

# Taiwan's Chen low, but few blame him for scandal

November 2, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Taiwan's](#)

[Chen low, but few blame him for scandal](#) –

*Angus Reid*, November 2, 2005

The 'scandal' of the exploited Thai subway workers continues to haunt the Taiwanese president. Locally, it barely caused a ripple.

*...The United Daily News poll was conducted after revelations that former presidential office deputy secretary-general Chen Che-nan was allegedly involved in an illegal profiteering scheme between the Kaohsiung Rapid Transit Corp. (KRTC) and brokerage firm Huapan Co. that exploited Thai labourers working on a railway project.*

*The story broke after television station TVBS showed a November 2002 photograph where Chen Che-nan and former KRTC vice-chairman Chen Min-hsien are sitting together at a casino table in South Korea's Cheju Island. On Oct. 30, Chen Che-nan was formally expelled from the MCT...*

# Thaksin meets the press – in court

November 2, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Thaksin meets the press – in court](#) – Asia Times Online, November 2, 2005

*Once upon a time, Thailand was known to have a free and open press. Not anymore. In the 2005 Worldwide Press Freedom Index, released last month by Paris-based Reporters Without Borders and ranking 167 countries, Thailand shows up at a far from flattering 107th place, behind post-Khmer Rouge Cambodia and post-Suharto Indonesia.*

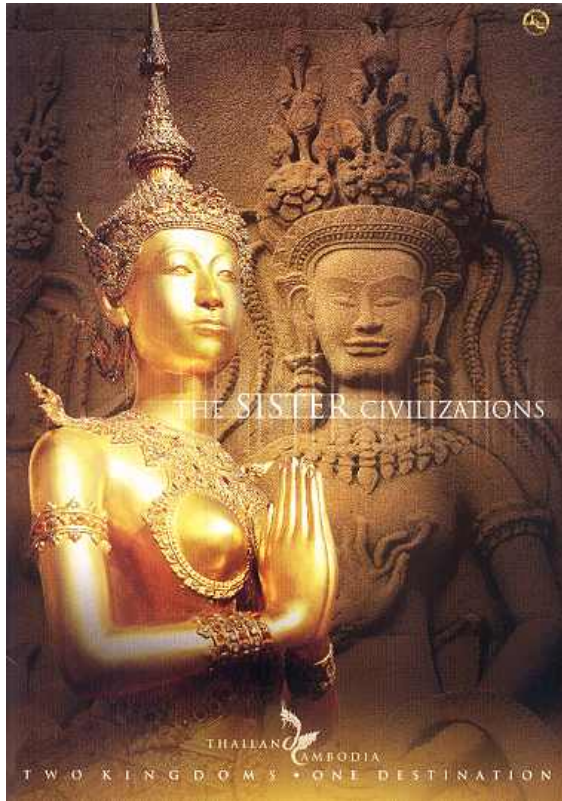
*As far as the Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA) is concerned, the issue is clear-cut. "More than anything, or anybody else, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra should take the blame for this dismaying portrayal of Thailand as a country where the press is suddenly under a dark cloud," says SEAPA executive director Roby Alampay. Whenever billionaire tycoon Thaksin, his government, or his family's and friends' companies don't like what the Thai press has to say about them, they tend to sue. Big time...*

*On October 11, Thaksin again filed a lawsuit in both criminal and civil courts against Manager Media Group, publisher of the Manager Daily newspaper, and two of its executives, seeking an additional 500 million baht for defamation. The reason: severe criticism of the government in a public sermon by respected, senior Buddhist monk Luangta Maha Bua published in the newspaper on September 27. According to Thaksin's chief lawyer, Thana Benjathikul, claiming a total of \$24 million in damages makes sense because of Thaksin's "very high social status as the prime minister"...*

# One visa for Thailand, Cambodia

November 2, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News



[One visa for Thailand, Cambodia](#) – *The Nation*, November 2, 2005

*Come next April, foreign visitors will be able to visit both Thailand and Cambodia on a single visa, said Vimol Kidchob, director general of the Department of International Economic Affairs...*

**Left:** Joint Thai-Cambodia tourism poster from a campaign in 2000.

## Bus ad

November 2, 2005

Categories: Signs and Billboards



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Bus ad – November  
2, 2005

Bus ad that reads: "Orange (a mobile phone company) has the best quality network for Bangkok residents." Note the patriotic flag decal on the bus as well.

# Protest tent

November 2, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News



Protest tent

– November 2, 2005

**Above:** A protest tent with English-language banners set up in front of the BMA building (city hall) downtown.

# Old odd planes

November 2, 2005

Categories: Nothing to do with Thailand, but Interesting

[Old](#)

[odd planes](#) – November

2, 2005

Nothing to do with Thailand, but interesting.

# Worry that the government is insolvent

November 3, 2005

Categories: Thai Politics

From the Thai-language press:

*Thairath* editorial: Worry that the government is insolvent

– November 3, 2005

An ABAC poll surveyed peoples' opinions in 20 provinces and 74.8% said they had less trust in the government than three month ago because of problems of unrest in the three southern border provinces and 66.4% cited economic problems, high gasoline costs, and the high cost of living.

This was a survey of 20 provinces around the country that asked 4,256 people so the answers reflect some peoples' view. Most people think that the big problem faced the government and all Thai people at present is unrest in the South followed by the high cost of gasoline, the high cost of goods and corruption.

About the southern problem, the draft report that the National Conciliation Commission (NCC) prepares to send to the government is divided into eight parts. Some parts are worrying, especially the part that explains about the violent events including the protesters who vanished at Takbai making Thai-Muslims in the southern border area not trust the government. This is a dangerous signal showing things are moving to the circumstance of insolvability.

A symptom of this is that the government cannot guarantee safety and give public service for people. It seems there are more places that the government cannot access. More dangerous is the trend of weak insolvent communities such as the case of Tanyonlimore village where community cannot protect its people.

In the political science philosophy of "society contract" that PM usually cites, people consent to make a contract with the "state" by sacrificing some rights and freedom to the state. The important duty of the state is protecting safety of life and assets of people. If the government cannot do that, it can termed in the circumstance of "insolvent."

The worrying thing is the draft of NCC report shows that areas where the government cannot access is increasing. The insurgents' statements in the past said they can spread the "liberated area" continuously although the government has many military,

police, administrative people and volunteers including the full of power of an urgent decree.

The more worrying thing is that there is no confidence in who is responsible for the unrest in the south—neither by the persons who set policy or the those who implement it. Neither can clearly “understand and access” problems in the three provinces although the PM always declared to “go to the right way” and quickly “close the game,” but it seems that it is still lost.



# Thai individuals and companies that had their assets frozen by the U.S.

November 3, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thai](#)

[individuals and companies that had their assets frozen by the U.S.](#) – November 03, 2005

Here is the [list](#)

of 11 individuals and 16 companies that had their assets frozen for alleged connections to notorious drug trafficker Wei Hsueh-kang and the United Wa State Army.

# Taxi call box

November 3, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News



(Photo: Jerry)

Taxi call box

– November 3, 2005

Jerry writes: *I have attached a shot of the inside of one of the Taxi Call boxes on Ratchada Physek Road. They look ready to go...but how will they achieve their aim of reducing taxing cruising, I have no idea...*

*From your main page, [the bicycle lane on Narathiwat](#) is shown running from Silom to Sathorn....but in fact, it runs all the way down Narathiwat and ends up on Rama 3...more than 4 kms...*

# Locals to build 'likay' museum to save community, traditions

November 3, 2005

Categories: Local Beliefs

[Locals to build 'likay' museum to save community, traditions](#)

– *Bangkok Post*, November 3, 2005

*...The proposal was approved because of the community's history.*

*Historical documents show Mahakan Fort, off Ratchadamnoen Avenue, was where the first public likay performing arts house was established in 1897 in the early Rattanakosin era by Phraya Phet Pani...*

## More VCR projects

November 4, 2005

More VCR projects

– November 4, 2005

Nils writes: *More about what you can do with video recorders and computers* – [here](#) and [here](#).

**Yesterday:** [From](#)

[VCR to cat feeder](#) – November 3, 2005

Nothing to do with Thailand, but interesting... Thanks to Gigabyte for pointing this out.

# Thai email forwards

November 4, 2005

Categories: Uncategorized

Thai email forwards

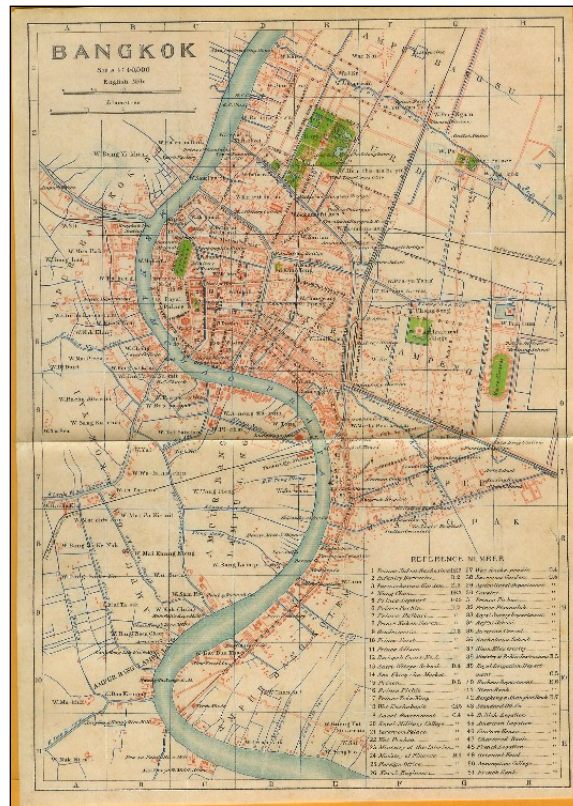
– November 4, 2005

- \* On the forum, Wisarut translated a [Thai-language email that is being forwarded around](#). It is hard to find any good things being said about the government these days.
- \* Don sent a Thai-language spam *from a girl named Rin who gives a brief description of herself, says she really needs money, and will do anything in pursuit of such.*

# 1917 Bangkok map

November 5, 2005

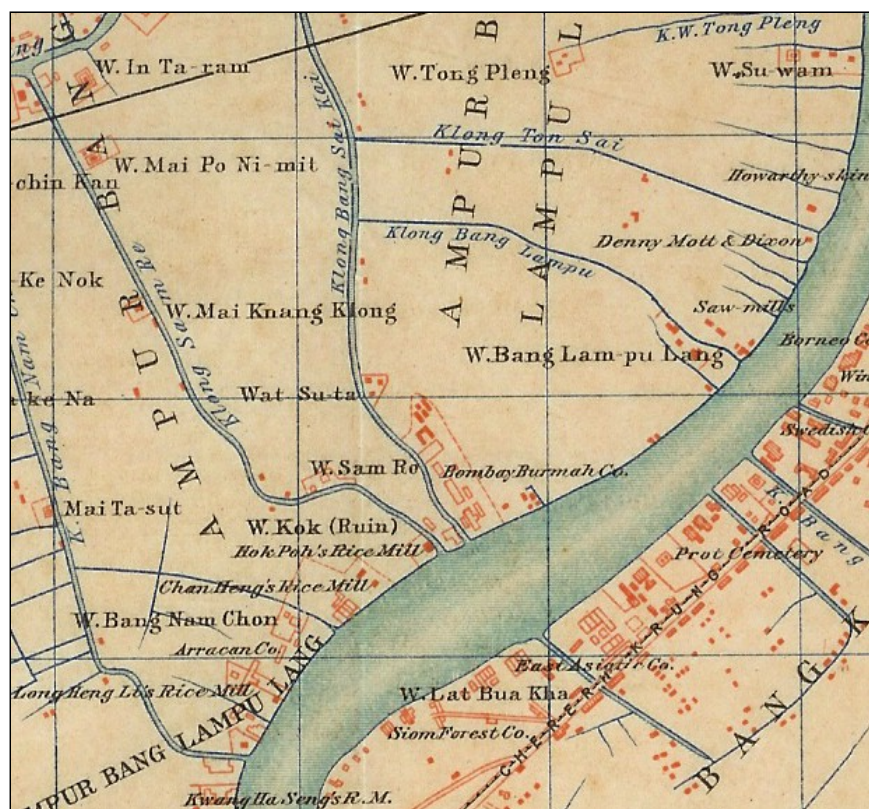
Categories: Maps



1917 Bangkok map –

November 5, 2005

Map from *An Official Guide to Eastern Asia: East Indies*, prepared by the The Imperial Japanese Government Railways, Tokyo, Japan, 1917











REFERENCE NUMBER			
1 Prince Nakon Rachasima	DE.2	27 Wat Racha pradi	C.4
2 Infantry Barracks	D.2	28 Saranrom Garden	C.5
3 Parusakawan Garden	E.3	29 Agricultural Department	"
4 Wang Chan	DE.3	30 Cavalry	"
5 Prince Lopburi	D.23	31 Prince Pichai	"
6 Prince Pachin	D.2	32 Prince Pisanulok	"
7 Prince Ratburi	"	33 Royal Survey Department	"
8 Prince Nakon Sawan	"	34 Rajini School	"
9 Gendarmerie	C.3	35 Austrian Consul	"
10 Prince Naret	"	36 Rachabuna School	"
11 Prince Adison	"	37 Siam Electricity	"
12 Borispah Court No. 2	"	38 Ministry of Public Instruction	D.5
13 Satri Wilaya School	D.4	39 Royal Irrigation Department	"
14 Sao Ching-cha Market	"		C.5
15 Prison	D.5	40 Harbour Department	E.6
16 Prince Pichai	"	41 Siam Bank	"
17 Prince Tewa Wong	"	42 Hongkong & Shanghai Bank	E.7
18 Wat Rachabopit	C.45	43 Standard Oil Co.	"
19 Local Government	C.4	44 British Legation	"
20 Royal Military College	"	45 American Legation	"
21 Saranrom Palace	"	46 Customs House	"
22 Wat Prakeo	"	47 Chartered Bank	"
23 Ministry of the Interior	"	48 French Legation	"
24 Ministry of Finance	B.4	49 Oriental Hotel	"
25 Foreign Office	"	50 Assumption College	"
26 Naval Engineers	"	51 French Bank	"
F		G	H



# The signal that warns the government

November 5, 2005

Categories: Thai Politics

From the Thai-language  
press: *Thairath* editorial: The signal that  
warns the government –  
November 2, 2005

Although the Election Commission has not officially declared the results of the by-election in four areas, the results show that TRT won in only one area. The opposition parties, Democrat, Chat Thai and Mahachon won in three areas. Thaksin Shinawatra and the leaders of TRT insisted that the result was not about the party, but about issues of individuals running in each area.

But most of the political observers believe this result reflects the political view and it has important meaning not only because Thai Rak Thai was defeated in Satun, it also defeated and lost its own seats in two provinces, Pichit and Uthaitani. TRT held onto only one seat in Singburi only. At the same time, the opposition party gained two more seats.

These are two significant seats in politics and strategy. The campaign of cooperating opposition parties begged people to vote to reach 125 opposition seats. After getting 2 seats, the opposition parties have votes enough to call a no-confidence debate on corruption issue and be able to dismiss ministers.

The votes that they received reflect the decreasing popularity of TRT in every area. Although Thaksin has come back to be the PM again in the second election, but he had little time for a political honeymoon with the voters as he had many problems and scandals. Among them are the accused corruption in CTX at Suwannabhumi Airport, corruption in many projects in buying-hiring, the unrest in the southern border provinces that spreads and becomes more violent, and the recurrent economic problems such as the high cost of gasoline, goods, and the current account trade deficit.

Those problems test the ability of the government in solving problems. In the past, the government could not solve problems such as unrest in the south and quelling corruption even though they used populist policies such as village funds, solving the poor problem and discharging debts. So there is a question as to whether any of the government's solutions to problems are really sustainable.

# Rangoon moves ministries to Pyinmana

November 7, 2005

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[Rangoon moves ministries to Pyinmana](#) – *The Irrawaddy*, November 7, 2005

# Ape 3 metres tall once lived in Thailand

November 7, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Ape](#)

[3 metres tall once lived in Thailand](#) –

November 7, 2005

*A researcher from McMaster University in Canada is in Thailand to wrap up his research proving that a gigantic ape, measuring about 3 metres (10 feet) tall and weighing up to 540 kg (1,200 pounds) co-existed with early humans...*

# **‘Open letter to Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra’**

November 8, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[‘Open letter to Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra’](#)

– *Reporters sans frontieres*, November 8, 2005

*...1. Withdraw all the criminal and civil defamation actions brought against journalists and press freedom activists by your lawyers or by members of your government or family, or by Shin Corp, a company controlled by your associates. It is inconceivable in a democracy that the most senior officials and their associates file lawsuits against journalists in such an abusive manner...*

# ‘No gun shooting strictly’

November 8, 2005

Categories: Signs and Billboards



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

‘No gun shooting strictly’ –  
November 8, 2005

**Left:** Sign at a hilltop shrine in Pattaya

# The accusation about a secret prison and criticism of Matichon

November 8, 2005

Categories: Thai Politics, Thai Secret Prison

*Matichon*

editorial: The accusation about a secret prison  
and criticism of *Matichon*

– November 8 2005

Again PM Thaksin Shinawatra blames newspaper that reported news that *Washington Post* claimed that the CIA built a secret prison for Al-Queda detention in eight countries including Thailand. He accused the newspaper *Matichon* of taking the story and expanding it. He also said the press must think of the nation first and not present news that causes damage, bad image, and makes foreign countries misunderstand.

Although this is not the first time that PM Thaksin commented that the press should report less, this time he accused *Matichon* of taking the story to expand it. This is a serious accusation and cannot be accepted. This accusation means that *Matichon* had bad attention to its duty although reporting news is a normal duty of mass media which presents the public truth from every side. For the 'secret prison' news, if it is not reported, Thai people will not know there is an accusation that Thailand is one of network for settling by a secret prison for America.

Moreover presenting news of the secret prison does not mean that the Thai press or mass media operators believe in that news. They tried to check the truth and ask for an explanation from Thai government spokesmen from the PM office. We published his explanation at the same time as reporting the *Washington Post* story to let people know every side of the story so they can decide what to believe. It is a democratic principle that people have the right to information.

It is true that there is much news sifted through society before presentation and it is one of important jobs of mass media to be the "gate of the news." But this duty must be exercised carefully so as not to become the "father who knows well" and who decides for people what is true and not true. Thus the mass media could not present news as is its duty and at the same time present Thaksin's words on the matter as true. There are many things Thaksin spoke which are not true such as the explanation of the Muslim lawyer who disappeared because of his family problems, the treasure golden trove at

Lijea cave, or the news of buying the Liverpool football team.

It is right that PM Thaksin loves the nation and tries to have others love the nation like him. But if he set his consciousness a little bit, he will find that mass media operators love the nation as well. Thaksin does not have a monopoly on love and thinks that others who do not think or operate the same as him do not love the nation. True love for the nation must be proved by practice—not word only.

# Old building 'must go' to improve plaza view

November 9, 2005

Categories: Buildings

[Old building 'must go' to improve plaza view](#)

– *Bangkok Post*, November 9, 2005

*The Ratchadamnoen Committee yesterday approved the partial demolition of an old-style building beside the Maha Chesada Bodin plaza to create more visual space in the historical area.*

*A highly-placed panel source said the building, which houses a tutorial school, must go because it blocks the public's view of Loha Prasat in the Wat Ratchanadda compound...*

*The committee, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak, also approved spending 24 million baht to transform the former Government Lottery Office (GLO) property into a public park.*

*This project will celebrate His Majesty the King's 80th birthday in 2007...*



# Japanese youth are like chimps in the wild

November 10, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Japanese](#)

[youth are like chimps in the wild](#) – Mainichi

Daily News, November 10, 2005

... "There's been a dramatic increase in the dearuki-zoku.

*They don't eat meals at home with family members and you can clearly see with your own eyes the large increase in young people who hang about on the streets together with the same old friends," Masataka tells Sapio. "They make places like Shibuya their territory and rarely head even to places like (nearby entertainment and shopping districts) Shinjuku or Harajuku. They get tired going to new places or meeting new people. If they get hungry while they're strolling around, they simply get food by going into a convenience store, buying something and sitting down outside on the curb to eat it. If not that, then they just hang around for hours in fast food joints."*

*The primate specialist says the actions of the dearuki-zoku closely resemble behavior patterns in chimpanzees, which tend to travel in groups, walking around for a long time without going to any specific place, then eating and disposing of their wastes in the same place before bedding down on piles of grass whenever and wherever the inclination takes them...*

# Road to Pyinmana

November 10, 2005

Road to Pyinmana

[UN](#)

[Fears Pyinmana Effect as Government Loses Touch](#)

– *The Irrawaddy*, November 10, 2005

[Pyinmana:](#)

[The Threat from Within](#) – *The Irrawaddy*, November 10, 2005

*...Brig-Gen Kyaw Zaw, a member of the "Thirty Comrades," who fought for independence for Burma from British rule, commented that the junta is not worried about an American seaborne invasion—the most touted reason—but is afraid of its own people, who are tiring with the regime. If people take to the streets in Rangoon or elsewhere, it would be easy to continue to run the country's administrative affairs from Pyinmana, in central Burma, while sending troops to quell protests or an uprising, the general told Washington-based Radio Free Asia...*

# New parliament may be built at Suvarnabhumi city: Bhokin

November 10, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[New](#)

[parliament may be built at Suvarnabhumi city: Bhokin](#)

– *The Nation*, November 10, 2005

*...Bhokin said the House committee on parliamentary affairs proposed three choices for the new site of parliament for him to consider and he believed the area of Suvarnabhumi city would be the best choice.*

*The two other choices were a military plot in Nonthaburi and a plot near industrial plants in Rangsit. He said the two other areas would not be appropriate for housing a new parliament. He said the military plot would be too close to a palace while the plot in Rangsit would be too close to industrial plants...*

# Tigerfibel

November 10, 2005

*Tigerfibel*

– November 10, 2005

Nils writes: *Found this gem by chance; I can imagine you'll like it, too. An [introduction](#).*

*A near-complete set of [scans](#)*

*[of the original](#). [Attempts](#)*

*[at an English translation](#) (only the first few introductory pages, not the actual manual); nonetheless, gives a limited impression of the very casual, humorous style of the booklet.*

*If you understand German, it's really amazing. BTW, the strange font used for some headlines is called [Sutterlin](#)*

*[script](#)*

*– very hard to decipher.*

# Following the right way

November 11, 2005

Categories: The Thai Deep South

*Khao Sod* editorial: Following  
the right way – November  
11, 2005

Air Chief Marshal Kongsak Wantana, Minister of the Interior, agrees with the idea of Mr. Kosin Ketthong, the Assistant of Interior Minister, on the way of solving problems in the three southern provinces. That is, to move people from the Northeast to replace population from the area including to arrange draftees to be ordained in the abandoned temples.

It seems a suggestion that does not understand the cause and problem so this cannot be the right way to solve things.

There is some group trying to to terrorize and separate, but no matter the quality or quantity of the movement, these people cannot succeed from killing and terrorizing.

The cause of the violence and unrest are extending and increasing in level and area and the important factor is that most people in the area do not trust the government officers. The government officers do not trust by people because they do not understand the root and culture so they do not perceive the movement of the terrorists.

As they understand and be in line of the truth, people will cooperate, and the authorities will be able to get useful information, solve the problem, and stop the violence.

If the government realizes that it is a part of extending and prolonging the southern problems, it will realize that the priority is to solve problems at the level of the government and officers.

Studying the truth in the area, the truth of life, culture and religion, the source of the problem can be understood clearly and the government will be able to propose the right solution and be in line with the truth.

It is important not to suggest nonsensical ideas that make the problem extended. If we do not know and do not study, cooperating to solve problems will be in turmoil.

# Chumong Pisawong and Bangkok haunted places

November 11, 2005

*Chumong Pisawong*

and Bangkok haunted places – November  
11, 2005

*Chumong Pisawong* (Pisawong Hour) is on every Tuesday night at around 22:20. The two hosts, Kamon Thongplup (Pong) and Kunchai Kumnoedploy (Noom) visit spooky vacant buildings at night a la the *Blair Witch Project*. The show's website is [www.pisawong.com](http://www.pisawong.com).

The October 21-November 3, 2005 *BK Magazine*, had Pisawong's list of haunted places in Bangkok:

1. Ractchaphisek Road, Din Daeng (the abandoned twin towers across from Robinsons) – supposedly a woman was murdered and her body thrown off the 10th floor
2. Pattanakan Road, near Kasembandit University – a two-story abandoned factory where pens were made
3. Nawamin Road, Suang Luang – a woman committed suicide by hanging herself in a swamp
4. Moo Baan Senanived 1, Lad Phrao – house of a family killed in a plane crash–now an empty, overgrown lot
5. Soi Watcharapol, Bang Kaen – housing development where a worker fell onto a metal pole and later a taxi driver was found murdered
6. Ramkhamhaeng Soi 32 – abandoned three-story house no filled with graffiti where a maid was murdered by robbers.

# Nikki Sixx replaces drugs with photography

November 11, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Nikki](#)

[Sixx replaces drugs with photography](#) –

UPI, November 11, 2005

*Motley Crue bassist Nikki Sixx says he's long past the days when the band's management wouldn't let him go to Bangkok for fear he'd overdose on drugs.*

*'I tried to go in '87, and our management wouldn't let me,' Sixx told RollingStone.com. 'They said, 'Bottom line, Nikki — you'll die. We know you.'...*

# Cambodia ratifies controversial treaty with Vietnam

November 11, 2005

Categories: Cambodia, Vietnam

[Cambodia](#)

[ratifies controversial treaty with Vietnam](#)

– VOA, November 11, 2005

*...Border expert Sean Pengse, one of the treaty's critics, says Cambodia may not have entered the 1985 agreement voluntarily, since the treaty was signed while the country was under occupation by Vietnam. He says the treaty gives away land and maritime areas that have historically belonged to Cambodia.*

*Vietnam occupied the country after the fall of the genocidal Khmer Rouge in 1979, and installed many of the leaders of the current government. Relations with Vietnam remain a sore point for many Cambodians...*



# To solve or make problems?

November 12, 2005

Categories: The Thai Deep South

From the Thai-language press

– *Thairath* editorial: To solve or make problems?

– November 12, 2005

It is accepted that Mr. Kosin Ketthong, Assistant Interior Minister, proposed to migrate people from the Northeast to the three southern border provinces to solve the land problem and unrest. But what is unusual is that even the Air Chief Marshal agreed with this idea.

That proposal was the way to solve the Communist problem in the era of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, a dictatorial idea. This idea might be followed by government officials up to now. We do not know how many Esarn people migrated to the south and whether it was a success in merging the different cultures.

The Thai government policy of merging races and ethnicity in the past was a success in North and Northeast because these two regions have the same root of ethnicity, language, religion and culture that is the same as the central people. And it was success to merge the Chinese race in the central and other regions as Chinese are migratory and a minority in Thailand.

But it is difficult or impossible to merge people in the deep south because of differences in ethnicity, language, culture and due to the fact that Muslim people are the majority in the deep south. Buddhists are a minority with a ratio 80:20 so migrating people with different religions and language in the south will make problems instead of solving them.

All Thais have freedom as the constitution states to choose where to live in the kingdom and they should not be forced by government policy. In the past, the migration of some Esarn people might have been no problem, but for the event of the unrest nowadays, the unrest group tries to separate from the nation in every way.

If this is government policy, it will become a boon for the bad intention group who will incite local people to resist and accuse the government of trying to grab land and resources of local people and imperil the life and culture of Muslim people by bringing in different religions. This may lead to extending

the conflict and reinforcing the support group for the terrorists.

This idea is a way of dictating problem solving and comes from the opposite direction of the proposals of the National Conciliation Commission that emphasizes peace and reconciliation and promoting respect for a variety of religion, culture and giving communities the right to arrange resources by religious belief and not by merging.

More on [Troubles in the South](#)

More on the [secret prison](#)

# EDITORIAL: Waning fortunes for populist PM?

November 13, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

## EDITORIAL:

Waning fortunes for populist PM? – *The*

*Nation*, November 13, 2005

*...Thais who are not familiar with royal protocol may not feel that there is something wrong with a Thai prime minister conducting a ceremony with noble purpose inside the sacred temple. But somehow Sondhi managed to put together a jigsaw puzzle that made many Thais raise their eyebrows at Thaksin's action. The government's awkwardly handled response to the charges, providing documents supposedly showing that Sondhi's arguments contained some loopholes, has increased public suspicion and confusion. The government insists that Thaksin did not impinge on royal prerogatives when he presided over the religious ceremony. Approval had been sought and granted by the Royal Palace, government officials said. Sondhi countered that the "approval" was sought in a very urgent manner, one or two days before the ceremony, and that the royal document allowing the ceremony to take place followed the government's suggestion that Thaksin would be only one of the "participants", not someone who would preside over it...*

# Ugly images of Asian rivals become best sellers in Japan

November 14, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Ugly

[images of Asian rivals become best sellers in Japan](#) –

*New York Times*, November 14, 2005

*...In another comic book, "Introduction to China," which portrays the Chinese as a depraved people obsessed with cannibalism, a woman of Japanese origin says: "Take the China of today, its principles, thought, literature, art, science, institutions. There's nothing attractive..."*

# End the media circus on teen sex

November 14, 2005

Categories: Local Beliefs

## EDITORIAL:

[End the media circus on teen sex](#) – *The*

*Nation*, November 14, 2005

*Watana's puerile threat to station police outside motels only highlights the blind hypocrisy in Thai society. Thai society's almost voyeuristic obsession with teenagers' sexual activity and the inane public debate that accompanies it is both unhealthy and counterproductive...*

# Watana upsets women

November 14, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Watana upsets women](#) – *The Nation*, November 14, 2005

*Women's groups said yesterday that they would ask Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to account for his appointment of Watana Muangsook as Social Development and Human Security Ministry in light of Watana's call on Saturday for women to prostrate themselves at their husbands' feet before bedtime, in line with Thai tradition...*

# Looking for the Burmese junta? Sorry, it's gone into hiding

November 14, 2005

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[Looking for the Burmese junta? Sorry, it's gone into hiding](#)

– NYT, November 14, 2005

*...Astrological timing may also have been behind the abruptness of the move to a site that was not yet complete.*

*One theory is that the move was prompted by astrologers who several years ago warned the ruling generals that the dilapidated capital on the Bay of Bengal would become a dangerous place for them.*

*Seen from their perspective, the notion of an American invasion might not seem far-fetched. They are a ruling clique of soldiers whose background is jungle warfare and who know little of the outside world.*

*For years they have been squeezed by economic sanctions and battered by relentless criticism from the West over their abuses of human rights, and they have responded by pulling further into their shells.*

*In January, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice included Myanmar in a list of "outposts of tyranny," along with North Korea, Cuba, Iran, Zimbabwe and Belarus.*

*Officials in Myanmar sometimes offer visitors a list of their own: Panama, Grenada, Somalia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq – places where the United States has sent armed forces.*

*Not long ago, according to one story making the rounds in Myanmar, a military officer was asked the purpose of obligatory civil defense training for civilian men. "You are the holding action against the Americans until the Chinese come to our aid," the officer said, according to David I. Steinberg, a professor at Georgetown University who is a leading expert on Myanmar.*

*Mr. Steinberg said rumors of an American "rescue" circulate among opponents of the government – a current of wishful thinking that is as extravagant as the fears of the ruling generals...*

# Thai-style working

November 14, 2005

Categories: Thai Politics

From the Thai-language  
press – *Matichon* editorial: Thai-style working  
– November 14, 2005

Many works of government policy cause many problems to solve both in the short-term and long-term. Many times we see ministers who put forth ideas thoughtlessly and without information and the fact to support their views. When nobody agrees with so the idea it is canceled easily. This is different from solving problems with analysis and if nobody agrees, it should be proved and confirmed and not so easily canceled.

The idea to solve the problems of the deep south put forth by the Interior Minister or his related persons each time—such as setting up cable TV or migrating people to the area or even Minister of Social Development and Human Security's idea to solve youth problem by motorcycle racing or pointing spotlights at hotels—may have good intentions, but it is too easy. When there is an objection, their answer is that they are just giving suggestions. This clearly shows the efficiency of government thought and that finding someone for the position is like playing to sell rice and curry.

To solve the accumulative social problems, whether youth or the deep south, takes solutions at the structural level and needs time and energy in every way to find the root cause. It requires expertise including the knowledge of history, politics and administration. It must be analyzed and researched in every case and aspect.

The truth is that most of the high government officials are electioneers who have the business to be selected to work in the government team and make overseas trips. They must know that solving problems at the government level is not easy, but because we play politics as a family and do not consider other's feelings, we can see clearly that more problems happen.

To be governing the nation absolutely at the House of Representative level may make the one who has power forget that while he is looking at a star his feet must be on the ground. His mind must be with peoples' grief and happiness. Having absolute power does not permit one to do whatever they want and appoint whoever from wherever because the result



is what we do not expect to hear, but we hear anyway.  
It seems that the nation's administration is like  
playing musical chairs and is opposite to the Prime  
Minister's wish of seeing the nation progress  
in stability in the new century while people live  
without hardship.

# Revamped North Korean website

November 15, 2005

Categories: North Korea

Revamped North Korean website

– November 15, 2005

Don Entz points out the new [North Korean website](#).

# Loy Krathong 2005

November 16, 2005

Categories: Loy Krathong



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Loy Krathong 2005 – November 16, 2005

**Above:** Blue waterfall at Benjakitti Water Park

**Below:** Wind and rain did not deter the festival at Benjakitti Water Park

**Also:** [Loy Krathong 2003](#) and [Loy Krathong 2004](#)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



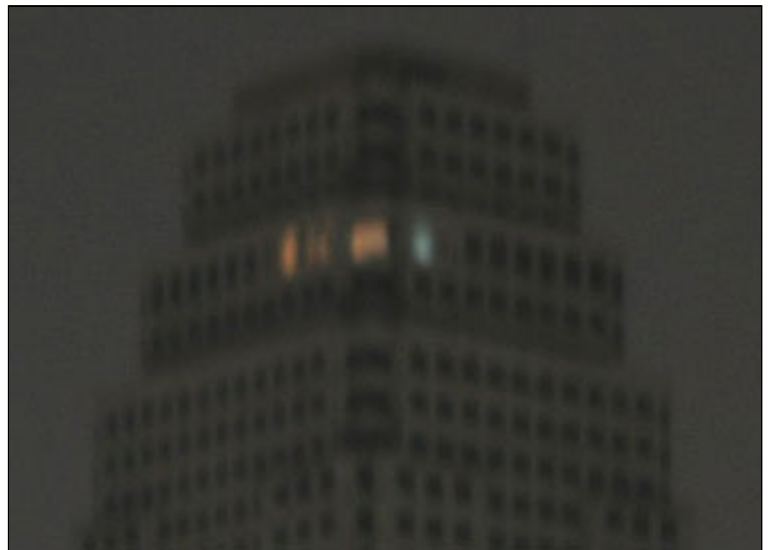
(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

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(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Loy Krathong party in a ghost building? –  
November 16, 2005  
At 9:43pm from Benjakitti Water Park we  
noticed a few lights on in the long vacant  
ghost building at the corner of Sukhumvit and  
Rachadapeisek Roads.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

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(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

**Above:** Mahakan Fort and the Golden Mount on Loy Krathong night

Loy Krathong is tonight – November 16, 2005

Tonight is Loy Krathong, a major Thai festival where people place small decorated floats into canals and rivers while making a wish. In recent times, Loy Krathong has become more and more associated with a night of romance between young people and each year the public increasingly frets about sexual activity on Loy Krathong night.

Another change in recent years has been the near elimination—at least in Bangkok—of the reckless fireworks that used to be shot off in and around the crowds at the water's edge. (Fireworks used to be sold behind the old city wall at [Mahakan Fort](#)—sometimes they can still be seen for sale there.)

Environmentalism has also played a part in Loy Krathong the last decade as city governments first banned the use of foam to construct krathongs and then a [subsequent Bangkok Governor](#) encouraged the use of foam. The current city government is back to discouraging foam and other non-biodegradable materials. Loy Krathong night is also one of the worst traffic nights of the year.

Photos of the festival: [Loy Krathong 2003](#) and [Loy Krathong 2004](#)

Loy Krathong described in 1966 – November 16, 2005

Note there are two Loy Krathong days and a 'mouthful of betel nut and betel leaf' is added to the krathong... (from *Bangkok Bulletin*, No. 657, Monday, December 12, 1966) *The full moon night of the eleventh and twelfth lunar months, i.e. in the later parts of October and November, are the days of "LOY KRATHONG" or the floating of light in a leaf cup. Some of the krathongs are not leaf cups at all, in the ordinary sense of the word. Generally, some of them are in the shape of a bird or a boat. They are more of a toy than a krathongs, and have only made their appearance in recent years. Usually in a "krathong," apart from a candle and one or more incense sticks, a small coin, say a five-stang piece, is also put in, and sometimes a mouthful of betel nut and betel leaf for a chewing purpose is added. In the evening, when the full moon begins to rise in the months of October and November, the people carry one or two krathongs to the edge of the water. After the candle and incense sticks in the krathong are lighted, they let it go gently on the surface of the placid water. A few folk will sometimes raise their hands in worship, they watch the krathong as they float sluggishly along the water for some time until they float far away out of sight.*

Info needed – November 16, 2005

We are looking for sources concerning the following: *Before the 1980's Loy Krathong was a regional festival held mainly in the Sukothai area (or Chiang Mai?). At some point national tourism authorities decided to*

*promote it as a national festival, causing annoyance from Sukothai officials who felt their festival was being 'stolen.' We remember articles about his from the early 1990s...*

Loy Krathong in 1981 – November 21, 2005

Heinrich writes: *Concerning your ["Info needed – November 16, 2005"](#) about Loy Krathong before the 1980's. I don't know if you can use this information, this was my first Loy Krathong ever: I remember a really wonderful celebration of Loy Krathong on 11. November 1981 in Bangkok in Lumpini Park. It was very(!) crowded. In and around the park you could buy lots of ready-made khratongs, much styrofoam but also natural materials were available. Young boys were diving in the lake to get the small coins that were hidden in the khratongs. Around the lake were many hawkers, which sold all this delicious stuff that I like Thai celebrations for. Most of the food was wrapped in banana-leaves – no plastic like today, and you could sit on big mats on the floor while eating, watching the other people enjoy themselves... Have a look at this [photo](#) from that day...*



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

# Quality of a Minister

November 17, 2005

Categories: Thai Politics

From the Thai-language

press: *Matichon* editorial: Quality of a Minister

– November 17, 2005

Mr. Wattana Muaangsuk may have good qualities otherwise Thaksin Shinawatra may not have set him up him to be in cabinet since Thaksin 1. He used to be the Minister of Commerce and Industry. In Thaksin 2, he is a minister of Social Development and Human Security. When he was in this position, he proposed ideas that were protested from many sides in society.

A suitable name for him is “Lighting Rod Minister” because his ideas have been obstructed from all over the country. It seems he wants to send a signal to the PM to know that he is in the wrong position or sits in the wrong musical chair. If it is, Mr. Wattana dares to risk himself with the pain from the objections from the public and this is a risk for PM to consider. If PM chooses the retire him, Mr. Wattana will have no chance to present his strange ideas.

The mission of the ministry is taking care six groups—children and youth, women, old people, disabled and disadvantaged and minority groups which are a big issue and need to brainstorm by government officials, NGOs’ experience and then combine and cooperate with many ministries such as Education, Culture, Interior and Royal Thai Police, etc.

Giving out the daily idea and being criticized by society and then waiting for the PM’s consideration, Wattana cancels the idea if the PM does not agree with it. This is too easy for the person who comes to govern and administrate policy.

Thaksin said and declared louder for the second cabinet to assess the ministers’ work after three months. But three, then six months passed and now it will be nine months. What it is not deniable is that many ministers have no good for the people and some ministers present the idea that is not believable. These ministers focus on the micro not macro. Some are not remembered by the people.

Instead of complaining that he has to be responsible for everything, the PM should check if the ministers if good enough quality. If they have no quality or no skill, they should be removed. Because this does not only obstruct the good and skillful people,

but also destroys the nation's occasion to  
get development from the minister's work.



# **‘President George W. Bush and Thailand Prime Minister Thaksin Chinnawat share a laugh’**

November 18, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

‘President George W. Bush  
and Thailand Prime Minister Thaksin Chinnawat share a laugh’

– White House, November 18, 2005

*President George W. Bush and Thailand Prime Minister Thaksin Chinnawat share a laugh Friday, Nov. 18, 2005, during an opening session at the two-day, 2005 APEC summit in Busan, Korea.*

[Here](#)

and [here](#).

# MassTransitBoard.com

November 18, 2005

[MassTransitBoard.com](http://MassTransitBoard.com)

– November 18, 2005

Ohm writes: *I would like to introduce my webboard [www.masstransitboard.com](http://www.masstransitboard.com).*

*This webboard will be about Bangkok Mass Transit and Singapore  
Mass Transit.*

# Weekly News Magazine, 2005

November 18, 2005

Categories: Thai Newspapers and Magazines



From Matichon Weekly, Nov 18-24, 2005

Main cover reads: Flower Flower will bloom. 'Sarocha' is brave and will be blooming in a heart of a 'mob'

Top: The translation on 'Dreams' 5th story

# Siemens ‘wins Chinese train deal’

November 21, 2005

[Siemens](#)

[‘wins Chinese train deal’](#) – BBC,

November 21, 2005

*China awards Siemens and a Japanese consortium contracts to supply high-speed trains, reports claim...*

[Trouble](#)

[on the line for new SA train](#) – BBC, November

21, 2005

*South Africa’s Gautrain could revolutionise public transport – or it could prove to be a billion-dollar white elephant...*

# **‘Second Wives’ are back**

November 22, 2005

Categories: China

[‘Second](#)

[Wives’ are back](#) – *LA Times*, November 22, 2005

*Mistresses are again a status symbol in China. As scandal spreads, the government worries that they are a motive for public corruption...*

# Thailand: land of dreams for hes wanting to be shes

November 23, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thailand:](#)

[land of dreams for hes wanting to be shes](#)

– AFP, November 23, 2005

*His last patient was 62 years old, married with two kids.*

*He showed up wearing his wife's underwear, having come from the United States to Thailand to make his life-long dream come true...*

# ‘Can farang ever be Thai?’

November 24, 2005



(Source: *Bangkok Post*)

‘Can farang ever be Thai?’

– November 24, 2005

Cormac Bracken writes: *Great advert in today's Bangkok Post. Nice to know that it hasn't yet been ruled out...*

# More on the Kaoshuing subway

November 24, 2005

More on the Kaoshuing subway –

November 24, 2005

Here's another KMRT information from [Mass Transit Bureau Kaoshuing](#). And the [long-term map](#).

**Earlier:** [Kaoshuing subway website](#) – November 21, 2005



# What street? What date?

November 24, 2005



What street? What date?

– November 24, 2005

Updated: Wisarut comments: *For the Image, it is unmistakably "Yaowaraj Road" at Chaloem Buri Intersection from the National Archives.*

*It must be around 1900-1910...*

# KMITL students planning to revolt against slum dwellers from Makkasan

November 24, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

From the Thai-language forums: [KMITL students planning to revolt against slum dwellers from Makkasan](#)  
– November 24, 2005

Wisarat explains: *Slum dwellers from Phyathai, Makkasan, and Huamark are going to have a showdown with the students of KMITL since the government has pushed those slum dwellers to stay next to the campus and the apartments of KMITL students...*

# Man in pickup truck talking on mobile phone

November 25, 2005



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Man in pickup truck talking on mobile phone  
– November 25, 2005

# Charoen Krung Road around Sam Yaek

November 26, 2005

Categories: Old photos and films



Charoen Krung Road around Sam Yaek during the time of King Chulalongkorn...

# First looks

November 28, 2005



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

First looks –  
November 28, 2005

**Above:** One of the new Smart Signs in action.  
**Left:** Glimpse of a new taxi minivan.

# S.S. America

November 28, 2005

[S.S.](#)

[America](#) – November 28, 2005

[During](#)

[her lifetime of over fifty years.](#) *many important decisions had been made regarding the fate of the vessel which was once the pride of the United States maritime industry, but none as dubious as her sale to the Chaophraya Development Transport Company...*

# Thai AIDS “success story” scares Asia

November 29, 2005

Categories: HIV-AIDS

[Thai AIDS “success story” scares Asia](#) – Bangkok Post, November 29, 2005

*...AIDS education, for instance, was taken away from the prime minister’s office and passed on to the health ministry, where it was abandoned. The free condoms programme, for example, was discontinued...*



# Laos communist regime to mark 30 years in power

November 30, 2005

Categories: Laos

[Laos communist regime to mark 30 years in power](#) –

AFP, November 30, 2005

*Communist authorities in landlocked Laos, one of Asia's poorest countries, will on Friday celebrate 30 years in power...*



# Burma's doddering despot

November 30, 2005

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[Burma's doddering despot](#) – *The Nation*,

November 30, 2005

*I can say without hesitation that Senior General Than Shwe is mentally unstable and that the current state of the Burmese regime reflects the disorder in his vicious and increasingly paranoid mind...*

# Thailand and Laos become 'Fritolaysia'

November 30, 2005



(Source: The Onion)

## [Thailand](#) [and Laos become 'Fritolaysia'](#)

– The Onion, November 30, 2005

A joke from The Onion – 'Fritolaysia Cuts Off Diplomatic Relations With Snakistan': *Citing crumbling relations due to years of protracted french-onion diplomacy, the president of the Central Asian doritocracy Fritolaysia withdrew the country's ambassadors from Snakistan Monday...*

# Subway Expansion News 2000-2004

December 1, 2005

Categories: Subway

**PR on Purple Line** – translated and summarized from [Manager Daily](#), December 1, 2004

Minister Suriya and MRTA have come up with a PR effort on the Purple Line Project (Bangsue – Bang Yai – 23 km) at Bangsue Station so as to tell the public whose houses are along the purple line about the upcoming project and the effect during the construction and after the opening of the system.

Commentary: There has been heavy criticism of the Purple line, such as the desire to have a terminal at Mochit 2 instead of Bangsue as well as the wishful thinking that the line be totally underground. The media have been guilty of giving the public the impression that the Subway will always be underground.

Furthermore, some even are upset that the new line does not reach their houses at Bangbuathong – Sai Noy. However, these people are justifiably fed up with the poor minibus services run by Chalong Riawraeng (Nonthaburi MP) and Colonel Dr Aphiwan Wiriyachai (TRT MP of Nonthaburi – 4th district – covering Bang Buathong). Even the extension of BMTA Bus No 134 to from Bang Buathong to Sai Noy was rejected for political reasons.

**The plan for the Rama 6 Expressway and the Red Line Commuter – 2700 must be removed** – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, November 24, 2004 and *Manager Daily*, November 24, 2004

OTP told 370 people who are going to be affected by the Rama 6 Expressway and Red Line Commuter details of the project.

- 1) A new 6-lane Rama 6 Expressway from Chimplee Interchange to Srirat Expressway with 7 interchanges
- 2) Electrified and double-tracked Red Line Commuter from Bangsue to Talingchan – at grade from Bangsue to Bang Bumru and Bang Son to Bangsue while elevated across the Chaophraya
- 3) Two-lane local roads with 3 at-grade u-turns and 4 u-turn bridges in Thonburi and 5 at-grade U-turns in Bangkok

The daily number of cars by 2021 will be 104,500 per day while there will be 156,000 daily passengers for the Red Line commuter .

The electrified double tracking of the Red Line commuter has a price tag of 13.7 billion baht.

The Rama 6 expressway – 22.4 billion baht

Local roads – 0.47 billion baht

Land Expropriation – 4.9 billion baht covering 2700 houses at the toll gates and the interchanges.

The compensation for using SRT land – 3.4 billion baht

Local road will be done by BMA while ETA is handing the Rama 6 Expressway and SRT is handling the Red Line commuter.

Land expropriation will start in July 2005.

The EIRR for the project is about 12% for Red line commuter alone, 13% for Expressway alone while the combination of Red line commuter and Rama 6 Expressway has EIRR of 15.4% and the Extension from Taling Chan to Nakhon Pathom will has EIRR of 17.1% but with a price tag of 35.2 billion baht

For the case of FIRR, the expressway ALONE will be 6.1% with 21.2 year payback while 100% private venture will have FIRR of 7% with 19.7 year payback. The public-private joint venture will result in 8.36% FIRR and payback period of 18.7 years... with the following price tags: Construction: 1.389 billion baht

land Expropriation 8.7104 billion baht

Private investment 4.6817 billion baht

Loan of 9.2034 billion baht

Total 24.1471 billion baht

If the Red Line commuter is to be extended to Nakhon Pathom, SRT needs 38.904 billion baht -> public funds for construction and signal installation of 27.904 billion baht while the private concession holder will have to invest 10.399 billion baht.

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Communities to be evicted to make way for the Red Line Commuter and Pink Airport Link – translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, November 18-20, 2004 and *Than Setthakij*, November 21-24, 2004

### Red Line Commuter

- 1) Lak Hok Community -> near Muang Ek Village and Rangsit University
- 2) Ban Phak Roat Fai -> the residential area for SRT railway workers and officers where many poor people also live since many of those railway workers are so poor that it is very hard to distinguish them from slum dwellers.
- 3) Tuek Daeng -> those who live around the Red Building in Bangsue Junction and the area near Prem Prachakorn canal
- 4) Talad Noy -> Chinese people in Thailand Noy-Chiang Kong shrine have lived in that area for more than 100 years and many Thai billionaires have lived and started their business in Talad Noy

- 5) Klongsan – Lad Ya -> area of poor people on the Thonburi side of Bangkok
- 6) Wongwian Yai
- 7) Talad Ploo
- 8) Chom Thong

### Pink Airport Link

- 1) Paed Reiw Railway Communities
- 2) Communities around Yommaraj – Chitladda Triangle
- 3) Community behind Decha Hospital
- 4) Ban Phak Roat Fai (same as above)
- 5) Tuek Daeng (same as above)
- 6) Klong Som Poy – near Rama 6 Bridge
- 7) Suan Phak – Talingchan

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List of 25 Stations for Pink Line Commuter – translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, November 21-24, 2004

- 1) Talingchan
- 2) Bang Bumru
- 3) Charansanitwongse (should be Rama 7)
- 4) Bang Son (revived Bangson station – closed after the opening of Rama 7 Bridge)
- 5) Prachachuen (former Bangson Stop)
- 6) Mochit 2 (replacement of Phaholyothin terminal and Km 11 Stop – connected with Northern Bus terminal – interchange with Red line commuter)
- 7) Phaholyothin Center (New Bangsue Junction – interchange with Airport Link Transit, Blue Line)
- 8) Pradiphat (upgraded from Pradiphat stop)
- 9) Samsen (interchange with Red Line Commuter)
- 10) Ramathbodee (should be Tuekchai or Chitladda – interchange with Airport Link Transit, interchange with Orange Line)
- 11) Yommaraj (interchange with Airport Link Transit)
- 12) Phyathai – Interchange with BTS
- 13) Raj Prarrob (Airport transit)
- 14) Makkasan (Old Makkasan Station – no construction for the time being)
- 15) Makkasan center (terminal of Airport Express)
- 16) Phetburi (Near the road to Soi Nana Nuea – no construction for the time being)
- 17) Soi Soon Wijai (near RCA – no construction for the time being)
- 18) Klong Tan (no construction for the time being)
- 19) Ramkhamhaeng (upgraded Sukhumvit 71 stop due to better road access – Airport Transit)
- 20) Seri (Near Kasem Bundit U. – no construction for the time being)
- 21) Hua Mark (Airport Transit)
- 22) Krunthep Kreetha (near Unico Golf Course – no construction for the time being)
- 23) Ban Thup Chang (the interchange between Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road and Motorway – Airport Transit)
- 24) Lad Krabang (Airport Transit)
- 25) Suvannabhum

The list of 35 stations for Red Line commuter – translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, November 18-20, 2004

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1) Rangsit  | 16) Hua Lamphong (interchange with Blue line Subway)   |
| 2) Muang Ek (former Lak Hok)                        | 17) Talad Noy  |
| 3) Donmuang   | 18) Klong Sarn   |
| 4) Karn Kheha Km 19                                 | 19) Wong Wian Yai                                      |
| 5) Laksi  | 20) Talad Ploo   |
| 6) North Park (replacement of Thung Song Hong stop) | 21) Tha Phra (the replacement of Klong Tonsai station) |
| 7) Ngam Wongwan (replacement of Bang Khen           |  |

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| station with connection to Kasetsart University)  | 22) Taksin Center -> interchange with BTS                 |
| 8) Prachaniwet (in front of Wat Samina Naree)   | 23) Wat Sai   |
| 9) Mochit 2 (replacement of Phaholyothin terminal and Km 11 Stop – connected with Northern Bus terminal – interchange with Pink Airport link) | 24) Wat Singh   |
| 10) Phaholyothin Center (New Bangsue Junction – interchange with Airport Link Transit, Blue Line)   | 25) Bang Bon  |
| 11) Pradiphat (upgraded from Pradiphat stop)  | 26) Karn Khehai   |
| 12) Samsen (interchange with Airport Link Transit)  | 27) Rang Sakae  |
| 13) Ramathbodee (should be Tuekchai or Chitladda – interchange with Airport Link Transit, interchange with Orange Line)                       | 28) Rang Pho  |
| 14) Yommaraj (interchange with Airport Link Transit)  | 29) Sam Yaek  |
| 15) Mahanak -> near Mahanak canal and Nopphawongse Police station – interchange with BTS  | 30) Phrom Daen -> BKK City Limit                          |
|   | 31) Thung Seethong  |
|   | 32) Bang Nam Jued   |
|   | 33) Mahachai Muang Mai – replacement of Khok Kwai station |
|   | 34) Ban Khom  |
|   | 35) Mahachai  |

[Complete details of 2 new subway lines and 2 new extensions](#) – *Thaipost*, November 11, 2004 and *Prachachart Thurakij*, November 15, 2004

Purple Line station list – July 13, 2004

Wisarat comments: The list of 14 elevated stations for the purple line from Siamturakij and my own analysis on the integrated mass transit system form MRTA and I got the list of 8 stations along Suvanabhum Airport Link from Manager Daily.

The list of 3 underground section and 1 elevated Interchange from Bang Pho to Samsen of the purple line, the 6 stations on the Ring section, 2 new station for the new version of orange line are derived my own analysis on the route.

#### **List of 14 elevated stations for the Purple Line**

- 1) Bang Yai Terminal station – needs a park and ride
- 2) Bang Phraek AKA Thunyatharn Village
- 3) Bang Buathong Bang Buathong Intersection – needs a park and ride
- 4) Bang Rak Yai AKA Wongchai Nakhorn Village
- 5) Ratchapruek Intersection – needs a park and ride
- 6) Rattanathobet Rattanathibet Road – AKA Tha It
- 7) Wat Sai Mah – opposite to Sanambin Nam
- 8) Phra Nanaklao near Sanambin Nam Intersection – going to have a park and ride
- 9) Sri Pornsawan – a shortcut to downtown Nonthaburi near Jusco Rattanathibet which has been purchased by Central Pattana
- 10) Kae Rai intersection near New Nonthaburi Provincial Hall, Tesco Lotus, and Shinnawatra Satellite Station
- 11) Rewadee in front of Soi Rewadee – a short cut to Nonthaburi Pier and Bang Kwang prison
- 12) Nakhon In – the 1st station outside Bangkok near Tiwanon – should have a via duct to Big C Nonthaburi
- 13) Wongsawang near Big C Wongsawang and Wongsawang Intersection – good for KMITNB students
- 14) Tao Poon market

#### **List of 3 underground stations (plus 1 elevated interchange)**

0) Bang Pho Interchange Station – need to construct an intermediate station between Bangsue and Taopoon if space allows. Otherwise, Bangsue Station must be converted into an interchange station.

- 1) P8 Thaharn – Thaharn Road near RTA Ordinance Department – RTA Military area
- 2) P9 Bang Krabue (AKA Phichai) Interchange between Phichai Road and Umnuay Songgram Road
- 3) P10 Sang Hee Sang Hee Intersection – AKA Samsen -> Samsen Road

#### **List of 2 new stations for Orange line (Bang Bumru – Bang Kapi)**

- 1) O1 Bang Bumru Bang Bumru Railway Station
- 2) O2 Sirinthorn the beginning of Sirinthorn Road – Interchange with Blue Ring

#### **List of stations of Blue Ring section**

- 1) B1 Bang Kruay – (AKA Rama 7) near EGAT HQ – a few meters from the Southern railway tracks, still within Bangkok area – needs a giant bridge to go across Chao Phraya
- 2) B2 Bang Or

- 3) B3 Bang Plut – Pang Plut district – near Premier Thaksin's Palace
- 4) B4 Phra Pinklao – Pha Pinklao Intersection – near the van pool to Mahidol University (Salaya campus)
- 5) B5 Bangkok Noy (AKA Charan Sanitwongse) near Charan Sanitwongse 35, Sam Yaek fai Chai, and Phrannok Road
- 6) Tha Phra Interchange station

#### **List of 8 stations for Suvannabhum Airport Link**

- 1) Phyathai upgrade from Phyathai Stop – needs to be long enough to reach Sri Ayutthaya Intersection as well as Uruphongse intersection (Rama 6 Road).
- 2) Ratprarob – The access to Pratoonam and Mahanakhorn Gypsum Building upgraded from Ratprarob Stop – may be long enough to reach the western edge of Makkasan Station.
- 3) Makkasan – New Makkasan station must be long enough to reach Phetburi subway station. SRT is going to allocate 40 rai of land for Airport City Terminal – the starting point of Airport Express.
- 4) Klongtan – Klongtan Station – needs a via duct to link with RCA and businesses buildings along New Phetburi road (e.g. Italhai Building, Charn Issara 2 Building)
- 5) Hua Mark near Jusco Sri Nakharin
- 6) Thin Chang – Thub Chang Station – needs a park and ride for Kanchanaphisek Road, 2nd stage Expressway and Bangkok-Chonburi Motorway... but needs to negotiate for the land to local Muslim Bangkokians.
- 7) Lad Krabang – Ladkrabang Station – needs a park and ride for those who want to go to downtown Bangkok and feeder bus and van to pick up those who live the area of Minburi province (Minburi – Nongchok – Lad Krabang district) as well as those workers in Lad Krabang Industrial Estate, KMITL students and Japanese-graduated professors from KMITL.
- 8) Suvannabhum underground terminal station at the main terminal.

MRTA planning for 91-km expansion of subway – translated and summarized from *Thairath*, April 5, 2004 and *Than Setthakij*, April 4-7, 2004

After receiving the task to implement 91-km of MRTA mass transit systems, MRTA said there will be two phase of this expansion project:

- 1) 68.9 km – Phase 1 -> The one which could be started immediately since this section has already passed Environmental Assessment (EA) and has preliminary design blueprints in the hands of MRTA.
  - 1.1) 13.9 km – Blue Line Southern Extension (Hua Lamphong – Bang Khae) with a price tag of 48.241 billion baht (4.8 km underground + 9.1 km elevated tracks -> 10 stations) which could be constructed and designed in mid 2005 and open for service by the end of 2009.
  - 1.2) 20 km – Orange Line (Bang Kapi – Samsen) with a price tag of 62.213 billion baht (18.5 km underground and 1.5 km elevated track -> 14 stations) which could be constructed and designed in mid 2005 and opened for service by the end of 2010.
  - 1.3) 20 km – Purple Line (Bangyai – Phra Nanklao – Bangsue -> former Blue line Northern extension) with a price tag of 37.201 billion baht (14 elevated stations) which could be constructed in the mid 2005 and opened for service by the end of 2008.
  - 1.4) 15 km – Purple line (Samsen – Ratboorana -> former Orange line) with a price tag of 42.410 billion baht (9 km underground and 6 km elevated track) which could be constructed at the end of 2005 and opened for service by the end of 2010.
- 2) 22.1 km – Phase 2 -> New section which requires environmental assessment and new design.
  - 2.1) 13.1 km – Blue Ring (Bangsue – Charansanitwongse – Tha Phra) – with a price tag of 15.544 billion baht (7 elevated stations) which will be constructed in early 2006 and open for service at the end of 2009.
  - 2.2) 5 km – Purple Link Line (Bangsue – Samsen) -> with a price tag of 14.974 billion baht (3 elevated stations) constructed in early 2006 and opened for service in early 2010.
  - 2.3) 4 km – Orange line (Samsen – Bang Bumru) -> with a price tag of 11.055 billion baht (2.5 km underground and 1.5 km elevated -> 1 underground station and 2 elevated stations) constructed in early 2006 and opened for service in early 2010.

This will be definitive design with much more detail than preliminary design. The first three sections will be started first with Bangsue-Bangyai section as the very first to start since it is all elevated track and MRTA is going to pay 300 million baht to hire the consultant to handle the final design.

MRTA complained that the price tag BMCL has set up is too much -> 17.5 billion baht against the 7 billion baht MCL has invested (25% of stock at 1 baht/share and the other 75% at 3 baht/share). Therefore, MRTA will negotiate with both creditors (which are shareholders of BMCL) and Ch. Kanchang PCL. until they get a much better deal at lower prices.

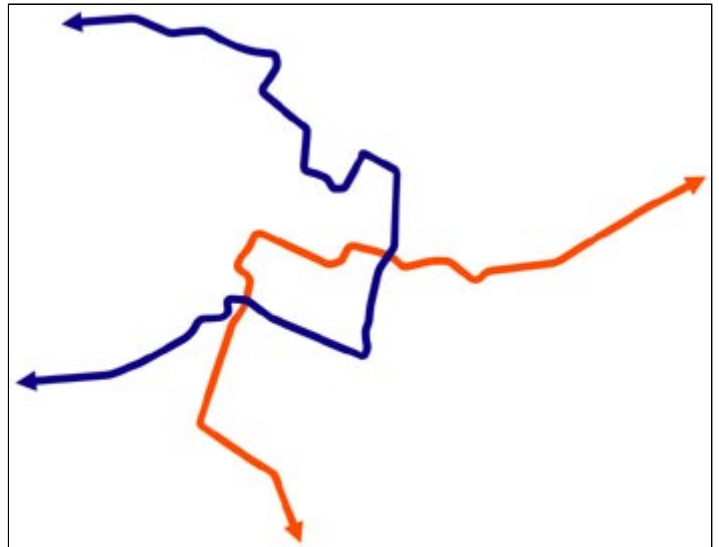
MRTA also hired Business Terminal Co.Ltd. to handle stores around MRTA stations as parking lots for taxi,



tuk tuk, vans and motorcycle cabs near the gates of subway stations. Thus Business Terminal Co.Ltd. is asking BMCL to facilitate the movement of the cars around MRTA Subway stations.

The subway routes of the future – February 5, 2004 Chatchawal explains the readjusted subway lines: I have been closely following news from the Transport Ministry and the OTP (Office of Transport and Traffic Policy Planning) since mid-2003. Changes have been made to the routes planned for the Subway / Skytrain future lines and their extensions. These changes have been confirmed by the authorities and they seem to be serious about working under this new plan, hence the changes are likely to materialise.

The subway lines make up the core changes under the new plan, officially called the [‘Development Plan for Bangkok Mass Rapid Transit’](#) (BMRT). In December 2003, news about the alternative extended routes for the Blue Line (Chaloem Ratchamongkhon Line — under the MRTA’s supervision) broke in local newspapers.



**Above:** The plan for future subway lines as of January 2003 (see below for the new plan)

Under the original plan, the Blue Line will see 2 extensions — northern and southern extensions. The northern extension runs from Bang Sue to Saphan Phra Nangklao in Nonthaburi and the southern extension runs from Hua Lamphong to Bang Khae via Tha Phra.

The new routes for the blue line are as follow: Instead of running northwards towards Nonthaburi, the Blue Line runs westwards from Bang Sue towards Bang Pho along Thanon Pracharat Sai 2. It is likely that immediately after Bang Sue Station, which in underground, the line will be elevated.

Crossing the Chao Phraya River, the line turns left at Thanon Charan Sanit Wong and goes southwards towards Bang Phlad, Bangkok Noi and Bangkok Yai The Blue Line eventually terminates at Tha Phra, connecting the Blue Line’s Southern extension route.

It is very likely that the southern extension route (Hua Lamphong — Tha Phra — Bang Wa — Bang Khae) remains unchanged.

Further extension from Tha Phra to Queen Sirikit National Convention Center via Rama III has been included in this new plan, but that’s only in a distant future. The Blue Line will become a loop which I would call a "Bangkok Lariat".

Since the section of the Blue Line along Thanon Charan Sanit Wong will be elevated, there will be a problem at Phra Pin Klao Intersection as there are Borommarat Chachonnani Elevated Road and a flyover beneath it. These elevated carriage-ways will physically form a ‘wall’ which does not permit the elevated Blue Line to cut straight through.

Crossing over the ‘wall’ will mean that the train viaduct has to be raised to a height so high that it becomes a great engineering challenge.

This is not a new problem, the BTS Skytrain also faces similar difficulties as it tries to extend northwards (Mo Chit — Kaset — Saphan Mai) and so far, making a detour around Lat Phrao Intersection is the highly anticipated solution because of the presence of Uthumphak Expressway (a.k.a. Don Muang Tollway) and a flyover beneath it at Lat Phrao Intersection. Fortunately, the Government officials planned the Bang Na Intersection well and avoided similar problems occurring there.

The now-under construction S1 Third-Stage Expressway (At Narong — Bang NA) will be built so high over Bang NA Intersection so that the BTS Skytrain On Nut — Samrong — Samut Prakan extension can run just below it, and at the same time, the Skytrain viaduct will be high enough to allow vehicles entering / leaving Chaloem Mahanakhon Expressway along the existing flyover to run below. I believe that this type of 4-tier crossing will become a commonplace in Bangkok in the future.

Another exciting update includes changing the routes for the planned Orange Line, also a project under MRTA’s supervision. The original plan is a long line running from Bang Kapi to Rat Burana Under the new plan, the Orange Line run strictly in an east-west direction.

It will not turn southwards at Sam Sen Road and it no longer runs towards Wang Burapha, Wong Wien Yai, Chom Thong and Rat Burana.

Instead, the Orange Line runs westwards along Thanon Rajavithi and Thanon Sirindhorn in Bang Phlat

district. Under the new plan, the Orange Line will terminate at Bang Bam Ru where it will intersect with one of the Red Lines under the SRT's commuter train project.

What will happen to residents living along Nonthaburi and Thanon Suk Sawat where the original Blue Line's northern extension and half of the original Orange Line have been withdrawn? The Purple Line is the answer.

Originally, the MRTA wants the Purple Line to run from Sam Sen to Bang Sue and goes northwards along Thanon Pracha Chuen. However, there has been a lack of any serious discussion or effort put into this line until late last year.

Under the new plan, the Purple Line will materialise sooner than the original plan. The Purple Line will also run on a different route which is longer in a north-south manner.

The new Purple Line will begin at Saphan Phra Nangklao in Nonthaburi and runs along the same route as that of the cancelled Blue Line's northern extension. It will also be elevated in along this section.

The Purple Line intersects the Blue Line at Thanon Pracharat Sai 2 and runs southwards towards Thanon Sam Sen. Before it reaches Sam Sen, it will go underground.

Traveling along Thanon Sam Sen, it cuts the Orange Line at Thanon Rajavithi, passing Kiak Kai, Thewet and the Central Bank at Bang Khumthong.

From here it runs along the exact route as that of the Orange Line's cancelled section. The Purple Line will be elevated again at Dao Khanong and terminates at Rat Burana.

Additional elevated section from Saphan Phra Nangklao to Bang Yai at Thanon Kanchanaphisek (a.k.a. Western Ring Road) has also been included as part of the Purple Line, but it is not clear if this section will be constructed together with the rest of the line all at once.

Now that the Government has made a U-turn decision by wanting to run the subway by itself, the BMCL has been experiencing great pressure to give way since the beginning of the year. In one of the reports by a local newspaper, Mr. Suriya, the Transport Minister, might resort to making further adjustments in the subway routes, so that other lines owned and run by the Government will gain economic advantage at the expense of the Blue Line ridership. Personally, I feel that the planning of subway routes should not be influenced by any of these political factors and planning should be geared towards maximum benefits of the locals, financial sustainability, economic contributions etc. I hope this is just a threat from the Government and both parties should reach an agreement soon. So far, BMCL has offered the government to purchase 25% stake in the company, but that might not completely please the Transport Minister who demands a complete take-over. Talks will continue in February and an agreement should be reached in the middle of this year. I strongly support creating an integrated mass transit system for Bangkok, especially when it comes to fare collection. Integration will ensure a successful

public transport policy and this will ensure the maximum ridership for the entire system.

I hope that small pictures will well illustrate what I have been describing to you. Personally, I find the new route of the Blue Line really odd-looking, but as long as they are seriously working it out and get it done as soon as they can, I am happy with the changes in general. Loop lines and circle lines are nothing new in many metro system across the world. Our neighbour, Singapore, is busy constructing an entirely underground Circle Line to relieve congestion in the city. The routes under the new plan, if constructed together all at once, should serve Bangkok better than those under the former plan. The changes will be reflected in my January 30th version of my map.

**UPDATE:** There are more changes as of today, confirming the January 29th news from *Than Setthakij* ([Meddling in mass transit plans](#) – translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, January 29-31, 2004)

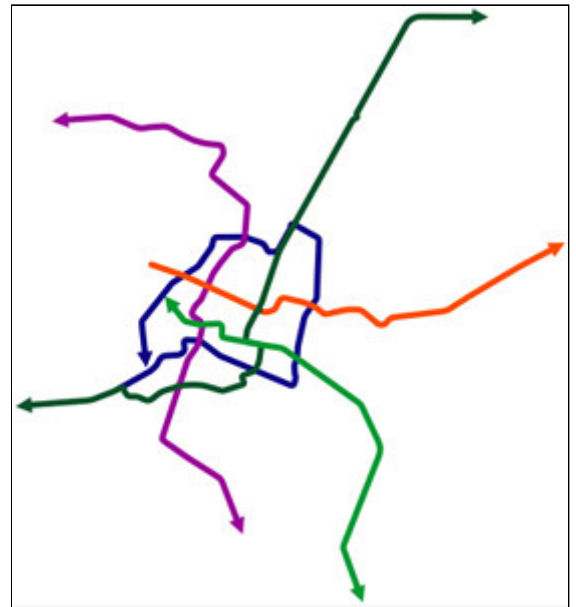
Further changes include replacing a section of the MRTA's Blue Line along Thanon Phetchakasem by the BTS Dark Green Line. Hence, the BTS Taksin extension will not only go to Wong Wien Yai and Bang Wa, but it will also make a westward turn into Thanon Phetchakasem and goes towards Bang Khae. On the other hand, the MRTA's Blue Line southern extension will still proceed but the line will terminate at Bang WA instead.

Secondly, the BTS skytrain lines might see a change.

Currently, there are Silom and Sukhumvit Lines, but under the new plan, trains from On Nut / Samrong will go towards the



National Stadium after Siam station instead of turning north towards Mochit.



**Above:** The plan for future subway lines as of January 2004

This will become the Light Green Line. Meanwhile, trains from Saphan Taksin will turn northwards after Siam station and head for Mochit instead of making a short trip to the National Stadium. This, therefore, becomes the Dark Green Line. Nevertheless, these changes with regards to the BTS Lines have not received any official confirmation and more studies related to the plan's viability is still pending. Hence, the likelihood of it materialising is lower than the other routes changes that we have been discussing so far. More information can be obtained from this [map](#) (from the Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning). Also see the [Updated Bangkok future mass transit map](#) and the [forum](#) to discuss the map.

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Names of extension subway stations – translated and summarized from the MRTA website, February 6, 2004

The official named for the extension line stations:

**Orange Line** -34.6 km -> 28.1 km underground + at grade and 6.5 km elevated

Elevated Section

1) Bang Kapi

Underground Section -> either a single tunnel with double track, 0.50 m thick wall and 10.7m diameter or a double tunnel with 0.30m thick wall and 5.7m diameter, central and side platform with platform door-20 m wide and 250 m long platform

2) Lam Sali

3) Hua Mark

4) Hua Mark Stadium

5) Ram Khamhaeng

6) Nawasri

7) Lad Phrao Canal

At-grade section

8) MRTA

Underground Section

9) Thai Cultural center -> Interchange with Blue line

10) Prachasongkhrao -> Public Welfare Housing

11) Din Daeng -> Din Daeng Intesection

12) Victory Monument -> Ratwithee Section of Victory Monument – Interchage with Skytrain

13) Ratchawithee -> Yothee Intersection near Chitladda Palace

**Northern Extension of Blue line** -11.6 km, all elevated. -> Central platform like Siam Station of the Skytrain. 250 m long 18 m wide-the distance for each pillar will be 30m-no platform door

1) Tao Poon (near Tao Poon Police Station)

2) Wong Sawang near Wong Sawang Intersection

3) Nakhon In -> the starting point of Nakhon In road -> before reaching Tiwanon Intesection

4) Rewadee -> Soi Rewadee

5) Kae Rai -> Near Jusco Kae rai

6) Sri Porn Sawan -> near the shortcut to Nonthaburi Pier

7) Phra Nangklao -> before reaching Sanambin Nam intersection-with Park and Ride

**Southern Extension of Blue Line** – 13.8 km

Underground Section -4.8 km either a single tunnel with double track, 0.50 m thick wall and 10.7m diameter or a double tunnel with 0.30m thick wall and 5.7m diameter, central and side platform with screen door-20 m wide and 250 m long platform

1) Wat Mungkorn

2) Wang Boorapha -> between Sam Yod Intesection and Chaloemkrung Intersection

3) Pakklong Talad -. Near Grand Palace Police Station

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14) Dusit Zoo</li> <li>15) National Library</li> <li>16) Bang Khunphrom</li> <li>17) Phan Fah -&gt; Phan Fah Bridge</li> <li>18) Wang Boorapha -&gt; Interchange with Blue line</li> <li>19) Memorial Bridge (Thonburi Side of the Bridge to prevent any damage on King Rama I Monument)</li> <li>20) Wongwian Yai -&gt; the interchange at Bang Wah has ended any further need for interchange with Skytrain at Wongwian Yai</li> <li>21) Sam Reh</li> <li>22) Mahai Sawan -&gt; near Bangkok Bridge Elevated Section – 11.6 km all elevated. -&gt; Central platform like Siam Station of the Skytrain. -&gt; 250 m long 18 m wide ... the distance for each pillar will be 30m–no platform door</li> <li>23) Chom Thong -&gt; near Chom Thong Intersection</li> <li>24) Dao Khanong -&gt; Bang Mod Intersection– Intersects with Rama II Highway with Park and Ride</li> <li>25) Bang Pakok</li> <li>26) Pracha Uthit -&gt; Intersects with Expressway near Rama IX Bridge</li> <li>27) Rat Boorana -&gt; The last station within the Thonburi Jurisdiction of Bangkok, near Soi Suksawat 35 with Park and Ride</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4) Bangkok Yai -&gt; near Wat Arun and RTN HQ Elevated Section -&gt; 9 km -&gt; Central platform like Siam Station of the Skytrain -&gt; 250 m long 18 m wide–the distance for each pillar will be 30m–no platform door</li> <li>5) Tha Phra (Tha Phra Intersection)</li> <li>6) Bang Phai</li> <li>7) Bang Wah (Southern Bangkok Transportation center)</li> <li>8) Phasee Charoen</li> <li>9) Bang Khae</li> <li>10) Lak Song (near The Mall Bang Khae, with Park and Ride)</li> </ul> |
|---|---|
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#### Quick subway extension overview – January 20, 2004

Chatchawal Phansopa wrote this concise overview of the state of subway extensions: There are two lines under the supervision of the MRTA which are likely to be built in the near future. These are the orange line and blue line (the purple line running through Nonthaburi is still under planning... no serious efforts has been put into it yet).

The subway line which is about to open this April is the initial phrase of the blue line. Together with the northern and southern extensions, the blue line runs from Bang Khae to Hua Lamphong to Bang Sue to Saphan Phra Nangklao.

Besides the blue line, the orange line is another route currently under intensive studies and planning by MRTA as it seems economically feasible to construct. The orange line runs from Bang Kapi along Ramkhamhaeng Road to the MRTA depot in Huai Khwang, intersecting the blue line at the Cultural Center. From there it runs towards the second BMA Headquarters (a.k.a. BMA2) in Pracha Songkhro and cuts the BTS Sukhumvit Line at Victory Monument. Along Rajavithi Road, it runs towards the Dusit Zoo and make a left turn at Sam Sen Road, passing the National Library, Thewet, Bang Khunphrom (The Bank of Thailand). Making another left turn into Phra Sumaen Road, it passes Pom Mahakan Intersection at Ratchadamnoen Klang Avenue where it will intersect with one of the extended BTS routes. From here it runs along the right bank of the Klong Ong Ang towards Wang Burapha and intersects, once again, with the MRTA's blue line. Crossing the Chao Phraya River around Saphan Buddha Yodfa Chulalok (Memorial Bridge), it travels down Pracha Thipok and Somdet Phrachao Taksin Roads, calling at Wong Wien yai, Sam Rae and Mahai Sawan. Finally, it runs along the the same stretch of road (now Suksawat Road), passing Chom Thong, Dao Khanong, Bang Pakok and Pracha Uthit, terminating at Rat Burana.

The orange line is largely underground, except for the stretch from Chom Thong to Rat Burana and at the other tail from Lam Sali to Bang Kapi where it will be elevated. Park & Ride facilities are expected at Rat Burana and Bang Kapi terminals. Further extensions for the orange line are still pending and they include an extension from Bang Kapi to Min Buri (along Ramkhamhaeng Road a.k.a. Sukha Phiban 3 Road), another from Rat Burana to the Southern Outer Ring Road along Suksawat Road. No additional depot is planned specially for this line and it will use the existing facilities at Huai Kwang Depot. Nevertheless, when the orange line has been extended towards Min Buri, there might be one constructed in the Eastern suburb, but that is still in the very distant future.

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## New subway station names – October 16, 2002

Translated and summarized from the MRTA website. MRTA changed some station names to correspond with the names of significant places, landmarks, roads, and local names of the places.

Old	New	Reason
Pracharat Bumphen	Huay Kwang	Most people are more familiar with Huay Kwang than with Pracharat Bumphen.
Thiam Ruam Mitr	Thai Cultural Center	Thiam Ruam Mitr Road is not a main road. Therefore, MRTA selected a significant bureaucratic place (Thai Cultural Center) close to the station instead.
Ratchada	Ratchadaphisek	The station is on Ratchadaphisek Inner Ring Road (a ring road initiated by His Majesty The King as a gift to his Bangkok subjects during the Silver Jubilee of His Majesty's Reign in June, 1971).
Mochit	Chatuchak	The station is near Chatuchak park, a park that became more significant than Mochit Market. The park was established in 1975 by SRT to commemorate the 4th cycle of His Majesty (48-years old).
Bon Kai	Klong Toei	The station is in Klong Toei area, not Bon Kai

## Full list of updated subway station names – October 18, 2002



Here's a complete list of subway station names (translated and summarized from the MRTA website).

**Left:** Rendering of the Lad Phrao Park-and-Ride

Station name	Location	Dimension	Depth	Platform	Gates
Hua Lamphong	Between Rong Muang and Hua Lamphong intersection in front of Hua Lamphong Station with a permanent exhibition about the MRTA project and the history of transportation in Thailand	23 m x 206 m	14 m	Central	3
Sam Yarn	Sam Yarn Intersection near Wat Hua Lamphong and Chula Hi-tech-along Rama 4 Road	22 m x 174 m	14 m	Central	2
Silom	Under the Thai-Japanese Flyover at Saladaeng Intersection in front of Dusit Thani Hotel	30 m x 156 m	30m	Stack	2
Lumphini	Sathon Intersection opposite to Suan Lum Night Bazaar (aka Soo Laew Ruay Market)	20 m x 172 m	26 m	Stack	3
Klong Toei	In front of MEA office (Klong Toei) near the expressway and Maenam Intersection	28 m x 202 m	18 m	Side	2

Queen Sirikit Convention Center	Opposite the new Stock Exchange of Thailand and Soi Phai Singtoh (to be decorated with traditional Thai decorations)	23 m x 196 m	17m	Central	4
Sukhumvit	Asok Road, near Asok-Sukhumvit Intersection in front of Asok market	23 m x 199 m	17 m	Central	3
Phetburi	Asok Road, near Asok-Phetburi Intersection near the Japanese Embassy and the Eastern Railway	23 m x 200 m	20 m	Central	3
Rama 9	In front of Fortune Town Building and Rama 9 Intersection	23 m x 199 m	18 m	Central	3
Thai Cultural Center	In front of Thai Life Insurance HQ	27 m x 340 m	19 m	Central	4
Huay Kwang	Huay Kwang Intersection	23 m x 266 m	19 m	Central	4
Suthisarn	Suthisarn Intersection – near Suthisarn Police Station	23 m x 226 m	19 m	Central	4
Ratchadaphisek	In front of Plathong Karat Building	23 m x 226 m	19 m	Central	4
Lad Phrao	Lad Phrao Soi 21–connected to the Park and Ride Facility	22 m x 258 m	18 m	Central	4
Phaholyothin	Lad Phrao Intersection near Central Lad Phrao and Saint John’s School	22 m x 226 m	18 m	Central	5
Chatuchak	At Chatuchak Park near the Morchit Skytrain Station	30 m x 336 m	17 m	Central	4
Kamphaengphet	Near Chatuchak Weekend Market and the Agricultural Market Organization	23 m x 226 m	17 m	Central	3
Bang Sue	Near Bangsue junction	30m x 226 m	12 m	Side	2

[MRTA map](#) showing proposed extensions and other mass transit projects (August, 2000 – Thai). This map shows the proposed subway extensions.

#### KEY

**Green** – BTS Skytrain

**Blue solid** – Blue line subway (under construction)

**Blue dotted** – Blue line subway (proposed)

**Orange** – Orange line subway (proposed)

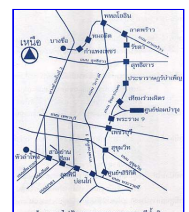
**Red** – State Railway of Thailand rail system (existing and proposed)

**Purple** – High speed train (proposed)

Sources for the lists below: 1997 MRTA master plan and information from Thai magazines and newspapers. The latest updated station list he found is from *Transport and Travel Journal Weekly*, November 8-14, 1999 and November 15-21, 1999. He found updates for the Blue Line in the latest MRTA brochure.

Blue Line (Initial System Project) – 20 km  
February 10, 2000

The route starts from Hua Lamphong railway station and continues along Rama IV Road, then runs northward along Ratchadapisek Road to Lat Phrao Road and runs northwest along Lat Phrao Road to Central Plaza, then southward passing the North and Northeastern Bus



Terminal and finally westward to Bang Sue railway station as the end of the line.

Park and ride: 2000 car facility at Lat Phrao Station.

Presently under construction. The Bangsue-Huay Kwang section of the MRTA Blue Line will open in December 2002. The rest will be done in July 2003. However, delays in digging the tunnels and laying the tracks may push the whole project opening back to early 2004.

The station list is from an MRTA brochure and *Prachachart Thurakit* (<http://www.matichon.co.th>) November 25-28, 1999.

Right: Thai map of the Blue Line

#### 18 stations

- 01) Hua Lamphong – northern side of Rama IV Road, between Jarumueang and Mahaphruttharam Road (AKA Hua Lamphong and Saphan Lueang Intersection respectively)
- 02) Samyan – southern side of Rama IV Road and the eastern side of See Phraya Road – in front of Wat Hua Lamphong, not far from Chula Hi-tec Center Building
- 03) Silom – southern side of Rama IV Road and the eastern side of Silom Road (AKA Windmill Road) – in front of Dusit Thane Hotel – will be a transfer station to BTS Skytrain
- 04) Lumpinee – southern side of Rama IV Road and the eastern side of Sathorn Intersection (Sathorn Tai Road) – not far from Lumpinee Boxing Ring and Cadet preparation Academy (The Academy will move to Khao Cha-Ngok, Nakhon Nayok, not far from Chulachomklao Royal Military Academy)
- 05) Bonkai – southern side of Rama IV Road and eastern side of the Maenam Railway Line (to Port Authority of Thailand) and Chaloem Mahanakhon Expressway – not far from Klongtoei neighborhood
- 06) Queen Sirikit – Ratchadaphisek Inner Ring Road, opposite to Queen Sirikit National Convention Convention Center, not far from Phai Singto neighborhood
- 07) Sukhumvit – Asok Road (Sukhumvit 21), the northern section of Sukhumvit Intersection – will be a transfer station to the BTS Skytrain not far from the Siam Society
- 08) Phetburi – Asok Intersection and Phetburi Road – near the Embassy of Japan – this one will be a showcase so the Bangkokians will learn what the MRTA stations will look like
- 09) Rama IX – Ratchadaphisek Inner Ring Road, at the North of Rama IX intersection to Huay Kwang intersection
- 10) Thiam Ruammit – Ratchadaphisek Inner Ring Road – same side of Thai Life Insurance Building, not far from the Thai Cultural Center
- 11) Pracharat Bumphen – center of Huaykwang Intersection near Pracharat Bumphen Road (a shortcut to Ladphrao Road – via Ladphrao Soi 80 (80th Lane of Ladphrao Road)
- 12) Suthisarn – center of Suthisarn intersection, near Suthisarn Road (RCA II is at Suthisarn Road)
- 13) Ratchada – in front of P. Karat Building
- 14) Ladphrao – around Lad Phrao Soi 21 (21st Lane of Ladphrao Road), near Ratchada-lad Phrao Intersection – Park and Ride will be here.
- 15) Phahol Yothin – Lad Phrao Intersection, near Lad Phrao flea market and Central Plaza – Lad Phrao Branch
- 16) Mo Chit – in Chatuchak Park – will be at transfer station to the BTS Skytrain
- 17) Kamphaeng Phet – opposite of Agricultural Central Market Organization – same side at Chatuchak Weekend market, not far from Moh Chit 2 Bus Terminal
- 18) Bang Sue – not far from Bang Sue Junction, the 2nd stage Expressway

#### Blue Line Transfer Stations

- 1) Tao Poon Intersection – a station next to Bang Sue Junction – for the Blue Line (northern extension and the future Purple Line)
- 2) Bangsue Junction – the northern end of Blue Line and the moribund Hopewell Project – AKA Red Line
- 3) Moh Chit – the Bangkok Terminal to the green and the blue line
- 4) Thewet – the southern end of the future Purple Line and the Orange Line
- 5) Dusit – the Orange Line and the moribund Hopewell (Red Line) – the Hopewell section – if ever implemented at all – need to get the Royal approval first – otherwise they won't be able to construct it at all – the station will be higher than the Chitlada Palace!
- 6) Victory Monument – the Green Line of BTS and the Orange Line
- 7) Thai Cultural Center – the Blue and the Orange Line

- 8) Ratchadamnuen Avenue – the Orange Line – and the Red Line – Northwestern section of the moribund Hopewell – if ever implemented
- 9) Yommarat – all Hopewell sections will meet here but probably not in our life time .... sigh!
- 10) Phayathai – the Green Line and the Red Line (Hopewell) ... if ever implemented at all
- 11) Rama IX – the Blue Line and the Red Line (Hopewell) ... if ever implemented at all
- 12) Phutthayodfah-Phapokklao Bridge – the southern extension of the Blue Line and the Southern section of the Orange Line will be meet here
- 13) Hua Lamphong – the southwestern section of that Hopewell Red Line and the Blue Line will be met here
- 14) Siam Square – the most obvious interesection – opened December, 1999
- 15) Asok-Sukhumvit – the Blue Line and Green Line probably meet here
- 16) Wongwian Yai (Thonburi Circle) – the Blue, Orange and the moribund Red (Hopewell) Line (Wongwian Yai Railway Station)
- 17) Silom (Windmill Road) – the Green and the Blue Line will be probably meet here
- 18) Bang Na – the Green Line will be separated into 2 sections here – one goes to Samrong and the other goes to Nong Ngoo Hao Airport – Southern Terminal

[Bangkok Subway status in 1999](#)



# Master Plan News 2005

December 1, 2005

Categories: Master Plans

This section contains news of the Master Plan, overall Bangkok development, the Bangkok Governor's development plans, and articles about interconnecting mass transit projects.

[Mass Transit News main page](#)

[Western Corridor Project](#) – December 27, 2005

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[SIDELINES: Fast-track plan for mega-kickbacks unveiled](#) – *The Nation*, December 18, 2005

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[BMA to push for Samrong extension](#) – *The Nation*, December 13, 2005

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On the forum: [Blue Ring may cause collapse of Santa Crus Church in Thonburi?](#) – *Dailynews*, December 12, 2005

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[Bickering slows new rail projects](#) – *The Nation*, December 13, 2005

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Flip-flopping mass transit plans – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from December 9, 2005

*Bangkok Biznews*, December 8, 2005: Even though Transport Minister Pheng has grudgingly accepted the 10 lines initiated by Suriya and Sudarat, he has still not specified whether the section from Bang Kapi to Minburi will be the extension of the Orange line or the new Brown Line. Minister Pheng said he is going to deliver the data to diplomats during the meetings on December 14.

*Than Setthakij*, December 8-10, 2005 and *Manager Weekly*, December 4-10, 2005: The flip-flop plan of Transport Minister Pheng has effectively deferred both foreign investors and local real estate owners and contractors from investing in this megaproject. For the media, they say it would be very lucky for TRT to complete just 1-2 lines of the mass transit project from 10 lines... For many, the term "Internal Bidding" is just a turnkey in the new disguise...

*Than Setthakij*, December 8-10, 2005: Wait until you can see who is the next MRTA Governor since Pheng and Suriya are going fight for the new MRTA puppet ... Pheng wants some new face to replace Governor Praphat while Suriya wants to keep Governor Praphat in the same old place instead of becoming MRTA Advisor.

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[Thailand mulls single bidder for mass transit](#) – *Business Day*, December 6, 2005

*Thailand is considering awarding Bangkok's 550 billion baht (13.75 billion dollars) 10-line mass transit project to a single bidder when it calls for proposals early next year, government officials have said...*

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[Mass-transit plan 'made for collusion'](#) – *The Nation*, December 6, 2005

*...There is only a handful electric-train manufacturers in the world, namely Siemens, Alstom and Bombardier, which would have to join hands with other international suppliers and local contractors. Even though the government will open all the 10 routes for bidding, it is more likely that each firm will choose only those routes that they think are more economical and may collude to win the contracts...*

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[List of 10 new lines with international bidding](#) – *Thai News Agency*, December 1, 2005

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[Suriya goes one up over rival Pongsak – PM rejects proposed changes to train lines](#) – *Bangkok Post*, December 2, 2005

*...Soon after taking over the Transport Ministry in August, Mr Pongsak tried to erode Mr Suriya's influence by reviewing some of the seven mass transit lines.*

*He eventually had to give up the attempt. The additional three lines announced on Tuesday were the ones designed when his predecessor still controlled the ministry.*

*The three routes were not put before cabinet for approval at the time when Mr Suriya was the transport minister.*

*"The attempt to change some routes had a bad effect on the country's credibility," a government official said. "It could also affect the government, which put the mass transit system on the agenda during Thai Rak Thai's election campaign..."*

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[Siemens eyes mega rail projects – German firm aims to enter bidding round](#) – Bangkok Post, December 2, 2005

*...In January this year, Siemens together with its consortium partners – B Grimm MBM and Sino-Thai Engineering and Construction Plc – won the Airport Rail Link and City Air Terminal contracts from the State Railway of Thailand. This new 28 km-long, 160 kph-speed rail line worth 25.91 billion baht will connect the Bangkok's Makkasan area with the Suvarnabhumi Airport.*

*In addition, the company was also awarded a contract to maintain an extension of the BTS Skytrain for 10 years...*

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List of 10 new lines with international bidding – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thai News Agency*, December 1, 2005

The government has asked for 10 lines of mass transit system with a price tag of 550 billion baht even though the same amount of budget is for just seven lines.

The extra three lines are

1) Old Yellow Line – Bang Kapi – Sri Nakharin – Samrong

2) New Yellow Line – Nawamin – Kaset – Bangkhen Station – Ngam Wongwan – Khae Rai with a branch line from Patthamawikorn to Km 8

3) Pink Monorail – Chaeng Watthana – Ram Indra – Minburi – Suwinthawongse

The 1st phase will consist of 4 lines with a price tag of 194.276 billion baht and this will have to be a turnkey project.

**Notes:** Nowadays, few people feel convinced with PM Thaksin's plans on megaprojects after a series of shenanigans with mass transit plans by Transport Minister Pheng along with impulsive and continuing changes of the plan by PM Thaksin.

Even worse, the plan to borrow 80 billion baht to solve the cash flow problems due to the pet projects of the PM and his cronies has effectively ruined the confidence that the government has any cash to deal with the megaprojects at all...

The cut of Lad Phrao – Bang Kapi Section (underground) instead of a scaled-down version to elevated tracks would only alienate those who live along Lad Phrao Road to such extent to jeopardize the election of TRT MPs.

Pink Monorail without going to Muangthong Thani will never work. Nobody wants to make a transfer from the gate of Muang Thong Thani to go into IMPACT.

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[Mass transit rail plan aims to ease Bangkok congestion](#) – TNA, December 1, 2005

*...The three new extended routes will cover the Bang Kapi, Sri Nagarindra, Samrong, Kasetsart University, Kae lai, Bang Khen, Raminthra, Nawamin, Changwatana, Min Buri and Suwinthawong areas.*

*The transport minister said details of the new routes were now being worked out, and would be submitted to the prime minister for further consideration within seven days.*

*The previously announced seven routes, with some adjustments to plans, are:*

– 43-kilometre purple route from Bang Yai in Nonthaburi Province, passing through Bang Sue to Ratchaburana in the city's Thonburi side.

– 27-kilometre blue route from Hua Lampong, passing through Bang Sue and Bang Kae to Ta Pra in Thonburi.

– 24-kilometre orange route from Bang Kapi to Bang Bamru in Thonburi.

– 66.8-kilometre red route from Rangsit in Pathum Thani Province, passing through Bang Sue and Hua Lampong to Mahachai in Samut Sakhon Province.

– 71.4-kilometre light red route from Airport Link, passing through Bang Sue, Makkasan to Taling Chan.



- 26.5-kilometre light green route from Prannok in Thonburi to Samut Prakan Province.
  - 18.7-kilometre green route from Saphan Mai in Don Muang area to Bang Wa in Thonburi...
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Blue Ring at Bangkok Noy discussions: Scaling down the station size and connections to the canal pier – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thairath*, November 29, 2005

There was the meeting between MRTA-BMTD and local people of Bangkok Noy at 9am on November 28, 2005 with 50 local people attending. The meeting was about the Blue Ring that passes Bangkok Noy District.

There will be two stations on this route

- 1) Bangkok Noy
- 2) Phran Nok

However, those who live in Bangkok Noy district have a split opinion on Bangkok Noy station as well as Phrannok station.

- 1) Change the name from Bangkok Noy to Bang Khun Non since the station is on Bang Khun Non Intersection as well as Chanasanitwongse 53.
- 2) Those who live in Wat Suwannaram neighborhood in Charansanitwongse 59 told MRTA to "keep the name of Bangkok Noy station, but the station must be moved to the pier on Bangkok Noy Canal for convenient connection with the long tail boat. Many of us have to ride long tail boats to Bang Kruay and Pakklong Talad."
- 3) The stairways for both Phrannok and Bangkok Noy station must be the same form as BTS since they refuse to surrender the land for making comfortable stairways for the handicapped due to the narrow space (4 meter wide footpaths).
- 4) The distance between each pillar will be 35 meters with the box structure with more curvy and lighter structure than BTS.
- 5) Phran Nok station must be connected to the future BTS Pinklao extension.

Most local people ask MRTA on the land expropriation issue. MRTA said they just ask for a Royal Decree to survey the land until they have finalized the place to construct the stations.

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Summary for Blue Ring – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thairath*, November 24, 2005 and *Dailynews*, November 23, 2005

During an MRTA meeting session with local people at Bangkok Yai district hall on November 23, the Blue Ring will pass Bangkok Yai with two elevated stations on the middle or Charansanitwongse Inner ring.

- 1) Phanitchayakarn Thonburi
- 2) Tha Phra interchange station

Local people want to see the exact areas to be expropriated along with the compensation rates. MRTA and BMTD replied to the local people that they have not finished the station design yet so they cannot answer such questions.

There were 150 Taopoon people attending the previous session about Blue Ring at Bangsue District hall . MRTA said the Blue Ring will go from Bangsue to Bang Pho via Pracharat Sai 2 Road which passes Tao Poon area.

There will be one station in Bangsue for Blue Ring which is

- 1) Bang Pho Station – at Bang Pho intersection–not finalized whether it will be closer to Chao Phraya Express Pier or the shopping mall

The other station (Tao Poon) will be an interchange for both Blue Ring and Purple Line. Therefore the Purple Line will be there even though some disgruntled local people have sprayed graffiti of the Red Nazi Cross on the map of the Purple Line.

Most people of Tao poon have seen the point to have elevated tracks near their building rows, but they need to see the exact areas of the expropriated land so they are prepared to buy new homes along the Purple Line once they have to move out.

For the case of those who live in Phasaecharoen, they would support the Blue Ring project instead of objecting to the project as those who live in Tao Poon have and who now now become pariahs in the eyes of other Bangkokians. However, the local people of Phasaecharoen have asked MRTA to make a serious survey on Phakasem Road since there is a sewage pipeline along that road which requires a rebuilding of the pipeline before removing the old one. Without proper planning, the construction of the Blue Ring from Tha Phra to Bang Khae would be delayed.

Furthermore the local people are concerning about Bang Khae Station near Bang Khae Market. The good design of the elevated station is needed so it can run along the area with high density like Bang Khae Market. Those who live along Phetkasem Road wonder if MRTA is going to build a Park and Ride near the Mall

Bang Khae according to the plan. They are also very reluctant to surrender their land to constructing the station with much better facilities than BTS stations.

The stairways of elevated tracks will depend upon the demands of local people—either the same as BTS but without elevators or with elevators and big escalators for handicapped in the same way as MRTA with and expropriation needed.

MRTA Governor Phraphat said if they refuse to surrender the land to construct the station facilities, they would have to say goodbye to the escalators and elevators for the handicapped. Furthermore, MRTA have already cut the station length from 250 meters to 180 meters to minimize the detrimental effect during construction and MRTA would have to write an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) to be submitted to the Environmental Bureau, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

For the underground line through Rattanakosin Island, MRTA is asking the Environment Bureau that MRTA would have to use the open road surface method to construct the Blue Ring through Rattanakosin island instead of the closed surface method as suggested by Rattanakosin Island Committee due to the fact that there is unlikely to have the old artifacts at Wang Boorapha and Sanam Chai since both have road surfaces for a long time despite the claims of artifacts like the foundation of Sam Yod Gate and the City Wall at Wang Boorapha. The open surface method is cheaper to implement and it is faster to be complete. However, MRTA would have to wait until they see the result from the Environmental Bureau and Rattanakosin Island Committee.

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Elevated section of the Blue Line at Phasee Charoen following BTS model with stairways on the footpaths – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thairath*, November 23, 2005

150 people attended the MRTA-BMTD meeting with the local people at the Phasee Charoen District office. BMTD told the local people that the section from Pakklong Talad to Bangkok Yai would be underground before becoming an elevated track from Issaraphab Road. The elevated tracks would follow the middle island on Phetkasem Road from Tha Phra.

There will be four stations within Phaseecharoen district:

1) Bang Phai, 2) Bang Wah, 3) Phekasem 48, 4) Phaseecharoen

The length of stations will be down from 250 meters to 180 meters which requires the reduction of commercial spaces.

There will be four models for the stairways:

1. Standard stairway parallel with the road. This type will have escalators and elevators for the handicapped. The stairways would be outside the footpath area, so land expropriation is needed.

2. The standard stairway perpendicular with the road. This type will have only the stairway without elevators. The stairways would be outside the footpath area so land expropriation is needed.

3. The small stairway parallel with the road and the stairways will be in the opposite direction. This type will have only escalators that go UP to the station without elevators. This type of stairway will be the same as the BTS Skytrain. Therefore, no need for land expropriation since it covers only the footpath area.

4. The small stairway parallel with the road and the stairways will be in the same direction. This type will have only escalators that go up to the station and the stairway will be the same as the BTS Skytrain.

Therefore, no need for land expropriation since it covers only the footpath area.

For the interchange at Bang Wah for the future connection with BTS, MRTA said they will be connected with BTS eventually.

MRTA would give priority for the environment during and after the construction with the continuing environmental assessment. Therefore, MRTA need continuing public opinion to guarantee full satisfaction. MRTA would also pay the landowners at a satisfying rate since there will be a committee to make an assessment on the land expropriation by applying the market rates of land prices.

**Note:** Expect a conflict of interest between the handicapped and the landowners along the route because the handicapped want elevators in every station while landowners refuse to surrender their land unless they get paid at hefty prices.

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Expropriating a football field in Wat Rajbophit high school for the Blue Ring across Rattanakosin Island – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thairath*, November 16, 2005

There was a meeting between MRTA and BMTA and local people at Phra Nakhorn District for the Blue Ring in the morning of November 15 with only 50 people (most from the bureaucrat offices) attending the meeting. On the other hand there were 30 people during the afternoon meeting at Samphanthawongse District.

There will be one underground station at Samphanthawongse district and two underground stations at Phra

Nakhorn District with 1.7 km underground track with double tunnel. The stations will be stacked up like Silom station due to space constraints.

- 1) Wat Wangkorn Kamalawat -> Samphanthawongse
- 2) Wang Boorapha -> Phra Nakhon
- 3) Sanam Chai -> Phra Nakhon

Dimension of Sanam Chai station and Wang Boorapha station will be 23 meter wide, 180 meter long and 30 meter deep while the dimensions of Wat Wangkorn Kamalawat station will have to be 23 meters wide, 250 meters long and 30 meters deep. All three stations would have to be stacked up like Silom station.

The representative from Wat Rajbophit school is asking for the area to be expropriated and BMTD said part of the football field from that school would have to be expropriated. For the case of Wat Wangkorn Kamalawat station, it needs a major land expropriation for the gates due to space constraints—19 meter-wide footpaths. Even though the company would try at best not to do any harm to Wat Wangkorn Kamalawat due to its historical significance.

It is necessary to open the surface of Charoenkrung Road which will do harm to the commercial activities in that area. Therefore, a hefty compensations is needed, but it is up to the policy from MOTC to deal with this matter.

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Modifying Kaset flyover for the Bangkok Smart Way and Phaholyothin extension of BTS – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thairath*, *Matichon*, *Dailynews*, November 16, 2005

BMA City Hall had released the news that it is necessary to modify the 3-lane Kaset flyover by shortening and narrowing the flyover to allow both Bangkok Smart way and BTS Phaholyothin extension. It will shorten the flyover by 500-600 meters from Phaholyothin 35 – GSB to the Land Development Dept – GSB so as to construct the new BRT station at Senanikhom 1 Road .

Furthermore, BMA is going to narrow the lane from 3 to 2 lanes. This measure is to allow the construction of both the Bangkok Smart Way and BTS Phaholyothin extension.

This modification would cost BMA 200 million Baht and the flyover modification would have to be executed at the same time as the construction of Bangkok Smartway so as to minimize the traffic interruption and both Flyover Modification and Bangkok Smartway would be done at the same time -> December 2006.

The blueprint for Flyover modification would be done by the end of November 2005 .... and the price assessment would be submitted to BMA Board so as to start the flyover modification in Jan 2006, finish removing in April 2006, allow BRT operation in August 2006, and finish the modification in December 2006. The modification would take six months to be complete.

Furthermore, BMA is asking the Provincial Highway Department, ETA, and the Highway Department to finish the tunnel construction at Kaset Intersection so BMA could start the flyover modification.

The new flyover at Ratchayothin will be made by removing the old flyover along Ratchadaphisek Inner Ring with the space for BTS Phaholyothin extension and BRT. The replacement for Ratchayothin flyover is the new tunnel.

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Speeding up spending on 1.8 trillion baht megaprojects – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thairath*, November 11, 2005

The upcoming cabinet meetings on November 15 will consider the plan for megaproject spending which is up to 1.804242 trillion baht, up by 103.492 billion baht

For MOTC, the list of megaprojects are:

- 1) 555.737 billion baht mass transit
  - 1.1) 23 km – Purple Line
  - 1.2) 27 km – Blue Ring
  - 1.3) Red line commuter
  - 1.4) Pink Airport Link
- 2) Other 17 MOTC Projects of 407.43298 billion baht
  - 2.1) Pak Bara deep sea port
  - 2.2) Eastern Seaboard Double tracking
  - 2.3) 14 new commercial planes for Thai International

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Critique of plans for future intercity rail Deputy Professor Dr. Ichiro Kakisaki, author of *Laying Track* – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi, November 15, 2005

The way to force the intercity passengers to go down to change the train to red line commuter at Taling Chan and Chiang Rak is not a very good idea at all.

1. Very inconvenient for the intercity passengers to change trains at Chiang Rak or Taling Chan. Taling Chan and Chiang Rak are too far away from the city center (40 km for Chiang Rak). The taxi from Chiang Rak to the city center is already 200-300 baht, so this will force intercity passengers into the Red Line commuter, leaving too little space during rush hour due to heavy luggage from intercity passengers and lots of people from the suburbs.

You should never forget that many suburban people ride intercity trains to Bangkok in the morning. There are 10 intercity trains going along the Northern tracks and those who use intercity trains carry lots of luggage which is very inconvenient for the passengers to transfer their baggage.

Furthermore, the terminal of intercity at Chiang Rak, Makasan and Taling Chan would force the passengers to make at least three transfers instead of just one at Hua Lamphong or Bangsue.

Other countries in the world would allow intercity trains into the city center, not leave them far away at Chiang Rak. Where did they get the idea to move the intercity terminals to the suburbs?

## 2. Obstructing the cargo trains to Bangkok

The main cargo for Bangkok is at Phahol Yothin Yard. The daily cargo of cement from Saraburi to the cement silo at Phaholyothin Yard is 840,569 tons of cement in 2003. If you decide to terminate cement trains at Chiang Rak instead of Phaholyothin Cargo yard, you would face the dire consequence of transferring the cement into the city by trucks which would take 80,000 ten-wheel loads to do the job.

The cargo train to Mae Nam station would be in trouble without the track from Chiang Rak to Makasan via Bangsue and Makasan. The alternative of Kang Khoi – Klong 19 – Makasan is too long for a Southern cargo train.

## 3. Adding extra operating costs for SRT

Building only two elevated tracks instead of five (2 for red line commuter and 3 for intercity) is not a cost savings at all! Only two elevated tracks would force SRT to rearrange the tracks and system which costs more than adding extra tracks.

The new double track from Suphanburi to Ban Phachi is not easy to implement in the very short period of time. Initially, the track from Nong Pladuk to Suphanburi is heading to Lopburi but it stops at Suphanburi since 1963 after the death of strongman Sarit and is a single commuter train to Suphanburi with very few passengers.

Even though the bypass route such as Nong Pladuk – Suphanburi – Ban Phachi is not a bad idea, the government should prepare to pay the extra cost from the 7 billion baht budget along with extra time over 6 years to finish the since it requires three bridges across the Suphanburi River, Noy River and Chao Phraya River. The cost to acquire the land in the central planes from Suphanburi to Ban Phachi via Ang Thong is not cheap.

Furthermore, you have to make a massive rehab of track from Non Pladuk to Suphan Buri and then the new track from Suphanburi to Ban Phachi via Ang Thong which requires a new survey for feasibility and design before construction. The government is acting like a fool millionaire who wants a 100-floor skyscraper without building floor 1 to 99.

You have to keep Taling Chan – Bangsue – Chiang Rak and Bangsue – Makasan – Hua Mark route alive and well so long that you have not finished the route Nong Palduk – Suphanburi – Ban Phachi (or Lopburi according to the old plan) which will take longer time to implement than Bangsue – Chiang Rak Red Line commuter.

Furthermore, the massive movement of new terminal from Bangsue to Taling Chan and Chiang Rak along with the movement of the godowns and cement silos, the marshaling yard and locomotive depot from Bangsue (and Hua Lamphong railcar depot) to Ban Phachi would cost the government a lot more than the savings from cutting down from 5 tracks to 2 tracks.

The old plan to move Hua Lamphong to Bangsue (near Kamphaengphet subway station) and turn the track from Bangsue to Hualamphong into a road failed due to the higher cost to build the new track from Bangsue to Klong Tan (now Ratchadaphisek ring road). It is also cheaper to construct an elevated track from Bangsue to Yommaraj and Yommaraj to Makasan but SRT failed to realize it.

Therefore, it is better to keep the track from Bangsue to Chiang Rak and Bangsue to Taling Chan as the mix of Red Line commuter and intercity trains and keep Bangsue as the center of the intercity trains as defined in the old plan which is rejected by Transport Minister Pheng, for sake of convenience of the passenger service and cargo services and budget saving.

Even five tracks from Bangsue to Chiang Rak is not much more expensive due to the Hopewell structures which allow five track. New road tunnels across the railway tracks from Wat Samian Naree to Don Muang would also help. The same can be said of the Bangsue – Taling Chan route if they want at-grade tracks.

If you really want to cut the budget on first phase, please cut at the following routes:

1) No Blue Ring in the first phase. The Blue Ring should be implemented only after the Red Line commuter

and Purple Line has become a reality. The track from Hua Lamphong to Bangkhae can be substituted by the third phase BTS Taksin extension (Bang Wah – Bang Khae) only after the demand is rising would force the government to implement the Blue Ring.

2) The Orange Line should be implemented even though the route has to be modified to be extended to Klong Tan (or Makasan) after passing the Thailand Cultural Center.

3) The Purple Line section 2 should be implemented from Wongwian Yai to Rat Boorana , even though the route has to be midfield to be started at Hua Lamphong.

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Flip-flop on mass transit plan – the Yellow Line LRT is gone! – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Matichon*, November 8, 2005

Initially, we thought that the government was running out of money to implement 500 billion baht mass transit system. However, we found the reasons behind Transport Minister Pheng's words that there are more hidden reasons behind the changes.

1) The budget is still the same 500 billion baht for 10 lines with a 291km distance

2) 60 billion baht for 5 expressways with 65 km distance

3) Only the first 4 lines would be done—the red line commuters first and then the purple line and blue ring. The Green BTS would be later.

4) However, Pheng no longer mentions the Yellow LRT by claiming that there are too few passengers despite the fact that there are many people living in the Bang Kapi-Lad Phrao area and a promise by previous Transport Minister Suriya.

This is a sure sign that the policy changes are according to the whim of ministers.

Furthermore, we really feel frightened about the conflict between Wang Nam Yom (headed by Somsak and Suriya) and the "Big House" (headed by Khunying Potjaman and Pheng) that is increasingly intensified along with the discrimination policy against the provinces that do not vote TRT.

Even the provinces that vote for TRT would get no aid if they vote for the wrong factions— they vote against the "Big House."

The ongoing conflict such as between the "Big House" vs. Sudarat Faction in Bangkok and the "Big House" vs. Wang Namyom have effectively killed the Yellow Line along with the Orange Line despite the ready credit lines for the projects.

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Minister Pheng's mass transit plan – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thairath* and *Manager Daily*, November 2, 2005

Minister Pheng has come up with the followign plan for the mass transit system:

1) Mixed gauge (meter gauge/standard gauge) for the following sections

1.1) Rangsit – Ayutthaya – Ban Phachi

1.2) Lad Krabang – Chachongsao – Chonburi

1.3) Talingchan – Nakhon Pathom

2) Double tracking for the following routes

2.1) Nakhon Pathom – Nong Pladuk – Suphanburi

2.2) Chachongsao – Klong 19 – Wiharn Daeng

3) New line for Suphanburi – Ban Phachi – Wiharn Daeng as a new cargo route

Comments about the plan are in [this thread on the forum](#).

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[Many decisions hinge on mass-transit plans](#) – *Bangkok Post*, October 31, 2005

...When Pongsak Raktapongpaisal took over as transport minister in a recent cabinet reshuffle, he declared that changes from the original plan were needed. He proposed scrapping some parts of the planned routes, and substituting cheaper Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) or monorail systems for trains in some areas.

...But Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra later declared that the government would go ahead with the seven originally planned routes, based on a heavy-rail system that would bring suburban people into the central business district within 30 minutes for a maximum fare of 30 baht.

Ultimately, all property developers want is clarity, given the impact mass transit availability can have on land values, affecting both their costs and the prices of the homes they market to customers...

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TOR for Red Line commuter and more on the mass transit routes – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thairath*, October 29, 2005

There will be two version of TOR for the Red Line commuter as well as the Blue Ring and Purple Line.

1. Government to government – paid in agriculture products – only France, mainland China and Russia are keen to deal with this kind of payment.

2. International bidding – paid in cash – preferred by USA, Japan, South Korea, and Germany

Transport Minister Pheng said if the first version of the TOR fails to be approved by the government from France, mainland China and Russia after two month of negotiation, the second version would be called.

Transport Minister Pheng has admitted that the barter system for megaprojects (the first version of TOR) is really hard to implement, but it is not impossible to do so.

The specifications for the Red Line commuter:

1) Makkasan – Donmuang – Ayutthaya – Distance -> 73 km

Elevated tracks -> 24 km from Makkasan to Donmuang

Tracks At grade -> 49 km from Donmuang to Ayutthaya

22 Stations – 19 grade crossings

2) Bangsue – Bang Bumru – Nakhon Pathom – Distance -> 57 km

Elevated tracks -> 11 km from Bangsue to Bang Bumru

Tracks at grade -> 46 km from Bang Bumru to Nakhon Pathom

15 stations – 19 grade crossings

MOTC has approved a 3.8 billion baht fund for the Highway Department and related agencies to dig the tunnel and the flyover across the railway areas as a way to save construction costs by 20 billion baht instead of having elevated track all the way from Donmuang to Ayutthaya and all the way from Bang Bumru (the station where the International Express stops on the Thonburi side) to Nakhon Pathom.

3) Purple line – all the same – 23 km elevated tracks

4) Blue Ring – all the same – 13 km elevated track Bangsue to Tha Phra, 9 km elevated track from Tha Phra to Bang Khae, 5 km underground across Rattanakosin Island from Hualamphong to Tha Phra

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[Many decisions hinge on mass-transit plans](#) – Bangkok Post, October 31, 2005

*...When Pongsak Raktapongpaisal took over as transport minister in a recent cabinet reshuffle, he declared that changes from the original plan were needed. He proposed scrapping some parts of the planned routes, and substituting cheaper Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) or monorail systems for trains in some areas.*

*...But Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra later declared that the government would go ahead with the seven originally planned routes, based on a heavy-rail system that would bring suburban people into the central business district within 30 minutes for a maximum fare of 30 baht.*

*Ultimately, all property developers want is clarity, given the impact mass transit availability can have on land values, affecting both their costs and the prices of the homes they market to customers...*

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Red Line commuter to be finished in 10 years instead of 5 years – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Than Setthakij*, October 27-29, 2005

Transport Minister Pheng has asked SRT to submit the plan for Red Line Commuter as shown here to the cabinet by the end of October 2005:

1) Bangsue – Donmuang – Rangsit – 24.6 km – 33.025 billion baht

2) Phayathai – Bangsue – Talingchan – 20.4 km – 27.410 billion baht

MRTA would also have to submit the plan for the following routes:

1) Purple line (Bangsue – Bang Yai – 23 km – 31.664 billion baht

2) Blue Ring (Bangsue – Tha Pra, Hua Lamphong – Bang Khae) – 27.2 km – 37.880 billion baht

The Red Line commuter along with Suvarnabhumi Airport Link extension along with other projects would not be completed in 5 years, but in 10 years instead. The claim is that it has to go slower to prevent traffic jams.

Further extension of Red Line commuter will have to undergo new studies before getting cabinet approval.

1) Rangsit – Ayutthaya – 41.5 km – 11.955 billion baht

2) Talingchan – Nakhon Pathom – 42.6 km – 21.440 billion baht

3) Suvarnabhumi – Chonburi 50 km – 25.728 billion baht

Furthermore, Minister Pheng asks SRT to study the following routes:

1) Nong Pladuk – Suphanburi rehabilitation to allow cargo line to bypass Bangkok – 78 km – 2.340 billion baht

2) Suphanburi – Ban Phachi line as the replacement of defunct Suphanburi – Lopburi – 78 km – 7.000 billion baht

3) Ban Phachi – Wiharn Daeng line to link the northern line with the eastern line bypassing the busy Kaeng Khoi Junction – 30 km – 3.000 billion baht

#### 4) Klong 19 – Wiharn Daeng Double tracking – 52 km – 4.000 billion baht

They are trying to use a barter system for the first seven locos from China as well as Chachongsao-Laem Chabang double tracking.

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More details from the new mass transit lines – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Than Setthakij*, October 20-22, 2005

##### 1) Red Line Commuter

	Distance	Civil works	Rolling stock	Control machinery
1.1) Bangsue – Rangsit	24.6	14.083	18.942	?
1.2) Rangsit – Ayutthaya (pending)	41.5	10.875	10.375	0.190

##### 2) Suvannabhhum Airport Link

	Distance	Civil works	Rolling stock	Control machinery
2.1) Phyathai – Talingchan	20.4	12.410	15.000	?
2.2) Talingchan – Nakhon Pathom (pending)	42.6	11.150	10.650	0.195
2.3) Suvannabhhum – Chonburi (pending)	50.0	13.000	12.500	0.228

##### 3) Purple Line

	Distance	Civil works	Rolling stock	Control machinery
3.1) Bangsue – Bang Yai	23.0	14.800	18.864	?

##### 4) Blue Ring

	Distance	Civil works	Rolling stock
4.1) Bangsue – Thaphra	27.0	22.880	15.000
Hua Lamphong – Bangkhac			

The ticket price will be not be more than 20 baht. The pending sections would be implemented in either phase 2 or phase 1 if there is enough budget. The other routes (Orange Line, Red Line Commuter to Mahachai, the Purple Line to Rat Boorana, and of course BTS) would pushed into phase 2.

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Transport Minister Pheng's plan – Budget cut to 120 billion baht – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Manager Daily*, October 17, 2005

Premier Thaksin has approved MOTC's plan to cut the budget to 120 billion baht even though the tracks of the Red Line Commuter have to be extended to the following directions after 2008:

1) Northward to Chiang Rak to secure the voters in northern suburbs and to fix the final place for the new parliament at Thai Melon.

2) Eastward to Chonburi (Pattaya) to secure the voters from the eastern Seaboard and terminate the commuter service by Sprinter DMU to Chachongsao.

3) Westward to Nakhon Pathom to secure voters from Salaya

The rate is 15 baht fixed rate. Only Phase 1 would be done in 2008.

The details of each line:



1) Red Line Commuter

1.1) Bangsue – Rangsit (24.6 km) – Quadruple Tracks (4-tracks) cutting down the expense from 41 billion baht to 22 billion baht

1.2) Phyathai – Talingchan (21.3 km) – Double Tracks (2-tracks) cutting down the expense from 29 billion baht to 12 billion baht

2) Purple Line (Bangsue – Bang Yai – 23 km) – cutting the expense from 25 billion baht to 12 billion baht

3) Blue Ring

3.1) Phekasem Extension (Hua Lamphong – Bang Khae – 14 km) – cutting the expense from 50 billion baht to 25 billion baht

3.2) Blue Ring (Bangsue – Tha Phra – 13 km)

The capitalization for 1st phase is

1) Government bonds

2) New taxes

3) New surcharges

4) Service revenue

5) Subsidies from the private sector

The bidding would be started by the end of this year with invitations to mainland China, Russia, France, etc. The private sector must have the capital to run the turnkey project while the barter trade during the bidding would be applied as well.

Minister Pheng also ask for the creation of MTA by Royal Decree to run the mass transit system through both construction and capitalization. Phase 2 would be done through the national assembly by the end of March 2006.

After bidding, the construction will be started and done in 3 years for Phase 1 section with the ticket price of 15 baht flat rate.

Note: The extra saving and revenue should go into nationwide double tracking instead of 50,000 km of new asphalt roads to please vested interests against the will of the people. The nationwide double tracking would make the new license plate surcharge of 50,000 baht more reasonable to rural folks.

Those who live in Lad Phrao – Bang Kapi – Ram Khamhaeng area have [booed Pheng's plan](#).

Transport Minister Pheng's plan – Budget cut to 199 billion baht – *Bangkok Post*, October 18, 2005

*...Under the proposal, the budget for the construction of the first phase and other systems for the 25km Red Line railway from Bang Sue to Rangsit in Pathum Thani would be 33 billion baht, reduced from an initial estimate of 41 billion baht. The investment in another 21km Red Line from Phaya Thai to Taling Chan's construction would be 27 billion baht.*

*The 23km Purple Line from Bang Sue to Bang Yai in Nonthaburi would cost 31 billion baht, down from 25 billion baht, and the Blue Line from Hua Lamphong to Bang Khae and from Bang Sue to Tha Phra 37.8 billion baht.*

*Other spending included a future plan to extend the Red Line from Rangsit to Ayutthaya and from Taling Chan to Nakhon Pathom, and the Airport Rail Link from Suvarnabhumi airport to Chon Buri, the minister said.*

*The two extensions would require a budget of about 33.5 billion baht...*

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Public hearing on the Blue Ring – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Manager Daily* and *Naew Nah*, October 15, 2005

The first public hearing on the Blue Ring shows that even though most people want the Blue Ring, they worry about the land expropriation, especially the area along Phetkasem road and Charan Sanitwongse Inner Ring. They are also concerned about the construction of ventilation shafts for the underground section in Rattanakosin Island and the park and ride.

MRTA said that cost cutting measures will enable MRTA to create the Blue Ring within a 70 billion baht budget. 49 billion baht is for the Rattanakosin extension (Hualamphogn-Tha Phra Bang Khae) and 25 billion baht is for the Blue Ring (Bangsue – Charansanitwongse – Tha Phra).

The current state of the detailed design plans are:

Elevated sections: 100% done

Underground section through Rattanakosin Island: 50% done

The detailed designs will be completed in March 2006.

MRTA has designed many types of gates for people to choose as a way to minimize detrimental impact.



There are two choices for stations:

- 1) Central platform
- 2) Side platform – 4-meter wider than the central platform version, but cheaper to construct and easier to manage traffic flow.

Note: Thai comments on Blue ring are [here](#) and [here](#).

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Local press comments on mass transit

"Commentary" by Somphongse Ongkarn, translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from [Khomchadluek](#), October 12, 2005

The Government cares more about automobile vested interest so they add 50,000 km of asphalt roads for new automobiles with tax money instead of financing the new mass transit lines such as Denchai-Chiang Rai, etc. This is despite the claim about a new tax for the mass transit system.

They are going to siphon the taxpayer's money to their own cronies who run the contractor businesses once the roads have more and more potholes and boost more car purchases to please other cronies who run the automobile business.

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[SUBWAY EXPANSION: French technology to cut costs](#) – *The Nation*, October 7, 2005

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Minister Pheng modifying the MRTA Orange Line route – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Manager*, September 14-15, 2005

MOTC Minister Phongsak Raktaphongsephaisarn (Minister Pheng) told the press about the discussion with SRT, OTP, MRTA about the seven mass transit route and the conclusions are:

- 1) Shorten the Orange Line to be a feeder for Suvannabhum Airport Link with a possibility to be a feeder monorail or even BRT.
- 2) Splitting the Orange Line to Bang Kapi – Makkasan and Yommaraj – Bang Bamru, Linking Southern Line with the Eastern Line at Yommaraj and Bang Bumru .
- 3) Red Line Commuter will be underground when they pass Rattanakosin Island to Thonburi—a revival of the defunct Hopewell... State of the art tunneling (such as TBMs) through Rattanakosin Island is a must to prevent any damage to significant places within Rattanakosin Island.
- 4) No decision whether the Purple Line would end up at Bangsue Station or at Bangkok Station.
- 5) No decision on if the Purple Line will become BRT or still be MRT.

These decisions are to double the number of daily passengers for Suvannabhum Airport Link and Red line commuter. Furthermore, this decision has cut the budget for the Orange Line from 73.268 billion baht to 50 billion baht if the system is still MRT. It would be cut further to 10 billion baht if the new Orange Line is BRT.

**Note:** Those who live in Ram Khamhaeng and Rattathibet area have booed the idea of a BRT. They want MRT so badly that any decision to downgrade MRT to BRT would meet strong public disapproval. Therefore, Minister Pheng has to keep the Orange Line/Purple Line as a heavy rail MRT at all costs even he has to shorten the routes.

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MRTA pushing the extension through Rattanakosin Island to Bang Khae – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thairath*, September 16, 2005 and *Dailynews*, September 16, 2005

MRTA Governor told the press at SC Park Hotel on September 15 that MRTA would find a way to dig tunnels for the extension through Rattanakosin Island without opening the road surface. This was during the seminar with BMTD along with the contractors from Japan, Germany and Mainland China that have expertise on digging tunnels without opening the road surface as well as other related agencies and media. The Bang Khae extension has to pass through Rattanakosin Island, so the new technique for tunnel digging without opening the road surface, especially at Wang Boorapha Station (near Samyod Intersection, Saphan Lek Bone and Wang Boorapha area) and Sanamchai Station (near Wat Pho and Ban Moh). This also covers Saphan Phan Fah Station of Purple Line as well.

This new technique requires an extra budget of 1 billion baht/km from the regular rate of 3 billion baht/km (thus total 4 billion baht/km). The stations at the narrow space would require stacking station levels (like Silom Station of the subway) while the wide area would require a double tunnel as a substitute for a single big tunnel.

The construction details done by consultants would be done in March 2006. After that, MRTA would call PQ

to select the right contractors which takes two months and MRTA would call a new bid for the contractors to handle this delicate section in June 2006. MRTA would issue a Royal Decree for the land expropriation with approval from MOTC.

If the contractors discover some ancient ruins or artifacts within the tunnel areas, MRTA would have to invite experts from the Fine Arts Department to investigate and remove to exhibit the ancient artifacts in the same way as Athens Subways has done without modifying the route. MRTA would do their best to avoid school and temple areas.

MRTA decided to stick with the old route through New Road instead of going through Yaowaraj Road due to engineering problems to go further from Saphan Han (the end of Yaowaraj Road). MRTA would make minimal land expropriation for gates and the places to move the drill heads underground due to the fact that the price of land around Yaowaraj is so high that it has to be paid in gold bars covering the expropriated land. The procedure for the consultant to handle this project is:

- 1) The first three months for Environmental Survey and Assessment
- 2) The later five months for the detailed design

This procedure would apply to all the subway projects that pass through Rattanakosin Island such as

- 1) Blue Line (Hua Lamphong-Bang Khae)
- 2) Purple Line (Bangsue-Samsen, Samsen-Rat Boorana)

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SRT using the Taipei Mass Transit System as a model for the Red Line – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Manager Daily*, October 11, 2005

The SRT Governor said the Red Line Commuter will be in two parts.

1 Northern Line – Elevated Track while keeping the existing system as is.

2 Eastern Line – from Phayathai to Yommaraj to Samsen, Bangsue, Bang Khen, Laksi, Donmuang, Rangsit and Chaing Rak as the northern extension of the Suvannabhum Airport Link using standard gauge (1.435 m) so as to use Suvannabhum Airport Link rolling stock from Siemens with a maximum speed of 160 kph.

The elevated section of Suvannabhum Airport Link will end at Rangsit and then it will be at grade all the way from Rangsit to Chiang Rak (the station closest to Thammasart Rangsit – if you do not count Thammasart Rangsit stop as a station). This would allow transit from Ayutthaya to Bangkok within 60 minutes.

SRT would apply the result from the Taipei mass transit system which uses the SYSTRA system on Red Line Commuter.

SRT has made an order of 33 carriages of Suvannabhum Airport Link Rolling stocks from Siemens. Eight sets for Suvannabhum Airport Transit/Express. The second order for the northern extension would follow. The budget will be within 500 billion baht even though the government wants to make a cut to 200 billion baht.

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Alstom planning to grab the Bangsue-Bang Yai line by introducing a u-shaped structure – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Manager*, October 7, 2005 and *Than Setthakij*, October 9-13, 2005 SYSTRA, a French Firm, is introducing the u-shape via duct structure when Minister Pheng is going to take a tour of the Taipei mass transit system which was constructed by using SYSTRA system as the way to cut construction costs for elevated tracks by 30% (770 million baht/km vs. the current 1100 million baht/km). This system is also supposed to speed up the project by 60% with less noise and vibration along with less dust and other pollution.

However Minister Pheng is planning to cut the budget by 65% by reducing the height from 17 meters to 12 meters... The plan to cut down the number of stations from Bangsue to Bang Yai would create another dilemma. Cutting too much would fuel public angry from those who live along Rattathibet Road.

This kind of measure from Alstom is to snatch MRTA from Siemens by locking the system to allow only Alstom rolling stock even though Mr Thoedsak Sthhamanop claimed that SYSTRA's u-shape viaduct would still allow the heavy rail cars of Siemens to run.

If it is really a successful design, MOTC would introduce this SYSTRA structure for elevated sections such as the Red Line Commuter (Bangsue – Rangsit – Chiang Rak, Bangsue – Talingchan), and Purple Line.

So far, there are four cities that use the SYSTRA structure, Santiago (Chile – 2 lines 13 km) Delhi (India – 22 km), Dubai (UAE – 65 km) and Taipei (Taiwan – 13 km). This u-shape structure is very similar to Bangna – Bang Pakong Expressway which uses an H-shape structure (done by Bilfinger and Ch. Karnchang PCL). The extra charge to the consultant for the new structure is worth paying since a new system could save the budget by billions of US dollars.

**Note:** Minister Pheng has a clear policy to cut down the section from Bangsue to Wang Boorapha even

though the voters from Samsen and Banglamphoo would vote against TRT out if MOTC refuses to implement this Bangsue-Wang Boorapha section. However, Minister Pheng has no clear policy on the section from Wang Boorapha to Rat Borana. If he refuses to implement the section from Wang Boorapha to Rat Boorana, TRT would lose votes in Thonburi and even Phra Padaeng...

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More notes on Red Line Commuter from insiders – compiled and translated by Wisarut Bholsithi

1) To allow the Southern cargo line to connect with the Northern and Northeastern and Laem Chabang Port at Ban Phachi, the following project has to be revived along with the new project:

1.1) Suphanburi – Ban Phachi (80 km)

1.2) Ban Phachi – Wiharn Daeng to connect with Kaeng Koi – Klong 19 Bypass to allow Northern cargo train to Laem Chabang Port without going to Kaeng Khoi.

2) The interchange between the Red Line Commuter and intercity train will be created at Chiang Rak Noy. Dual gauge and gauge conversion may be applied on the section from Rangsit to Ban Phachi.

3) MOTC will ask SRT to convert all the Diesel Electric Locos to be powered by NGV. Those that cannot be converted will not be allowed to enter the Bangkok area within the tracks of the Red Line Commuter (Chiang Rak Noy and Lad Krabang).

The payment for engine conversion by PTT officers will be paid by the extra charge on NGV sold to SRT.

4) New intercity bus terminal would be at Donmuang Airport.

5) New inland port at Tha Ruea (for Pasak River) has to be constructed.

6) Project from Hualamphong to Mahachai may have to be delayed unless the demand from the people of Mahachai grows so high that the section from Yommaraj to Mahachai has to be constructed.

Note: The deal to clean up SRT debts between MOTC and MOF is the main reason for the latest modification of the Red Line commuter plan. The main features of the modifications are a new center at Chiang Rak Noy (with connections to the expressway and Phaholyothin Road). This is with the consent of the SRT Board of Directors, but not the SRT worker's union. Makkasan and part of Phaholyothin Cargo would be converted for commercial development proposed by the Treasury Department.

Many Railfans have bitterly argued that the conversion of engines would require the permanent alteration of diesel engines so as to optimize the NGV engine. This would weaken the structure of the locos, add extra maintenance cost, and shorten the lifespan of the locos. This is seen as a sign of corruption to siphon money from SRT.

The reason for the restriction of the diesel electric engines from passing through greater Bangkok area is due to the fact that PTT PCL (owned by politicians) want to milk money from SRT and Treasury by forcing SRT to convert virtually all diesel electric locos to use NGV with an extra charge of 1-2 baht/kg (from 8.50 baht/kg for the market price of NGV) to pay for the engine conversion. Many SRT workers have complained that the engine conversion would shorten the lifespan of locos in the same way as NGV engines in BMTA aircon buses. They prefer Euro 3 diesel engines for locos instead.

The section from Rangsit to Chiang Rak Noy (at grade electrified section) would help TRT secure the conservative voters in northern Bangkok suburbs as well as the voters from industrial estates in northern Bangkok suburbs—at the expense of Democrat supporters in Ram Khamhaeng and Lad Phrao.

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Conclusions on Red Line Commuter – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Manager*, October 7, 2005

Minister Pheng has asked SRT to deal with both railways and Red Line Commuters as follows:

1) If possible, converting diesel-electric loco to be NGV with a joint venture with PTT PCL—after the successful testing of GEA Loco No. 4557 which had been converted to use NGV. This is a saving on the level sections and a 33% savings for the steep track like Kaeng Khoi to Pak Chong.

SRT has to pay an extra 1-2 baht/kg of NGV gas to PTT PCL as a way to pay back to PTT PCL if the NGV price is now 8.50 baht/kg.

2) Extending the Red Line commuter from Rangsit to Ban Phachi with a new transportation center at Chiang Rak Noy to cut down both air and noise pollution. The transfer point with the intercity will be at Chiang Rak Noy while the cargo transportation transfer point will be at Ban Pha Chi.

3) Speed up the construction of Red line Commuters, Purple Line and Blue Ring.

3.1) Red Line Commuter will be from Makkasan to Rangsit using Hopewell pillars with the cut of intercity trains (meter gauge) and expressways so as to cut the budget from 110 billion baht to 36 billion baht.

3.2) The Purple Line will follow the old route with new cost cutting measures even though it still allows heavy rail rolling stock to be used. There will be less stations with no frills so as to cut costs by 65% and shorten the construction time by 60%. This is to win Bangkokian and Nonthaburi voters in the next election

through speedy implementation from 4 years to 2 years.

**Commentary:** Most SRT workers and Thai Railfans said "converting GEA and HID to use NGV adds extra maintenance costs while shortening the lifespan of locomotives in the same way they have ruined BMTA aircon buses. This is a sure sign of callousness and corruption within MOTC!..."

Some people accuse Minister Pheng of benefiting from route readjustment.

...This transportation center at Chiang Rak Noy makes no sense at all so MOTC and OTP would get booed by many people, especially those from rural areas who come on intercity train to seek their jobs in Bangkok through the agent at Hua Lamphong.

Even worse, the cut will chop the Northern route and Southern route from central command at Hua Lamphong...

This action is a sure sign of cost cutting that wrecks havoc on public infrastructure and ransacking the public budget.

**Also:** [Manager thread](#) with many booing MOTC and OTP for meddling in mass transit plans

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[First stage of Purple Line given the nod – Effort to scale down cost of project by 25%](#) – Bangkok Post, October 6, 2005

*Transport Minister Pongsak Raktapongpaisal has given the go-ahead for construction of the first stage of the Purple Line railway extension, between Bang Sue and Bang Yai. There was enough demand for the route from commuters who travel regularly into the centre of the city, he said yesterday...*

*The second-stage extension, from Khae Rai to Bang Khen, would be built later as part of an outer railway loop that will include Bang Khen to Kaset Navamin, Pak Nam, Bang Na and Onnuij...*

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[Pattaya Beach Bus](#) – October 5, 2005

*...The modern minibuses seat thirty people in air-conditioned comfort and literally 'embody' Pattaya's image as a vibrant, fresh-and-fun leisure destination. The bus bodies sport bright and breezy designs...*

**ROUTES**

*All routes start out from Big C supermarket, Sukhumvit Road, Pattaya.*

*Green Line:*

*Big C – South Pattaya Road – Pattaya 2 Road (reverse route = Beach Road) – Dolphin Roundabout – Naklua Road – Soi Potisan – Sukhumvit Road (back to Big C).*

*Yellow Line:*

*Big C – Sukhumvit Road – Thepprasit Road – Thappraya Road over the hill – Pattaya 3 Road – North Pattaya Road – Dolphin Roundabout – North Pattaya Road – Sukhumvit Road (back to Big C)*

*Red Line:*

*Big C – Sukhumvit Road – Soi Chaiyapruet – Jomtien Beach Road – Dongtan Corner – Thappraya Road over the hill – Pattaya 2 Road (reverse route = Beach Road) – Dolphin Roundabout – Naklua Road – Banglamung Police Station – Sukhumvit Road – Kratinglai intersection (u-turn) – Sukhumvit Road – Soi Chaiyapruet (u-turn) –*

*Big C.*

*Fares*

*A 30-baht one-way ticket can be used on any of the routes. Visitors will also be able to purchase one-day passes at 90 baht, three-day passes at 180 baht, and one-month passes for 900 baht...*

[Map here](#)

**Also:** [Dynamic Pattaya – All Action Resort](#)

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Further cuts on Red Line Commuter – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Komchadluek*, September 26, 2005

Transport Minister Pheng is going to make a further cut on red line commuter (Rangsit – Mahachai) so they can save 200 billion baht for the following purposes:

- 1) Nationwide double tracking
- 2) Extension from Talingchan to Salaya (if not Nakhon Pathom) and from Rangsit to Ayutthaya (if not Ban Phachi).

This measure is going to be handled by 4 subcommittees.

- 1) Route decisions, design and construction headed by Mahidol Jantharangkoon.
- 2) The new organization to run the mass transit systems in Bangkok – to snatch BTS from the hands of BMA through a legal channel instead of a hostile takeover headed by Mahidol Jantharangkoon.
- 3) Project financial scheme headed by Mahidol Jantharangkoon.

4) Negotiators with BMCL, BMA and BTS headed by Pornchai Nuchsuwan.

The first committee is going to modify the Purple Line while cutting Taopoon – Wang Boorapha.

The further cut is to cut the number of rails from 10 tracks to 3 tracks for the Red Line commuter from Rangsit to Mahachai.

It is also to finance the extension from Talingchan to Nakhonpathom and from Rangsit to Ayutthya.

Furthermore, MOTC is asking BTS and BMCL to share the same maintenance center to cut down costs. The financial subcommittee has another duty to develop the land along the routes for the new schools, hospitals, and parks.

The final modified routes along with the investment plan would be within two months while the bidding for all lines will be done by February 2006 with the priority readjustment in the next 30 days and the subcommittees are to report to MOTC every two weeks.

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OTP plan to please Pheng – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Manager* and *Thairath*, September 23, 2005

OTP has submitted a plan to please the MOTC Minister Pheng. The new plan is to cut down the Mass Transit budget from 500 billion to 400 billion baht and the savings would go to the nationwide double tracking.

1) Modify the Purple Line route from Bang Sue to Bang Yai to Bangsue to Bang Khen station while keeping the Purple Line as heavy rail due to strong public demand and to feed the Red line Commuter (Rangsit – Mahachai)

2) Turn Yellow Line LRT to be Yellow Line BRT (Lad Phrao – Bang Kapi – Sri Nakharin – Samrong)

3) Keep the western Red Line commuter (Bangsue – Bang son – Taling Chan) intact and ready for bidding in January-February 2006. This line will be extended to Makkasan to feed Suvannabhum Airport Express.

4) Speed up the Blue Ring that passes Premier Thaksin's Palace to be ready for bidding in early 2006.

5) Modify the second section of the Purple Line to be Hualamphong – Rat Boorana for Phase 2 investment.

6) Turning the Orange Line MRT into an Orange Line monorail from Bangkokpi to Ramkhamhaeng Station of the Airport Link near Klong Tan intersection.

7) Approve the new act to control BMCL and BTSC and set up the committee to deal with private concession holders so they can spend the budget to handle the popular BTS extensions.

8) Approve the Ring BRT to run along Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring.

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Pheng and nationwide double tracking – trying to woo NESDB to approve the project – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thairath* and *Matichon*, September 19, 2005

Minister Pheng is trying to woo NESDB and the plan for nationwide double tracking to support the logistics plan. However, they have to wait until they have finalized the plans for Bangkok mass transit System since MOTC is going to fund the nationwide double tracking by the saving from the downsized Bangkok mass transit system through canceled routes and shortened routes with fewer stations. SRT said there are five routes that need to get double tracking immediately with a total price tag of 56.7754 billion baht due to popular demand even though SRT officers are studying on the routes and the design of the routes to pass the EIA so they can submit the plan to the cabinet by the end of 2005.

1) Chachongsao – Sri Racha – Laem Chabang (87 km – 5.3 billion baht)

2) Lopburi – Nakhon Sawan (150 km)

3) Chachoengsao – Klong 19 – Kaeng Khoi (90 km)

4) Kaeng Khoi – Pakchong – Nakhon Ratchasima. (130 km)

5) Prachuab Khirikhan – Surat Thani (300 km)

After finishing all 5 routes, the 2nd phase would be

1) Nakhon Sawan – Phitsanulok

2) Nakhon Pathom – Prachuab Khirikhan along with the track rehab

3) Ban Phai – Nam Phong route

4) Kaeng Khoi – Bua Yai route

Note: Such massive undertaking compels SRT to triple the fleets of track maintenance machines. This will help SRT to rehab the troublesome routes such as the route from Nakhon Pathom to Hua Hin in a speedy manner. This track from Nakhon Pathom to Hua Hin which has become so deteriorated that the max speed in some sections is 30 kph—unacceptable by any standard. Train 781 (Bangsue – Padang Besar) derailed on September 18 at Rajburi due to the heavy rain that eroded the base of the tracks.

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Insiders' info about modifications to the seven mass transit lines – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Prachachart Thurakij*, September 14-17, 2005

The insiders told the correspondents from *Prachachart Thurakij* that the consultants has asked the government to keep all the heavy rail systems for economies of scale with a decision to cut down some routes and move those with a lower priority to Phase 2 .

This would cut the cost from 550 billion baht to 241 billion baht for Phase 1 while moving phase 2 to 2010-1017 with a price tag of 254 billion baht.

The first phase for mass transit line (2005-2009) is to function as feeder lines for Red line Commuter/Suvarnabhumi Airport Link along with the completion of the Blue Ring MRT.

#### 1) Purple Line

Before: Bangsue – Bang Yai – (23 km, 16 stations, 50.709 billion baht – all elevated)

Now: Bangsue – Phra Nang Klao Bridge (12 km, 9 stations 25 billion baht- all elevated)

The list of nine stations along the Purple Line is

- 1) Taopoon
- 2) Bang Son
- 3) Wong Sawang
- 4) Tiwanon
- 5) Ministry of Public Health
- 6) Nonthaburi Center
- 7) Sri Porn Sawan (Central Rattathibet)
- 8) Nonthaburi 1 (should be Sanambin Nam if closer to Sanambin Nam intersection)
- 9) Phra Nang Klao bridge (connecting with Chao Phraya Express boat pier to Ministry of Commerce)

Phra Nangklao-Bangyai section would be done later in Phase 2 since the EIA on that section is not done yet.

The reason for Taopoon Station is due to the fact that there are ready passengers for this line at Taopoon and the consultant has come up with the number of passengers for each station along the Purple Line as follows:

Taopoon – 30,000 passengers a day

Ministry of Public Health – 25,000 passengers a day

Tiwanon – 12,000 passengers a day

Wong Sawang – 8,000 passengers a day

Nonthaburi – 3500 passengers a day

Phra Nanklao – 2800 passengers a day

Sri Porn Sawan – 2500 passengers a day

Bang Son – 2100 passengers a day

Nonthaburi 1 (Sanabin Nam) – 1000 passengers a day

Another option is to make a full length of 23 km from Bangsue to Bang Yai but some stations cut due to the sparse number of passengers such as:

- 1) Nonthaburi -1000 passengers a day
- 2) Sai Mah – 1800 passengers a day
- 3) Bang Rak Yai – 800 passengers a day

Furthermore, the stations along purple line would be smaller than the initial plans so as to use only footpaths instead of land expropriation. This measure would cut the budget by 500 million baht. Further cut is to reduce the number of rolling stock from 24 sets to 18 sets while using only 3-car formation instead of 6-car formation to fit into the new scheme.

Before: Bangsue – Wangboorapha – Rat Boorana (20 km – 64.874 billion baht)

Now: Wang Boorapha – Rat Boorana (12.2 km – 44.874 billion baht)

This line would either connect with Blue Line or have to wait until phase 2 (after 2010)

Before: Bang Kapi – Bang Bumru (24 km 82.688 billion baht)

Now: Bang Kapi – Thailand Cultural Center (12 km – 40 billion baht)

Either connect with Blue Ring at Thailand Cultural center or Shift to Phase 2

NO REDUCTION Plan for Bangsue – Tha Phra Ring Line (13 km – 25.101 billion baht) and Hua Lamphong – Bang Khae since (14 km – 49.902 billion baht) due to its significance as the main Ring

Line.

Rangsit – Mahachai (65 km) – split into two phases to save money

Phase 1: Bangsue – Hua Lamphong (7.5 km -passing Chitladda Palace)

Hua Lamphong – Taksin center (7 km -connecting Mahachai line with the main trunk line)

Bangsue – Talingchan (15 km – going across Chao Phraya)

Bangsue – Phayathai (6 km – the extension of Airport Link)

Phase 2: The rest of the red line commuter (Bangsue – Rangsit)

BTS:

Phase 1: Onnut – Samrong (8.9 km – 15.190 billion baht)

Phrannok – National Stadium (Pin Klao Extension – 6.8 km – 16.72 billion baht for the tunnel)

Saphan Taksin – Taksin Intersection (2.2 km – 3.42 billion baht)

Taksin Intersection – Phetkasem (4.5 km – 7.16 billion baht)

Phase 2: Samrong – Samut Prakarn (7.9 km – 13.34 billion baht)

Mochit – Saphan Mai (12 km – 19.99 billion baht)

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[COMMENTARY: Changes that cause confusion](#) – Bangkok Post, September 14, 2005

*...But Mr Pongsak had a better idea. He wanted to shelve the Purple Line, as well as the Orange One, in favour of other lines with better business prospects. The single-model system, for him, was too expensive. He believed that it might be cheaper and make more business sense to install either the express bus running on special lanes, or the light rail or mono rail on some lines.*

*The public and the government got confused about the new look of the system and asked why it needed the change. The Finance Ministry wondered why he wanted to mess up the scheme with several forms of transport instead of using a single model currently used by the BTS and underground train so that all lines can be easily linked in the long run...*

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[Purple and Orange lines not derailed – But the projects may become smaller](#) – Bangkok Post, September 13, 2005

*...A source at the OTTP said the agency would propose a light rail system for the Purple Line and the monorail system for the Orange Line...*

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[Move to build Red Line in stages](#) – The Nation, September 8, 2005

*...The first task for the top-priority line will be laying tracks between Bang Sue and Rangsit – a distance of 24.6 kilometres – costing Bt28.47 billion...*

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Matichon editor's viewpoint toward changing mass transit policies – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from Matichon, September 5, 2005

If there is an emergency to change the policy of the government, the government should clarify the issue of flip-flop policy along with the details of the policy to minimize public outrage. For example:

1) The changing Purple Line (Bangsue-Bang Yai) to BRT (Bang Yao-Bang Khen)

1.1) When will the Red Line Commuter be constructed and finished to serve BRT?

1.2) Does the government want to scrap the Purple Line to please vested interests along Krungthep – Nonthaburi Road?

1.3) What about the BRT route from Bang Yai to Bang Bon and Wongwain Yai to Ratboorana as the replacement of the Purple Line?

2) The changing Orange Line (Bangkapi-Bang Buru) to BRT (Bang Kapi-Klong Tan)

2.1) Is the Yellow Line BRT (Lad Phrao-Bang Kapi-Sri Nakharin) a substitute for the Orange Line?

2.2) What about those who live In Thonburi?

There are better alternatives to revitalize the Purple Line-Orange Line instead of introducing a BRT route:

1) the Suvanabhumi Airport Link should be modified to "Suvanabhumi Commuter" only so more funds from Suvanabhumi Airport Link could be used to revitalize the Purple Line.

2) Applying public-private participation as Blue Line to finance Purple Line-Orange Line. The higher fare to cover the construction would be okay.



3) Scraping unnecessary projects such as wasted expressways and the underground tunnel at the Government House. The modification of Government House could be scrapped to finance the Purple Line-Orange Line.

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[Scrapping transit lines will hurt TRT](#) – Bangkok Post, September 6, 2005

*Khao Sod Editorial, Sept 4 – The government's decision to scrap the Purple and Orange subway lines and replace them with a cheaper passenger bus system will have severe repercussions not only on the ruling Thai Rak Thai party, but also commuters and business operators in Bangkok...*

*By scrapping the two main subway lines, the ruling party will lose its credibility in the eyes of the city voters. How could the party announce the project without making a detailed study into its cost and benefits, as well as its viability?*

*Not surprisingly, Bangkok commuters were furious when they heard that the promise would not be kept. The next time Thai Rak Thai utters some grand idea, everyone will have to think twice...*

[Mass Transit News main page](#)



# **‘Have no the adult the child that look after with the old man prohibition against the next sea swimming’**

December 1, 2005

Categories: Vietnam

[‘Have no the adult the child that look after with the old man prohibition against the next sea swimming’](#) –

December

1, 2005

And a photo of [Halong Bay, Vietnam](#)

# Security boost at Bangkok embassy

December 1, 2005

Categories: Security

[Security boost at Bangkok embassy](#) – AAP, December 1, 2005

# **Bangkok mall to offer gay shopping**

December 1, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Bangkok mall to offer gay shopping](#) – Sapa-DPA, December 1, 2005

# A question that has no answer

December 1, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

From the Thai-language press: *Komchadluek* editorial: A question that has no answer – December 1, 2005

The suspect behavior of the government team especially corruption, dishonesty and special privileges in using power has people waiting for the reasonable answer to these charges.

What people hear is the accusation without reason such as corruption on Suwannapoom Airport construction and quality of roads which had to be rebuilt.

The government canceled the new year celebrations at the airport with the excuse of safety. This issue should have been thought of earlier, because it seems unusual to cancel it now.

Although the government has an explanation about using a C130 airplane to carry people to the PM's sister's birthday party, the excuse does not hold water. It is shameful behavior to use privilege that get benefit from peoples' tax and use an airplane for pampering the leader's relative.

The next untransparent act is trying to transfer some part of the Television Broadcast Commission's work to the National Telecommunication Commission. There is a suspicion that a political family who has a telecommunication business may seek some benefit.

Also no transparency on arranging income and expenses of the Lottery Bureau makes a suspicion as to whether there is a transferring of a big amount money to a power politician.

Nobody answers about these shameful behaviors that lead to a decrease in trust and faith in the government. Even PMs could not get the image back. It will be worse if people do not trust the government and government does not explain and continues to tolerate corruption, seeking benefits and privileges without shame.

# **Police officer caught on TV kicking suspect**

December 2, 2005

Categories: Uncategorized

[Police](#)

[officer caught on TV kicking suspect](#) – *The Nation*, December 2, 2005

# Where has all the money gone?

December 2, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Where has all the money gone?](#) – Bangkok

Post, December 2, 2005

*The Government may not be broke. But it has raised doubts about its ability to manage money with its decision to issue 80 billion baht's worth of treasury bills. And the fact that questions persist days after the prime minister and his finance czar defended the decision – essentially as legitimate and normal practice – just shows how much public confidence this government has lost...*

# Thaksin's comments on the SEA Games judging

December 2, 2005

Categories: Sports, The Thaksin Years

More on Thaksin's comments  
on the SEA Games judging

br>

[Thailand](#)

[apologizes for SEAG outburst](#)

– *The Philippine Star*, December 2, 2005

*Thai sports officials apologized to the Philippines yesterday for the remarks reportedly made by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra complaining about the alleged unfair officiating in the ongoing 23rd Southeast Asian Games (SEAG) in Manila. Chaiyapak Siriwat, vice president of the Thailand Olympic Council, extended his apologies to Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco and other members of the Southeast Asian Games Federation Council (SEAGF) over the issue.*

*"The report was inappropriate and I feel sorry for this. On behalf of the Thailand Sports Council, I apologize for whatever inconvenience brought about by the senseless report," Siriwat told the SEAG Federation Council meeting at the Hyatt Hotel yesterday...*

[Two](#)

[Thai aquatics officials sacked](#) – *Inquirer News Service*,

December 2, 2005

*...At least two of Thailand's aquatics officials have been sanctioned by the FINA (international aquatics federation) for "shady judging," among other things, according to Philippine Amateur Swimming Association president Mark Joseph yesterday.*

*...In water polo, Joseph said another Thai referee was banned from the deck because of "intentional bad calls and unfair player exclusions."*

*The referee "destroyed the Vietnam team" and was never allowed to be on the deck again by FINA neutral delegate Khosrow Amini of Iran, he said...*

[Thai 'palusot'](#) – *ABS-CBN*, December 1, 2005

*...Still, more gold medals are up for grabs — and the Thais could yet overtake the Vietnamese and the Filipinos in the medal standings when the Games come to a close on December 5. But even if that were to happen, Thaksin and the Thai sports officials who supplied him with the information about the alleged cheating going on in the 23rd SEAG have already left a bad taste in the mouth.*

*For all Thaksin knows, the Thai sports officials may just have been feeding him with excuses to explain away their delegation's less than stellar performance. Even the Vietnamese have so far been garnering more golds than the Thais. Does this mean the Vietnamese have been cheating the Thais, too? ...*

# What is the plan to protect the nation from flooding that reoccurs from North to South?

December 2, 2005

Categories: Weather

From the

Thai-language press: *Prachachatturakij* editorial:

What is the plan to protect the nation from flooding that reoccurs from North to South? – December 2, 2005

Finally Samui Island, the famous tourism area in the world, was under water after three days of heavy rain (November 25-27). The big flood caused 300 million baht damage. People who was born in Samui Island say there has never been a flood, except after the recent disorderly construction of hotels, luxury hotels and commercial buildings on mountains and on beaches. Many selfish entrepreneurs constructed and obstructed the water way and investors have project on the mountains.

Actually, not only Samui Island, but also another beautiful tourism place—Ban Krood Amphur Bangsapan, Prachabkikhun—faces a flood crisis. Before this, there was flood in Chiangmai four times with damages in the many billions of baht. Every time after a flood, the government leader flies to rescue people by giving necessary things and then flies back to Bangkok. After that event, Chiangmai was under flood again.

At present, the problem of floods all around the country is not thought to related to natural issues any more because a flood in a big city or tourist area is a seasonal problem and the government just sends relief. This is a very disappointing thing because the Thaksin government usually says this is a government of New Thinking, New doing, Solving Problem Unity and CEO administration. But considering with empty eyes, there are still floods and the economy is still under water every season.

It is useless to blame the flood problem on investors invading forests, mountains, or construction in a wrong form different from permission, cheating, insufficiency of TAO. It is useless to expect to the "CEO governor" to help. The most disappointing thing is that the central government could not develop city and tourism areas not to face floods every season, meanwhile the government intends to get 100,000 million baht income from tourism areas.



# BMA threatens to fine company for failures

December 3, 2005

Categories: Highways and Roads, Signs and Billboards



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

[BMA threatens to fine company for failures](#) – Bangkok

Post, December 3, 2005

...The company has finished the installation of the signs, which began operating on Nov 29.

Bangkok governor Apirak Kosayodhin said that on the next day 16 of the 40 signs were out of order...

# **Dhaka's bid to change Asian Highway route fails**

December 3, 2005

[Dhaka's](#)

[bid to change Asian Highway route fails](#)

– News From Bangladesh, December 3, 2005

# Expert: Taiwan Skyscraper May Cause Quakes

December 3, 2005

Categories: Nothing to do with Thailand, but Interesting

[Expert:](#)

[Taiwan Skyscraper May Cause Quakes](#) –

AP, December 3, 2005

*The weight of the world's tallest skyscraper – specially built to withstand Taiwan's frequent earthquakes – could be causing a rise in the number of tremors beneath it, a professor from the island wrote in a scientific journal...*

# Photos of harvest time in Khon Kean

December 4, 2005

Categories: Culture and Society



(Photo: Jerry)

Harvest time –  
December 4, 2005  
Photos of harvest time in Khon Kean...





(Photo: Jerry)



(Photo: Jerry)



(Photo: Jerry)

**Above:** A rat catcher



# HM The King's Birthday 2005

December 4, 2005

Categories: HM The King's Birthday, The Monarchy



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

**Above:** December 4, 2005 – Placard with an image of the HM The King at the Royal Plaza. The equestrian stature of King Rama V and the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall (the old parliament building) is in the background.

HM The King's Birthday – December 5, 2005

HM The King's birthday is on December 5 (a national holiday). The King's annual address is on December 4. See last year's stories about what goes on during these days: [2004 – HM The King's birthday](#) and [2004 – HM The King's annual address](#)

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[A Royal 'delicacy'](#) – *The Nation*, December 08, 2005

*Against the backdrop of the showdown between Thaksin and Sondhi, our revered King gave everyone a special treat. One political scientist calls it "art of the highest form". But whatever term is used to describe His Majesty the King's birthday speech — we have heard everything from "simple" to "profound" — there's no avoiding the fact that people are feeling the varying effects it generated...*

*The Nation's* rough interpretation of HM The King's speech – December 7, 2005

This [rough and unusually direct interpretation of the King's message](#) is still online at *The Nation*, although not linked to from any current pages.

[HIS MAJESTY THE KING'S BIRTHDAY SPEECH: 'Actually, I want them to criticise'](#) – *The Nation*, December 5, 2005

[Thai king in veiled call for public feud to end](#) – AFP, December 4, 2005

[King tells PM, accept criticism](#) – Bangkok Post, December 5, 2005

*...He compared this to his Kam Ling (monkey's cheek) project that has proved successful.*

*"People were laughing when we first talked about Kam Ling, but not anymore. Because a monkey must have cheeks. Without cheeks, it can't survive. A man too must have cheeks, and they can be like those of the monkey," said the King.*

*As the monkey's cheeks could save water, a man's cheeks could save his words...*

[King calls for mindfulness and caution](#) – TNA, December 4, 2004

*Evidencing the wisdom and mindfulness, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej used the occasion of his birthday to advise his Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, and the wider public.*

*The world's longest reigning monarch marks his 78th birthday on Monday.*

*In his customary birthday speech to the Thai public, the King clarified at length the statement that "the King can do no wrong."*

*"Whatever one does, one just has to be conscious of what one is thinking and doing, and thus trying not to make mistake... I myself have made mistakes a few times, because I have always been mindful.*

*Had I not been careful, I would have been dead. Such is the nature of politics, of being under the public spotlight and if we're not careful, those looks could kill."*

*The King thanked the Prime Minister for his birthday wishes. His Majesty said his praise for the Prime Minister's speech may not be shared by all but it's only human nature to be fond of praise and to dislike criticism. He reiterated the fact that one has to be careful about what one says and does.*

*The King said he occasionally criticised people, and sometimes his criticism was magnified out of proportion in press reports, much to their apprehension. In fact, he said, he hardly ever been critical of anyone.*

*"But the truth is the more exposed one is to the public scrutiny, the easier one becomes the target of criticism. And it could be damaging to the public sometimes if one doesn't appreciate those points of criticism," said the King.*

**Also:** *Dads and their children can ride the Skytrain for free on Monday in celebration of His Majesty the King's birthday and Father's Day.*

*Skytrain operator Bangkok Mass Transit System (BTS) said the free rides would be offered from 6am until midnight... ([Free Skytrain Rides](#) – The Nation, December 2, 2005)*

Also: [2004 – HM The King's annual address to the nation](#)  
[2004 – Outdoor celebrations on HM The King's birthday](#)

[Back to the main 2Bangkok.com page](#)



# Red Cross mulls 'neutral' emblem

December 5, 2005

[Red](#)

[Cross mulls 'neutral' emblem](#) –

BBC, December 5, 2005

*In Geneva diplomats from the 192 countries which have signed the Geneva conventions are meeting to discuss a third emblem for the international Red Cross...*

# Strange new carnivore species sighted on Borneo

December 5, 2005

Categories: Wildlife and Nature

[Strange new carnivore species sighted on Borneo](#) –

Reuters, December 5, 2005

*...Researchers hope to confirm the discovery by setting cage traps to catch a live specimen, but warn that Indonesian government plans to clear the rainforest to create the world's largest palm oil plantation may interfere with plans, WWF said.*

*The proposed plantation scheme, funded by the China Development Bank, is expected to cover an area of 1.8 million hectares, equivalent to about half the size of The Netherlands, said the WWF, formerly known as the World Wide Fund for Nature...*

(photo [here](#))

# Thailand, Ghana and the Military “Coups Trap”

December 5, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Thailand, Ghana and the Military “Coups Trap”](#) – *The Globalist*, December 5, 2005

# Abraham Lincoln's body exhumed and viewed in 1901

December 6, 2005

Categories: Nothing to do with Thailand, but Interesting

[Abraham](#)

[Lincoln's body exhumed and viewed in 1901](#)

– [The](#)

[1876 attempt to steal Mr. Lincoln's body](#)

– December 6, 2005

Nothing to do with Thailand, but interesting...

# Greenpeace seeks to stop climate killing coal plants in Thailand

December 6, 2005  
Categories: Energy

[Greenpeace  
seeks to stop climate killing coal plants in Thailand](#)

– *India Infoline*, December 6, 2005

*With its flagship the Rainbow Warrior looking on, Greenpeace activists on Tuesday climbed the loading crane of the BLCP coal plant at Map Ta Phut in Thailand and unfurled banners demanding the plant's immediate closure, calling on the Thai government to phase out coal power and to commit to renewable energy...*

# Bangkok Inside Out banned in Thailand?

December 6, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

*Bangkok Inside Out* banned in Thailand?

– December 6, 2005

From a

[press release](#) (PDF, 170KB): ...*On November 22, Thailand's prominent daily newspaper Kom Chad Luek ran a front page story quoting a senior Thai government official, Ms Ladda Tangsuphachai, Director of Cultural Monitoring at the Thai Ministry of Culture, alleging that [Bangkok Inside Out](#) taints the image of Thailand and its people. The article states that our book "discusses negative subjects such as fake goods, gambling, gay performances, touts and scams, and places such as Patpong, Nana, and Khaosan Road," and singles out a photograph that shows a bar girl on a farang's (foreigner's) lap. Ms Ladda is quoted as saying that "According to the Constitution, the press has freedom to publish. So, all we can do is to take the problematic books off the shelf." ...Asia Books and Bookazine, the two largest English-language book chains in Thailand, have removed our books from their shelves after being informed that anyone caught selling our book was subject to a fine and/or imprisonment... (via [Friskodude](#))*

# Dark News debut on Komchadluek.net

December 6, 2005

Categories: Thai Newspapers and Magazines

["Dark News" debut on Komchadluek.net](#) –

*The Nation*, December 6, 2005

*Check out the website [www.komchadluek.net](http://www.komchadluek.net) Wednesday, and you will find the first issue of "[Dark News](#)", Thailand's first online newspaper that you can count on in a state of turmoil.*

*Despite its name, it will shine a light on every dark corner in society that is waiting to be revealed. "Dark News" investigates and unmask those issues that have been covered up. It provides you challenging news stories and analyses in Thai, in an extraordinary form.*

*"Dark News" comes in colourful pages – like the newspaper – that allow you to discover things that have been hidden, just as in the actual newspaper you trust.*

*Besides news stories and analyses of current events, "Dark News" provides a platform for you to express your opinions or share information with the "Dark News" team so that they can help find out the truth for you.*

*Behind "Dark News" are teams of reporters and analysts who have experienced all kinds of political climates. More importantly, they all believe in the ideology of providing constructive investigative media as a voice for the people that doesn't depend on political or business interests.*

# **The Schnabel car, the world's largest capacity railcar**

December 7, 2005

Categories: Nothing to do with Thailand, but Interesting

[The](#)

[Schnabel car, the world's largest capacity railcar](#)

– December 7, 2005

Thanks to Jack for pointing this out...



# Burmese activists stage protests in Bangkok

December 8, 2005

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[Burmese](#)

[activists stage protests in Bangkok](#) –

*The Irrawaddy*, December 8, 2005

*Several Burmese activists in exile briefly staged a protest in front of Burma's Embassy in Bangkok today against the reconvening of the junta-sponsored National Convention. Zaw Min, a Burmese protester, told The Irrawaddy that the demonstration was organized to deplore the military government's "sham" assembly...*

# Why Isan's dip in birth rate matters

December 8, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Why Isan's dip](#)

[in birth rate matters](#) – Bangkok Post,

December 8, 2005

*...In just one generation, the demographics in Isan have gone from six to 10 child families to one and two child families. And some of these, who are ready to be the next parents, are electing not to go down that path. The long-held belief that Isan will supply our country with all of our manual labour requirements is disappearing in just one generation. The repercussions both within Isan and beyond is enormous...*

# ‘Yes’ billboards

December 9, 2005

Categories: Signs and Billboards



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

‘Yes’ billboards

– December 9, 2005

From *The Nation*: An Bt80-million marketing campaign has the slogan ‘Yes’ appearing on billboards and the Skytrain. The promotion was launched by an as-yet-unnamed US bank, whose identity will be announced on December 16.

**Earlier:** Above is one of a series of billboards appearing around town with the word "yes" in various blue fonts.

This sort of teaser billboard—with a graphic image but no sign of what is being advertised—is becoming increasingly common way of introducing new products.

# How to identify languages

December 9, 2005

Categories: Language

[How to identify languages](#) – December 9, 2005

Remember Thai "has a round dot on most characters."

# Triple blow paralyses city traffic

December 9, 2005

[Triple  
blow paralyses city traffic](#) –

*The Nation*, December 9, 2005

*Three major events plunged Bangkok into nightmarish traffic yesterday. Traffic across much of the city came to a virtual standstill, owing to preparations for today's opening of the Siam Paragon shopping mall on Rama I road, a graduation ceremony at the Bangkok International Trade and Exhibition Centre (Bitec) in Bang Na, and a mob of farmers descending on Silom road...*

# Daughter of German-Thai couple may be alive a year after tsunami

December 9, 2005

Categories: 2004 Tsunami

[Daughter  
of German-Thai couple may be alive a year after tsunami](#)

– CBC, December 9, 2005

The photo is [here](#).

# Chinese naval fleet arrives in Thailand for visit

December 9, 2005

[Chinese](#)

[naval fleet arrives in Thailand for visit](#)

– Xinhuanet, December 9, 2005

*A Chinese naval fleet which is formed by the Shenzhen missile destroyer and Weishanhu depot ship of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China, Friday arrived Thailand's Sattahip Navy Port for a four-day friendship visit to Thailand.*

*...It will be the first time for the Chinese navy to conduct joint military exercise with the Royal Thai Navy in the Gulf of Thailand.*

# On the site of the Four Seasons Hotel

December 10, 2005

Categories: Old photos and films



(Photo: Janette Steenhuis Gatesy)

On the site of the Four Seasons Hotel

– December 10, 2005

Bill Stelling writes: *I hope you receive this photo—it's a picture of the house that stood on the site of the current*

[Four Seasons](#)

[Hotel](#) on Rajadamri Road. My school mate Janette Steenhuis' father was the head of Diethelm back in the 60's and lived in this house, which was just one of an enfilade of beautiful teak villas that stood across from the RBSC. Her mother planted the flame trees which still adorn the grounds of the hotel.



# Google Transit beta

December 10, 2005

[Google](#)

[Transit beta](#) – December 10, 2005

Via Slashdot: *Google's introduced [Google](#)*

*[Transit](#), a new Lab product where users (or, "people") can map trips around their city using public transit. From the Google Blog: 'With it, commuters will be able to easily access public transit schedules, routes, and plan trips using their local public transportation options. This first release covers only the Portland, Oregon metro area, but we are working to expand our coverage very soon.' The amount of data they give seems very comprehensive, including time you'll spend walking to the bus or subway, and the amount of money it would cost compared to driving.*

# Sanan denies speculation he will join with Thai Rak Thai

December 10, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Sanan](#)

[denies speculation he will join with Thai Rak Thai](#)

– *Bangkok Post*, December 10, 2005

*Mahachon party leader Sanan Kachornprasart has denied speculation that he will join the Thai Rak Thai party...*

# PRC road accidents taking heavy human and economic toll

December 12, 2005

Categories: China

[PRC](#)

[road accidents taking heavy human and economic toll](#) –

ADB, December 12, 2005

*In the four years 2000-2004, more than 500,000 people were killed and around 2.6 million injured in road accidents in the People's Republic of China, equivalent to one death every 5 minutes – the highest rate in the world....*

# Something from Thaiinsider.com

December 13, 2005

Something from Thaiinsider.com

– December 13, 2005

Wisarat writes: *Now the updated info about CTX Scandal from US Attorney general can be seen [here](#).*

*This news mentions the list of those who involved in CTX scandal:*

- 1) Premier Thaksin*
- 2) Khun Ying Potjaman*
- 3) Sister Yaowapha*
- 4) Minister Suriya*
- 5) Former AOT Director "Sor Sala"*
- 6) General "Sor Suea"*
- 7) Current AOT Director "Sor Suea"*
- 8) The officer of NBLA "Or Ang" who goes to the US with General "Sor Suea"*

# Benny Goodman in Bangkok 1956

December 14, 2005

Categories: Uncategorized

Benny Goodman in Bangkok

1956 – July 20, 2005

Benny Goodman 1956 – December 14 and 15 – Recorded at the "Lumpini Parc"- A review of the recording from

[Artist](#)

[Direct](#): *This is one of the more unusual live CDs by Benny Goodman, recorded in December 1956 over two days in Bangkok, Thailand. He leads a 13-piece group, which includes Budd Johnson and Peanuts Hucko in the reed section, along with pianist Hank Jones and bassist Israel Crosby. Goodman and his band are at their very best, in spite of playing outdoors and competing, on occasion, with a passing train; this early stereo recording, performed with just two microphones, was made with the clarinetist's permission. In addition to favorites like "Don't Be That Way," "One O'Clock Jump" and "Flying Home," Goodman surprises the audience by playing two works composed by His Majesty the King of Thailand Bhumiphol Aduladet, as well as a brief sign off of the "Thai Royal Anthem." Jones and drummer Mousie Alexander join the leader for exciting trio renditions for "The World Is Waiting For Sunrise" and "Lady Be Good," during which Jones sounds very much like Teddy Wilson. This historic CD is well worth acquiring. ~ Ken Dryden, All Music Guide*  
A thread about this is [here](#).

# And the richest family is...

December 14, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[MONEY and BANKING MAGAZINE SURVEY: And the richest family is...](#)

– *The Nation*, December 14, 2005

*Thaksin's kin head money list for the second straight year  
with Bt33.2 bn as political cronies follow close behind...*

# **INTERVIEW – Thai candidate for U.N. sounds reform note**

December 14, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[INTERVIEW](#)

[– Thai candidate for U.N. sounds reform note –](#)

*Reuters*, December 14, 2005

# Thaksin throws hat into Asean ring on Burma

December 14, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Thaksin](#)

[throws hat into Asean ring on Burma](#) –

*The Irrawaddy*, December 14, 2005

*Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra made an unprecedented public statement of displeasure yesterday over recent political developments in Burma...*



# ‘Drink Don’t Drive’

December 15, 2005

Categories: Signs and Billboards



‘Drink Don’t Drive’ - December 15, 2005

**Above:** Advertisements on Baiyoke II tower

# Giving birth to Pan-Asian vision, but no road map

December 15, 2005

[Giving](#)

[birth to Pan-Asian vision, but no road map](#)

– AP, December 15, 2005

*... "Nothing is wrong with the dream," Robert Broadfoot, managing director of Political and Economic Risk Consultancy in Hong Kong, said Thursday. "But does it mean East Asia will become a European-style community? Does it mean reduced travel restrictions? Does it mean different investment rules?"...*

# The best of 2Bangkok in 2005

December 17, 2005

Categories: Best of 2Bangkok



What it was like to be there...

(Photo: Undated postcard from the 2Bangkok.com collection)

**Above:** Wat Pra Keaw

## Politics

[What is being said on the Samak-Dusit Show?](#)

[The Poojadkuan column in \*Manager\*](#)

[High tension in Thailand – November-December 2005](#)

[Book Review: The impurity of protest](#)

[Royal Power controversy](#)

[The 'secret prison'](#)



(Source: Channel 9, MCOT)



(Photo: Mr. John for 2Bangkok.com)

**Above:** Government officials' cars bombed in two places in Yala province.

## Troubles in the South

[Main page](#)

[November 2005](#)

[October 2005](#)

[September 2005](#)

[August 2005](#)

[August 2005 – Yala closed](#)

[July 2005](#)

[May-June 2005](#)

[April 2005](#)

[March 2005](#)

[January-February 2005](#)

Also [Wanted posters from Yala](#)

Also [From the Thai-language press: 80-day plan to form Pattani state](#) – *Manager Daily*, February 20, 2005

Also [Translation of a leaflet left by 'bandits' in the deep South](#) – May 1, 2005

Also [Translation of a leaflet left by 'bandits' in the deep South](#) – February 22, 2005

Also [Songkhla bombings](#) – April 3, 2005

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## Places



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[Almost the end for Magicland](#)

(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

**Above:** [Old Russian Embassy](#) and [2Bangkok.com visits the old Russian Embassy](#)

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## Maps

[Hammonds Atlas map of Bangkok in 1958](#)  
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Historical Thailand transit maps:

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## 2B Fact Files

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## Thai Media Project

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[Matichon editorial: The accusation about a secret prison and criticism of Matichon](#) – November 8 2005

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[Thairath editorial: The gang to exploit poor people](#) – October 13, 2005

[Thairath, Khaosod, Matichon and Manager: 'haew and bourbok selling out'](#) – August 6, 2005  
[Thaksin Dictionary](#) – June 21, 2005

[The end of a dayweekly](#) – June 17, 2005

[War and Peace at the Southern Border](#) – April 30, 2005

Chapter summaries from the Thai-language *War and Peace at the Southern Border* by Dr Rung Kaewdaeng, Deputy Education Minister. This is the book that Democrat leader Abisit Vejjajiva suggested that PM Thaksin should read...

[Something from the Thai press: Headless farang ghost](#) – Khaosod, March 1, 2005

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# The Nation names the PM as the mystery man

December 17, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

*The Nation* names the  
PM as the mystery man – December 17,  
2005

OFF

[THE BENCH: Confessions of a mystery paramour](#) – *The Nation*,  
December 17, 2005

*...The prosecutor then produced a list of my personal encounters with the leader, which showed that I had actually met him once during a press conference at Government House. I recalled trying to be flirtatious, sitting in the front row with a sinister plan to uncross my legs in front of him a la Sharon Stone in "Basic Instinct".*

*But I never got the chance, because the leader quickly held up his X-sign. I must admit, I initially thought the X-sign suggested something a little more titillating...*

# Giant lime

December 18, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Giant](#)

[lime](#) – *Thai Rath*, December 18, 2005

A giant lime that weighs 1.5kg...



# Foreign filmmakers flocking to Thailand, but Hollywood stays away

December 18, 2005

Categories: Film and TV

[Foreign](#)

[filmmakers flocking to Thailand, but Hollywood stays away](#)

– AFP, December 18, 2005

*More and more foreign producers are filming in Thailand, industry officials say, but high taxes and red tape are driving away big-budget Hollywood movies that would bolster the 250-million-dollar industry...*

# Thai crimebusters enlist www: arrest warrants go online

December 18, 2005

Categories: Crime

[Thai  
crimebusters enlist www: arrest warrants go online](#)

– TNA, December 18, 2005

# Bangkok Post now B25

December 19, 2005

[Bangkok](#)

[Post now B25](#) – *Bangkok Post*,

December 19, 2005

[‘The](#)

[Nation’ to cost Bt25](#) – *The Nation*,

December 20, 2005

# Piyamanee – December 20, 2005

December 20, 2005

Categories: Gem Scam

A reader reports: *Hi, I have previously came across a scam that organized by Piyamanee. Below are my brief story to share:*

*I have recently visited BKK for a short vacation in June 2005. One day while I was near the entrance of the Grand Palace, I was approached by a middle aged man. He was helpful with suggestions to the nearby temples while saying that the Grand Palace will only open at 2pm. I knew it was not true but I have the time so I just listened (It was 8:30am and I know it opens at 9am because I just asked the guard in front). He suggested several places and lastly he mentioned about a export center for buying gem. A tuk-tuk suddenly appear and he negotiated the price to 40B for visit to several places.*

*I thought it was a good deal to visit around so I followed the tuk-tuk and visited temple as he suggested. There were just normal temples and nothing special compared to the Grand Palace. As I stopped at different temples, there were people talking about the export center, offering promotion and that was the last day. They claim that I could get as much as 100% profit out of it by selling back to the gem store in my country. They did mentioned several name of the gem stores (as to strengthen my confident) that I could sell to them back in my country. In one occasion, there was a tourist (he said he was from UK which I dont believe) that said he managed to earn as much as 1000euro by selling back the gem in the UK. In many occasions, the tuk-tuk driver was "coordinating" with the "people-on-show" to allow them to talk to me. For instance, the driver told me to wait while he is going to a restroom, or saying that the engine is overheating, so to allow time for "their people" to talk to me.*

*With all these nicest touch, I finally agreed to pay a visit to Piyamanee. When I arrived at the store at 1pm, the store just opened with light to allow me to go in. I started to get suspicious. They shown me several sets of gem and said I could only buy one as that was the government policy. I dont know much about gem myself but by looking at the gem, I knew they were were poor quality gem. With the price-tag that they put on it, they are definitely not worth it. I didnt buy any even though they offered me like a 25% discount. They said I could just pay by credit card with cash advanced. There will be people "escorting" me to the bank for cash advance.*

*I left the place with some disappointing faces on her face but the story didnt just end here. The tuk-tuk driver continue his "tactic" to allow more people to "sweet talk" me for the gem. These people are persistence and well coordinated but I am just not the dummy that they are looking for (Sorry Piyamanee for your failed attempt). At the end, I just left the tuk-tuk driver and catch another taxi back to the Grand Palace. I hope with 2Bangkok, I could spread the massage to other tourists. Be careful when travel to Thailand. One thing I always remind myself is: DO NOT GREED. If I could easily earn 1000euro, why does this happened to me "so luckily" if I have not been "so lucky" for all my life?*

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

# Speed Train Derails in Northern Thailand

December 20, 2005

Categories: Thai Railroads

[Speed](#)

[Train Derails in Northern Thailand](#) – RedNova,

December 20, 2005

*A northern speed train from Thailand's northern resort province of Chiang Mai derailed in Pitsanulok Province Monday morning, but there was no report of any casualties...*

# Number of electoral democracies reaches 122 as freedom spreads

December 20, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Number  
of electoral democracies reaches 122 as freedom spreads](#)

– breitbart.com, December 20, 2005

[Press  
release from Freedom House with links to the full report](#)

– December 20, 2005

Thailand drops to a rating of three in "political rights."

The Philippines joins Thailand as "Partly Free."

# Skytrain Extensions News 2005

December 20, 2005

Categories: Skytrain

Serious issues on Pinklao extension of BTS (National Stadium – Sam Yaek Fai Chai) – translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Dailynews*, December 20, 2005

Team Consultant Utility has submitted the complete EIA on four BTS extensions to be started after finishing the Taksin extension or Samrong extension.

1. Samrong – Samut Prakarn (8 km)
2. Wongwian Yai – Bang Wah (4.5 km)
3. Mochit – Saphan Mai (11.9 km)
4. National Stadium – Phran Nok (7.7km)

The committee consisted of representatives from the following agencies:

- 1) BMA Policy and Planning on Natural resource and Environment Bureau
- 2) BMA Traffic Bureau
- 3) SRT

The interesting details on completed EIA can be described as follows:

- 1) The first three lines will be elevated double tracks following the middle island of the roads (Sukhumvit, Phaholyothin, Rajapruek Road)
- 2) Pinklao extension (National Stadium – Phran Nok) has to be underground track due to the fact that the track goes through Rattanakosin Island.

This section alone needs 26.285 billion baht. The starting point for Pinklao extension will be the ramp heading underground in front of Wat Chai Monkhon on Rama I Road. The track will go along Chakkraphaddiphongse Road after passing Yotse intersection and it will turn left to Lan Luang Road at Saphan Khao before going to Rajadamnoen Avenue at Phan Fah Bridge and it will go all the way across Chao Phraya at Sanam Luang to Thonburi Railway Station, Issaraphab Road before ending up at Phra Nok Road.

There will be five underground stations on 7.7 km underground track.

- 1) Krasat Suek (Kasat Suek Bridge across railway–the nearest to Hualamphong BTS could get without interchanging into MRT)
- 2) Phan Fah Lee Lart (Phan Fah Bridge – gateway to Rattanakosin Island)
- 3) Sanam Luang (Rattanakosin Hotel – the hotel that witnessed political upheavals in Thailand)
- 4) Bangkok Noy (connecting with Thonburi Railway Station – a big plus for travelers who want to ride the trains to Kanchanaburi – compelling SRT to add more commuter trains to Kanchanaburi or rebuild Thonburi Terminal to be at the same place as Hualamphong terminal)
- 5) Yaek fai Chai – terminal station – interchange with MRT Blue Ring There are several place for land expropriation such as

- 1) Curves at Bumrung Muang to Chakkaraphaddiphongse (Yot Se Intersection)
- 2) Curves at Chakkaraphaddiphongse to LAN Luang (Saphan Khao Intersection)
- 3) Curves near Pinklao Bridge
- 4) Curve at Bangkok Noy Railway market, Thonburi station

Total expropriated area is 15546 square wah with 1.93538 billion baht for just the land alone. The compensation for 49 commercial buildings and other buildings is about 0.17404 billion baht. Therefore, the total land expropriated is 2.10442 billion baht.

The details on land expropriation for Pinklao Extension will be under serious consideration before submitting to Rattankosin Island Committee to get the approval in January 2006.

The other three extensions would be submitted to National Environment Committee before getting the final approval from the cabinet.

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Auspicious day for starting  
the construction of Taksin Extension – translated  
and summarized by Wisarut from *Manager Daily*, December

13, 2005

Governor Abhirak came to the construction site of Charoen Nakhon station (S7) to perform the inauguration ceremony for the construction of Taksin extension along with representatives from STECON after signing the contract on November 30, 2005.

Taksin extension will be 2.2 km long with price tag of 1.033 billion baht. This has to be done in 300 days. The first section is to construct the support pillars for both Charoen Nakhon station and Wong Wian Yai station which has to be complete by February 2006. After that, track laying will go from April to September 2006. At the same time, the construction of stations along with the installation of escalators, elevators for the handicapped, electric power, the lighting system, and air-conditioners will be executed so all will be done by the end of September 2006.

Charoen Nakhon station (S7) is at Bang Chak gas station (former Technic Sajjawat Technical School) and Wongwian Yai (S8) is near the flyover across Taksin Road.

STECON has to install the system for environmental assessment, vibration detection, noise detection and dust counting so BMA can inspect the system every month.

The BMA Governor has asked Deputy Samart to handle the negotiation with BTS. So far, the problem is due to shareholders who disagree with the BMA scheme of revenue sharing even though Khun Khiree, Mr. Super K, and Khun Anat have agreed with the BMA scheme of revenue sharing to relieve them from the burden of constructing the main infrastructure. BTS only needs to install the signals and system and supply the new sets of rolling stock if the original 35 sets cannot cope with surging demand.

For the Samrong extension, BMA has asked Mahatthai six times to change the scheme from 100% private to 60% from BMA and 40% from BTS. So far, Mahatthai rejected the BMA scheme despite the fact that this Samrong extension cost BMA 8 billion baht. This section has to be started in 2006 so the line would help those who live in the Samrong area.

BMA will also ask Samut Prakarn Provincial Hall to help BMA on the section beyond BMA Boundary Pole since the Samrong extension is going to penetrate into Samut Prakarn and those who live in the Samrong area are willing to help BMA since they would get benefit from the project. If the central government refuses to help BMA, BMA would have to come up with an emergency plan to accomplish the Samrong extension.

**Note:** If the central government refuses to help BMA handle the Samrong extension, the section from Onnut to Samrong—even Paknam would turn into a red zone for TRT as well as those vested interests who act like a local mafia.

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New names for the Taksin extension stations – translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Dailynews*, November 25, 2005

Deputy BMA Governor Samart Rajpolasit is sending a proposal to change the names of stations along Taksin extension due to public demand to have very distinguishable station names since the old names are very hard for passengers to distinguish.

	Old name	New name
1) S7	Krung Thonburi	Charoen Nakhon
2) S8	Taksin Road	Wongwian Yai



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BMA Traffic Bureau has planned to hire Utility Design Co. Ltd. as a consultant to control the construction of the Taksin extension with a price tag of 30 million baht. So far, Utility Design has quote of 29,705,126 baht for this contract. The contract will be signed on November 30.

BMA Traffic Bureau has chosen Utility Design since this company has handled the defunct Phaseecharoen Elevated Way before so there will be no problem on connecting the system.

BMA is drafting a TOR for hiring the private sector to handle the signal and system installation ticket with a price tag of 1.29 billion baht and the consultant to handle the signal and system installation ticket with a price tag of 40 million baht.

The TOR for the upcoming project will be complete in December 2005.

There will be either an e-auction which takes 45 days to implement or the special procurement which takes 15 days to implement (but is more corruption prone).

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Skytrain Extension: Details of the Taksin Bang Wah line – translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Thairath* and *Dailynews*, November 14, 2005

The correspondent at BMA City Hall got the news that Team Consulting and Utility Design, and Asdicon Corp has concluded planning the extension project from Taksin Road to Bang Wah (4.5 km) which connects Phetkasem road with the upcoming Taksin extension of 2.2 km. The details are:

1) The area along the route is urban area with moderate-high density along with agriculture areas, consisting of residential buildings, offices, commercial buildings, schools, temples and so on.

2) The construction of elevated tracks with the pillars on the city of the road will consist of 4 stations

2.1) Pho Nimit

2.2) Ratchadaphisek

2.3) Wutthakart

2.4) Bang Wah

3) Land expropriation is 41 million baht while the construction will be 6.656 billion baht which consist of

3.1) Main structure and rails – 2.43 billion baht

3.2) New sets of rolling stock – 2.42 billion baht

3.3) Electrical and mechanical works – 1.603 billion baht

3.4) Design and control – 0.203 billion baht

It will takes three years to finish the project extension though the main tracks are nearly done.

The economic benefit is 23.6% -> 2.17 times of investment

4) The ticket price will be  $10 + 1.8 \times N$ ,  $N$  = number of km to be paid back in 9-17 years depending on

whether it is done by the public or private sector. 100% private investment will add extra cost and compel higher ticket prices. Public contribution along with subsidies would enable the company to lower the ticket price.

5) There are two historical sites along the route, Wat Pho Nimit and Phaseecharoen Canal. Fortunately, the construction does no harm to both historical sites since the tracks are 300 meters away from Pho Nimit temple while no pillars are on Phaseecharoen Canal. However, it needs some land expropriation. It may do some harm to the residents along the tracks from microdust (0.7 micrograms), air pollution (NOX, CO) or noise during construction which will be in the day for short

periods. A wall to block noises has to be erected for the area with noise more than 70 dB.

Therefore, a PR effort is needed to allow public participation along with traffic facilitation during the construction along with suggestion boxes and webboards for collecting opinions and complaints.

6) The foundation for the track is 54 meters deep so no worry about earthquakes Rubber shock absorbers will give further protection.

Fortunately, most people tell BMA to speed up the tracks to suburb areas on the Thonburi side with fair prices. However, BMA needs to modify some parts of the project before submitting the plan to the Environmental Board.

---

Signing the contract with STECON for the Taksin

Extension – translated and summarized by

Wisarat from *Bangkok Biznews*, November 11, 2005

STECON has signed the contract with BMA to handle the Taksin extension of 2.2 km with a price tag of 1.033877909 billion baht with witnesses from the BMA Traffic Bureau and BMA City Clerk. The construction of Taksin extension has to be done in 300 days.

The construction will start in December 2005 and the late fine would be applied at 0.2% of 1.033877909 billion baht/day -> 2.067755 million baht/day.

There will be two stations at the following places:

1) Krung Thonburi – in front of Soi Sajakwat Technical School

2) Taksin road – near Taksin flyover

This will include viaducts connecting with flyovers along Krung Thonburi road to facilitate passenger movement and the removal of obstructing infrastructure. There will be 4 escalators and 4 elevators for the handicapped for each station. A new light system will be installed under the station along with fire extinguishing-detecting system. A system to measure air and noise quality along with vibration will be installed as well.

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Dimensions for the Taksin extension and beyond

– translated and summarized by Wisarat from *Dailynews*,

November 8, 2005

The stations for Taksin extension and beyond would be 25 x 150 meters.

The stairways would be 1.5-3.0 meter wide. Escalators would be narrower.

---

Interchange between BTS and Mae Klong would be on

1.5 rai of land – translated and summarized

by Wisarat from *Dailynews*, November 8, 2005

After a wrangling negotiation, those who live in Thonburi side of Bangkok say:

1) They do not want the interchange between BTS and Mae Klong railway at Wuthakart area because the new station of BTS is just 800 meters away from Talad Plooi station. Only a connecting viaduct in the middle of Ratchadaphisek Inner Ring Road would be needed.

2) If the government desperately wants the closer interchange, the local people would allow the land expropriation of only one rai and a half (0.6 acre).

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More details of the Taksin

extension – translated and summarized by

Wisarat from *Manager Daily*, November 7, 2005

1) Even though the Taksin extension may cut down the number of passengers

at Saphan Taksin by 10,000 a day, the compensation from 50,000 old and new passengers from the Taksin extension is a big boon to BTS.

2) BTS would have to negotiate with SCB, IFC, and KfW that the Taksin extension of 2.2 km would add extra revenue from the current 8 million baht a day. 5 million baht is just enough to pay the loan interest and the other 3 million is for the electric bill, maintenance, salaries, etc. It is not enough to cover the principle. The extra revenue from the Taksin extension as well as further extensions would enable BTS to pay the principle of 50 billion baht.

3) BTS is going to use the reserved two sets of rolling stock to run the Taksin extension so the operating rolling stock would be 33 sets from 35 sets—nearly reaching the limit.

4) The second phase of the Taksin extension to Bang Wah would force BTS to run at full capacity with new sets of rolling stock needed.

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Settlement on the fares for the two new stations – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Manager Online*, November 7, 2005

Those who ride BTS between from S6 (Saphan Taksin) to S8 station (Taksin Road) would have to pay 10 baht while there will be no 10 baht surcharge applied after riding from S8 to station beyond S5 station (Surasak). This extension would facilitate the existing passengers while adding 50,000 extra passengers a day. BTS is ready to provide all the available rolling stock for the Taksin extension.

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BMA discussing with BTS on three issues – Installing countdown clock for the Taksin extension  
– translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Dailynews*, November 7, 2005

Deputy BMA Governor Samart is going to discuss with BTS about three issues related to the contract with Krungthep Thanakhom on BTS services on the Taksin extension.

1. Service – five sets of rolling stocks going across the Chao Phraya  
– No need for new rolling stock—the same old 35 sets would be enough.
2. 10-40 baht ticket fee with 10 baht collected from BTS by BMA along with revenue sharing on the first 23.5 km as a way to raise revenue for further extensions and recoup the investment.
3. The BMA contract with BTSC – whether it is necessary to collect ticket fee to go across the Chao Phraya.

After discussion, BMA would ask BTSC to come up with a plan in the next two weeks so as to make a speedy settlement.

BMA is finishing the draft on a TOR for signal installation along with the construction of two stations and laying tracks to be signed by STECON. The only thing left is to wait for the consultant chosen by BMA Traffic Bureau to handle this project. After the signing ceremony with STECON, BMA would install a countdown clock to speed up the company to get it done in 300 days– leaving 60 days for system testing.

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Premier Thaksin letting BMA handle the Taksin extension at 40 baht max – Other BTS extensions wait until next year – translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Manager*, November 4, 2005

The central government is giving the green light to the Taksin extension to be done in one year, but they are asking BMA to negotiate with BTS to freeze the prize at 40 baht max instead of the additional 5-10 baht for going across the Chao Phraya. This was after 2 hours of discussion between BMA (Governor Aphirak and Deputy Samart) and the central government

(Maew, Pheng, Thanong, MRTA Governor) from noon to 2pm.

The 2nd phase to Bang Wah will have to be under negotiation with MOTC even though BMA has already finished the first 4.5 km with only 0.8 km left.

The Samrong extension (8.9 km) is also under negotiation between the cabinet and BMA via Mahard Thai for BMA and OTP for the central government. However, the government would like to delay the extension projects (e.g. 8.9 km Samrong extension, 10 km Paknam extension, 10.9 km Phaholyothin extension and 7.7 km Pinklao extension) until they have set up MTA to handle both MRTA and BTS along with the Red Line commuter. This is the only way BMA could get more funds and subsidies from the Central government after BMA has thrown all its money for the Taksin extension to Bang Wah.

Failure for BMA to negotiate with BTS would prevent BMA from executing any further extensions. The central government would come up with the line competing with BTS instead. Even MRTA is questioning the BMA scheme to help BTS including the contract as well as the extensions and the authorized person to approve the projects. MRTA would help BTS only after BTS had agreed with MOTC.

MRTA would call a new bid for the Purple line and Blue ring with a price tag of 120-125 billion baht in the next three months. The latest in January 2006.

Furthermore, the government decided to scrap the direct barter trading system to let the other countries to bid for the projects paid in cash next year. This is after getting boos from foreign investors. They would allow an indirect barter system. Some barter and some in cash so as to start the construction in June 2006. The Purple line would be done by the end of 2009.

#### Government

#### approves BMA's 2.2 km extension of skytrain

– TNA, November 4, 2005

*The government has finally approved a proposed plan of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) on its 2.2 kilometre extension of the existing skytrain system to the Thonburi side.*

*The government endorsed the plan at a joint government-BMA meeting here on Friday, which was chaired by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra...*

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#### EDITORIAL:

#### Standing up for weary commuters – *The Nation*,

October 30, 2005

*...It came as little surprise therefore to see the initial hostile reactions from the prime minister and relevant Cabinet ministers when Apirak made public his plan to speed up the BTS extension to Thon Buri. Probably because the plan makes very good sense. After all, Thon Buri is a major population centre that has not been served by either of the existing rail-based mass-transit systems.*

*Apirak not only has stolen the show but has also made the Thaksin government lose face. A visibly annoyed Thaksin went so far as threatening to stop the BMA plan in its tracks, saying Bangkok is not an independent state and that any mass-transportation plan must have the approval of the country's Transport Commission.*

*Bangkok councillors belonging to the Thai Rak Thai Party, as if on queue, boycotted a meeting of the Bangkok City Council called by Apirak to make a decision on the proposed funding for the BTS extension.*

*But they later came to their senses, after realising that opposing a plan that would benefit much of Bangkok's population is not very smart politically. The council then unanimously approved the plan...*

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More articles on the Skytrain

extension controversy – October 29, 2005

Wisarat points out more Thai-language articles about the Skytrain extension controversy:

\* [Photograph](#)

[of Saphan Taksin as testimony for the Taksin extension](#)

- \* [The smear campaign against Governor Apirak](#)
  - \* [Deputy Governor Samart points out that a 15 baht flat rate scheme would cost the central government billions of US\\$ for subsidies](#)
  - \* [Loud cheers for the Taksin extension – Loud jeers toward TRT’s smear campaign](#)
  - \* [Deputy Governor Samart insists that the structure of the Taksin extension to Bang Wah is strong enough to handle heavy rail rolling stock](#)
  - \* [MOTC inviting foreigners to handle the four lines of mass transit systems](#)
  - \* [Irregularities on the foreign participation on the four lines of mass transit systems baffling diplomats from seven nations](#)
- 

Skytrain roundup

### [\*\*Apirak wins round one of BTS showdown with Thaksin 52-0\*\*](#)

– *The Nation*, October 27, 2005

*TRT councillors vote ‘yes’; 1,000 rally at BMA; governor says work begins next month. Bangkok City Council yesterday unanimously approved a Bt2.39-billion budget to extend the Skytrain to the Thon Buri side of the city...*

### [\*\*City Council approves B2.3bn BTS extension – Apirak backed by Thai Rak Thai councillors\*\*](#) – *Bangkok Post*, October 27, 2005

*The City Council, including members of the Thai Rak Thai party, unanimously approved a 2.3-billion-baht budget for the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) to finish the short BTS train extension across the Chao Phraya to Thon Buri. However, a Thai Rak Thai cabinet minister insisted the project would need a fresh environmental impact assessment...*

### [\*\*TRT derailing BTS extension\*\*](#) – *Bangkok Post*, October 27, 2005

*...There is no justification whatsoever for the government to drag its feet any further to delay the BTS extension. The government has only itself to blame for doing almost nothing to relieve the suffering of Thon Buri residents. It’s time they had a better alternative, just as their neighbours do, on the Bangkok side of the river. And if the government is not willing to finish the unfinished project, then it should not stop the city administration from doing so if it truly cares for the well-being of Thon Buri voters.*

### **Lambasting BMA for planning BTS extension**

**without discussing with Premier Thaksin** – translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Manager Daily*, October 27, 2005

Premier Thaksin is lambasting BMA that “you didn’t come to discuss with me before implementing the BTS extensions!” “BMA is very undeveloped—the extension does not connect with other systems!”

“I can do these BTS extensions while keeping a 15 baht flat rate!”

“BMA is irresponsible to force passengers to pay twice when using the Taksin extension”

Wisarut points out many *Manager* articles whipping up a frenzy over the extension issue:

\* [More](#)  
[people have booed Premier Thaksin on his obstruction of the BTS extension](#)

\* [Governor](#)  
[Apirak pushing BTS extension forward with 10-40 baht ticket](#)

\* [MOTC](#)  
[discussion with BMA on Taksin extension](#)

\* [TRT](#)  
[using a smear campaign against those demonstrators for Taksin extensions](#)  
[as](#)

[“Mobs from Klong Toei slums”](#)

\* [Premier](#)  
[Thaksin’s smear campaign against the Taksin extension](#)

\* [Critics](#)  
[on TRT’s mishandling of the BTS extension issue](#)

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## [Bangkok](#)

[Council approves BTS extension](#) – *The Nation*,  
October 26, 2005

*...The council voted unanimously to allow the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration to invest Bt2.39 billion to construction the 2.2 kilometre part of the elevated railway.*

*The extended Skytrain route will run from Taksin Bridge across the Chao Phya river to the Thon Buri side of the city.*

*The vote came after over four hours of debate by Bangkok councillors...*

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A tale of many newspapers: Did the Transport Ministry “refuse to approve” or “soften its stance”? – October 26, 2005

The English-language newspapers are not quite clear on what the Transport Ministry meeting meant (although the *Post* adds in an interesting detail not in the Thai-language papers—that the Skytrain extensions have to be controlled by a new agency which the government has yet to set up).

The Thai-language papers give a much clearer picture that makes it appear the Transport Ministry meeting is a stalling tactic—asking for new EIAs on already complete projects (ironic considering all the projects the government has tried to rush through without EIAs) and offering to call a bid and pay overseas contractors in agricultural products.

### [SKYTRAIN](#)

[EXTENSION: Ministry drops opposition to BMA funding](#)

– *The Nation*, October 25, 2005

*The Transport Ministry has softened its stance over the*

*Bangkok Metropolitan Administration’s attempt to pay for the*

*Skytrain extension to Thon Buri.*

*But it has urged officials in charge to pay more attention*

*to fares, and the potential for environmental damage.*

*Transport Minister Pongsak Ruktapongpisal said yesterday after*

### [Pongsak](#)

[rejects city’s plan to finish route](#)

– *Bangkok Post*, October 25, 2005

*Transport Minister Pongsak Ruktapongpaisal has refused*

*to approve city hall’s plan to complete the 2.2km extension*

*of the BTS skytrain from Taksin station to Thon Buri, a decision*

*sure to anger Bangkok Governor Apirak Kosayodhin. Mr Pongsak*

*said there were several reasons for the decision, but in particular*

*the authority to proceed rests with a city mass transit authority*

*a meeting with the rail network development committee that in principle, the BMA financing was feasible...*

*that the government has yet to establish. He was speaking after chairing a meeting of his working group on mass transit development yesterday. Mr Pongsak said while the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) could build the existing BTS network, because the Interior Ministry had authorised it to do so, it needed approval from the mass transit authority to extend any routes...*

### **Pheng said BMA should revise the impact studies of the BTS extensions**

– translated and summarized from *Manager*, October 25, 2005

The head of the Transport Ministry Pheng asked BMA to revise the environment impact assessment (EIA), the maintenance garage, and the fare before investing in the BTS 2.2 km extension. He is prepared to invite 7 countries to bid for the construction of the four routes and confirmed to consider to each country's payment conditions and offer payment in agriculture products instead of investment payments.

### **Thonburi people are going to be happy to use the BTS – The government and BMA will discuss this case** – translated and summarized from *Bangkokbiz*, October 25, 2005

The government conceded to talk to BMA. The Transport Ministry adjusts the plan at the meeting with the rail network development committee and will postpone to consider the details of the TOR of BTS and the four routes in order to urgently set the condition framework for BTS extension construction.

Governor Apirak pushing the Taksin extension and BMA smart way forward retorting to Pheng that the EIA is finished – translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Thairath*, *Dailynews*, and *Manager*, October 25, 2005

Governor Apirak has lambasted Minister Pheng that BMA has finished EIA on the Skytrain extension in 2000, so there is no need for another EIA as Minister Pheng claims. Furthermore, BMA has already included 2.393 billion for the first phase of the Taksin extension in the next BMA meeting tomorrow (October 26).

So far, the BMA Financial Bureau has reported that there is 10.4 billion baht in reserve with no strings attached, so there will be about 8 billion baht left after spending on the first phase of the Taksin extension. However, BMA could spend only 7 billion baht since BMA has an obligation to reserve 1 billion baht for an emergency.

BMA has to wait for the cabinet resolution to see if the government would allow BMA to spend on the Samrong extension (8.9 km) with a price tag of 8 billion baht. If the government refuses to endorse the Samrong extension, BMA will have to spend the reserves for this matter.

Furthermore, BMA has a policy to spend another 6 billion baht for the 2nd phase of the Taksin extension. This would require the capitalization of about at least 15 billion baht out of the annual budget to complete both the Taksin and Samrong extensions.

Kasikornthai Bank (KBank) has told BMA that BMA has to also handle the water treatment at Klong Toei, the BMA 2 building, and the mass transit system. KBank would submit the details by the end of November 2005. KBank has suggested BMA to issue more bonds to finance all BMA projects out of the budget if BMA does not have enough reserves. KBank has been a consultant on the BMA Budget Bureau.



## BURNING

ISSUE: BTS extension is more important – *The Nation*, October 25, 2005

*...The day before Apirak announced his plan, the government trumpeted an ambitious idea to build the a city near the new airport – “Nakhon Suvarnabhumi” – for some Bt400-500 billion, to be completed over the next ten years.*

*But a simple comparison of the size, budget, duration of building and benefit to the people from the two projects would clearly favour the BTS extension route as more necessary and reasonable than the new “economic centre”.*

*...The major reason why the government opposed the Thon Buri extension appears to be nothing more than ugly politics, because Apirak is a Democrat, and the national government fears that the governor and his party would take the credit...*

## BMA

VERSUS PM: City hall set for Skytrain face-off – *The Nation*, October 26, 2005

*City councillors will decide today whether to approve Bangkok Governor Apirak Kosayodhin’s Bt2.3-billion plan to complete a 2.3km extension of the Skytrain system.*

*The long-delayed project has become a hot political issue in recent days as Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra has shown his reluctance to support the governor’s bid amid dire city traffic problems...*

## PM

still won’t back BTS extension – TRT city councillors to side with Apirak – *Bangkok Post*, October 26, 2005

26, 2005

*... “The meeting has decided that all TRT councillors should attend the meeting in a reasonable fashion and give Mr Apirak the support he needs if his terms are acceptable,” said TRT councillor for Huay Kwang district, Pradermchai Bunchua.*

*Min Buri councillor Virat Meenachainant said TRT councillors had nothing against the route and blamed misleading press reports for giving the impression they opposed the plan.*

*TRT’s Taling Chan district MP Pitiphong Temcharoen said he did not mind who built the skytrain extension but the government already had a master plan for a mass transit system for all of Bangkok and its vicinity.*

*But Mr Pitiphong claimed that Mr Apirak’s move over the extension was politically motivated to win votes as the Bangkok councillors’ election draws near...*

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From the Thai-language press – October 25, 2005

Wisarat has a roundup from the Thai-language press of Skytrain and Suvannabhumi province articles and Thai posts commenting on the articles.

\* Continuing boos toward Premier Thaksin and Minister Pheng’s stand against the Taksin extension are [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

\* MOTC negotiating with BMA on the Skytrain extension issue – [Manager](#) – [Manager](#) – [Manager](#) – [Bangkok Biz News](#)

\* [BMA complaining that they have not received a letter issued by MOTC about the negotiations concerning the BTS Extension](#)

\* Articles from the website of Thaksin’s arch-foe Ekkayuth Anchanbutr: [MOTC](#)



[negotiating with BMA on the Skytrain extension issue](#) – [Premier Thaksin blows up on BTS extension issue](#) – [People want to kick Premier Thaksin out of the country](#)

\* Most people who posted on the net have booed the Suvannabhum Province as a project which pleases vested interests at the expense of local people – [here](#) and [here](#).

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A tale of two newspapers: The Transport Ministry meets about the Skytrain – October 24, 2005

*Bangkok Post* lazily parrots the TNA article while *The Nation* gives a full rundown of the controversy. Still it is interesting how these two papers insulate English-speakers from the depth of feeling on the issue that is being expressed in the Thai-language press.

#### [TRANSPORT](#)

##### [MEETING: Ministry clears agenda to discuss Skytrain plan](#)

– *The Nation*, October 24, 2005

*...Pornchai Nuchsuwan, a member of the committee, said the central government had stepped into the BMA plan because it wanted to ensure maximum benefits for the people. “We are a regulator and we are planning for a ticket that can be used on all mass-transit systems,” he said. The committee will try to reach a conclusion today, then will “invite the BMA for talks,” Pornchai said. Democrat Party deputy leader and Bangkok MP Korn Chatikavanij suspects that the central government is simply using a political ploy. “It’s better to have the extended route sooner rather than later,” he said. “Apart from that, the government can ask for negotiations at any time...”*

#### [Govt](#)

##### [set to soften position on BTS](#)

– *Bangkok Post*, October 24, 2005

*...The meeting will also consider the bidding terms for the other mass transit lines: Red Line (Rangsit-Mahachai and Taling Chan-Suvarnabhumi), Purple Line (Bang Yai-Bang Sue) and Blue Line (Hua Lamphong-Bang Khae and Bang Sue-Tha Phra). Deputy Governor Samart Ratchapolsitte yesterday denied having received an invitation from the government to discuss the BTS extension, as reported by the media...*

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From the Thai-language press: Democrats lambasting TRT for obstructing BTS extensions – translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Manager*, October 23, 2005

Democrats have thrown support to the popular BTS extensions by having BMA give the Skytrain a 2.3 billion baht budget.

MP Korn Jatikawanit has lambasted

Maew about the indicators of a “worthy investment project” by pointing out the MRTA Purple Line and MRTA Orange Line are good examples. Furthermore, MP Korn has pointed out that if you give 1 million baht for each village around Thailand (total 70 billion baht), you should never question a 2.3 billion baht budget for the BTS extensions. No more excuses for obstructing the extensions can be entertained since the plan to nationalize BTS-BMCL has been terminated.

At the same time, MP Ongart Klamphaiboon has attacked TRT people as “narrow-minded men” who come to obstruct BTS extensions

as the way to destroy the popularity of Governor Aphirak while perpetuating the sufferings of those who live in Thonburi. Governor Aphirak has been a “Mr Nice Guy” for too long, but Premier Thaksin refuses to respond. Therefore, Governor Aphirak has to do his best to deal with the Taksin extension without asking the central government for a budget.

MP Ongart told the press that if TRT members do not want to terminate their own political careers, they should go against Maew by supporting BTS extensions.

If TRT refuses to work on the Taksin extension of 6.7 km length, They should let BMA handle this section by themselves without obstructing them. If they keep obstructing the popular BTS extension as they have done for more than 5 years, they would face dire consequence in the next elections in Bangkok in the same way as soldiers in the “red zone.”

Responses to this article are is [here](#).

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From the Thai-language press:

BTS Extensions – Thonburi people revolt – full route to be 6.7km

– translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Thairath*

and *Dailynews*, October 21, 2005

After Thaksin Extension is rejected by Premier Thaksin and TRT PMs and TRT members of the BMA City Council, those who live in Thonburi revolt.

At 11am on October 20, Governor Aphirak and Deputy Samart inspected the construction of the Taksin extension in golf carts from Saphan Taksin station to Kalaprapuruek Interchange (nearly 6 km from Saphan Taksin) with strong cheers from those who live in Thonburi.

Governor Aphirak told those who live in Thonburi that the full version of the Taksin extension would be 6.7 km. with stations at the following places:

- 1) Krung Thonburi
- 2) Somdej Phrachao Taksin
- 3) Phonimit
- 4) Ratchasaphisek
- 5) Wutthakart
- 6) Bang Wah

BMA would run the first 2.2 km to Somdej Phrachao Taksin station while the section from Somdej Phrachao Taksin station to Bangwah (4.5 km) is 74% done (5.9 km done, the other 0.8 km on the row) and that section from Somdej Phrachao Taksin station to Bangwah will be done in June 2006.

The first 2.2 km would shorten travel time from Taksin Intersection to Saphan Taksin to 5 minutes—very good compared to the current 30-60 minutes for 2 km due to traffic jams.

After finishing the full length of the Taksin extension, BMA would push the Samrong extension (8.9 km)

along with the Phaholyothin extension (Mochit – Saphan Mai -> 12 km) and the Pinklao extension (National Stadium – Phrannok -> 7.7 km) by themselves without asking for money from the selfish central government. The capitalization would be done with bonds.

Even though Transport Minister Pheng want to force BTS to run at a 15 baht flat rate, Governor Aphirak said even today BMCL and BTSC have collected ticket prices higher than that populist prices advocated by Minister Pheng and TRT. BMA would either hire BTS or BMCL to do this job for the Taksin extension.

When Govern Aphirak reached Kalaprapruek Interchange, he spotted local

people from Bhanumathorn Community in Chomthong District showing a banner to support the decision of Governor Aphirak. The banner and people of Thonburi said:

“We who live in Thonburi have suffered from Traffic jams for too long.”

“We are stuck for hours and hours on Phetkasem, Taksin Road and Saphan Taksin Bridge.”

“Taksin Extension must be here now! – The solution for fuel savings.”

Mr Anat Abhabhirom said BTS is ready to negotiate with BMA about the Taksin extension service, but they need to talk with BMA about the details such as the new officers at Krung Thonburi station and Somdej Phrachao Taksin.



(Source: *Manager Online*) Turning up the heat on the Skytrain extensions – October 23, 2005

*Manager Online* posted [photos](#) and [email addresses](#) of the 26 TRT city council members who boycotted a city council meeting in an attempt to stop the Skytrain from expanding (thanks to Wisarut for pointing this out).

Meanwhile, *Thairath* and *Dailynews* report on the ‘revolt’ of the Thonburi people over the issue. On Thursday Governor Aphirak and Deputy Samart publicly inspected the viaduct for the Taksin extension and vowed to complete the project to the cheers of residents.

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[Thaksin confirms he'll stop BMA Skytrain plan](#) – *The Nation*, October 21, 2005

*Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra repeated Friday that the government would put a brake on a Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) move to fund the extension of Skytrain services from Taksin Bridge to Thon Buri.*

*“Bangkok is not an independent state,” he said...*

### [Train row escalates – PM](#)

[tells city it is not an ‘autonomous state’](#) – Bangkok Post,

October 22, 2005

*The row over the elevated train extension escalated yesterday with Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra cautioning the city that it was not an autonomous state and that it had to discuss the project with the government first before proceeding. Mr Thaksin insisted the Bangkok Transit System Co (BTS), which operates the train service, was bound by the contract with the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration to pay for the civil work of extended routes.*

*The BMA, therefore, could not simply decide to pay for the civil work, stations, tracks and operating systems for the BTS extension, he said. But Bangkok Governor Apirak Kosayodhin said city hall has waited long enough. It would go ahead and complete the extension with or without government approval...*

### [Residents support BTS extension](#)

– Bangkok Post, October 22, 2005

*Thon Buri residents favour the city administration's plan to build a 2.2km extension route for the BTS electric train system, saying the short section must be built even if the investment is not economically viable. Navarat Thoopthong, 35, a regular BTS commuter from Pasi Charoen district, said that before the electric train project was built she had to spend almost two hours travelling from her house to her office in Silom. After the BTS train system opened, she was able to cut her travelling time by one hour...*

### [SKYTRAIN](#)

[EXTENSION: Thaksin objects to BMA investment](#) – The Nation,

October 21, 2005

*...Agriculture Minister Sudarat Keyuraphan said Thai Rak Thai would call for a meeting of its councillors to find out what prompted their absence from Wednesday's meeting. She urged the public not to see this incident as a political issue and said the government was supportive of the BMA...*

### [PM wants BTS extension scrapped](#)

[– Will try to convince Apirak to end project](#) – Bangkok Post,

October 21, 2005

*...The government had delayed considering the extension for years and Thai Rak Thai Bangkok councillors did not return to the council's session on Wednesday, effectively rejecting Mr Apirak's motion for the BTS extension, Mr Ong-art said...*

*The 61-member Bangkok council includes 30 Democrat councillors with 25 from Thai Rak Thai.*

*Pipat Larppratana, chief Democrat councillor whip, said Democrat councillors would exercise their majority vote to pass the motion on Tuesday...*

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### [TRT absence leaves BTS route](#)

[hanging – Apirak can't go ahead without govt support](#) –

Bangkok Post, October 20, 2005

*Thai Rak Thai councillors failed to show up at the City Council's afternoon meeting yesterday, so it was unable to consider Bangkok Governor Apirak Kosayodhin's request for approval to complete the skytrain extension to Thon Buri in the absence of government support. Twenty-five Thai Rak Thai councillors failed to return to the council yesterday after lunch. As a result, the session lacked the necessary*

*quorum of 31 councillors present. There are 30 Democrat councillors in the 61-member council but not all attended yesterday's session...*

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## Political battle

over mass transit: Central government freezes budget for Skytrain extensions – Defiant city government approves own fund for the Skytrain – translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Manager Daily* and *Matichon*, October 18, 2005

Minister Pheng has come up with the plan to cut the budget at the expense of BTS extensions to relieve traffic jams along Sathorn Road that have been deliberately neglected until the government can create MTA to take over BTS and MRTA. The cabinet has just approved the plan this evening (October 18)–and the plan will be officially declared as a “PM Office Decree.”

The total budget is 129.979 billion baht, down from 212.362 billion baht. The bidding will start in February-March 2006.

There are four lines:

1. Red Line Commuter-> Bangsue – Rangsit (24.6 km), cutting from 70.984 billion baht to 33.025 billion baht
2. Airport Link extension -> Phyathai – Bangsue – Talingchan (20.4 km), cutting from 35.154 billion baht to 27.410 billion baht
3. MRTA Purple Line -> Bangsue – Bang Yai (23 km), cutting from 42.204 billion baht to 31.664 billion baht
4. Blue Ring (Bangsue – Tha pha, Hua Lamphong – Bang Khae – 27.2 km), cutting from 64.020 billion baht to 37.880 billion baht

The elevated section would be u-shaped to cut the budget by 30% while shortening the time by 15-20%.

The government will have to make a 100% investment so as to introduce a 15 baht flat ticket fee.

Phase 2 will come from savings which is going to the following routes with a 69.163 billion baht budget -> 35.638 billion baht for civil work and the rolling stock and signals 33.525 billion baht.

- 1) Red Line Commuter -> Rangsit – Chaing Rak – Ayutthaya (41.5 km)
- 2) Red Line Commuter -> Talingchan – Salaya – Nakhon Pathom (42.6 km)
- 3) Suvanabhum Airport Link -> Suvannabhum – Chachoengsao – Chonburi (Pattaya?) (50km)

The capitalization will come from four sources:

- 1) Annual budget
- 2) Bonds
- 3) Taxes and surcharges
- 4) Loan – This to be done by the private sector that acts as contractors with deep pockets instead of the government... The government would pay back by barter trading of agriculture products–rice, rubber, palm oil, longan, etc.

This will be done in 3 years instead of 5-6 years and the Red Line would go from Bangsue to Rangsit by the end of 2008.

MOTC has invited Russia, France, and China to invest on this project.

MOTC decided to delay Samrong and Taksin extension by claiming that they would have to wait until they get the MTA Board have successfully forcing BMCL and BTSC to merge into a single operator so as to introduce a 15 baht flat rate instead of modifying the conditions to allow a joint venture–and claiming it was a political football caused by the Democrats.

This harsh and callous response from MOTC has upset BMA, BTSC, and

even Bangkokians to such extent that BMA has come up with two solutions.

- 1) Temporary bus from Surasak to Tha Phra
- 2) BMA has to invest in the Taksin line (Saphan Taksin – Tha Phra – Bang Wah) via Krungthep Thanakhom and lease the BTS rolling stock to run the service at that section.

Even Thai netters have used flamed the government after they have found that the government refuses to invest in the Taksin-Samrong extension.

One of local the Thonburi people said, “Please, we are desperate for the Taksin extension. We suffer from traffic jams and fuel hikes for too long. We wait for the government to fulfill the promise but they have broken promises (such as both bridges and expressways across the Chao Phraya and new mass transit lines to Thonburi) to please vested interests. Premier Thaksin, you feel no shame to commit such crimes to rob our tax! We’ll punish you in the next election.”

However, MPs and the BMAC Council from both TRT and the Democrats still keep pointing fingers at one another on who are the culprits for this long delayed project.

BMA has responded by allocating 2.2 billion baht for the Taksin extension.

Note: Most people have booed the plan of Minister Pheng as the following posts [suggest](#).

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More details of the BMA plan for the Taksin extension  
– translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Manager*,  
October 18, 2005

- 1) The BMA City Council has approved a fund of 2.333 billion baht for the Taksin extension, 1.033 billion baht for civil work, and 1.300 billion baht for the signal and system
- 2) The BMA Budget Bureau has approved such funding from the 2006 budget.
- 3) BMA would have to push this project to be ready for service in October 2006.
- 4) The Samrong extension would have to be funded by bond to be under discussion by the end of October 2006.

Note: Most netters have cheered Governor Abhirak for this bold decision to push the Taksin extension at all costs as the [following link has suggests](#). Realizing the Taksin extension would redeem Governor Abhirak from the “Black House Scandal” and secure Democrat seats in Bangkok and Thonburi.

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[Four years, still waiting for a train](#) – *Bangkok Post*,  
September 19, 2005

...Somkiat Kantharawarakarn, a city councillor for Thon Buri district, said many people in his area had questions about the delay. He called on those agencies responsible to keep the public interest in mind—rather than personal interests.

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[Abhisit suspicious of skytrain delay – BMA could be ‘pawn in a political game’](#) –  
*Bangkok Post*, August 21, 2005

...Some critics say the ruling Thai Rak Thai party is not keen to give the project the go-ahead for fear that it would help increase the Democrat party’s popularity among Bangkok voters.

“There is no progress despite the fact that the government should fully support this project to help solve Bangkok’s traffic woes,” said Mr Abhisit...



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Government seriously pressuring the Skytrain to join the holding company – translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Manager Daily*, August 2, 2005

The government seriously wants to pressure BTSC (the Skytrain company) to join in the new holding company while coming up with two new lines with a price tag of 40 billion baht as a substitute for the canceled BTSC Skytrain extensions if BTSC refuses to join the new holding company. The substitute lines if BTSC refuses to give up some stock to join the new holding company are:

1) Queen Sirikit Center – Rama 4 – Old Paknam Road – Poochao Saming Phrai – Phra Padaeng – 18 km elevated track, 10 billion baht -> the substitute for Onnut – Samrong

2) Phayathai – Phetburi – Yomraj – Lan Luang – Ratchadamnoen Klang – Sanam Luang – Thonburi Station (Bangkok Noy), 10 km subway + 5 km elevated track from Thonburi to Phrannok, 30 billion baht -> the substitute for Pinklao extension of Skytrain

The other substitute for BTS extensions are the Red Line Commuter Network.

If BTS agrees to surrender some stock to join the new holding company, the number of passenger will go up by 300,000 passengers a day/route.

TNA has a slightly gentler take on the situation: [BMCL to talk BTS into selling shares to the government](#) – TNA, August 2, 2005

The *Post* finally chimes in on the controversy and gives some background: [Ministry plans competing train routes](#) – *Bangkok Post*, August 3, 2005

*...The two firms, however, have been reluctant to sell their businesses to the government due to what they feel are paltry offers by the state and their sense of confidence in their future performance once they can extend their services to suburban areas.*

*The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, now under the control of the opposition Democrat party, controls the skytrain project.*

*It is trying to protect the BTS service which is operated under a city administration concession. The BMA has staged public hearings to gather support for the proposed extension routes of the skytrain system.*

*A Transport Ministry source admitted the BMA was not cooperating in the government's bid to convince BTS to link its service with the state's mass transit system.*

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Finally, it's official: MOTC and OTP suspending Skytrain extensions – translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Dailynews*, July 20, 2005

After the failure to nationalize BTS Skytrain, OTP has disqualified BTS from becoming partners in the mass transit holding company and suspends any further extensions of the BTS Skytrain. OTP has come up with the following substitutions:

**Skytrain extensions canceled:**

- 1) Mochit – Saphan Mai
- 2) National Stadium – Phrannok
- 3) Taksin Intersection – Phetkasem
- 4) Saphan Taksin – Taksin Intersection
- 5) Onnut – Samrong – Samut Prakarn

**Substitutes:**

- 1) Bangsue – Rangsit
  - 2) Hua Lamphong – Lak Song
  - 3) Hua Lamphong – Lak Song
  - 4) Purple Line
  - 5) New Rail line from Makkasan to Paknam via old Paknam railway
- Furthermore, OTP has asked BMA to return the money for BTS extensions since BMA cannot use that money unless the BTS Skytrain is nationalized.
- 

**More pressure on the Skytrain**

After stifling the Skytrain's growth to pressure it and trying several methods of taking the company over, it seems the Prime Minister's company is trying to gain control of the company by buying out Skytrain creditors.

**Shin Corp trying to take over BTS** – translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Thairath*, July 15, 2005

BTS creditors have news from Shin Corps that Shin Corps is going to buy BTS debts from the creditors such as KfW and other domestic creditors at a 50% discounted price (from the current US\$850 million for KfW and 13 billion baht for domestic creditors such as IFCT which has been taken over by TMB, and SCB). This is being done to take over BTSC.

After the debt buyout, Shin Corps would ask BTSC to cut registered capital to pay off debts and raise the ticket price to the 45 baht ceiling.

Even today, BTSC still operates at a loss indefinitely postponing the IPO despite the 400,000 passengers a day. Failure to perform debt restructuring would discourage the company from offering an IPO.

**MASS**

**TRANSIT: Alternative to new BTS routes eyed** – *The Nation*, July 20, 2005

*Suriya ups stakes in govt's row with firm*

*Transport Minister Suriya Jungrungreangkit has ordered a study of the construction of new mass-transit routes as an alternative to extensions to the existing Bangkok Transit System (BTS) network.*

*The move is seen as putting more pressure on privately-owned BTS, which has refused to continue share-sale negotiations with the government...*

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**Skytrain extension: BMA fighting back against OTP**

– translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Dailynews*, June 8, 2005

After getting a harsh response from OTP, BMA said BTS extensions deserved government support to attract private investors while attracting more passengers. This should be done in the same way as the MRTA subway which has 90% public investment while BMCL invests in the other 10% (100 billion baht total). BMA has asked for the modification of the Skytrain investment plan since 2002, but the government still rejects the BMA scheme.

BMA has to call for a bid for the contractor without signing the contract until BMA has submitted the plan to the cabinet which includes provisions to extend BTS beyond the BMA city limits. BMA has not chosen BTS to run the service to allow more competition even though BTS has a cutting edge over other companies. BMA has submitted a business plan to OTP several times, but OTP keeps throwing BMA business plans for BTS into the trash. BMA may have to explain to the cabinet about this matter.



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OTP applying a heavy hand to  
halt Skytrain extensions – translated and  
summarized by Wisarut from *Dailynews*, June 7, 2005

The conflict between OTP and BMA on the traffic solution at Sukhumvit Road between Soi Bearing (Sukhumvit 107) and Poochao Saming Plai Road erupts since OTP is going to allow the Highway Department to construct a flyover on the route where the Samrong Extension is to run.

OTP wants to construct both the Samrong extension and Samrong Flyover at the same time and the Highway Department should handle the construction of both flyover and Samrong extension of BTS. However, BMA refuses to cooperate with OTP and Highway Dept. Therefore, OTP has to apply a heavy handed approach to give BMA a very hard lesson by stopping and scrapping the Samrong Extension due to the following violations.

- 1) Approving Samrong Extension without cabinet approval.
- 2) Samrong Extension route goes beyond BMA city limits.
- 3) Allowing BTS to monopolize the route without calling a new bid to get a new company to handle the services.
- 4) BTS has not delivered the concession payment plan for both BMA and central government to OTP.

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Slight cut on BTS extension bids  
– translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Dailynews*,  
May 18, 2005 and *Manager Daily*, May 18, 2005

After negotiation with contractors to cut the construction budget for the Taksin and Samrong extensions, the results are:

	Before (baht)	After (baht)
Taksin Extension (STECON) (no discount)	1,033,877,909.00	1,033,877,909.00
Samrong Extension Phase 1 (ITD)	4,060,130,289.49	4,059,300,000
Samrong Extension Phase 2 (ITD)	4,414,681,852.86	4,413,400,000

After this, BMA will deliver the bargaining results and ask the cabinet to help BMA out of trouble by making 50% of funds available while BMA takes the other 50%.

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Central government will not help with Skytrain extensions  
– translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Siam Thurakij*,  
May 17-20, 2005

BMA found that the government refuses to help with 2 billion baht for Southern Bangkok Transportation and freezes both the Southern Transportation Center and Hua Lamphong-Mahachai section. This is to concentrate on Makkasan Center and the Makkasan-Bangsue-Rangsit with a provision for the extension from Rangsit to Ban Phachi with a new stop at the new parliament at Thai Melon land.

BMA finds that the central government will grant nothing to help BMA to construct the Taksin and Samrong extensions. Therefore, BMA may have to pay 9 billion baht to complete the Taksin-Samrong extension from its own pockets.

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From the Thai-language press: BMA delivering bidding results for BTS extensions to challenge the government to obstruct the plan – translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Thairath*, May 2, 2005 and *Than Setthakij*, May 1-4, 2005

After inspecting Saphan Taksin Station on April 29, Governor Abhilux said after getting the unofficial winner of the bidding for Skytrain extensions, they will inspect the plan and declare the official winners in the next two weeks.

After getting the official winners, BMA will send the results to Mahatthai which will ask the government to help both BMA and BTS handle the project.

The Minister of the Interior Mahatthai Chitchai and the BMA Governor will discuss the plan for BTS extensions (2.2 km Taksin extension, 8.9 km Samrong extension of which 5.25 km is within Bangkok while the other 3.65 km is in Samut Prakarn) on May 3. If the BMA plan is approved, the Taksin extension will be done in 1 year while the Samrong extension will be done in 3 years. The sufferings from traffic jams should help end the political football between BMA and government over the Skytrain extensions.

If the government refuses to approve the BMA plan (which is expected), BMA said they will push the project at all costs even without government support.

Deputy Governor Samart said if BTS declines to handle these extension, BMA can call a new bid for those who are going to handle the services

. BTS has sent a letter to BMA that the company is definitely going to handle the extensions. Only a high power company like Siemens could possibly rival BTS. Therefore, BMA will have to make a temporarily arrangement by allowing BTS to handle the services of the Taksin extension until they could find a better company to handle the services of both Taksin and Samrong extensions. This BMA movement has ignited some grudging responses from OTP. Even though OTP agrees with BMA that the extensions would be constructed and opened as soon as possible, OTP has not received any info about the financial benefits of these extension projects before asking for 50% support from the central government. However, the government may have to approve the funds to handle these extension projects since BMA has delivered the official winners of the bidding as well as the changes in the investment plan, only after BMA and BTS delivered the financial benefits of the extensions to the government.

Credit Swiss First Boston (HK) has sold their stock (12.67%) to BTS on April 20 and there is speculation that the New World Group (Alliance of Mr. Khiree in Hong Kong) is going to buy all of those stocks.

However, slow settlement on BTS debt restructure is the most serious issues for OTP which really makes BTS not a viable service handler for extensions despite the strong willingness of the company to handle the service. If other companies are going to handle the extensions, it makes no sense at all since it requires frequent embarking and disembarking between the lines of different companies.

Nevertheless, a BMA source said the BMA City Council has already approved 4.5 billion baht over three years to handle these extension projects since local people demand this project as soon as possible. Money allocated is 1.5 billion baht for 2005 and 1 billion baht for 2006.

BMA will sign up the contractors in July 2005 and the Taksin extension will be ready for service in 2006 while Samrong extension will be done in 2008.

For the case of the bidding, the winners are

- 1) Taksin extension (Saphan Taksin – Taksin Intersection): STECON + AS -> 1,033,877,909 baht -> lower than the 1.113 billion baht of the BMA plan
- 2) Samrong Extension Phase 1: (Onnut – La Salle): ITD -> 4,060,130,289.49 baht -> cost overrun from the target of 3.87545 billion baht
- 3) Samrong Extension Phase 2: (La Salle – Samrong + Samrong Depot):

-> 4,414,681,852.86 baht -> still within the budget of 4.296 billion baht

**Notes:** Even the columnist in *Matichon* said Samrong and Taksin extension must be done as soon as possible at all costs because people can no longer tolerate any political footballs between the Democrat and TRT on the BTS extensions issue. After getting both extensions done, the Phaholyothin extension must be done and routed from Mochit to Ratchayothin all the way along Phaholyothin Road to Donmaung and Rangsit (not the paddy fields in Lum Lookka gobbled up by former Governor Samak's cronies) to relieve the sufferings of those who live in Bangkok northern suburbs.

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Skytrain: [Apirak wants extension okayed](#) – *Bangkok Post*, April 30, 2005

*...Inspecting the site of the route that will reach the Thon Buri side of Bangkok, Mr Apirak said he would propose the project to cabinet through Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Chidchai Wannasathit on Tuesday.*

*The section starts at the Taksin station, crosses the Chao Phraya river and reaches Taksin junction in Thon Buri...*

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Pushing delayed Skytrain extensions  
– translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Dailynews*, April 27, 2005

BMA Traffic Bureau is going to open the bidding results for the contractors to handle the BTS extensions which have 3 contracts at 11 AM of April 27, 2005.

Three contracts for BTS extension are

1) Taksin Extension (Saphan Taksin – Taksin intersection): 2.2 km 1.1 billion baht

2) Samrong Extension Phase 1 (Onnut – Lasalle )

3) Samrong Extension Phase 2 (Lasalle – Samrong )

Contracts 2-3 have a total distance of 8.9 km and price tag of 8.4 billion baht

ITD, CKC (Ch. karnchang PCL), STECON, Nawarat Phatthana PCL, and CIVIL are competing for the three contracts. Only Civil declines Phase 2 of Samrong Extension.

After waiting for cabinet approval for the changes on the investment plan for so long since the proposal was submitted to the cabinet in 2002 and commencing the bidding on October 3, 2003, BMA has decided to make an announcement on who is the winner of the bidding.

**Notes:** After declaring the winner, TRT may have to think twice if they are going to continue to obstruct the construction of the Taksin extension and Samrong extensions for fear of alienating voters. Bangkokians and those who live in suburbs and Thonburi want to ride to the Bangkok city center after waiting for this project for many years.

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ITD says no to BTS debt restructure plan – translated and summarized by Wisarut from [Bangkok Biznews](#), February 20, 2005

After reading the BTSC debt restructure plan, ITD and three other creditors retort back to BTSC that “we refuse to approve such a plan unless BTSC pays more.” The creditors have come up with their own version that BTSC must pay them back 100% instead of just 7.5%. This has effectively delayed the debt restructure from February 7 to April 19, 2005.

# Siam Ocean World at the Paragon

December 21, 2005



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Siam Ocean World at the Paragon –  
December 21, 2005

A few shots of the fascinating [Siam Ocean World](#) at the [Siam Paragon](#) including the inevitable corporate sponsorship (fish in a car) and incredible jellyfish.

**Also:** [Remembering the grounds of the Siam Intercontinental Hotel](#)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

# Junta Chief's Tour Creates Speculation

December 21, 2005

[Junta](#)

[Chief's Tour Creates Speculation](#)

– *The Irrawaddy*, December 21, 2005

*...Some observers have suggested that Than Shwe's group includes only government aides traditionally aligned with the junta chief because of a growing distrust of the junta's second-in-command, Deputy Snr-Gen Maung Aye...*

# About diplomatic bags

December 21, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[About diplomatic bags](#) – Straight Dope, December 21, 2005

Don Entz points out something about diplomatic pouches: *Any container can be a diplomatic bag—there are no limitations on size or shape. The Soviet Union tested the limits of this rule in 1984 when it claimed that a nine-ton tractor trailer was a diplomatic bag.*

*The bag has been abused from time to time. For instance, in the 1984 Dikko incident, a former Nigerian minister was kidnapped in London and placed in a crate to be flown to Nigeria. With him in the crate was another man who was conscious and equipped with drugs and syringes. The kidnappers were hiding in another crate...*

# **NEW YEAR SPECIAL: The 10 top things taking shape (or not) next year**

December 21, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[NEW](#)

[YEAR SPECIAL: The 10 top things taking shape \(or not\) next year](#)

– *The Nation*, December 21, 2005



# Thailand literary blog by Christopher G. Moore

December 21, 2005

Categories: Books

Thailand literary blog by Christopher G. Moore

– December 21, 2005

Phaka writes: *I am the webmaster who runs a [new](#)*

*[Thailand literary blog by Christopher G. Moore](#). I am a great*

*fan of your blog and hope that you might find an opportunity*

*to bring Moore's new blog to the attention of your many readers.*

*It does something other Thailand based blogs don't do: it concentrates*

*on the literary scene in Thailand. I would draw your attention*

*to the two part interview with the Managing Director of Bookazine.*

# Incredible gem scam story – December 22, 2005

December 22, 2005

Categories: Gem Scam

Incredible gem scam story: *'Finally, she became tired and really went crazy, not pretendedly, by her body language such as her short breath, shaking shoulders, beating desk hands, and angrily opened eyes'* – December 22, 2005

Dear [www.2Bangkok.com](http://www.2Bangkok.com):

I want to report you that I am a new victim for the gem scam, too. (2005 Dec 4 afternoon) The scam shop is S.S.S. Jewelry Limited Partnership. As the content of the email about S.S.S. Jewelry published on your website, I also met a nice Thai who can speak good English but the location was Ratchadamneon Road, near Khao San Road. He very friendly talked to me, asking many questions such as where I am going to, where am I from, how many days have I stayed in Bangkok, how many days will I stay in Bangkok, etc, and finally suggested me a visiting route, and circled them on my map. That first site is Wat Intharawihan, second site is Wat Benchamabophit, third is an Thai Export (at that moment, I don't know what he meant), and the forth(final) site is Wat Sunthon. He said that some of those wats are free visited today for King's birthday also brought me to a Tuk Tuk driver and automatically help me to bargain the Tuk Tuk fee from 40 baht for 20 baht and claimed 20 baht was the true price. Unfortunately, this is my first time taking Tuk Tuk in Bangkok, I don't know the actual and reasonable fee for such sightseeing. I stepped into the trap.

In the first site, Wat Intharawihan, nothing happened. But in the second site, Wat Benchamabophit, I met a 3 touts. The first one, weared like a manager, told me that it was noon rest time for the Wat and asked me to sit down in a chair to wait 10 minutes until the Wat opened again. On the chair, another tout sat already, he can speak very good English and claimed that he run a Thai restaurant in USA. In fact, he played the role to explain details, to answer questions, and to lure victims to S.S.S. Jewelry Limited Partnership. The baits (lies) are that 1. the shop is on sale now, only once per year. 2. The shop is the only one controlled by government, so it is much cheaper than any other jewelry shop. 3. Besides, Thailand Ruby's export tax is 195%, very high. 4. I can resell it in my home country to earn my the traveling money. (It is the main reason I hooked) 5. He has done it every years more than 10 years. ( He claimed that he wait for the shop's discount every year and comes back to this home country Thailand for vacation.) 6. He showed his purchasing receipt by S.S.S. Jewelry from his wallet to make an image that all he told to me was true. He even prepared a Thai newspaper full of photos of gems and gem workers and claimed it is the advertisement for the discount of that S.S.S.

He emphasized many times that I am very lucky to know this news on the last day. After hearing his story, the first one who looks like a manager came to tell me the Wat opened again, I can visit it. When I entered the Wat, another tout, a white man, weared completely like a tourist, appeared in the entrance at the same time to visit the Wat. It seemed occasional, but in fact arranged. He talked to me naturally and claimed that he came from London and often visited Thailand. He controlled his speed of visiting the Wat to go with me together, seems occasionally. During visiting the Wat, he chatted many things with me and mentioned he also bought jewelry from the S.S.S. Jewelry shop every year and resold them on other countries to earn traveling money. Similarly, he showed his purchasing receipts form S.S.S. Jewelry to enhance the those lies. When visiting Wat Benchamabophit, I felt a little strange. In the wat, many children plays and many adults chat. It didn't look like just taking a noon rest. After visiting this Wat, the second tout, who claimed he runs a restaurant in USA, still sat the chair and I went to say good-bye for him. I felt another thing strange, why did he talk to another tourist, a black women, very happily, and his purchasing receipt is on the chair, not in his wallet?

Although I felt something strange, I didn't find that was a big scam. Thereafter, I went to the S.S.S. Jewelry shop and heard every details from the clerks the same as the touts. For example, 1. it is the last day of the discount week. 2. Only foreign tourists can buy. 3. Every tourist only can buy three times. 4. The ruby in their shop is really much cheaper than my nation's shop. 5 Any items sold from this shop only can be for

personal use, not allowed for reselling. Those clerks even emphasized that they wished me to buy less or cheaper ones at the first time. They want to make friends rather than making money.

It was strange, too. But I didn't understand Jewelry shop clearly, especially in Thailand, not my home country. I was very worried at that moment. Was I making a mistake? I didn't bring my credit card, so I ask them to let me consider what to buy when I come back to my guest house taking my credit card. All of their employees are female, and one of them went with me to take my credit card. I felt very regretful that I didn't consult Internet when I came back to take my credit card and did it after purchasing. After coming back to the S.S.S. Jewelry, I meet the black woman again. I am still very worried, so I asked her if she know ruby's price in her country, but she didn't know. All of those employees who promotes their items to me saw I was very worried, but they claimed that I should be happy, not be worried, because their price is really low and really good. Their ruby is local product, and really worthy for the price. But I still could not make a good decision. I was still very worried because I knew my information is not enough. Finally, they claimed that it was the last day of the discount week and they had to close early to check all items and pressed me on to make a decision. So, after purchasing 2 gems in S.S.S., I came back to an Internet Shop soon and found your website, read the similar story as mine. I knew I was unfortunately hooked. I soon came back to S.S.S., but it did close, all items are not on the desk. For my most effort, I notified my credit card bank immediately, but they said they can't cancel the payment because when I bought those gems, I was on my willing, not forced.

I carefully read the gem scam articles in your website, and felt much thankful for you for providing information for victims such as me to get some help and to prevent next victim. I know that I had been hooked already and what I can do is merely to notify TAT, tourists police, and my nation's agency in Thailand. Today is Thailand King's birthday(DEC 5 2005), so both TAT and S.S.S. Jewelry are closed. My nation's agency has emergency call and have promised that one of their employee can go with me to S.S.S. Jewelry tomorrow but I have to suffer some money loss for the shop's return charging, maybe 20%. They said I was the 2nd unfortunate person who fell in such trap this year from my country, Taiwan.

The final result was that I took back 91.86% (135000/146960). One of my embassy's employee called to S.S.S. this morning with pure speaking in Thai language and get a promise to return gems with full money but charge additional 3~5% credit card fee. However, it was not true. When I went to the shop alone, the process is very terrible. The manager, a woman, denied any promise of 3~5% and claimed no any refund because I had signed on a agreement listed that. Besides, she also threatened me for any possible claims such as She claimed she would call the Police to kick me out of the shop, she claimed she didn't want to talk to me any more and call her lawyers to talk with me (with handing up her cell phone), she claimed that she even can close the shop immediately and not to waste any time to negotiate with me. However, she didn't do what she claimed. But she did call in a very huge Thai man to force me to talk to her in a small room in 2nd floor and she claimed she couldn't guarantee my body's safety if I didn't follow. Sometimes she was even so angry that she told me openly that this is a gem scam and everyone who told to me in the trap can get a commission totally 40% of my payment immediately after I sign my name on the credit card receipt. About the percentage and the time touts get money, maybe it is a lie, maybe it is a truth. I mention this only to emphasize the process was very very unreasonable.

I spent more than 3 hours in the shop to beg her to uplevel the refund started from 70%. Of course, she threatened me and always claimed the amount is the final limit. But it did become more and more when I consisted to beg her and continuously apologized to calm her anger. From 102870(70%), to 110000, to 120000, to 130000, to 135000. Finally, she became tired and really went crazy, not pretendedly, by her body language such as her short breadth, shaking shoulders, beating desk hands, and angrily opened eyes. She claimed they loss more than me because they have paid those touts and lost more than me so she can't uplevel any more. She claimed I have to decide immediately to accept this amount or kicking me out of the shop. I thought the best record 95% report by other victim for S.S.S. was hard to reach again and agreed with her in 135000. After I signed the refund sheet, she even apologized to me for make me loss so much, and told me "business is business, I can't understand". (now I get the idea what she meant is that to threaten victims during the negotiation is the unavoidable way to make more money in such business) She even sincerely kindly (not pretended behavior as 2 day before when I got hooked) linked my arm downstairs and told me to be careful before I walked out the door.

After leaving S.S.S., I took the copy of the refund sheets to my embassy for confirmation because most of the sheet is printed and written in Thai characters I can't know so I have to ask for a believable person rather than S.S.S.'s employees and manager to confirmed it. My embassy's employee confirmed it and told me that I can get the refund.

By the way, I am writing my complete experience including every detailed conversation with everyone involved and the scanned images of every documents involved. I want to publish it as a paper book exhibited in bookstores and libraries to prevent next victim in my country. Now, I have written the story down almost 75% but in Chinese, not in English.

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

## **‘Dark news’ about the Phan Waen Fah literature award**

December 22, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

‘Dark news’ about the Phan

Waen Fah literature award – translated

and summarized from Dark News, *Komchadluek*,

Issue 22, December 22, 2005

Southern problems have also wrecked havoc on literature circles

since the head of the literature committee—MP Dr. Lalita Roeksamran—has

decided to give first prize for the Phan Waen Fah literature

award to another writer since the writer who got the highest

votes wrote a work that criticizes authority as well as TRT

politicians. This kind of despotic action by Dr. Lalita to please

"the Leader" and

his men in Khaki has outraged most members of the literature

committee including Master Nawarat Phongphaibun and they are going to boycott the next annual Phan Waen

Fah literature award.

# Thai Labor Party to Be Revamped

December 22, 2005

Categories: Labor

[Thai](#)

[Labor Party to Be Revamped](#) – *The Irrawaddy*,

December 22, 2005

*Thailand's State Enterprises Labour Confederation will join civic and other labor groups to revive a fully-fledged labor party that would better represent public interests...*

# Thailand's biggest billboard

December 22, 2005

Thailand's biggest billboard

– December 22, 2005

**Right:** The Baiyoke II, Thailand's biggest billboard, with a Johnny Walker ad including an appropriately scaled warning at the top of the ad.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

# The Surya Nawa 5 aground on Samilla Beach in Songkhla

December 23, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News



(Photo: Mr. John for 2Bangkok.com)

The *Surya Nawa 5* aground on Samilla Beach in Songkhla – December 23, 2005



# Happy holidays from 2Bangkok.com

December 23, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News



(Source: Postcard circa 1909)

Happy holidays from 2Bangkok.com –  
December 23, 2005



(Source: Undated postcard from  
the 2Bangkok.com collection)

Happy holidays from  
2Bangkok.com – December 22,  
2005

# About Wat Pathum Wanaram

December 23, 2005

[About](#)

[Wat Pathum Wanaram](#) – *The Nation*,

December 23, 2005

# Happy holidays from 2Bangkok.com

December 24, 2005

Categories: New Year's Eve



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Happy holidays from 2Bangkok.com – December 24, 2005

# Ghost train of tsunami's fury

December 24, 2005

Categories: 2004 Tsunami

[Ghost train of tsunami's fury](#) – *The Age*, December 24, 2005

Thanks to Danny for pointing this out...

# Suthisarn flyover

December 25, 2005



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Suthisarn flyover – 11:30pm, December 25, 2005

Span for the new flyover for Suthisarn Road and Weepahwahdeerangsit Road about to be raised.

# **Building rooftop roller coaster being built in downtown Tokyo**

December 26, 2005

Categories: Nothing to do with Thailand, but Interesting

[Building](#)

[rooftop roller coaster being built in downtown Tokyo](#) –

BoingBoing, December 26, 2005

# One year ago: 2B coverage of the tsunami

December 26, 2005

Categories: Today in History



One year ago: 2B coverage of the tsunami – December 26, 2005

It started with this: **8:10am, December 26**

*– Earthquake felt in Bangkok. On the ninth-floor of a 13-floor building, we could distinctly feel the building sway with a circular motion for about four seconds. Hanging telephone cables also swayed. We looked out the window and it seems that people at ground level were not aware of the shaking. Updates to come.*

[The 2B tsunami](#)

[\(December 26, 2004-January 3, 2005\)](#)



# Chairman Maew's thoughts on the Great Hop Forward

December 26, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Chairman](#)

[Maew's thoughts on the Great Hop Forward](#)

– Chang Noi, December 26, 2005

*Money. Money, money, money, money, money, money, money, money!*

*That's what this business of politics is all about. When you've*

*got enough, it's easy to keep everybody happy — villagers,*

*MPs, faction bosses, family, soldiers, percentage men, everybody.*

*But when you don't.....*

# Political gallery 2005

December 27, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Political gallery 2005](#) – *The Nation*, December 27, 2005

All the [2Bangkok](#)

[forum](#) favorites are here: Pramuan Ruchanaseree, Suchon Chaleekrua, Chuwit Kamolvisit, Wissanu Krea-ngam, Sanan Kachornprasart, Nahathai Thewphaingarm, Sita Divari, Chaiyot Sasomsub, and Apirak Kosayodhin

# Overloaded

December 27, 2005



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Overloaded – December  
27, 2005

Overloaded pickup on the expressway... In the past it seems these types of vehicles were mostly kept off the Bangkok expressways, but recently we have noticed quite a few these severely overloaded pickups slowly chugging along.

# Press Release: Bring the Elephant HOME Education Tour starts

December 28, 2005

Categories: Wildlife and Nature

[Press](#)

[Release: Bring the Elephant HOME Education Tour starts](#)

– December 28, 2005

*Bring the Elephant HOME, a Dutch organisation founded by Antoinette van de Water has started her education tour. Together with two elephants the "elephant rescue team", total*

*of 8 people, will make their way through the heart of Thailand (including Ayuthaya, Lopburi and Sukhothai). The group will stay at temples and will hold workshops at local primary schools.*

*Showing the beauty of the elephants and the Thai culture the team hopes to raise awareness about the importance of nature conservation and the problem of elephants on the street.*

*Bring the Elephant HOME was founded as an educational and publicity campaign to support the elephants in Thailand...*

*For more information about this project, footage or tour details please contact:*

*Mr. Viritphon Chaiwong (Thai): 01 2890563*

*Ms. Antoinette van de Water (English): 01 5680571*

*Or check our website: [www.bring-the-elephant-home.nl](http://www.bring-the-elephant-home.nl)*

# **BURNING ISSUE: As TRT falters, Chalerm sees an opportunity**

December 28, 2005

Categories: Chalerm Yubamrung, The Thaksin Years

[BURNING](#)

[ISSUE: As TRT falters, Chalerm sees an opportunity](#) –

*The Nation*, December 28, 2005

As the Thai Rak Thai Party faces a period of political turbulence, veteran politician Chalerm Yoobamrung has seized the moment to raise the banner of his New Alternative Party.

In his own words, Chalerm portrays his party as a new choice for voters and politicians who are dissatisfied with the polar politics of government versus opposition...

# India builds a 2,500-mile barrier to rival the Great Wall of China

December 28, 2005

Categories: India

[India](#)

[builds a 2,500-mile barrier to rival the Great Wall of China](#) – *Times Online*, December 28, 2005

*...Next month India plans to fence off this area of West Bengal as part of a little-known £600 million project to erect a steel barrier right along its 2,500-mile border with its much smaller Muslim neighbour. As a result Mr Biswas and his village of 2,000 people will be sealed off from their own country...*

# 2Bangkok.com picks the top stories of 2005

December 29, 2005

Categories: Best of 2Bangkok



(Photo:  
2Bangkok.com)

**Left:** Newspapers of February 7, 2005 – Top left: *Bangkok Post* – Single party rule / Top middle: *The Nation* – One-party rule looms / Top right: *Matichon* – Wannor-Phokin vie to be the House of Representative chairperson – Maew (Thaksin) sets up a single party (government) / Bottom left: *Khaosod* – Thaksin overwhelming victory at almost 400! Democrats are shocked – lower than 100 / Bottom middle: *Komchadluek* – Counting the vote is in turmoil – Electricity went out – Protest – Satun has to re-vote / Bottom right: *Daily News* – Thai Rak Thai sweep all nearly almost 400 – pitch a flag (making inroads) to acquire the Bangkok area

2Bangkok.com picks the top stories of 2005 – December 29, 2005

While some stories appear as screaming headlines and points of controversy for a week and then are forgotten, others have lasting impact and lead to other controversies. This year's top stories largely chart the misery of the TRT party in the first year after its historic election win.

1. The year started with **Thaksin's triumph at the polls** ([Thai Elections](#)). This air of invincibility probably contributed to a series of aggressive stances by the PM challenging critics' patriotism which led to...

2. A series of **aggressive lawsuits against government critics** ([T is for trouble in the age of libel](#), *The Nation*, July 29, 2005, [Libel suits being used to intimidate](#), *The Nation*, August 17, 2005) which seemed to be an attempt to create a Singapore-style of order in the media ([Aura of fear pervades Thai media](#), *IHT*, October 5, 2005).

**Right:** *Komchadluek's* March 12 news of the cabinet appointments: 'All Thaksin's people seize the main ministries – Noi (Sudarat) is Minister of Agriculture'



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

3. The convoluted **plan to remove Jaruvan as auditor-general** continued to simmer ([A tale of two newspapers: Jaruvan relieved](#), June 28, 2005) until the replacement nominee had to be clumsily withdrawn ([Visut's nomination withdrawn](#), *The Nation*, September 23, 2005) further cheering government critics and piercing the invulnerability of TRT.

4. In April, the **CTX scanner scandal** broke ([No illegal airport deal, Suriya says](#), *The Nation*, April 26, 2005) which eventually led to...

5. A **cabinet reshuffle** with Suriya out as Transport Minister (Reactions to the cabinet in the press – August 4, 2005, [Thai press reaction to the new cabinet from Thairath, Khaosod, Matichon and Manager: 'haew and bourbok selling out'](#) – August 6, 2005).



6. Despite some earlier bad luck for the government, a first major event that brought out protesters and condemnation beyond the political parties was the **attempt to takeover the *Bangkok Post* and *Matichon***. This action was widely believed to be on behalf of the Prime Minister as a way to control major newspapers.

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7. In September, with Phongsak Raktaphongsephaisarn (Minister Pheng) as new Transport Minister, news started to dribble out that many of the **mass transit routes promised during the election campaign were being cancelled or modified**. This story was much bigger in the Thai-language media and internet with furious denunciations of TRT. Eventually the transport minister was forced to reinstate the lines with cabinet approval although the timelines remain vague. Mass transit woes continued with...



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

8. The long-running stalemate on **Skytrain expansion came to a head** in October and resulted in a public backlash against the [politicizing of the Skytrain by TRT](#). This event also allowed Bangkok Governor Apirak to be pushed forward as the public face of the Democrat Party after being sidelined in most of his initiatives by the central government.

**Left:** End of the Skytrain line at Taksin Bridge over the Chao Phraya River

9. Late in the year, *Manager* newspaper founder **Sondhi Limthongkul mounted a serious challenge to the ruling party**. In September, Sondhi's *Thailand Weekly* was removed from television for its anti-government rhetoric ([Notes on canceling \*Muang Thai Rai Sapdah\*](#) – September 17, 2005). Then for many weeks, Sondhi performed his show live at various venues as a kind of protest.

Sondhi finally got real traction with the press and the public by playing up Thaksin's appearance at the Temple of the Emerald Buddha (including a widely circulated photo of Thaksin in the temple). This act was said to somehow usurp the King's role. Sondhi later hit on other allegations popular with the public such as misuse of aircraft by the PM's family.

Eventually, his Lumpini Park speeches drew thousands and the political scene heated up with rumors of coups, protests and threats ([High tension in Thailand](#)). However, Sondhi seemed to peak in mid-December as Thaksin's lawsuits against Sondhi were withdrawn and the press turned on Sondhi to examine the motives behind the man who was once Thaksin's outspoken advocate.



(Photo:  
2Bangkok.com)

**Right:** Overflow crowds watch the *Thailand Weekly* show on giant screens at Lumpini Park on November 25

10. Stories questioning the **state of the economy** were quite prominent in the Thai-language world. Backtracking on mass transit projects, studies on public indebtedness, and peculiar bond issues fueled persistent rumors that the government is broke and that Thailand is in store for another 1997 economic slump. All this has led to...

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11. **The disgruntlement of TRT factions** which revealed TRT to be a kind of coalition government within one party held together by promises of money, good times, and constitutional strictures that make it difficult for politicians to jump parties.

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(Photo: Mr. John for 2Bangkok.com)

**Above:** November 8, 2005 – Bomb hidden in the car of a government official in Yala.

12. Simmering in the background are the [continuing problems in the deep south](#) and

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13. [Flooding](#)... Do not underestimate floods as an issue that can disgruntle the Thai electorate.

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# Master Plan News 2005

December 29, 2005

Categories: Master Plans

This section contains news of the Master Plan, overall Bangkok development, the Bangkok Governor's development plans, and articles about interconnecting mass transit projects.

[Mass Transit News main page](#)



TRT pamphlet with promises for future Bangkok mass transit – September 6, 2005

We first posted this TRT map of promised mass transit on January 29, 2005 during the heat of the election campaign. Now the expensive plan has been "scaled back" amid howls of outrage on all sides. Democrats and other critics had long contended that the investment on such a plan was untenable, but the overly optimistic government insisted that money was not a problem and continued to promote the lines through August with posters in each area of town promoting the lines. The scale-back is a humiliating backdown for TRT that allows the opposition to contend the whole thing was a stunt to win votes during election time. More mass transit maps [here](#).

(Thanks to Wisarut for more links to articles on the continuing fallout from the cancellations.)

[Public angry about the cancellation of the Orange Line](#) – *The Nation*, September 5, 2005

[Those who live in Bang Kapi have booed BRT line as a substitute for the Orange Line](#) – *Matichon*, September 5, 2005

Public anger toward Minister Pongsak after canceling the Purple Line ([here](#), [here](#), and [here](#))

Minister Pongsak trying to introduce a Monorail/LRT for the Purple Line after people reject the BRT ([here](#), and [here](#)) [MASS TRANSIT: Monorail seen as Purple Line option](#) – *The Nation*, September 5, 2005

[Deadlock on the land along Purple Line](#) – *Prachachat Thurakij*, September 3-6, 2005

Khun Choowit lambastes TRT after the cancellation of the Purple and Orange Lines ([here](#) and [here](#))

[The changing policy is a way for TRT to shoot themselves in the foot](#) – *Matichon*, September 4, 2005

[An open letter from a broken-hearted Bang Kapi resident](#) – *The Nation*, September 5, 2005...But I must say that I am the most brokenhearted by the sudden change, after I realised I had sacrificed my political ideology for nothing.

Flash back to February, when the election turned into a dead heat between the Democrat Party and Thai

*Rak Thai, whose populist policies enchanted my mother like Love Potion Number 9. I had never faced such a crucial dilemma in my whole life. The Democrats were campaigning for checks and balances in the political system, which I admired. On the other hand, who wouldn't look twice at Skytrain pictures on Thai Rak Thai billboards? And for your information, I consider myself an upholder of social rights. I'm often telling my friends that I disdain any politician who pushes populism merely for short-term political gain... The government promised me a luxurious ride, and all I'll end up getting is a dingy bus...*

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[Transit plan backed](#) – *The Nation*, September 2, 2005

*...Construction of all seven electric train routes in greater Bangkok would have produced around Bt50 billion in deficits over 10 years, commissioner Sasiphat Swetwatana told a press conference...*

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[OVERDRIVE: Another U-turn from Great Communicator](#) – *The Nation*, September 2, 2005

*...During the political campaign ahead of the February general election, voters in Bangkok were promised that new mass-transit systems would be built. The message for the people in the Bangkok area was that if they voted for Thai Rak Thai, these systems would pass nearby their houses. The Great Communicator also promised that the Purple Line – would be finished within three years because there would not be any big burden for land expropriation. Land developers and speculators rushed to buy land and build projects in anticipation of the investment in the Purple Line in northern Bangkok. Real estate around the area saw a big boom...*

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Opposition parties lambasting the government flip-flop on mass transit – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Manager*, September 1, 2005

Both Democrat (Khun Kriangsak) and Chart Thai (Khun Choowit) are lambasting the campaign for mass transit system of TRT accusing TRT of lulling voters and then scraping the project after cornering land prices along the routes. Even Khun Korn Jatikawanit (Democrat MP, child of Mr. Super K–Kasem Jatikawanit—who runs BTS) has suggested TRT to expand the mass transit along BTS routes.

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Downsizing Taksin Center – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thairath* and *Manager*, September 1, 2005

OTP said that they are going to downsize Taksin Center to 75 rai, moving the inner-city bus terminal to either:

- 1) Kalaprapuek Road on 100 rai of vacant land
- 2) Rama 2 area (10 km from proposed Taksin Center) on 200-300 rai of land

Furthermore, OTP is planning to modify the Red Line commuter route to be an underground track from Hua Lamphong to Taksin Center as well as the Blue Line to serve the new inner-city bus terminal at either Kalaprapuek Road or Rama 2.

However, the cost to implement the elevated section for Red line commuter is 0.995 billion baht/km while the underground section is about 3.115 billion baht/km.

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[Saving money by derailing transit routes](#) – *Bangkok Post*, September 1, 2005

*The government has saved a colossal 200-billion-baht budget by cancelling some mega-mass transit system routes, citing an urgent need to use the money to solve chronic drought and flood problems – a decision that has triggered deafening complaints from residents living along the now-derailed subway lines, and business operators alike...*

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[Taksin transport hub downsized – Mega-project halted by local opposition](#) – *Bangkok Post*, September 1, 2005

*The Transport Ministry has yielded to fierce opposition from people facing eviction and decided to downsize its southern transport centre mega-project into an electric train station instead.*

*The decision came yesterday, five days after the ministry announced it would scale down the mass transit project to save state budget amid strong criticism from the opposition Democrat party...*

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Minister Pheng explaining to TRT MPs about the scrapping of the Purple Line – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Manager*, September 1, 2005

Minister Pheng is telling TRT MPs from Nonthaburi that those people in Taopoon-Tiwanon do not want a mass transit system, so he has come up with BRT for them. The rest from Bang Yai to Tiwanon would get mass transit system later.

More on the [Taopoon controversy](#)

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MOTC said BRT is a good substitute for the subway at just 35.2 billion baht – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from [Manager](#), August 29, 2005

MOTC said the substitute for subway is a BRT -> 97 km for 35.245 billion baht. This BRT would use NGV engines. Purple Line and Orange Line Subway would get 6% benefit while getting an annual loss of 3 billion baht.

The list of BRT Line as a substitute is:

- 1) Bang Yai – Rattathibet – Ngam Wong Wan – Bang Khen and Rattathibet – Rama 7 Bridge – Sam Sen – Sanam Luang
- 2) Wongwian Yai – Taksin – Suksawat – Ratboorana
- 3) Klong Tan – Ram Kham Haeng – Bang Kapi – Kanchanaphisek
- 4) Bang Yai -Kanchanaphisek – Bang Bon
- 5) Lad Phrao Bang Kapi – Sri Nakarin – Sikharin

### Subway vs Skytrain Vs BRT comparisons

<a href="#">Subway</a>	<a href="#">Skytrain</a>	<a href="#">BRT</a>	<a href="#">BRT</a>
2.395 billion baht/km for construction, 0.285 billion baht/km for land expropriation	0.860 billion baht/km for construction, 0.105 billion baht/km for land expropriation	At grade section: 0.050 billion baht/km for construction, 0.050 billion baht for land expropriation and 0.100 billion baht for rolling stock -> total 0.200 billion baht/km	Elevated section: 0.250 billion baht for construction, 0.050 billion baht for land expropriation and 0.100 billion baht for rolling stock -> total 0.400 billion baht/km
0.435 billion baht/km for system and rolling stock -> total 3.115 billion baht/km	0.435 billion baht/km for system and rolling stock -> total 1.400 billion baht/km		

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BMA trying to promote BRT – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thairath*, September 1, 2005

After Krungthep Thanakhom Co. Ltd. has been assigned by BMA to run BRT as the way to get around regulations, the BMA governor is pointing out the success of BRT services in Australia. Furthermore, BMA is going to implement BRT on the following routes:

- 1) Watchiraphon – Rama 9 – Klong Tan
- 2) Bang Buathong – Kanchanaphisek – Bang Khae
- 3) Onnut – Suvannabhum

[BMA to launch first BRT routes this year](#) – TNA, September 1, 2005

More on [Bus Rapid Transit – BRT](#)

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More on the end of the Purple and Orange Lines

[MASS TRANSIT CHANGES: Property projects worth Bt40 billion in doubt](#) – *The Nation*, August 31, 2005  
*Suspension of rail lines wreaks havoc in the market. More than 30 property projects worth almost Bt40 billion in total and heavily advertised as having convenient access to mass transit are in disarray over the government's abrupt decision to suspend its plans for the Purple and Orange subway-system lines...*

[EDITORIAL: Switching tracks on mass transit](#) – *Bangkok Post*, August 31, 2005

*...The fact that an infrastructure of such a massive scale could be abruptly cut back soon after the government promised its financial support, indicates the project has already served its political need. Now reality has finally set in. The government promised it would spend 500 billion baht on the project. The cost will now be cut to about 300 billion baht, after having already spent 300 million baht studying the original project.*

*With the Transport Ministry's latest decision, the city's mass transit system now faces a lot of uncertainty. The government has announced its intention to complete the entire network in four years from 2004-2008.*



Even without the change last week, it has already failed to meet its deadline to start the bidding contest for the Purple Line between Bang Sue and Bang Yai, originally planned for the middle of this year. Residents of Bangkok and adjoining provinces should consider themselves lucky if they see any of the new mass transit lines up and running during the term of this government—now that there is no longer any political urgency for TRT to fulfil its promise.

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(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Canceling the Purple and Orange lines – August 31, 2005

After being heavily touted during the election and on posters around town, the government has had to cut back the Purple and Orange mass transit lines and might possibly replace them with bus lines. Above is a poster for the still-intact Red Line. The poster reads: *Metropolitan Police Bureau – Main road project line 2 – Red line: Vipavadee Road all route – Memorial Institute to Dindaeng Intersection – For convenience, speed, safety*

[Route scrapping has MPs wringing hands](#) – *The Nation*, August 30, 2005

*Thai Rak Thai MP Pimuk Simaroj said his colleagues feared losing support from their constituents after they promised them that they would push for the mass-transit systems...*

[Street WISE: Pongsak in hot seat over transit](#) – *The Nation*, August 30, 2005

*...But residents in areas the routes were to pass through are seething. They must be thinking back to the month before the general election last February, when posters were plastered in their neighbourhoods trumpeting the planned routes and telling them what to expect if Thai Rak Thai were to win. Hence it is no surprise that after Pongsak announced the government's change of heart, that many people flooded public websites with their comments. "No matter how indebted the government becomes, I don't care. I just want a train," wrote one disturbed resident...*

[City MPs want answers from Pongsak about electric trains](#) – *Bangkok Post*, August 30, 2005

*Fearing that the planned scrapping of some electric train routes will send their political fortunes plummeting, Thai Rak Thai MPs for Bangkok and Nonthaburi will demand explanations from Transport Minister Pongsak Raktapongpaisal today...*

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Taksin controversies: Sudarat trying to relieve the sufferings of Thonburi people – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Prachachat*, August 25-28, 2005

TRT PMs from Chomthong and Thonburi District have asked those who are involved in Taksin Center to listen the local people before implementing the project. Most people did not oppose the project per se. They

just do not want an intercity bus terminal as well as BMTA terminal to their area. Both terminals would cause heavy traffic jams they want to avoid. They used to suffer from traffic jams due to the intercity bus terminal at Phrannok so they would never want to repeat that again. Both terminals must be somewhere else in Thonburi.

The local protesters have sent representatives to report their pleas to the Parliament Consumer Protection Committee on the 3rd floor of Building 1, National Assembly on August 25.

On Sunday August 21, Khunying Sudarat Keyuraphan (part of Premier Thaksin's inner circle) and 30 coworkers have come to inspect the area for Taksin Center at Soi Athit (Wutthakart 43) to Montree School (Wutthakart 25) by following Mahachai Railway.

Khun Ying Sudarat said she will work for this issue for 30 days to get more details before making further discussions with Premier Thaksin because this area has been studied for more than 10 years ago so the data is outdated. The orchards have already become residential areas. She is not in MOTC since she is Agriculture Minister, but as she is one of the inner circle of Premier Thaksin for the Bangkok area, she has to investigate this controversy.

Khun Ying Sudarat said she is not so sure that the Ministry of Finance has enough reserves to pay for the land expropriation due to the fact that there are more than 10,000 households in that area. This needs at least 10 billion baht to pay them all. Even the Paksak Jolasit Dam controversy already cost billions of baht.

Taksin center would cover the following areas:

- 1) Northern Border: Rajapruek Road. (Taksin – Phetkasem) – 400 meters
- 2) Southern Border: Wutthakart 43 & Ratchada – Thaphra Soi 9 – 900 meters
- 3) Eastern Border: Parallel with Bang Sakae Canal – 200 meter far from the canal using the new road connecting Rajapruek Road with Ratchadaphisek and Wutthakart as the border.
- 4) Western Border: Wutthakart Soi 23-43 – 500 meters
- 5) Total area: 175 rai, covering Jomkthong and Thonburi
- 6) Taksin Center would connect Maeklogn Railway with BTS Skytrain and even MRTA Subway along with the transportation hub in Thonburi
- 7) Taksin Center would have an interchange building along with the offices for transactions and commercial affairs. There will be a Southern Intercity Bus terminal along with a park and ride and BMTA Bus
- 8) The New Red Line Commuter would consist of the following lines.
  - 8.1) Transit version ... takes 50 minutes to travel, stops at every station such as:
    - 8.1.1) Hua Lamphong
    - 8.1.2) Lad Yah
    - 8.1.3) Wongwian Yai
    - 8.1.4) Talad Ploo
    - 8.1.5) Taksin Center
    - 8.1.6) Jomthong
    - 8.1.7) Wat Sai
    - 8.1.8) Wat Singh
    - 8.1.9) Bang Bon
    - 8.1.10) Rang Sakae (should be Karn Keha which has lots of people while the actual Rang Sakae has been covered by grass and weeds)
    - 8.1.11) Rang Pho
    - 8.1.12) Sam Yaek
    - 8.1.13) Thong See Thong (In Mahachai)
    - 8.1.14) Bang Namjued
    - 8.1.15) Khok Kwai
    - 8.1.16) Bang Khom
    - 8.1.17) Mahachai Station – north of Rama 2 Highway, not far from Soi Rung Setthakij
  - 8.2) Express version takes 30 minutes to travel.
    - 8.2.1) Hua Lamphong
    - 8.2.2) Taksin Center
    - 8.2.3) Bang Bon (near the house of Chaloem and sons)
    - 8.2.4) Mahachai

Skytrain would go to Taksin Center and then goes up north to interchange with Blue Line to Bang Khae via Bang Wah.

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[MASS TRANSIT: U-turn on buyback plan](#) – *The Nation*, August 29, 2005

*Govt rethinks plan to acquire indebted Skytrain, subway firms; still favours single-operator system with fare subsidies...*

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More Thai-language article links – August 29, 2005

Wisarat points out the following links to Thai-language articles:

[Premier Thaksin moving 200 billion baht from mass transit project to solve water shortage problems](#)

[OTP pushing the Red Line Commuter forward since the government will not cut the Red Line Commuter](#)

[The cynical responses to the conversion of the Purple Line into a BRT project: Taopoon people get what they ask for -> No mass transit line to their area after all](#)

[Even though they have to convert the Purple Line and Orange Line to BRT, they would not cancel the mass transit project .... and here](#)

[Taopoon people thanking the government for canceling the Purple Line](#)

[OTP pushing the Red Line Commuter-Suvarnabhumi Airport Link – The Conversion of the Purple Line - Orange Line into BRT does no harm to Red Line Commuter network](#)

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Details on the routes to be axed, modified and added – translated and summarized by Wisarat Bholsithi from *Bangkok Biznews*, August 26, 2005 and *Thairath*, August 27, 2005

After further studies by MFC, some mass transit lines will be axed or modified. The government will introduce trams, monorails and BRT as substitutes based on the 10 baht + 1.2 x N travel km scheme.

The lines to be modified according to the MFC scheme:

Axed: Orange Line (Bang Kapi – Huay Kwang – Dindaeng – Bang Plat)

Added: Yellow Monorail (Lad Phrao – Bang Kapi – Sri Nakharin)

Modified: Purple Line

Old: Bang Sue – Wong Sawang – Bang Yai

New: Bang Yai – Ngam Wongwan – Bang Khen

Spared: Blue Ring and Blue Line

This would cut budget from 550 billion baht to 343 billion baht.

OTP feels upset that MFC has come up against the OTP plan.

Securitization would be a substitute for a loan, but the government seems to prefer a loan because they feel not familiar with securitization. MFC also has strongly discouraged the government from nationalizing BMCL and BTSC. The government should never take the full burden of megaprojects.

The central organization to manage the projects, one for the inspection on implementation, and the other for the basic structure maintenance along with the mass transit services to cut redundancy. The current system creates too much redundancy. The Ministry of Finance is seeking the funds while MOTC is handling the construction—no cross checking available.

MFC also discourages the government from setting up a holding company without proper management because poor management could create more burden to the government. Therefore, an organization from a neutral party to run the holding company is necessary.

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[MASS TRANSIT PLAN: Cut back to three routes, panel says](#) – *The Nation*, August 26, 2005

[4 of 7 subway routes likely to run at a loss – Megaprojects may be reviewed, rewritten](#) – *Bangkok Post*, August 26, 2005

*Only three out of seven planned new subway routes in Bangkok are likely to meet costs over a 30-year period, according to Pichit Akrathit, the president of MFC Asset Management...*

*Dr Pichit said the fact that some rail routes were not necessarily expected to break even did not necessarily mean that they should not be built.*

*"For these megaprojects, there is still room to adjust the projects to help reduce costs while maintaining the same benefits for society," he said...*

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The leather industry asks to change Mae Klong line – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Matichon*, August 24, 2005

*Matichon* editor has received complaints from those who suffer from Taksin Center project and new Mahachai Commuter that the decision to move the track from Lad Yah Road to Charoen Rat Road (the former Klong San – Wongwain Yai section of Mahachai line) is not good at all because it hurts their leather industry. There are 40-50 shops of leather businesses and 90% are landowners.

However, Team Consultant has replied that the line to Lad Yah has more harmful effects on businesses and the environment than the Charoen Rat section, especially the King Taksin Monument at Wongwian Yai. Those who live in Thonburi would never allow any project that damages the King Taksin Monument or they would face the bloody wrath from Thonburi people.

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OTP asking to cut Taksin Center to 14 rai and move the Southern Bus Terminal to Kalaprapuek – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Dailynews*, August 24, 2005

The meeting at OTP has come up with the result that:

- 1) Taksin Center must be at the same place Since there is no better place than Wutthakart where Klaprapuek, Rajapuek, and Ratchadaphisek intersect.
  - 2) Cutting the size from 175 rai to 14 rai as the interchange between BTS Skytrain and Mahachai Commuter line.
  - 3) The Southern Bus Terminal should be moved to Kalaprapuek Road.
  - 4) The consultant has come up with the provisional Southern Bus Terminal at Rama 2 Highway near Kanachanaphisek Outer Ring Road on 100 rai of government land.
  - 5) Land expropriation should be done only once for all projects especially the bureaucrat area at Rama 2.
- OTP will submit these meeting results to MOTC by the end of next week.
- 

Bridge over the Chao Phraya at Pakkret – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thairath*, August 20, 2005

The 6-lane bridge across the Chao Phraya at Pakkret (near Koh Kret) and the 6-lane east-west access road are 45.68% done and ready to be opened on February 28, 2007. The 6-lane north-south access road is 66.31% done and ready to be opened on May 18, 2006. The new Pakkret bypass road with trumpet-shaped interchange is 56.11% done and will be complete on June 1, 2006.

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## Taksin Center news

Scaling down Taksin center – BMA offering Rama 2 area as an alternative – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thairath*, August 18, 225

OTP said they considered scaling down the Taksin Center from 175 to 50 rai. It would only be an interchange station between Mae Klong Railway and BTS Skytrain due to the strong protest from more than 10,000 households, not just 1703 households as previously thought.

The Southern Bus Terminal has to move somewhere else with fewer existing residents around. This will reduce the budget by 2 billion baht.

However, local Thonburi people feel very confused about the government's moves because PM Thaksin bullied the local people by saying that "I'll come up with two new alternative routes to replace the [Taksin extension of BTS](#)."

However, the same government has come up with the Taksin Center with a BTS extension at the same time saying "Taksin extension from Saphan Taksin is not allowed!"

Which should they believe? Without Taksin Extension, there is no way for BTS to connect with Taksin Center according to the plan.

OTP insisting on constructing Taksin Center – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thairath*, August 17, 2005

OTP said they refuse to back down on the Taksin Center project, no matter how much pressure the local people of Thonburi come up with.

The local people of Thonburi retorted: "See you at Bangbon on August 20, and you'll face the wrath and revenge from our people if you still insist on the Taksin Center without listening to our voices."

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Mass transit investment viable? – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi, August 19, 2005  
The General Auditor's Office has complained that MRTA Purple Line (Bangsue-Bang Yai and Bang Yai-Rat Boorana) passes through the very low density area, not central business district areas which are more viable (*Matichon*, August 15, 2005). Mouthpieces of the government such as *Dailynews* say investment on the seven lines is definitely viable.

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Taksin Center controversies – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Than Setthakij*, August 14-17, 2005 and *Prachachat Thurakij*, August 15-17, 2005

OTP has learned very hard lessons on their laziness to update data. Local people from Thonburi have revolted against Taksin Center and tell OTP that there are more than 10,000 households in the the area for Taksin Center, not just 1703 households as OTP has claimed.

OTP has to come up with three choices:

- 1) Delaying the project
- 2) Moving Taksin Center along with rerouting both Maeklong Railway and BTS extension to go along Kalaprapuek Road which has more vacant space than Wutthakart Road .
- 3) Move intercity bus terminal, BMTA terminal, and park and ride to somewhere else along Maeklong Line while constructing only an interchange building for BTS and Mae Klong Railway so the local people could use both systems. The blue line extension to The Mall Tha Pra should be an included provision .

The owner of Montree Witthaya School said he would sacrifice his school on five rai of land at Wutthakart Road and build a new one for his students at Kalaprapuek Road. However, most local people said they are up against vested interests who come to destroy their communities with very little compensation and they are already fed up with the snobbish new neighbors who come to grab their land at bargain price for speculation while driving their community away.

**Note:** Even *Thairath* columnists have pointed out the usual habit of hidden agenda on government projects causing strong protests from local people. Ban Krua, Thai-Malay joint pipeline venture, Laem Pak Bai project, Purple Line, and Taksin Center controversies are a few samples of such malpractice by governments with hidden agendas. No wonder that NGOs come up with strong protests due to such irregularities in government projects. Furthermore, the local people of Thonburi have pointed out the political football along with the vendetta between the central government and BMA are definitely the main causes of delays in the [Taksin Extension of BTS](#).

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Barter trade to finance eight projects with a price tag of 29.6 billion baht – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thaipost*, August 18, 2005

The government has come up with barter trade for eight projects

- 1) New batch of locomotives and BCF and container boxex
- 2) Chachongsao – Sri Racha – Laem Chabang double tracking
- 3) Airplane for royal rain making
- 4) Feeder ships
- 5) New machines for Thai Tobacco Monopoly Factory at Chiang Mai
- 6) X-ray machine for containers at the Customs Department

...and two other two projects with total price of 29.583 billion baht.

This will focus on the agriculture products, but the rice mill association have warned that this barter trade should never be resold to a third country since it will depress the price of their products.

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BMA installing Smart Traffic System at Silom Road – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from [Manager](#), August 16, 2005

BMA government has installed the first Smart Traffic System in front of Bangkok Bank PCL, Silom Road this morning. BMA plans to install up to 40 Smart Traffic Systems with a price tag of 210 million baht. However, BMA would install the first five system at the following places:

- 1) Bangkok Bank PCL, Silom Road
  - 2) Sukhumvit Road before reaching Phrom Phong Intersection
  - 3) Phayathai Road in front of Silom Medical just before reaching Phayathai Intersection
  - 4) Rama 6 Road, before reaching Tuek Chai Intersection
  - 5) Narathiwat Rajnakharin Road near the intersection with Sathorn Road.
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Editorial: [Mass transit projects must go ahead](#) – translated from *Tharn Settakij* by the *Bangkok Post*, July 28, 2005

*Despite opposition from some quarters, the government should go ahead with its mass transit projects, which will help lessen fuel consumption in Bangkok and nearby provinces...*

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[Single firm to oversee mass transit – Holding company for skytrain and subway](#) – *Bangkok Post*, July 26, 2005

*...He said the new holding company would take over state shareholdings in the existing Bangkok subway and skytrain systems, as well as new mass-transit projects to be developed over the next seven years.*

*...But private operators have resisted calls to swap their shareholdings with shares of the new holding company, prompting Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to comment recently that companies refusing to co-operate with the concept could be blocked from integrating with seven new light rail routes planned for Bangkok over the next seven years.*

*...Major shareholders of Bangkok Metro (BMCL), the operator of the subway system, include Ch. Karnchang, Natural Park, Krung Thai Bank and TMB Bank. The company recently announced a plan to list on the Stock Exchange of Thailand and raise capital to 11.95 billion baht from 7.35 billion, including the placement of 2.6 billion shares to MRTA as required under the concession contract.*

*Shareholders of the Bangkok Mass Transit System (BTS), the operator of the Bangkok skytrain, include Tanayong, the International Finance Corp, Siam Commercial Bank and Italian-Thai Development Plc. The company is currently restructuring its 39 billion baht in debts...*

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Mass transit notes – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi, July 23, 2005

\* Premier Thaksin has told the people in his Saturday morning radio address that he has given a green light for MOTC and OTP to eliminate BTS Skytrain from participating in the joint ticketing system for mass transit.

\* *Thairath* reports (July 20, 2005) that local Taopoon people would no longer listen to statements from OTP about the Taopoon interchange station which they oppose. They are sending their pleas to the Participation Committee and Human Right Committee.

\* *Thairath* reports (July 22, 2005) that local Taopoon people booed MRTA officers who came to survey their area and even throw the stones at them.

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JBIC loan scheme for megaprojects – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Manager Daily*, July 21, 2005

The Public Debt Administration Office told the press that MOF is going to start borrowing from JBIC to finance megaprojects in 2006 and set up a real estate fund with a price tag of 80-100 billion baht so as to start construction in October 2006.

To get around FOREX risks and interest rate fluctuations, the Public Debt Administration Office has come up with a plan by going through the following steps:

- 1) Borrowing JBIC loans with 0.75% annual interest rates, 40-year payment period, and 10 year grace period
- 2) Making cross currency swap/participating swap -> turning Yen loan from JBIC into Thai baht to cut FOREX risks
- 3) This scheme would make the actual annual interest after swapping currency at 3.95-4.05%, slightly lower than local baht loans of 4.45%
- 4) Securitization to form the real estate funds of 80-100 billion baht.

This scheme would go into the following projects:

1) Purple Line to Bang Yai -> 30% budget, 70% domestic loan since it take too much time to get JBIC loans. The final design would be done in October 2005 and the contract with contractors would be signed in December 2005. This would free MRTA to choose the supplier at the cheapest price without strings attached from JBIC.

2) Purple Line to Ratboorana, Blue Line Subway to Bang Khae, Blue Ring to Tha Phra and Orange Line would be 20% budget and 80% JBIC loan. The government would guarantee the loan. This is to be negotiated in September 2005 so as to start in October 2006.

The total allocation for MRTA would be as follows:

Budget: 21.80%

Domestic loans: 10.30%

JBIC loans: 67.90%

The Public Debt Administration Office may not work on any BTS Skytrain scheme since OTP has decided to abandon BTS Skytrain since it refuses to be nationalized.

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OTP discussion on Purple Line, Pink Monorail, and Yellow LRT – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Manager*, July 13, 2005 and *Bangkok Biznews*, July 13, 2005

After the discussion between OTP, MRTA and those who live along Bangkok-Nonthaburi Road, they have come up with the following results:

1) For the case of the Pink Monorail (Pakkret – Laksi – Suwinthawongse), this should be frozen for a while, and only be under serious consideration after finishing the Yellow LRT since the existing van services and private buses have already covered the route and the demand is too low.

2) Yellow LRT with total distance of 32 km and a price tag of 34 billion baht would be under serious consideration to relieve the traffic jams at Lad Phrao Road, Bang Kapi, Lum Salee and Sri Nakharin Road.

3) NHA must be ready to start the construction of Ban Uea Arthorn and Flat Uea Arthorn for more than 10,000 families (about 100,000 people) removed from along the Red Line commuter networks.

4) OTP and MRTA said the elevated tracks require less expropriation space than underground tracks and both would show the comparison maps to convince those who live along Bangkok-Nonthaburi Road.

The list of land expropriation for Purple line (46.962 billion baht – 23 km) is:

Section 1 – km 8+723.205 – km 9+130.00 , eastern side of Kanchabnaphisek Outer Ring, 400 m, 60 plots of land

Section 2 – km 11+700 – km 12+300 , for widening the curve, 600 m, 14 plots

Section 3 – The Bridge Across Chao Phraya between km 18+300 + km 19+350 – the bridge parallel and South of Phrananklao Bridge–expropriation of 56 plots

Section 4 – Kae Rai Intersection between km 23+700 – km 24-400 – 700 m, need 28 plots

Section 5 – km 23+350 – km 26+000 – Tiwanon Intersection–needs land expropriation for the curve need 55 plots of land with 650 meter distance.

Section 6 – km 30+250 – km 31+170 at Pracharat Sai 2 – 1100 meter long–going to the front of Tesco Lotus Prachachuen to avoid hitting Bangsue Flyover. Need 68 plots of land.

The extra expropriation for the station gates:

- 1) Klong Bang Phai – 5 plots
- 2) Talad Bang Yai – 7 plots
- 3) Bang Yai Intersection – 8 plots
- 4) Bang Ploo – 13 plots
- 5) Bang Rai Yai – 13 plots
- 6) Tha It – 11 plots
- 7) Sai Mah – 7 plots
- 8) Pra Nanklao Bridge – 33 plots
- 9) Nonthaburi 1 – 13 plots
- 10) Sri Porn Sawan – 15 plots
- 11) Nonthaburi Hall – 10 plots
- 12) MOPH – 16 plots
- 13) Tiwanon -27 plots
- 14) Wong Sawang – 20 plots
- 15) Bang Son – 42 plots
- 16) Tao Poon – 94 plots

Bang Phai depot of 163.5 rai requires 417 plots of land.

The extra expropriation for Park and Ride:

- 1) Bang Yai Intersection – 4 plots
- 2) Tha It – 15 plots
- 3) Nonthaburi 1 – 1 plots

MRTA has ensured the people from Bangkok-Nonthaburi road that they would get compensation at market prices. He even said he will ask the consultant whether he can cut the size of land for the gates which requires 200 square wah for each gate.

OTP said those who have the land expropriated have the right to get the prime commercial area inside stations. No metro mall inside the stations though–only 7-11s are allowed. Nevertheless, MRTA would give the first 10 years of commercial area leasing for free, but those who lease the space would have to invest on their own.

The consultants said the construction could be started in January 2006 to be done and opened on December 5, 2009 with a 15 baht flat rate.

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The list of station for four feeder commuters proposed by OTP – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Building and Land Weekly*, June 25-July 1, 2005

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1) Northern Line -&gt; Rangsit – Ban Phachi – likely to be electrified<br/>Station Name – Km from Bangsue<br/>Rangsit – 22.2<br/>Klong Nhung – 26.2<br/>Chiang Rak – 29.9<br/>Thammasat University – 32.6<br/>Nava Nakhon – 36.5<br/>Chiang Rak Noi – 38.4<br/>Klong Phutsa – 44.3<br/>Bang Pa-In – 50.4<br/>Ban Pho – 55.2<br/>Ayutthaya – 63.5<br/>Ban Ma – 67.1<br/>Map Phra Chan – 71.4<br/>Phra Kaeo – 77.8<br/>Ban Phachi Junction – 82.4</p> <p>2) Eastern Line -&gt; New Makkasan – Chachongsao – likely to be electrified<br/>Station Name – Km from Bangsue<br/>New Makkasan – 9.3<br/>Klong Tan – 12.5<br/>Hua Mak – 18.0<br/>Ban Thap Chang – 23.7 -&gt; Not constructed due to lack of demand<br/>Soi Wat Lan Boon – 26.8 -&gt; Not constructed due to lack of demand<br/>Lat Krabang – 29.8<br/>Pra Chom Klao – 32.9<br/>Hua Takhe – 33.5<br/>Klong Luang Phaeng – 42.1<br/>Preng – 49.1<br/>Klong Bang Phra – 56.6<br/>Chachoengsao Junction – 63.6</p> | <p>3) Southern Line -&gt; Talingchan – Nakhon Pathom – likely to be electrified<br/>Station Name – Km from Bangsue<br/>Taling Chan Junction – 14.5<br/>Ban Chim Phli – 17.0<br/>Phuttamonthon Sai 2 – 19.9<br/>Sala Thammasop – 22.5<br/>Sala Ya – 27.5<br/>Wat Suwan – 31.9<br/>Klong Maha Sawat – 35.5<br/>Wat Ngiu Rai – 39.8<br/>Nakhon Chaisi – 44.1<br/>Tha Chalaep – 49.0<br/>Ton Somrong – 53.3<br/>Nakhon Pathom – 57.1</p> <p>4) Mahachai – Mae Klong – Pak Tho – likely to be DMU due to the lack of demands<br/>Station Name – Km from Bangsue<br/>Mahachai – 43.6<br/>Tha Chalom – 46.4<br/>Ban Chi Phakhao – 48.1<br/>Klong Nok Lek – 50.1<br/>Bang Si Kot – 50.22 51.2<br/>Bang Krachao – 53.0<br/>Ban Bo – 54.9<br/>Bang Thorat – 57.4<br/>Ban Ka Long – 60.2<br/>Ban Na Khwang – 61.6<br/>Ban Na Khok – 64.0<br/>Ket Muang – 67.7<br/>Lad Yai – 72.0<br/>Bang Krabun – 74.5<br/>Mae Klong – 78.1<br/>Bang Kaphom – 84.5<br/>Amphawa – 89.3<br/>Wat Pleng – 95.7<br/>Pak Tho – 99.4</p> |
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Premier Thaksin asking for barter on imported subway rolling stock – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Bangkok Biznews*, June 15, 2005

Premier Thaksin is asking MRTA to come up a barter trade scheme for the imported Subway rolling stock before the local assembly becomes a reality. This is to control the current account deficit while BOI and FTI agree on a local assembly scheme. A plan for local assembly will be submitted to the cabinet soon.

The mass transit expansion has to take the current account balance into account. The foreign suppliers may not have to set up the local assembly to reduce the investment risks, but local assembly is a much better deal. However, the purchase of imported equipment should be through barter trade—not counter trade as has been done before.

The urgency for mass transit expansion is to cut travel time from 4-5 hours a day for those who have no car or 2 hours for those who have a car to 15-20 minutes.

The 1.7 trillion baht investment on megaprojects would have to be financed by taxes, loans, and barter trade to keep the trade balance in check. E -Auction with the observation by the media would solve collusion problems

Even though BOI and FTI agrees with MRTA about the local assembly line for subway, the details such as the number of rolling stock, the local content percentage, and investment package demands would depend upon each investor's demand.

**Earlier:** [Thailand does not need a train factory](#) – TNA, June 15, 2005

**Earlier:** [Visiting the London Tube and Alstom's rolling stock factory](#) – Manager, June 6, 2005

**Earlier:** [Rolling stock assembly line-1000 sets needed](#) – Matichon, May 16, 2005

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[Train makers vie for Thai deals](#) – Bloomberg News, June 22, 2005

*Siemens, which has supplied \$1 billion in trains and equipment to Bangkok in the past decade, is facing competition from Alstom to win contracts from Thailand for subways, railroads and highways by 2010. The contracts are worth 601 billion baht, or about \$14.6 billion...*

*Overseas companies have lost money on Thai mass-transit projects in the past. In 1998, when the Thai economy shrank 10.5 percent at the height of the Asian financial crisis, the government scrapped a \$3.7 billion elevated rail-and-road contract with Hopewell Holdings of Hong Kong after the company had completed 12 percent of the network. Hopewell had spent 1.45 billion Hong Kong dollars, or \$187 million, on the project.*

*In 1992, the government scrapped a \$2.3 billion contract awarded to SNC-Lavalin Group, Canada's biggest engineering and construction company, seven years after approving a plan to build an urban rail system that never went ahead...*

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List of stations for OTP's plan for commuter feeder lines – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Siamtharakij*, June 18-21, 2005

OTP is speeding up the implementation for the new commuter line to feed both the Red Line Commuter and Pink Airport Link. This may be either a DMU network or EMU network in the same fashion as KL

Kommuter, depending upon the frequency and fuel hikes.

The corrected list of station along Commuter Feeder Line

1) Rangsit – Ayutthaya – Ban Phachi -> likely to be EMU due to high demand

( Distance in KM from Hua Lamphong)

1.01) Rangsit 29.75

1.02) Khlong Nhung 33.84

1.03) Chiang Rak 37.47

1.04) Thammasat University 40.19

1.05) Nava Nakhon 44.12

1.06) Chiang Rak Noi 46.01

1.07) Khlong Phutsa 51.88

1.08) Bang Pa-In 58.00

1.09) Ban Pho 62.75

1.10) Ayutthaya 71.08

1.11) Ban Ma 74.69

1.12) Map Phra Chan 78.98

1.13) Phra Kaeo 85.44

1.14) Ban Phachi Junction 89.95

2) Makkasan – Hua Mark – Chachoengsao -> another likely candidate for EMU due to high demand.

The corrected list of the new New Commuter Line – to feed Suvannabhum Airport Link -> likely to be electrified for EMU Stations

(Distance in km from Hua Lamphong)

2.01) New Makkasan 6.98

2.02) New Khlong Tan 9.85-11.14

4) Mahachai – Maeklong – Paktho -> requiring missing links and major bridges across Thachin and Mae Klong after waiting for the link with the main trunk lines since 1908. A likely candidate for DMU due to the lack of demand unless fuel prices reach intolerable levels compelling SRT to electrify and construct double tracks.

A major rail rehab is also needed for this route after using 50 lb/yard rail since the 1960s.

(Distance in km from New Mahachai – Assuming that missing link at Tachin is 2 km and at Maeklong is 2 km)

4.01) New Mahachai 0

4.02) Tha Chalom 0.84+2

4.03) Ban Chi Phakhao 3.71+2

4.04) Khlong Nok Lek 5.41+2

4.05) Bang Si Kot 6.72+2

4.06) Bang Krachao 8.68+2

4.07) Ban Bo 10.72+2

4.08) Bang Thorat 13.64+2

4.09) Ban Ka Long 15.60+2

4.10) Ban Na Khwang 17.76+2

4.11) Ban NA Khok 19.79+2

4.12) Ket Muang 23.55+2

4.13) Lad Yai 27.48+2

4.12) Bang Krabun 29.98+2

4.13) New Mae Klong 33.57+2+2

- 2.03) Hua Mak 15.18
- 2.04) Ban Thap Chang 20.87
- 2.05) Soi Wat Lan Boon 23.94
- 2.06) Lat Krabang 26.75
- 2.07) Pra Chom Klao 30.33
- 2.08) Hua Takhe 30.91
- 2.09) Khlong Luang Phaeng 39.50
- 2.100 Preng 46.50
- 2.11) Khlong Bang Phra 53.99
- 2.12) Chachoengsao Junction 60.99

3) Taling Chan – Nakhon Pathom -> another likely candidate for EMU due to high demand (Distance in KM from Thonburi – to Hua Lamphong add 16 km more)

- 3.01) Taling Chan Junction 6.08
- 3.02) Ban Chim Phli 8.64
- 3.03) Phuttamonthon Sai 2 11.47
- 3.04) Sala Thammasop 14.05
- 3.05) Sala Ya 19.06
- 3.06) Wat Suwan 23.46
- 3.07) Khlong Maha Sawat 27.05
- 3.08) Wat Ngiu Rai 30.80
- 3.09) Nakhon Chaisi 35.13
- 3.10) Tha Chalaep 40.02
- 3.11) Ton Somrong 44.30
- 3.12) Nakhon Pathom 48.12

- 4.14) Amphawa (?)
- 4.15) Bang Khaphom (?)
- 4.16) Wat Pleng (?)
- 4.17) Pak Tho (?)

The list of budget for new commuter routes

Route	Distance	DMU (Billion baht)	EMU (Billion baht)
1) Rangsit – Ayutthaya – Ban Phachi	60 km	32.623	35.746
2) New Makkasan – Hua Mark – Chachongsao	54 km	26.697	27.502
3) Talingchan – Salaya- Nakhon Pathom	43 km	24.529	24.344
4) Mahachai – Mae Klong – Pak Tho	56 km	43.609	49.314
Totals	213 km	127.458	136.906

DMU has a maximum speed of 120 kph. EMU has a maximum speed of 160 kph with 20-25% higher costs than DMU.

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[Train makers vie for Thai deals](#) – Bloomberg News, June 22, 2005

*Siemens, which has supplied \$1 billion in trains and equipment to Bangkok in the past decade, is facing competition from Alstom to win contracts from Thailand for subways, railroads and highways by 2010. The contracts are worth 601 billion baht, or about \$14.6 billion...*

*Overseas companies have lost money on Thai mass-transit projects in the past. In 1998, when the Thai economy shrank 10.5 percent at the height of the Asian financial crisis, the government scrapped a \$3.7 billion elevated rail-and-road contract with Hopewell Holdings of Hong Kong after the company had completed 12 percent of the network. Hopewell had spent 1.45 billion Hong Kong dollars, or \$187 million, on the project.*

*In 1992, the government scrapped a \$2.3 billion contract awarded to SNC-Lavalin Group, Canada's biggest engineering and construction company, seven years after approving a plan to build an urban rail system that never went ahead...*

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[Mae Hong Son-Chiang Mai tunnel proposed](#) – TNA, June 15, 2005

*The journey from Mae Hong Son to Chiang Mai in the North of Thailand is along windy mountain roads, but now local businesses want to cut through this problem by building a tunnel linking the two provincial capitals.*

*Mr. Phoonsak Suntharapanichakul, President of the Mae Hong Son Chamber of Commerce, said that the tunnel would become cost-effective, given the continuously rising price of fuel.*

*Under the proposals, the government would provide financial support for the construction of a tunnel, which would slash the journey time between the two provinces.*

*The tunnel would pass through the Thanon Thongchai mountain range, and would pass by tambon Huay Pu Ling and into tambon Wat Chan in Chiang Mai.*

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[PM insists on transparency of mega projects](#) – TNA, June 15, 2005

*Transparency is vital for the success of the government's large-scale infrastructure development projects, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said today.*

*The prime minister, whose government has become embroiled in a scandal surrounding the procurement of bomb detection equipment for Bangkok's new international airport, the Suvarnabhumi Airport, said that all the bidding for the 'mega projects' would be conducted by electronic auctions to cut out opportunities for corruption...*

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[Thailand does not need a train factory](#) – TNA, June 15, 2005

*Thailand's Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra has warned that the government must take into account the country's trade deficit when considering importing elevated trains from overseas.*

*"If we have to, our counterpart must import Thai goods to help reduce our trade deficit. We have to thoroughly think through many factors that are in the best interests of the country," Mr. Thaksin told journalists on Wednesday.*

*But, he said, he did not see a need for foreign investor to build a factory for elevated trains, even though it would help transfer the technology to Thailand.*

*Mr. Thaksin said Thailand needed to invest in a good mass transport system to improve the quality of life for Thais and to help reduce the country's energy imports.*

**Earlier:** [Visiting the London Tube and Alstom's rolling stock factory](#) – Manager, June 6, 2005

**Earlier:** [Rolling stock assembly line-1000 sets needed](#) – Matichon, May 16, 2005

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[Global road safety initiative launched for ASEAN countries](#) – ADB, June 15, 2005

*...The Global Road Safety Initiative (GRSI) is funded by seven of the world's largest auto and oil industry companies. The companies – Ford, GM, Honda, Michelin, Renault, Shell and Toyota – are all members of GRSP, which will be the delivery organization for the initiative.*

*GRSI is to be undertaken in low and middle income countries and will focus on the key risk factors identified in the World Health Organization's (WHO's) 2004 World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention. These include seat belt and helmet use, alcohol, inappropriate speeds, and safety of pedestrians and cyclists...*

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[Cabinet approves Bt1.70 in 5-year mega project investment](#) – The Nation, June 14, 2005

*Cabinet Tuesday approved plan to invest Bt1.701 trillion in mega projects during 2005-2009, proposed by the Finance Ministry.*

*According to the ministry's statement, 25 per cent of the total budget would be invested in mass-transit projects, 19 per cent in other transport projects, 12 per cent in housing projects, and 12 per cent for water developments.*

*Of the total funding, Bt657.94 billion, or 39 per cent, will be from the fiscal budget; Bt222.28 billion, or 13 per cent, from state enterprise revenue; Bt410.03 billion, or 24 per cent, from onshore bonds and borrowings; Bt305.03 billion, or 18 per cent, from offshore borrowing, and Bt105.47 billion from other sources, including initial public offerings and securitisations.*

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[Chaos looms at Lat Phrao junction – BMA decides to close lanes from early July](#) – Bangkok Post, June 13, 2005

*...The road's partial closure was scheduled to start on June 15. However, it was postponed because traffic police and city officials were unsure how to handle traffic problems in the area once construction begins.*

*The city administration, its contractor and traffic police have now reached an agreement on a traffic solution and the partial road closure will start in the first week of next month. Construction is likely to end on Nov 25...*

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[Transport Ministry's powers grow – Somkid sketches 2nd wave of state reform](#) – Bangkok Post, June 13, 2005

*The Transport Ministry will be more powerful but the Information and Communication Technology Ministry will lose some of its influence under the second wave of bureaucratic reform to streamline government agencies.*

*The Transport Ministry will be renamed the Infrastructure and Transport Ministry and will grow with the Public Works Department, transferred from the Interior Ministry, coming under its umbrella...*

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Upgrading Soi Udomsuk and Soi Lasalle into roads – Changing the name of Soi Inthamara into Soi Sutthisarn Winijchai – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thairath*, June 7, 2005  
BMA has decided to upgrade Sukhumvit 103 (Soi Udomsuk) and Sukhumvit 105 (Soi Lasalle) into Udomsuk Road and Lasalle Road due to the fact that both sois have become 4-lane roads (no longer 2-lane sois).

Furthermore, the name "Soi Inthamara" (the name came from the surname of a land developer—Lt. Pol. Gen. Toh Inthamara ) is not fit for the name of a main street. Sutthisarn Winijchai comes from the royal name of Luang Sutthisarn Winijchai. This change will be as follows: Soi Sutthisarn 5 for Soi Inthamara 1, Soi Sutthisarn 4 for Soi Inthamara 2, etc.

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Visiting the London Tube and Alstom's rolling stock factory – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Manager*, June 6, 2005

BTS Skytrain and MRTA Subway have become the favorite mode of transportation around CBD areas of Bangkok due to fast and comfortable service. However, massive expansion is needed to cover more than 300 km distance around Bangkok and suburbs.

MRTA and BMCL have been to London to see the management of the London Tube so as to improve the management of BMCL to meet world class standards after January 17, 2005 Bangkok Subway crash. They will also inspect rolling stock production and testing facilities of Alstom in France.

The London Tube has been in service since 1863 and British Government has set up TFL in July 2000 to take charge of transportation around the London metro area covering London buses, London Tube, and Dockland LRT with total distance of 580 km. The financial resources for such massive mass transit system come from the following three sources:

- 1) Revenue from passenger services of all mass transit systems in London – 51%
- 2) Central government support – 48%
- 3) Local government of London Metro – 1%

There are 5.4 million passengers/a day for the mass transit systems in London including 3 million passengers a day for the London Tube.

The Department of Transport (DFT) controls TFL while TFL has set up DLR as a subsidiary to control the Dockland Railway LRT as well as to grant the extension of private concession lines while allowing the service and maintenance of Dockland LRT to be done by other companies.

For the case of the London Tube, DFT has set up LUL (London Underground Limited) to run London Tube while allowing other companies to run the maintenance/rehabilitation of tracks and rolling stock.

For safety, HMRI would function as the inspector of the system as well as the approval issuers for utility usage before and after opening the service as well as investigators on serious accidents.

There is another agency to handle leasing rates collected from the train operator for the track.

TFL Officers have told Minister Suriya about the benefits of the integrated tickets for mass transit systems such as buses, Subway/Skytrain, railway and LRT:

- 1) Solving redundant expenses on transportation to encourage more people to take mass transit systems instead of private cars while the government could collect excise tax from private cars entering the CBD—nearly 100 million GBP a year (7 billion baht a year) while cutting down on private car usage by 15%.
- 2) Doubling real estate value along tube/mass transit lines compared to the investment on the mass transit systems enabling both central and local governments to collect more land/building taxes as well as corporate taxes.
- 3) Encouraging the massive expansion of mass transit systems.

Even the London Tube has 3 million passengers a day (more than 100 million trip a year) but has to swallow an annual loss of 50 billion baht a year since it is mass transit system.

Nevertheless, BMCL has hired Lloyd's Register Group to function as an independent auditor of the Subway from June 2005-December 2006 with a price tag of 12 million baht. Lloyd's will send officers to make a comprehensive inspection of the subway system and recommend necessary changes for BMCL to ensure world class safety along with knowledge transfer on safety inspections.

### **ALSTOM shows the driverless heavy rails used in Singapore**

The massive expansion of mass transit systems has encouraged the producers to invite MOTC to visit and inspect their rolling stock production facilities. One of the main rolling stock producers, ALSTOM, has invited MRTA, BMCL and MOTC to visit the rolling stock facility at Varensonnes, France and watch the performance of the driverless heavy rail rolling stock used for Singapore NEL (Northeastern Line) and CCL (Circle Line – 120 carriages) as well as Shanghai Metro Line 3 (Pearl Line) and Line 5 (Xinmin Line). This



driverless subway rolling stock is controlled from a control center and shows strong interest to compete with other firms for the local assembly and the extension of the subway in Bangkok.

ALSTOM is a very big mass transit producer firm at the same level as Siemens (Germany), Bombardier (Canada) and ROTEM (Korea) with rolling stock facilities in 8 countries including USA, Argentina, Brazil, Spain, mainland China and so on. 21% of ALSTOM stock are held by the French Government.

All seven lines of the mass transit system must have safety as the first priority. Even though the driverless subway rolling stock is good, the high price tag—even higher than the conventional subway rolling stock—makes MRTA think twice about this type of rolling stock.

ALSTOM also picks SYSTRA to show a new design of the elevated section of the subway system with a u-shape design for high safety and a transformable sound barrier wall into emergency walkways with 25% cheaper construction costs than a conventional design. Actually, ALSTOM and SYSTRA nearly won the contract for the first section of Blue Line subway, but a glitch forced BMCL to pick Siemens instead. MRTA has shown strong interest on SYSTRA design, but it cannot be used for the Bang Yai-Bang Sue Line since the design is already finished.

Both London and Paris transportation management have the common feature that it has centralized subway, bus, and commuter trains to create single integrated tickets which is the same thing the government wants to create along with 360 km of mass transit systems along with local assembly of mass transit systems. This would be a landmark achievement for Premier Thaksin.

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['Mega projects' fail to take shape](#) – TNA, June 8, 2005

*The government's ambitious mega investment projects received a setback yesterday when the committee responsible for state investment admitted that it had failed to reach a conclusion on government 'mega projects' for next year...*

*Nonetheless, he stressed that the mega projects committee would closely supervise investment funding to ensure that it did not push Thailand's current account deficit above 2 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP)...*

*A source from the Ministry of Finance revealed to TNA reporter yesterday that under the government's original mega project plans, 38.5 percent of the funding was to be drawn from the national budget, 14.5 percent from state enterprise income, 36.9 percent from domestic and foreign borrowing, and 10.1 percent from other sources.*

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The MFC version to finance Mass Transit System – MOF vs. MFC – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Matichon*, May 30, 2005

Mr. Phichit Akkharathit (the director of MFC Funds PCL- [MFC Asset management](#)) said even though Premier Thaksin and MOF are embracing securitization on land, farmers' debts, and even cattle, they refuse to come up with securitization on the 563.117 billion baht mass transit scheme due to claims from MOF about the high cost for securitization which is a big lie from MOF.

Director Phichit has shown that the securitization of mass transit system does not cost as much as MOF claimed due to the benefit of mass transit system itself. However, this securitization scheme requires rational project planning with the clear revenue resources and excellent management.

The MFC director said that MOF has kept many lucrative properties within their portfolios, but they utterly failed to realize the potential—especially the land along mass transit lines within their portfolio. This is just like using deposit accounts as loan collateral instead of using savings within the deposits to finance the projects to avoid paying loan interest.

MFC is trying hard to help the government avoid borrowing or spending too much of the annual budget. The loan should be reserved for non-financial viable projects such as education, health care, and agriculture (the government has always had very opposite viewpoints since they always found ways to exploit education funds, health care funds, and agricultural funds).

MFC also condemned MOF that their mentalities are out of touch with today's reality. For example, they still worry about the revenue uncertainty so much that they still stuck on the old loan and annual budgets and wait for revenue from property development, concessions, new tax hikes on polluters, and new license plate taxes which are no longer enough for the mass transit projects. This due to the fact that the MOF officers are not accustomed to new financial instruments or spending future money yet. So far, the investment of 280 billion baht to construct tunnels and lay tracks while keeping national debts within 50% of GDP.

MFC has pointed out the different viewpoints between MFC and MOF. MOF prefers decentralized management while MFC prefers centralized management—especially the single public company to handle financial matters, capitalization, and engineering matters relating to the construction. This is very important

to ensure the project finishes on time. After that, they can split or keep it as a single company. However, MOF has failed to come up with clear management even though the project could be an economic stimulant from the current doldrums. The clear management scheme would attract more foreign investors. It is very reasonable not to separate the ones who find financial resources from those who spend money (unless the government has a hidden agenda to siphon the public money and avoid responsibilities if the project fails). This is a contrast with MOF's scheme which separates those who finance the project from those who spend it. MOF's plan has implied that MOF is going to reject any plans for check-and-balance on the spending and financing of projects so that they can spend as they go without any responsibility. Furthermore, MFC said more competitors holding concession for each line would create competition to be a benefit for the passengers. However, passengers better prepare to pay tax hikes to finance this project such as the license plate tax, environment tax, and a new property tax for the land and buildings along the subway line. This is the same scheme as Hong Kong Subway has employed with successful results. MFC also opposes the nationalization plan because it has created a very bad image to foreign investors by threatening to seize control without paying good compensation. They should pay for the BTS and BMCL stocks at market prices and come up with the provision to allow the joint venture with the government so they would willing to sell stock and have joint tickets. The holding company scheme of MOF would force BTS and BMCL to end up as corrupt state enterprises.

**Earlier:** [Thailand gets creative in infrastructure projects](#) – *Financial Times*, May 22, 2005

*Securitisation is becoming the new buzzword of Thailand's financial industry. In fact, analysts believe Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra sees it as a relatively painless way of helping fund his \$40bn infrastructure programme...*

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[MASS-TRANSIT SYSTEMS : Debt Fund to acquire operators](#) – *The Nation*, May 25, 2005

*The Thaksin government will reportedly establish a fund to finance purchases of shares from operators of the subway and the Skytrain and fund mega-infrastructure projects worth Bt1.7 trillion...*

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[Coming up with two new LRT lines and nationalization](#) – *Manager Daily*, December 15, 2004, *Dailynews*, December 16, 2004, and *Thai Post*, December 16, 2004

[Suriya wants taxes to ensure a 15 baht flat rate for the Subway & insists that he will never give up the plan to nationalize the Skytrain](#) – *Thai Post*, November 5, 2004

[MASS TRANSIT NATIONALIZATION CANCELED – Premier Thaksin stuns Suriya by revoking the plan for Skytrain-Subway nationalization](#) – *Than Setthakij*, November 4-6, 2004

[Premier Thaksin selling the dream for the new smart card–15 baht for boat/Subway/Skytrain/bus](#) – *Manager Daily*, August 28, 2004

[What are the real costs of taking over the Skytrain-Subway?](#) – *Thaipost*, July 19, 2004

[Suriya sets up negotiation committee to deal with the nationalization of Subway-Skytrain](#) – *Manager Daily*, July 1, 2004

[Speeding up nationalization for Skytrain and subway–private sector refuses to sell at par](#) – *Prachachart Thurakij*, February 12, 2004

[Political motivations and obstacles behind the mass transit sell-out](#) – *Prachachart Thurakij*, February 2-4, 2004

[Pliew and Khiree preparing to sell the Skytrain-Subway](#) – *Than Setthakij*, February 1-4, 2004

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Settlement on Mochit park and ride – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thairath*, May 23, 2005

OTP, MRTA, and BTS have come up with the settlement on the Mochit park and ride expenses: BTS: 62.5% and MRTA: 37.5%

This rate can be modified every year accordign to actual usage. This is much better deal since it is closer to the actual usage

Parking for BTS: 64%

Parking for MRTA: 31%

Parking for other matter: 5%

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Rolling stock assembly line–1000 sets needed – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Matichon*, May 16, 2005

The MRTA Governor said they are going to push the government to invite foreign investors to set up a local assembly line for subway rolling stock by granting an attractive investment package on the joint venture with local Thai firms. The local assembly would enable Thailand to develop the local assembly of rolling stock production to meet the public demand from BTS, MRTA and SRT. There are several major producers for subway rolling stock on the list of MRTA such as:

- 1) Siemens – Germany
- 2) Alstom (formerly ALSTHOM) – France
- 3) Bombardier – Canada
- 4) ROTEM (owner of the rolling stock section of Daewoo) – South Korea
- 5) Japanese firms (e.g. Hitachi + Kawasaki, Nippon Sharyo, Kinki Sharyo, Fuji to please JBIC)

Their forecasted demands for subway rolling stock are at least 1000 sets and this local assembly line would also enable SRT to supply passenger rolling stock for the Airport Link as well as electrified commuter networks and move the DMUs to meet rural demands for local railway trips—and even realizing the Chaing Mai LRT and northern local railway networks.

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Allocation of financial resource for the mass transit system – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Manager Daily*, May 6, 2005

Allocation of financial resource for mass transit system: Budget 30% – Domestic loan 40% – Foreign loan 30%

The condition: When the current account deficit is more than 2% of GDP, the projects will be delayed or canceled.

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MRTA vs. BTS on Mochit Park and Ride issue – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thairath*, May 9, 2005

MRTA and BTS are bickering with each other over the Mochit Park and Ride expense issue since MRTA said they should pay only 30% of expenses while BTS should handle the other 70% of Park and Ride expenses since more passengers are riding BTS. On the other hand, BTS said the 50-50 deal is still okay for them. Asking BTS to handle 70% of Park and Ride expenses instead of the current 50% is too much to swallow.

MRTA is asking OTP to mediate this Mochit Park and Ride issue. So far, OTP have checked the ratio of Park and Ride usage and they found that:

- 1) During the school period (November 2004 – March 2005) 82% of Park and Ride usage are BTS passengers while 13% are subway passengers .
  - 2) During the summer period (April 2005) 60% of Park and Ride usage are BTS passengers while 30% are subway passengers .
- 

Modified mass transit plan from OTP – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Prachachat Thurakij*, May-5-7, 2005

After looking at the ongoing plans for mass transit expansion, OTP decided to modify the priorities according to the updated info:

- 1) Suvannabhum Airport Link Extension -> Phyathai – Chitladda – Bangsue – Donmuang (21.1km). This got is the first priority since the plan is nearly done. This line has to be ready by the end of 2009.
- 2) Bangsue – Talingchan Red Line Commuter (14.7 km) -> Second priority since Bangsue-Talingchan Expressway blueprint is on the way to be finished in June 2005. However, they need to take Rama 6 Bridge into account since it has been registered as a ‘Historical Place’ with Department of Fine Arts. This is also the substitute for the line across Chao Phraya to Thonburi.
- 3) Bangsue – Rangsit Red Line Commuter (24.5 km) -> Third priority since there are strong demands, but the plan is not done yet. To be done in the next 4 months.
- 4) Bangsue – Bang Yai Purple line of MRTA (23 km) -> Another route with strong demand from the people of Nonthaburi. They even ask for the extension to Bang Buathong despite the objection from the Ministry of Finance. Need at least six months to finish the blueprint
- 5) Taksin Extension (2.2 km) and Samrong Extension (8.9 km) of BTS. BMA has declared the winner for the contractor biddings. However, the debt restructure and political football between BMA and the government are the main obstructions despite strong demands for both routes. BMA has already approved the 1.9 billion baht budget for handling the Samrong and Taksin Extensions in the year 2006.
- 6) Red Line Commuter (Hualamphong – Mahachai -> 30 km)

The blueprint will be done in the next 4 months

7) Red line commuter network (Bangsue – Makkasan, Bangsue – Hua Lamphong) (18.5 km) – This will complete the necessary red line commuter networks.

8) Orange Line (Bang Kapi – Victory Monument – Bang Bumru) (24 km) The underground section (21 km) requires lots of time to handle, especially the route from Thailand Cultural Center to Samsen.

9) Purple Line Phase 2 (Bangsue – Rat Boorana) (23 km) The underground section requires lots of time to handle especially the section that passes Rattanakosin Island.

10) Blue Ring ->Bang Khae extension (14 km) and Charan Sanitwongse route (13 km) The underground section that passes Rattanakosin Island and Wat Arun requires delicate handling.

11) Phaholyothin extension of BTS (Mochit – Lum Lookka), Phra Nok extension (National Stadium – Phrannok) and Paknam Extension (Samrong – Pak Nam) The giant water tunnel of MWA and the Senanikhom Flyover are the main obstacles for the Phaholyothin extension despite strong demands. The delicate issue of Rattanakosin Island requires at least 12 months for extensive studying.

12) Yellow Line LRT (Lad Phrao – Bang Kapi – Sri Nakharin – Samrong) ->32 km – Require further studies.

13) Pink Monorail -> 27km (Pakkret – Laksi – Minburi) – A provision for Monburi – Rom Klao – Lad Krabang extension.

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From the Thai-language press: Advice for mass transit – Extensions to Thonburi first – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Matichon*, May 3, 2005

Ajarn Manop Phongsathat (Instructor of Housing Development, Dept of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University) told the press that the mass transit expansion may have to be divided into a 3-phase development according to priorities. Only the first two phases will be done in 4 years while phase 3 will be done in the next 8 years.

The first phase would consist of the following routes:

1) Thonburi routes which consists of

1.1) Bangkhae extension of Blue Line (Hua Lamphong -Tha Phra – Bang Khae) due to the high population density

1.2) Blue Ring (Bangsue – Bang Pho – Charansanitwongse – Tha Phra)

1.3) Purple Line phase 2 (Bangsue – Rat Boorana)

1.4) Taksin Extension + Phetkasem Extension

2) Suvannabhum Airport Link (Phayathai – Makkasan – Suvannabhum)

3) Route to Paknam (Onnut – Samrong – Samut Prakarn)

Phase 2 will consists of the following lines

1) Airport Link Phase 2 (Phyathai – Chitladda – Bangsue – Donmuang – Rangsit)

2) Bangsue – Talingchan route

3) Mahachai Extension (Hualamphong Wongwian Yai – Mahachai)

Phase 3 will consist of

1) Bangyai Extension (Bangsue – Bang Yai – Klong Phai)

2) Orange Line (Bang Bumru – Bang Kapi)

30% of funds will come from the budget while the other 70% will come from Foreign loan (JBIC + KfW loan).

Ajarn Manop has warned OTP about the financial issues as well as the viable lines while focusing on MRTA routes. Ajarn Manop also advises OTP to transfer the responsibility for the Airport Link to BMA and BTS if SRT cannot handle this monumental task. However, OTP still insists that they are going to build all 7 lines in 6 years instead of 8-12 years.

MRTA said they have delivered the proposals to handle all 3 routes (Orange, Purple, and Blue Ring) with the investment of 300 billion baht. They will start on Bang Yai Line first due to the ease of construction even though they know too well that it may not be a very profitable line. However, the rest will follow by the end of 2006 and MRTA plans to get all 3 routes done in 2010 despite the looming hardship and financial constraints.

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From the Thai-language press: BMA City Council refusing to approve the budget for smart traffic systems – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Dailynews*, May 2, 2005 and *Thairath*, May 2, 2005

After investigating the additional budget of 5,076,847,000 baht, BMA City Council said even though they approve the amount of the budget they still have to cut some unnecessary project such as

1) 226 million baht for Smart Parking Lots at Phra Khanong and Ratchathewee

2) 3.4 million baht for studies of the masterplan for flood control in Phyathai, Dindaeng, and Huay Kwang district

This reduced budget is going to pay for the improvement of flyovers, BMA Mobile Service Office, and the expansion of Song Prapha road in Donmuang.

The reasons for cut the budget of smart traffic is unclear info. It may not be a worthy investment since it takes 90 seconds to park each car and the last car needs to wait 75 minutes. 20 baht/hour and 200 baht a day rate is too much. Therefore, BMA City Council is approving only 4 million baht to handle the studies on smart car parking instead.

Furthermore, some irregularities have been found in the 1.89 billion baht budget for BRT projects (e.g. procurement instead of leasing).

Deputy BMA Governor Samart said they can cancel the bidding for smart car parks if the BMA Council refuses to approve the budget.

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From the Thai-language press: Purple Line budget cut – BRT may become a substitute – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Khao Hoon*, April 29, 2005

The Ministry of Finance is asking to scrap the Purple Line (Bangsue – Bang Yai) and then come up with [BRT](#) as a substitute. Even Premier Thaksin agrees with Minister Somkhid that the government budget is going higher and they are trying to control public debt within 30-40% of GDP.

MOF is asking the government to scrap seven unworthy lines and replace them with BRT since BRT is 70 times cheaper than a subway and 36 times cheaper than a Skytrain.

This kind of measure is due to the fact that each agency has come up with its own pet project without cooperating with one another so some unnecessary projects have appeared without consent from MOF. There are too few passengers for the Purple Line so BRT can be a substitute—especially the Rattanthibet section at a very wide road.

Only the lines with a high potential will receive budget approval and as well as the [Suvannabhum Airport Link](#). For MRTA, the worthy routes are

- 1) Orange Line (Bang Kapi – Bang Bumru)
- 2) Blue Ring (Hua Lamphong – Bang Khae, Bangsue – Tha Phra)
- 3) Purple Line Section 2 (Bangsue – Rat Boorana)

Even Premier Thaksin said he has to agree with MOF to trim the budget so as to keep the national debt in check (30-40% of GDP from 50% GDP limit) and they have to add more taxpayers' money to finance the budget while the foreign loans will focus on supplier credit (e.g. Siemens, etc.). The government also has to limit debt financing from 15% of the annual budget to 10% to keep the budget in check (2007-2008). This will force the government to make another study so as to come up with the highest potential lines.

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[Govt should finance sky train project with offshore loans](#) – *The Nation*, April 7, 2005

*The government should seek Bt70 billion in offshore loans to invest in new seven routes of the elevated electric train system in order to alleviate government's budget spending...*

NCR [points out on the forum](#) that they are not talking about the BTS Skytrain (which [the government is still preventing from expanding](#)), but citywide rail system routes the government is proposing.

[Mass Transit News main page](#)

# Celebratory gun firing – good idea or not?

December 29, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Celebratory](#)

[gun firing – good idea or not?](#)

– *Notes from the Technology Underground*, December 29, 2005

# “Bigfoot” in Malaysia?

December 29, 2005

Categories: Malaysia

[“Bigfoot” in Malaysia?](#) – *The Nation*, December  
29 , 2005

*Malaysia’s wildlife department said Thursday it would investigate  
claims that "Bigfoot" man-like beasts are roaming  
the jungles of southern Johor state, an official said Thursday...*

# Nationalism makes Laotian beer a success

December 30, 2005

Categories: Laos

[Nationalism](#)

[makes Laotian beer a success](#) – USA

Today, December 30, 2005

*Inspired by Czech brews, propelled by patriotism, Beerlao has snapped up 99% of its domestic market and some international awards while forging a rarity in this impoverished remnant of the communist world a distinctive brand name...*



# High-speed trains meet global demand

December 30, 2005

[High-speed](#)

[trains meet global demand](#) – *New*

*York Times*, December 30, 2005

Thanks to Danny for pointing this out...

*As countries like Italy and Spain open their pocketbooks  
for huge high-speed rail development, the U.S. remains on  
the sidelines...*

# Airbus gets order from Thailand

December 30, 2005

Categories: Airports and Airlines

[Airbus](#)

[gets order from Thailand](#) – *International*

*Herald Tribune*, December 30, 2005

*Airbus said Friday that it had received an order from Bangkok Airways for six A350 airliners, valued at about \$1 billion at list prices, as the airline adds routes to Europe...*

# Forget China, even Thailand beats India!

December 30, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Forget](#)

[China, even Thailand beats India!](#) – India

Daily, December 30, 2005

*Every Indian economist, businessman and other corporate-type has been spouting figures juxtaposing China and India, forgetting, according to figures, that India is more in league of Thailand and Indonesia in some of the metrics that will drive future economic growth...*

# New Year's Eve in Bangkok December 2005

December 31, 2005

Categories: New Year's Cartoons, New Year's Eve



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

New Year's

Eve in Bangkok – December 31, 2005

The Central World Plaza (formerly World Trade Center) is one of the main areas where people gather for the new year's eve countdown.

**Above and below:** Note the hundreds of digital camera and mobile phone screens capturing the festivities.

Over the years, crowds at major events in Thailand have grown larger and larger with little attempt to keep lanes of movement open or manage the flow of people in any way. This year, particularly in front of the Arnoma Hotel (just to the right in these photos) the crowds became panicky with pushing and shoving and personnel from the hotel preventing people from escaping the crush over the hotel wall. It seems unless some attention is paid to crowd control, someday there will likely be a crowd-related tragedy.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)





(Photo: Undated postcard)  
 "(Siam) A Groupe of the people"  
 – December 31, 2005



## Year of the dog – January 1, 2006

Front page new year's cartoon

from *Thai Rath* – It is a kind of play on words:

*Hello year of the dog (pi jor) pi = year; jor = dog*

*Jor. jangwa = Time to be a new rich person, entrepreneur*

*Jor. jackpot = Get money from a jackpot game from your luck*

*Jor. khao jua = Meet a girlfriend or your partner who has white skin and is beautiful*

*Jor. jer = Meet your bride or groom*

*Jor. jaoni = Someone will borrow or be your debt (you will have lots of money for people to borrow)*

*Jor. jebkhai = Recover from your sickness*

*Jor. pijor = The year of the dog is quite good for you*



**New**  
**Year's Eve newspaper cartoons – December**  
**31, 2005**

**Above:** Front page new year's cartoon from *Thai Rath*

– It is a kind of play on words:

*Bye bye chicken year*

*Kor. kai = bird flu*

*Kor. kradok = corruption*

*Kor. kinruab = only those that run the lottery get rich*

*Kor. kodkhi = oppress the freedom of the media*

*Kor. kaolao = fighting by insulting each other*

*Kor. kekzim = disheartened*

*Kor. kaojeng = exhausted*

*Kor. klaeng = the chicken annoys and should go away*

**Below:** Front page new year's cartoon from *Khao Sod*

– *Goodbye Chicken year*

Biggest personalities of the year from left to right: Benlo

(superstar Katalaeya McIntosh who led to people to believe that she was not pregnant–she was fat because she drank Benlo liquid medicine), Argoo (head of Grammy who tried to buy the *Bangkok Post* and *Matichon*), Sonthi, Thaksin





(Photo: Undated postcard)

Happy New Year from 2Bangkok.com

– December 31, 2005

In Thai it says *Laksanawong*, a classic work by Sunthorn  
Phu written nearly 200 years ago.





(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Central World Plaza –  
December 30, 2006

**Above and below:** One major area for Bangkok's New Year festivities is at Central World Plaza.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Lumpini Park –  
December 29, 2005  
More Lumpini photos from the past are [here](#).

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**2004:** [New Year's Eve in Bangkok](#)  
[2004](#) and [New](#)  
[Year's Eve 2004 – Bangkok Biz News – "Say goodbye](#)  
[to the cruel monkey year!"](#)  
**2003:** [Ratchaprasong](#)  
[intersection – December 31, 2003](#)

# Bangkok Subway News 2005

December 31, 2005

Categories: Subway

[Subway reinforces security measures with canine bomb expert squad](#) – TNA, January 30, 2006

*...They would be divided into four groups each day to separately inspect suspicious objects and detect any bomb at all subway stations and inside the underground train, Mr. Ronnachit told journalists here on Monday.*

*The canine bomb expert squad would be on service everyday from 06:00 a.m.-11:00 p.m., the daily service hours of the underground train, he said.*

*...Mr. Ronnachit said, however, that there had been no bomb threats against the subway service so far although subway security officers used to discover unattended briefcases which later turned to be forgetfully left by some passengers.*

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Metro Mall opens first at Sukhumvit subway station on September 2 with 22 shops – translated and summarized from *Thairath*, August 20, 2005

Metro Mall Development Co. Ltd. will have an unofficial opening of its subway shops on September 2, 2005 and official opening date on September 9, 2005. The commercial area will be 759 sq. meters comprising 22 shops of 7 types.

- 1) Convenience stores
- 2) Bank
- 3) IT-communication
- 4) Bookstore
- 5) Financial Institute
- 6) Food and drink
- 7) Other stores

Metro Mall is 95% done. There will be 11 Metro Malls: Klong Toei, Queen Sirikit Center, Sukhumvit, Phetburi, Phra Ram 9, Ratchadaphisek, Thailand Cultural Center, Lad Phrao, Phaholyothin, Chatuchak, Kamphaeng Phet–524 shops, 12,720 sq. meters.

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MRTA inviting foreign investors to set local assembly for subway rolling stock in five years – translated and summarized from *Thaipost*, August 23, 2005

MRTA is pushing the holding company hard during the negotiation with the Ministry of Finance and MOTC on August 22, 2005. MRTA said it takes three years to realize the Purple Line so MRTA is going to push the holding company as soon as possible—by the end of 2006—and MRTA is going to transfer the construction responsibility to the holding company. MRTA is going to rely on a JBIC loan while inviting the following firms to handle the local assembly of 300-400 subway rolling stocks.

- 1) CAF
- 2) Siemens
- 3) Alstom
- 4) Hitachi-Kawasaki-Kinki Sharyo-Nippon Sharyo

The decision for local assembly along with investment package will have to be done by the end of 2005 so as to get cheaper subway rolling stock with technology transfer. The initial phase would be the importation of 20 new subway rolling stocks.

MRTA would have to handle the following three lines with a total distance of 94 km.

- 1) Purple Line (43 km)
  - 1.1) Bang Yai Section (23 km)
  - 1.2) Rat Boorana Section (20 km)
- 2) Orange Line (24 km)
- 3) Blue Ring and Blue Subway (27 km)
  - 3.1) Blue Ring (13 km)
  - 3.2) Blue Line through Rattanakosin Island (14 km)

The further new line would be:

- 4) Yellow Line (32 km)

MRTA would ask for a new cabinet resolution to get the loan of 2.6 billion as the first batch of registered

capital for the holding company with the Ministry of Finance as the underwriter instead of MRTA. After setting up a new company with the Ministry of Finance, the registered capital will be 3 billion baht. It will take another three month to get stock from BMCL.

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BMCL planning to raise the subway ticket prices on October 1 – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, *Thairath*, *Dailynews*, August 23, 2005

BMCL said they have to raise the subway ticket prices to follow the contract with MRTA and to cover the operating cost even though the number of passenger has reached 200,000 a day.

Nevertheless, the discount of stored value tickets will be kept to keep the number of daily passengers high enough. Furthermore, the Metro Malls will be opened according to plan in this September.

Ch. Karnchang PCL also insists that they will sell part of their BMCL stocks to the government even though they are going to offer an IPO with no delay to get more funds to purchase five more sets of subway rolling stock from Siemens.

BMCL Subway has 190,000 average passengers a day. The number of passengers peaks at 200,000 only on Friday.

On the other hand, the average number of daily passengers on Monday to Thursday is about 100,000 passengers a day. Only when there is a special event at Queen Sirikit National Convention Center do passenger numbers reach 200,000 a day.

The daily ticket revenue is 3 million baht a day from the daily number of passenger or about 190,000-200,000 passengers a day. 220,000-230,000 passengers a day are needed to get the revenue of 3.5 million baht a day—still far away from the break even point of 4.5 million baht a day (400,000 passengers a day). The increasing number of passengers is due to the continuing fuel hike and should reach 200,000 passengers a day by the end of 2005.

The Metro Mall will become a reality in September 2005 while the telecom system to allow mobile phone communication within subway tunnels will be done by the end of 2005 after obtaining the temporary license from the National Telecommunication Relations Committee recently. However, the permanent license for mobile phone communication within subway tunnels will be issued later on.

BMCL is going to raise the ticket price to 14-36 baht on October 1, 2005 with a 30% discount for students. BMCL would still guarantee 20% discount from the new rates for stored value tickets as a promotion.

However, BMCL would readjust the ticket prices according to CPI (inflation rate) after January 1, 2006, to be effective on July 3, 2006.

BMCL has been filing for an IPO. SEC has asked if the purchase of 25% of BMCL stock by MRTA to set up a holding company would have detrimental effects on the company or not. BMCL has replied that the MRTA purchase would not delay the IPO offering or have any detrimental effects on BMCL. If SEC allows BMCL to offer an IPO before setting up the holding company this would allow BMCL to capitalize enough funds to buy five more sets of subway rolling stocks from Siemens or another company. It takes 30 months to get the five new sets. The holding company would have to pay at market prices for the other 75% of BMCL stocks—at least 3 baht/ stocks.

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Speeding up Purple Line/Subway news – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, August 21, 2005  
MRTA is going to speed up the Purple Line project to be done in three years after making a settlement with the local people of Taopoon while keeping the 15 baht fixed rate alive to push more people to use MRTA services.

The number of Subway passengers is increasing due to the continuing fuel hike:

	Then	Now
Daily number of passenger during weekdays:	160,000	190,000
Daily number of passenger during weekends:	130,000	160,000

The new ticket rate will be settled on September 30, 2005.

MRTA has added more security personnel and sniffer dogs to ensure safety from terrorism or other security hazards.

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Final study on the Red Line Commuter (Bangsue-Rangsit) – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, August 12, 2005

OTP told the press that the final study for the northern section of the red line commuter is to be done in September 2005 and submitted to SRT and start the bidding for the construction.

There are 5 stations for this Red line commuter

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

The price tag is 39.6 billion baht and there are two main contracts:

1) Bangsue Station which can be upgraded into Northern Bangkok Transportation Center once the Airport Link has been extended to Bangsue and Donmuang

2) Bangsue – Rangsit line on Hopewell Pillars – using 153 pillars from the total 554 Hopewell pillars.

Fortunately, this project is being built on SRT land with no slum dwellers so there will be no protest against the project. SRT only needs to remove hawkers on SRT land near Talad Donmuang and Donmuang station.

Note: There will be no stations at the following places:

1) Km 11 Railway Community

2) Wat Samian Naree

3) North Park

4) Lak Hok

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Blue Line moving to Yaowaraj instead of New Road – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, July 11, 2005

After taking serious consideration, MRTA found that it would be better if MRTA decides to go through Yaowaraj Road instead of New Road since more people know about Yaowaraj than New Road (from Saphan Lek Bon, Sam Yaek to Hualamphong) even though it is a longer route than going through New Road.

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Subway: After capitalization, BMCL will raise the ticket price to the full rate – translated and summarized from *Prachachat Thirakij*, July 10-13, 2005

The 6.5 billion baht capitalization of BMCL to purchase more sets from Siemens, investing in subsidiaries, and retail deals will be as follows:

1) BMCL approving the sale of 2.6 billion baht stocks at 1 baht par

2) 450 million stocks will be in the hand of BMCL workers

3) 1550 million stocks will be IPO

4) BMCL receiving the other 1 billion stocks from NPark—adding with the existing ones and BMCL would have 11.985 billion stocks in hand complying with SEC without raising new capitalization or borrowing from creditors.

5) BMCL is expecting 6.5 billion baht capitalization to purchase 5 new sets (2.5 billion baht), 300 million baht investment on the subsidiaries, 1.5 billion baht for current flow and the rest would be the signal and system rehab, new signal and system installation, and debt repayment.

BMCL is expecting a 15% passenger hike from the current 170,000-180,000 passengers a day to reach 200,000 passengers a day due to the condo/office boom along the subway line despite the initial hiccups and glitches due to the inadequate length of the system and TVMs.

After raising the capital in stock markets, BMCL said they are going to raise the ticket prices to the full rate of 14-36 baht once the discount expires after September 30, 2005. Nevertheless, BMCL would ensure that those who use the SmartCard would still get special discounts at the new rates.

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MRTA must pay 2.5 billion baht to BMCL for 25% of its stock – translated and summarized from *Prachachat Thirakij*, June 27 – 30, 2005

BMCL has set a deadline of July 25, 2005 for MRTA to purchase 25% of BMCL stock at 2.5 billion baht. If the payment is late, BMCL would ask MRTA to pay at the market price. MRTA is negotiating with KTB for a 2.5 billion baht loan.

The deadline is due to a filing schedule with SET at the end of the third quarter (September 2005).

Furthermore, BMCL has increased registered capital from 7.35 billion baht to 9.8 billion baht. After the MRTA purchase, the BMCL stock allocation for Ch. Karnchang will be down from 66% to 49%, but still a majority.

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Somkhit wooing JBIC to grant a soft loan for subway expansion – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, June 17, 2005

Minister Somkhit is flying to Japan from June 15-19, 2005 to negotiate with JBIC on soft loans to finance 30% of the mass transit expansion. 555.737 billion baht with 424.437 billion baht for civil works and 131.3



billion baht for rolling stock, financed 30% by budget, 40% by domestic loans and the other 30% foreign loan. The foreign loan would reduce the current account deficit.

JBIC has granted the soft loan to Thai governments since 1968 with the total amount of 2.010537 trillion baht. The latest JBIC loan for Thailand is a 70 billion baht loan for Suvarnabhumi Airport while the other 42 billion baht for the Suvarnabhumi Airport comes from taxpayers.

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Siemens and Alstom digging up more info before negotiating with BOI and FTI for local rolling stock assembly – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, June 16, 2005

ALSTHOM has come to MRTA to negotiate about the plan for local assembly in Thailand. However, this investment must be a long term investment—at least longer than the initial 5 years. So far, MRTA needs at least 300 subway carriages for the first 3 lines.

ALSTHOM needs more data about the potential of Thai industry to support local assembly as well as the future potential after the first 100 sets of subway have been assembled in the next 5 years. ALSTHOM has told MRTA about their business expansion in China such as the locomotive assembly, DMU and EMU assembly—at least 10,000 carriages.

MRTA told ALSTHOM that they eventually need more than 1000 subway carriages to serve the Red Line commuter, Suvarnabhumi Airport Link, Yellow LRT and even Pink LRT along Highway 304—all locally assembled to cut down the cost except the first batch of Blue line and Purple lines which have to be imported.

However, the demands for SRT section will be submitted to the cabinet in July 2005. Even though SRT has expressed to the public that they need at least 70 diesel electric locos with 2500 HP engines to cure the locomotive shortage and at least 100 set of DMUs and 1000 aircon carriages to cure the seat shortages. So far, the Imported version would cost MRTA about 1.5-1.6 million Euro/carriage while the local assembly would cost MRTA 1.15 million Euro/carriage – a sure sign of saving and local industry development from local assembly which Premier Thaksin strongly agrees with.

Siemens and CAF are waiting to negotiate with MRTA about this local assembly matter next week while collecting more data for the local partners.

MRTA also discusses with both BOI and FTI (the Federation of Thai Industries) about the local assembly scheme. FTI and BOI agree with MRTA about this scheme.

Therefore, the private investors should submit conditions for the local assembly. Only those who come up with the best deals would be awarded with attractive investment packages from BOI and local industry support from FTI if they decide to invest outside Bangkok.

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Subway financing: BMCL suggesting the government allow 20% private joint venture – translated and summarized from [\*Manager Daily\*](#), June 8, 2005

The MD of BMCL has suggested the government allow the private sector to make 20% participation while government invest 80%.

BTS advisors said the government should allow many private firms to participate in the 20% joint venture with the government while the government should coordinate all the private firms.

BMCL has raised the price of BMCL stock over 3 baht/stock after the hike of the land around the subway route—ready to offer an IPO in the stock market despite of the request from the government to sell back stock to MRTA at 1.50 baht/share. Even BTS refuses to sell their stocks to the government at any price. They think it is better to exchange stock between BTS and BMCL instead.

BTS is negotiating with BMCL to make a discount for joint tickets after installing a smart card system at BTS stations. However, BTS also has to negotiate with the smart card system producers about the right price tag for new smart card systems installation.

Only those who use single trip card will have to stick with magnetic cards while those who use stored value cards would have a chance to buy the new stored value smart card.

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Complaints about Bangsue park and ride – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, May 23, 2005

Those who live in Bangsue area have complained about the Bangsue park and ride that they cannot access it since there is no direct road from Bangsue area (Tao Poon, Prachanivet). Even the existing roads are too narrow to accommodate more vehicles.

One of the main reasons for the lack of direct access roads to Bangsue park and ride is that SRT (the landowner) refuses to allow the construction of roads or even automobile flyovers on SRT land. Not surprisingly, there are too few cars at the Bangsue park and ride.

Therefore, the SRT Board has been asked to approve the construction of direct access roads and automobile flyovers as soon as possible. Otherwise, that park and ride would do nothing to solve traffic problems. Road expansions around Bangsue Junction along with more terminals for BMTA buses would be a great boon. SRT and BMTA needs to terminate the monopoly of BMTA bus Number 52 so other bus lines could set permanent terminals at Bangsue in the same way they have done to Hualamphong, and make the plan to terminate intercity trains at Bangsue with much better level of success. The failure of terminating intercity trains at Bangsue is due to the narrow access roads and too few buses terminating at Bangsue.

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A tale of two newspapers: Subway passengers after the fare hike

**Subway passengers dropped 5% after the ticket hike** – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, June 8, 2005

After the subway ticket hike, the number of passengers dropped by only 5%. The passengers at QSNCC Station on June 5 shot up compared to other Sundays. On the other hand, the number of passengers on Monday, June 6, 2005 dropped by 5% to 170,000 passengers due to psychological effects after the ticket hike while revenue increased from 2.5 million baht/day to 3 million baht/day. The number of passengers should go back to the normal levels.

BMCL has already offered special discounts for those who are willing to pay at least 300 baht for stored value tickets. Only children under 12 and senior citizen over 65 are entitled to half-value discounts for both stored value cards and tokens.

**Many subway passengers even after the ticket hike** – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, June 6, 2005

BMCL is claiming that there are still many subway passengers even after ticket hike while the MRTA governor said they would reduce the ticket price back to the same old level if MRTA could buy at least 45% of BMCL stock.

After raising the price from 10-15 baht to 12-31 baht, BMCL said there are 136,000 passengers a day during the weekend–up from previous weekends where there were 110,000 passengers a day due to the Amazing Thailand Grand Sale at QSNCC.

The steady fuel hike would encourage more people to ride the subway as regular customers. However, MRTA Governor said they would lower the ticket price to 10-15 baht if MRTA could grab at least 45% of the subway stock.

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The new ticket price for subway effective from June 5-September 30, 2005 – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, June 2, 2005

Stored Value Card : 20% discount (10-25 baht)

Stored Value Card : 30% discount (8-22 baht)

Stored Value Card : 50% discount (6-16 baht)

Single trips : 12-31 baht

Single trips : 6-16 baht

This measure is to encourage more spending through smart cards. No need to stand on the long lines in front of TVMs. It is also encourages more passengers to ride the subway.

**Note:** Responses to the new Subway rates are [here](#)

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Subway passengers like the old rates – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, June 5, 2005

After turning to the 12-31 baht rate (with 10-25 baht discount) many Subway passengers said they prefer the good old rate of 10 baht for the first 3 stations and 15 baht for the rest. Such a rate hike would do no good to encourage the usage of the mass transit system.

Furthermore, the massive expansion of Subway networks to cover all parts of the Bangkok area as well as the suburbs are the first priority.

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Cabinet approving 2.45 billion baht to purchase 25% of BMCL stock – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, May 31, 2005

PM Office Speaker said the cabinet has approved 2.45 billion baht for MRTA to purchase 25% of BMCL stock at par from a domestic source without underwriting from MOF. The Budget Bureau better pay the creditors the principle and annual interest for MRTA. However Minister Somkid said the Budget Bureau would only pay the interests and MRTA should pay the principle.

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Enthusiasm for local assembly of subway rolling stock – translated and summarized from *Manager Online*, May 27, 2005

Minister Suriya said foreign investors who are going to invest in the subway have to set up local assembly for subway rolling stock using local materials and making technology transfers to Thai people. This measure is to satisfy local demand as well as solving the maintenance problems. The subway accident in January 2005 forced MRTA to ship the broken subway rolling stock to Germany for heavy repair.

During the visit to ALSTOM's subway rolling stock assembly line at Valensia (France) to see the new driverless heavy rail subway rolling stock used in both Singapore (Purple NE line – 75 bogies -> 25 sets) and Shanghai (Line 3 and Line 5), ALSTOM showed strong interest in the local assembly line. This could be compensation for their loss in the initial bidding to Siemens. The strong demand for both Skytrain-Subway (and even railway) rolling stock have made local assembly worth setting up.

However, Siemens and Bombardier are not to be outdone by ALSTOM, so they have shown strong interest in setting up a local assembly line to compete with ALSTOM. The winner would have to negotiate with BOI for a beneficial investment package.

However, MRTA know too well that it would take time to set up the local assembly line so they have to attach the provision to import rolling stock (75-90 bogies or 25-30 sets) before the local assembly line is ready to start production.

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Predicted demand for subway rolling stock – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, May 27, 2005  
MRTA has estimated that MRTA would need 2,700 carriages (900 sets) of subway rolling stock. The rolling stock for Bangsue-Bang Yai may need to be imported since it would take time to construct the local assembly line, but newer lines would get the locally assembled version.

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MRTA poll results on the extensions and new lines – translated and summarized from the MRTA website  
After sending 1,000,000 poll forms, MRTA has received 92,386 forms back with 90,902 properly filled out. After processing the forms, the results show the opinions of the public in regards to the subway system:

1. MRTA Subway project did solves traffic problems very well -> 84.76%
2. MRTA Subway project cut pollution very well -> 84.30%
3. MRTA Subway project facilitates journeys between home and office in a speedy manner -> 89.28%
4. MRTA Subway project has modestly cut travel expenses -> 47.37%
5. MRTA Subway should extend to the following suburbs after finishing the 3 main lines (5 projects)
  - 5.1) Bang Khae – Phutthamonthon Sai 4 – Salaya
  - 5.2) Bang Khae – Om Noy – Sam Phran
  - 5.3) Bangsue – Rangsit – Lum Lookka
6. All 5 projects (1 ring + 2 lines) must be completed as soon as possible.
7. Subway should have much cheaper ticket prices with monthly passes like BTS.
8. More Park and Ride and parking lots at every station with much better access roads for Bangsue parking lots and adequate space.
9. Much better efficiency required.
10. Much better security and accident prevention measures.
11. Minimize traffic problems during the constructions of extensions along with much better traffic management.
12. Better service with much clearer direction signs.

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MRTA speeds up BMCL stock purchasing to gain more power – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, May 16, 2005

MRTA is going to buy 25% of BMCL stock with a 2.5 billion baht credit line from KBank and SCB with the advice to MRTA that MRTA should never buy more than 50% of BMCL stock let alone 100% to prevent BMCL from becoming a state enterprise within MRTA. The fair price is at 1.52-3 baht since BMCL has purchased back the stock held by NPark at 1.52 baht/share. This purchase to gain control of BMCL has to be done before the third quarter of 2005 when BMCL has scheduled to offer an IPO. The price for BMCL stock in the market is expected at 4 baht/share, so the delay would force MRTA to purchase BMCL at market prices with complicated procedures instead of the 3 baht/stock as proposed by BMCL.

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Maew green lights 1st phase subway expansion – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, May 16, 2005  
Maew has given a green light to the MRTA proposal and is ready to push the 269 billion baht project in early



June 2005. No securitization needed. Financing is by loan (70%).

The Public Debt Office said the government is going to invest on megaprojects with 50-60% from loans, 15% from the annual budget, and 15% from state enterprise revenue.

Even if loan are the main financial measure, it would do little harm to public debt in the next five years (2006-2010). It would still be 30% of GDP with the assumption of 5% growth.

For MRTA projects, 70% would come from loan and only 30% from securitizations due to the high cost of Securitizations. They need high interest rates or high return to attract bond-stock holders with a stock-bond rate of at least AA level.

BOT Governor said the 1.65 trillion baht Investment on megaprojects is lower than the expected 2.35 trillion baht proposals thanks to the cuts on the redundancy. 300 billion baht investment a year does not harm the macroeconomic picture.

The government is trying to keep financial deficit at the level of no more than 2% of GDP. The investment in schools, hospitals and housing can use local materials to meet demand with not more than 50% importation. Of transport projects, MRTA projects are the most ready to get started with a total price tag from 2005-2012 of 269.527 billion baht

#### 1. Purple Line

1.1 Bangsue – Bang Yai – 46.962 billion baht

1.2 Bangsue – Rat Boorana – 64.874 billion baht

#### 2. Blue Ring

2.1 Hua Lamphong – Bang Khae – 49.902 billion baht

2.2 Bangsue – Tha Phra – 25.101 billion baht

3. Bang Kapi – Bang Bumru Orange Line – 82.688 billion baht

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269.5 billion baht MRTA investment plan – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, May 12, 2005  
After hearing the financial constrains on mass transit projects from MOF (Budget Bureau), MRTA has come up with a new investment plan of 269.527 billion baht over 8 years (2005-2012) with the highest investment in 2009 (70.909 billion baht) to be submitted to the cabinet:

#### Year – Budget

BE 2548 – 1.134 billion baht

BE 2549 – 23.222 billion baht

BE 2550 – 52.735 billion baht

BE 2551 – 66.821 billion baht

BE 2552 – 70.909 billion baht

BE 2553 – 38.160 billion baht

BE 2554 – 12.450 billion baht

BE 2555 – 4.096 billion baht

#### 2. Bang Sue – Ratboorana Purple line (111.836 billion baht)

BE 2548 – 0.087 billion baht

BE 2549 – 3.581 billion baht

BE 2550 – 14.564 billion baht

BE 2551 – 13.950 billion baht

BE 2552 – 16.257 billion baht

BE 2553 – 11.933 billion baht

BE 2554 – 3.143 billion baht

BE 2555 – 1.359 billion baht

#### 4. Bangsue – Tha Phra Blue Ring (25.101 billion baht)

BE 2548 – 0.049 billion baht

BE 2549 – 0.853 billion baht

BE 2550 – 3.252 billion baht

BE 2551 – 8.952 billion baht

BE 2552 – 9.237 billion baht

BE 2553 – 2.758 billion baht

The budget allocation for each line will be as follows:

#### 1. Bang Yai – Bangsue Purple line (46.962 billion baht)

BE 2548 – 0.834 billion baht

BE 2549 – 9.281 billion baht

BE 2550 – 7.631 billion baht

BE 2551 – 16.043 billion baht

BE 2552 – 13.173 billion baht

#### 3. Hua Lamphong – Bang Khae Blue Line (49.902 billion baht)

BE 2548 – 0.057 billion baht

BE 2549 – 4.196 billion baht

BE 2550 – 12.360 billion baht

BE 2551 – 7.591 billion baht

BE 2552 – 10.945 billion baht

BE 2553 – 8.080 billion baht

BE 2554 – 5.733 billion baht

BE 2555 – 0.940 billion baht

#### 5. Bang Kapi – Bang Bumru Orange Line (82.688 billion baht)

BE 2548 – 0.107 billion baht

BE 2549 – 5.311 billion baht

BE 2550 – 14.928 billion baht

BE 2551 – 20.285 billion baht

BE 2552 – 21.297 billion baht

BE 2553 – 15.389 billion baht

BE 2554 – 3.574 billion baht

BE 2555 – 1.797 billion baht

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[MRTA to buy back subway](#) – Bangkok Post, May 5, 2005

*The Mass Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand (MRTA) is poised to buy back a majority of shares in Bangkok Metro Plc (BMCL), the subway concessionaire, intent on completing the transaction ahead of the initial public offering of BMCL which is slated to take place in the third quarter of this year.*

*"MRTA has already by concession the right to buy 25% of BMCL shares at one baht par value, but we (MRTA) prefer to taking up to a 49% stake in the company so that we can have management control," said MRTA governor Prapat Chongsanguan...*

*Earlier, the Transport Ministry announced it would buy back the concession so that it could keep the fares of the rail system for any distance at no more than 20 baht, but the plan has yet to be finalised...*

Bangkok Subway news > [BangkokSubway.com](http://BangkokSubway.com)

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[Subway plans listing in Q3 to raise B3bn](#) – Bangkok Post, May 3, 2005

*Despite continuing pressure of a takeover by the government, Bangkok Metro Co Ltd (BMCL), the operator of the capital's subway train line, plans its initial public offering by the third quarter of this year to raise 3.05 billion baht...*

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[Lat Phrao, Pak Kret subway routes 'by 2009'](#) – The Nation, April 7, 2005

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[MASS TRANSIT EXTENSION: MRTA seeks wider govt role](#) – The Nation, April 18, 2005

*...Hence, the authority's Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning will ask the government to transfer authority over Bangkok's mass transit system routes to the Transport Ministry, which is better equipped to handle mega-projects, according to Prapat....*

*Apart from the Bang Sue-Bang Yai route, there has been no progress in the development of other lines.*

*Anat Arbhabhiroma, adviser to BTS, which runs the Skytrain, said the operator is ready and able to operate extended light-rail lines from On Nut to Samrong and Taksin Bridge to Petkasem.*

*BTS has asked the government to authorise it to operate the extended routes, but has yet to receive an answer. It is also ready to participate in any bidding for running the new lines. If the government wants to speed up construction, it should make a decision soon, Anat said...*

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[Subway plan includes new Chao Phya bridge](#) – The Nation, April 12, 2005

*...The bridge will be constructed next to Rama III Bridge, where the subway route will cross. Earlier, the MRTA proposed taking over the project and to shoulder all the costs, as well as designing the structure and handling its auction...*

*The bridge will be built parallel to Rama III Bridge, from Rattanathibet Road to Bang Yai on the Nonthaburi side. It will have six lanes, compared to Rama III Bridge's four.*

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(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Subway sign – February 15, 2005

The banner reads: *From today until March 31, 2005. Riding the subway – The first three stations are only 10 baht. More than 4 stations is only 15 baht. Students who have the stored value ticket: The first three stations are only 7 baht and 4 stations or more, it is only 11 baht. MRTA and Bangkok Metro Co Ltd.*



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

**Above:** Elevated walkway from the Sala Daeng Skytrain Station above Silom Road to the ‘Si Lom’ Subway Station pedestrian overpass in the distance.

MRTA closing Silom Road from 10pm to 5am for viaduct construction – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, September 16, 2004

MRTA says they have to close two traffic lanes for viaduct construction from 10pm to 5am until November 2004 to be ready for the opening on December 5, 2004. This viaduct will connect Si Lom Subway Station and Saladaeng Skytrain Station together by going along the Skytrain pillars. The contractor who is dealing with the construction of viaduct along with the steel pillars and roofs covering the via duct is PreBuild PCL. For the case of Sukhumvit Subway Station and Asok Skytrain Station, MRTA is installing more escalators to enable subway passenger to reach the Skytrain Station without having to climb. This will be done in October 2004

**Note:** The hot discussion about the viaduct construction is [here](#).

MRTA Governor asking for the investment on the new lines and extensions – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, March 17, 2005

MRTA governor is asking for funding for the following new lines and extensions:

- 1) Pink line – Pakkret – Suwinthawongse (26.7 km – 13 elevated stations – 17.354 billion baht)
  - 2) Yellow line – underground section (9.5 km – 8 stations – 25.276 billion baht)
  - 3) Yellow line – elevated section – Bang Kapi – Samrong (22.2 km 12 stations – 30.584 billion baht)
  - 4) Orange line extension – Bang Kapi – Minburi (9.4 km – 5 elevated stations – 17.173 billion baht)
- MRTA will submit the plan to OTP before delivering to the cabinet. The elevated section of the Yellow line and Pink line will be constructed first as the way to connect with Suvannabhumi Airport Link and the extension of the Airport Link.

MRTA also said that the MRTA Board has just approved a 300 million baht budget to speed up existing projects (Purple line, Orange line and Blue Ring with 260 billion baht price tag) to be done on schedule with the least burden to the government budget.

Commentary: Even the Governor of Ayutthaya is asking MRTA to implement a new line from Bangsue to Ayutthaya (64 km) since the existing SRT commuter lines between Bangkok and Ayutthaya have reached capacity and the defunct sprinter services have failed to relieve commuter passengers' burden due to conflicts in the schedule for cargo trains and passenger trains—despite of the 3rd track from Rangsit to Ban Phachi.

Updated list of stations along the MRTA Purple line – translated and summarized from *Thairath*, March 16, 2005

AEC is handling the studies and design of the stations along the Purple line and readjusting the positions of those stations according to public request.

- 1) Tao Poon
- 2) Bangson
- 3) Wong Sawang
- 4) Ministry of Public Health
- 5) Rewadee
- 6) Nonthaburi Provincial Hall
- 7) Rattana Thibet
- 8) Sri Porn Sawan
- 9) Phra Nanklao bridge
- 10) Tha It
- 11) Bang Ploo
- 12) Bang Yai Intersection
- 13) Bang Yai Market
- 14) Bang Phai Canal

The stations omitted due to lack of demand: Klong Ban Phraek, Sai Mah, and Bang Rak Yai

MRTA board hiring a consultant to handle extensions – commercial deal with BMCL and How Come approved – translated and summarized from *Thaipost*, February 17, 2005

MRTA Board are going to hire a Project Management Consultant (PMC) to handle the detailed designs as well as the project admin with a price tag of 2.8 billion baht (1.7 billion baht for Project Management Consultancy and 1.1 billion baht for those who handle detailed design). The Project Management Consultant can be joint venture lead by a Thai consultant firm and they have to complete the project in 8 months. MRTA Board of Directors has approved the commercial with BMCL with 7% revenue sharing of the direct

revenue of BMCL and 25-35% revenue sharing with Traid Networks and How Come.  
More on the [How Come deal](#)

After ticket price reduction subway passengers boosted by 25% – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, January 7, 2005

After introducing the new ticket price reduction on January 7 (10 baht for first 3 stations and 15 baht for the rest for adult rate and the 7 baht for the first 3 stations and 11 baht for the rest for children+students), the number of passengers has been boosted by 25%—especially during rush hour (7:30am-10:00am and 4:00pm-8:00pm). Furthermore, MRTA governor said he feels confident that the number of passengers will be boosted by at least 50%.

If the number of passenger is been boosted more than 50%, MRTA would not need pay compensation to BMCL since the increasing ticket revenue would help out and MRTA would consider extending the special rates.

MRTA will also ask media to spread more news about the special discount so as to increase the number of passengers to match the target.

Thai netters' lukewarm response to the new discount of subway tickets is [here](#).



# Skytrain News 2006

December 31, 2005

Categories: Skytrain

[BMA SkyTrain plan a PR stunt, says TRT councilor](#) – IHT, 03 May 2006

*The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration's plan to finance the extension of the BTS SkyTrain, announced earlier this week by Governor Apirak Kosayodhin, is a publicity stunt designed to win votes for the Democrats in the July 23 city council elections, Thai Rak Thai councilor Chaiwut Jariyavirojsakul said yesterday...*

[Skytrain extension work to start in '07](#) – The Nation, April 29, 2006

[Apirak's plan for skytrain under fire](#) – Bangkok Post, April 27, 2006

*Bangkok Governor Apirak Kosayodhin's decision to switch the budget for the 16 megaprojects, stalled following graft charges, to the skytrain route extension came under political fire yesterday. Visut Samretwanich, Thai Rak Thai councillor for Lat Krabang district, claimed the switch was aimed at helping Democrat candidates running in the district council election on April 30...*

*Chaiwut Jariyavirojsakul, Thai Rak Thai councillor for Bang Kapi, said the decision to suspend the 16 flyover projects was detrimental to public well-being and he would gather 50,000 signatures to call for Mr Apirak's impeachment.*

*Meanwhile, Thai Rak Thai deputy leader Pokin Polakul said he will file a libel suit against Democrat deputy leader Alongkorn Ponlabutr tomorrow after he accused him of being involved in the tainted 6.7 billion baht project to procure 315 fire trucks and accessories for the city...*

Skytrain routes! – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, April 24, 2006

## 1) Taksin Extension Phase 2 (Taksin extension – Phetkasem -> 4.5 km)

- 1.1) Rajpruek
- 1.2) Ratchadaphisek (near Talad Ploo Station)
- 1.3) Wuthakart
- 1.4) Phetkasem

## 2) Onnut – Bearing (Sukhumvit 107 – Border Pole -> 5.2 km)

- 2.1) Sukhumvit 101
- 2.2) Udomsuk (Sukhumvit 103)
- 2.3) Meteorology Dept (Bang Na)
- 2.4) Bearing (Sukhumvit 107 – Border Pole)

## 3) Mochit-Kasetsart University (5 km)

- 3.1) TMB Bank
- 3.2) Satee Woranat (Phaholyothin 24)
- 3.3) Major Ratchayothin
- 3.4) Senanikhom
- 3.5) Kasetsart University



(Source: *Matichon*)

The total budget for Onnut – Samrong is 9 billion baht (6 billion baht for construction and the other 3 billion for signal and system) to be done in 3 years.

[BMA to foot bill for line extension](#) – The Nation, April 24, 2006

*The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) will spend Bt9 billion of its own money to build the 5.2-kilometre extension of the Skytrain from Onnuj to Bang Na...*

*Deputy Bangkok Governor Panich Vikitsret said the extension had been delayed for a long time because of a*

decision in 2000 by the Cabinet to require the project to be 100-per-cent funded by the private sector. The BMA had petitioned the government to have the resolution changed to allow the BMA to join in the investment.

*"It would be better for the BMA to invest in the construction of the 5.2km extension from Onnuj to Sukhumvit Soi 107, which is part of the 8.9km Onnuj-Samrong route project," Panich said...*

BTS dilemma – Deutsche Bank selling debt to New World – Khiri lobbying Pheng for Phaholyothin Extension – Pheng refusing to meet with Khiree – translated and summarized from *Post Today*, January 18, 2006

Deutsche Bank has promptly sold US\$850 million of debt purchased from KfW to 4-5 Asian investors – without any local Thai investors to get selling fees and the New World group and Samsung Life Insurance (Thailand) are the main buyers since Samsung Life and New World Group of Hong Kong are alliances of Mr. Khiree.

SCB has sold BTS shares to ADB subsidiary at 6 billion baht while IFCT (now a part of TMB) has sold BTS stocks to American Engineering Firm at 2.680 billion while KfW has sold the stock at 70-72% of the nominated stock price. Much higher than 50% of the nominal stock prices offered by Minister Suriya. Mr. Super K said he still work with Mr. Khiree despite of the threat of litigation. The upcoming meeting on January 18 would be the decision to force Mr. Super K. to resign as the Chairman of BTS board not the dismissal of the entire BTS board.

Mr. Prakrit Pratheepasen (member of the BTS board) said he and Mr. Saranthorn Chutima (the assistant manager of the marketing department from SCB) would have to resign since the new creditor has already nominated the new man to replace him and his friend.

The 39 billion baht outstanding debt of BTS consists of 33 billion baht in principle and 6.3 billion baht interest. The shareholders said they want to write off 8.5 billion baht in debt–2.2 billion baht in principle and outstanding interest of 6.3 billion baht while converting 12 billion baht debt into assets.

Mr. Khiri and BTS shareholders are trying to lobby with Minister Pheng to deal with the debts and get the right to handle the

- 1) Phaholyothin extension
- 2) Phran Nok extension
- 3) Samrong-Paknam extension
- 4) Taksin extension phase 2

However, Minister Pheng refuses to meet them since he did not want to interfere in the internal affairs unless it is at his own advantage. Only after the final settlement of BTS debts between the shareholders, creditors, BTS Board and Mr. Khiree.

Furthermore, Minister Pheng would like to call a free bid which he may not invite BTSC and BMCL to get into the bidding since both have already have the cutting edges due to ready depots and existing rolling stocks. MOTC would invite BTS and BMCL only after they accept the new TOR which will be approved on January 26, 2006.

**Note:** It seems to me that Minister Pheng would not allow BTS to run Phaholyothin extension unless Mr. Khiree agrees to surrender BTS stock to Shin Corp and the leader's cronies at bargain prices.

This is due to the fact that Phaholyothin Extension would hurt the sale of Shinnicha Villages along the Red Line Commuter. Without Phaholyothin extension, people would force people who live along Phaholyothin to migrate to live at the Red Line commuter, pleasing Shinnicha (real estate arm of Shin Corp). Phaholyothin extension in Shin Corp Portfolio would definitely double the assets without doubt.

The [Taksin extension](#) (both phase 1-2) would hurt Blue Ring while Samrong-Paknam extension would hurt the Yellow LRT.

Furthermore, Phran Nok extension through Rattanakosin Island is so lucrative that Transport Minister Pheng would not approve the construction of this line unless the leader and his cronies have obtained this line for themselves. However, the selling of the BTS debt at 70-72% of the price has shocked Transport Minister Pheng and the TRT cronies since they have to pay a much higher price to get BTS debts before converting debt into equity.

Khiree uniting with New World and Samsung Life to pressure Super K out as BTS board chairman – translated and summarized from *Bangkok Biznews*, January 19, 2006

Super K said the upcoming special meeting session of shareholders on February 16 is due to the request from the main shareholders (Thanayong, New World, Samsung Life) to overturn the old debt restructure plan and make a major change on the BTS board. Super K. agrees on the change of debt restructure plan even though the main shareholders refuse to elaborate the details of the new plan.



For the change of the BTS Board, Super K said he did call a meeting on December 8, 2005 to all 16 members of the BTS board, but he has only three—not enough for a quorum. This incident has outraged Mr. Khiree so he has filed a case against Super K for neglect of duty in the civil court. The hearing would be held at civil court on January 19, 2006.

However, Super K told the press that Khiree is scheming to kick him out of the position of BTS board chairman with three reasons, including:

- 1) Mr. Khiree and company have never collateralized the debts through registration as asked by Super K due to the request from the creditors.
- 2) The registrar has not make any registration on the stock transfer from Thanayong to ADM (subsidiary of ADB) and ADM has sent the letter to the BTS board that ADM has transferred the stocks to CTF, subsidiary of New World group.
- 3) BTS has not paid the outstanding fees to Mr. Bill Repper, the financial adviser approved by the BTS Board.

It would be very regretful that there is no progress on debt restructure even though the BTS board has worked so hard and spent lots of time and energy to deal with the matter. Therefore, Super K. said Mr. Khiree should listen and follow the advice from the BTS board to save the company from worsening troubles.

Super K refuses to resign until he receives the resolution from shareholders to sack him. Super K has pointed out that the actual share holding allocation for Thanayong is just 8.8%, not 28.21% (from the initial 50%) as claimed by Mr. Khiree since Mr. Khiree has not registered the transfer of capital to the registrar. On the other hand, New World Group has held 26.26% of stock while ADM (ADB subsidiary) has held 23.03% of stock after purchasing the stock from Credit First Boston (Hong Kong). ITD is going to sell all the remaining stocks to ADM.

Mr. Khiree said he could not accept the old debt restructure plan of Super K and BTS board since it deters BTS from offering an IPO and paying the dividend to shareholders who has held the stocks for about 10 years. Therefore, Mr. Suiper had to step down from BTS board Chairman if the resolution from the upcoming special meeting session of shareholders on February 16 said Mr. Super K. has to resign.

The debt restructure plan of BTS Board is to clear 40-50 billion baht of debt to 27 billion baht—all to be paid in 18 years.

- 1) Haircut the outstanding interest up to the end of 2004 by 6.3 billion baht
- 2) 2.2 billion baht cutting of principle
- 3) Converting 4.3 billion baht of debt into equity

All the revenue is to be paid off in debt. No dividend payment, so the main shareholders refuse to accept this plan. Therefore, the BTS board are asking to shorten the debt payment period from 18 years to 13 years which the shareholders cannot accept either since it requires higher principle payment. Therefore, BTSC shareholders said they cannot accept the BTS board debt restructure plan by Super K—and Super K points out the debt delinquency for Mr. Khiree and shareholders. So, the main shareholders have no choice but to force Super K to step down as the chairman of BTS board by voting.

Mr. Khiree also discusses with members of the BTS board such as Mr. Phanat Simasathian and Siwawongse Jankhasiri about this new debt restructure plan and the change of BTS board chairman. Both members of the BTS Board warned Mr. Khiree that he and his friends would have to take full responsibility if the new plan from Mr. Khiree failed even though they are very reluctant to sack Super K. due to their respect for him. However Mr. Khiree has to sack Super K despite his veneration since Mr. Khiree has no choice due to the stubbornness of Super K.

The new debt restructure would take 12 months to be complete due the cooperation of the new creditors and shareholder, but shareholders would have to appoint the new chairman of the BTS board and participate in the debt restructure plan to ensure that the main shareholders could offer IPO and pay the dividend along with the major extensions.

The 451.5 million US dollar debt held by KfW has been officially transferred to Deutsche Bank AG (LONDON) and Fifth Avenue Capital group (New York).

The 80 million US dollar debt held by IFC has been transferred to Fifth Avenue Capital group (New York).

The 1.5 billion baht of IFCT (now TMB) has already transferred to Deutsche Bank AG (London).

SCB still holds 3.2 billion baht of BTS debt while Thanachart Asset Management Co. Ltd. has held 2.1 billion baht of BTS debt TAMC has held 3.85 billion baht of debt and SICCO has held 0.5 billion baht of debt without official announcement of debt transfers yet.

Mr. Khiree has responded to the accusation that Thanayong has held 8.8% of stocks that he can make a transfer of stock to pay off the debt to creditors such as New World and Credit First Boston (Hong Kong) if he wants to but only after the stock price assessment. The debt restructure has caused the delays on stock

transfer to the creditors. Furthermore Thanayong could pay back the creditors in cash instead of stocks in the future. Furthermore, Thyanyong and New World Group are in strategic alliance so the stocks transfer is not a problem after all, so long that Thanayong is the nominal major shareholders and it is not the business of anyone to ask him to do anything they please.

Internal rift within BTS – Khiri vs. Kasem – translated and summarized from *Prachachart Thurakij*, January 12-15, 2006

There are internal conflicts between Mr. Khiri Kanchanaphak (the owner of BTS) and Mr. Kasem jatikawanit (the Head of BTS Board) on many issues such as

- 1) The ways to run the company
- 2) The selling of BTS stock to the government – Mr. Khiri is willing to sell BTS stock at 5 baht/share – well below the par price of 10 baht/share as the way to get a long term deal with the connection for other routes. This is instead of 15 baht/share according Mr. Kasem's plan to extract the most from the government's coffer. This plan is due to the fact that Mr. Kasem is a staunch supporter of the Democrats, so animosity toward the TRT government is not a surprise at all.
- 3) The debt restructure plans. The old plan proposed by Mr. Khiri has folded since the creditors refuse to approve the debt restructure deal despite the approval from both shareholders and the BTS Board. Therefore, creditors have sold debts of BTS to the following companies as the sign of disapproval of the BTS debt restructure plan:

- 3.1) SCB sold 6 billion baht of BTS debts to a subsidiary of ADB
- 3.2) KfW sold 34 billion baht of BTS debts to Deutsche Bank
- 3.3) IFCT has sold 2.68 billion baht of BTS debts to contractors from the U.S.

This effectively forces BTS to go back to square one for debt restructure.

Mr. Khiri is satisfied with the new creditors who purchase BTS debt, but Mr. Kasem is urging Mr. Khiri to come up with a new debt restructure plan so as to offer an IPO for the Samrong extension which needs a 5-6 billion baht investment.

The current debts of BTS are 39 billion baht–33 billion baht in principle and 6.3 billion baht in outstanding interest.

30% of BTS debt is in baht denomination while the other 70% is in US dollar denomination.

The new plan is to:

- 1) Write off the debt by 8.5 billion baht – 6.3 billion baht in outstanding interest and 2.2 billion baht in principle.
- 2) Convert 4.3 billion baht debts into equity.
- 3) Convert 12 billion baht debt into bonds redeemable in 18 years.
- 4) The rest of the debts (14 billion baht) will be paid all in 18 years instead of 12 years.

This would compel BTS to cut down the par price of the share from 10 baht/share to 5 baht/share and the allocation of stocks will be as follows:

- 1) BTS would own 42.1% instead of 58% of shares
- 2) The creditors with insured equity would own 29.8% of shares
- 3) The creditor without insured equity would own 2.8% of shares
- 4) The rest would be an IPO

Mr. Khiree said he is going to handle the new debt restructure plan by himself. It would take 8 months to finish the new debt restructure plan since BTS gets 8-9 million baht revenue per day.

Note: TRT could exploit the conflicts between Mr. Khiree and Mr. Kasem (Super K), but the government has not done so since the plan to obstruct the [Taksin extension](#) backfired on the government.

[SKYTRAIN AND SUBWAY: Mend mass transit first, then expand](#) – *The Nation*, January 11, 2006

*The government should first solve its problems with existing Skytrain and subway operators before opening bids for the construction of new lines, said a source from the Transport Ministry...*

[Foreign firms take control of Thai train operator](#) – AFP, December 30, 2005

*Hong Kong's New World group and Samsung Life Insurance of Korea have acquired a majority stake in one of the Thai capital's two mass transit operators, a press report says.*

*The new partners now control more than 50 per cent of BTS, which operates two Skytrain elevated rail routes in central Bangkok...*

Land expropriation for Pinklao underground extension to Phrannok – translated and summarized from *Thairath*, January 4, 2006

*Thairath* correspondents said that BMA has hired the consultant to handle the 7.7-km Pinklao underground

extension of BTS from National Stadium to Phrannok so they can submit the study results to the Committee for Conserving and Developing Rattakosin Island in January 2006 to get approval for the underground section to pass through Rattanakosin island with a price tag of 26.285 billion baht. The track would go underground in front of Wat Chaimonkhon, passing Rama 1 Road, Chakkaraphatdiphongse Road, Lan Luang Road, Ratchadamnoen Avenue, Thonburi Railway Station, and Issaraphab Road before ending up at Phran Nok.

There will be five stations for this Pinklao extension:

- 1) **Kasatsuek** – underground station at Bumrung Muang in front of Hua Chiaw Hospital with a gate in front of Sino-Thai Medical Center, Bangkok General Hospital, behind Europa Tower and footpaths before reaching Yotse Lane.
- 2) **Phan Fah Leelart** – under Ratchadamnoen Avenue before reaching Democracy Monument with a gate in front of Thewet Insurance, Bank Thai, Din So Road, and Internal Revenue Department – Bangkok Area 1.
- 3) **Sanam Luang** – under Ratchadamnoen Kal Avenue in front of Government Lottery Office, with a gate in front of the Government Lottery Office, Sanam Luang, WWI Monument, and Khok Wua intersection near the October 14 Monument.
- 4) **Bangkok Noy** – under Arun Amarin Road between Siriraj Hospital and Arun Amarin Bridge with a gate in front of Siriraj Hospital (but Wat Amarinthararam would be closer) and the Railway Market near Thonburi Station.
- 5) **Yaek Fai Chai** -under Phra Nok Road, 600 meters from Phran Nok Intersection and near the upcoming road from Phran Nok to Phutthamonthon Sai 4 with a gate at Charansanitwongse 31 and Charansanitwongse 31/1. This station is to interchange with the Blue Ring.

BMA would allocate 2 billion baht for land expropriation with the details as follows:

1. Rama I Road – in front of Wat Chai Mongkhon – 337 Sq. Wah, 0.101 billion baht
2. Kasatsuek Station – 1.759 sq. wah 0.593 billion baht
3. Phanfah Leelart Station – 259 sq. wah – 0.067 billion baht
4. Sanam Luang Station – 810 sq. wah, 0.210 billion baht
5. Bangkok Noy Station – 5022 sq. wah 0.593 billion baht
6. Phran Nok Station – 1719 sq. wah, 1.719 billion baht

This line is to deal with traffic jam on Ratchadamnoen Avenue which is already at 16,097 cars/day/traffic lane (741 cars/hour/traffic lane) and Pinklao Bridge which is already saturated as with 18,796 cars/day/traffic lane.

**Notes:** The extension would definitely be very popular and the central government would be in serious trouble if they obstruct this extension, because it would boost more passengers who ride train to Namtok and Kanchanaburi and those who want to go to Sanam Luang.

BMA would have to make serious consideration about feeder buses and vans to pick up those who live along Pinklao Road up to the Southern Bus Terminal to feed into the Pinklao extension.

# Skytrain News 2005

December 31, 2005

Categories: Skytrain

Skytrain breaks 500,000 passengers in a day barrier – translated and summarized from *Thairath*, December 14, 2005

BTS told the press on December 13 that it has successfully broken the 500,000 passengers a day barrier on December 9, 2005. The max number of passengers was 537,328 on December 9, 2005, dwarfing the previous record of 476,191 passengers on November 16, 2005 (Loy Krathong).

The top 5 stations on December 9, 2005:

- 1) Siam Station
- 2) Onnut
- 3) Mochit
- 4) Victory Monument
- 5) Saladaeng station

The reasons for the surge of passengers:

- 1) Long weekend
- 2) Siam Paragon opening
- 3) The Friday talk of Khun Sondhi at Lumpini Park

BTS has carried 562,290,989 passengers from December 5, 1999 to December 5, 2005. The average number of passengers is 425,000 a day on weekdays, up from the first year of services by 204%. Even just this year (January 1, 2005 – December 5, 2005), there are already 116,919,617 passengers—up by 9.06% from the same period the previous year.

The steady growth of the number of passengers can be described as follows:

- 1) Growth of passengers (9.65% during weekdays, 8.96% during the weekends) due to the surge of regular passengers—mostly from working adults.
- 2) Subway as a feeder for BTS—the number of passengers who make a change at Asok Station is now at 24,001 passengers a day, up from the last year by 37.47% while the number of passengers at Onnut terminal is now 38,050 a day, up from the previous year by 10.54%.

There are 10,000 passenger trips between Onnut and Asok station in one day—the most frequent trip of all.

- 3) The continuing fuel hike has compelled many passengers to ride BTS.
- 4) The growth of residential buildings, offices, and shopping malls along BTS.

On the forum: [Taksin Extension – the next hurdle for BMA is BTS?](#) – *Prachachart Thurakij*, December 12-14, 2005

BTS boasts increasing passengers – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, December 7, 2005

Dr Anat Abhabhiorom said that after the six year anniversary on December 5, 2005, the number of passengers is climbing from an average 150,000 passengers a day to an average 400,000-420,000 passengers a day with 8-9 million baht a day revenue. After subtracting the daily expenses of 3 million baht, BTS has net revenue of 5-6 million baht a day to pay back the loan and debts.

So far, December 2 has 465,000 passengers a day—very high indeed even though not as many as Loy Krathong Day which has the daily number of passengers at 467,000. So far, the number of passengers is growing by 8-9%, thanks to the continuing fuel hike and the increasing number of regular customers from the building and shops along the routes. It is an expectation that the average number of passengers would reach 430,000 a day and the peak of each week would be on Friday and festival days—with an expected number of passengers of nearly 500,000 due to the opening of Siam Paragon on December 9, 2005 and the upcoming extension across Chao Phraya to Taksin Road (Wongwian Yai) by the end of 2006 which would add even more passengers.

The concession would end in the next 24-25 years. The concession has allowed BTS to raise the retail ticket price from 10-40 baht to 15-45 baht (the maximum). However, BTS has decided to freeze the ticket price for the time being. BTS is going to draft a plan before signing the contract with BMA for the Taksin extension—which asks BTS to add more sets of rolling stock (5 sets is the possible max number) to meet the steadily climbing demands.

Subway-Skytrain passenger numbers still steadily rising – translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, October 23-26, 2005

The average number of subway passenger on weekdays: 195,000 passengers a day, up from 190,000 passengers a day in the previous year

The average number of Subway passenger on weekends: 170,000 passengers a day

The average revenue: 3.5 million baht

Now, 60% of passengers use stored value cards, compared to 40% in previous years.

The target of 200,000 subway passengers a day will be reached in 2006.

The current rate for token – 14-36 baht

The current rate of stored value card – 12-31 baht

The student discount card – 10-25 baht

Children and senior citizens – 7-18 baht

This rate will be effective until July 2, 2006. The new rate will be declared in January, 2006 to be effective in July 3, 2006.

BTS daily passengers has been nearly 400,000 passengers a day.

The average number of Skytrain passengers on Monday-Thursday: 400,000 passengers a day.

The average number of Skytrain passengers on Friday: 450,000 passengers a day.

The average number of Skytrain passengers on Saturday: 300,000 passengers a day.

The average number of Skytrain passengers on Sunday: 200,000 passengers a day.

BTS installs new version of TVMs – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, October 18, 2005

BTSC has installed new versions of TVMs (the Integrated Ticketing Machines) that accept both coins and banknotes for single trips–up to 10 single trips.

Coins: 5 baht, 10 baht

Banknotes: 20 baht, 50 baht, 100 baht

These TVMs would give change as 5 baht and 10 baht coins and will operate from 6am to midnight.

These TVMs have been installed in the following stations since October 15, 2005

- 1) Chitlom
- 2) Asok
- 3) Phromphongse
- 4) Victory Monument
- 5) Saladaeng

Smart Card System for BTS – translated and summarized from *Thairath* and *Manager*, September 19, 2005

BTS has chosen Singapore Technology to install the smart card system with a price tag of 185 million baht.

Singapore Technology would install the smart card system at Asoke and Mochit first and then Singapore

Technology would train BTS workers to handle the installation of smart card system at the other stations.

They expect the smart card system installation to be done in August 2006. There will be 2 holes in the smart card readers, one for the single ticket and the other for stored value ticket and 30-day pass.

BTS is going to negotiate with BMA and MTA for the joint ticket system in many relating issues such as revenue sharing to encourage more to use the mass transit system.

Note: The Smart card TVMs have shown up at Asoke, Mochit and Victory Monument even though they are not operating yet.

Thonburi people say "yes" to BTS extension, "no" to Taksin Center and BTS route modification – translated and summarized from [Komchadluek](#), [Manager Daily](#), [Dailynews](#), [Thairath](#), August 8, 2005

At the public hearing at Rajabhat University of Ban Somdej Chaophraya at 2pm on August 7, 2005, about 1100 local people attended. The local people say 'no' to Taksin Center since it requires extensive land expropriation (175 rai, 1703 families, and 5.3 billion baht) to remove many historical communities around the area.

The local Thonburi people feel convinced that Taksin Center would not ameliorate the traffic jam in the area, it only worsens traffic jams due to the giant plaza allowing the rich elite to exploit the poorer local people.

OTP also refuses to come and talk with local people at all during this public hearing. They just send the representatives from six consultants participating in that project instead.

Furthermore, the local people prefer not to modify the BTS route to be much closer to Taksin Center since it requires another land expropriation which local people never want.

The consultant told the angry local people that this project has been under extensive study and the

government has a clear policy to build it anyway. This Taksin Center will be like Mochit 2 connecting the

Red Line commuter to Mahachai with BTSC Skytrain and MRTA Subway along with the intercity bus terminal. The consultant said they will bring the local people's viewpoints to OTP so as to rectify this wrong by the end of this year. The local people said they will be back on August 10 to see if OTP is listening to the people at all.

Premier Thaksin asking Germany about monorails – translated and summarized from *Manager*, August 3, 2005

Premier Thaksin has invited the outgoing German Ambassador (Herrn. Fon Steschow) to talk with him about the monorail projects after German firms installed systems for China and Malaysia. This type of monorail can be constructed faster than the BTS Skytrain and at cheaper prices.

The outgoing German ambassador told Premier Thaksin that Germany has the best monorail system in the world which has been installed to Shanghai (China) and KL (Malaysia). He will do his best to get good government connections in Berlin to assist Thailand.

Note: The monorail installed in Shanghai is actually MAGLEV while the KL Monorail was done by a Malay firm. It might be that the Manager correspondents have mixed up the facts and should actually have cited the Shanghai Metro and KLIA Express (both done by Siemens but not monorails).

Fuel hikes adding more Skytrain passengers – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, July 8, 2005

After a series of fuel hikes, the number of passengers has shot up from 380,000 a day to about 400,000 a day. The peak was on Loy Krathong Day in 2004 when there was about 450,000 passengers a day.

This has compelled BTSC to run more sets of rolling stock—from 31 sets to 33 sets a day so as to shorten the interval during the rush hour from 2 minutes, 40 seconds to 2 minutes, 30 seconds.

Land expropriation for the Pinklao extension of the Skytrain – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, July 8, 2005 and *Matichon*, July 8, 2005

The seminar on the Pinklao extension of the Skytrain in Krasatsuek 2 Room, the Twin Tower Hotel at 10:30am on July 7, 2005 had 400 attendants. The results were:

- 1) A 7.7 km Subway line with 5 stations since it must pass through Rattanakosin Island.
- 2) 20-meter deep tunnel with a price tag of 24.893 billion baht. BMA is investing 19.856 billion baht for the construction while BTSC would invest 5.037 billion baht for the new sets of rolling stocks and signals. This is 3-4 times expensive than the elevated version. The 20-meter depth tunnel is to avoid hitting the support pillars of the buildings which are 4-meter deep.
- 3) This line requires the land expropriation of 100 houses around Hua Chiaw Hospital and at Fai Chai Intersection] so as to construct the station gates and install ventilators.
- 4) The other 150 families living along this route would be under temporary interruption
- 5) After opening this route, it will generate the additional 140,000 passengers a day from the existing 400,000 passengers a day
- 6) Most of the attendants approve of this project since it is underground but they are really worried about the land expropriation at Wat Saket, Siriraj Hospital, Issaraphab Road, Hua Chiaw Hospital, Lan Luang Road, and Fai Chai Intersection. Thus they are asking for the exact locations of stations. The consultants said they will do their best to ensure the minimized land expropriation with an optimal route.

The detailed studies on Skytrain extensions will be done by the end of August 2005 and they will deliver the result to Mahadthai in September 2005 to ask for 50% support from the Central government so as to start the project (Phaholyothin extension and Phetkasem extension) by the end of 2006 and finish the project by the end of 2011.

The total budget for 4 extensions, Taksin Intersection – Phetkasem, Samrong – Samut Prakarn, and National Stadium – Phran Nok ] would be 84.255 billion baht.

2006 BMA budget: Money for Skytrain extensions – translated and summarized by *Thairath*, June 29, 2005 and *Manager Daily*, June 28, 2005

The 2006 budget for BMA is now 39 billion baht, compared with 31 billion baht for 2005. The following allocations for the 2006 budget:

1. Continuing projects – 26%
2. New projects – 21%
3. Regular expenditures – 45%
4. Central budget – 8%.

The central government has sent another 14.195 billion baht to speed up the construction of roads and bridges and other transportation matters. BMA is going to spend this budget for the Taksin extension along

with the studies on Mochit-Lum Lookka line of 0.715 billion baht and Lumsalee-Klong Ban Mah of 200 million baht.

Even though it is necessary to wait for cabinet approval for the BMA scheme, BMA is going to work anyway and BMA would be able to find contractors to deal with the Taksin-Phetkasem extension in April-May 2006.

Mochit-Saphan Mai-Lum Lookka Skytrain line route – translated and summarized from *Thairath*, July 1, 2005

During the seminar on Mochit-Saphan Mai-Lum Lookka on June 30 at Sri Pathum University with 200 attendants, Deputy Governor Samart told the attendees that the central government has approved the initial 563 million baht for this line. However this budget is subject to cabinet approval of the project before starting. If approved, BMA would start this Phaholyothin project immediately to fulfill the public demand to be done in three years for the first section.

The first section has 11 stations on an 11.9 km route

0) Mochit – the starting point

1) Lad Phrao – between Central Lad Phrao – Tesco Lad Phrao in front of Hor Wang High School

2) Ratchayothin – in front of Major Ratchayothin – Phaholyothin 30

3) Senanikhom – in front of Mayo Hospital

4) Kaset – in front of Kasetsart University

5) Sri Pathum – between Sara Witthaya High School and Sri Pathum University

6) Bang Bua – between Wat Bang Bau and Sri Pathum University

7) Infantry 11 – in front of the 11th infantry Regiment

8) Ram Indra – near Bangkhen District and Wat Phrasri Mahathat

9) Phaholyothin 48 – near Tescho Lotus Bangkhen

10) Saphan mai – Big C Saphan Mai and Central General Hospital

11) Sai Mai – Yingcharone Market

This section needs some land expropriation at Bangkhen District office and Taiu Niyom Songkrau Primary School to avoid the temple area which traditionally requires a handsome amount of compensation to the temple trustee/abbot.

The second section has six stations on 12.2 km route could be delayed due to the green belt even though many suburban people got angry that the Skytrain has not reached their home yet .

The list of six stations are:

1) Donmueang – Bhumibol Adulyadej Air Force Hospital near Jantharubeksa Golf Course

2) Air Force Academy – in front of the Air Force Museum

3) Khoo Khot – near Khoo Khot Police Station

4) Klong 3 – near Wat Sai Mai

5) Klong 4 – Near Wat Klong Chan

6) Kanchanaphisek – near Lum Lookka

Mr. Parinya Thammawatthana (the owner of Yingcharoen market) said that even though this project has a very good benefit for those who live in the Saphan Mai area, but he feels afraid of pollution due to elevated tracks as those who live in Saphan Kwai, Silom and Sukhumvit have experienced. He still thought that the extra cost for a subway is just 1.5 billion baht/km despite the fact that Bangkokians have to pay an extra 4 billion baht/km from the current 2 billion baht/km if they want underground tracks.

Nevertheless, Mr. Parinya told Deputy Governor Samart that he is going to develop a new Park and Ride to hold 2000 cars for BTS passengers and Yingcharoen Market customers in front of the market as a joint venture with BMA.

MRTA Governor and foreign engineers/consultants are surveying the area around Taopoon-Bang Son-Wongsawang area to check changes after the initial plan in 1995 which asked for elevated tracks to see if MRTA has to change the design into a 4 km underground track.

BMA setting up public hearing for the Phaholyothin extension – translated and summarized from *Thairath*, June 28, 2005

BMA is going to set up a seminar on Phaholyothin Extension on June 30 from 8am to 1pm at Sri Pathum University.

Previously, there were 500 people attending the seminar on Taksin-Phetkasem line while there are 300 people attending the seminar on the Samrong-Samutprakarn line.



List of stations for BTS Skytrain extensions proposed by BMA – translated and summarized from *Building and Land Today*, June 26, 2005-July 3, 2005

BMA is going to submit the plan to Mahatthai (Ministry of Interior) for BTS extensions as follows:

- 1) Changing the condition to allow BMA contribution to BTS Skytrain extensions
- 2) Budget from the central government to finish the Taksin and Samrong extensions
- 3) Scrapping Rama 3 extension after BRT has become a substitute
- 4) The bidding results for the Contractors

### **The list of stations**

#### **Samrong extension**

E10 Bangchak (near Sukhumvit 62)

E11 Sukhumvit 101

E12 Udomsuk

E13 Bang NA

E14 Bearing – Boundary pole

E15 Samrong – the the tail end at Sukhumvit 119 near Erawan Shrine

#### **Paknam Extension**

E16 Chang Sam Sian

E17 Naval Academy

E18 Provincial Hall

E19 Sri Nakarin

E20 Praek Sa

E21 Sai Luad

E22 Samut Prakarn Housing

#### **Paholyothin Extension**

N9 Lad Phrao

N10 Ratchayothin

N11 Sena Nikhom

N12 Kasetsart University

N13 Sri Pathum

N14 Bang Bua

N15 Infantry Regiment

N16 Ram Indra

N17 Paholyothin 48

N18 Saphan Mai

N19 Sai Mai

#### **Lum Lookka Extension**

N20 Donmuang

N21 Air Forces Academy

N22 Khoo Khot

N23 Klong 3

N24 Klong 4

N25 Kanchanaphisek Lum

#### **Pinklao Extension**

W2 Mahanak

W3 Phan Fah Bridge

W4 Sanam Luang

W5 Siriraj

W6 Phran Nok

No further western extension until the road from Phrannok to Phutthamonthon Sai 4 is done which allows a BTS extension to Salaya.

**Note:** This underground Pinklao extensions goes along Rama 1 Road until it reaches Yotseh Station, and then the line turn right at Mae Sri Intersection (AKA Saphan Dam – there should be an intermediate station there). After that, the line goes along Chakkraphatdiphongse Road to Mahanak Intersection (another choice for intermediate station) and then turn left to Lan Luang Road before heading into Phan Fah Bridge. After that, the line goes along Ratchadamnoen Avenue to the foot of Pinklao Bridge and then goes under the Chao Phraya to a new Thonburi railway station (which is good for those who want to go to Kanchanaburi) before

ending up at Phran Nok intersection

I am afraid that OTP and MOTC will ask Premier Thaksin not to grant a single satang for Skytrain extensions until they have finished their Red Line commuter networks and Subway networks as well as the feeder commuter lines—unless BTSC and BMTA are willing to sell the Skytrain at very cheap prices to their cronies.

BMA should invite Samut Prakarn and Pathum Thani Provincial governments to join with them so as to avoid the backlash from the central Government who claim BTS lines must end at the BMA border poles which please the local mafia that run the minibus services which most people despise, but have to endure since they have no alternative.

Skytrain reaches the 500 millionth passenger landmark – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, June 20, 2005

BTS passengers have reached the 500 millionth milestone at 7am on June 16, 2005. Current daily passengers are now at 390,000 persons/day, a 136% increase from 250,000 passengers a day in 1999.

In 1,698 passenger trips, a delay over 5 minutes occurred only one time. Satisfaction: 4.3 out of 5 in every field—riding quality, safety, reliability, punctuality, and service quality.

Skytrain Extension Plan – translated and summarized from *Thairath*, June 17, 2005

After the hearing about the Skytrain extension plan at Siam University on June 15, 2005, BMA told 300 seminar attendees the following:

Scrapped Lines that are not financially feasible:

- 1) Taksin Center – Mahachai -> Converted to BRT along Kalapraphruek Road until
- 2) Onnut – Suvannabhum -> Converted to BRT
- 3) Bang Na – Wat Sri Lam -> Converted to BRT

The projects to push forward:

- 1) Phaholyothin Line
- 2) Silom Line
- 3) Sukhumvit Line
- 4) Pinklao Line

List of stations for the extensions of Silom Line

First Phase: 1) Krung Thonburi

2) Taksin Intersection

Second Phase: 1) Wat Phonimit

2) Ratchada Thaphra

3) Taksin Center

4) Bang Wah

Price tag: 85 billion baht

Ticket rate: 10 baht +  $(1.8 \times N)$  N = Number of traveling KM—not the number of stations many Skytrain passengers have wished.

Investment plan: 80% public investment on the structure- 20% private section on system and rolling stock.

A further seminar on Sukhumvit extension to Paknam will be held at Samut Prakarn Civic Center on June 16 while the seminar on Phaholyothin Line will be held at Sri Pathum University on June 23 and the seminar on Pinklao extension will be held at BMA City Hall on June 30.

The poll on mass transit systems show that the Skytrain is still the most popular choice:

- 1) BTSC Skytrain: 8.11 from 10
- 2) MRTA Subway: 7.10 from 10
- 3) BMTA Aircon Buses: 6.20 from 10

Most people want Skytrain expansion and they are ready to endure traffic jam during the construction while some are unwilling to sacrifice their land for the convenient connections for the routes.

Skytrain ticket price hike – translated and summarized from *Prachachat Thurakij*, June 16-19, 2005

*BTS is going to raise the ticket price to 45 baht max according to the contract with BMA. However, this ticket hike would not be started until September 2006—the day BTS introduces the smart card system.*

Skytrain debt restructure – translated and summarized from *Prachachat Thurakij*, June 16-19, 2005 and *Bangkok Biznews*, June 16, 2005

BTS's 38-billion baht debt restructure plan is now under assessment by the creditors. The 38 billion baht debt restructure will be as follows:

- 1) Transforming 4.31 billion baht debts into assets
- 2) Cutting principle debts by 2.2 billion baht
- 3) Cutting outstanding interest by 5.76 billion baht
- 4) Transforming 10.8 billion baht into bonds
- 5) Transforming 1.1 billion baht stock into preferred stock
- 6) Paying back 14 billion baht debt in 18 years
- 7) Cutting registered capital from 14.933 billion baht to 6.08 billion baht

If the plan goes well, BTS could ask STECON to start the construction of the 2.2-km [Taksin Extension](#) without the help from BMA and offer an IPO in early 2006 to finance both the Taksin and Samrong Extensions. The delay is due to the creditor's demands for more debt conversion into stocks for creditors.

Skytrain to have smart card system to link with the subway – translated and summarized from *Bangkok Biznews*, June 7, 2005

BTS is going to bid for the new smart card system to enable BTS to have a joint ticket with BMCL subway. There are three companies competing for the smart card system installation:

1. NSI (Singapore), 2. CUBIC (USA), 3. SINGAPORE TECH (Singapore)

BTS would be able to pick the bid winner by the end of June 2005. The investment on a smart card system would be 150-200 million baht.

BTSC and BMCL have cooperated with each other so as to train BTS officers to handle smart card systems. The BTSC and winner of the bidding will install the system and train BTS officers in the first two stations while the rest will be done by the winning company alone. The new system will be ready for full service by the end of 2006.

BTS will not buy any additional rolling stock for the time being. The current number of passengers are:

- 1) Weekdays: 380,000 passengers a day, 2) Weekends: 230,000-240,000 passengers a day

There are 31 serviceable Skytrain sets from the available 35 sets. 2 of 4 standby sets will be used for another 2 years beginning at the end of 2005. After 2007, BTS will consider purchasing new sets.

Number of Skytrain passengers shot up 12% – translated and summarized from *Thairath*, May 24, 2005

Even though the fuel hike added more passengers to BTS, the statistics showed that the fuel hike had little effect on the increasing number of BTS passengers. The main contributors are the regular summer fairs at several places such as the Motor Show at BITEC, Red Cross Fair at Suan Amporn, Book Fair at QSNCC, and Asia Drive Expo at Central Plaza. People take the Skytrain to avoid traffic and the limited parking spaces.

The average number of passengers before the fuel hike (February 23-March 6, 2005)

Weekdays: 377,687 passengers a day

Saturdays: 275,746 passengers a day

Sundays: 195,287 passengers a day

Overall: 315,095 passengers a day

The average number of passengers after the fuel hike (March 23- April 3, 2005)

Weekdays: 403,020 passengers a day -> 6.7% increase

Saturdays: 300,436 passengers a day -> 8.9% increase

Sundays: 218,953 passengers a day -> 12.1% increase

However, BTS will continue monitoring the number of passengers to see if fuel hikes are the main contributor to increase Skytrain passengers since the fuel hike will continue.

Skytrain stocks flow to the government/Skytrain ridership stagnant – translated and summarized from *Transportation Journal*, May 16-22, 2005

BTS stock held by CSFB (HK) went into ADRC limited and ADM Maculus Funds without the acknowledgment from BTS. This is seen as a sign of a dirty trick to funnel BTS stock to the government. Furthermore, the number of passengers is now at 400,000 a day with the expected growth rate at 7%—down from 15% last year—a sign of saturated demand which can only be improved by the extensions.

[TRANSIT SYSTEM: Keeree tightens grip on BTS](#) – *The Nation*, April 27, 2005

*Real-estate magnate Keeree Karnjapanas is inching toward regaining control over Bangkok's Skytrain after ally New World Group of Hong Kong bought a 12 per cent stake in Bangkok Mass Transit System Pcl (BTS) from Credit Suisse First Boston...*

*The creditor source said New World's purchase of the shares had taken other creditors by surprise because*

*earlier Transport Minister Suriya had made it clear he was trying to buy shares from both New World and Credit Suisse First Boston in an effort to integrate Bangkok's elevated rail with the underground metro line...*

A tale of three newspapers: Buying back the Skytrain – January 28, 2005

In another case of reporting 'government happy news' (or at least putting the best face on it), the *Post* seems eager to report that buying back the Skytrain was Suriya's plan and also how happy BTS CEO Keeree is with the government.

*The Nation*, on the other hand, plays up the fact that this is an abrupt and odd u-turn in government policy (mentioning critics who call it 'flip flopping'). *The Nation* does not carry any glowing quotes from Keeree, but instead mentions BTS's long fight to resist nationalization.

However, both newspapers are two months late in this news. It was already covered in the Thai press (and mentioned on 2Bangkok.com) [back in November](#).

[PM: Govt won't take over skytrain service – Concession will not be bought back off BTSC](#) – *Bangkok Post*, January 27, 2005

*...His decision could kill off a plan by Transport Minister Suriya Jungrungreangkit who has pushed for the government's takeover of the elevated train system, mainly through negotiations between the Transport Ministry and creditors of BTSC...*

*But the prime minister promised to approve the skytrain route extension plan once the BTSC completes its debt restructuring which would make the BTSC ready for more investment.*

*"The problem is that the BTSC must finish debt restructuring first. If it is ready, it can do that because it is a good idea," he said...The prime minister's decision yesterday was welcomed by Keeree Kanchanapas, the BTSC chief executive officer. He said Mr Thaksin's decision made him happy and comfortable as an investor and he now had a better understanding of government policy...*

[No takeover of the Skytrain: Thaksin](#) – *The Nation*, January 27, 2005

*... "It never entered my mind to buy out the private-sector operation," he said... Thaksin's comment amounted to a turn-about of his government's policy. Transport Minister Suriya Jungrungreangkit has been behind a campaign for the government to buy out both the Skytrain and the underground metro line in order to integrate Bangkok's mass transit systems...*

[Premier Thaksin stuns Suriya by revoking the plan for Skytrain-Subway nationalization](#) – *Than Setthakij*, November 4-6, 2004

[Nationalization plans: government backs down](#) – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, January 27, 2005

Premier Thaksin said the Government will not use an iron fist to choke BTSC to sell their stock to the government since the company is ready to deal with the first two delayed extensions. This stance is due to the subway accident which forces them to rethink the strategy to nationalize BTS. BTS has an excellent safety record and becomes a good model MRTA and BMCL in having to correct the faulty sections at Huay Kwang Depot. Furthermore, public anger toward TRT [delaying the Taksin extension](#) also forces PM Thaksin to come up with the newer and more subtle plan.

# Master Plan News 2005

December 31, 2005

Categories: Master Plans

This section contains news of the Master Plan, overall Bangkok development, the Bangkok Governor's development plans, and articles about interconnecting mass transit projects.

## [Mass Transit News main page](#)

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From the Thai-language press: Final conclusion on MRTA Purple Line in July with measures to protect the last durian orchards in Nonthaburi – translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Dailynews*, April 29, 2005  
After the last meeting with local people along the Purple Line at Klong Bang Phai Tambon Administration Office in April 27, 2005, AEC Consultant found that most people want to realize this project as soon as possible and they need as many park and ride facilities as possible.

The initial Park and Ride facilities will be at Nonthaburi 1 (Rattathibet 30) and Klong Bang Phai Depot. However, many people—especially durian orchard owners at Sai Mah—feel worried about environmental protection measures since the construction could ruin the last durian orchards in Nonthaburi. Durian at Nonthaburi always command premium prices and locals consider Nonthaburi durian as a national treasure which has to be paid in gold or hard currencies (US dollars, Euro and Yen).

Therefore, MRTA may have to pay the durian orchards compensation at premium prices if they are going to construct a Park and Ride at Sai Mah.

The position of Sai Mah Station is at the construction site of the new Sai Mah U Turn Bridge on Rattathibet Road so AEC initially considered cutting Sai Mah station off the list, but strong demand from local people have compelled AEC to secure Sai Mah station + Sai Mah Park Ride and Sai Mah U Turn Bridge as part of the project. The final results will be delivered to MRTA in July 2005.

BMA also told *Dailynews* correspondents that the construction of Udomsuk tunnel near Wat Sri Lam Intersection (Sri Nakharin crossing Bang Na – Bang Pakong Highway) would not have a detrimental effect on the construction of the Yellow LRT since BMA will design a new Udomsuk tunnel by taking the Yellow LRT (AKA Samak Golden Ring Railway) into account.

OTP pushing Yellow LRT and Pink Monorail – translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Manager Daily*, April 20, 2005 and *Dailynews*, April 20, 2005

OTP is pushing the following projects forward so as to complete 10 lines in 6 years by asking 390 million baht for consultants.

- 1) Yellow LRT -> Lad Phrao – Lum Salee – Sri Nakharin – Samrong
- 2) Pink Monorail -> Muang Thong Thani – Chaeng Watthana – Ram Indra – Minburi (30 km) Rom Klao – Lad Krabang

OTP also asking for 30 billion baht to foot the mass transit construction bills before capitalizing from the markets.

**Commentary by Wisarut:** It seems to me that OTP is going to push some controversial projects at all costs and OTP is going to use EIA as the rubber stamp of approval to push the projects while misleading the public. These projects are:

- 1) Laem Phak Bai Project
- 2) Lad Phrao Elevated Way
- 3) Asok – Lang Suan Elevated Way Project (this project is going to remove those slum dwellers at Phai Sing Toh Canal near Queen Sirikit national Convention center)

I found that the first section of the Pink Monorail project will have the route shortened from 41 km (Pakkret – Minburi) to 30 km (Chaeng Watthana – Minburi) since the new JBIC-funded bridge across Chao Phraya at Pakkret has no space left. Furthermore, the Ministry of Finance told the press that the government has two choices to finance the projects:

- 1) Only 5 profitable lines can be constructed in 6 years
- 2) Extend the project from 6 years to more than 10 years

This will ensure that the projects will go on while the GDP growth rate is 5-6%, the inflation rate is within a 32% limit and public debt is still within 50% of GDP limit.

BTS also complains that OTP refuses to deliver their proposal to the Ministry of Transportation as an arm-twisting and bullying measure to force BTSC to sell stock to the government at very cheap prices.

[Mega projects 'lack good governance'](#) – Bangkok Post, February 28, 2005

*The development of state mega projects is failing to comply with the concept of good governance, since the authorities are ignoring public opinion and violating citizens' rights with regard to natural resources, academic and civic groups said yesterday...*

[Transport Ministry focuses on 3 major projects](#) – TNA, March 27, 2005

*...The government is interested in the dual railway track system but its construction is likely to take several years. More crucially though the locomotives, which have been in service for more than 30 years could pose a problem, he said.*

*...Government officials are trying to find ways to reduce the Bangkok Mass Transit Authority (BMTA) enormous operating loss, currently running in the red to the tune of five billion baht a year...*

[MEGA-PROJECTS: Ascon releases bidding plan](#) – The Nation, April 1, 2005

*Little-known, well-connected firm targets airport rail project, among others.*

*Ascon Construction Plc, which includes the prime minister's niece Chinicha Wongsawat among its major shareholders, unveiled a business plan yesterday that focuses on bidding for government mega-projects. These include the Bt500-billion high-speed rail link to Suvarnabhumi Airport and the Bt10-billion Centre for Government Agencies.*

*Chinicha, who is the daughter of Thaksin's sister Yaowapa Wongsawat, did not show up at the news conference to announce the company's change of direction, which was addressed by the company's CEO, Pattanapong Tanumatthaya.*

*Ascon is a little-known company that was founded in 1991 by the Tanumatthaya family. But late last year, the company raised its registered capital from Bt50 million to Bt200 million. The paid-up capital is Bt150 million.*

*As a result, the Wilailak family, who control the Samart Telecom Group, and the Wongsawat family emerged as major shareholders with about a combined 50-per-cent stake.*

*The Tanumatthaya family's holding in the firm was diluted from 100 per cent to 50 per cent...*

[Govt urged to delay two city mass transit projects as economy slows](#) – Bangkok Post, March 25, 2005

*...During the House debate on government policies, Democrat MP Korn Chatikawanit called on the government to rethink two of the seven mass transit projects, including plans to open new routes for skytrains and subways in the city.*

*... "Though the government plans to spend 1.5 trillion baht on various investment schemes in the next four years, two of the seven mass transit projects incur up to 40% of the total costs but accommodate only 18% of city commuters.*

*...He admired the skytrain and subway projects, even though none passed his constituency of Yannawa district...*

[Selling the country's new infrastructure push](#) – The Nation, March 16, 2005

*...Some 15 years on, the euphoria for privatisation lies in tatters. The physical debris of the unfinished and now defunct Hopewell elevated rail/road project is a reminder of the tragedy of these high hopes. The finances of the Don Muang Tollway are still in ruins. The Expressway and Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand's victory over Kumulgai Kumi, the Japanese construction giant, proved to be a Pyrrhic one. Elsewhere, even if we factor out the damages caused by the foreign exchange disaster in the run up to the 1997 economic crisis, Thailand's telecom industry lies in a confused state with an un-level playing field, much to the detriment of competition and innovation within the industry. The Skytrain project, which has in all other areas proved to be a success, is caught in the trap of local and national politics. And many independent power plant projects have run into one problem or another...*

Pak Bara Deep Sea Port – Strategic Port of Thailand – translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Manager Daily* ([1](#) & [2](#)), December 19, 2004

Thailand exports para rubber and rice by going through Port Klang and Tanjung Pelapas in Malaysia as well as Singapore which adds more transportation cost since both Malaysia and Singapore put a surcharge on Thai exports.

To cut transport costs of products such as rice, para rubber, etc. to European countries, the India



subcontinent, Middle East, and Africa, the new deep sea port of Pak Bara (Lagoo district of Satun) would have a price tag of 5.6 billion baht. This will cut transportation costs by 269.568 million baht a year. The advantage of Pak Bara over Phuket and Phang Nga deep sea port is that Pak Bara could accept larger ships (50,000 ton deadweight) since Pak Bara is 13 meters deep which could be easily upgraded to 25 meters deep, and Pak Bara is only 150 miles away from international routes inside the Straits of Melaka. The Pak Bara deep sea port requires a good rail connection and there are 3 choices for the route:

1) Trang – La Ngoo – Pak Bara (100 km)

Pro: Shortest Route, linking with Thung Song Junction, good for those who live in the Northern part of Southern region

Con: No link with the Deep South and Hat Yai as well as the Provincial Hall of Satun

2) Hat Yai – Satun – Pak Bara (130 km)

Pro: Connecting with Hat Yai, Satun and three deep south provinces – good political movement since it will support the Halal Food Industry in Pattani. It will force Port Authority to upgrade Songkla Deep Sea Port to have a rail link, creating a land bridge.

Con: The longest route

3) Kuan Nian – La Ngoo – Pak Bara (110 km)

Pro: A compromise since Kuan Nian is the station on the main route between Hat Yai and Thung Song.

Con: Investment required to upgrade Kuan Nian station into the same standard as Thung Song and Hat Yai. No connection with Satun.

[MASS TRANSIT: All systems go, PM tells Bangkok](#) – *The Nation*, February 12, 2005

*The Nation* leads with a mass transit story...

*Cash will be found to expand capital's transport system, says a victorious Thaksin. Fresh from a sweeping re-election victory, the emerging Thaksin II government will reward Bangkok voters with a promise to complete the expansion of the seven mass-transit-system routes in the capital.*

*The six-year expansion totals 248 kilometres and would cost Bt521 billion...*

*The signal from this meeting was clear: Suriya, who together with Deputy Prime Minister Somsak*

*Thepsuthin have mustered factional control of 125 Thai Rak Thai MPs following Sunday's crushing election win, is likely to keep his transport portfolio...*

Mass transit article roundup – January 31, 2005

Wisarat points out and summarizes recent mass transit articles in the Thai-language press:

[Nonthaburi Provincial Administration Organization showing its selfishness by asking for all-underground section of the Purple Line Subway to Bangyai so as not to compete with their private buses](#) – *Matichon*, January 30, 2005

[MOF asking MRTA to give more details about Purple Line Subway or they will not guarantee the loan](#) – *Matichon*, January 28, 2005

Rolling stock factories in Thailand – February 2, 2005

Wisarat reports: *Transport Minister Suriya said there will be 10 lines of mass transit with a price tag of 500 billion baht along with more than 100 set of rolling stock in 5 years. The winners of the bidding for the second batch and further batches of Subway rolling stock are required to set up a local subway assembly line in Thailand to also produce stock for other Thai cities and for export.*

*However, many Thai netters ([here](#) and [here](#)) said the government should help BMA and BTSC out of trouble for the Taksin and Samrong extensions first. Otherwise, they would say TRT has told a big lie to the public.*

Details of two proposed mass transit lines – translated and summarized by Wisarat from *Dailynews*, December 17, 2004

1) Yellow Line – Lad Phrao – Sri Nakharin – Thepharak – Samrong

Type: LRT

Distance: 33 km

Price tag: 40 – 45 billion baht

Estimated number of passengers: 100,000 passengers a day

Station list:

1.1) Lad Phrao -> connect with park and ride

1.2) Bhawana -> shortcut to Ratchadaphisek and Senanikhom

1.3) Saphan 2 -> flea market

1.4) Chokechai 4 -> very important road linking Sena Nikhom and Lad Plakhao together



- 1.5) Janthima -> shortcut to Sutthisarn
- 1.6) Wang Thonglang -> Big C Lad Phrao
- 1.7) Mahadthai 1 -> shortcut to Hua Mark Stadium
- 1.8) Vejthanee -> Vejthanee Hospital
- 1.9) Happyland -> giant center since buses, vans, terminate here due to The Mall Bang Kapi, Carrefour and Tawanna IT Store
- 1.10) Lum Salee -> a very congested intersection
- 1.11) Krungthep Kreetha -> connecting with Unico Golf Club
- 1.12) Hua Mark -> the starting point of double tracking of eastern line and Airport Transit along with Jusco Sri Nakharin.
- 1.13) Sri Nut -> Onnut + Sri Nakharin Intersects here
- 1.14) Seacon -> Seacon Square -> giant mall with some vigor
- 1.15) Seri Center -> another mall
- 1.16) Sri Udom -> Udomsuk + Sri Nakharin intersect here -> heading to King Rama IX Park
- 1.17) Sri Lam -> Wat Sri Lam -> close to Central City Bang Na
- 1.18) Si Kharin -> Soi Lasalle intersects with Sri Nakharin – Sikharin Hospital nearby
- 1.19) Phatthana Chumchon -> near Food Lion + Carrefour Sri Nakharin
- 1.20) Nam Daeng (red thorn) -> Wat Nam Daeng
- 1.21) Sri Thepha -> Thepharak intersects with Sri Nakharin
- 1.22) Mahawongse -> Mahawonse canal – midway between Sukhumvit and Sri Nakharin
- 1.23) Thepharak – connecting with Samrong Nuea station – end of the line

## 2) Pink Monorail

First Phase: Pakkret – Muangthong Thani – Chaeng Watthana – Ram Indra – Minburi

Distance: 30 km

Price Tag: 20 billion baht

Second Phase: Minburi – Lad Krabang – NBIA

City planning forces developers to stick to areas along mass transit lines – translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Manager Daily*, December 24, 2004

The new BMA city plan is forcing real estate developers to go outside the CBD and creating the sprawl in the same way as an octopus—going from the CBD and then following the mass transit line tracks. So OTP is asking for real estate development inside CBD if possible as well as the area between Ratchadaphisek Ring Road and Kanchanaphisek Ring Road. Also that BRT be substituted for the mass transit lines which are not constructed yet. So far, the only upcoming lines are

- 1) Purple line (Bangsue-Bang Yai)
- 2) Red line commuter (Rangsit-Mahachai)
- 3) Suvannabhum Airport Link

However, the other lines will be delayed due to the land expropriation for park and ride. Furthermore, the 2nd phase of Taksin extension and Bangkok Southern Transportation center will have to be delayed due to the tussles on the nationalization process as the exchange for the government's help to construct the system and the land expropriation for Bangkok Southern Transportation Center.

MRTA and SRT seems to have fewer problems, so the construction of Purple line (Bangsue-Bang Yai) will be started in 2005 after the plan is complete by April 2005. The system will be opened in December 2009. The Red line commuter (Rangsit-Mahachai) and Airport link (Phayathai-Makkasan-NBIA) will follow suit.

Pitfalls of promoting the auto industry domestically – translated and summarized by Wisarut from [\*Manager Weekly\*](#), December 24-30, 2004

Bad consequences and domino effects come from promoting the automobile industry. It is the main reason why our railway system goes downhill after the long-term support for the auto industry. This also causes pollution, traffic jams and mayhem on the roads. Also a waste of economic resources which would be better used supporting other industries.

**Also:** BTS will cease issuing the 3-day pass (280 baht – 40 trips) due to a lack of demand (*Siam Thurakij*, December 22-25, 2004)

Coming up with two new LRT lines and nationalization – translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Manager Daily*, December 15, 2004, *Dailynews*, December 16, 2004, and *Thai Post*, December 16, 2004

The strong public demand for good mass transit systems has compelled the government to come up with two new lines:

- 1) Yellow Line: Lad Phrao – Bang Kapi – Hua Mark – Sri Nakharin – Sri Thepha – Samrong (32 km all elevated LRT or monorail) – 45 billion baht
- 2) Pink Line – Pakkret – Muangthong Thani – Chaeng Watthana – Rama Indra – Minburi (27 km all elevated LRT or monorail) – with feeder bus or van from Minburi to Klong Sam Wah (near Safari World) and the provision for an extension from Minburi to Lad Krabang or NBIA -20 billion baht

The initial investment will be 10 billion baht though.

After finishing all nine planned lines, it will create a massive network of mass transit of 360 km and a 15 baht flat rate may be applied.

The nationalization process will be done in following way:

- 1) For BTS – look at the financial statement in detail–wait unit BTS finishes the debt restructure and they will be back for the nationalization.
- 2) For BMCL – look at the financial statement in detail, but make 25% of stock at par first and then look at the financial statement in detail again.

OTP speeding up MRTA Pink monorail – translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Than Setthakij*, December 26-29, 2004

MRTA has come up with the rough draft of the Pink Monorail (Pakkret – Muang Thong Thani – Bang Khen – Ram Indra – Minburi) with total distance of 27 km and the price tag of 20 billion baht ([map](#)).

The MRTA Pink Monorail would go from Pakkret Intersection along Chang Watthana Road to Laksi Intersection via the gate of Muang Thong Thani, Tesco Lotus, Big C., Consul Section, MOFA, SCHQ, ICT, Laksi Railway Station, and Rajabhat Phra Nakhon. After that, it will go along Ram Indra Road all the way to Suwinthawongse Road near Minburi Prison via Lad Plakhao, Maiyarab, Watcharaphon, Nawamin, Khanna Yao or so.

There will be 13 elevated monorail stations which can be listed as follows:

- 1) Pakkret
- 2) Muang Thong Thani
- 3) Prachachuen
- 4) Laksi railway Station – Interchange for Red Line Commuter
- 5) Wat Phra Sri Mahathat – Interchange with Phaholyothin Extension
- 6) Lad Pla Khao
- 7) Maiyalap
- 8) Watcharaphon
- 9) Nawamin
- 10) Khanna Yao
- 11) Phraya Suren
- 12) Hathai Raj
- 13) Nimit Mai

OTP will finish the study on this Pink Monorail in 75 days to be submitted to the upcoming government.

They will have to find if it is necessary to add more stations since the station are too far away.

**Commentary by Wisarut:** Sooner or later, those people who live along Chang Watthana – Ram Indra Road will demand that they should get the better treatment, at least to be at par with those live along Lad Phrao-Sri Nakharin-Thepharak Road (the Yellow Line)–or even a better deal like elevate a metro like those who live along Ratthathibet Road (Purple line).

Furthermore, the list of stations should be revised as follows:

- 1) Pakkret
- 2) Software Park
- 3) Muang Thong Thani
- 4) Sahakorn Karn Bin Thai
- 5) Prachachuen -> connect with Tesco Lotus Chang Watthana
- 6) Supreme Commander HQ
- 7) Laksi Railway Station – Interchange for Red Line Commuter
- 8) Rajabhat Phra Nakhon
- 9) Wat Phra Sri Mahathat – Interchange with Phaholyothin Extension
- 10) Rama Indra
- 11) Lad Pla Khao
- 12) Maiyalap
- 13) Watcharaphon
- 14) Nawamin

- 15) Khanna Yao
- 16) Suna Siam
- 17) Phraya Suren
- 18) Hathai Raj
- 19) Nimit Mai is not far away from that intersection]

After the first phase (27 km) is done, the 2nd phase from Nimit Mai will have to go to NBIA via Rom Klao Road (14 km). Even though, they can go to Rom Klao Road alone so as to connect with Airport Link at Lad Krabang, they should take the large number of students at KMITL into account since many of them are willing to pay to ride on mass transit systems. Van to Mochit 2 via Victory Monument is quite expensive (40 baht). The van to Bang Kapi and Minburi is quite cheaper, but they will have to get off at Bang Kapi or Minburi so as to go to other places. Commuter railways lines have been reduced to please vested interest and Airport Transit has not been extended to Chachoeng Sao yet even though it should be. Bus 517 from KMITL to Mochit 2 is a very long and tedious route. Private bus to Onnut and Bang Kapi are infrequent and dangerous to ride. The 2-row bus to Lum Phakchee (intersection to Nong Chok – Muslim District) is very unreliable.

Big plans for Bangkok green spaces and clean roads – translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Manager Daily* and *Thairath*, January 3, 2005

Governor Aphirak told Bangkokians that BMA is going to grant 10 new parks, 10 clean canals and 10 clean streets to improve the quality of life for Bangkokians while giving 1 million young trees to be planted around BMA area during the ceremony of ‘Clean Bangkok Home’ in Lumpinee Park on January 3, 2005. Residents can ask for some of the 1 million young trees from all 50 district offices or the Nawamin Office and Onnut office of BMA Gardening Section. Furthermore, students will give the young trees in the malls around Bangkok.

The 10 new parks with the total area of 336 rai:

The first 2 parks—to be ready by the end of Jan 2005

- 1) Thung Sikan Forest park (Sikan area of Donmuang district – for the local people of Sikan commune)
- 2) Kiakkai Chaloeprakit Park (Kiakkai – Dusit district)

The other 8 parks will follow such as:

- 1) Mahatthai Park (Prawet district)
- 2) Sanam Luang 2 Park (Thawee Watthana district)
- 3) Phra Ram 9 – Pradit Manootham Park (Huay Kwang)
- 4) Ram Indra Sport Park (Bang Khen district)
- 5) Kalapraphuek – Kanchanaphisek Interchange Park (Bang Khae district)
- 6) Kalapraphuek – Rajapraphuek Interchange (Chomthong – Phaseecharoen district)
- 7) 60 year Queen Sirikit Park (Lad Krabang district)
- 8) Lam Phang Phuay Pond (Bung khum district – not far from Serithai Park)

Furthermore, there will be a new water park at Nong Bon water park (650 rai) where Bangkokians can jet ski, kayak, windsurf, and sailboat—to be opened in August 2005.

BMA also plans to diverge water from Chaophraya to cleanse the following 10 polluted canals while running a garbage boat service to ensure cleanliness.

- 1) Klong Lord (the old city moat)
- 2) Klong Bang Lamphoo (the upper middle city moat)
- 3) Klong Ong Ang (the lower middle city moat)
- 4) Klong Wat Thepthidaram (the link between the old and middle city moat at Wat Thepthidaram)
- 5) Klong Wat Rajbopit (the link between the old and middle city moat at Wat Rajbopit)
- 6) Klong Phadung Krungkasem (the new city moat)
- 7) Klong Bang Sai kai (a canal for the orchard in Talingchan district)
- 8) Klong Bang Nam Chon (a canal for the orchard in Talingchan district)
- 9) Klong Samreh (a canal for the Southern part of Thonburi)
- 10) Klong Bang Sakae (a canal connected with Phaseecharoen canal)

The first 10 roads to be cleansed and have no leftover garbage:

- 1) Rajprarob (Dindaeng Intersection – Prato Nam)
- 2) Phayathai (Victory Monument – Sam Yan)
- 3) Phaholyothin (Victory Monument – Chatuchak Park)
- 4) Rama 4 (Hua Lamphong – Phra Khanong)
- 5) Rajadamnoen Avenue (Sanam Luang – Equestrian Monument)
- 6) Sri Ayuthaya (Thewet – Soi Moh Leng in Makkasan)

7) Vibhavadee Rangsit Highway (Dindaeng – National Memorial)

8) Phetkasem (Wongwian Yai – Bang Khae)

9) Charansanitwongse (Tha Phra – Rama 7)

10) Sukhumvit (British Embassy – Soi Bearing)

The garbage collecting fee will be cut from 40 baht to 20 baht.

Thirty-five new small fire stations, in addition to the existing 30 fire stations, will be built.

A new viaduct connecting Saladaeng Station with Bangkok Bank HQ will be installed as well as a new viaduct connecting Sukhumvit 1 (Soi Ruen Ruedee) with Nana Station and Asok Station to pick up more passengers

The area along Chao Phraya (Rama 8 Bridge – Rama 7 Bridge) as well as the area along Bangkok Noy Canal (New Thonburi Station – Wat Suwannaram) will be clean up and regulated. Eleven new bicycle routes along Phetkasem, Charansanitwongse, Lad Phrao-Phaholyothin with total distance of 83.9 km will be installed.

Now 34 traffic lights for crossing streets as well as smart traffic systems, new school buses, and buses along the expressway will be installed. The second BMA Sports School in Thonburi for 4 sports (athletics, football, swimming, and tai-kwan-do) is going to accept 80 students of the 4th grade while BMA will set up 6 new electronic libraries.

[Mass Transit News main page](#)

# Two-baht coin

December 31, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Two-baht coin

– December 31, 2005

Announced in May, 2005, it seems the two-baht coins are now in circulation (left). They are slightly larger than the one-baht coins.

# World's most polluted city?

December 31, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

World's most polluted  
city? – December 31, 2005

Conor points out that the phrase "world's most polluted city" has been applied to almost every major city over the years. A Google search of the phrase reveals many cities mentioned as "world's most polluted," such as New Delhi, Ahmedabad, Athens, Calcutta, Tehran, Raipur, Los Angeles, Taiyuan, Lanzhou, Dzerzhinsk, Chongqing, Dhaka, Cairo, Benxi, Beijing, Norilsk and perennial favorite Mexico City.

Considering the many major industrial areas in China and India undergoing unchecked expansion, not to mention post-Soviet far eastern cities, it is probably unlikely that Bangkok is among the world's most polluted in any category.

**Earlier:** The state of traffic in Jakarta – December 30, 2006

Danny comments: *An interesting article, particularly as it mentions Bangkok as second most polluted city. Good juxtaposition between Bangkok and Jakarta on the BRT front...they are racing ahead with new lines whilst Bangkok lags.*

2005:

[Tough year for motorists and commuters alike](#) – *The Jakarta Post*, December 26, 2005

*...Keeping private cars off the streets would ease traffic jams and reduce air pollution in the capital, which is the World's third most polluted city after Mexico City and Bangkok...*

# CorruptionWatch.net

December 31, 2005

[CorruptionWatch.net](http://www.corruptionwatch.net)

– December 31, 2005

As pointed out by *The Nation*: *Embattled Auditor-General Khunying Jaruvan Maintaka shows a sticker with the logo of the Corruption Watch group's website —www.corruptionwatch.net— calling on the public to help monitor corruption.*



# Press bestows annual nicknames on the cabinet

December 31, 2005

Categories: Thai Politics, The Thaksin Years

Press bestows annual nicknames  
on the cabinet – December 31, 2005

[Thaksin's" Wizard who  
loses his magic"](#) – *Bangkok Post*, December 30,  
2005

[The  
Wizard and his band of populist preachers](#) – *The Nation*,  
December 30, 2005

*Government House reporters have this year voted to label  
Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra "the Wizard with  
Weak Magic" and his administration "the Government  
That Puts the Populace in Distress". Name giving by  
the Government House press corps is an annual tradition  
ahead of the New Year holiday...*

# **“Your bus pass to a world of freedom”**

December 31, 2005

["Your](#)

[bus pass to a world of freedom"](#)

– *The Nation*, December 31, 2005

And odd transit-related opinion piece from *The Nation*...

This picture of buses does not sound like the writer is used to riding Thai buses.

*Buses provide a valuable service, one that involves much more than getting you from point A to point B. You can even say it is a form of freedom. With the availability of public buses, you no longer have to drive and put up with all of the hassles that come with driving, such as finding a parking space or observing traffic rules. The most important benefit of buses over other means of transportation is not just that they are cheaper, but that they can act not only as a means, but also as a medium...*

*...One example of this is a country's prosperity, which is shown by economic indicators, but which is grounded in such areas as basic education and sound infrastructure.*

*A bus company that aims not only at making a profit, but also at helping to ease traffic problems and making life in the city easier in the end becomes profitable as well as popular. Such a company can also draw its competitors into its scheme and thereby make new business partnerships and perhaps even save on operating costs...*

# Homemade skyscraper!

December 31, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Homemade skyscraper!

– December 31, 2005

Photos [here](#)

and article [here](#).

via BoingBoing

# Thailand, world's no. 2 sugar exporter, faces 'severe shortage'

December 31, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thailand,  
world's no. 2 sugar exporter, faces 'severe shortage'](#)

– Bloomberg.com, December 31, 2005

*Thailand, the world's second-biggest exporter of sugar, is facing a "severe shortage" of the commodity and will crack down on hoarding and illegal exports to shore-up supplies, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said today...*