

Suriya at odds with Thaksin over workflow

September 3, 2004

Categories: Highways and Roads, The Thaksin Years

[Suriya at odds with Thaksin over workflow](#)

– *Bangkok Post*, September 3, 2004

The locations of the underground tunnels: ...*There will be five construction sites on Rama III road, two each on Sri Ayutthaya and Rama IV roads. The other designated spots are in the areas of Din Daeng, Ratchathewi, Chalong Krung, Ekachai, Suksawat, Bang Khun Thian, Muang Thong Thani, Lat Pla Khao, Seri Thai, Ram Intra and Kasetsart.*

'20/20' visits Thailand's 'long-necked' women

September 3, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

['20/20'](#)

[visits Thailand's 'long-necked'](#)

[women](#) –

ABC News, September 3, 2004

Tradition of Neck Stretching

Is Centuries Old, But Is It a

Cruel Custom? ... Far from the

glitz of Bangkok, in Thailand's

remote northeastern region, tourists

are lured by a spellbinding image—women

and girls who've undergone a bizarre

body enhancement...

Bomb threat at Bangkok University

September 3, 2004

Categories: Security

[Bomb
threat at Bangkok University.](#)

– September 3, 2004

Interesting blog entry about a bomb threat.

Call for renaissance

September 5, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Call for renaissance](#) – *The*

Nation, September 5, 2004

Traffic, pollution and residents' safety should not be the only issues before newly-elected Governor Apirak Kosayodhin when he officially takes office tomorrow. There is a crying need to revive the glories of Old Bangkok and restore the capital's position as the seat of culture in Southeast Asia...

Asia's dysfunctional democracies

September 6, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Asia's dysfunctional democracies](#)

– *The Nation*, September 6, 2004

...Voters there may also extend a disturbing paradox that has emerged in the region: the more “vigorous” Asian democracy becomes, the more dysfunctional it is...

Indeed, the precedents of democratic immobility in Asia are hardly encouraging. For example, since Pakistan's creation in 1947, partisan divisions have ensured that no elected government has been able to serve its full term. So Pakistanis have grimly accepted military rule as their destiny. The problem in Asia often arises from something the French call “cohabitation”

– an awkward arrangement by which a directly elected president must co-exist with a parliament controlled by a rival party or parties...

True, Asian democracies, however unstable, are preferable to autocracies, whether military, as in Pakistan and Burma, or communist, as in China and Vietnam. But the danger in a weakened democracy is not merely blocked legislation and ineffective government...

Missing Buddha

September 7, 2004

Missing Buddha

– September 7, 2004

FBI page listing [info](#)

on a Buddha statue missing from Lampang.

Blue Dragon – September 8, 2004

September 8, 2004

Categories: Gem Scam

Blue Dragon – September 8, 2004

I would like to report my case, another victim of Blue Dragon in their well-organized gem scam.

We arrived Bangkok in 9/8/04. The next morning, when we were reading the Bangkok map near a petrol station, a tuk tuk driver approached us and said in a very friendly way that it was the Buddha's day, and he wanted to do a good deed by helping us. He offered us a tour around Bangkok's famous temples for only 20 B. Having heard that Thai people are religious, we trusted him and sat on his tuk tuk. On the way, he spoke in Thai with someone on the mobile. When we contemplating the decoration of the first temple, one Thai guy and one foreign guy 'happened' to chat with us. The native introduced himself as a tourist guy. The foreigner introduced himself as an American tourist from Sanfrancisco. When I said I was leaving in Melbourne, Australia, the native guy seemed to know a lot about Melbourne. After a while, they asked us if we arrived Bangkok for the annual Thai government's gem promotion week. When we said we never heard of such a promotion, they appeared to be very surprise and excitingly told us about their experience of buying cheap gems in Thailand during the promotion and sold them abroad for profit. The guy from Sanfrancisco said he went to Bangkok every year for the promotion, and made handsome profit selling the gems back in Sanfrancisco. They said that the Thai government waived 197% tax on tourists buying gems for personal use. They suggested we do the same. But I was not interested.

The tuk tuk driver outside then offered to take us to the Thai gem promotion 'just to take a look' because he would get a free petrol coupon. The first place he took us was a large building, inside was not only a big gem company, but also a big office of 'Tourism Authority of Thailand'. We did not buy anything in this shop, but we could not suspect anything because the presence of the Tourism Authority of Thailand in the same building. The sellers told us that during the gem promotion week, the Thai government waived 197% export tax on tourists buying gems for personal use.

The second scam shop was a three-storey factory. The first floor was for gem finishing. The second floor for gem sale. The third floor was for cloth sale and tailoring. Again, a sale staff professtionaly and aggressively tried to sell germs to us. We said no. When we got out, the tuk tuk driver asked if we bought anything, and seemed disappointed to know that we did not buy anything. However, he offered another temple near there. In this renovating temple, a well-dressed Thai man approached us, asked if we needed help finding ways in the temple. He introduced himself working in Israel, coming back to Bangkok just for the gem promotion week to make profit on the special tax waive. This time, we could not resist the temptation to believe that there was a gem promotion week going on. We told him we visited two shops, but bought nothing. He then suggested us the Blue Dragon, which he said was a government company, where price is best.

We was hooked, and bough 850AUD. That night, when I was on the Internet, we typed in 'Thai gem promotion week' in google. Instead, we found stories about gem scam, we also found Blue Dragon in the list of gem scam shop.

The next day, we went to the Tourism Police headquarter. There, we met a couple, also from Australia, who spent 2500AUD for a set in a scam shop. The police told us that we had to wait for the right policewoman, who was in charge of gem scam. The other couple was waiting for that policewoman for 2 continuous days in that office, but never saw her. We spent one day waiting, nothing happened. Finally, all of us quit because we did not want to loose our holidays to the police after loosing our money to the scam shop.

Now I am still very angry with the Thai police, and the thai government for my experience in Thailand. How such a daylight crime against tourists can go on at the nose of Thai politicians and Thai people?

More on the
[Gem Scam & maps to the scam stores](#)

Makkasan Depot – Part I: The grounds

September 9, 2004

Categories: Thai Railroads

Makkasan Depot

The Makkasan Depot and State Railway of Thailand ([SRT](#)) Maintenance Center area is in the center of the city ([map](#)). The entire area is slated to be redeveloped into a transport junction for the [Airport Link](#) Station for the [new airport](#). The depot and maintenance operations would be moved to a location out of town. **Also:** Back in 2003, 2Bangkok.com proposed the area be [Bangkok's new 'Central Park'](#)

[Map of Makkasan](#)

[Depot & SRT Maintenance Center](#)

[Part I: The grounds](#)

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[Part IV: Repair building 1](#)

[Part V: Repair buildings 2 & 3](#)

[Part VI: Odds and Ends](#)

Makkasan Depot – Part I: The grounds



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

The grounds are overgrown, peaceful, idyllic...
(behind building #4 on the [map](#))



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

View from the Administration Building (#12 on the [map](#)) toward the Spirit House (the path on the left).



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Employee entrance (#7 on the [map](#))



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Entrance to the machining building (#2 on the [map](#))—no photography allowed. It contains a huge announcement board with a small Buddha image inset in it. As large as one of the train repair buildings, the machining building contains the most exotic collection of massive machining devices imaginable—most of which have been in service since 1951. To the right is the smelting building (#1 on the [map](#))—also no photography allowed.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

The Administration Building (#12 on the [map](#))
with a small model locomotive in front.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Makkasan Station



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Interior of Makkasan Railway Station (#9 on
the [map](#))



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Warning sign above the ticket window

Makkasan Depot- Part II: Miscellaneous locomotives

September 9, 2004

Categories: Thai Railroads

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Makkasan Depot – Part II: Miscellaneous locomotives



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Around every corner on the site is another unusual locomotive...



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Wrecked locomotive 4049 which crashed and burned at Si Racha. Both this photo and the one below are in the train junkyard (#10 on the [map](#)).



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Locomotive 537



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Locomotive 537 (#8 on the [map](#))

Wisarut explains about locomotive 537: *For locomotive 537, it is a Davenport 500 Loco commissioned in 1952. Initially, SRT ordered 30 Davenport Loco (500 HP type) from the USA to further the plan for Dieselization in 1952 (with Bobo bogey arrangement). SRT ordered*

another batch of 15 Davenport Locos from USA in 1955. Also locos '1000 HP locos' with Co-Co bogey arrangement were also used.

Davenport 500 Locos have the code 511-540 and Davenport 1000 locos have the code of 571-585. Very few Davenport Loco still survive—mainly as shunters. Same can be said for the 1000 HP version.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

*Wisarut explains about the seal: Borachat
Seal is the name of Prince Purachat Jaiyakorn—the first Siamese Director of Railway Dept. He has pioneered the Diesel-Electric loco by ordering the first two Swiss shunters (No 21-22) in 1928. These two locos proved the superiority of Diesel locos over steam locos so more powerful Diesel locos have been ordered such as Frich locos (551-556, 601), Swiss Loco (501-504), etc.*

Therefore, all Diesel-Electric locos in Thailand must have the red seal of Prince Purachat Jaiyakorn—first installed on the 50 year anniversary of Thai Railways in 1947. Initially, this seal was made of Brass and later on they had to replace them with cast iron since so many robbers were trying to steal the seals from the locos.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Makkasan Depot – Part III: Garden railway project trains

September 9, 2004

Categories: Thai Railroads

Makkasan Depot

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[Part VI: Odds and Ends](#)

Makkasan Depot – Part III: Garden railway project trains



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Trains from the defunct garden railway project intended for Ayutthaya (#11 on the [map](#)).



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above and below: Under the tarp—the dusty, but well-preserved coaches.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Under the train–60cm gauge.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Plaque mounted in the locomotive



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Another set of coaches and spare wheels

Makkasan Depot- Part IV: Repair building 1

September 9, 2004

Categories: Thai Railroads

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[Part V: Repair buildings 2 & 3](#)

[Part VI: Odds and Ends](#)



(Photo:
2Bangkok.com)

Makkasan Depot – Part IV: Repair building 1



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Lot and lots and lots of parts... The buildings are mainly lit by overhead skylights and have the smell of fresh clean oil (#6 on the [map](#)).



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Despite the many varied parts, they all seem to be well-organized.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Rolling segment of tracks between repair buildings so shunt trains to any repair berth.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above and below: Locomotives being reconditioned



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

The chalk writing says: Took off the electric cable already. Can renovate or recharge it. 8/10/2004

Makkasan Depot- Part V: Repair buildings 2 & 3

September 9, 2004

Categories: Thai Railroads

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[Part IV: Repair building 1](#)

[Part V: Repair buildings 2 & 3](#)

[Part VI: Odds and Ends](#)

Makkasan Depot – Part V: Repair buildings 2 & 3



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Undercarriages of passenger bogies—it seems that most of the lighting in the buildings is ambient lighting from overhead skylights (#4 & 5 on the [map](#)).



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Offices inside the repair buildings



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Interior of a gutted locomotive



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Locomotive driver's console



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Passenger bogies undergoing reconditioning



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Another rolling segment of tracks between
repair buildings.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above and below: Things being repainted



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above and below: Passenger bogies up
on jacks and without undercarriages

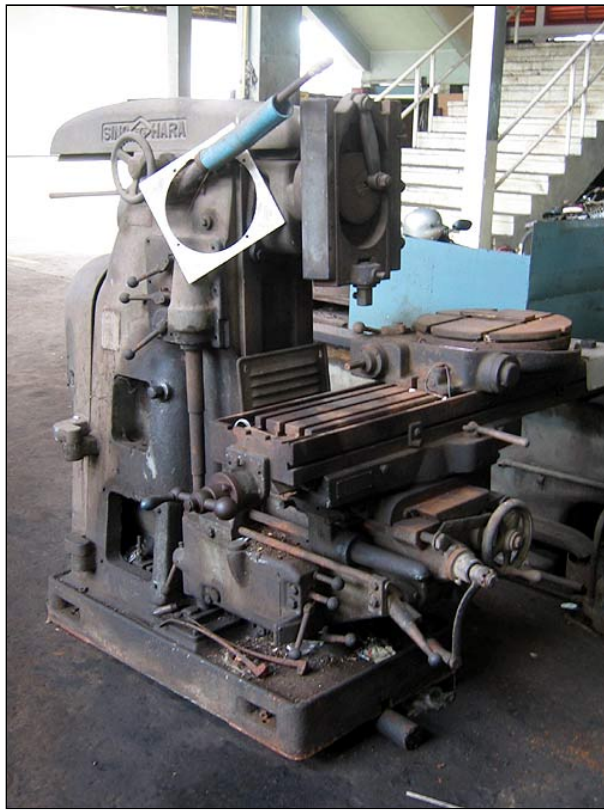


(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Have you seen the round windows in the tops of the depot buildings from the expressway? Above are the round windows from the inside of the building.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

One of the many machining devices in the buildings

Thais condemn Jakarta attack

September 9, 2004

Categories: Security

[Thais](#)

[condemn Jakarta attack](#) –

AFP, September 9, 2004

...Thailand condemned the bombing and said it was taking every precaution to prevent a similar attack inside the kingdom, which has been rocked by a separatist insurgency in its southern provinces this year.

... Australia has asked for additional security at its embassy in Bangkok, already at a high level because of fears about a terrorist attack.

... Additional security after the Jakarta blast would include more checkpoints to search cars near the embassy, said Thai Maj. Gen. Tritot Ronnaritivichai, responsible for security of foreign missions.

Stadiums in Thonburi

September 9, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Stadiums in Thonburi

– translated and summarized from

Thairath, September 9, 2004

Premier Thaksin

is planning to construct the new stadium on the Thonburi side of Bangkok while turning the old Suphachalasai National Stadium into a public park. The new stadium in Thonburi must be at least as big as Hua Mark Stadium and it must be situated along the new proposed Subway-Skytrain routes.

Review of Bang Rajan and the “Founding Myth of Modern Thailand”

September 9, 2004

Categories: Film and TV

[Review](#)

[of Bang Rajan](#) –

New York Times, September 9, 2004

...The Burmese are thoroughly demonized as bloodthirsty savages. "What kind of man could do this?" one character asks, surveying a scene of hideous carnage. And the Burmese are led by a tubby, decadent general who seems to have stepped out of "Quo Vadis." The Siamese men are lean, mean fighting machines with the bodies of Calvin Klein models. They, too, enjoy hacking off arms and heads, but only in the ennobling context of battle.

...But there's something arrogantly ethnocentric in the way American marketing know-how has been used to transform one country's nationalist epic into another's splatter camp, complete with amusingly inept subtitles. ("What's the plan, Chan?" asks one soldier of his commander.)

Morgue photos of the murdered tourists

September 10, 2004

Morgue photos of
the murdered tourists –
September 10, 2004

ThaiRath, famous for its daily
sensational front-page photos, has
a real shocker today that has locals
huddled around newsstands: gruesome,
eyes-open morgue photos of the two
tourists gunned down in Kanchantaburi.

Thailand in the news

September 10, 2004

Categories: Uncategorized

Thailand in the news – Bad press

[U.S. cracks down on maritime security offenders](#) – Reuters, September 10, 2004

...It will also increase boardings of ships bearing the flags of 13 other countries — including the world's largest ship register Panama — because of two months of below average compliance with new international security standards...

Apart from Panamanian-flagged ships, the worst offenders include vessels registered in Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cayman Islands, Cook Islands, Cyprus, Honduras, Hong Kong, Malta, the Netherlands, Russia, Singapore and Thailand.

[Dominican a perverts' paradise](#) – Canoe, September 10, 2004

It's being called Canada's Thailand. A perverts' paradise where children as young as 12 are being sold into prostitution — usually by a family member looking to cash in on the pink-tanned turistas and their appetite for sun, sand and sex...

[How British demand feeds slaughter of rare species](#) – The Guardian, September 12, 2004

Today among the 10,000 stalls of Bangkok's sprawling Chatuchak weekend market, a major draw for British tourists, The Observer was repeatedly told it would be possible to order orang-utans, snow leopards or rare birds by market traders. Similarly sources told Monkey World they could buy an orang-utan for ?4,000 but that prices will fall after the spotlight of Thailand's international talks fades.

...Of equal concern are the findings of an Observer investigation that has unearthed a trail of corruption, harassment and even death threats as elements within Thailand resist efforts to suppress the trade before the gaze of the world's media arrives. Even the Thai Prime Minister, it has emerged, has come under fierce pressure from the powerful interests that profiteer from the covert smuggling of endangered creatures.

...One prominent conservationist was recently told by a Thai official that he could not even attend Cites. Attempts were even made to discredit Edwin Wiek, who runs the acclaimed Wildlife Rescue Centre in Petchaburi, north of Bangkok. Despite nursing 115 previously sickly and malnourished animals he has been arrested and charged on grounds that have left supporters baffled. Other campaigners have fared far worse. One was recently killed after trying to protect a mangrove swamp from developers. A forestry campaigner was shot dead two weeks ago north of Bangkok. 'I am on the list, by the time you found out how high up you are it's too late', one told The Observer last week in the safety of a guarded hotel.

Steven Galster, director of Thailand's WildAid, said: 'People get killed around here for a lot less.'...

[Tragic toll of Thailand travellers](#) – Daily Record, September 9, 2004

Authorities plan to seize assets, property of Ekkayuth

September 10, 2004

Categories: Thai Politics

[Authorities plan to seize assets, property of Ekkayuth](#) – AP, September 10, 2004, 7:34pm

This is a controversial move typically made late on a Friday afternoon: *Thai authorities said Friday they plan to seize all assets and property of a London-based Thai businessman who claims that top government figures manipulated the stock market for personal gains.*

... "AMLO is acting under the orders of a dictatorship. They are welcome to check my assets and I am ready to fight back," Ekkayuth told The Associated Press in a telephone interview.

Friday September 10, 7:34 PM

Thai authorities plan to seize assets, property of London-based Thai businessman

Thai authorities said Friday they plan to seize all assets and property of a London-based Thai businessman who claims that top government figures manipulated the stock market for personal gains.

The announcement by the government's Anti Money Laundering Office, or AMLO, is the latest twist in a nasty political fight between property tycoon Ekkayuth Anchanbutr and Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

Ekkayuth's accusations against Thaksin and the government's threats to prosecute Ekkayuth have made daily headlines in Thailand. Commentators say Thaksin seems worried that the claims will undermine his popularity ahead of general elections that he must call by January 2005.

Ekkayuth said the AMLO order proves that Thaksin is using state power to victimize him.

"AMLO is acting under the orders of a dictatorship. They are welcome to check my assets and I am ready to fight back," Ekkayuth told The Associated Press in a telephone interview.

Ekkayuth says 30 members of the government, whom he has not identified, influenced stocks to build their political war chests before general elections.

He has said he will provide the evidence on Monday to the Securities and Exchange Commission, which has threatened to arrest him if he refuses to disclose all information relevant to his allegations.

Ekkayuth gained notoriety in 1984 when he was allegedly involved in a pyramid investment scheme that defrauded hundreds of people, mostly army officers and their families, of more than 1 billion baht (US\$24 million; euro 20 million).

AMLO Secretary General Peeraphan Premaphuthi told reporters that action will be taken against Ekkayuth to recover the money he allegedly stole from Thais.

"The law empowers AMLO to seize the money from Ekkayuth Anchanbutr for his cheating of the public," Peeraphan said.

Ekkayuth's personal assets and those of his high-profile company, Charter Investment Co. Ltd., were seized before in 1984 after the pyramid scheme was busted.

He fled to Europe that year, but returned to Thailand the next year when he was allegedly involved in a coup attempt against the then coalition government.

After the coup failed, Ekkayuth fled to Britain, and lived there until recently, when he returned to Thailand after the pyramid scheme charges expired under the statute of limitations.

Ekkayuth now runs a successful retail, real estate and restaurant business in Britain. His company, Oriental Mart Group, is reportedly worth more than 10 billion baht (US\$243 million, euro 203 million).

It was not clear if AMLO has the power to seize his assets in Britain. Ekkayuth refused to say how much his assets in Thailand were worth.

On the Thai-language forums

September 11, 2004

On the Thai-language forums

– September 11, 2004

Wisarat reports: *For the case of the nationalization of Skytrain and Subway, there are lots of public [debate](#) [and distrust](#) for the nationalization scheme.*

The Royal Thai Survey Department

September 11, 2004

Categories: Buildings



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

The Royal Thai Survey Department

– September 11, 2004

The Royal Thai Survey Department

looks like it is ready for some
kind of restoration, but there is
no sign at the site and we have
not read anything about it.

Revised Hollywood Buddha poster

September 11, 2004

Categories: Uncategorized

Revised *Hollywood Buddha* poster – September 11, 2004

The [Hollywood Buddha](#) film, which created controversy last week, will have a new poster.

The [short statement](#) from the filmmaker is, in itself, somewhat humorous and feckless. Philippe Calanad: *I have made a movie called "Hollywood Buddha," that itself has only respect and admiration for the positive power and great significance of the peaceful message of the Buddha...*

Further, I did not understand the image was offensive, or I never would have allowed its use in any way...

The film never makes fun of Buddhism or any religion, but instead shows how frauds commercialize religion for their own gain...

Some statements about the film is Thai are here: [Thai Temple](#)

[Thai government to ban culturally insensitive foreigners: report](#) – AFP, September 12, 2004

The Thai government will ban foreigners from the kingdom who break serious cultural rules as laid out in an official etiquette book it plans to produce...

Earlier: *Matichon*: "Buddhism Humiliated" – September 8, 2004

Front page photos of disrespectful Buddhist imagery are a popular staple of Thai newspapers. There are typically two flaps a year over something like this. Media watchers will remember the Buddha underwear and Buddha sandals from earlier this year. The latest instance is the poster for a Hollywood film. The poster is [here](#).

(from [Buddhist Thais Seethe at Hollywood Film Poster](#) – Reuters, September 7, 2004): *...The public outcry was raised after the Thai-language newspaper Matichon published the poster on its front page on Tuesday with the caption, "Buddhism Humiliated."*

The advertisement features Caland, who also stars in the YBG Productions film, sitting atop a Buddha statue with his feet — the least holy part of the body to Thai Buddhists and never pointed at anyone — dangling by its eyes...

The very bizarre case of Dr Thaksin Shinawatra

September 12, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[The very bizarre case of Dr Thaksin Shinawatra](#) – *The Nation*, September 12, 2004

Another tough editorial from *The Nation*. This also touches lightly on a subject we have pondered here at 2Bangkok.com—could a personality like Thaksin stage some sort of action to gain unopposed power or might others eventually take action "for the good of the country"?

...All national leaders have dark areas. Those who suffer from over-confidence, hubris and arrogance of power tend to lose their sense of reality. They fail to listen to other people and see no signs of disaster.

A national leader who feels genuine compassion towards his fellow citizens would never look down upon the little people. After all, he still needs their votes – unless he grabs the power to rule by force.

History shows that leaders with these symptoms generally fail to realise that their downfall is just around the corner. We have experienced the rise and fall of tyrants, both civilian and military, throughout our history, but the Strange Case of Dr Thaksin is something very peculiar.

Our political history will probably embark on a new chapter very soon.

SIDELINES: The very bizarre case of Dr Thaksin Shinawatra

Published on Sep 12, 2004

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra blew his top last week while venting his fury at his most recent arch-nemesis Ekkayuth Anchanbutr. However legendary the prime minister's short fuse, this most recent outburst was still very extraordinary.

The prime minister's rage came couched in very harsh words, sarcasm and thinly veiled threats of retaliation.

His choice of language was unbecoming of a benevolent national leader, particularly one from the "compassionate capitalist" school. We should know that our CEO smugly plays this twin role most of the time.

Unfortunately, his public behaviour and conduct in office remind a lot of people of "The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde" by Robert Louis Stevenson. It is not known whether Thaksin has ever recommended that his Cabinet members read this book whenever they are free from their indulgence in self-enrichment.

The vehemence of Thaksin's wrath could have been a result of the accumulative effect of the continual criticism and barrage of unflattering comments that have been directed at him in recent months, during the "downtime" of his eroding popularity.

A few days before his Ekkayuth outburst, he had labelled a group of about two dozen eminent and respectable figures – among them academics, social thinkers and well-known lecturers – "a bunch of fools" who, Thaksin boasted, would never be able to understand what he was up to.

What these luminaries did to deserve the prime minister's ire was write articles for two best-selling books to educate the public on the politics of the day and expose the blatant mischief-making and massive corruption that has taken place during the Thaksin years. The blatant graft, the plundering of national assets and the scope of the gluttony, among other sinister goings on, have become a new source of wonder.

Ekkayuth's hollering about stock price manipulation by politicians within Thaksin's inner circle immediately redirected the prime minister's attention. Such accusations might be embarrassing, but they are nothing compared to the previous examples of big-time corruption that have occurred with the help of policy.

Thaksin's response was swift, but in an unexpected direction. Instead of taking prompt action against the nogoodniks, our CEO unleashed a barrage of criticism of Ekkayuth, branding him a felon who had

swindled a lot of people and got away with it thanks to the help of statutory limitations.

He is a fine one to preach morality in business practices and corporate good governance with a straight face.

And our CEO was not satisfied to just ridicule and jibe his accuser's controversial past as the operator of a pyramid scheme: his cronies in various units promptly got down to work digging up dirt on Ekkayuth, and the Anti-Money Laundering Office declared that Ekkayuth's assets could be seized.

This opened the way for what is shaping up to be a drawn-out battle.

Ekkayuth declared the other day that he is on a crusade to stop what he regards as the authoritarian rule of the country before disaster strikes.

At a press conference, he received warm support from many people who are against Thaksin's way of doing things. About 200 members of the Royal Bangkok Sports Club signed their names in support of Ekkayuth's risky mission.

What was our CEO's response? He scoffed at his upper middle-class antagonists with disdain, remarking crudely that they were the kind of people who held all the non-performing loans, and that they should clearly distinguish which among them were "humans" and which "buffaloes".

We can see that our CEO's arrogance and contempt for the people have reached new heights. Is his case beyond salvaging? The pattern of his behaviour has become a subject of concern.

As the saying goes, loose lips sink ships. Thaksin is practising statecraft in a turbulent sea of his own saliva.

All national leaders have dark areas. Those who suffer from over-confidence, hubris and arrogance of power tend to lose their sense of reality. They fail to listen to other people and see no signs of disaster.

A national leader who feels genuine compassion towards his fellow citizens would never look down upon the little people. After all, he still needs their votes – unless he grabs the power to rule by force.

History shows that leaders with these symptoms generally fail to realise that their downfall is just around the corner. We have experienced the rise and fall of tyrants, both civilian and military, throughout our history, but the Strange Case of Dr Thaksin is something very peculiar.

Our political history will probably embark on a new chapter very soon.

SOPON ONKGARA

Nuclear plants for the PRC

September 13, 2004

Categories: China

[Nuclear](#)

[plants for the PRC](#) – *Wired*,

September, 2004

...Late last year, China announced plans to build 30 new reactors – enough to generate twice the capacity of the gargantuan Three Gorges Dam – by 2020. And even that won't be enough. The Future of Nuclear Power, a 2003 study by a blue-ribbon commission headed by former CIA director John Deutch, concludes that by 2050 the PRC could require the equivalent of 200 full-scale nuke plants. A team of Chinese scientists advising the Beijing leadership puts the figure even higher: 300 gigawatts of nuclear output, not much less than the 350 gigawatts produced worldwide today...

A tale of two newspapers: Akeyuth targeted by the government

September 13, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

The *Post* explains the government viewpoint on the AMLO probe while *The Nation* dismisses it and adds some rabbleroxing quotes from Akeyuth (which the English-language newspapers used to write as “Ekkayuth”).

[Govt denies Amlo probe prejudiced – Securities watchdog calls for share inquiry](#) – *Bangkok Post*, September 13, 2004

...Mr Pongthep said the agency may launch inquiries into other suspect pyramid-share schemes that did not make the news.

The course of justice was free and fair and the government did not meddle with the process, he said.

Pol Maj-Gen Peeraphan was appointed to Amlo well before the government took office and he is known for his honesty...

Even the Constitutional Court could not say for certain how far back in time the asset seizure inquiry could go.

The opposition leader said the Amlo law could only be enforced against assets generated from laundering, not those made honestly afterwards...

[AMLO PROBE: Ekkayuth safe, says expert](#) – *The Nation*, September 13, 2004

...The legal expert said yesterday that any attempt by the AMLO to freeze Ekkayuth's assets by launching a fraud case in relation to his failed pyramid scheme in 1985 would have no legal backing and, therefore, be a wasted effort.

...The AMLO was mistaken in claiming that the Constitutional Court had made a ruling that allowed it to pursue suspects charged prior to 1999, he said, adding that the court had not in fact resolved the legal issue.

...Ekkayuth said he believed he was being followed in the wake of his revelation against the government officials.

"I will fight this all the way even though my life is in danger," he said.

"I got threats to kill me and my family but they didn't scare me. Thailand is not democratic today. People are threatened every day, including my friends."...

The *Post* and *Nation* also show their stripes in editorials. The *Post* challenges Akeyuth to produce some evidence while reassuring readers none of this will impact TRT's chances in the polls and even expressing surprise at why anyone would choose to target the TRT party.

The Nation, while purporting to be perplexed by Akeyuth's motives, takes the opportunity to point out that all the powers of the state have been turned on a critic of the PM, hinting that this means there may be truth behind Akeyuth's accusations.

[Ekkayuth could help his case with some proof](#) – *Bangkok Post*, September 13, 2004

Why he chose to target Thai Rak Thai is anybody's guess. But it is assumed his statement was in retaliation to calls by members of the party for an investigation into the source of his political donations...

To most political pundits, Mr Ekkayuth would appear to be embarking on an impossible mission. Mr Thaksin will surely be re-elected for a second term in the next general election in less than six months' time, even after his party's humiliating defeat in the Bangkok governor election in which it supported Pavena Hongsakula. The ruling party commands popular support in rural areas through its populist programmes and political gimmicks, although it may not be able to capture the 400 seats

[OVERDRIVE: Is Ekkayuth a tiger at large or just crying wolf?](#) – *The Nation*, September 10, 2003

...We don't know yet what Ekkayuth is really up to or who is behind him. We do know with certainty that he has already become an enemy of the state. All state agencies have suspended their normal business so that they can focus on going after Ekkayuth. He has been cast as a dangerous fugitive who could undermine the security of the state. Police officers at the Central Investigation Bureau and the Economic Crime Suppression Unit are digging into Ekkayuth's past and seeking to learn about his contacts. The Anti-Money Laundering Office is looking at the possibility of confiscating his assets. The Justice Ministry is looking at the possibility of re-opening the Charter Investment "pyramid-sales" case, in which Ekkayuth was one

it so desires in the lower house...

To boost his questionable credibility, Mr Ekkayuth should stop playing games of hide-and-seek and present the Securities and Exchange Commission with the evidence he claims to possess of stock manipulation. When he does that then we can be assured he is the real deal.

of the prime suspects. The Securities and Exchange Commission is threatening to put him in jail and fine him if he fails to show up on Monday to provide more evidence for his claim of price manipulation of the bank warrant SCIB-C1. The Revenue Department is probing whether Ekkayuth has properly paid his taxes. Prosecutors are weighing whether he could be brought to court again...

Education Ministry ordered to prepare for Thailand's host of 2016 Olympic Games

September 14, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Education](#)

[Ministry ordered to prepare for Thailand's host of 2016 Olympic Games](#) –

TNA, September 14, 2004

... "The prime minister has instructed that the Ministry of Education begin to select the 'stars' of the Thai athletic team for the 2016 Olympic Games since they are around 10 years old now, and train and develop them until they are around 22 years old then"...

IMPACT Convention Center construction

September 15, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News



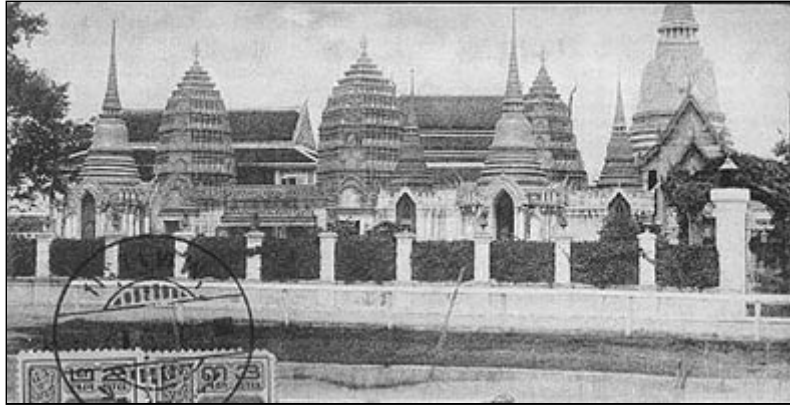
IMPACT Convention Center construction – September 15, 2004

A massive new convention center is being constructed at Muang Thong Thani—incredibly in the convention center parking lot. The existing parking, always chaotic, it now practical impossible with cars parking in every available space along the roads.

Wat Rajbopit

September 15, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News



Wat Rajbopit – September 15, 2004

[Heinrich Damm](#) writes: *On Wednesday, September 8, 2004-on the 2Bangkok-website you asked: "Where is this?" It seems it shows Wat Rajbopit as seen from Klong Lord at Atsadang Road.*

Please compare these two examples:

– a [photo](#), taken from the book "Siam" by Karl Doering from the year 1923(?), I found it in an old collection of postcards

– a [photo](#) I took just last week from the same spot

In the courtyard of Wat Rajbopit are a couple of buildings ([1](#) [2](#)) that seem to be kind of mausoleum, that's what you see on your picture.

30-day student pass for Car-Free Day

September 15, 2004

30-day student
pass for Car-Free Day – translated
and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Manager
Daily*, September 15, 2004

BTS is issuing a new 30-day pass for students—40 trips in 30 days for 400 baht to support the government policy for mass transit systems. The selling of this pass will start on September 22, 2004. This pass is a 6-month experiment from October 2004 to March 2005.

Obese children become weighty problem

September 16, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Obese](#)

[children become weighty problem](#) –

Health India, September 16, 2004

A child weighing over 140 kg is admitted to the intensive care unit of a hospital in Thailand every month given their high-calorie food intake.

In fact, statistics show that more than 10 obese children were put on respiratory support in the past year...

Corruption rife in construction projects, says prominent engineer

September 16, 2004

Categories: Crime

[Corruption rife in construction projects, says prominent engineer](#) – TNA, September 16, 2004

...Many of the owners and contractors involved in country's construction projects have paid enormous kickbacks to government officials for building approval, amounting to as much as 30% of the total costs, the president of the national engineering institute, Totrakul Yomanak said on Wednesday. Getting approval for the project's designs usually requires the biggest kickback payment...

2014 note: Like many Thai newspaper articles from the early days of the Thai internet, this article is no longer online. Below is the complete text of the original article.

Corruption rife in Thai construction projects, says prominent engineer

BANGKOK, Sept 16 (TNA) – Corruption among government officials in the construction business has increased significantly over the last three years, according to the chief of the national engineering institute.

Many of the owners and contractors involved in country's construction projects have paid enormous kickbacks to government officials for building approval, amounting to as much as 30% of the total costs, the president of the national engineering institute, Totrakul Yomanak said on Wednesday.

Getting approval for the project's designs usually requires the biggest kickback payment.

Earlier this week, Sumet Tantivejakul, the President of a Thai anti-corruption foundation — Muang Thai Sai Sa-Ad Foundation, claimed Thailand had lost some 12 trillion baht in corruption involving large construction projects.

He cited a survey done by the country's engineering institute.

However, he admitted on Wednesday that the 12 trillion baht figure was actually a typing error in a report of a national economic and social advisors' council.

The actual figure for the cost of corruption was 1.2 trillion baht.

Mr. Totrakul has demanded that the government seriously deal with the problem in corruption in the country's construction business when it launches its clean up campaign against corruption on 3 October.

Kickbacks have substantially added to the cost of construction, as the contractors are likely to push the burden onto their customers, or lower the quality of construction materials in the project to avoid incurring losses.

It is well known that many government construction projects are much more expensive than their actual costs because of corruption.

(TNA)-E112, E002

Thai-language newspapers – September 18, 2004

September 18, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Matichon – September 18, 2004

- * Congress of Society and Development worry about swinging sex (“Aua Artorn”). People like swinging. 15-24 year-olds get HIV.
- * American takes Thailand off of the drug blacklist for first time in 43 years . Decrease in opium planting.
- * Heavy rain in six northern provinces. Closes 8 schools. 2 die from mud slides
- * Urge the government to cope with the Influenza “A” that is as harmful as SARS – in only two years it has spread very far
- * NGO want the people to penalize Maew , Somsak , and cooperatives that released the GMO papayas into the wild
- * Greenpeace will join in to clean Hua Hin beach on the World Clean Day in Prajuaabkeereekan Province
- * Rabiebrat, Senator from Khon Khaen, blames Nat and Tata Young for making women in Thailand lose their reputation.
- * Check of DNA for those who raped in the pratom 3 case
- * Billion bath to renovate the National Library
- * New idea to ask motorcycle taxis and neighborhood shops to keep an eye on youth gangs
- * Ministry of Resources and the Environment take polluted chemical water from Jengo company to check
- * Hunting for the policeman who kill the Britons still has failed
- * Buriram people resist the hunters who kill elephants
- * Songkhla people complain about the pipeline work that makes houses crack
- * The Japan Alliance for Humanitarian De-mining Support (JAHD) starts to remove mines this September 20 at the border of Khao Pravihan in Srisaket so it can be opened again for people
- * Varatep, Deputy Minister of Finance, opposes TDRI and insists that government policy helps poor people

Thaipost – September 18, 2004

Headlines

- * Change of target to judges in the south—assailant confesses that they got an order to kill high level government officials
- * Shock for the judge – southern assailants change the target to be a judge. Gunmen shot him in front of his mother-in-law and child while waiting for a traffic light to turn green. One of the gunmen was arrested shortly after the shooting. He confessed that the teacher who was teaching religion ordered him to kill high level government officials
- * Mr. Rapin Ruankaew, a judge at Pattani provincial court, was killed on the way to send his child to school. This makes the situation in the 3 provinces in the south more tense.

Politics

- * The alternative agriculture network wants “Somsak and Thaksin ” to get a penalty for GMO case
- * Ad "Karabao" talked to the elderly victims of bird-flu to support a vaccine

Economy

- * Pias Cosmetics company to target male customers
- * Future Park opens gourmet section to lure customers
- * The Securities and Exchange Commission's (SEC) to stop rumors and stock market manipulation news

Editorial summary

- * Campaign to combat corruption

Thai society cannot neglect the demand/report from Dr. Sumej Tantivechkul, chairperson of Clear and Clean Foundation, Thailand. He asked people to combat corruption which is a deep crisis for Thai society. It has spread everywhere and if we just ignore it, the new generation will not have a nation.

Thairath – September 18, 2004

- * Rabiebrat, Khonkaen Senator, said nowadays that students do not conserve their bodies. She condemns the behavior of Nong Nat-Kesarin who makes a bad example for young people.
- * Ekkayuth swoops back to England... after we was followed by the government officers. He claims he has to go back England for some business. Meanwhile Pratin will investigate the politicians named 'P' and 'S' for stock manipulation.
- * Thailand now off the blacklist for drug selling.
- * Son-in-law kills the father because he ate his fighting cock.
- * Sting operation to arrest corrections officers from Bangkwang who sell drugs in prison.
- * New structure of police force: “No belly”
- * More bird-flu patients–Malaysia in turmoil

Thai-language newspapers – September 19, 2004

September 19, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Matichon – September 19, 2004

* “Thaksin repeats clearly” that those who want to be ministers must work. Don’t get the post by giving him money or giving money to the party.

* Pasuk exposes the process of “grabbing media.” Her speaking at the seminar pushes the process of media reform.

* Again—a rottweiler mangles a 6 year old, seriously injuring him.

* Dr. Jarun confirms that the new influenza can be cured. "Don’t panic. Nobody has died before."

* Maew gives three tips for playing the stock market:

- choose the basic factor of stock
- if it loses value, just hold, don’t sell
- don’t be alarmed

Maew claims he is managing the economy well right now.

* Sudarat boosts Samui Island is cool and it is the first district for the food safety program in Thailand.

* Rabeibrat leads to solve the swinging sex problem. Courses for “preserving the body” will be held as well as building up a network of Thai student leaders to promote preserving their bodies.

* An elephant named “Kumpai” gives birth to a baby weighing 100 kgs. The elephant is from Chiangmai. She usually hits baby elephants so she was taken to the elephant hospital in Lampang. Now she is 17 years old. Her baby is a male, 100 kgs and healthy.

Thaipost – September 19, 2004

* Thaksin will come to speak at the Thailand Focus Festival to persuade foreigners to invest in Thailand. Ekkayuth waits for Thaksin to find fault with him when he persuades the foreigner investors.

* Before going to London, Ekkayuth is staying at Four Seasons Hotel. He said he or his team may join to listen and see whether Thaksin is telling lies at the opening ceremony for foreigner investors on September 20 at the Thailand Focus Festival.

Thairath – September 19, 2004

* Bangkok people are glad that BTS and BMCL are not in competition and will cooperate to use the same ticket.

* The gunmen who killed the judge , also killed a policeman in the past

* Pushing Anek to be Prime Minister . Sanun Kajornprasat, the senior advisor of Mahachon Party, talks up support for Anek Laothammatat, the leader of Mahachon party, to be Prime Minister.

* Wild youth drive crazy, all five die.

* Phokin, the Interior Minister, discusses with the new Bangkok governor to prepare for floods.

* A brave taxi driver punches a robber unconscious.

Makkasan Depot – Part VI: Odds and Ends

September 20, 2004

Categories: Thai Railroads

Makkasan Depot

The Makkasan Depot and State Railway of Thailand ([SRT](#)) Maintenance Center area is in the center of the city ([map](#)). The entire area is slated to be redeveloped into a transport junction for the [Airport Link](#) Station for the [new airport](#). The depot and maintenance operations would be moved to a location out of town. **Also:** Back in 2003, 2Bangkok.com proposed the area be [Bangkok's new 'Central Park'](#)

[Map of Makkasan](#)

[Depot & SRT Maintenance Center](#)

[Part I: The](#)

[grounds](#)

[Part II: Miscellaneous locomotives](#)

[Part III: Garden railway project](#)

[trains](#)

[Part IV: Repair building 1](#)

[Part V: Repair buildings 2 & 3](#)

[Part VI: Odds and Ends](#)

Makkasan Depot – Part VI: Odds and Ends



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Like any railroad depot, the Makkasan Depot is loaded with peculiar relics scattered about the site.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Thai-language newspapers – September 20, 2004

September 20, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Matichon – September 20, 2004

- * The Democrat Party jeers Thaksin saying he is now combating corruption only to create a good image for the next election.
- * Judges ask for bulletproof cars to pick them up and ride in. 40 judges are scared and want to move from the risky areas in the south
- * The owner of the rottweiler is defiant. If the injured wants compensation, the owner will appeal. The policeman says if the owner of the dog does not come forward, they will issue a summons.

* **Editorial:** “The poison(harm) attitude”

The report of the Committee of National Economic and Social Welfare in the six months of 2004 said it is more difficult than the past to control HIV/AIDS. This is because having sex easily is the prevalent attitude of men and women and swinging sex is normal in society. AIDS nowadays comes from this attitude. So all organizations (GO, NGOs and all media) should help to stop this attitude.

Thaipost – September 20, 2004

- * Southern judges protect themselves by buying guns and wearing bulletproof vests. They say the government neglects them so they rely on themselves.
- * **Editorial:** The death of the judge, the failure of the government

The judge, Mr. Rapin, was a good person and was responsible and honorable. It is believed that his death is related to the crisis in the deep south and the government cannot deny this. His death shocked and hurt all people. They feel that even the high level government officers can be killed so how about the normal poor people? Their lives are not safe.

If the government still sends officers to serve people in the risky area, the government will face the defiance (a challenge) and the judge will not be the last dead body.

Thairath – September 20, 2004

- * **Bloody news** – A male student from Vongchaowalitkul University, Nakorn Ratchasima province, was killed. He was hit with deadly force by the gang of youth. It is suspected this was caused by an illicit romance.
 - * The representative of the owner of the fierce rottweiler will not pay compensation and challenges the injured to appeal to the court if they want compensation.
 - * The Democrat Party plans to raise funds on October 18 at Queen Sirikit Convention Center. It will show a multimedia slide show about the political direction in 2005 and the standpoint of the Democrat Party. Chinese tables will be sold to raise funds and will cost 100,000-500,000 baht each.
- There will also have a talk between the big pretty face and small pretty face and also a concert by superstar Bird Thongchai McIntyre.
- * Judges are scared and want to move from the south. They are given bulletproof vests.
 - * Two technicians got drunk and died in a room they just painted—it was filled with paint thinner fumes.

* A young, 25-year-old singer at Excite Pub killed herself by jumping from a building in central Pattaya, Chonburi. It is suspected she did it because she had failed in love.

More on the highest bridge in the world

September 20, 2004

[More](#)

[on the highest bridge in the world](#) –

September 20, 2004

Peter sent this [info](#)

on the incredible French bridge construction.

Thai-language newspapers – September 21, 2004

September 21, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Matichon – September 21, 2004

* Nevin, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, announces the Chamlong Srimuang Foundation has been found to have encroached on 535 rai of reform land for agriculture. He declares this is not related to the conflict between Maew and Chamlong.

* Public prosecutors in the South worry they may be killed like the judge. They have a meeting to ask for guards. Pongtep asks the soldier-policemen to oversee them first.

* Assembly of the youth from four regions reveals finding at “The Pupil-Student” seminar. There is more free sex and selling sex. They note that the new generation of youth are materialistic. They have sex at school. It destroys the local culture. Some pupil-students in Esarn are selling sex.

* "Strange-Rare-Expensive"—This is the new trend in pets for Thai people. Popular are reptiles, arrow frog, colored snakes, giant spiders and chameleons.

* A warrant is prepared for the arrest of the rottweiler owner. The two nursemaids who fed the dog know that they will be prosecuted and escape. The Director General of Rights and Liberty Protection gives a hand to help the mauled boy.

Thaipost – September 21, 2004

* BOI supports I.P. Star. Senator Chemsak Pintong points to a conflict of Interest. Chemsak claims the government lost 1.6 billion bath after BOI gave tax privileges for I.P. Star which is controlled by the "country's leader" .

* Thienthong received a railway concession for three years. Thailand Tourism Authority uses photos by Oak to show in Japan.

Thairath – September 21, 2004

* Revelations about youth sex. The girl starts first by touching the boy. According to the National Youth Day seminar, nowadays the girl initiates sex first by touching the boy.

* Tear off the mask! Kroo Bala cheated Karen people of 3 million baht. The policeman raid the Kuti to arrest Kroo Bala. Kroo Bala set up himself to be a god of mountains and a reborn person. He convinced the Karen people to invest money with him by persuading them that they will get interest or a car. The Karen villagers really believed him so they sold their elephants, cows and buffalos and gave him money. Finally they were cheated of 3 million baht.

* Volvo explodes while filling with NGV gas. A guy wants to save money by using Benzene. So he sets up a gas tank in his car by himself, but he uses wrong type of gas tank–LPG. Finally it explodes.

Thailand's dirty little secret: Phuket's coral reefs are dead

September 21, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thailand's](#)

[dirty little secret: Phuket's coral reefs are dead](#)

– Cyber Diver News Network, September 21, 2004

Two-thirds of spectacular coral reefs ringing Thailand's top holiday island have been destroyed because of overzealous development...

A tale of two newspapers: Land grab charge against Chamlong

September 21, 2004

Categories: A Tale of Two Newspapers

A tale of two newspapers: Land grab charge against Chamlong –
September 22, 2004

A typical tale of two newspapers:

The Nation plays up the fact that Chamlong is an opponent of PM Thaksin (right in the headline of the story). Note that the Thai-language papers, like *Matichon* (above), also mention the Thaksin/Chamlong conflict. The *Bangkok Post* blandly announces that Chamlong's charity is encroaching on reform land and does not mention accusations of politics.

[Foundation sitting on encroached land – Representative says land was donated](#) – *Bangkok Post*, September 21, 2004

The charity foundation founded by former Palang Dharma party leader Chamlong Srimuang has been

found to have encroached reform land for agriculture.

The Chamlong Srimuang Foundation, known for promoting

alternative educational development, is sitting on about 50 rai of reform land, or so-called Sor Por Kor land, in Suphan Buri province's Dan Chang district...

[CHAMLONG:](#)

[Land grab charge levelled at PM critic](#)

– *The Nation*, September 21, 2004

Deputy Agriculture Minister Newin Chidchob yesterday

alleged that a foundation founded by veteran politician

Chamlong Srimuang had encroached on a 500-rai plot

designated for land reform in Suphan Buri.

Newin's allegation comes in the wake of Chamlong's

harsh criticism of the man he once mentored, Prime

Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

...One of Chamlong's close aides, Wichan Jiravejbovornkit,

said yesterday that the land Newin referred to was donated to the foundation in 1994.

" "I think this has something to do with politics. Let's hear clarification from Chamlong himself when he comes back from an overseas trip soon," Wichan said...

Thai-language newspapers – September 22, 2004

September 22, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Matichon – September 22, 2004

* Thaksin reaffirms the land reform case , but says he has no conflict with Chamlong. He understands that Chamlong is honest and does not break the five commandments of the Buddha.

* The owner of the rottweiler that mauled a boy still keeps silent. The police said the relative of the victim asks for 150,000 baht compensation.

Thaipost – September 22, 2004

*** Editorial**

...Attacking the Chamlong Foundation, no one can believe in the good intention of the government. Lots of critics say Newin Chidchop, the Deputy of Agriculture and Cooperatives arranged this case.

Thairath – September 22, 2004

* Bloody news : A cruel young guy stabbed a woman 20 times in the back. An old rich woman, 65 years old, was killed. She was the owner of a snooker hall. The attacker took her gold necklace.

* A merchant died mysteriously. His wrist looks like it had been cut and his dead body was found in the middle of a bridge at Talad Plu, Thonburi. The police suspect that he might have been hit by a motorcycle. The police arrested one drunken motorcyclist nearby because he was found to have hair stuck in his motorcycle.

* A Deputy Chief of the Education Ministry points to the case that a gay teacher having sex with a student for a grade . He says it is wrong and against the law and asks students to report things like this confidentially. If true, teachers can be arrested immediately.

Nobody believes in his good intention even though the Prime Minister and Chaowalit came out to deny the conflict and protect Newin. People can see from past events that whoever criticizes the Prime Minister will later on be attacked like this .

* There was a fire on the fishing boat near the pier in Sattaheep, Chonburi. For two hours it burned before sinking with 10 million baht damage. It was started when the boat was refueling and the gas was ignited by an 'electronic spark.' Two crew burned to death.

* Ekkayuth gets a lawyer to file civil charges against the government. The charge is that government officers violated his rights and liberty and threatened him.

* The Constitutional Court rules to dissolve Chatpattana Party.

Thai-language newspapers – September 23, 2004

September 23, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Matichon

– September 23, 2004

* An expert team of doctors is ready to operate on male Siamese twins in Khonkaen province. Now the team is ready and just waiting for permission from the parents to operate.

* A cargo ship bumps against the fishing boat, *Srimuangthong*
3. Its captain and 3 crew died and 15 are missing.

* A report from the Bangkok governor house confirmed the cancellation of 332 positions of Kamnan and headman of villages. The reason is to save 100 million baht.

* The first robot in Thailand invented by Thai people from Mahidol University.

Thairath –

September 23, 2004

* Bloody news
: A gay man dies mysterious.
His skeleton was found in ditch at Wangnoi District, Ayuthaya.
Near his dead body there was his ID card and a handbag.
From this the police know that he was an AIDS patient. It is suspected that he died 2-3 months ago.

* Bloody news
: Mother and daughter drink pesticide. Two dead bodies were found in the house. The mother cannot stand her hard life. Her daughter also had polio so the mother decided to kill herself and her daughter.

* Phokin declares that foreigners can invest in the south. He said the government can control the situation.

* Phokin calls for a stop to the killing of terrorists in the South. He says do not just shoot the hardcore gangs in the south. Punish them in jail or execute them. The Southern troublemakers offered millions in bounty for whoever kills Dr. Khunying Pornthip Rojanasunan . The southern academic warns the government to hasten the review of how to solve the crisis in the south.

* The hot issue: Grabbing the ‘536 agriculture reform land.’ Chamlong opposes the government accusations furiously –“The government lies and does not have innocent intentions.”

* The cruel vocational students shot bus No. 90 and injured two students. One surrendered to the policeman. The other escaped.

* Police arrest the head of gangster–his alias is “White Horse.” His team stole rental cars in Pattaya and Phuket.

* Surasak Anatkaphan, a 51-year-old Petchaboon Province M.P. , was seriously scalded by methanol alcohol when his friend tried to refill a depleted pan of it at Oishi Restaurant and the alcohol exploded. The M.P. is still in I.C.U. The head of Oishi’s committee came out to take responsibility. This kind of alcohol is on a list of hazards, but the government is just waking up to warn about its dangers.

* The Tourism Police
arrested the "white Muslim foreigner thieves"
at Ratchadaphisek and Huaykwang. They robbed
hotel rooms.
The four accused are Turkish and Iranian.

Thailand building Uncle Ho memorial

September 23, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thailand](#)

[building Uncle Ho memorial](#) – Viet Nam News, September 23, 2004

The first phase of the memorial complex for President Ho Chi Minh was inaugurated in Thailand's Udon Thani Province on Sunday...

Thai sites

September 23, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Thai sites

– September 23, 2004

[Maesa](#)

[Elephant Camp](#) (It has ISO!) and [Thai
mythological creatures database](#)

Thai-language newspapers – September 24, 2004

September 24, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Matichon

– September 24, 2004

* A member of the TRT Party who was once a member of the Palangtham Party said they will tell Maew to check the behavior of Newin in the case of illegal land reform. Newin declares he will responsible and continues as is. Chamlong points out that those who persecute him will face an inferno after they die.

* Two children was suspected to have died from bird flu in Kumpaengpetch province. Their mother dies 7 days after their funeral.

* An ABAC survey of 5,200 people found that public favor in Thaksin and TRT decreases, especially in Bangkok and the south, and Democrat Party is more popular. People are not confident that the government can combat corruption.

Thairath

– September 24, 2004

* Bloody news :
Bus No 207 ran very fast and hurried to miss the red light and this made a 21-year-old female student of ABAC, to fall out of the bus. Her head hit the road very hard. Her state is very serious and she is in I.C.U. and is unconsciousness with no feeling. She is just waiting to die.

* It has been disclosed that the police keep 50% of the lottery money for

* Please save his life! At the press conference, Mrs. Sombat Beakley is crying and asking the terrorists to release her English husband Mr. Kenneth Beakley. He was taken hostage in Iraq and is under threat of death.

* Suwit Kunkitti, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, sends a committee from the consumer protection office to check all branches of Oishi. The staff in Oishi confirmed that the M.P.'s staff refilled the methanol alcohol by himself.

* Dr. Pornthip is not afraid of the southern terrorists who set a bounty of 1 million baht for her death.

* The police arrest a man who brings 72 bottles of bird flu vaccine which costs 200,000 baht from Hong Kong to Thailand yesterday .

* The Mahachon Party formally opens the new Mahachon office at the Thai Hotel, Wisuttikasat at the auspicious time of 9:45 am today.

themselves
and use the other 50% to fund police activities.

It is the time that tenants on land start to work so
this
is also a symbolic time to open. It is the belief
of the party that their leaders can set up the next
government

.

Swedish PM rejects jets-for-chicken trade

September 24, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

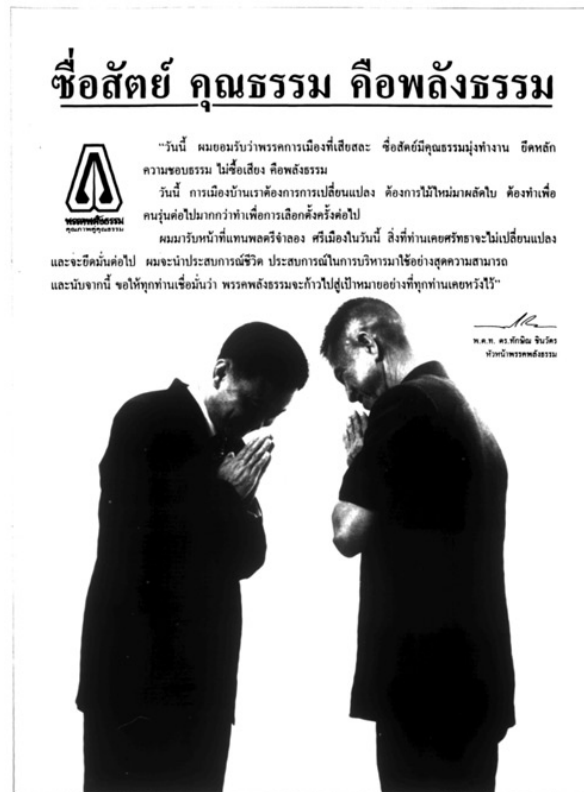
[Swedish PM rejects jets-for-chicken trade](#) – AP, September 24, 2004

This will surely be a story of the international ‘weird news’ columns: *The Swedish government cannot negotiate a deal with Thailand to trade jet fighters for raw chicken meat, Prime Minister Goeran Persson said Thursday...*

Thaksin hits his political mentor with land encroachment charges

September 24, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years



(Source: Full page ad in *Bangkok Post*, June 1, 1995)

More about [when Thaksin was given control of the Phalang Dharma Party](#)

Also: [The Roots of the Thai Political Crisis: Thaksin as Prime Minister](#)

[Personality clash comes to a head](#) – *The Nation*, September 24, 2004

The bitter falling out between Thaksin and Chamlong is a fresh sign of the polarisation of Thai politics. It was bound to happen.

Even when Thaksin Shinawatra and Chamlong Srimuang were at the height of their political romance in the mid-1990s, their latent irreconcilable differences were obvious. Everyone, with the possible exception of the duo itself, knew it would be just a matter of time before the two parted company.

One wore a home-made mor hom shirt, while the other had a penchant for pricey designer products. One ate one meal a day and bathed himself with only seven scoops of water, while the other indulged in the world.

...While Chamlong's turnaround was no surprise, Thaksin's latest move was never anticipated. The land encroachment charges that have been levelled at the charitable Chamlong Foundation is perhaps one of the biggest ironies of Thailand's modern political history.

Chamlong's campaign against allegedly illegal land grabs in Phuket by Democrat politicians, known as the Sor Por Kor scandal, brought down the Chuan government in 1995 and paved the way for his rich tycoon friend to make further inroads into politics.

Following the collapse of the Chuan administration, Chamlong allowed Thaksin to take over his Palang Dharma Party, which the businessman ran a few years before forming his own Thai Rak Thai...

Full text:

EDITORIAL: Personality clash comes to a head

Published on Sep 24, 2004

The bitter falling out between Thaksin and Chamlong is a fresh sign of the polarisation of Thai politics

It was bound to happen. Even when Thaksin Shinawatra and Chamlong Srimuang were at the height of their political romance in the mid-1990s, their latent irreconcilable differences were obvious. Everyone, with the possible exception of the duo itself, knew it would be just a matter of time before the two parted company. One wore a home-made mor hom shirt, while the other had a penchant for pricey designer products. One ate one meal a day and bathed himself with only seven scoops of water, while the other indulged in the world's most expensive wines and spent sums on haircuts that would put food on the table of a poor family for weeks. One made it common practice to denounce the power of money, while the other by that time had already become Thailand's richest tycoon.

When Chamlong declared recently that Thaksin was his personal mistake, eyebrows were raised as people asked themselves what had taken him so long to reach this conclusion. That statement, alongside some shrewd manoeuvring, helped make sure that the ruling Thai Rak Thai Party was humiliated at the Bangkok governor election.

Even before that, Chamlong had put the last nails in the coffin of Thaksin's ambitions to buy a share of the Liverpool Football Club with money raised from a special lotto.

Over the past few months, the veteran politician known as "Mr Clean" during his politically active days has started to look like a man who is trying to clear his conscience and rid himself of his guilt for having played a pivotal role in launching Thaksin's political career.

There is no doubt that Thaksin must have been deeply offended when this change became evident, though he continued, for a while anyway, to go out of his way to show respect for his former mentor. He scrapped the Liverpool lotto plan and gave credit to Chamlong by saying that the latter was criticising him in good faith. However, the premier dropped this restraint during the governor election campaign, during which he defiantly described Chamlong as "just someone I know". And the burning bridge finally caved in this week.

While Chamlong's turnaround was no surprise, Thaksin's latest move was never anticipated. The land encroachment charges that have been levelled at the charitable Chamlong Foundation is perhaps one of the biggest ironies of Thailand's modern political history. Chamlong's campaign against allegedly illegal land grabs in Phuket by Democrat politicians, known as the Sor Por Kor scandal, brought down the Chuan government in 1995 and paved the way for his rich tycoon friend to make further inroads into politics.

Following the collapse of the Chuan administration, Chamlong allowed Thaksin to take over his Palang Dharma Party, which the businessman ran a few years before forming his own Thai Rak Thai.

To have hit Chamlong with Sor Por Kor land grab charges is revenge of such a large scale that a new conspiracy theory is brewing. The Bangkok election embarrassment was bad, but even without Chamlong, Thai Rak Thai-backed candidate Pavena Hongsakul would still have lost anyway.

Speculation has mounted that Chamlong must have done something out of the public eye that prompted Thaksin, a man who is known for showing gratitude to the people who helped him succeed, to shrug off threats of being deemed an ingrate or, worse, a leader who abuses his power.

That speculation revolves around Chamlong and Thaksin's rivals, both old and new. According to some reports, the ambush on the government by the controversial tycoon Ekkayuth Anchanbutr and its aftermath fuelled the prime minister's suspicions towards his ex-mentor.

Ekkayuth is known to be close to former military officers who are notorious for their predisposition towards overthrowing governments through the use of force or underground strategies. The nucleus of this group consists of key members of the Chulachomklao Military Academy's Class 7, to which Chamlong belongs.

It remains to be seen if the showdown between Thaksin and Chamlong is in fact reflecting a lot more of the current state of Thai politics than meets the eye.

But even without conspiracy theories, the fallout is highly significant in that it provides undeniable proof of escalating tension and polarisation in Thai politics, which have apparently moved a growing number of top

political and social figures and thinkers to lay siege to the mighty Thaksin empire.

Press releases as news stories

September 25, 2004

Categories: Uncategorized

Press releases as news stories – September 25, 2004

This is not uncommon, but we thought we would point out this this Accor [press release](#) running as a news story in *The Nation*:

[Sofitel on Phi Phi Island](#) – *The Nation*, September 25, 2004

Sofitel Phi Phi Villa and Spa will open in early 2005 on picturesque Phi Phi Island, featuring a unique all-inclusive concept for guests seeking to get away from it all and indulge themselves...

A tale of two newspapers: The threatening billboard

September 27, 2004

Categories: A Tale of Two Newspapers, Signs and Billboards, The Thaksin Years



Above: From *Khom*

Chad Luek: Ekkayuth is very scared of the billboard that threatens him

A tale of two newspapers: The threatening billboard
– September 27, 2004

On September 27, 2004, *The Nation* rushed a grave sounding story onto their website about a supposed threat to two government critics (one of them anti-TRT tycoon Ekkayuth) by a mystery billboard.

The Thai-language paper *Khom Chad Luek* (also owned by *The Nation*) had the same story, but [reported](#) that "after checking" they found that the billboard is to promote the new film *Suriyakart* (Solar Eclipse) that will open October 14. It seems that both articles are identical except that the one on *The Nation* site omits the line in the first and last paragraph about the billboard being for a film (or perhaps *The Nation* article was rushed online before the source of the billboard was checked).

[Mystery behind billboard 'threat'](#) – *The Nation*,
September 28, 2004

...The two businessmen, who have recently been outspoken in their criticism of the administration, said the warning on the billboard had something to do with their antigovernment views. They were referring to a giant advertising billboard along the expressway near Sukhumvit Soi 62. The billboard

*carries the message: "A famous fortuneteller
said on the day of the solar eclipse on October 14
well-known businessmen with the initials 'Or'
are doomed."...*

Four-hundred-year-old giant vines are a new tourist spot

September 27, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Four-hundred-year-old
giant vines are a new tourist spot](#) –

TNA, September 27, 2004

Local authorities are promoting a four-hundred-year old vine in a national park in Thailand's northeastern province of Ubon Ratchathani as a new tourist spot.

The giant clump of vines, near a waterfall in the Ubon Ratchathani's Pha Taem National Park is more than two metres wide...

Thai-language newspapers – September 27, 2004

September 27, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Matichon – September 27, 2004

* Thaksin will eat rice with workers at the Suwanapoom airport. The military prepare a tent for him to stay in.

* The newspapers reveals a new name of youth on the internet–“young online.” Their target is looking for a girlfriend and having sex with a young girl.

Thairath – September 27, 2004

* Bloody news : The cruel head of gangsters in the slums catches a young guy and burns him to death. His condition is very serious and then he dies in the hospital. The policemen are now looking for the gangster.

* The famous Kamnan in Pathumthani drives carelessly and falls into a canal. His family suspects he was killed.

* ABAC University appoints a team to help the student who fell out of the bus. The law center of ABAC has a team to help prepare a lawsuit and collect evidence to deal with those responsible.

* Bloody news
: The cruel guard uses a hammer beat a guy because he could not stand seeing the guy sleep in the building during work hours. He hit his head until he died and hid his dead body in the toilet.

Thai-language newspaper – September 28, 2004

September 28, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Matichon

– September 28, 2004

* A crazy buffalo gores people in front of the Zentago company, Pathumtani. One dies from being gored and seven are injured.

* The Bank of Thailand will launch a new 50 baht banknote on October 1.

* Research

from Chulalongkorn University students reveals that

young men use the telephone (“Dek Len Line”) for seeking friends or girlfriends. It found that young men change partners seven times in one year

(swinging sex). The professor said that “technology

is the new institution of the youth.” That youth have looked outside the family and spend more time

using the phone. They are addicted to consumerism.

The owner of telephone businesses want to get money

from youth and the youth love telephones for solving their loneliness.

Thairath

– September 28, 2004

* Bloody news
: The policeman’s wife is jealous of the minor wife so she burns her.

* Big arrest to seize the heroin 60 kgs. The two who arrested are from a minority.

* A mean

dog, an Alsatian, bites a 13-year-old girl, seriously injuring her. She has a big wound on her head and her ear torn and in the hospital in Trad province.

* A policemen is killed again in the south in Pattani province. His colleagues are afraid because four policemen have died and two have been injured in only one month.

The King Chulalongkorn Memorial Building

September 28, 2004

The King Chulalongkorn Memorial Building

– September 28, 2004

Enis on the [forum](#)

pointed out [this](#)

[site](#): *In 1897, King Chulalongkorn of Siam (present-day Thailand) visited Sweden and Ragunda municipality. Almost exactly one hundred years later, the construction of a memorial building in honour of the King was commenced...*

Thai-language newspaper – September 29, 2004

September 29, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Matichon – September 29, 2004

* WHO accepts that it is possible that birdflu will spread from human to human. It is recorded that Thailand had the first case in the world.

* The Public Health department announced that birdflu is still occurring, but is still not confident that it can be transmitted from human to human.

Thairath– September 29, 2004

* Bloody news
: For killing her
4-day-old son named Apec, the mother was sentenced
by the court to be executed. She confessed and accepted
her guilt so the Southern Bangkok Criminal court gave
her 25 years instead.

* The female food seller, 38 years old, who sold somtum
at Hualampong Station was killed in a terrible way
by being stabbed with a screwdriver in the neck at
a hotel.

* The
Prime Minister forgives the "regular customer"
(an alias that Thaksin gives to those who criticize
him). He says "I am calm now" and declares
the kick off of the TRT reelection campaign on
October
17.

* A group of vocational education teachers and
students
in Chaingmai asks for help from Thaksin for a
study
loan.

* The North starts to get cold–17 degrees!

* Two
million baht disappeared from an ATM machine in
Pisanulok
province. The police did not find any clue.

* The dead body of a teacher was found in the
channel
of a golf course in Chiangrai. It is suspected that
he was killed by his friend after quarreling.

Manufacturing opposition to Thaksin

September 29, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[What choice do we have?](#) – *Bangkok Post*, September 29, 2004

A candid and insightful editorial from the *Post*

that even takes a swipe at *The Nation*:

...Some newspapers, drawing courage from others, are manufacturing "opposition to Thaksin growing" articles.

My favourite is about a "major" rally at Sanam Luang recently, which turned out to be organised by one disgruntled and very bankrupt tycoon, who is about to lose control of his empire because the government has done the right thing and forced through a restructuring programme that the country's banking system desperately needed, and one very failed pyramid financing engineer who recently returned to Thailand after the statute of limitations had expired. These two gentlemen and their rent-a-crowd do not in any way reflect public opinion or a growing opposition to Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. In fact, their anger is more a measure of Mr Thaksin's effectiveness, if anything...

Tired of being kept away from the feeding trough—I mean, out of power—and convinced that Mr Thaksin will serve another four years as prime minister, Maj-Gen Sanan, the archetypal old guard politician, decided to break away from his long-time Democrat friends to stitch together a new "coalition party-in-waiting"...

What choice do we have?

One public opinion poll suggests that the prime minister's popularity is declining. The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration's governor election results were seen by some as a stinging rejection of the Thai Rak Thai party. Some newspapers, drawing courage from others, are manufacturing "opposition to Thaksin growing" articles.

My favourite is about a "major" rally at Sanam Luang recently, which turned out to be organised by one disgruntled and very bankrupt tycoon, who is about to lose control of his empire because the government has done the right thing and forced through a restructuring programme that the country's banking system desperately needed, and one very failed pyramid financing engineer who recently returned to Thailand after the statute of limitations had expired. These two gentlemen and their rent-a-crowd do not in any way reflect public opinion or a growing opposition to Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. In fact, their anger is more a measure of Mr Thaksin's effectiveness, if anything.

Perhaps more interestingly, we have a few new political parties rushing to register in time so that they can beat the 90-day deadline before the general election. Of these, the Mahachon party clearly has the most experience and money. However, when one looks at the founding partners _ Sanan Kachornprasart, formerly a Democrat party bigwig, and Vattana Asavahame, formerly of the Rassadorn party _ one begins to wonder. No, one doesn't actually. It's as clear as daylight.

Tired of being kept away from the feeding trough _ I mean, out of power _ and convinced that Mr Thaksin will serve another four years as prime minister, Maj-Gen Sanan, the archetypal old guard politician, decided

to break away from his long-time Democrat friends to stitch together a new “coalition party-in-waiting”. Between them, Maj-Gen Sanan and Mr Vattana hope to draw into their net perhaps 20 to 40 captive seats at the next general election, thereby weakening the Democrats, and in return they clearly hope to be invited to join Mr Thaksin’s second-term administration, at which time the Mahachon party will be seamlessly dissolved into the Thai Rak Thai party.

The cost of this farcical political ballet will be shared between the three gentlemen concerned and the rewards will be cabinet posts for Maj-Gen Sanan and Mr Vattana. Another bonus: Thai Rak Thai will appear a slightly less dominant victor at the time the general election results are announced, perhaps in keeping with the prime minister’s toned down publicly stated election goals.

According to Mahachon leader Anek Laothammathat, another Democrat party stalwart, now a defector, and a former Communist Party of Thailand student activist, the party believes in progressive welfarism, decentralisation and the fight against corruption and conflicts of interest. Assistance given under progressive welfarism is not vertical, meaning state to people, but horizontal, meaning people to people. Apparently, instead of having the government help people directly, communities decide for themselves which people are given assistance.

Which leaves us with the Democrat party.

What can one say about this disparate collection of old guards and younger stars? As much as we all might want a viable alternative to the Thai Rak Thai party, how can we expect voters to be inspired by a party that is effectively split between the old and the new and has yet to articulate a meaningful policy platform that addresses the fundamental issues facing our country? Simply telling us that they are against corruption and cronyism and for transparency and decentralisation is not sufficient to convince me, at least, that they have anything concrete to offer the country.

I imagine Democrat party leader Banyat Bantadtan and Prime Minister Thaksin facing off in a series of televised debates about the issues of our times in the run-up to the general election next February. That’s a gauntlet I would like to see both men take up.

Kanjana Spindler is Assistant Editor, Editorial Pages, Bangkok Post.

Thai backed for top job at U.N.

September 29, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Thai backed for top job at U.N.](#) –

Washington Times, September 29, 2004

Ten Southeast Asian nations yesterday endorsed Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai to succeed Kofi Annan as the next UN secretary-general, an early and unusually public announcement that likely will pre-empt other candidates from declaring their interest...

Also: [ASEAN names Thai FM as candidate for UN chief](#) –

TNA, September 29, 2004

Thai-language newspapers – September 30, 2004

September 30, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Kom Chad Luek</i> – September 30, 2004</p> <p>* Ms. Zorida Salvara, secretary of the Elephant Foundation, reveals that a baby elephant wandered far from home. Missing its mom, it died of tension. 42 NGOs join to prevent the selling of elephants to zoos around the world.</p>	<p>* Thaksin is tense about the coup news. The PM did not deny the news of the underground movement plan a coup d'etat. He said "it is the internal matter of the party," but members of TRT worry about the "rebels of September 9" who might wake up and participate with the 'Silom mob'. The Democrat party leader, Mr. Bunyat, said the Government talks big about coups, but it's no longer the time for coups anymore.</p>
<p><i>Matichon</i> – September 30, 2004</p> <p>* "Sex webcam" is a new and popular for "Dek Len Lai." Some use it for earning money and having sex later or send by SMS called "Sex SMS."</p>	
<p><i>Thairath</i> – September 30, 2004</p> <p>* A female student in Chumporn province who ate Naem made in Hadyai, Songkhla, vomited when she a piece of a finger inside.</p> <p>* People are crazy about lottery numbers. They buy the number of Olympics-314 and 14 .</p>	<p>* The abbot and the committee of the temple KasemSuriyamnaj, Nakornprathom reveals that 4,580,000 baht in the temple's money held at Bangkok Bank was stolen and all that remains at the bank is 3,817 baht.</p> <p>* Chuwit Kamolwisit allegedly beat his wife. His first wife reported to the Dindaeng Police .</p>

Ruling party spokesman claims coup plan against Thai government

September 30, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Ruling](#)

[party spokesman claims coup plan against Thai government](#) – AP, September

30, 2004

A spokesman of Thailand's ruling party created a stir Thursday by claiming that a group of people opposed to Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's government are planning a military coup.

Suthin Klangsaeng, a member of Parliament and deputy spokesman of the Thai Rak Thai party, did not name anyone but hinted that the group consists of military officers close to a London-based businessman who recently made corruption allegations against the government.

"The group of people who have long been opposed to this government are planning to stage a military coup," Suthin told reporters. Speaking separately, Thaksin refused to confirm or deny the allegation.

"Let it be the internal matter of my party," Thaksin replied cryptically when asked by reporters to comment on Suthin's remarks.

When Thaksin was in Europe on an official trip, rumors were swirling in political circles last week about an alleged coup attempt, linking it with the London-based tycoon, Ekkayuth Anchanbutr. He was not immediately available for comment...

However, observers discount the possibility of the military mounting a coup and jeopardizing Thailand's reputation in the international financial and business community as a stable investment base.

Curry leaves may help control diabetes, scientists say

September 30, 2004

Categories: Food and Drink

[Curry leaves may help control diabetes, scientists say](#) – *The Guardian*,

September 30, 2004

Ancient herbal remedies used for centuries in Indian cooking and in preparing dishes in the far east have the potential to control diabetes and treat cancer, according to a team of London scientists...

Thai speakers map

September 30, 2004

Categories: Language

[Thai](#)

[speakers map](#) – September
30, 2004

Select 'Thai' from the list and see where in the
U.S. Thai-speakers live.

Bangkok Subway News – July-October 2004

October 1, 2004

Categories: Subway

Bangsue – Bang Yai subway line approved – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, September 28, 2004

The cabinet has approved the Bangsue – Bang Yai line with a budget of 46.764 billion baht, 13 stations, 23 km. The bidding will start in two months and take another six months to come up with the detailed design and the contract to be signed in May 2005. Construction will be finished by September 2008.

MRTA has to find a loan from a domestic source at cheapest price while MOF will be an underwriter. MRTA will have to issue bonds and offer IPO on the SET while the board for the mass transit investment will discuss with MOF about the financial plan later.

Commentary: Even though many people feel very glad that the subway will be reaching the suburbs, some suspect corruption and collusion again.

Those who live along Sukhumvit road from Bang Na to Samut Prakarn as well as those who live in Thonburi feel angry that the government has still blocked any funding of [Skytrain extensions](#). They feel that the government is punishing the people who did not vote for Thai Rak Thai. Same can be said to those who live along Lad Phrao road and Kaset area...

However, those who live in Nonthaburi area praise Premier Thaksin that he has very good long term vision. Even though they think TRT is corrupt, they still think that TRT is a lot better than Democrats. Discussion of this can be seen [here](#).

MOTC pushing Bangyai subway extension for the cabinet meeting at NBIA – translated and summarized from *Thairath*, September 27, 2004

MOTC is pushing the purple line extension from Bangsue to Bang Yai (23 km with 46.709 billion baht price tag). MRTA needs to make further study to make an environmental impact assessment and detailed design.

The project will be a turnkey project.

The bill for Purple Line extension:

- 1) Consultant to handle the detail design and bidding forms – 0.350 billion baht
- 2) Land expropriation to construct Bang Yai depot – 1.587 billion baht
- 3) Payment to contractor – 27.556 billion baht
- 4) Rail system – 16.417 billion baht

There are 100 villages along this purple line within a 5 km radius and 60,000 households and 250,000 people. There are already 100,000 cars in the area.

If approved, the construction can be started by September 2005 and the opening will be by the end of 2008.

Furthermore, the first 25% of BMCL stock must be sold at par price. The rest will be mentioned later.

Note: Opinion about 25% share at par is [here](#).

BMCL coming up with a strategy to boost passengers – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, September 24, 2004

BMCL is going to issue the Student Smart card for students not older than 23 in the next semester. Even those adult passengers will receive some discount for using smart cards to boost the number of passengers by 10-15%. So far, BMCL has daily revenue of 3 million baht.

The children 90-120 cm tall and senior citizens qualify for a 50% discount.

Adult passengers who use smart cards will qualify for a discount only when they ride during the non rush hour periods of the day. However, the details on the discount scheme for adults has not been revealed yet.

This plan will boost the number of passenger by 10-15%. This also strongly encourage passengers to buy smart cards—up from 40% of passengers now to a target of 80% passengers.

The average weekday passengers is 140,000 trips a day during weekdays and 100,000 trip a day during weekends. The daily revenue is 3 million baht.

BMCL has submitted a commercial management plan to MRTA to get approval. If the plan is approved, the installation of telecommunication systems for mobile phones inside the subway could be started within one

month while the commercial development could start in the next two months after approval and the new advertising run by Mr Phanthongthae Shinnawattra will be started in 1 week.

The revenue sharing to MRTA is 7% of the revenue received from the private sector. However, it will take time for BMCL and MRTA to make a settlement on revenue sharing by clearing up all misunderstanding.

Note: Comments, Criticism and cynicism about this Subway discount scheme can be seen [here](#).

MRTA rejects the commercial development plan for the subway – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, September 24, 2004

MRTA rejects the commercial development plan of BMCL since BMCL will pay MRTA only 7% of 25% of the subsidiary revenue while BMCL grabs the rest. That is a very unfair deal since BMCL has held 75% of stocks in subsidiary companies and they get 93% of the 25% subsidiary revenue. This deal has pleased the BMCL shareholders very much. MRTA deserved to get 7% of the net revenue while BMCL should get 18% of net revenue. The deadlock has postponed the plan to offer an IPO.

Mobile Phone substations and commercial stores are not very important since even subways in Japan prohibited passengers from using mobile phones inside subway bogies except for sending messages. Student discounts and 10% discounts during non rush hour for those who hold smart cards have been requested by MRTA, from the very first days of the contract, but BMCL has rejected this by claiming that the 15% discount for the first year would be sufficient—however it has been proven this is not so.

BMCL has to correct some direction signs at Chatuchak, Phaholyothin, and Silom since lots of passengers have made very loud complaints about the lousy direction signs.

Notes: Comments and criticism about 10% discount plan is [here](#).

[SUBWAY TAKEOVER : Bt3 a share is too high, Suriya says](#) – *The Nation*, September 2, 2004

Park and Ride at Bangsue and Mochit will save 75 million baht a year – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, June 30, 2004

MoEnergy agrees to grant 43 million baht to BMA and BTSC to construct two new park and rides at Bangsue and Mochit.

1) Mochit Park and Ride will be at the 23-rai old Mochit bus terminal and will hold 2000 cars with a 25 million baht budget.

2) Bangsue Park and Ride will be at the 10-rai Thoed Damri Road opposite Siam Cement. It will hold 1000 cars with an 18 million baht budget to cover a bridge across the railway tracks at Bangsue junction.

MRTA, BTSC and SRT will set up security units in both park and ride buildings. Both park and rides will have facilities to link with other modes of transportation. MRTA needs to have more park and rides in addition to the existing 9 park and ride facilities and parking lots to pick more passengers.

Stunning success for the subway – 7 million baht in 5 days – translated and summarized from [Ban Muang Daily](#), July 8, 2004

BMCL received 7 million baht of revenue to give to His Majesty in just 5 days of service—with the average number of daily passenger at 150,000. The delays during July 4-5 were due to facts that many of those monkeys (those who cannot keep their hands in the right place) are pulling the emergency gate switches – causing the subway doors to open and forcing BMCL to evacuate the passengers for inspection and reinstall the gate system.

BMCL has installed temporary signs to solve unclear gate sign problems along with having BMCL workers make announcements.

The problems with the subway service on July 8-9 will be solved. Further education for those who are not familiar with the Subway will be applied to ensure that they can use the subway without glitches. More passengers will compel BMCL to run 18 subway sets—up from the current 14 sets during the normal period and 18 sets during the morning and evening rush hours. Only when daily passengers have peaked to be at par with Skytrain (400,000 passengers a day) will BMCL be compelled to purchase five more sets of rolling stock.

BMTA has revenue squeezed – translated and summarized from the Public Relations Department info posted on [MThai](#), July 8, 2004

BMTA buses have their revenue reduced by 300,000 baht a day due to the Subway. However, they hope that after the first year rates have been applied, some of their customers will be back.

Nikorn Jamnong (deputy minister of MOTC) said they may consider transferring BMTA to BMA since the non-aircon buses are reaching the decommissioning period. The government would subsidize the fare so that passengers can pay only 5 baht while BMA pays 5 baht and the government pays another 5 baht in addition to the current subsidies to BMTA.

Stunning success for the Subway – 250,000 passengers in a single day – translated and summarized from *Prachachart Thurakij*, July 7, 2004

Subway is a very stunning success.

First day (July 3, 7pm to midnight) – about 50,000 passengers

Second day (July 4 – Sunday) – 250,000 passengers a day due to it being a holiday and many want to try the Subway—for some may be once in a lifetime.

Even during the workdays, passengers fill up the subway since it is dirt cheap (10 baht—cheaper than Euro 2) with very fast services. This subway has already changed the lifestyle of Bangkokians—especially those who work along Rachadaphisek and Rama 4 since they can go to have good dining and shopping at Hua Lamphong during noon break. Some use the subway to interchange with the Skytrain before heading to offices at Silom, Wireless Road, Siam.

The subway is not hurting the Skytrain very much since the Skytrain has already have regular customers and the route is not competing, but complementing. However, the real test will come when the first year rates are applied.

The atmosphere inside Subway stations is not perfect. It is very dry since it looks barren—no decoration, no charming ads, no resting areas for sipping coffee or drinking water. TVMs are not fully installed yet.

The rush to open the system has forced BMCL to forgo the installation of convenient directing signs and many passengers have ranted and yelled at BMCL officers while asking about the directions due to the frustration when they have to up and down many levels before finding the right gates. However, some of those passengers are very lazy since they do not bother to read the signs at all.

The smart cards/token system is a big plus that makes the BTSC cards look primitive by comparison even though there are some glitches since many have never experienced such kind of convenience before.

BMCL has installed aircon and ventilators to cut pressure inside the subway, but it will cost BMCL very much—40 million baht a month for aircon alone. Air must be cool enough, but the thermostats have been set to 29 Celsius so as to force the passengers to rush. Many have complained due to the jam-packed subway—thus they need to set the thermostat to 25-27 Celsius as the way to make it more comfortable.

Central Pattana to dig 500-meter tunnel to the subway – SRT cooperating with MRTA to modernize Bangsue Junction – translated and summarized from *Prachachart Thurakij*, July 7-10, 2004

SRT is going to cooperate with MRTA in a joint venture to invest 10 million baht to modernize Bangsue Junction (5 million baht from SRT and another 5 million baht from MRTA) along with a viaduct and a new gate at 2-rai of land around Central Plaza Lad Phrao to connect with Subway. The 2-rai of land in front of Central Lad Phrao will be a new shopping mall.

Bangsue modernization will not be aircon—just better looking shops and a modernized railway stations to allow subway passengers to sit and relax before going into the underground station or before riding SRT commuters/intercity trains. This also allows rural folks to head into Bangkok without having to go to Hua Lamphong.

However, Central Pattana told SRT that they are going to invest 500 million baht for the underground tunnel to link with Phaholyothin and are just asking approval from SRT and the investment will become a reality. So far SRT has received 500 million baht revenue from leasing SRT land—short of the 1 billion baht target. However the advertising billboards from Rangsit to Lad Krabang will help SRT to reach the 1 billion baht target—even though the current billboard advertising with 3-year lease has generate 40 million baht additional revenue.

SRT is checking whether the 45 booths around Central Lad Phrao are within the leased land or vacant land. Central Patthana can lease that land with booths for commercial development, but they have to pay higher rent to SRT.

Central Patthana has asked SRT to dig a 500 m tunnel connecting Central Lad Phrao with Phaholyothin Station. After approval, Central Patthana has to pay investment bills of 500 million baht while paying the additional lease to SRT at market rates.

BMTA shocked! Subway sucking away almost all passengers from Ratchadaphisek Road busses – translated and summarized from *Thaipost*, July 7, 2004

The cheap ticket price of the Subway has already sucked away the BMTA bus passengers. Nevertheless, BMTA will wait to see the results when the actual ticket rates are applied. Even so, BMTA buses still have regular customers to ride the bus no matter how many passengers the Subway sucks away.

Motorcycle taxi drivers also feel stunned that passengers have already shortened routes to go only to Subway stations. Now, metered taxis have to park near Subway stations to pick up passengers who want to go to the suburbs. The drivers are wishing that the subway will be extended to Rangsit or Bang Kapi.

At Klong Toei Intersection, there were only two passengers in BMTA bus No 136 (New Mochit – Customs Dept) and BMTA Aircon Bus 185 has only a driver and ticket conductor since both routes go along a Subway line. The conductor of BMTA bus 136 told correspondents that the number of passengers is decreased but there are a few regular customers who still ride the bus since they do not have to pay for both Subway and Bus if they still ride the bus. The actual impact will come out after August 12 and the BMTA workers believe that they will get their customers back unless BMCL decides to issue 30-day pass to keep their regular subway customers happy with bargain prices.

The BMTA officers said even after the introduction of 30-day passes for the Skytrain, there were still a lot of regular passengers who ride BMTA No 77 (Rama 3 – New Mochit). The have-not Bangkokians still have to ride the buses. Many of subway riders have complained that it is very hard to breathe inside the subway due to the sardine-packed subway. Some even faint inside subway stations. The have to count the number of stations before reaching the destination. Inside the bus, they still have some room to breathe.

Even though Subway has added more travel choices, it will not help cut the traffic since many people still travel in the same old way by driving private cars. The police inside Subway stations also cause a lot of troubles to the passengers.

The motorcycle taxi drivers at Klong Toei told the press that the passengers used to hire them to take them to Huay Kwang or Ratchadaphisek. Now, those passengers have asked them to drop down at the nearest Subway stations or just simply ride the subway without asking for a motorcycle ride.

Taxi drivers said they waited by the Subway for a very long time. Those taxi cabs simply pick up the passengers at the nearest subway station instead of seeking out passengers. Taxi driver said when they parked their cars at Skytrain station for just about 3 minutes, they will get the new passengers... a big boon for them indeed when the Subway became a reality. Therefore, the major expansion to Bang Kapi and Rangsit will help them a lot since there will be several stations to choose and driving in suburb areas have much less stress and strain from traffic jams.

Crimes inside subway stations – Hoarding subway tokens – Sexual harassment – translated and summarized from *Thairath*, July 7, 2004

BMCL activity managers said there are 250,000 passengers on July 4. Many of those passengers have hoarded Subway tokens to resell at higher prices (buy 10 baht and sell 15 baht) even though they are not supposed to do so since it has only a 1-day lifetime. Those who hoarded the tokens have to return those tokens to BMCL to get payback. Many of them have purchased tokens for keepsakes.

Some passengers have passed out or had seizures which forced BMCL officers to take them to hospitals. There are also slipping while scrambling for tickets. Some young women have undergone sexual harassment by being grabbed at their behind while waiting on the long line at Bangsue. BMCL officers arrested that molester and took him to Noppahwongse Police Station (the HQ of Railway Police near Hua Lamphong). Now passengers can use mobile phones at the ticket level while those who stay at the platforms and those who inside the subway will not be able to use mobile phones. They will be able to use the mobile phones inside subway next month. More CCTV systems (30 CCTV per station) will be installed to ensure security. Every passenger will be under the surveillance of CCTV systems which connect to the station, the HQ and the maintenance center and are recorded onto magnetic stripes. MRTA and BMCL have been trained along with police from 11 stations (5 sub HQ) along subway route stop all those bad folk inside the subway.

Passengers still storming the subway – Hoarding subway tokens – New passenger numbers – translated and summarized from *Khaosod*, *Thairath*, & *Dailynews*, July 6, 2004

Even on the first working day (July 5, 2004) the subway is open, Bangkokians are still storming the stations—especially Asok and Sukhumvit.

However, there are several problems with using tokens since it is very new concept for subway passengers—

BMCL and MRTA officers have to educate the masses about how to use the new tokens.

Even worse, many have hoarded Subway tokens to resell at 15 baht/token. Furthermore those who ride subways just hang around the station to socialize with other people despite the 1-hour limitation. When MRTA imposes a fine, the passengers who hang around the station will have their stored value cut down while those joy riders with tokens will have to pay a fine according to the length of time they stay.

MRTA Governor admits that this low price attracted many passengers to the subway stations and caused long lines at the booths since the TVMs imported from France have not been fully installed yet. The TVM installation will be done next month. So far, few people bought smart cards due to the high price (300 baht) despite they are much more convenient to use than tokens.

The confusing signs at the gates (usually 4 gates) also frustrated the passengers when they are going out of the stations.

After recounting the passengers, the final number are:

July 3 (8pm – midnight) – 65,000 passengers

July 4 (6am – midnight) – 250,000 passengers

July 5 – not finalized yet. – the first estimation is 150,000 passengers

The stations which have the highest number of passengers:

1) Hua Lamphong (Highest), 2) Bangsue, 3) Queen Sirikit Center, 4) Silom, 5) Sukhumvit

Many passengers exit at Silom, Ratchadaphisek, Suthisarn, Phra Ram 9 and Phetburi.

On the other hand, the number of passengers for the BTS Skytrain on July 4 is 230,000 passengers. While the number of passenger who exit the Skytrain station at Asok is increasing, the number of passengers who go to Saladaeng station is declining due to a much more convenient interchange with the subway at Asok station.

Connections to the Subway and Skytrain – July 7, 2004

Notes: *The owners of four buildings are asking MRTA to construct connections with Subway stations:*

1) Fortune Town – Phra Ram 9

2) Chula Hightech – Sam Yan

3) Bangkok Terminal – Chatuchak Park

4) Office and condominiums along Asok-Sukhumvit road – Sukhumvit station

MRTA has some conditions attached before approving the via duct construction:

1) *The owner of the buildings must have the blueprint of the tunnel to connect to the subway station and it needs to fit into the same format as the subway tunnel.*

2) *Security within the tunnel must be ready all the time.*

3) *The owners of those buildings have to take the whole responsibility for the power bill, the water bill, security hiring, and the construction cost of the connecting tunnels and they have to allow MRTA engineers to inspect the tunnels without hesitation.*

BTSC has received requests from four buildings for BTSC to come up viaducts connecting the Skytrain with their buildings:

1) Thaniya Plaza – Saladaeng station

2) Major Ekkamai – Ekkamai station

3) Nusasiri Project (Nuza 101 building) – Ekkamai station

4) Central World – Rajadamri Station

The constructions of via duct to the Skytrain station is a piece of cake, but the owners of those buildings have to take a responsibility for construction costs, maintenance, power and water bills, and miscellaneous expenses.

Storming the Subway – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, July 5, 2004

Even on the third day, the subway undergoing a human storm due to the 10 baht ticket. The human circulation and education to the masses about how to use Subway have been improved.

MRTA now agrees to correct the confusing signs by enlarging the letters, posting more sign at the wall near the gates with much larger letters and asking BMTA to supply more buses to go to the subway stations.

Even though Ratchadaphisek traffic has improved, the traffic along Vibhavadeerangsit and Phaholyothin are still seeing traffic jams. Even the main park and ride at Lad Phrao and Thailand Cultural Center are full—the capacity needs to be doubled.

After the first year rates have been applied, the number of passenger will be reduced by 30% to 140,000 passengers a day which then requires a monthly pass to boost the number of passengers.

Subway passengers are asking for the shuttle bus. Therefore, MRTA can ask BMTA to supply the buses only in some important stations even though it will not please every passenger.

The Thai-language forums and the subway, July 7, 2004

[First thread](#) – This one asks for better bus connections with Samyan station to allow passengers to transfer to the bus and reach Si Phraya via Phyathai-Si Phraya road without trouble since the existing bus stops for the bus to Si Phraya are too far away from the station.

Bigger route map as well as the bigger signs indicating the significant places near the gates are also being demanded. The bigger sign showing the ticket prices are requested along with the time to reach the destinations. Some also ask for a 20-baht flat rate ticket which will not come about until MRTA has come up with 30-day passes. Furthermore, they ask for the extensions to Thonburi, Bangkok and Rangsit.

[Second thread](#) – This one asks for cooler air conditioning inside both stations and subway cars after getting crushed in like sardines with other passengers in both stations and inside subway cars. Furthermore, MRTA and BMCL should add more perfume in the air conditioning to suppress the stinking and humid atmosphere along with moldy smell inside the subway stations. Better ventilation and dryers inside subway stations have to be installed to solve such problems.

Furthermore, the passengers are asking MRTA to follow Tokyo subways which have speakers to announce which side of turnstiles to go in and which side of the turnstiles to come out. However those who live in Boston warn that the speakers could confuse even those regular passengers.

Many feel very disgusted at the security measure suggested by the FBI to close the restrooms for security reasons. Tokyo and Seoul Subways have restrooms open. Bigger station logos and station names are also on demand.

Thai-language newspapers – October 1, 2004

October 1, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Matichon – October 1, 2004

* The advisor of WHO does not believe the bird flu can be controlled in 1 month. A recent case is of a woman who ate duck in Ayuthaya got sick—she is being watched.

* Thaksin declares he will ‘close the game.’ He will try to stop the deep crisis in the south by reorganizing the system and strategies for solving the problems

* Democrat Party raps the government drivel of talking about a coup. Maew tells his ministers to accelerate the plan for the next four years. He hires his son’s studio to take photos for the election. He refuses to comment on the coup talk.

Thairath – October 1, 2004

* Three ponoh students who sneak on to a military base in Yalawas are shot and injured.

* A facial massager, employee of Face and Figure salon, steals a customer credit card to buy things such as 3 mobiles phones, 6 glasses and 4 watches which all total 50,000 baht. Finally he is arrested.

* Chuwit avoids embarrassment in the case of beating his wife. He says that it is a domestic problem and he apologized to his wife already.

* After monitoring the Naem Yaowapa Factory and worker conditions, a doctor in Songkhla said it passes the standard of GMP and there has been no history of complaints at the factory.

Aviation in Thailand

October 1, 2004

Categories: History

[Aviation in Thailand](#) – October 1, 2004

...There is some confusion over whether Prince Chakrabongse or Prince Purachatra was the first Thai to leave the ground in an airplane, though the newspaper accounts suggest that it was the latter, on a test flight the day before the demonstrations officially opened. In any event, both certainly flew – "in uniform with riding boots and spurs", according to Lords of Life by Prince Chakrabongse's son – and so did numerous others, paying 50 baht for the experience. The first foreigner to glimpse Bangkok from the air was identified as a "Mr. F. Bopp" and the first Thai woman appears to have been the Princess of Nagorn Chaisri.

...Further developments in Thai aviation proceeded rapidly thereafter. Don Muang was ready for occupancy within a few months, and the first plane, a Nieuport, landed there on March 8. (Bangkok's airport, it might be noted parenthetically, is the oldest in the world still being used in its original location; no road connected it with the city in the early days, the only access being by railway on the northern line, which passed the site.)...

‘Thai Hotels Association stamps out sales of illegal ivory’

October 1, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[‘Thai Hotels Association stamps out sales of illegal ivory’](#)

– TAT, October 1, 2004

TAT claims no member hotels now sell ivory:

	Bangkok	Total
	Hotels (n=111)	
Survey 1 (December 2000)	35 with ivory	
Pieces of ivory	15,465	15,465
Value of ivory (THB)	61,319,380	61,319,380
Survey 2 (October 2003)	17 with ivory	
Pieces of ivory	5,355	5,355
Value of ivory (THB)	11,589,270	11,589,270
SEPTEMBER 2004	NO IVORY FOR SALE	0
Pieces of ivory	0	0
Value of ivory (THB)	0	0

(Chart: TAT)

New type of forged U.S. dollar bills discovered

October 1, 2004

Categories: Crime

[New](#)

[type of forged U.S. dollar bills discovered](#)

– Kyodo, October 1, 2004

A Tokyo-based precision equipment maker said Friday it has confirmed a new type of counterfeit US dollar bills is circulating in Southeast Asia...

National Commission to Counter Corruption to file criminal and civil lawsuits against those who oppose its decision to raise the wages of its commissioners

October 1, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[What things cost](#) – *Bangkok Post*, October 1, 2004

From ‘Watchdog to take criminal action against pay-rise critics’: *The chairman of the National Commission to Counter Corruption (NCCC) says he will file criminal and civil lawsuits against people who oppose its decision to raise the wages of its commissioners...*

"We have faced insults and hatred from the general public. We need to take both criminal and civil action to address the damage," he said...

The commission's regulation on July 29 increases the monthly allowance of the NCCC chairman by 45,500 baht, to 154,000 baht. The monthly allowance of other commissioners increases by 42,500 baht, to 147,000 baht. An MP's salary stands at 76,000 baht...

Watchdog to take criminal action against pay-rise critics

PRADIT RUANGDIT

The chairman of the National Commission to Counter Corruption (NCCC) says he will file criminal and civil lawsuits against people who oppose its decision to raise the wages of its commissioners.

Pol Gen Wuthichai Srirattana-wuthi said the NCCC would have to take legal action after remarks by opponents caused the public to hate the agency.

"We have faced insults and hatred from the general public. We need to take both criminal and civil action to address the damage," he said.

Pol Gen Wuthichai declined to name targets. The NCCC opted for legal action instead of explaining the issue right away because opponents claimed their stance was in line with the law.

"As we have the duty to explain in line with the law, we choose to explain to the courts," the NCCC chairman said.

He declined to say why the NCCC issued a regulation to increase the pay of commissioners and whether the practice would set an example for executives of other independent organisations.

Pol Gen Wuthichai said the action was legal and the regulation was announced in the Royal Gazette.

Bangkok senator Pol Gen Pratin Santiprabhob, chairman of the Senate committee on anti-graft investigation, is a key critic of the pay rise. He says the NCCC had no right to raise its own wages.

The commission's regulation on July 29 increases the monthly allowance of the NCCC chairman by 45,500 baht, to 154,000 baht. The monthly allowance of other commissioners increases by 42,500 baht, to 147,000 baht. An MP's salary stands at 76,000 baht.

"I think the commission went beyond its authority. It should propose an amendment to parliament so parliament can ask why it needs to raise salaries," Pol Gen Pratin said.

The NCCC was authorised to issue regulations to govern its own administration, staff and the management of its budgets and assets.

Any change to the wages of its commissioners required an amendment to the law that governs financial returns in the government sector, and such a change should go before parliament.

Pol Gen Pratin insisted he did not intend to tarnish the NCCC but the Senate had the duty to keep an eye on the commission.

He is gathering the signatures of MPs and senators to ask the Supreme Court's Criminal Division for Holders of Political Positions to punish the NCCC chairman and commissioners for malfeasance. He has gathered nearly 90 senators' signatures, and 109 Democrat MPs are about to sign their names.

Thai premier's corruption pledge meets with scepticism

October 1, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Thai
premier's corruption pledge meets with scepticism](#)

– FT, October 1 2004

...But academics and anti-corruption campaigners said Mr Thaksin appeared focused only on petty misdeeds or "old-style corruption" – bribes and kickbacks – while ignoring conflicts of interest in government policy and decision-making...

...Kanokkan Anukansai of Transparency International Thailand, said: "Corruption doesn't mean only illegal activities. Corruption also means something that is improper."

But she said few Thais appeared to understand the concept of "conflict of interest".

100 firsts that shaped Bangkok

October 1, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[100](#)

[firsts that shaped Bangkok](#) – *The*

Nation, October, 1 2004

...Bangkok's first land thoroughfare, Charoen Krung Road, opened in 1860, the same year the Siamese first glimpsed ice.

The Kingdom's first telegraph line was established in 1883, and the first railway – the Paknam Line – in 1891. Chao Phraya Surasakmontri imported the country's first car in 1897, as well as the first telephone.

Another first for Bangkok, the Rama VI Bridge, came in 1926. Bangkok's skyline, of course, knew no high-rises in earlier times. Its vast sprawl of wooden houses rose no more than three storeys. Only its palaces and temples pierced the horizon. Factories were small and covered with palm leaves, most of them situated along the Chao Phya's banks...

Thai Rak Thai will mobilise a team of celebrity figures

October 1, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

The Nation [editorial](#):

With guile and cunning, assisted by a well-oiled propaganda machine, his party's well-funded campaign-managers are fine-tuning pork-barrel rituals into a national exhibition of success concerning the way in which the chief executive has been running the country.

From yesterday to Wednesday the government is putting on a big show for prospective voters, who consist of downtrodden and gullible grass-roots citizens being herded together from all over the country by party MPs and strategists, so that they will understand that Thai Rak Thai is to rule the country for four more years...

Of course, Thai Rak Thai will mobilise a team of celebrity figures and smooth talkers who could make snake-oil salesmen green with envy, what with their jaundiced eyes in the art of spin and propaganda messages...

Thai-language newspapers – October 4, 2004

October 4, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Matichon – October 4, 2004

* The Medical Science Department confirms that the object is a human finger. The student “Naem” is very upset. She got a phone call from a crazy person who wants to have sex with her. She got lots of phone calls making it so she cannot sleep or study. Some called to encourage her, some blamed her, and there was one guy who called her and said he will give her funds for her schooling if she sleeps with him.

* Lots of people join to celebrate the 81 year anniversary of “Luang Por Koon” in Korat (Nakorn Rachasima).

* In Kanchanaburi a female elephant named “Yoyo” was seven months pregnant and miscarried. The Elephant Foundation used the body in a ceremony.

* Maew set a new plan for the Southern crisis. He removes “Big Jiw” and tells Deputy Supreme Commander Sirichai Tunyasiri to take charge.

Thairath – October 4, 2004

* **Bloody news** – The biggest fireworks factory in Ayudtaya, named “Golden Flower,” explodes. 10 die and 2 are injured.

* **Bloody news** – Bus no. 85 (blue and white, cooperated by a private company and the government) crashes again. It hits and kills the ex-deputy director of Pathumkongka school who was 75 years old.

* Three teachers are charged of the case of making a 2 year old fall in a pot of boiling noodles.

* One Thai woman and two Malaysian men are arrested at the custom duty border, Sadao Songkhla, trying to carry drugs (E) worth 25 million baht into Thailand.

Thai-language newspapers – October 5, 2004

October 5, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – October 5, 2004</p> <p>* it is very sad that no one participated in the funeral of the latest bird flu victim, a nine year old girl. A child in Petchboon is in serious condition. The government approves the budget of 25 million bath to buy duck eggs to be destroyed.</p>	<p>* The Ministry of Finance blames the committee of the 30th anniversary of October 14. The committee last year ordered commemorative coins from LuangPor Koon (a famous monk in Korat) from the “I love democracy” (Koo Rak Prachatippatai) series. This cost 20 million bath, but now no one is taking responsibility for the order.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – October 5, 2004</p> <p>* Bloody news – The dead body of a 12 year old girl who was slashed by her mother in a ritual slaying. Her mother and her aunts believed they were sending her life to the god Indra.</p>	<p>* Police arrest a gang of five youth who robbed Levi jeans from people crossing a flyover. After making them take off their jeans, they gave the victim shorts to wear. They also took mobile phones and gold necklaces.</p> <p>* A father got drunk and kicked his wife who holding their baby. The baby fell to the floor and died.</p>

Impatient PM shuns partnership

October 5, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Impatient PM shuns partnership](#) – *The Nation*,

October 5, 2004

Interesting language indeed from *The Nation*: ...*The utter failure of the Thai public to rein in Thaksin's autocratic style will have far-reaching effects on Thailand's destiny if Thaksin is indeed returned to power. Until something is done to counterbalance the prime minister's unseemly character traits, the future of Thailand does not look very bright.*

US citizens prohibited from smoking Cuban cigars—anywhere

October 6, 2004

Categories: Nothing to do with Thailand, but Interesting

US citizens prohibited from smoking

Cuban cigars—anywhere

— October 6, 2004

From [US](#)

[Tightens Restrictions on Cuban Cigars](#) – VOA

News, October 6, 2004: *The United States Treasury*

Department has tightened its prohibitions against

U.S. citizens importing or consuming Cuban cigars.

The department's Office of Foreign Assets Control has announced in a notice posted on the Internet that even Americans licensed to bring back up to \$100 worth of Cuban goods will no longer be allowed to include tobacco products in what they carry.

Previously, those licensed were exempted from what was otherwise a total import ban on Cuban tobacco products.

The notice also clarifies that Americans are barred from not only purchasing Cuban goods in foreign countries, but also from consuming them in those countries.

The penalties for violating the prohibitions include maximum criminal fines for individuals of \$250,000 and imprisonment for up to 10 years. Corporations can be fined as much as a million dollars.

Thai-language newspapers – October 7, 2004

October 7, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Matichon

– October 7, 2004

* Chularachamontri said the oil smuggling mafia kills police in the south and blames the Muslim groups. The big commander takes charge declaring an end to the daily shootings.

*

The memorial of 28th anniversary of October 6, 1976 organized at Thammasat University yesterday was quiet. Vitayakorn Chiangkoon, a speaker on “The lessons of October 6 and the crisis situation nowadays,” said the nation’s leaders have forgotten history and do not use non violence to solve problems.

Thairath

– October 7, 2004

* **Bloody news** –

An awful, mysterious death of a Thammasat University academic who was 24 years old. She died in her apartment with no wounds.

* **Bloody news** –

Pieces of a dead woman were found in Ayutaya province. The body parts were burned. It is suspected that she died 14 days ago.

* Pinit Prasitketkij,

a Police Lieutenant Colonel, who was arrested yesterday in the case of selling drugs and money laundering was not allowed bail. This because he and his network are influential persons.

* Do not panic that bird flu can be transmitted to humans. Even WHO does not know much about bird flu so people should be very careful. The research has not concluded clearly yet so we should not panic.

Past October protests commemorated

October 7, 2004

Categories: October, 1976

[Past](#)

[October protests commemorated](#)

– *Bangkok Post*, October 7, 2004

From ‘Public disinterest, govt failure to help victims’ kin deplored’: *High-profile attendees at the Oct 6, 1976 pro-democracy uprising commemoration bemoaned the public’s lack of interest in the tragic event and the government for failing to help the families of those who perished in the massacre defending the country’s fragile democracy...*

Right: Detail from one of the October 6 sculptures at Thammasat University



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

The Makkasan cars

October 8, 2004

Categories: Trams

[The](#)

[Makkasan cars](#) – October 8, 2004

An answer [from](#)

[the forum](#) to the question below about the Makkasan trains:

The two narrow gauge (600 mm) coaches you spotted in front of the makkasan workshop are not renovated but brand new build. Together with a refurbished steam locomotive (nr. 7) and probably a second one (nr.31 – formerly on a plinth in front of the Chiang Mai station) the whole was mentioned for a sort of garden round railway in a (the) queens project (near Ayutthaya if I am right) and should have been in full order by now. But as many things in Thailand, the project seems to be delayed or even abandoned or who knows what else.

So what you have seen is a modern relict of the youngest history. Take a seat on the wooden bench and imagine your self riding along one of the 600 mm lines Thailand ever had...



(Photo: Nils)

Earlier: Question about Makkasan – October 4, 2004

Nils asks: *Anyone know what these vehicles near the entrance to Makkasan Railway Plant (Th. Nikhom Makkasan, opposite the back of Bangkok Palace Hotel) are? Unfortunately there is no sign explaining anything about them. They have been renovated*

(and even fitted with electrical power lines, though I doubt that someone turns on the beautiful interior lamps at night!) and are in a much better state than the various trams to be found around town.



And what is the significance of that SRT stone marker (from between the tracks)? It has a north arrow and a number on it.

(Photo: Nils)

Also:

[Thai Railway/SRT main page](#)

Thai-language newspapers – October 8, 2004

October 8, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – October 8, 2004</p> <p>* Dr.Suchai, the new Deputy Minister of Public Health “opens the war” against bird flu. He is confident he can control it. The Education Ministry orders schools to stop serving chicken.</p> <p>* The government will organize the People’s Congress to explain what they have done and listen to critics and suggestions on November 6-8 at Impact Muang Thong Thani.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>The Police Senior Sergeant Major who killed two English tourists surrenders after lying low at the border with Burma. He accused that he was injured by the Englishman first and received a broken a rib and nose.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – October 8, 2004</p> <p>* Mrs. Penkhae Thongon, a 51-year-old worker at Wiworn Intertrading (exporter of tuna) fell in a boiling pot of tuna fish while she mopped the floor. She was seriously injured and died later at hospital.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>Three prisoners at Bangkwang, Nontaburi killed an old prisoner in the same cell who was serving life imprisonment yesterday morning. One of the killers said he did it because he disliked that man.</p>

Taipei 101 skyscraper deemed tallest

October 8, 2004

Categories: Buildings

[Taipei 101 skyscraper deemed tallest](#) –

AP, October 8, 2004

... The 1,679-foot-tall structure — which some liken to a giant bamboo shoot of glass and steel — received the title from the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, a Chicago-based nonprofit organization involved in the planning, design and construction of skyscrapers.

"There's no dispute whether Taipei 101 is the tallest building in the world," said Ron Klemencic, chairman of the council, as he formally certified the building's record with a new plaque...

Preserving Esarn alphabets

October 8, 2004

Categories: Language



Above: The letter for elephant (*chang* in Thai).

[Esarn alphabets](#) – TNA, October 8, 2004

From [Ancient Isaan alphabets to go high-tech](#): *A lecturer at a college in Thailand's Northeast has invented a computer font for two ancient Isaan alphabets which are in danger of dying out.*

The new high-tech inventions mark a huge change in the life of the 'Tai Noi' and 'Dharm' alphabets...

It was not until the 19th century, when government legislation insisted on the use of the Thai alphabet, that the two alphabets slipped into disuse...

The fonts can be downloaded for free [here](#).

Ancient Isaan alphabets to go high-tech

UBON RATCHATHANI, Oct 6 (TNA) – A lecturer at a college in Thailand's Northeast has invented a computer font for two ancient Isaan alphabets which are in danger of dying out.

The new high-tech inventions mark a huge change in the life of the 'Tai Noi' and 'Dharm' alphabets.

According to Asst. Prof. Sanit Phokaphan from the Faculty of Science and Technology at the Rajabhat University's Ubon Ratchathani campus, the Tai Noi alphabet was originally written on palm leaves as a mean of recording events relating to merit-making ceremonies and other local traditions, as well as local folk tales and medical formulas.

The 'Dharm' alphabet, meanwhile, was regarded as a high-ranking mean of recording issues relating to Buddhism.

It was not until the 19th century, when government legislation insisted on the use of the Thai alphabet, that the two alphabets slipped into disuse.

Asst. Prof. Sanit, who invented the computer fonts, says that the alphabets are now only taught at the Rajabhat University, and among Buddhist monks wanting to read ancient manuscripts.

The lecturer hopes that his inventions will lead to a resurgence of interest in the ancient scripts, and prevent their extinction.

The fonts will also make it easier for researchers to learn about national historical events written on palm leaves.

The fonts can be downloaded for free at the Rajabhat University's website.

Wishful thinking

October 8, 2004

Wishful thinking –

October 8, 2004

Check out tuk-tuk.com.

Tourists to be offered special 'stream locomotives' trips

October 9, 2004

Categories: Thai Railroads

[Tourists to be offered special 'stream locomotives' trips](#)

– TNA, October 9, 2004

...The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) plans to offer special daily train trips to Trang province, using steam locomotives, according to Jaran Chuennaitham, the chief of the provincial tourism office.

...The planned train trips will visit several historic sites in the province, including the Kan Tang Pier, the first rubber tree grown in Thailand, as well as the old Royal residence, which Japanese soldiers use as their headquarters during Word War II...

Thai-language newspapers – October 11, 2004

October 11, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Matichon

– October 11, 2004

* A new generation of students cheat their parents, make fake registration documents for study, and keep the education fee. After that they beg money from parents for shopping and entertainment.

* An award named “Charoen Wataksorn” is given to the best community radio show . This year “Khon Hakthin” from Udonthani province won it for reporting on the case of a potash mine.

Thaipost –

October 11, 2004

*

Thairath

– October 11, 2004

* The killers who shot the son of a policeman in Pattani are arrested. One of the killers confesses they are the same team that killed the judge earlier.

*

A mob of caddies have a problem with the new rule of Pinehurst Golf Course that bans the short, fat, and old from being caddies. They plan to submit a letter to “Pa U” to protect their rights.

*

The Ministry of Public Health is upset and objects that Philippines sets up bird flu screening for passengers who arrive from Thailand.

Thai group celebrates anniversary of the Workers' Party of North Korea

October 11, 2004

Categories: North Korea

[Thai group celebrates anniversary of the Workers' Party of North Korea](#) – KCNA, October 11, 2004

The magazine "Warm Congratulations on 59th Founding Anniversary of the Workers' Party of Korea" was published by the Organization for the Study of the Juche Idea of Thailand on the occasion of the anniversary. The magazine carries articles and photos introducing the Juche idea and Korea. It also informs the readers of recent activities of the organization.

In Thailand, a leader feels the heat

October 11, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[In Thailand, a leader feels the heat](#)

– *BusinessWeek*, October 11, 2004

The tough-talking Prime Minister has delivered heady growth. Fall is traditionally a pleasant season in Thailand, as monsoon rains begin tapering off and temperatures start to cool. Yet October has been anything but salubrious for Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra...

Thai PM's family to face scrutiny if libel suit proceeds: lawyer

October 11, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Thai PM's family to face scrutiny if libel suit proceeds: lawyer](#) – AFP, October 11, 2004

As we predicted, the next hearing date is well after the election.

Shin Corporation lawsuit hearing

October 11, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

What's happening today – Shin Corporation lawsuit hearing – October 11, 2004

Today is the first hearing of a civil suit by the Shin Corporation against Supinya Klangnarong, secretary-general of the Campaign for Popular Media Reform along with the owner and editors of *Thai Post*. The suit seeks compensation of about 400 million baht for "adverse publicity" that supposedly resulted from an interview with Supinya that was published in *Thai Post*.

Supinya stated that the profits of Shin Corporation, founded by the Prime Minister and now owned by his family, have soared since the Prime Minister's Thai Rak Thai party came to power. Besides the civil suit, the defendants are also facing a criminal defamation suit that threatens them with lengthy prison sentences.

This legal action by the Shin Corporation will be widely watched as it has seen as creating a possible precedent that a ruling party and its top personalities could be immune from media oversight, much like they are in Malaysia, Singapore and other countries dominated by one political faction. It is likely that next hearing will be delayed until well after the next election to deflect further discussion of the case.

Airport Link News – 2001-2004

October 12, 2004

Categories: Airports and Airlines, Mass Transit

See also: [Suvanabhumi Airport & visits to the construction site](#) & [Proposal for Bangkok's New Central Park](#)

[Back to the main Thai Railways/SRT page](#)

NBIA Airport Link bidding delayed by one month – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Manager Daily*, October 12, 2004

SRT Board agrees to delay the bidding process by 30 days due to the mountain of details to filled in. Thus the bidding will be called on November 18, 2004. Furthermore, the negotiation with supplier is go on.

SRT Governor likely to ask SRT Board to extend the Airport Link bidding period – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Manager Daily*, October 10, 2004 and *Prachachat Thurakij*, October 7-10, 2004

SRT Director is going to ask the SRT Board to extend the bidding process by 3 weeks since all 7 bidders complain that the TOR of this project has so many details that they cannot fill in the details for bidding in a short period of time. The price tag for this project is 25.917060209 billion baht with a total distance of 28.5 km.

Furthermore, the TOR is open for either standard gauge or meter gauge even though SRT workers prefer meter gauge since they are more familiar with the system. Meter gauge is convenient for system expansion once the system has been pressured to use the Northern, Eastern and Southern Railway as the way to expand to Ban Phachee, Chachognsao, and Nakhon Pathom respectively.

On the other hand, standard gauge could be converted to high speed system to Khorat to please the politicians if they want to. This will create a very strong and boiling conflict of interest.

So far, the SRT Board will extend bidding by three weeks (to be open until early December instead of October 18), but the SRT Board will take legal and technical issues into account and they will send the extension letter after the board has approved the extension.

The elevated section is not connected with SRT eastern railway so it is not necessary for the Airport Link to be meter gauge. Even though it is possible to come up with q meter gauge, SRT would be condemned by the public that they are pleasing lazy SRT workers too much. If SRT decided to choose Standard gauge, they will be suspected that they are trying to please German contractors.

This project is a turnkey project so the private sector must have very deep pockets to handle it. There is a provision in the TOR that the private sector may not have to pay all for the turnkey project if the public sector could manage to finance the project to pay to the contractor. This TOR must be fair and square to all parties.

There are many issues to be handled by MOTC for Airport Link:

- 1) All the additional information must be within the TOR
- 2) The information for the TOR is really too much but it is necessary due to the status of this megaproject and most data is useful for bidding.
- 3) The extension must not create the advantage of one company over another company.

Seven companies fight for this project.

- 1) Mitsui (AKA Mit Siam (Thailand))
- 2) B. Grimm Group
- 3) Ch. Karnchang PCL
- 4) Italian Thai Development PCL
- 5) AS Engineering PCL
- 6) Namprasoed Construction Co. Ltd.
- 7) Powerline Engineering Co. Ltd.

ITD has complained that the supplier and the contractor said the project will have cost overruns due to the steep price of steel and cement and the importation of rolling stocks–shooting up from 26 billion baht to 30 billion baht.

The supplier could not get the credit line from the banks for purchasing the necessary supplies for the check-

in system of 3 billion baht. The estimated construction cost for both elevated and at grade level also shot up. So, Siemens declines to supply rolling stock for the system so ITD is going to consider ALSTOM and ROTEM since both have supplied DMU and Diesel Electric Loco to SRT through ITD . Furthermore, ITD is going to negotiate with SCB to grant a credit line to purchase rolling stocks as well as other construction materials. If ITD fails to secure the credit lines, ITD will let others scramble for this project.

Ch. Karnchang said they will become a contractor for Mitsui or they will ask Mitsui (which competes for this project) to be a supplier, but they still worry about the price of cement and steel prices which have skyrocketed.

Commentary by Wisarut: Most Bangkokians are desperate for Skytrain-Subway expansion even though columnists at *Matichon* have been complaining about the permanent environmental and aesthetic damage from the elevated section of the Skytrain-Subway as mentioned [here](#). Forumers think that those *Matichon* columnists act like hypocrites since they keep complaining about environmental damage or becoming a mouthpiece for NGOs, yet they still live in very high life and do not live like common people. They say they are just hungry for more money from advertising and the circulation as well as donations from NGOs abroad which have been strongly discredited.

SRT hints for more money for the Airport Link – Thaksin threatens steel mills that hoard steel – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thaipost*, October 5, 2004

SRT is hinting for more money for the Airport Link after prices for construction materials have shot up. They expect the private sector to bid at a price higher than the initial budget of 26 billion baht.

Premier Thaksin is ordering MOC and MOIndus to search for steel hoarders and grants power to penalize mills which hoard steel. The private sector is also asking the government to help them set up the first full circle steel mill as a way to prevent price fluctuations even though the cost for setting up such a steel mill is at least 80 billion baht.

SRT said they may need to increase the budget for the 26 billion baht Airport Link if the results from bids opened on October 18 show that even the lowest price is still higher than the the medium price set by SRT. Initially, they have to take a look at the details along with the price for the construction materials such as cement and steel. If the construction materials price has shot up to a certain level, SRT will need to increase the medium price for bidding. However, it has to be done after bid opening which will imply that there will only 3-4 qualified bidders to compete. If SRT fails to bargain the price for the Airport Link, they need to call a new bid with a new price since the initial bidding was a very big rush. Premier Thaksin also asks MOIndus and MOC to investigate steel heading and collusion between steel mills and distributors. If there is any price collusion, MOIndus has to shut down the steel mills while MOC will have to investigate steel retailers. The Minister of Industry, Phinit Jarusombut, said even though the government could solve the price collusion problem, the goal to cut down the steel price to 16 baht/kg is a very elusive goal since the price for billets (steel from the blast furnace) has shot up to US\$400/ton while the initial billet price is about US\$280. Therefore, the fair price for steel should be 24 baht/kg. The government should help the private sector to come up with the first full circuit steel mill with blast furnace to cut down the impact from price fluctuations. The Director of Thailand's Institute of Iron and Steel said they agree with the idea of MOIndus to come with a steel mill with blast furnace. However, they have to take the production costs into account. At least the price of the steel from the new blast furnace has to be cheaper than the imported steel and the management. Furthermore, the setting up cost for the steel mill with blast furnace is generally high and it requires an excellent managing system along with the quality control.

If Thailand did set up such steel mill, the country will have very cutting edge industry because no country in ASEAN region has ever come up with such steel mill before and the domestic demand is also high.

Therefore, it is necessary to do this on a phase by phase basis. The new steel mill must produce 5 million tons of steel and the price for setting up such steel mill must be about US\$2 billion (80 billion baht).

Note: Comment on Airport Link can be seen [here](#).

ITD worrying about Suvannabhum Airport Link due to the interest rate hike and increased construction material costs – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Manager Daily*, September 30, 2004 Mr Premchai Kannasutra (the CEO of ITD) told the press that it is quite hard to get loans and suppliers for the Suvannabhum Airport Link due to the surge on interest rates and skyrocketing construction material prices.

SRT Director said SRT allows the contractor to come up with a budget higher than 26 billion baht medium price–up to 10% of medium price (the maximum limit at 28.6 billion baht).

Even though ITD feel very interested in Suvannahum Airport Link, ITD feels very worried about the

looming cost to implement such a system after reading the TOR. The TOR said that the contractors must find creditors and suppliers to back up the project that requires very high and stringent standards, especially the passenger check in system at Makkasan. Only the big guns from abroad would be able to do such things. Furthermore, the budget of 25,917,060,209 baht is too low for the current market prices. Now, steel prices have shot up by 50%. Only those contractors who have very deep pockets and good connections with suppliers would not have to worry.

MOTC responded that they asked the Ministry of Commerce to impose price controls on construction materials and duty-free steel importation to be used in such a high priority project even though the price surge started in early 2004.

SRT said the bidders should submit the price first. If the winning price is higher than the maximum limit, SRT will negotiate with the winner. The qualified bidder are either a single entity with registered capital not less than 0.5 billion baht or a joint venture with total registered capital more than 1 billion baht. They also need to have experience on handling of a contract on tollways, highway interchanges and bridges with a price tag not less than 750 million baht. Furthermore, they should have experience handling contracts on railway, electro-mechanic or mass transit systems with a price tag not less than 1.5 billion baht. The qualified supplier must have produced more than 200 rolling stock with more than 20 sets for a single project.

So far, the following foreign rolling stock suppliers are asking for the TOR:

- 1) CITIC – Mainland China
- 2) Mitsui – Japan
- 3) Siemens – Germany
- 4) Alstom – France
- 5) CAF – Spain
- 6) Rotem – South Korea
- 7) ? – Australia

Those foreign rolling stocks suppliers are going to cooperate with local contractors to handle this project.

Nevertheless, there will be 2-3 foreign contractors along with the foreign suppliers will come to compete for this project.

Suvarnabhumi Airport Link consists of 8 stations: 1) Phyathai, 2) Rajprarop, 3) Makkasan/Asok (AKA New Makkasan), 4) Ramkhamhaeng, 5) Hua Mark, 6) Ban Thub Chang, 7) Lad Krabang, 8) NBIA

The bidders would submit the proposal on October 18, 2004 while the qualified bidders would be announced on October 20, 2004. Eventually, winner will be announced in November 8, 2004. The construction will take 900 days and another 90 days for testing the system. It will have to be ready for grand opening on December 5, 2007 (80-year anniversary of His Majesty).

Commentary by Wisarut: I got the insider data that the following contractors (subcontractor would be more appropriate) will get this project, no matter who wins the bidding: 1) ASC Engineering 2) Namprasoe 3) Kamhangphet Vivat 4) Obayashi



(Source: *Prachachat Thurakij*)

Airport Link and Airport Transit – September 7, 2004

Wisarat comments on the above map (*Prachachat Thurakij*, August 30-September 1, 2004):

Light Blue line – strictly standard gauge

- 1) Donmuang
- 2) Laksi
- 3) Bang Khen
- 4) Bangsue
- 5) Yommaraj
- 6) Phyathai
- 7) Rajprarob (Not shown on the map)
- 8) Makkasan
- 9) Ram Khamhaeng
- 10) Hua Mark
- 11) Ban Thubchang
- 12) Lad Krabang
- 13) Suvannabhum

For the Yellow line and the red line, it will be strictly electrified meter gauge since the system will be extended to Nakhon Pathom, Chachongsao, Ban Phachee, Nakhon Pathom and of course Pak Thon via Mahachai and Mae Klong with the new stations for both Me Klong and Mahachai. The section from Phyathai to Hua Lamphong will be electrified meter gauge though so that SRT can simply electrify the section beyond Rangsit, Bangsue, and Hua Lamphong and introduce reciprocal service in the same way the JR system has introduced with the Tokyo Subway.

The list of the stations along east – west corridor of red line commuter

- 1) Nakhon Pathom – at grade
- 2) Salaya (not shown here) – at grade
- 3) Talingchan
- 4) Bang Bumru
- 5) Rama 6 Bridge (near Rama 7 Pier)
- 6) Bang Son (not shown here – can be either at Bangson stop or Ban Son station)
- 7) Bang Sue
- 8) Samsen (not shown here)
- 9) Chitladda (This one must be separated between a Royal station and public station which connects with MRTA Orange subway line). This will require a delicate balance.
- 10) Yommaraj
- 11) Phyathai
- 12) Rajprarob (not shown here)
- 13) Makkasan
- 14) Hua Mark
- 15) Thub Chang
- 16) Lad Krabang
- 17) Prachomklao (not shown here)
- 18) Hua Takhe (not shown here)
- 19) Ban Nam Priaw
- 20) Chachongsao

The yellow section of the red line commuter

- 1) Ban Phachee
- 2) Ayutthaya (not shown here)
- 3) Bang pa In (not shown here)
- 3) Navanakhon (not shown here)
- 4) Thammasart (not shown here)
- 5) Chiang Rak (not shown here)
- 6) Rangsit
- 7) Don Muang
- 8) Laksi
- 9) Bang Khen
- 10) Samian Naree (not shown here)
- 10) Km 11 (not shown here)
- 11) Phaholyothin (not shown here)
- 12) Bang Sue
- 13) Samsen (not shown here)
- 14) Chitladda (not shown here)
- 15) Yommaraj -> with branch to Phyathai at Chitladda triangle
- 16) Hua Lamphong
- 17) Klong San (not shown here – likely not the same old Klong San station since it will be at Lad Yah Road due to more space)
- 18) Wongwian Yai
- 19) Talad Ploo (not shown here)
- 20) Wat Sai (not shown here)
- 21) Wat Singh
- 22) Kan Keha
- 23) Prom Daen (not shown here)
- 24) Ban Namjued
- 25) Mahachai Muang Mai
- 26) Mahachai (new station to replace the old one)
- 27) Mae Klong (not shown here – the new station to replace the old one)
- 28) Amphawa (not shown here)
- 29) Pak Tho

After both Airport link/transit and Red line commuter network are done, SRT will cease the diesel trains of the commuter system and replace them with electrified versions. The diesels will go to the local transport systems at the regional level (e.g. Nakhon Ratchasima and Hat Yai) to meet surging demands for frequent local trains.

There will be more stations if the passengers demand.



Hopewell Revival & Suvannabhumi Airport Link – Premier Thaksin's megaprojects – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Prachachat Thurakij*, August 30-September 1, 2004

Left: *Prachachat Thurakij* artist's rendering of the airport link along the old Hopewell route at around Sukhumvit 71 stop – AKA Ram Khamhaeng Station

(Source: *Prachachat Thurakij*)

The Hopewell revival (Bangsue – Rangsit) along with the Suvannabhumi Airport Link (Bangsue – Phayathai – Makkasan – Suvannabhumi Airport) are a part of the 400 billion baht mass transit project to be done in six years. This is a measure for both traffic jam as well as the reduction of oil consumption. Furthermore, the Suvannabhumi Airport Link, which is going to open in 2005, also demands the direct railway access. Therefore, these two projects will go ahead at full speed—especially the Suvannabhumi Airport Link.

Furthermore, these two projects will allow direct rail link between Donmuang Airport and Suvannabhumi Airport. This will enable SRT to make a frequent commuter service as well as allow more opportunities for SRT land development along railway stations and tracks.

There will be 5 stations from Bangsue to Rangsit using the old Hopewell structure:

- 1) Bangsue
- 2) Bang Khen
- 3) Laksi
- 4) Donmuang
- 5) Rangsit

There will be 5 stations from Bangsue to Makkasan

- 1) Bangsue
- 2) Samsen
- 3) Yommaraj
- 4) Phayathai
- 5) Makkasan (Ratprarob)

This project will be started after the Airport Link has become a reality so as to carry passenger from northern Bangkok suburbs to Suvannabhumi Airport. This line must be the same standard as Suvannabhumi Airport Link. The bidding for this section will start in 2005 to be done in 2008. So far, OTP is seeking financial resources for the project. After that they will come up with an investment form—either 100% private or joint venture between public or private sector. However, the investors and concession holders can convert the Hopewell structure with some reparation for the subsided pillars by inserting the smaller support pillars to fix the problems—up to 80% of the structure. The unusable structure will be destroyed.

Bangsue to Rangsit requires 38 billion baht of investment and another 20-30 billion baht investment on the Bangsue – Makkasan section.

- 1) Red Line Commuter (electrified meter gauge – up to Rangsit)
- 2) DMU track (meter gauge, non-electrified – up to Rangsit)
- 3) Suvannabhumi Airport Link extension Makkasan – Bangsue – Donmuang)

The left rail is the red line commuter which stops along the way while the middle of the track is for DMUs and the right section is the high speed rail link to Suvannabhumi.

All the stations will be elevated like BTS and the land development around the station and along the track is necessary which can be separated into three sections:

- 1) area within the station
- 2) area within 500 meter radius
- 3) area within 2 km radius

However it is necessary to review the project by BMA City Planning as well as other city plans and mass

transit & road projects which require updating data from the Social and Economic perspective which can be shown in the following examples:

- 1) Bangsue Station – This has to be developed for a transportation hub from the eastern and western sections. Furthermore Siam Cement PCL (HQ at Bangsue) wants to develop a business center near Bangsue so the land development will be a commercial area with mixed uses—new park and rides, the connection system, and residential area with high to moderate density.
- 2) Bangkhen Station – The new Bangkhen Station must be moved to be close to the Vibhavadee gate of Kasetsart University. The local road development is also needed so as to link with major road such as Ngam Wangwan and Vibhavadee Highway. The main development will aim to connect to bureaucrat offices at Kasetsart University and nearby areas. The commercial and residential development is a secondary development.
- 3) Laksi Station – The new Laksi Station will be moved to be at the center of Chang Watthana road to serve as the new bureaucrat center at Laksi. Changwatthana Road and local road will have to be upgraded to allow fast connection with the new bureaucrat center. The residential development is a secondary consideration.
- 4) Rangsit Station – This will be the new community center with the hub for BMTA buses as well as intercity buses. The commercial development and social activities also have to put into the area around Rangsit station. It will be a transfer station due to the huge residential and commercial area in Rangsit. This project has given a big boost to contractors and the real estate along the track is booming. ITD is planning to grab both construction contracts as well as the land development along the tracks (new condominiums).

In the next two months, ITD is going to open a condominium project on 22 rai of land at Talad Mai Donmuang near Donmuang Station (the first of condominium project run by ITD). This condominium is for the middle classes with a price tag of 1-2 million baht/unit. Each unit will have 60-90 usable area and there will be 2 condo buildings with 10 floors.

Commentary by Wisarut: The high-speed section is strictly the AC electrified standard gauge (25 KV) while the red line commuter network can be either the DC electrified standard gauge or DC electrified meter gauge (1.5 kV).

DC power is suitable for commuter systems since the brakes of DC system is working very fast while the brake on AC system takes time due to higher speeds and inherent limitations. However, Delhi Metro is trying to fix such braking disadvantages. Delhi Metro is the only mass transit system which uses AC power (25 kV). India Railway can electrify AC power traction on their own so they ask South Korean ROTEM to produce AC power rolling stock to used for Indian broad gauge (5 feet 6 inches) for Delhi Metro before making technology transfer so that Delhi Metro could produce rolling stock on their own to supply the mass transit systems for other major cities in India (Mumbai, Kolkatta, Chennai, etc.). This could be a big advantage since it can be used on Indian broad gauge system without problems.

Selling the bidding form for the Suvannabhumi Airport Link—Contractor giants scrambling for the 26 billion baht project – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Matichon Daily*, August 17, 2004

SRT is selling the bidding form for the Suvannabhumi Airport Link and the City Air Terminal along with the Eastern Railway with a total distance of 28.5 km and 8 stations.

1. Phyathai
2. Ratprarob
3. Makkasan
4. Ram Khamhaeng
5. Hua Mark
6. Thub Chang
7. Lad Krabang
8. Suvannabhumi

The bidding will be sold from August 20-31, 2004. The bidding competition will be held on October 8, 2004 and the winner announcement will be held on November 8, 2004 with the standard price of 25.917060209 billion baht. If everything goes as planned, the services will be started on December 5, 2007.

The list of foreign inventors that are scrambling for this project are:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1) CITIC (China) – with CITIC group as financial partners | 5) CAF (Spain) |
| 2) Mitsui (Japan) – with JBIC and JICA as financial partners | 6) ROTEM (South Korea) |
| 3) Siemens (Germany) – with KfW as financial partners | 7) Bombardier (Canada) |
| 4) Alstom (France) | 8) Australian railway suppliers... |

The winner must be able to pay for the project first. After the project is done, SRT is going to pay the principle along with interest—10 billion baht from SRT and 20 billion baht from central governments. The estimated number of passengers for the first year is 100,000 a day and it will increase according to the number of tourists. The express trailway from Makkasan to Suvannabhumi (nonstop service) is 100-120 baht/trip. Only children, senior citizen and the airport officers will get half price (50-60 baht/trip). Furthermore, a monthly ticket for those who use the Airport Express daily will be issued. For the Airport Commuter, the price will be the same as Skytrain-Subway (10-40 baht).

Irregularities on the Airport Link and SRT's response – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from [Thai-language webboards](#), August 7, 2004

The rumor monger said: SRT workers are the ones who cause the delay on the Airport Link since they complain about errors in the consultant's proposals due to the financial conflicts of interest between the SRT officers and the consultants even though the bidding should be started on July 10, 2004. This delay is also a plan behind the scenes for SRT to collude with their favorite contractors. Also the consultant has hired unprofessional subconsultants to handle the design which will cause the project delay and cost overruns. Therefore, the media should make a serious investigation on the TOR which have been flip flopped several times. Otherwise, collusion will become a reality as in other projects.

The SRT Officer's response: The consultant you mention has not finished the contract drafting for bidding yet. We get tired of the daily meetings so as to keep Airport Link project running on schedule. If the SRT Board, MOTC Ministry and media believe your rumor, it will cause project delay and cost overruns. Will you take any responsibility for the damage you have caused SRT with your rumor? Definitely you are a shameless troll who is going to inflict damage on the nation, you traitor!

Siemens – Lavalin – Mitsu – Rotem fighting tooth and nail for 30 billion baht Airport Link – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Bangkok Biznews*, July 26, 2004

Suvannabhumi Airport Link gets very first priority so as to solve traffic jams and facilitate transportation between the City Center and NBIA. The Asian Engineering Consultant Co. Ltd, Pacific Consulting International, and Thai Engineering Consultant Co. Ltd. have already finished the detailed design of Suvannabhumi Airport Link and they are going to draft a TOR so as to enable SRT to sell the bidding form in early August.

There are eight sections of this Suvannabhumi Airport Link :

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Basic structure | 5) Communication |
| 2) Rails system | 6) Signals |
| 3) Electric train rolling stock | 7) Tickets |
| 4) Subpower station | 8) Maintenance center |

The eight sections require companies with specialized skills. Companies need to have very deep pockets since this project is a turnkey project. A single company cannot handle such massive tasks. Therefore, the joint venture consortium is a must.

Siemens (Germany), Lavalin (Canada), Rotem (Korea), Mitsui-Mitsubishi-Sumitomo Group (Japan), and China Railway (China) are storming the SRT office. Therefore, SRT will have to come up with international bidding by inspecting the technical expertise first and then the construction cost. Those who pass the technical examination and show the lowest construction costs will win the bidding. All the bidders have to meet the SRT regulations on the bidding:

- 1) Depositing 5% of the whole project – 1.5 billion baht
 - 2) Previous projects which companies have handled must be at least half of the project price – 15 billion baht
- Thai companies must negotiate with foreign joint ventures so that they can join the international consortium. This bidding will be competitive bidding. SRT will be able to pick the winner by the end of 2004 and start the project to be completed in 30 months.

The companies will have to come up either meter gauge and standard gauge—or 750 VDC power or 25 KV power.

The government will decide who will run the Airport Link—SRT or private sector or public sector.

The estimated cost will be:

19.7 billion baht on civil works

6.16 billion baht on electronics and electro-mechanics

4.07 billion baht for rolling stock

EIRR = 22.3%

FIRR = 7.4%

Construction in 24 months

Test run for 6 months
Importation = 55%

Services

- 1) Suvannabhum Express: 15 minutes nonstop service from Makkasan to Suvannabhum
 - 2) Suvannabhum Commuter: 28 minutes from Phayathai to Suvannabhum with 8 stations (Phayathai, Rajprarob, New Makkasan, Ramkhamhaeng, Hua Mark, Thub Chang, Lad Krabang, NBIA)
- The estimated number of daily passengers in 2012 is 83,500 a day – 27,600 passengers from Airport Express and 55,900 passengers from Airport Commuter. There will be eight sets of Airport Express with a 4-car formation (total 32 cars) with 10 minutes headway and 6 sets of Airport Commuter with 4-car formation (total 24 cars) with 15 minutes headway.

Makkasan will become Airport City Terminal—a new building for passengers to NBIA allowing to check-in at Makkasan and there will be a shopping complex as well. SRT is choosing a consultant for 20 million baht to handle Makkasan complex along with permission for private development. It will take 18 months to get the Makkasan complex complete and ready to serve Suvannabhum Airport.

Commentary by Wisarut: Since this railway track will be eventually extended to Bangsue, Rangsit, Chachoengsao, New City at Banna, etc. setting up the system as the high-speed standard gauge with 25 kV power supply is the best choice. Setting up the system for further extension at the first place will cut down the future expense when the project is going to expand.

SRT seems to keep changing the number of rolling stock and the formation. So many flip-flops will cause lots of confusion and create a sense of distrust toward SRT.

Thai stories and web comments – July 21, 2004

Wisarut reports on what's going on in Thai-language forums:

Suvannabhum Airport Link

The Suvannabhum Airport Link will be bid in August after the detailed design is done by Aisna Engineering Consultant Co.Ltd. It will a turnkey project. After choosing the winner, the contract will be signed by the end of December 2004 ([here](#) and [here](#)).

More details of the Airport Link: Suriya pushing SRT to conceive the 30 billion baht airport link with private investment – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Prachachat Thurakij*, July 1-3, 2004
Suriya is pushing the Suvannabhum Airport Link forward with a turnkey process and private investment along the tracks. The bidding for the Suvannabhum Airport Link will be held in mid-July 2004. The contractor will be awarded by the end of October 2004 and the contract will be signed December 2004 since it is an urgent project. The project was approved by the cabinet on June 1, 2004.

The project will be turnkey project in the same way as Southern Kanchanaphisek Ring Road and be in 2007. This is a strategic line to be completed quickly and linked with Skytrain at Phayathai, Subway at Phetburi with the maximum speed of 160 kph. The civil works budget for elevated tracks will be 19.7769 billion Baht. System installation and electrification will be 6.163 billion baht. Rolling stock for the Airport Link Express will be 4.075 billion baht.

There will be two kinds of services:

- 1) Airport Express Makkasan – NBIA nonstop to reach Airport in 15 minutes – 100 baht/trip
- 2) Airport Commuter – Phayathai – NBIA to reach the airport in 30 minutes – 10 baht + No. km (max 40 Baht)

This will link the CBD with NBIA to cut energy bills and traffic jams.

The depot for the airport link will be at 40-rai of SRT land in Klongtan while the City Air Terminal will be at Makkasan. Makkasan will have commercial development as a business-commercial center. SRT does not have to use the Hopewell structure at Klongtan.

The development of 8 stations will be:

- 1) Phayathai – Commercial office building and the connecting via duct to Phayathai station.
- 2) Rajprarob – Commercial and trade center and the connection to Pratoonam – and the area of the old Makkasan will be developed
- 3) Makkasan (Asok) will have some development on 19.6 rai of land and the connection to Ratchadaphisek, Rama 9, New Phetburi Road, Asok-Dindaeng Road, Kamphaengphet 7 Road and the interchange with Phetburi station
- 4) Ram Khamhaeng will connect with Kamphaengphet 7 Road, Rama 9, New Phetburi, Ram Khamhaeng Road, Phatthanakarn Sukhumvit Road. Depot will be at Klongtan and close to RCA.
- 5) Hua Mark is a good interchange to Sri Nakarin and Motorway – needs a park and ride.

6) Ban Thub Chang close to Thubchang Interchange – needs a park and ride to attract those who go along Eastern Kanchanaphisek from Minburi and those who use the motorway

7) Lad Krabang – near Rom Klao Interchange – needs to pick up those who live along Onnut, ROM Klao and King Kaeo.

8) NBIA – underground station.

Each station will have 6 sections: 1) Gates, 2) Ticket selling area, 3) Platforms, 4) Stores, 5) Services, 6) Interchange with other modes of transportation

The first batch of Airport Link rolling stocks to be used in the first 15 years will be:

1) 6 sets of Airport Express (5-car formation), 2) 9 sets of Airport Commuters (5-car formation)

As demand surges due to either popularity or the major expansions to Bangsue via Chitlada Palace, SRT will buy more rolling sets.

Commentary by Wisarut: Probably SRT has learned from KLIA Airport Express as well as the HK Airport Express that they have to get more passengers from commuter lines since relying on airport passengers alone will not work.

Details on the airport link – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Prachachart Thurakij*, July 1-3, 2004

Prachachat Thurakij correspondents got the messages from SRT that the Airport Link will use Standard Gauge since the system will eventually be expanded to the New City at Banna as well as Nakhon Ratchasima. After expansion to Khorat, the new EMU which have the maximum speed of 300 kph will be the next batch of Airport Link EMUs

The 160 kph maximum is already ruled out since meter gauge has an inherent limitation of 120 kph—even when using the 60 kg/m welded rails.

There will be 15 sets of 5-car Emus for the 1st batch of the Airport Link:

1) Express version – 6 sets – 1-way ticket for the Express version will cost the passenger 100 baht

2) Commuter version – 9 sets – 1-way ticket for commuter version will cost the passenger from 10-40 baht Both are externally identical, but the interior is very different since the Airport Express must have a luggage facility and soft leaning seats while the commuter version will have hard seats (like in the Skytrain-Subway) and standing area to pack in more passengers. They have learnt from KLIA Express to pick more commuter passengers than airport passengers.

NBIA line map – June 24, 2004

[Scanned map of the NBIA line](#) (300 kb) from *Manager Daily*, June 21, 2004.

Satirical comments from *Than Setthakij Sunday*: 'Hot Issues' by Ung Thong – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Than Setthakij*, June 20, 2004

1) Why Traffic Policy Office and Premier Thaksin still tell a big lie (misleading for much more polite word) to the public by calling the airport link the "High Speed Train for Suvannabhum Airport" even though the specification of the Suvannabhum Airport Link states that the maximum speed is "160 kph"? The true high speed train must have the maximum speed at least 200 kph! Therefore, Suvannabhum Airport Link should be called as "Super Express Airport Link" instead.

2) The Nationwide Double Tracking may be aborted even before being conceived since it seems to SRT that the government has not shown any shadows of the promised 400 billion baht budget for it at all. Even worse, the meddlesome Traffic Policy Office have effectively ruined the SRT version of nationwide double tracking. Therefore the 6-year plan for nationwide double tracking is not even started yet.

3) There was a father whose name is "government" who has 3 sons, the sickest and oldest one was called "[SRT](#)", the middle very vigorous son's name was "BMA" and the little, but tricky one is named "[MRTA](#)".

When three sons want to do the same thing, the elder brother and the little brother just ask their father to borrow money from the neighbors as well as the foreign creditors in addition to savings.

On the other hand, the middle son gets nothing at all even though the middle son just wants to borrow only a half of the budget to complete the [Taksin extension](#). Even worse, the father just tightened the noose around the neck of BMA as the way to force middle son to transfer all assets to the tricky little brother. The middle son will be succumb to the strangulation while the father is still telling a big lie to the public that he treats his sons equally.

Hoarding land along the Airport Link route – land prices double – Ladkrabang is the most lucrative of all – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Than Setthakij*, June 24-26, 2004

The Suvannabhum Airport Link is going to start after the bidding form is issued on July 1, 2004 and land

speculation along the Eastern railway is popping up like mushrooms during the rainy season with the focus on commercial development of the eight stations for the Airport Link. The construction will start by the end of 2004.

SRT said the 30-billion baht Suvannabhum Airport Rail Link Project will start from Phayathai Stop and then go along Eastern Railway and then turn right after passing Lad Krabang station to head into the underground tunnel at the main terminal.

The elevated track will be 60 m high (sic – should be ‘6 meters high’) and there will be 8 stations – 28.5 km. It will take 28 minutes to run from Phayathai to NBIA.

1. Phayathai (connecting Phayathai Station of Skytrain and Rama 6 Road)
2. Rat Prarob (the stop closest to Pradoo Nam and it will swallow the old Makkasan Station to connect with Bangkok Palace Hotel)
3. Makkasan (New Makkasan Station – the main station swallowing Asok Stop) This new Makkasan station will interchange with Phetburi Station of MRTA subway.
4. Ram Khamhaeng (New Klongtan Station – This station is at the beginning of Ram Khamhaeng road. Furthermore it is near Klong Tan intersection and has much better road access than the old Klongtan station. Even Saen Saeb Boat can access this station with a short walk).
5. Hua Mark (the station near Jusco Sri Nakarin – should have a link to Jusco so as to attract more passengers)
6. Thub Chang (Thubchang Stop – need park and ride to attract those who use Motorway and Eastern Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road).
7. Lad Krabang (the last station before heading to NBIA – needs a feeder bus to pick up KMITL students)
8. NBIA – terminal station inside the main terminal.

The Airport express (25 km) will run nonstop from Makkasan to NBIA – 15 minutes from Makkasan to reach NBIA. Makkasan will function as the City Air Terminal to deal with airline passengers.

The construction budget will be 25.917 billion baht – civil works, signals and rolling stocks. The other 4.083 billion baht is a payment to NBIA for the construction of underground tunnels.

Japanese investors (Mitsubishi for rolling stock and Mitsui for the main contractor) with support from JBIC and JICA as well as German investors (Siemens for rolling stock and B. Grimm for the main contractor) with support from KfW are going to fight for this project even though Chinese and Canadian investors are also showing strong interest in this project.

The land development around eight stations will be under serious consideration which requires consultants to deal with this matter.

Capitalists have hoarded the land along Eastern Railway – doubling the land prices already from 1 million baht/rai to 2-3 million/rai. Makkasan has a very high potential since the new Makkasan will connect with Phetburi Subway station and Makkasan Depot is the prime target. On the other hand, Kingkaeo-Lad Krabang Road will become a new entertainment and commercial zone around NBIA (except the area close to existing factories). However, they have to take pollution and environmental degradation into account.

The existing suburb villages from Hua Mark to Lad Krabang will make connections to the minor Airport Link stations. Those suburb villages from Sri Nakharin to Ladkrabag are for those well to do people since it is within the green belt areas.

Responses to the airport link – June 15, 2004

Wisarat reports: *After reading the response about Suvannabhum Airport Link, there are [100 responses on this subject](#) (on the Manager website). Most want this airport link to expand to their home which is near the Northern Railway tracks. Only a few oppose this project—those with automobile bias as usual.*

Suvannabhum Airport Link – ‘150-200 baht for express ticket’ & station list – translated and summarized by Wisarat Bholsithi from *Matichon*, June 2, 2004, *Thai Post*, June 2, 2004, & *Manager Daily*, June 1-2, 2004

The cabinet approved the Suvannabhum Airport Link at 4:30 PM on June 1, 2004 as a turnkey project. The government will pay for the system by using Wayuphak Funds and the 2005 annual budget.

The first 4 billion will be paid to NBIA for an underground tunnel while the other 26 billion will pay for the elevated and at-grade track from Phayathai to NBIA via the Eastern Railway.

The bidding will start in July 10, 2004 and the bidding result will come in October 2004.

The ticket price of the Express Train (Makkasan – NBIA Nonstop) will be 150-200 baht while the commuter version will be paid according to the distance—10 + 2.5 baht/km.

The maximum speed will be 160 km/hr and it will take 15 minutes from Makkasan to NBIA. There will be an express every 15 minutes (8-car type) while the commuter will run in every 30 minutes (4-car type). The

expected number of passengers will be 10,000 a day.

There will be eight stations for the Suvannabhum Airport Commuter

- 1) Phyathai -> between Rama 6 Road and Phyathai Road -> upgrading from Phyathai Stop -> interchange with Skytrain at Phyathai Station
- 2) Rajaprapop -> The western edge of Makkasan Maintenance Center -> upgrading from Rajaprapop Stop -> This is the station closest to Prato Nam but it is closer to Soi Moh Leng (former PM Chuan Leekpai's House) and Mahanakhon Gypsum Building. Better construct a via duct to have direct link with Mahanakhon Gypsum.
- 3) Makkasan -> This must be reconstructed into a much larger Makkasan with the western edge at the old Makkasan Station and the eastern edge near Phetburi Stop so as to allow the interchange with MRTA Phetburi Station. Via duct connecting with Bangkok Palace Hotel and BMTA bus rerouting are a few big musts in addition to the new commercial center. If it is necessary to come up with monorail connecting Prato Nam-Ratprasong-Ploenchit with Makkasan, please do it now.
- 4) Ram Khamhaeng -> This should be named as "Klongtan" since it is exactly at Klongtan Railway Station -> needs a via duct connecting Tops Supermarket and RCA with this station to reinvigorate RCA as "Business at day/Entertainment at Night". Via duct to Siemens (Thailand) and Italian Thai Development PCL would add more regular customers who are white-collar workers.
- 5) Hua Mark -> This is suburb area. This station should have a via duct to Jusco Sri Nakharin to add more regular customers including the Japanese who set up their homes in the Huamark – Sri Nakharin area. Via duct to B. Grimm Group/Unilever would be a big plus to add regular customers from both companies. This is also the beginning of the motorway – better come up with Park and Ride facilities.
- 6) Thub Chang -> Thub Chang is railway station near the Interchange between Eastern Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring road and Bangkok-Chonburi Motorway. This is also close to Muslim communities in the eastern Bangkok suburbs.
- 7) Lad Krabang -> Lad Krabang Railway station – the last station before elevating to go across Onnut Road and Rom Klao road to go to NBIA. Better run a feeder bus to pick up the passengers from Minburi, Rom Klao, and Land Krabang who want to go to NBIA.
- 8) NBIA Terminal station – underground station in the main terminal.

Initially the private sector will have pay for the construction and the government will pay back in the annual budget of 2005. AEC Asian Engineering Consultant Co.Ltd. and the government offices (MOTC, MOF, NESDB) are drafting TOR for bidding of the Airport Link–ready for bidding on July 10, 2004. So far Japanese, German and Australia investors are keen to compete for the project.

There are seven approved projects with total price tag of 1.619 billion baht waiting to start:

- 1) Design of Red Line Commuter network – 156 million baht
- 2) Design of Taksin Transportation Center and new Maeklong railway as a part of Red line commuter networks – 179 million baht
- 3) Design of Commuter and Intercity Railway system – 460 million baht
- 4) Design of Laem Phak Bia project – 428 million baht
- 5) Hiring a consultant to handle Laem Pak Ba project – 40 million baht
- 6) Design of MRTA Subway expansions – 300 million baht
- 7) Hiring a consultant to handle MRTA subway expansion – 76 million baht

Earlier: [Suvannabhum Airport Link heading to cabinet approval on June 1](#) – *Matichon Daily*, May 31, 2004 and *Thairath*, May 31, 2004

Earlier: [A tale of two newspapers](#)

Difficult and expensive to evict slum dwellers along railway tracks – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thai Post*, June 1, 2004

The 35 billion baht airport link (Phyathai -Makkasan – NBIA) is a part of the 120 billion baht SRT Red Line Commuter Network.

However, land expropriation to evict those who invade SRT land along the railway tracks will take a long time since there are lots of slum dwellers living along railway tracks.

Even when the defunct Hopewell project was alive, they had very hard time to remove slum dwellers. Team Consultant said SRT will have to pay 3.8 billion baht for land to move slum dwellers to new designated places.

Thai Cabinet approves rail link to new international airport – *AP*, June 1, 2004

A 30 billion baht (US\$739 million) elevated rail project to link Bangkok with its soon-to-be-opened new international airport was approved Tuesday by Thailand's Cabinet, said Transport Minister Suriya

Jungrungreangkit.

Construction of the rail link is supposed to take about two years, and it is expected to begin operating in 2006, one year after the opening of the new Suvarnabhumi Airport, he said...

The contractor is required to pay all the construction costs upfront and the government will pay back upon completion, with interest, he said.

The train would run at a maximum speed of 160 kilometers (100 miles) an hour...

From yesterday: Suvarnabhumi Airport Link heading to cabinet approval on June 1 – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Matichon Daily*, May 31, 2004 and *Thairath*, May 31, 2004

Minister Suriya told the press that the cabinet is going to approve the Suvarnabhumi Airport Link (Phyathai – Makkasan – NBIA -> 26 km) in the same way as the Southern Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road which asks Ch Karnchang to find the funds and then the Expressway Authority will pay back later (a turnkey project). This project is part of the 400 billion baht mass transit system expansion.

MOTC expects ETA will be able to sign the contract with Ch. Karnchang PCL on May 31 and MRTA is going to call a new bid for Purple Line (Bangsue – Rattathibet – Bangyai) and the BTSC will try to call a new bid for Taksin Extension and Samut Prakarn extensions – with the condition that MRTA can take over BTSC after Ch. Karnchang agrees to cut their prices to 2 baht/share and BTSC's creditors agree to sell their stock to the government.

The SRT Governor said there are several foreign investors who have strong interest to invest in this project:

	Country	Creditors	Contractors	Rolling Stock
1	Japan	JICA + JBIC	Mitsu	Mitsubishi
2	Germany	KfW	German + Thai	Siemens
3	China	Bank of China?	China Rail Construction?	China Rail
4	Canada	?	?	Bombardier

SRT will pay back NBIA 4 billion baht for the finished underground tunnel construction (Airport Station) while the other 26 billion Baht will pay for the system.

Commentary by Wisarut: Turnkey projects are known as a breeding ground for corruption. Project delays will create cost overruns like the Southern Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road has shown.

A tale of two newspapers: Traffic at the new airport – May 28, 2004

Yesterday we ran the translated *Thaipost* story on the right and suspected that there would soon be a *Bangkok Post* story coming. Today the *Post* did chime in on this subject in a characteristic way—to reassure English-language readers that the government was taking care of the potential problem with various plans that "will be forwarded to the cabinet for approval." The *Thaipost* story, on the other hand, is an attempt to soften and mold public opinion about the lack of a rail system to the airport.

Delays in completion of road, rail projects likely to leave roads jammed for two years – *Bangkok Post*, May 28, 2004

Problems in road travel to and from the new international airport are likely to be a major headache until an express train link and the southern ring road are completed, more than two years after the first plane is due to take off. The two projects have been delayed for different reasons.

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra criticised Transport Minister Suriya Jungrungreangkit for the slow progress on the rail link during Tuesday's cabinet meeting.

Mr Suriya admitted that "without completion of both projects, the new airport will encounter traffic problems".

He said a 30-billion-baht investment plan for the

Airport rail not necessary: Most people drive cars – translated and summarized by Wisarut

Bholsithi from *Thaipost*, May 27, 2004

Deputy Director of Suvarnabhumi Airport Development Co. Ltd. (Mr Suwat Waneesuputra) said the Suvarnabhumi Rail Link—even with the Makkasan Airport City Terminal and Makkasan Trade Center at Makkasan is not necessary to invest in in the first five years since almost all people (99.5%) still rely on automobiles (private cars, taxi, BMTA buses) to go to Donmuang Airport. This system could be applied very well to Suvarnabhumi Airport.

Furthermore, the construction of the new separation tracks from Lad Krabang to NBIA along with the new elevated track may be so costly that it is unworthy to invest at all. Even the trade center at Makkasan may not help because those who go to

Airport Link 31-km train system from Makkasan to Suvarnabhumi airport at Nong Ngu Hao, Bang Phli, Samut Prakan, will be forwarded to the cabinet for approval next Tuesday.

He had also directed the State Railway of Thailand (SRT) to accelerate the design process. He hoped tenders would be called in July and a contractor hired in November. The construction time is estimated at two years and six months...

Mr Suriya expects the Expressway and Rapid Transit Authority to sign a contract with the selected builder Ch Karnchang Plc next week for the 22.5-km ring road from Bang Phli to Bang Khun Tian, after contractual disagreements had delayed the deal. The Attorney-General's Office is now scrutinising the contract details.

Construction of the ring road is expected to take two years and six months.

Premchai Karnasuta, president of Italian-Thai Development Plc, the airport constructor, confirmed Suvarnabhumi airport would open in September 2005.

the airport and those who go shopping are very different people. BMA city planning is unsuitable for rail transit since it was spreading out not focusing into many subcenters as in other countries.. Therefore, Premier Thaksin should not feel worried about the delay on the implementation of the Suvannabhum Airport Link. The eight lane motorways as well as the widened roads around Suvannabhum Airport would do this job. Suvannabhum New City will be developed in the next two years since it is necessary to wait for the Suvannabhum City Development Corporation Act to become a reality.

Commentary by Wisarut on the Thai Post article: The kindest thing to say about this is that Mr Suwat Waneesuputra may be displaying some kind of prejudice in line with the U.S. mindset which is hostile to railways. Look at JFK and LAX and Dulles Airport as a few sample of poor planning. The rail links from those airports to downtown are either frozen or coming up into a reality with very lousy results. Examples of US airports with proper systems would be Atlanta International Airport, SFO, or even O'Hare. On the other hand, Mr Suwat is displaying the anti-mass transit bias that has been a hallmark of the present government (despite all the talk about mass transit).

If SRT has offer very good and frequent rail services to Donmuang Airport, people would not bother paying hundreds or thousands baht for taxi (expressway fee included) in addition to the 50 baht surcharge to ride taxi waiting in front of the terminal gates. Even airport buses are very hard to find.

Mr Suwat may never suffer from traffic jams when he goes to their airport so he can say something like the above. Fuel prices have skyrocketed... a feeder LRT system from the area around NBIA would be great. Furthermore, *Thaipost* columnists and journalist usually write against any government they do not like with very venomous tones.

The specifications for the airport link – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Manager Daily*, September 26, 2003

After getting the approval from the NBIA board to construct the airport link as well as the tunnel at the northern terminal, SRT has come up with the specification of airport link rolling stock:

- 1) Airport Express -> Makkasan – NBIA – 25 km -> 6-8 car type – nonstop to NBIA 15 minute interval
- 2) Airport Link -> 28 km – 4-car type, 30 minute interval stop at the following stations: Phyathai, Makkasan, Phetburi, Klong Tan, Hua Mark, Lad Krabang, NBIA.

Commentary by Wisarut: Looks pretty abnormal since the slower airport link trains should be longer than airport express since they are supposed to pick more passengers and take longer time to go to the airport. If SRT insists on the 8-car type for the airport express, they should allow either MRTA or BTSC to extend to Makkasan to feed the airport express with more passengers.

SRT land to become major airport link – April 16, 2003

this land is the railroad junkyard in the center of town that probably should be Bangkok's 'Central Park.'

Wisarut Bholsithi comments: SRT will have to get cooperation from the SRT Union since this project would definitely involve the eviction of SRT workers who work and live in the Makkasan area. SRT should also renovate the junkyard at Makkasan to become a Railway Museum.

How to link to the Skytrain (at the Western End of City Terminal) and Subway (at the Eastern End) with City Terminal in Makkasan: A cheap way would be would be long escalators and moving ramps (for moving baggage). However, it would be much better if SRT has allowed BTSC (via BMA) have a track for

feeder service to Makkasan (it would be necessary to construct extra rails to handle the standard gauge Skytrain). Running feeder bus service from Chitlom (or Ploenchit) to Makkasan is another cheap option, but traffic jams around Pratoonam would render the feeder buses unpopular.

Working on the tunnel at the new airport: ITD (Italian Thai Development) is working on the 576-million baht underground station and tunnel under the main terminal of NBIA. They may have to dig tunnels large enough to accommodate the standard gauge railway even though SRT hopes to run the meter gauge railway to NBIA.

High-speed airport link plan revived – April 16, 2003

This project was previously canceled to much criticism: *(Prime Minister) Thaksin told the press that NBIA (the new airport) does not need to rush on the construction of a mass transit system linking NBIA with downtown Bangkok due to the fact that there will be an 8-lane highway with no traffic lights.* (from [Thaksin puts brakes on railway train-only the underground tunnel approved](#)) The entry tunnel and platforms for a future rail link are being constructed though. Further down on the same page are earlier articles about both the BTS (the Skytrain operator) and MRTA (the subway operator) both wanting to build the train. The latest [Hopewell revival plan](#) envisions a spur to the airport, but the plan requires that the private sector come up with hundreds of millions of dollars to give to the State Railway of Thailand for the investment.

Criticism of no rail service for the new airport – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Bangkok Biznew* and *Dailynews*, December 5, 2002

Criticism of no rail service for the airport

Governor Samak said he strongly disagrees with Minister Suriya about the policy on the connection to NBIA (Minister Suriya has postponed the implementation of rail service to NBIA). Governor Samak still insists that the 21-km extension from Onnut to NBIA is viable. It requires only 21 billion baht compared to 30 billion baht if BTSC decided to go along the Bang Na-Trat Highway. There is presently a three-month study being conducted on the feasibility of the NBIA link via Onnut. After that BMA will issue a TOR to invite the private sector to invest in this project. Governor Samak boasted that the private sector in knocking down his doors to invest in this project. If BMA is allowed to start now, it will be done within 2 years – just before the official opening of the airport.

Thaksin puts brakes on railway train-only the underground tunnel approved

Summarized and translated by Wisarut Bholsithi

Matichon Daily, September 3, 2002

Thairath Daily, September 3, 2002

Thaipost Daily, September 3, 2002

Manager Daily, September 3, 2002

Premier Thaksin went to the construction site of NBIA had had a meeting with NBIA board for 3 hours and then inspected the progress of construction by helicopter. After that, the premier told the press that the construction will be done by December 2004, ready for test run on the system on December 5, 2004, and then official opening on August 12, 2005.

For the main terminal, it has a capacity to carry 40 million passengers. If the budget is cut properly, the price tag of the airport will be 100 billion baht, instead of 120 billion baht. So far, the NBIA is 20.1% done (from a 20.5% target).

Thaksin also asked AAT and NBIA to make a PR effort to extinguish any bad rumor about the airport and correct any misunderstandings which might cause airlines to move out of Donmuang Airport (BKK) to be stationed at Changi Airport (Singapore).

Thaksin told the press that NBIA does not need to rush on the construction of a mass transit system linking NBIA with downtown Bangkok due to the fact that there will be an 8-lane highway with no traffic lights. Furthermore, Thaksin asked SRT to further cut the budget for the airport rail link (Makkasan – NBIA) from 23 billion baht and draft a new investment plan for this matter, with a lower price tag. Therefore, Thaksin has decided to put a brake on SRT's 23-billion baht railway link to NBIA due to its high cost. Nevertheless, Premier Thaksin order the contractors to construct the tunnel for the future rail link, with a price tag of 680 million baht, and asks NBIA to pay first before asking SRT or BTSC to pay back later.

Thoedsak (Head of SRT Board) has grudgingly accepted the decision even though the SRT Board want the private concession for this rail link project. However, the design on the construction of the SRT Rail link is not done yet, so SRT will do their best to finish the construction design on time so as to get the approval as soon as possible. SRT hopes that they will get the contractor by October 2002 and sign the contract by the end of 2002. It would take about a year to finish the design and the construction can be started in 2004 since the rail link is not necessary to be done at the same time as the Airport, but SRT needs a budget for the construction since SRT is in financial trouble.

Air Marshall Nopporn (Head of NBIA Board) said NBIA will pay for the tunnel first, and construct the irrigation system to drain water in case of flood. NBIA will construct the northern ramp connecting to the motorway while the western ramp will connect with King Kaeo Road, and the southern ramp will connect with the Bangna-Chonburi Expressway, but needs a connection with the 1st stage expressway at Bang Na (and the 3rd stage later on) to function properly. The control tower will be done in August 2004.

The NBIA Development Board has approved the plan for the NBIA to invest in the Custom Free Zone with a price tag of 6.29 billion baht and parking space for aircraft with a price tag of 685 million baht, since this custom free zone will save lots investment money and airport expense with an economic benefit of 4.11 billion baht within 20 years.

NBIA and EGAT have to remove some high voltage power line (owned by EGAT) out of the airport area for safety and pay 721 million baht for the removal.

Premchai Kannasut (CEO of Italian-Thai Development PCL) told the press that the NBIA board denies that the plan for bid calling is incomplete, but in the contractor's viewpoint it is and delays are possible. So far, ITD has paid 3 billion baht out of 36 billion baht for the main terminal construction while working on the foundation. The main terminal is 10% done (at the end of August 2002) since NBIA refuses to approve the 7-8 subcontractors and 3 suppliers offered by ITD. ITD also needed the construction control consultants and design consultants to work on the terminal since the terminal designed by MJTA is for bidding (not for construction) and needs comprehensivedetails. ITD has no expert on plan design, so the company needs design consultant to help the company out of trouble, and ensure fast construction process. It also takes two monthsto get a construction control consultant, and thus a delay will ensure. If the NBIA Board still refuses to approve or handle the proposed subcontractors, suppliers, construction control consultant, design consultant, there will be a big trouble ahead.

ITD said that even the main terminal is done, it will be able to carry 30 million passengers since the number of passenger modules is cut from 9 bays to 7 bays to save money, and the number of passengers in 2005 will be 40 million passengers, so an expansion is needed. If NBIA ask ITD to construct 2 more passenger modules, it is impossible to open the airport for test run on December 5, 2004. If ITD is unable to deliver the main terminal on time (December 5, 2004), ITD will have to pay fine of 28 million baht a day. Initially, the number of passenger modules is supposed to be 11 bays, but it was cut down to 9 bays and later 7 bays.

If NBIA needs to expand by constructing a second terminal, the new terminal will have to able to carry the other 30 million passengers in addition to the initial 30 million passengers. If NBIA need to expand by constructing 2 more passenger bays, it will take several years after 2005 to be done. 2 passenger modules need 6 billion baht to complete.

Minister Pracha has asked Premchai Kannasut (CEO of Italian-Thai Development PCL) to be at MOTC to explain about the news causing severe damage to NBIA.

Nevertheless, NBIA received a letter from MJTA explaining that the company will redesign on the passenger terminal so as to enhance the terminal management and administration, thus enable the main terminal to carry 40 passengers without any further expansion. MJTA will work on the design of the baggage transportation system, IT System, and other things relating to passengers' convenience to ensure that NBIA will be able to carry 40 passengers in 2005 without trouble.

NBIA said NBIA has discussed with JBIC about the construction control consultant and it would take 28 days to get the approval from JBIC. The NBIA main terminal will be 1.6 times larger than all Don Muang terminals combined (Donmuang is now carrying 32 million passengers a year). Therefore, 40 million

passengers a year is not a problem, they just need excellent management of immigration counters, custom counters, and the baggage transportation system.

"Suvannabhum Extension" vs. High Speed train – July 10, 2002

Who will get the airport route? Bangkok's second airport has for decades caused a feeding frenzy—everyone wants a piece of the action. The latest is the tussle over who will handle the rail route to the airport—the Skytrain company or SRT.

[BTSC Suvannabhum Extension vs. SRT High Speed Train to NBIA – Governor Samak says BMA is not a slave of OCMLT so BMA has the right to make its own decision](#) – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi – *Matichon*, July 9, 2002

[SRT Planning to Construct Rail Link to Suvannabhum Airport](#)

Thaipost, December 11, 2001

Somsak pushing MRTA to build skytrain to Nong Ngoo Hao Airport

MRTA Director says MRTA is in a better position than SRT due to its depot and subway construction

Summarized and translated by Wisarut Bholsithi – *Dailynews*, November 16, 2001

Minister Somsak Thepsuthin (Office of PM) has met with Mr. Surachai Phisitwanit (the Head of MRTA Board of Directors) concerning the mass transit link with NBIA. Initially, SRT, OCMLT, and MRTA were planning mass transit links. However, the recession delayed their implementation. There is a discussion over whether to let SRT handle this project or let MRTA take charge. Minister Somsak asks MRTA to make a feasible study concerning details of the construction of the mass transit link from the Rama IX Depot to NBIA along the Eastern Railway line with a total distance of 30 km.

Putting the line along the railway will save money in expropriation, Mr. Praphat Jongsa-nguan (MRTA Director) said. MRTA has the potential to handle this task since it is constructing the blue line subway so MRTA has its own depot and maintenance center. Only a new mass transit line to NBIA need be built. SRT is not in a very good position at all since it would need to make new investments on rail systems and a maintenance center.

It is up to government policy to decide which office should handle this project since the initial phase of NBIA is (supposed) to be done by 2004. The only way to ensure that the mass transit link will be done within that time period is to construct a skytrain along the Eastern Railway line and use the piling of the failed [Hopewell Project](#) along the eastern railway line to realize the link.

Commentary by Wisarut Bholsithi: It is a good idea to let MRTA handle this mass transit link to NBIA. After Premier Thaksin made the decision to demolish the [Hopewell](#) piles, he got lots of arguments against his decision, so he decided to change his mind by proposing that SRT revive the project from Donmuang to Bangsue (with a total distance of 15 km.), but with a budget of not more than 10 billion baht. Premier Thaksin could start such a mass transit project to NBIA and let MRTA handle the project.

[Current Airport Link news](#)

Thai-language newspapers – October 12, 2004

October 12, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – October 12, 2004</p> <p>* To make people in the world know more about Asia, Mr. Wisanu, Deputy Prime Minister, discussed with his Malaysian counterpart the idea to produce the TV drama “The Love Story of Thai-Malay” to show the culture and tourism of both countries.</p> <p>* Workers will gather for a rally on October 14 in front of government house asking to increase the minimum wage to 200 baht.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>Yesterday, Ms.Supinya Klangnarong, the secretary of the Campaign for Media Reform, paid respect to the shrine in front of the Southern Bangkok Civil Court before she appeared in court to face the charges of Shin Corp in their libel suit against her. Only her mother accompanied her.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – October 12, 2004</p> <p>* A livestock official in Prachinburi province claims it was diarrhea that killed pigs . The Ministry of Public Health alerts the public that the bird flu outbreak continues.</p> <p>* The result of a DNA test confirms that the piece of finger in Naem “Yaowapa” belongs to the Ms. Jarassri, a worker.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>A young guy is addicted to computer games, but has no money so he robbed the Bangkok Bank, Nongzang branch in Saraburi province. He was arrested because he did not know how to open the strong box in the safe and the alarm rang.</p> <p>* Superman is dead. Christopher Reeve, the super man who sat in a wheel chair for 10 years, has died of a heart attack.</p>

Evidence of 'jungle yeti' found

October 12, 2004

Categories: Nothing to do with Thailand, but Interesting

[Evidence of 'jungle yeti' found](#) – BBC, October 12, 2004

Fresh evidence has been found in the jungles of Sumatra supporting claims that a mythical 'jungle yeti' may exist, claim two UK explorers. Adam Davies and Andrew Sanderson found footprints which seem to match examples they found three years ago, which were shown to be from a new species of ape. The orang pendek, as it is known, is said by islanders to walk like a man...

Govt prepares new directives on witchcraft

October 12, 2004

Categories: Local Beliefs

[Govt](#)

[prepares new directives on witchcraft](#)

– TNA, October 12, 2004

...Mr. Weerasak Khowsurat, Vice Minister for Culture, said today that in the immediate term, the government would seek to use the 1996 Civil Service Administration Act to allow Interior Ministry officials to determine whether local spirit houses were adversely affecting communities, or whether legislation was being broken. However, Mr. Weerasak stressed that the government had no intention of trampling on ancient beliefs, many of which gave local people a considerable amount of psychological support.

In the long term, the government is looking at extending the 1985 Spirit House Act to require all spirit houses to be registered with the Interior Ministry.

This would also require any people believing themselves to have special spiritual powers to inform the authorities of their activities...

What's happening

October 12, 2004

What's happening

[Lightning](#)

[destroys ancient pagoda](#) – TNA, October 12, 2004

...Phra Ngen Chedi, known to locals simply as the 'giant chedi', was struck at around 16.30 hrs, sending bricks and sand from the back of the chedi flying out in all directions.

... As soon as people realised what had happened, they rushed to remove their parked cars from the area, he said, adding that local people were afraid that the chedi could collapse further in heavy rain.

Phra Ngen Chedi, built in 1008 by Mon immigrants, was originally part of a larger temple complex which was later abandoned...

[Thailand](#)

[to celebrate 200th birthday of King Rama IV](#) –

TNA, October 12, 2004

...Bangkok's Wat Bovorn Niwet Vihara will join temples of the Dharmayukti sect all over the country and overseas in the anniversary celebrations on 18 October, according to Phra Phrommuni, an assistant abbot at the temple...

[Heli](#)

[Asia 2004 – Day 1: Bangkok's Presidential Tower fire rescue relived by those who were there](#) –

October 12, 2004

With the backdrop of televised scenes from the Meridien Presidential Tower fire that occurred in downtown Bangkok in July 1997, helicopter crew members who helped rescue 93 people from the building's roof that day related their roles to delegates attending Heli Asia 2004's inaugural event, the Breeze Eastern Airborne Hoist Workshop. Led by pilot Major Swangkit, the crewmen from the Thai Police Aviation Department described the problems they faced, not least of which was the need to winch down onto the rooftop an officer to control the crowd of desperate people frantic to leave their temporary haven at the earliest possible moment...

Ads warn American child-sex tourists

October 12, 2004

Categories: Crime

[Ads warn American child-sex tourists](#)

– AP, October 12, 2004

*...A huge billboard that looms over traffic in the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh warns in English: "Abuse a child in this country, go to jail in yours."
The State Department, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the group World Vision are behind the [roadside, television, print and Internet ads](#) in the United States and the prime sex-tourism destinations Cambodia, Costa Rica and Thailand...*

Thai-language newspapers – October 13, 2004

October 13, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Kom Chad Luek – October 13, 2004

* A young student in grade 11 was dragged to be raped by a young employee of a plastic factory. She fought him strongly and bit 1/2 inch off his tongue.

* The latest trend in youth behavior in Chaiyapoom province is to have a big penis. Some novices even set themselves up like a doctor to give enlarging injections and charge 500 baht.

Thairath – October 13, 2004

* At a Familymart branch Chumchon Ram, a Ramkumhaeng University student and part-time seller had her neck cut terribly and died. Police are investigating.

* Wichet, deputy secretary of TRT party, releases news that there is a group wanting to overthrow Thaksin. He claims “the hooded man“ backs this up and wakes up all the mobs to move on an important day in October.

* Thaksin said at the meeting of TRT that if TRT wins the next election he will not get Mahachon Party to join the government because Mahachon deceives Esarn people and come from the Democrat Party . Esarn people do not want the Democrat party anymore.

Construction of Malaysia-Thailand link bridge starts

October 13, 2004

Categories: Bridges

[Construction of Malaysia-Thailand link bridge starts](#)

– Mustapa, October 13, 2004

Construction of the Bukit Bunga-Buketa bridge linking Malaysia and Thailand will commence tomorrow, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said.

The ground-breaking ceremony for the 120-metre-long bridge would be jointly performed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his Thailand counterpart, Thaksin Shinawatra, he said...

The look of two newspapers

October 14, 2004

Categories: Thai Newspapers and Magazines

The look of two newspapers

Both *Kom Chad Luek* and *The Nation* are publications of the Nation Group. 2Bangkok.com thought it would be interesting to compare the front page of these two newspaper published by the same company, but targeting very different markets.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

The Nation (left – estimated circulation 50,000) leads today with an interview and article about the Prime Minister that emphasizes the pressure he is allegedly under. It also has an article about attacks in the South. Its colorful and uncluttered front page has the prevailing style of many international English-language papers.

Kom Chad Luek (below – estimated circulation 700,000) is intended to compete with sensational mass market papers like *ThaiRath*. It is only three years old and already among the top four Thai newspapers in terms of circulation. Many younger readers find this paper interesting.

Kom Chad Luek uses the same giant ladle photo (from the annual vegetarian festival), but leads with a screaming Thai-style banner headline, complete with a bloody map of the South showing the location of attacks. The headline reads "One night–14 incidents. Bombs, shootings, robbing the district police station. Two dead–a policeman and a volunteer."



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Below the fold, the Southern trouble continues with photos of a bomb squad officer defusing a bomb, a police vehicle with a broken window, and a military man on patrol.

The design of the page is classic Thai-language newspaper style, packing as much info, headlines, and advertising as possible on the front page. This design allows passersby to read the main items by looking at the paper hanging up or laying on a newsstand. More *Kom Chad Luek* headlines in our Thai-language newspaper headlines below.

Thai-language newspapers – October 14, 2004

October 14, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Matichon – October 14, 2004

* Maew said he does not know that TRT decides not to take notice the Mahachon Party. He is confident to get 200 seats in the next election. Bunyat of the Democrat Party mocks “can’t believe this and boasts of 200 seats is just encourage TRT members.”

* The Queen helps victims in the “Kapor” district in the South. The situation is quite serious. Not only 300 students, but also foreign teachers want to move from the university .

* C.P. urges the government to use a vaccine for the bird flu. It is about the world politic that the big power country want to intercept the growth of economic in this region. Killing the chickens could not solve the exactly problem.

Thairath – October 14, 2004

* The student fought strongly with a guy who wanted to rape her and bit off his tongue .

* A security guard who drove a Brinks Thailand Company vehicle stole 4 million baht and ran away while the manager was preparing to put the money in an ATM.

* The Deputy of Public Health Ministry "talks big" that they controlled bird flu in 7 days because there has not been more patients in 7 days.

Thai-language newspapers – October 15, 2004

October 15, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – October 15, 2004</p> <p>* The man who had his tongue bit off during an attempted rape is arrested. His tongue got a tetanus infection and he cannot taste anymore.</p> <p>* Noi increases the budget by 10,000 baht in each village to support health volunteers. She claims that she is working in line with Maew's policy.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>In Nakhonsrithammarat, a crocodile escaped from a farm and bit a woman quite seriously.</p> <p>* Jae Bieb will have a training program for basic self-defense. She plans to bring "NongView" to teach how to protect the body.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – October 15, 2004</p> <p>* A six-wheel truck in Soi Satupradit ran over a seven year old boy riding a bicycle, flattening and killing him.</p>	<p>* After losing a motorcycle race and falling 30,000 baht debt, a young man killed his father's friend and took his jewelry. He was arrested after selling a golden necklace.</p>

Mor Chit Park and Ride

October 15, 2004

Categories: Mass Transit



(Photo: Nils)

Mor
Chit Park and Ride
– October 15, 2004

Nils took this photo of the almost completed Mor Chit Park and Ride. Wisarut reports the Park and Ride is actually an asphalt parking lot with a roof and will be opened by the end of this October one month behind schedule. This location was once slated for [Sun Estate's Mor Chit development](#)

Lube Oil Shop Fire – One-hour wait for chemicals to douse blaze

October 16, 2004

Categories: Uncategorized

[Lube Oil Shop Fire – One-hour wait for chemicals to douse blaze](#) – Bangkok Post, October 16, 2004

...The blaze, which broke out at 11.30am at one shop belonging to Krissada Jiravipattanond caused panic in the community as it was opposite a petrol station and just 50 metres away from a cooking gas cylinder store.

A fleet of large and small fire engines rushed to the scene but it took an hour before chemical foam—the appropriate extinguisher for an oil fire—arrived.

The situation worsened as fire fighters pumped waste water that was mixed with run-off lube from sewage pipes to put out the fire as there was only one hydrant...

It was not the first blaze in the area. Two years ago, a fire broke out at a shophouse selling electric appliances.

"We feel unsafe having shops selling hazardous goods in our community. It's like bombs being planted everywhere," said Rad Vanagodha, a resident...



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Thai-language newspapers – October 18, 2004

October 18, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – October 18, 2004</p> <p>* A poll of 400 districts around the country shows TRT is still popular. It is believed that Thaksin will the polls and create a second government.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>A rumor started that LuangPor Koon got sick and died and lots of people came to visit him at the temple in Nakornratchasima. He said he knew nothing of the news and if he died really, everybody would know about it.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – October 18, 2004</p> <p>* A 71-year-old woman in Roi-et province won the lottery. She travels by Thai Airways to Bangkok to get 22 million baht.</p> <p>* Thaksin spoke at the campaign kick off at the Indoor Stadium Huamark. He said his life has no privacy and his sex life is decreasing also.</p>	<p>* Bloody news – The dead body of Mr. Sutip Srathongkaew, 50 years old, was found in the middle of a pineapple orchard in Banka, Ratchaburi. The police assume it is a love case. Recently he felt affection for a beautiful widow in the village who is charming to other men also.</p>

Renovated “Red Palace” turns 96 in grand style

October 18, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Renovated “Red Palace” turns 96 in grand style](#) –

The Nation, October 18, 2004

Ladawan Palace, the gem of the Crown Property Bureau, last week celebrated its 96th anniversary after years of being caught in the ups and downs of modern Thai history and following a period of renovation these past 10 years...

The two-storey building appears to be an amalgam of Victorian and Italian-villa styles. It was built between 1906 and 1908 by royal order of King Rama V to be the residence of one his sons, Prince Yugala Dighambara. The prince married Princess Chalermkhetra Mangala Bhanubandhu, and together they raised three sons...

Thai-language newspapers – October 19, 2004

October 19, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

ThaiRath – October 19, 2004

* Bloody news – Prakroo Uthai Thamsophit, 64 years old, a famous abbot who came from Laos and helped instruct monks at Wat Summachaiyawas, Bangkok was shot at his Kuti . The police could not specify the cause because the gunmen did not take anything.

* Bloody news – The bus driver of no.109 drove very fast and dozed off. He crashed into an electric post at Soi Ramkumhaeng 8. One died and 26 were seriously injured.

Kom Chad Luek – October 19, 2004

* The guy who robbed 5 million baht from Brinks Company confessed he was mad when the company dismissed him so he asked his friend to rob them. He did not really do it for money—he just wanted to damage the company and satisfy himself.

* The old lady who won 22 million baht in the lottery fainted after long travel by plane and car to Bangkok. She gave 2 million bath each to her eight children (son and daughters) and the rest is for doing merit.

* In Banglamung, Chonburi an ex-wife is jealous of her husband because has a new wife so she cuts his “nok khao” (penis) while he was sleeping.

* Three ex-ministers, three local politicians, two government officials and a private company are involved in corruption regarding the Klong Dan case. The damages the government must pay for amount to 22 billion baht.

Contrasts from the Western media

October 19, 2004

Contrasts
from the Western media
– October 19, 2004
Western news media thrives on images
of contrast. News is more newsworthy
if it contains perceived contradictions
or hypocrisy of some kind. This
condescending photo (right) from
a [CNN](#)
[story](#) is typical of this approach.

expedia.com as well as individual carriers' sites and travel
izing in Asian tours.

on taking a domestic
ala Lumpur to
ia, it's always cheaper
ook local carriers once
an doing it all at once
gent back home.

eatly across the region
untries. Hanoi is
n July and August but
er and November,
City's rainy season
n May to November.

, there are some
be had during the wet
ot of places, rain showers may only last a couple hours in the



Two Buddhist monks stop to have their photograph taken outside one of the many nightspots along Patpong Road in Bangkok, Thailand.

Bangkok governor bans foam for Loy Kratong

October 19, 2004

Categories: Loy Krathong

[Bangkok governor bans foam for Loy Kratong](#)

– TNA, October

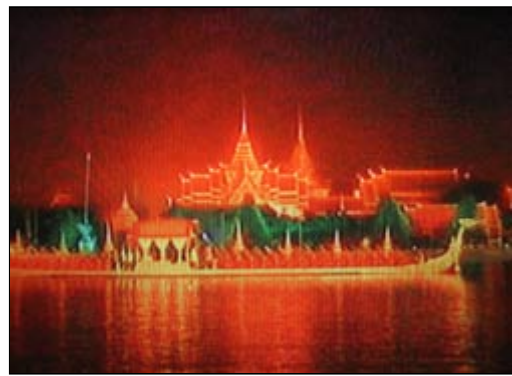
19, 2004

*First of all there was the famous
ban on the use of traditional banana
leaves, and then there were injunctions
to use bread. But this year for
the Loy Kratong Festival the message
from the Bangkok governor is clear:
all 'kratong' made from polystyrene
foam will be banned from public
parks. ...This
contrasts strongly with the policies
of former Bangkok governor Samak
Sundaravej, who memorably encouraged
the use of polystyrene 'kratong',
despite protests from environmental
groups...*

Thaksin and the National Anthem

October 20, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years



Thaksin and the National Anthem – October 20, 2004

Every morning at 8am the National Anthem is played across the country as flags are raised. On TV, montages of patriotic and royal images are shown as the anthem plays.

A controversy erupted recent when it was noticed that the Prime Minister was now part of these patriotic images on government TV channel 9.

The Prime Minister is part of a series of one-second images that includes photos of the Muslim South followed by scenes of army maneuvers (above—photos on this page are in the order they appear, but do not include every single shot).

The image of the prime minister shows him with his eyes lowered in a humble manner the entire time—as if it was expected that the inclusion of a political figure would be controversial in the national anthem montage.

Immediately after the Thaksin scene is a series of longer three-second shots that include HM The King and the Royal Family.

It is probably not coincidental that this controversy is being brought up as the election nears—the images have been running since January without comment.

In the Thai context, the contention that the “Premier symbolises national unity” is a bold one as the Thai monarch is considered the unifying symbol. This incident raises eyebrows as it shows that Thaksin, a partisan and controversial political figure, has the influence to elevate himself to symbolize unity. This also feeds into the recent debate over Thaksin’s contention that [those who are critical of him “do not love the country”](#)

[NATIONAL ANTHEM: Ch 9 stands by its use of PM’s image](#) – *The Nation*, October 19, 2004

State-run television station Channel 9 yesterday defended its decision to include a picture of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra during its daily broadcast of the national anthem, saying it depicted national solidarity....

The picture of Thaksin exemplifies a harmonious and unified nation, which is why the station’s senior executive used it, he said.

Thaksin is the first elected prime minister to be included in the montage of images that accompany the national anthem...



Photoshoppers parody the campaign posters

October 20, 2004

Categories: Elections, Humor

These homespun Photoshopped campaign posters have been circulating for the last couple of days. Thanks to Suchada for the translations.

Right: PM Thaksin superimposed over TRT-backed candidate Paveena.

More on the [Bangkok Governor candidates](#)

Also: [Articles on the 2004 Bangkok Governor campaign](#)



(Photo: Images circulated by forwarded emails)



Left: No.1

Apirak – Let's dance and sing. You'll be happy because of all the entertainment. It will be bright with light...

(Photo: Images circulated)

by forwarded emails)

Right: No.15
Chuwit – I can fight all the bar beers to change Bangkok.



(Photo: Images circulated by forwarded emails)



(Photo: Images circulated by forwarded emails)

Left: No.15
Chuwit – Know my biography before deciding on me.

Right: No. 19 Bichit – *Let me plant palm trees for Bangkok again.*



(Photo: Images circulated by forwarded emails)



Left: No. 3 Chalerm – *Whose dad is he? I have to experiences to treat/handle your son.*

(Photo: Images circulated by forwarded emails)

More on the
[Bangkok Governor candidates](#)
 Also: [Articles on the 2004 Bangkok Governor campaign](#)

Loy Krathong 2004

October 20, 2004

Categories: Loy Krathong



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

People waiting silently in the dark to file onto the royal pier at the navy yard (Tha Ratchaworadit) next to the Grand Palace.

This year 2Bangkok.com surveyed Loy Krathong activities from Taksin Bridge to the Rattanakosin Island area. Here is what it was like to be there...



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

10:30pm at Klong One Ang – still putting krathongs
in the water.



(Photo:
2Bangkok.com)

Crowds line Memorial Bridge.



(Photo:
2Bangkok.com)

One krathong being lit by another.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Watching krathongs being lit near Wat Muang Khae downtown.
Note the "Orange" balloon. Orange set up sales stands blasting
pop music by all the piers in the downtown business district.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Krathongs for sale near Memorial Bridge.



(Photo:
2Bangkok.com)

Crowds at Tha Tien Pier with Wat Arun
on the opposite shore.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Making a wish at Fort Mahakan Park.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Santas and krathongs for sale at the
end of Klong Lord at [Pak
Klong Talad](#).



(Photo:
2Bangkok.com)

A man on a styrofoam raft collects krathongs at
Phra Pokklao Bridge.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Preparing to put krathongs into the water
near the Golden Mount.



(Photo:
2Bangkok.com)

Krathongs drift into the night at Klong One Ang.

Thai-language newspapers – October 20, 2004

October 20, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Matichon

– October 20, 2004

* HM King spoke at the National Science and Technology Exhibition at Impact Arena Muang Thong Thani yesterday.
HM The King said that Thailand should study more about GMOs and develop a Thai way so as not to rely on the foreign countries or getting seeds from the Monsanto company.

* The Minister of Education said that nowadays old theaters are adapted to be the internet cafes that run 24 hours. Some students stay there and do not go back home.

* The Ramathibodi

Hospital declares that the sex behavior of youth is very frightful. Abortions average 1,000 per day.

* A new trend for Thai gays is to enlarge their muscles like Western gays to show “hyper masculinity.” They believe this will raise their status if they have foreign boyfriend.

Thairath

– October 20, 2004

* **Bloody news** –
The boyfriend of Ms. Juree Silsungworn, a 21-year-old student of Rumpaiphanni Ratchabhat Institute, Junthburi province cannot stand that she has a new boyfriend so he threw acid on her face and body. She was seriously burned and died cruelly at the hospital.

*

Bloody news –

Yesterday at 2 p.m. in Ratchadaphisek 36 Soi Sueyaiuthid, the naked dead body of a woman, white skin, aged around 40 with red toenails, was found in the a TOT bag no.26700/2540 in a shallow lake by the junk collector. The police assumed she died five days ago, but could not specify the cause at present

Bangkok Subway News – October 2004

October 21, 2004

Categories: Subway

Subway: Commercial development begins – new extensions to be approved – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, October 21, 2004

The commercial plan for the Subway stations is in progress since BMCL is proposing more revenue sharing from profit received by BMCL in addition to the 7% from subsidiary which BMCL takes 25% of.

MRTA is borrowing 2.44 billion baht from KTB to buy stock back with the interest rate of MLR minus 1.5% a year as the way to purchase stock as the collateral for the stock purchasing—up to 25% of all BMCL stocks at par. The other 75% of BMCL stocks will be purchased after the meeting with the Nationalization Board.

For the stocks sold to N-Park, they have a par price of 1.50 baht/stock. BMCL is a heavy loss if the government is planning to purchase the stock at a price lower than 1.50 baht/stock.

MRTA is approving the plan for the consultant to handle the 23 km Bangsue – Bang Yai line as well as other extensions for another 71 km with a 200 billion baht price tag and the plan to be approved by the cabinet this December.

New extension to be approved in December:

- 1) Bang Kapi – Bang Bumru (24 km)
- 2) Hua Lamphong – Tha Phra – Bang Khae
- 3) Blue Ring (Bangsue – Bang Pho Charansanitwongse – Thai Phra)
- 4) Last leg of Bangyai Line (Bangsue – Ratboorana)

Note: Comments and Criticism on the subway can be seen [here](#).

Subway notes – November 2, 2004

Wisarut reports: *BTS has ceased the shuttle bus service to Queen Sirikit National Convention center after Subway has become a reality. Even though many passengers could ride the Subway to QSNCC, but they will be better off if they purchase a smart card first sine the long lines of passengers at the TVMs and booths will shock passengers who want to pay for tokens instead of smart cards.*

On the forums: More complaints about changing the banknotes into the coins during the morning rush hour can be seen [here](#) and [here](#). On the other hand, more complains on the shuttle bus services can be seen [here](#). Complains for the stalls blocking the passenger way can be seen [here](#).

BMCL offering an IPO next year after settling on commercial deals with MRTA – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, October 21, 2004

BMCL said they will offer an IPO in the first quarter of 2005 after settling the commercial deals on the station areas with MRTA.

The average number of passengers during weekdays is 140,000 a day while the average number of passengers during the weekends is about 100,000 a day.

The student discount on the smart cards for those not older than 21 years old will be started in November as the way to boost the number of smart card users from 40% to 80% of daily passengers.

BMCL also asks Siemens to add more handles without adding more holding rails and they have installed additional directional signs (this has been done in Phaholyothin stations as well as in other stations) to clarify exits for passengers.

However, the additional gates at Silom, Chatuchak and other stations along with the underground viaducts to significant buildings will not be started until 2005 since BMCL has to import the machines for Ch. Karnchang.

Subway news – translated and summarized from *Prachachart Thirakij*, October 25-28, 2004

* MRTA is approving the plan for special discounts for the Subway. The price reduction from November 8, 2004 to March 2005 is as follows:

- 1) 30% discount for students
- 2) Non-rush hour discount (10am to 3pm and 9pm to midnight during weekdays and all day during weekends). 12 baht for the first 7 stations and 18 baht for the rest.
- 3) 150 baht daily pass

These measures are to increase the number of passengers by 33,000 a day during weekdays and by 53,000 passengers a day during weekends

* BMCL will help Traid to lull customers back after the delay on the commercialization deal in Subway stations. MRTA agrees with the deal to give more revenue from BMCL as well as 7% from 25% of the subsidiary profit. MRTA is asking for 2.4 billion baht loan from KTB with the annual interest rate of MLR-1.5% by using MRTA stock as collateral while the rest will need MOF to help MRTA.

Subway Discounts – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thairath*, October 21, 2004
MRTA and BMCL have come up with the 6-month period of discounts to boost passengers.

1) 30% discount for students (up to 21 years old)

2) Non-rush hour rate for regular customers (10am-3pm and 9pm-midnight for weekdays, 6am to midnight for weekends)

The first 4 stations: 12 baht

More than 4 stations: 18 baht

3) 150 baht daily pass

Commentary: The 150 baht daily pass will work only when this pass is a part of a joint ticket system (with the Skytrain, etc.) which has not been implemented yet.

Progress on Purple Line – translated and summarized from *Manager Online*, October 18, 2004

MRTA is looking for land proposed for the new mini depot as well as the area for Kae Rai curve so as to start and finish the project Purple Line subway project by September 2008. This project will create more jobs, improve the environment along the tracks, boost the national economy, increase tourists, cut fuel bills and traffic jams.

Anger at the Subway: Can go in, but cannot come out due to token fubah – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thaipost*, October 13, 2004

Subway passengers are giving a bad rap to BMCL since they pay the right passenger price, but the BMCL officers give the wrong price to token. Also the officers at the gate said the passengers got the wrong price of tickets and blame the passengers for the incident.

BMCL has responded that they have not received a direct complaint about this ticket issue. Many passengers have complained that buying a token from the BMCL officers caused lots of troubles. Some experienced such wrong ticket price problems several times. TMVs are not working properly so they have to rely on the troublesome token purchase from the officers.

One passenger complained that he tried to go from QSNCC to Ratchadaphisek with a price of 22 baht, but the officers have assigned the wrong station—terminating at Phetburi. So the turnstiles refuse to accept the token so the turnstiles cannot open. They have to pay fine for the mistake they did not make at all.

This incident at Ratchadaphisek Station has caused lots of concern, but so far the BMCL officers have asked the passengers to notice what happened to their tokens which is not quite realistic since they are rushing for the train so they will not be able to concentrate on this issue.

Hypnotic drugs in the subway – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, October 13, 2004

New crimes in Skytrain Subway station—a hypnotic drug that causes people to sign a paper to tap into credit cards and transfer money into thieves' accounts...

[Photos of a blind group taking the subway](#) – *Manager Daily*, October 19, 2004

Purple Line subway budget details – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, October 12, 2004
For the case of the Purple line, the budget details are as follows (unit – billion baht):

Year	Budget	Detailed Design	Survey	Land Purchase	Construction & Civil Work	System Installation	Consultant for Management	Consultant for Control
2005	1.190	0.350	0.018	0.315	0.472	0.644	0.006	0.105
2006	10.271	0	0	1.272	4.183	4.631	0.044	0.141
2007	18.912	0	0	0	12.556	6.163	0.093	0.100
2008	15.491	0	0	0	10.345	4.979	0.077	0.090
2009	0.120	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.120

After the budget plan has been approved, MRTA will ask MOF about the plan to obtain the funds for this project.

Advertising on Subway stalled – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, October 10, 2004
No settlement on the advertising deal and the revenue sharing between BMCL and MRTA is in sight.

Map of the new approved subway line – October 9, 2004
A scan from *Manager Daily* (October 8, 2004) of the [new subway line](#).

Is the subway crime-ridden? – October 8, 2004
Wisarat reports: *Someone [claimed on the Thai-language forums](#) that the subway is crime-ridden, but many said it's just hearsay and it is a big lie.*

The construction of Bang Yai line – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, October 12, 2004
Before the construction in September 2005, MRTA needs to acquire the land for the mini depot and park and ride facilities—the areas around Klong Bang Phai as well as Phra Nangklao Bridge (both sides).
Also park and rides at Nonthaburi 1 (before Rattanathibet 30), Klong Bang Phai terminal, and Wat Sai Mah station near the gate of Sue Trong village.
The cost for land expropriation is 1.587 billion baht while the construction cost will be 27.556 billion baht and the rolling stocks will be 16.417 billion baht and the total number for the budget 46.704 billion baht

The Public Debt office proposing two plans for financing the 46.704 billion baht Purple Line Subway extension (Bangyai – Bang Sue) – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, October 10, 2004 and *Prachachat Thurakij*, October 7-10, 2004

The Public Debt Office said there will be two plans for the Purple Line (Bangyai – Bang Sue).

- 1) Domestic loan with a 10-year period and Ministry of Finance as an underwriter for the MRTA bond
- 2) JBIC loan with a 40-year payment period and low annual interest rate of 0.75%

So far, the plan is to finance the 600 billion baht mass transit project is not settled yet. Either long term bonds, securitization, or Wayubhak 2 Fund.

This 23-km Purple Line is a heavy rail with the capability to carry 50,000 passengers per hour per direction. It is to be opened in 2010 with 416,000 passengers a day. The 30-year benefit is 20.56% while B/C ratio is 2.12. It will cut fuel bills by 25.595 billion baht. The bidding for this project will be e-bidding.

46 billion baht for purple line to be done in five years – translated and summarized from *Prachachart Thurakij*, October 4-6, 2004

The cabinet has approved the first leg of the purple line with a total distance of 23 km and a budget of 46.704 billion baht. 27 billion baht for construction, 1.5 billion baht for land expropriation and 16 billion baht for the new rolling stock. MRTA will have to find the domestic loan and the Ministry of Finance will be an underwriter for this project. The construction will be started in the mid 2005 and done in September 2008. There are already more than 100 suburban villages along Rattathibet Road with 60,000 households and thus estimated passengers are about 250,000 a day.

Since the Blue Ring section (Bang Sue – Charansanitwongse – Tha Phra) is not constructed yet, the line must terminate at Bangsue in the same way the original northern extension of the Blue Line.

The station next to Bangsue will be as follows:

- 1) Tao Poon – interchange with the Blue Ring
- 2) Wongsawang – just before Wongsawang intersection (Krungthep – Nonthaburi 39)
- 3) Nakhon In – near Tiwanon intersection
- 4) Rewadee – Soi Rewae (Tiwanon 5) near Srithanya Mental Hospital
- 5) Khae Rai – near the new Nonthaburi Government Center
- 6) Sri Pornsawan – Rattanathibet 28 not far from Jusco Rattanathibet
- 7) Sanambin Nam (AKA Nonthaburi 1 Road) – closed to Sanambinnam Intersection – Park and Ride facility is here
- 8) Phra Nangklao – the station across Chaophraya near Phranangklao Pier
- 9) Sai Mah – near Suetrong village and near the gate of Wat Sai Mah
- 10) Tha It – near Tha It intersection
- 11) Bang Rak Yai – near the gate of Wat Bang Rak Yai
- 12) Bang Buathong – near the intersection with Bang Kruay – Bang Buathong
- 13) Bang Phraek – just across Bang Phraek canal

14) Bang Yai Intersection near Kratsadanakhon 10

15) Bangyai Market – near Kasemraj Hospital

16) Klong Phai – the terminal station with depot and maintenance center along with a park and ride

Commentary: MRTA better negotiate with the mall along the route to construct the via duct connecting the mall with the stations in the same way BTS has done.

Even though the construction of Bangsue – Bang Yai line has not started yet, the price of the land and houses along the route has shot up. Same can be said about the Skytrain and Subway route as well as the area around Suvannabhum Airport.

Thai-language newspapers – October 21, 2004

October 21, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Matichon

– October 21, 2004

* The survey from Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (CPI) poll said that perception of corruption in Thailand is improved .

* Three doctors in the South are very afraid and want to cancel autopsies done at the location of the accident. They say it is risky to do this near the mountains and forests .

*

At the government house on October 20, Maew and Sudarat, Minister of Public Health made a giant bowl of boiling rice for opening the vegetarian festival for health. He suggested eating vegetarian food is like cleaning the cemetery .

Thairath

– October 21, 2004

* **Bloody news** –

In Oakland, New Zealand a Thai real estate business woman disappeared mysteriously after having lunch with a friend on October 3. The New Zealand police said there were many cases like this that happened to Asians many months ago. Her brother warns that Oakland is not safe for Asian people.

* One crocodile at the Crocodile Farm, Samut Prakarn swelled up and died. The tourists are afraid it might have had bird flu. The manager said it is very normal because there are lots of crocodiles in the farm .

* Terrorists in the South not only kill people, but also kill longan trees by cutting the stem and pouring gas into it to make it die.

* **Bloody news** –

At the back of an industrial estate at Kabinburi, Prajinburi Province a rotten dead body of a 43-year-old woman was found in the channel of the grove. After investigation it was found that she was a food seller at Sunyo Co. in the industrial estate. She was held underwater until she died.

Bangkok: Knot City

October 21, 2004

Categories: Uncategorized

[Bangkok: Knot City](#) – October 21, 2004

Pierre Bélanger explains the nature of Bangkok intersections in this [pdf](#) (382kb).

Radiation Optimum Neutralizer

October 22, 2004

Categories: Scams

‘Radiation Optimum Neutralizer?’ – October 22, 2004

A new pseudo-science product hits town!

More on the Radiation Optimum Neutralizer – October 26, 2004

Terry King comments on the Radiation Optimum Neutralizer: *The photographs in the supposed proof are of red blood cells. There is no danger associated with their reproduction because red blood cells never reproduce. New red blood cells are created in the bone marrow to replace those that die. Why do both The Nation and Bangkok Post run so-called news items on scams such as this?*

[Electromagnetic neutraliser hits town](#) – The Nation, October 22, 2004

New technology has arrived in Thailand that its distributor says will allow people to talk on their mobile phones as long as they like without worrying about electromagnetic radiation (EMR).

Health Relations Co – the local distributor of the Electromagnetic Resonances Optimum Neutraliser (Emron)...

It was invented using nanotechnology by Russian scientist Dr Igor Smirnow...

"Callers who use phones for five or six hours a day will not be prone to headaches when they use Emron," ...

Something about the product is [here](#) and [here](#) and a bizarre pseudo-science proof [here](#). The official site for the product appears to be [here](#).

Dr. Smirnow, the inventor, uses another pseudo science belief to explain the product in this [pdf](#): *The radiation is still entering the body but the neutralizing effect of EMRON renders the radiation harmless. There is an obvious parallel here with the pharmacological strategy of attempting to protect against bacterial infection, for example, by taking vitamin C, to fortify the immune system, rather than by wearing a protective mask to simply reduce the intensity of the bacterial field to which a person is exposed.*

Best of all is Dr. Smirnow’s other incredible invention: [Water Activator](#) – *During the process of activation the subtle low frequency electromagnetic field is imprinted into the water. It closely resembles the natural geomagnetic field found near the healing water springs.*

The area around Hualamphong Station

October 22, 2004

Categories: Thai Railroads

Nils reports: As 2Bangkok.com posted the [Paknam Railway map](#) (807kb) by Dik van der Spek, it would be appropriate to mention the [thread about the location of its Hualamphong station](#).

Furthermore, I attached the pictures from 1946 posted by Wisarut on the Thai forum (see below). What is most amazing is how tiny the [Paknam Railway](#) station was! I also visited the area with those old photos in hand to get an impression of the situation in the old days.



(Photo: Nils)

Above: View from subway exit

1 across Rama IV Road towards exit 3. Essentially, nothing seen in this picture existed back in 1946. A lot in this area has been redesigned following the construction of the subway station and looks very different from 1999, when I was first there. The photograph was taken about where Hualamphong Canal used to be.



(Photo: Nils)

Above: The recently renovated Station Hotel, also quite old, is not in the 1946 photo.



(Photo: Nils)

Rama IV Road – 2004

Above: Looking eastwards down Rama IV Road while crossing the street. We can estimate the conditions prior to 1960: The old Rama IV Road only occupied the space left of the middle island (or a little bit more than

that); to the right was the alignment of the railway/tramway, and still to the right of that, where subway exit 1 is situated today (circle), Khlong Hualamphong was flowing and freight barges were docking for loading and unloading. I have difficulty spotting the tramway in the old photos, though. Where was it?



Rama IV Road – 1959

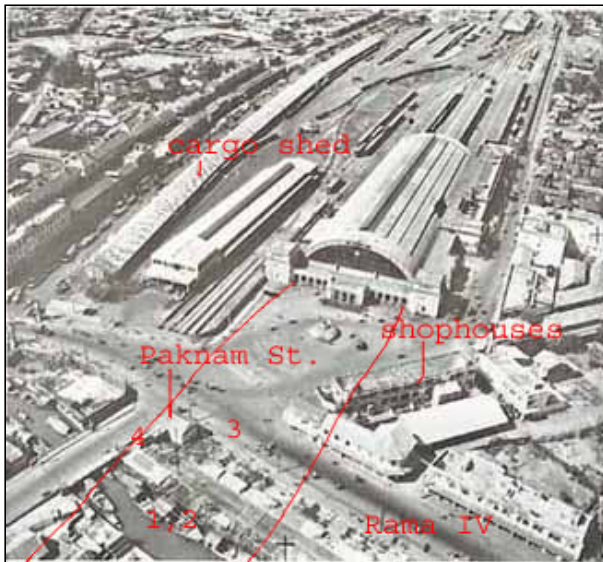
Above: 1959 – Paknam Railway (Hitachi) and Samsen Line Tramway somewhere along Rama IV Road – looks amazingly upcountry.



(Photo: Nils)

Above: This is, as far as I can tell, the position of the Paknam Railway Station! The red lines are approximate extensions of the baselines of Hualamphong Station, for better comparison with the old photo. Immediately to the left is the intersection of Rama IV and Mahapruettharam Road (which still sported a bridge over

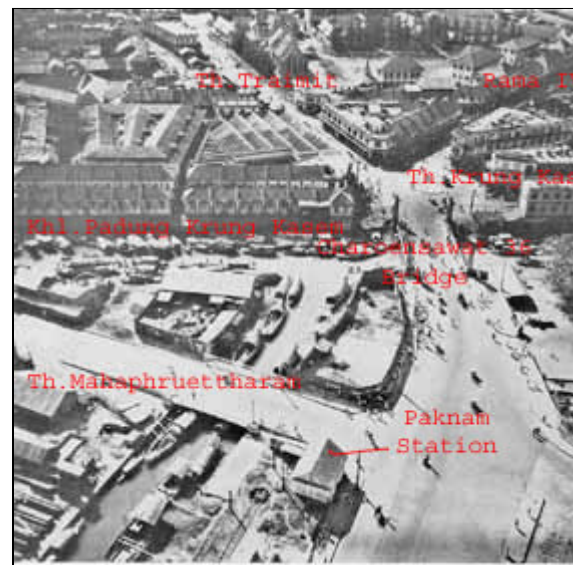
Khlong Hualamphong in the old times). That is how mass transit has been gobbled up by motorized individual traffic.



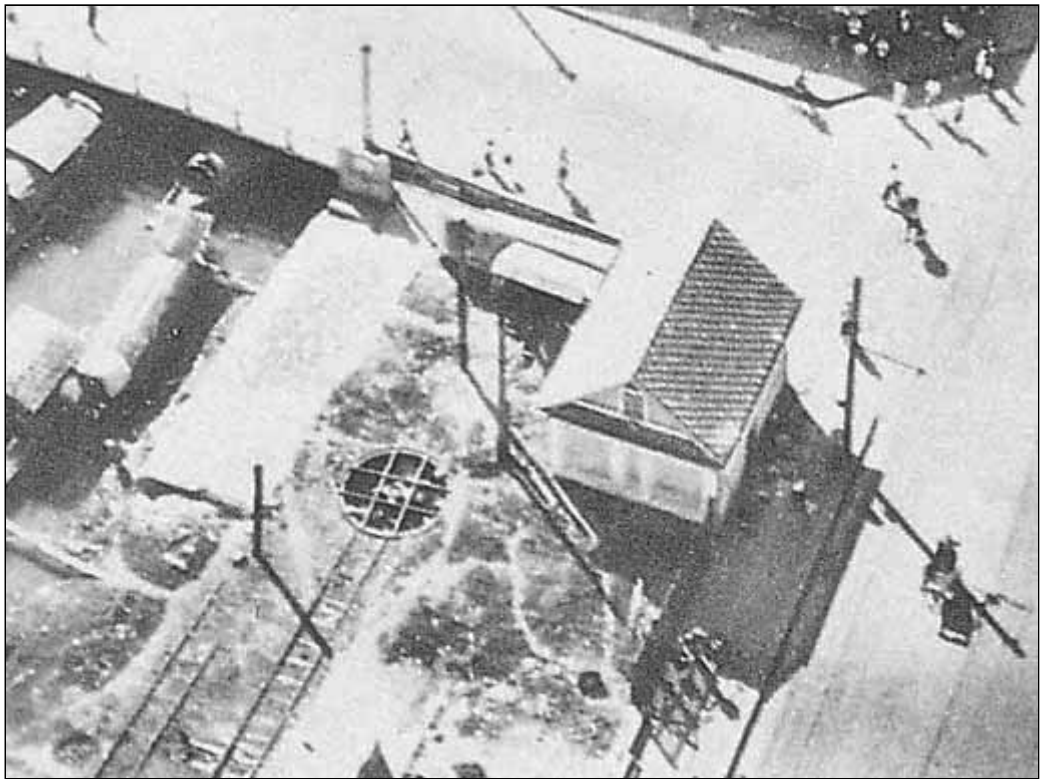
Left: Khlong Hualamphong runs along the bottom; Mahapruettharam Rd (with bridge) adjacent to the Paknam Station. Note the long building that was used to transfer cargo to and from boats along Khlong Padung Krung Kasem, according to Wisarut, and the other parts of the Hualamphong freight terminal that do not exist anymore. Numbers 1,2,3,4 indicate the approximate positions where the modern day photos were taken.

Right: Looking west. The building(s) behind Khlong Padung Krung Kasem, left of Charoensawat 36 Bridge (now substantially wider) have been demolished and replaced by newer (and uglier) ones.

Traimit Road goes towards Yaowarat (their intersection being known as 'Sam Yaek') and this was the route of the Samsen Tram Line. Rama IV becomes Charoen Krung Rd. (with Bang Kholaem Tram Line that intersected with the Samsen Line at Sam Yaek). Krung Kasem Rd was the route of Hualamphong Tram Line, merging with the Samsen line here at this intersection.



Finally, consider this: From 1925 to 1959, Sala Daeng Intersection had a crossing between Tramway and Paknam Railway (wonder how that looked like). The Paknam Line was dismantled 1960, the Silom Line 1962. Now, 45 years later, we finally have a crossing again at this point, between Skytrain and Subway (plus the flyover)... much in the same way, Hualamphong subway station has replaced the old Paknam station underground.



Paknam Station

– November 3, 2004

Nils prepared these closeup of the Peter Williams Hunt from 1946 and asks a few questions:

Above: Is that a turntable? Along the road note the Bangkok tram poles.

Below: I really wonder what the strange structures in front of the station (along Rama IV Road) are. There should be a platform there, not these indeterminable things.



Thai-language newspapers – October 22, 2004

October 22, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Matichon – October 22, 2004

* A Thai tourist in Nakornpathom was stunned to find a centipede in glutinous rice baked in a bamboo cylinder.

* At Central Ladphrao on October 21, the Deputy Dean of Social Welfare faculty, Thammasat university talked on the subject "The past, present and future of Thai Social Welfare—what the people get" and said that the government makes people interested in consumerism. For example in the north, a study found that people make a good income, but the old people must still go out to be beggars.

Thairath – October 22, 2004

* At Pinklao-Nakornchaisri road, a thief disguised as a policeman robbed the gasoline truck "Siam Sahaborickarn" owned by the brother of a Bangkok M.P. The total value stolen was 200,000 baht in gasoline and 500,000 for the vehicle.

* A maniac Rottweiler mangled a veterinarian at the "Mor Nueng" clinic in Banglamung, Chonburi Province He had had to get 30 stitches.

* An unidentified 35-year-old person tried to rob Mrs. Yinglak Chinawat's house that is under construction , but was electrocuted and died. The police found equipment to rob the house such as pliers, scissors, screwdriver and cable on his dead body. It is assumed he was accidentally shocked at the construction site.

Northern Malaysian state abuzz with talk of prince's planned wedding with Thai woman

October 22, 2004

Categories: Malaysia

[Northern Malaysian state abuzz with talk of prince's planned wedding with Thai woman](#) – AP, October 22, 2004

Frenetic preparations were underway for the lavish wedding of a Malaysian prince and a Thai commoner next month to which 15,000 guests including Thailand's prime minister have been invited, a newspaper reported Friday...

About the Elite Card program

October 23, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[About the Elite Card program](#) –

The Standard, October 23-24, 2004

Interesting explanation of the reasoning behind the Elite Card program and a scathing critique of what it became:

"Friends of mine liked the ease of getting through the airport. But the real thing was the right to own land." Not so. Thai law still prohibits the ownership of Thai land by foreigners, so this promise of the Elite Card was flawed from the first.

...VIPs or not, Elite Card members have to follow the same laws in the end. The only difference is that when a card holder eventually chooses to sell the land, that sale will be seen as a sale by an individual rather than by a corporation, making it liable for lower tax.

The five-year tourist visa also sounds good too – except that again, Thai law interferes and requires Elite Card members, just like any other foreigner in Thailand, to report to an Immigration office every 90 days.

As for the golf courses, news reports say TPC has cancelled its golf course-building and expansion plans around the country.

Card holders do get privileged access to some existing courses, however.

A key card benefit remains having just one number to call to arrange everything one wants in Thailand, from cars to roses to dinners and appointments.

Additional scepticism exists in some quarters about some of these promises because any rich person staying at a top hotel in Thailand can enjoy such benefits through the concierge and guest services.

Even non-rich people can have their own cars and drivers, and can hire fixers of many kinds...

‘My fascination with Ban Chiang’

October 23, 2004

Categories: Uncategorized

[‘My
fascination with Ban Chiang’](#) – October 23, 2004

Good page of links to the Ban Chiang artifacts...

Thai-language newspapers – October 25, 2004

October 25, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Matichon – October 25, 2004

- * After charging his batteries for three days in Hong Kong , Maew returns to Thailand. Bunyat, from the Democrat party, said it is not good that the P.M. disappeared.
- * Belgians grabbed a Thai guy who smuggled two eagles with bird flu into the country. Yukon and for Jan does not believe that the birds came from Thailand. Thailand never exports eagles.
- * After receiving the complaint from the representative of people who resist the Thai-Malaysia pipeline that the police prepare to destroy the protest, the National Human Rights Commission visits people in Thumbol Sagom, Jana district, Songkhla on October 24.

Thairath – October 25, 2004

- * **Bloody news** – Samutsakorn, Wat Krok Krak, Krok Krak Road: Mrs Tanom, a 29-year-old a singer at ‘Nong Ploy’ restaurant was stabbed 10 times. The police found that the knot is ‘lover case.’
- * **Bloody news** – Samutprakarn: After drinking whiskey and gambling and quarreling, the head of the gambling house was punched in the face. So he grabbed a 12-inch knife and cut Mr. Wichai’s neck. Mr. Wichai was a worker at Srichaloen Textile factory and died immediately at his shelter.

Thai-language newspapers – October 26, 2004

October 26, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Matichon – October 26, 2004

* At Lotus Superstore in Kanjanaburi, Ms. Orawan reported that she and her two nieces were accused by six security guards of theft. They were strip searched, but the guards found nothing. If no organization will take responsibility about this case, she will appeal to the P.M. that a multinational company harass Thai people.

* Although Ply Saengdao got injured and roams free in the Khaoyai National Park, it was ordered not to shoot anesthetic at him, because people do not want him to run away to the deep forest and believe that he still can help himself .

* Mr. Kerkkiat Pipatseritham, the former officer of NCCC and the one who drafted the constitution, said it is not good that NCCC offices increase their salary by themselves. They should show their spirit by resigning. It is not a hard rule, but it is about their own conscience.

Thairath – October 26, 2004

* **Bloody news** – A cruel monk shot three people, Ms. Jai Saengmak, 57 years old, Mrs. Sook, 27 years old, and a niece, 3 years old, was arrested in Pichit province. He said that he wanted revenge against Mrs. Numpeung, Ms. Jai Saenmak's daughter, who no longer would meet him (a love case).

* Luang Por Koon was carried to the surgeon urgently at Siriraj Hospital, his blood vessel broke yesterday evening .

* Mr. Thanut, a 23-year-old student of Rangsit University, was plied with beer from a man he has just met at an Esso gas station on Rungsit-Pathumthani Road. After waking up at noon in a hotel, he found his new car, a Toyota Camry, had been stolen.

Photo in the Thai-language press: Australian cut in half in suicide plunge

October 26, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Photo

in the Thai-language press: Australian
cut in half in suicide plunge

– October 26, 2004

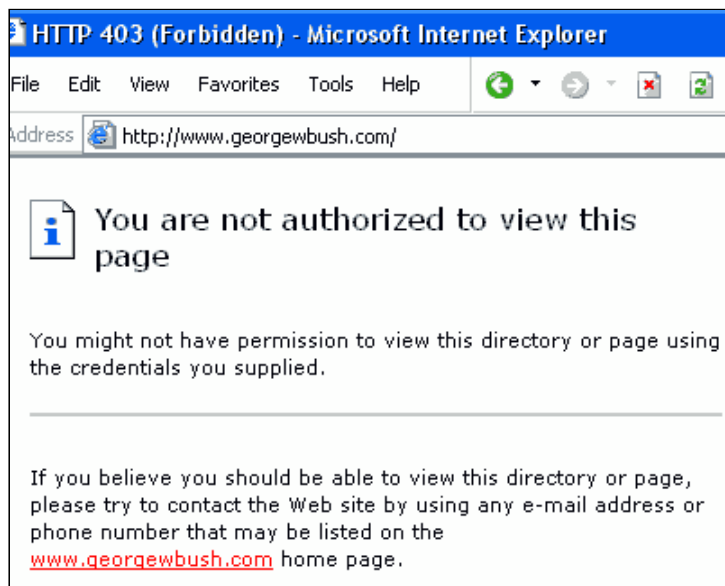
The Nation has the [story](#),
but *ThaiRath* has the [photo](#).

George Bush's election site unreachable from Thailand?

October 27, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok

George Bush's election
site unreachable from Thailand? – October
27, 2004



It seems GeorgeWBush.com remains unreachable from Thailand.

KSC tech support helpfully checked out the said it was not accessible via 'any' of the Thai ISPs (perhaps the Bush site webmasters are blocking Thai because of attacks on their servers).

KSC then insisted the .com URL was wrong; actual site is GeorgeWBush.org. However this site is a parody campaign site

[John Kerry's site](http://JohnKerry's site) is accessible.

Thai-language newspapers – October 27-29, 2004

October 27, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Thai Post –
October 27, 2004

* EDITORIAL: The riot – *Thai Post* thinks that the government cannot deny or evade responsibility for the 87 dead in Tak Bai although the government admires the officers who followed the system to settle the situation. Because violence to destroy a protest is not a solution. The situation like this—people dying again—shows the failure and the weaknesses of government officers especially the case in three southern provinces.

Thairath
– October 27, 2004

* The dead body of a foreign diving teacher (owner of Dave and John Roger Diving School) was found floating in a lake at Samaesarn, Sattaheep, Chonburi. The police note that his throat was stabbed.

* TRT MPs smile happily because of extra money for the next election. The old MPs received 2 million baht, the ones who moved from other parties received 1.5 million baht and the new MP applications received 1 million baht.

Thairath
– October 29, 2004

* **Bloody news** –
A cruel husband wants to keep in touch with his wife after a quarrel with her. However, he was denied and upset so he uses a big knife to cut her neck 13 times.

* The daily victim: Mr. Prasit Kultikan, 57 years old, the owner of Esso gasoline station in Tanyounmus, Pattani was shot two times and seriously injured by a gunman on a motorcycle.

* Comfort: Mr. Pongsapat Pongchaloen, the director of the National Police, came to comfort the relatives of the riot victims in Narathiwat while they came to take back the dead bodies in Pattani.

* The doctor said Luang Por Koon is getting better. He was taken off the respirator and can communicate.

Bush website adopts isolationist stance

October 27, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

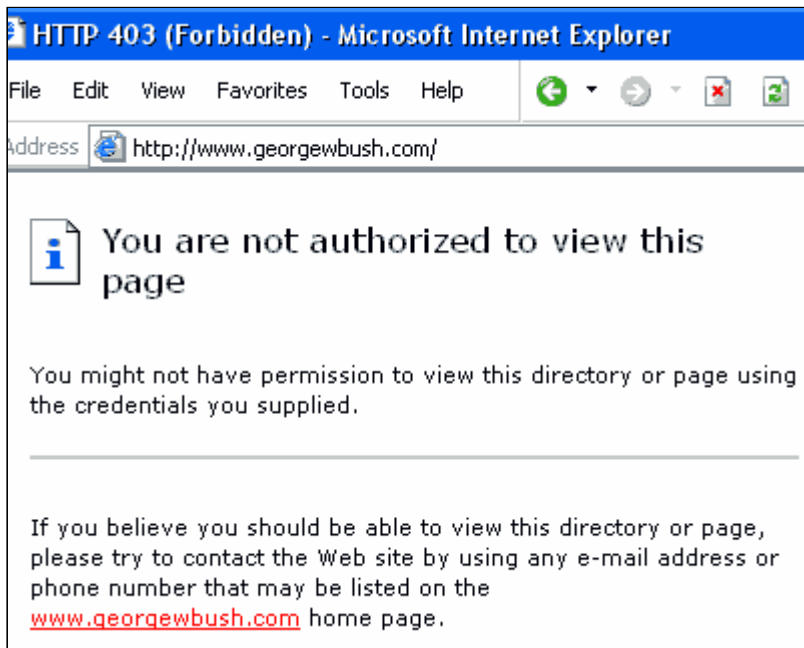
[Bush website adopts isolationist stance](#) – *The Register*,

October 27, 2004

Thanks Jeremy for passing along this link: *International access to the official re-election website of Us President George W. Bush (www.georgewbush.com) has been blocked. Surfers from outside the US trying to reach the site receive an "access denied" message...*

Yesterday: George Bush's election site unreachable from Thailand?

– October 27, 2004



It seems [GeorgeWBush.com](#) remains unreachable from Thailand. KSC tech support helpfully checked out the site and said it was not accessible via 'any' of the Thai ISPs (perhaps the Bush site webmasters are blocking Thai ISPs because of attacks on their servers). KSC then insisted the .com URL was wrong and the actual site is [GeorgeWBush.org](#). However this site is a parody campaign site. [John Kerry's site](#) is accessible.

Reporters without borders worldwide press freedom report

October 29, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Reporters

without borders worldwide press

freedom report

– October 29, 2004

Thailand

is 59th [this](#)

[year](#), 82nd in [2003](#),

and 65 in [2002](#).

[How](#)

[the index was compiled](#). By any standard, Thailand remains, by far, the freest press in the region.

Mahakan Fort

October 29, 2004

Categories: The Mahakan Fort Community



Mahakan Fort – October 29, 2004
Undated photo of Mahakan Fort with the Chalem Thai Theatre (torn down in 1989) in the background. More on the [Mahakan Fort community](#). Also: [Ratchadamneon—then and now](#)

Are Tak Bai VCDs banned?

October 30, 2004

Categories: The Thai Deep South

The Tak Bai VCDs –
December 11, 2004

More on [Troubles in the South & Nationalism & Right-wing Politics](#)

2Bangkok.com had an opportunity to review the contents of two of the five VCDs that have been circulating in the South. These VCDs contain the raw video of the Tak Bai event along with speeches by Malaysian lawmakers and crude slideshows created from the video footage.

Anyone familiar with the videos commemorating the protests of 1973, 1976 and 1992 will find the Tak Bai footage relatively mild. There are some instances of random kicking of protesters as they are dragged into custody, but nothing more shocking. Had no one died as the prisoners were being transported, the incident might have been seen as the first successful crowd control conducted by the army.

It is easy to see why the government might want to suppress the footage, not only from people in the South, but from people in other parts of the country. Unlike prior pro-democracy videos from 1973, 1976 and 1992 that focus on brutality and the 'people's struggle,' the common thread in the first VCD is Prime Minister Thaksin—in the banners that protesters wave asking him to step down to the fiery Malaysian speeches where he is mentioned again and again. There are possibly other operational security reasons why they might not want the footage distributed as well, but in terms of the images themselves, there is nothing particularly controversial or surprising.

"PAS speeches" VCD

This is clearly prepared as a propaganda vehicle. Here is what the video contains:

1. Raw Thai TV footage that ends with interviews with the people in charge. This is the same footage shown on local and international TV and framegrabs of it were printed in local papers (16 min 20 sec).

The video starts from inside the police compound. Protesters get rowdy and push forward, throwing sticks at the police. Water canons open fire as a few protesters are pulled through police lines and kicked. Tear gas is dispensed, but unfortunately the wind is blowing back towards the police station and the police and army are forced back instead.

Once the police and army retreat into the station, firing starts. The video appears to capture what might be someone inside the police shooting into the crowd (it is not clear in which direction

he is holding his gun), but all the soldiers shout at him and the man appears to stop shooting. Afterwards a soldier holding his head as if he is hurt is led from the scene. Throughout the video, several other military people can be seen taking videos with small cameras.

Windows are broken inside the police station which seems to indicate that the police station received fire from the direction of the crowd. The men retreat to behind the police station for awhile before charging out to the front gates again as it seems the protesters have surrendered. A handful of people are dragged back into the police compound being kicked along the way.

Finally the camera moves out in front of the police building as protesters laying on the ground are tied up and women and children are segregated. All the while there is sporadic gunfire in the distance. Protesters begin to be put in trucks. Press conference with military spokesman.

2. Angry speech in Malaysian by someone at a podium with "Parti Islam Semalaysia (PAS)" on the front (33 min 22 sec)

3. Another angry speech in Malaysian at the same podium (23 min 28 sec). Thaksin is mentioned often. The end of the speech is illustrated by a series of slides of the protest and aftermath with English-language banners from overseas protests. This appears to be an attempt to weave this event into the worldwide Islamic struggle. The slideshow has a prominent bar across the bottom that reads "Made as an evaluation of ProShow Gold."

"Taxi stand footage" **VCD**

1. The same Thai TV footage as the first VCD, but without the interviews and edited slightly to highlight the more action-filled parts (10 min 27 sec).

2. A grainy video taken outside the police station that shows some random beating of protesters that are being forced to crawl back into the police compound. It appears to be taken with a very long lens, perhaps from a motorcycle taxi stand, and some locals are chatting in the Yala dialect as they watch the prisoners being taken into custody.

Then there is footage from three days later at the funeral. A huge mass grave prepared for the victims. Villagers line up the bodies wrapped in green shrouds in the pit. People hold their noses, photographers snap photos, and a female farang reporter counts up the bodies. (19 min 37 sec)

[EC issues warning on doctored videos](#) – *The Nation*, December 14, 2004

...Army commander-in-chief General Chaisit Shinawatra said the footage was doctored to show security forces torturing people. The same doctored video footage had been shown in other countries... Democrat Party spokesman Ong-art Klampaiboon said on Sunday party leader Banyat Bantadtan had asked Thanin to stop showing the VCD. Ong-art said the footage was real, unedited and not doctored...

The footage was what Thai television stations had recorded at the scene of the Tak Bai clashes but were afraid to broadcast, Chuan Leekpai, the Democrat Party's chief adviser, said. He urged people to separate national security from government security. "National security occurs when all sides speak the truth. The government should accept what really happened there," he said.

A tale of two newspapers:

PM unhappy – December 12, 2004

The *Bangkok Post* article has the Democrats on the defense for showing the Tak Bai video. *The Nation* turns it around and has the PM under fire.

[PM](#)

[unhappy Tak Bai VCDs being shown](#)

– *Bangkok Post*, December 12, 2004

The Democrat party should consider the fragility of the

situation in the deep South while distributing video CDs on

the Oct 25 Tak Bai incident in its political campaigns, Prime

Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said yesterday.

"I think many Democrat members are not happy about this.

The way the the incident is being presented to the public

on the VCDs is horrible. It could incite disunity among the

people in the country. Saying that the incident was intended

to destroy the Muslim people is too much," he said...

[PM](#)

[rapped for ban on Tak Bai footage](#) –

The Nation, December 12, 2004

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's move to ban VCDs

showing soldiers and police attacking unarmed demonstrators

at Tak Bai was blasted yesterday by leading Democrat Party

members and called into question by the Law Society of Thailand

over its legality.

MP Alongkorn Pollabutr dared Thaksin to take legal action

against fellow Democrat MP Thanin Jaisamut, who has admitted

screening the video at a public function but denies suggestions

from the government that he had tampered with it and was using

it to stir unrest...

The Tak Bai VCD –
December 10, 2004

[Funds](#)

[channelled to Muslim rebels in Thailand: report](#) – AFP, December 9, 2004

A government lawmaker has alleged that money from a Muslim welfare organisation in Malaysia has been channelled to a rebel group in southern Thailand, a report said today...

[PM](#)

[orders investigation into Tak Bai VCD](#) – TNA, December 9, 2004

...Deputy Interior Minister Sutham Saengpratoom told TNA that evidence was being gathered, and that the interior minister would decide later whether to charge the film's producer.

The VCD documentary has been sold widely sold in Thailand's southern region.

Mr. Sutham said he was reported that the producer was a Malaysian who was believed to receive support from a political party to make the documentary, aimed at discrediting the government...

The government and the office of Chularajamontri, the supreme spiritual leader of Thailand's Muslims plan to issue their own VCD documentary

to counter the distorted Muslim beliefs that have been used to sway young Muslims and encourage them to anti-government operations.

Police

[crackdown on 'illegal' Tak Bai VCD](#) – *The Nation*,
December 9, 2004

...Piya Partha-silpine, district chief of Tak Bai, said individuals who possess or distribute VCDs of the crackdown on October 26, which ended in the death of at least 85 unarmed demonstrators, would be considered to have broken the law...

Piya did not elaborate on why it is declaring the Tak Bai VCDs illegal six weeks after the event or on what legal grounds the authorities could prosecute those who possess copies...

Authorities

[move to suppress video of Tak Bai violence](#) – AFP, November 27, 2004

The Thai government is moving to suppress a video CD of security forces beating Muslim protestors in the restive south on a day in which 87 demonstrators were killed...

A tale

of two newspapers: The fake press briefing – November 6, 2004

The story about the fake press briefing was carried on the front page of *The Nation* (and its

Thai-language counterpart *Kom Chad Luek*). *The Nation* was keen to suggest this was intimidation against Nation Group photographers who took photos showing police firing into the Tak Bai protesters. The *Bangkok Post* chose not to carry this story at all.

CSD

[lures media to false press briefing](#) – *The Nation*, November 5, 2004

...CSD officers were keen to find out who had taken a picture of commandos firing live rounds at Tak Bai protesters. The photograph, which appeared in Nation Multimedia Group publications on October 28, contradicted the government's claim that troops had fired into the air to scare protesters away.

The CSD's interest in knowing the identity of the photographer has raised the question of whether authorities had a hidden agenda...

The AP ran this story as well: [Thai police surprise journalists with questioning about riot that left 85 dead](#) – AP, November 4, 2004

Protests

[outside Thai embassy and consulate](#) – *The Malaysia Star*,
October 30, 2004

Public outcry continued to pour out against the death of 87 protestors in Thailand, with hundreds of people demonstrating outside the Thai Embassy here...



[People of Bangladesh shocked at excesses by Thai troops](#) – *The New Nation*, October 30, 2004

The way the Thai government is responding to the demand for autonomy of the Muslims of the country's southern province of Narathiwat is not only improper but...

[Freed](#)

[Thai Muslims Recount Detention "Hell"](#) – *Islam Online*, October 30, 2004

Muslim men released on Saturday, October 30, after six days in Thai military detention...

[PM](#)

[on air to explain Tak Bai deaths](#) – *TNA*, October 30, 2004

[PM](#)

[says Post report 'awful'](#) – *Bangkok Post*, October 31, 2004

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra yesterday slammed the Bangkok Post for damaging international confidence in Thailand's democratic system with its report that southern Muslim religious and community leaders will ask for a royally-appointed government from His Majesty the King to replace his administration...

[Country's stable reputation battered](#) – *Bangkok Post*, October 30, 2004

Political and social stability, long one of Thailand's strongest virtues in the eyes of foreign investors, has been turned upside-down following this week's events in the violence-plagued South...



Wisarat point out [Eyewitness](#)

[Accounts](#) of the tragedy at Tak Bai from Pantip.com.

News on the troubles in the South – October 28, 2004

[Indonesian](#)

[press furious over detainees' deaths in Thailand](#) – *AFP*, October 27, 2004

Indonesia's press has expressed fury over the deaths of 78 Muslim protesters in southern Thailand and warned that the incident would increase tension in the predominantly-Muslim region...

The Nation has another blistering editorial: [Has Thailand lost its conscience?](#)

[Asian](#)

[human rights group slams Thai government over riot deaths](#) – *Kyodo*, October 27, 2004

[Thai](#)

[militant group threatens Bangkok with attack](#) – *Reuters*, October 27, 2004

[Thai](#)

[PM Defiant Amid Anger Over Deaths](#) – *AP*, October

27, 2004

Thailand's prime minister was defiant in the face of mounting anger at home and from his country's Asian neighbors and the United States over the deaths of 78 Muslims while in army detention after a riot, insisting Wednesday that the military used "the soft approach."...

[Statement](#)

[from Amnesty International](#) – October 27, 2004

[Thailand](#)

[rebels use motorcycles with deadly efficiency](#) – Wall Street Journal, October 22, 2004

An insurgency is gaining ground in predominantly Muslim southern Thailand as military planners struggle to counter a potent new mode of guerrilla warfare: the use of motorcycles as attack vehicles.

Thai Muslim rebels on bikes have gunned down an estimated 240 government officials and security personnel in hit-and-run assaults this year. More than 375 people – including targets, bystanders and militants – have been killed in sectarian violence.

...Trained and equipped to fight guerrillas on foot, Thai security forces have struggled to cope with the motorbike attacks. Last month, the government doubled troop strength in the region to about 10,000 after a prominent judge was gunned down on his way to work in Pattani province.

"It's a new type of nonconventional threat: part jungle, part urban, highly mobile and highly effective," said Panitan Wattanayagorn, a security expert who advises the Thai army. "It's hit a blind spot in the military's defenses."...

Belief in signs and portents is observed in Thai current events: [Mayhem will spread, seers say](#)

Post and Nation editorials on Tak Bai – October 28, 2004

Finally, the *Bangkok Post* has stepped up with a tough editorial of its own after a rather weak one yesterday that praised government restraint.

Today: [Tak](#)

[Bai shatters all hope of peace](#) – October 28, 2004

Yesterday: [A tale of two](#)

[editorials: Deaths in custody](#) – October 27, 2004

A tale of

two editorials: Deaths in custody –
October 27, 2004

COMMENT:

[Body count spirals during PM's reign](#) – *The Nation*, October 27, 2004

The Nation lays the blame in Thaksin's style of leadership and condemns the government in every way possible. In contrast to the *Post*, which praises the forthrightness of the government response, *The Nation* says just the opposite: the government was silent as the news trickled out. It ends by suggesting the Prime Minister himself needs to be 'reshuffled.'

It was yet another black day for Thaksin Shinawatra's premiership. When more than 80 Thais perished at the hands of Thai troops in the deep South on Monday – six in the clash between protesters and security forces and 78 reportedly from suffocation after being rounded up and put in the back of military trucks – everything else that has marred his highly controversial reign now pales in comparison.

His contempt for human rights has resulted in a scattering of personal tragedies, masked by the proclaimed success of the war on drugs. But now this flawed trait of his leadership is threatening to plunge the country into the bitterest and most detrimental divide between the people and the state...

Thaksin may not have been directly responsible for them being crammed into military trucks like pigs headed for slaughterhouses, but the troops' demonstration of hatred and disregard for humanitarianism simply reflected how the country is being governed...

Something

went terribly wrong – Bangkok Post, October 27, 2004

The Bangkok Post does not mention Thaksin at all. The Post praises government restraint during the riot, saying shots were fired in the air. They also report the Prime Minister's comments about protesters weakened by Ramadan fasting as fact. The police are praised for having the decency to confront the truth about what happened.

... The officers who went public yesterday with the news of the deaths demonstrated deep remorse for the unexpected tragedy and vowed not to allow such an incident to happen again. They also promised that an inquiry would dig deep into the incident.

Instead of covering up the tragedy, as has been the case in the past, the authorities concerned, especially the officer in charge of restoring peace to the restive region, Gen Sirichai Tunyasiri, should be commended for having the courage to face the truth head-on and also for having the decency to show deep sorrow for the unexpected tragedy.

...Monday's dreadful tragedy should serve as a valuable lesson for the government, not just on how it should handle potentially violent protests, but also how it should treat arrested suspects with unbiased fairness, dignity and respect for their human rights.

Hopefully, the lesson has been learned and will not be repeated. Too many innocent lives, both Muslims and non-Muslims, have already been lost.

Three reports on
the riot in Narathiwat – October
26, 2004

PM makes urgent visit to South – TNA, October 25,
2004

The government Thai news Agency (TNA) basically reports the facts and highlights the Prime Minister's statements.

[Protest in Narathiwat: Six killed in bloody clashes with troops](#) – *The Nation*, October 26, 2004

Same facts, but reordered. Deaths are reported in the headline. Adds background and ramifications as well as that the dead were shot. Has a quote from a witness claiming police shot people. States "some 1,000 protesters were arrested" and puts the crowd size at 3,000.

[Bloodshed, mayhem in South](#) – *Bangkok Post*, October 26, 2004

The *Post*'s extremely early press time once again puts it behind. It does not have the final death toll or can report on the causes of death. States "more than 300 protesters were arrested..." and, like most sources, estimates a crowd of 2,000. It gives a third of the article space to an government defense of the event and the claim that agitators incited the event. Whether true or not, claims of agitators are always cited in cases of public unrest.

... "It's the lightest containment tactic we could think of. Would you prefer soldiers to fire cotton balls at the protesters instead?" he said.

The general called on the media not to blow the issue out of proportion by describing the standoff as "the second Black May massacre" which would be grossly misleading, he said...

About 50 core protesters wore hoods and were reported to be armed. Religious leaders and locals confirmed they were not from the neighbourhood.

Gen Sirichai said he believed a "third hand" had plotted the unrest and fired pistols into the air during the scuffle...

Both the *Post* and *The Nation* include additional articles in which leaders of Muslim groups state that the government acted too harshly.

More on [Troubles in the South](#)

The Nation endorses Kerry: ‘Nov 2 is a chance to make a new start’

October 30, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[*The*](#)

[*Nation endorses Kerry: ‘Nov
2 is a chance to make a new start’*](#)

– *The Nation*,

October 30, 2004

More on Thai Christians on TV

October 31, 2004

Categories: Local Beliefs

[‘Wrong approach’ in ad blitz](#) – Bangkok

Post, November 9, 2004

A central body of Protestant churches has ruled that an advertising campaign for a free evangelical Christian book, Power for Living, is too blunt and might affect religious relations among people in the country...

Reverend Thongchai said the committee decided not to take any harsh action as the campaign was due to end at Christmas. Besides, the 134-page book, written by the late Jamie Buckingham, an American pastor, was religiously correct.

However, the committee issued a warning that such a campaign should not be repeated in other countries...

Reverend Thongchai said about two million people had contacted the foundation through its four-digit hotline. Of this 800,000 managed to get through.

[Aggressive GOD campaign](#) –

Bangkok Post, October 31, 2004

...The Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand (EFT), the country's main Christian governing body, has questioned the foundation's motives. A source at the EFT said that the organisation would discuss the "Power for Living" campaign at its next meeting next month.

Tavivat Puntarigvivat, a philosophy lecturer at Mahidol University, questioned the suitability of the campaign. He did not think the aggressive thrust was appropriate. The government should develop tighter rules and regulations to keep such movements in check, he added..

"Buying air time to promote a belief, whether it be political

*or religious is not appropriate,"
he said...*

[‘Aggressive’
book ad campaign stirs up row](#)

– Bangkok Post, October

28

*Members of the Christian community
have expressed concern over an
aggressive advertising campaign
for a free evangelical Christian
book, Power for Living, now being
promoted in Thailand...*

*There are 400,000 requests for
the book—an amazingly high number
for Thailand where practising
Christians account for 0.5% of
the population, he said...*

*Several newspapers and TV programmes
have even alleged the foundation
is some form of "cult"...*

*A reader comments (October 27,
2004): Once again I would like
to say thanks for your great site.
I make a point of looking at it
first thing every time I get on
the internet...*

*I would also like to take the
opportunity to refer to one of
today's items. I am a Christian
(many years ago I was a Missionary
in Thailand) and I was very interested
in the item about Thai Christians
appearing in TV commercials . I
don't intend to say much about
it except to refer to Ms Anchalee.
She is a very practical Christian
and for many years she has been
involved in working for a group
which I have also helped support
financially. They work with poor
people who come to Bangkok in
search of fortune if not fame.*

*They meet these people usually
at Hualampong Station, take them
to overnight accommodation, give
them an evening meal and a morning
meal before sending them off with
advice on how to survive in Bangkok.
In some cases they help in finding
employment for the new arrivals.
All of this is done without cost
to the people they help. In the
last few years they have become
involved in helping men and women
released from prison. Unfortunately
the work they do is not something*

which the Thai people generally support.

My main point in writing the above is to show that people like Anchalee are not getting on some bandwagon but actually do good works quietly without any fanfare. It shows also that there are farangs around whose love for the Thai people is displayed in practical ways and are not continually complaining...

Earlier:

[Celebrities](#)

[plug Christian handbook](#) –

The Nation, October 25,
2005

...To promote “Power for Living”, Christian celebrities last week began appearing on television commercials to regale viewers with stories about how their strong belief in God had improved their lives...

The ads feature singer and composer Boyd Kosiyabong, model and TV host Sasithon Wattanakul, former pop singer Anchalee Jongkadeekij and Central Pattana CEO Kobchai Chirathivat.

In the commercials, the celebrities tell dramatic stories about their fears, conflicts and problems before God’s light illuminated them with happiness...