still present.



(Photo: Reiner)

March 23, 2002 – The remaining exhibits have been moved into the open. The partition gate is gone, the tram is seriously damaged, and has lost its trolley pole.

Does anyone know anything about this situation?



(Photo: Reiner)

Asking for I.D.

February 28, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Asking for I.D. –

February 28, 2004

A foreign reader informs us of an odd occurrence. About a month ago near Asok Skytrain Station an Asian person (perhaps Middle Eastern) wearing normal clothes drove up on a motorcycle. He claimed with much seriousness that he was a police officer and asked to see the foreigner's I.D. The foreigner refused and instead insisted on seeing the 'officer's' ID. The 'officer' quickly backed down and said it was ok because the foreigner seemed to be Russian anyway (!) and then sped away. Our reader speculates that the astronomical price of fake traveling papers (caused by a worldwide crackdown on false documents) has caused crime syndicates to attempt new ways to get their hands on passports.

Cursory concerts

February 28, 2004

Categories: Music

Cursory concerts –

February 28, 2004

Two readers have mentioned the rather cursory concert Mariah

Carey gave in town recently. It started three hours late, after every three songs an unenthusiastic Carey left the stage and the audience had to call out for her to come back, those with 5000 baht seats sat on the floor, Carey only did a couple of old songs, and there was quite a bit of bad feeling in the crowd.

Many Western acts (and critics) do not consider concerts outside of the U.S. and Europe as ‘real’ concerts, but rather as warm-ups with undiscerning fans in preparation for ‘real’ concerts in the West.