

Parts maker unhappy with decision to scrap eco-car

September 2, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Parts maker unhappy with decision to scrap eco-car](#) – Bangkok

Post, September 2, 2005

...But an informed industry source said Mr Suriya feared sales of eco-cars could cut into those of subcompact cars such as the Toyota Vios and Honda City and one-ton pickup trucks.

Mr Suriya's family owns the Thai Summit Group, a leading parts supplier to several carmakers including Toyota.

The minister said that instead he would support the production of more complex parts and upstream steel manufacturing to strengthen Thailand's automotive industry and enhance competitiveness in the long run.

Of the big automakers in Thailand, only Toyota had continuously opposed the project, saying the car size specifications in the plan were impractical...

Lat Phrao Work: Nightmare traffic conditions

September 2, 2005

Categories: Highways and Roads

[LAT](#)

[PHRAO WORK: Nightmare traffic conditions](#) –

The Nation, September 2, 2005

...Radio station FM91 Traffic Pro said that between 6.30am and 1pm, it received 2,971 calls from incensed motorists. It quoted one as saying the traffic stretched for more than 10 kilometres.

Dangerous work

September 3, 2005

Categories: Culture and Society



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Right: A UBC technician stands on a tiny balcony railing 10 floors above ground. (The [2Bangkok webcam](#) is to the right of his shin.)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

A visit to the old Erawan Hotel

September 3, 2005

Categories: Buildings, History

A visit to the old Erawan
Hotel
– September 3, 2005

Long a Bangkok landmark,
the old Erawan Hotel
stood at the corner of
Rajaprasong intersection. It
was built
in 1956 and torn down in
1987. A new highrise hotel
was built
in its place.

Unless otherwise noted, the
receipts and images on this
page
are from a brochure, circa
1963.

[Ratchaprasong intersection
over
time](#) – June 22, 2006

More on the [Crucible
of Construction](#)

Another hotel from days gone
by: [Siam
Intercontinental Hotel](#)



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



Erawan Hotel

BANGKOK, THAILAND
CABLE ADDRESS: ERAWAN
TELEPHONE: 58051-69

THE MOST LUXURIOUS HOTEL. FULLY AIR-CONDITIONED. SITUATED IN THE BEST RESIDENTIAL QUARTERS AND NEAR THE BUSINESS CENTRE.

TARIFF

ALL ROOMS AIR-CONDITIONED WITH PRIVATE BATH

Single Room	Bahts 270.—
Double Room	330.—
Suite	480.—
2 Bedrooms and Sitting-room	to 700.—
Extra Bed	60.—
Baby Cot	30.—

MEALS

Continental Breakfast	Bahts 14.—
Luncheon	36.—
Dinner	45.—

PLUS 10% SERVICE CHARGE ON ALL RATES

US \$ 1.00 = Bahts 20.00 £ Stg. 1.00 = Bahts 56.00

CHECK OUT TIME: 14.00

Above rates subject to alteration without notice.

FORM 27



The
ERAWAN
Bangkok

Erawan Hotel

BANGKOK, THAILAND
TEL. 58051-69



โรงแรมเอราวัณ

404 ถนนเพลินจิต พญาไท
กรุงเทพฯ โทร. 58051-69

FOL NO 1656
ใบฝาก

RECEIPT NO 82770
ใบรับ

RECEIVED FROM Mr. B. M. CHANON
ได้รับเงินจาก

ROOM NO. 240
ห้องที่เข้าพัก

TEN SEN OF BANT SEVEN HUNDRED AND FIVE 10
จำนวนเงิน

IN PAYMENT OF BILL NO. A 112775
ชำระใบเสร็จ

BANT 705.10
บาท

BANTONL-1

ERAWAN HOTEL

PAID
for Erawan Hotel
21 FEB 1963

Cashier
21 BANGKOK THAILAND
63.
06.30 AM

FORM 28

B. MC-ELHANON

Room No. *240*
 Rate *480*
 Arr. Date *20/2-63*
 Time *3 PM*

Erawan Hotel
 BANGKOK, THAILAND.
 No **A112775**

MEMO	Date	Explanation	Charges	Credits	Bal. Due
	1	FEB 20-63 ROOM	★ 480.00		
	2	FEB 20-63 SERV.	★ 48.00		★ 528.00
	3	FEB 20-63 T'ROOM	★ 3.30		
	4	FEB 20-63 T'ROOM	★ 39.60		
	5	FEB 20-63 T'ROOM	★ 22.00		
	6	FEB 20-63 T'ROOM	★ 6.60		★ 599.50
	7	FEB 20-63 BAR DIN	★ 105.60		★ 705.10
	8				
	9				
	10				
	11				
	12				
	13				
	14				
	15				
	16				
	17				
	18				
	19				
	20				
	21				
	22				
	23				
	24				

BILLS ARE PAYABLE WHEN PRESENTED.

GUEST'S SIGNATURE _____

LAST BALANCE IS AMOUNT DUE unless otherwise indicated

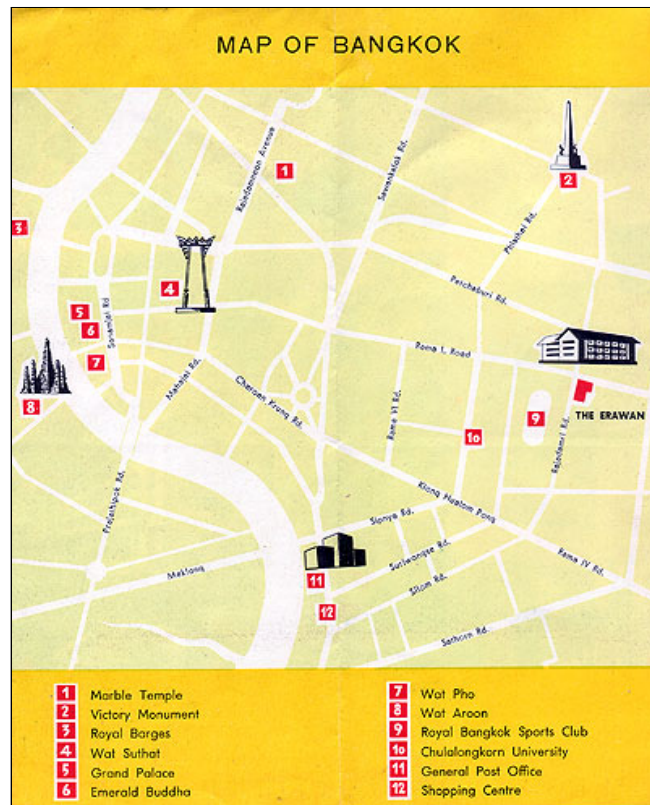


Above: This is the existing shrine that stands at Rajaprasong intersection
Also: [Destruction of the Phra Prom statue](#)

Below: The Shrine today. Note the new Erawan Hotel/Shopping Center behind it.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)







(Photo: Undated postcard)

F-52 THE SIAM DIRECTORY

In Bangkok

The Erawan Hotel

The International Hotel with the friendly charm of Thailand
 Completely Airconditioned 200 Rooms with
Tropical Garden with Swimming Pool and wide terrace
Tea Lounge with Daily Concert
"Le Chalet" the Restaurant with the Swiss trait
"La Cave" South-East Asia's first and only wine cellar
 also offering the ultimate in Seafood
The Ambassador Club features Thai Classical Dance every night

TARIFF ON APPLICATION FOR RESERVATION CABLE: ERAWAN
Tel. 59870—59899 (30 lines)
 UK Representatives: *HOTELS (ABROAD) LTD., LONDON*

(Image: Advertisement from *Siam Directory*,
1963-1964)

For the use of the guests, the hotel building contains itself:

POST
OFFICE



BARBER
ROOM



AIRLINE
OFFICES



BEAUTY
SALOON



DRUG
STORE



GIFT
SHOP



BOOK
STALL



TRAVEL
AGENCY



SHOPPING
ARCADE



Sukhumvit-area fire is out

September 3, 2005



(Photo: Victor)

Sukhumvit-area fire is out
– 20:20, September 3, 2005



(Photo: Victor)

Sukhumvit-area fire
– 19:51, September 3, 2005

Victor from the Sukhumvit 43 area reports: *Looking the window, I see this fire, between the Waterford Condominium across the street and the new Channel 3 building on Param 4 (Rama 4). It apparently seems like this fire is taking place at a structure no higher than seven stories.*



(Photo: Victor)

New Barometer of Thai Economy: Noodles

September 4, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[New Barometer of Thai Economy: Noodles](#) – AP,

September 4, 2005

It's unlikely to replace the country's stock exchange index, but Thailand has come up with a new economic barometer—the Mama Noodle Index...

Arianespace to launch Thaicom 5

September 5, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Arianespace](#)

[to launch Thaicom 5](#) – spaceflightnow,

September 5, 2005

The THAICOM 5 satellite launch contract was signed at World Satellite Business Week 2005 by Dr. Dumrong Kasemset, Executive Chairman of Shin Satellite Plc, and Jean-Yves Le Gall, Chief Executive Officer of Arianespace. THAICOM 5 is slated for an Ariane 5 launch in 2006 from Europe's Spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana...

Trocadero Hotel

September 6, 2005

Categories: Buildings, History

Trocadero Hotel still there
– September 6, 2005

The Trocadero building is there and the hotel itself still exists as 'New Trocadero Hotel' (below). Today the original roof decorations have been removed to add two more stories on the roof and the some of the curved porticos at street level have been replaced by metal-shuttered shops.

From *A New Guide to Bangkok, Second Edition*, compiled by Kim Korwong and Javid Rangthong, Hatha Dhip Company, 1950: *Trocadero Hotel, Suriwongse Road, telephone 30462 – This hotel is situated near the corner of Suriwongse Road and New Road, in the business section of Bangkok, and one of the largest hotels in town.*

All rooms are fully screened and equipped with ceiling fans.

Bath-rooms with running water are attached.

Excellent cuisine and restaurant catering for private parties.

The location of the hotel is particularly fortunate since it lies in the business centre of the town. Taxis are available at any time of the day and night.



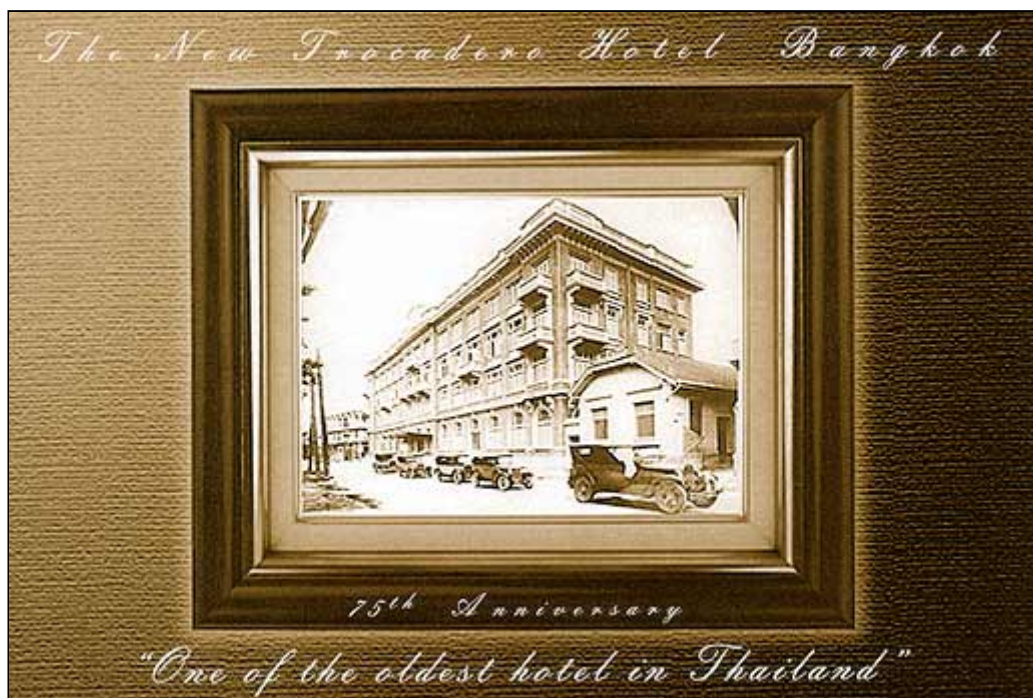
(Photo: *A New Guide to Bangkok, Second Edition*, 1950)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



More on the Trocadero Hotel
– October 7, 2005

Today the Trocadero Hotel is Bangkok equivalent of Hong Kong's Chungking Mansion with utilitarian shops jammed into every nook of the ground floor and rooms in the upper floors. Still, the hotel promotes its long history with free postcards (above) that features a photo of

the hotel from
the 1920s (right).



Nuclear stirrings in Burma

September 6, 2005

Nuclear stirrings in Burma

– *Asia Security Monitor*, September 6, 2005

A Burmese opposition group has charged that Rangoon's military junta is gearing up to erect a clandestine nuclear program. The Geostrategy-Direct intelligence newsletter reports that the opposition Shanland website has revealed regime plans for a covert nuclear facility near the town of Maymyo in the central part of the South Asian state. Over the past two years, the military government is said to have occupied territory surrounding the suspect site and begun construction of roads and tunnels. Intelligence assessments have concluded that Burma is receiving assistance for its nuclear power program – which could evolve to have military applications – from both North Korea and Russia.

Post's pack plenty of pachyderm power

September 6, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Post's
pack plenty of pachyderm power](#) – *The
Nation*, September 6, 2005

One of the most inglorious upsets in sporting history happened yesterday when the Bangkok Post team pulled off a shock 3-0 over the champion Nation team at the third King's Cup Elephant Polo Tournament in Hua Hin...

Post captain Wanchai Rujawongsanti won the toss and elected to go with the wind behind him, which gave his team a big advantage – at the same time a groundless rumour swept the crowd that there were large cracks in The Nation's half of the field. But the cracks turned out to be in The Nation's defence and the younger and fitter Post team took ungentlemanly advantage...

Thailand's 'Mr Condom' makes comeback

September 7, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thailand's](#)

['Mr Condom' makes comeback](#) – The World

Today, September 7, 2005

...MECHAI VIRAVADYA: The report that has been submitted to the Ministry of Public Health a month ago and again today, showed a huge increase in infections of sexually transmitted diseases amongst youth.

And at the same time, it had continuing increase in those who use intravenous drugs, and about men who have sex with men. So it's not just one – it's the whole across the board, and therefore, Thailand has now been knocked to floor.

We now have an increasing rate of HIV infections amongst the general public and so the good work that has been done has now been somewhat negated.

PETER LLOYD: What was your reaction when you first saw those figures?

MECHAI VIRAVADYA: I felt like losing my testicles. It was a great shock and I think it's like people losing their independence or being raped.

I never expected that this would happen, but it's a result of inaction by the Government, absolutely no interest by the Prime Minister except the promise at the World AIDS Conference and all the promises made have not been kept...

Thailand emerges as fake passport capital

September 8, 2005

Categories: Scams

[Thailand](#)

[emerges as fake passport capital](#) – AP, September 8, 2005

...One 24-year-old French tourist said he was offered \$240 by a clean-cut Iranian man in his 30s staying at the same guesthouse he was at on Bangkok's Khao San Road _ the popular backpacker district that police say is a major source of black market passports. "Some Westerners will sell their passports for \$500 to get quick cash, and then they'll say it was stolen, so it's hard to crack down," immigration policeman Chote said...

Villagers claim ET sighting

September 9, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Villagers](#)

[claim ET sighting](#) – *The Nation*, September 9, 2005

Villagers claimed they today (Friday) morning witnessed an "alien" or extra-terrestrial being which appeared like a small-body man with large head and about 70 centimetres tall.

Over 10 residents of Huay Nam Rak Village in Mae Jan district's Tambon Janjawa said they saw the ET today morning in a rice field outside the village.

Sawaeng Boonyalak, 35, said he heard from friends that they saw the alien so he rushed to see it.

"The alien is about 70 cm high and has yellow skin and flat chest. Its mouth is very tiny. It has bald big head with big eyes and big ears," Sawaeng said.

He claimed that several villagers also witnessed the ET at the same time with him.

Sawaeng said the alien wandered around in the field for about an hour without caring the villagers who were looking at it.

"Suddenly, the alien floated to a tree top. After more villagers came to see it, it floated into the sky into the bright light,"

Sawaeng said.

He said villagers did not find any foot print of the being in the area.

Buakaew Intaweng, 59, said she initially thought the alien was a doll but it could move around.

Mae Jan district chief Wisit Sitthisombat said he interviewed over ten villagers and they consistently testified about sighting the alien.

"I asked them to draw what they have seen and the picture came out similarly," Wisit said.

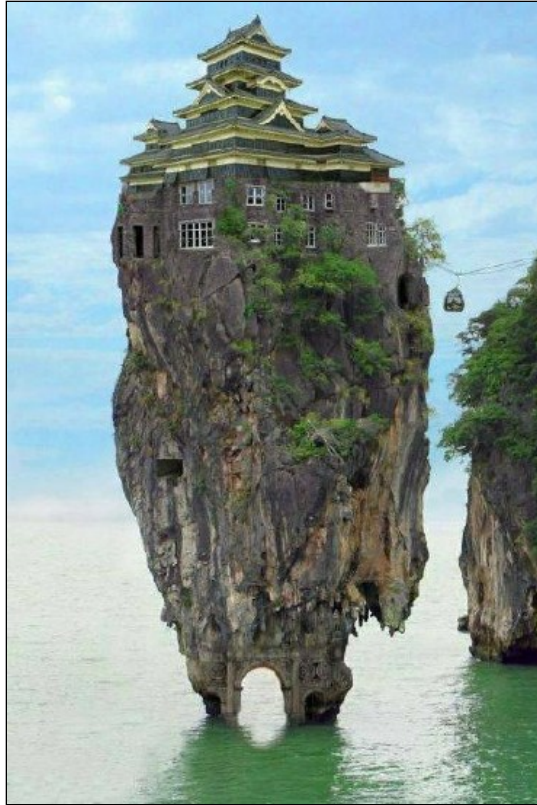
Photoshopping James Bond Rock

September 9, 2005

Categories: Uncategorized

Photoshopping James Bond Rock – September 9, 2005

Nice Photoshopped image (left, probably from [Worth1000](#)) of James Bond Rock in Phuket (below).



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Junta closes popular Rangoon church

September 9, 2005

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[Junta closes popular Rangoon church](#) – *The Irrawaddy*, September 9, 2005

The Full Gospel Assembly, a rapidly growing church in downtown Rangoon, has been ordered by Burma's military government to cease all activities, according to Christian sources in the capital...

Sanctuary of Truth

September 10, 2005

Categories: Buildings, Culture and Society



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Lek Viriyaphan's Sanctuary of Truth – September 10, 2005

The incredible Sanctuary of Truth is located on a small island just north of Pattaya.

Another eccentric cultural project of the late Lek Viriyaphan, the Sanctuary of Truth is a wooden monument that stands in defiance of the harsh ocean elements. It already seems to be rotting away while at the same time expressing a vibrancy rare in Rattanakosin-era Buddhist art.

Modern Thai religious art is usually lacking in the sensitivity and expression compared to the art of earlier eras. The projects underwritten by Lek—including the [Erawan Shrine](#)—have sensational and nontraditional ornamentation and a vibrant quality. For instance, the full-figured statues on the peak of each tier on the Sanctuary are a thrill and creative decorative flourish.

The Sanctuary also has an almost unique emphasis on Thailand's common heritage with Chinese, Cambodian and Lao artistic influences with each wing of the structure integrating Thai artistic style with a style of a neighboring artistic tradition.

There is an ironic emphasis on the 'Buddhist commandment of not drinking alcohol and committing adultery—at a location just north of Pattaya. The tableau is also slightly spoiled by a dolphin show in

nearby dirty pool, but the Sanctuary is an awe-inspiring sight and should not be mis-

Facts about the project

- It was initiated by the late Lek Viriyaphan, the owner of Thonburi Automobile (the agent for Mercedes Benz in Thailand) and Viriya Insurance. He also is responsible for Muang Boran, the [Erawan Shire](#), and the Samut Prakarn Crocodile Farm.
- The green color of the wood is due to treatment with CCA (copper, chromates and arsenic).
- The project was started on August 13, 1981.
- From a plaque at the site:
Area: 32 acres
Shape: A wooden sanctuary pavilion
Indoor: 2,115 square meters
Height: 105 meters
Length: 100 meters
- Interesting info about Lek from the [Sanctuary of Truth website](#): *On April 29, 1972, it was so hard for us to accept that our parent has passed away. Our mother died nine years ago at the age of 78 years old at the Bangkok Hospital. Our father had built the commemoration place to keep her bones at Mueng Boran, Bang Pu. The father often sat at the shelter as this place can see her grave. Today, our father also followed the mother peacefully on November 17, 2000. The day we were waiting for has come. His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Queen came to cremate their bodies on September 4, 2001. Usually, our family likes to show our works but not ourselves. It is because we think it doesn't matter. However, for recording our parents' story to the next generation, we gladly let this record happens. Our father was born in business family. The grandfather was an owner of pharmacy store in Sum Peng. He was like a playboy. Therefore, our father had 7 sister-in-laws and many from another mothers. Perhaps from this reason, he left Thailand and went to China for studying as he had relatives there...*

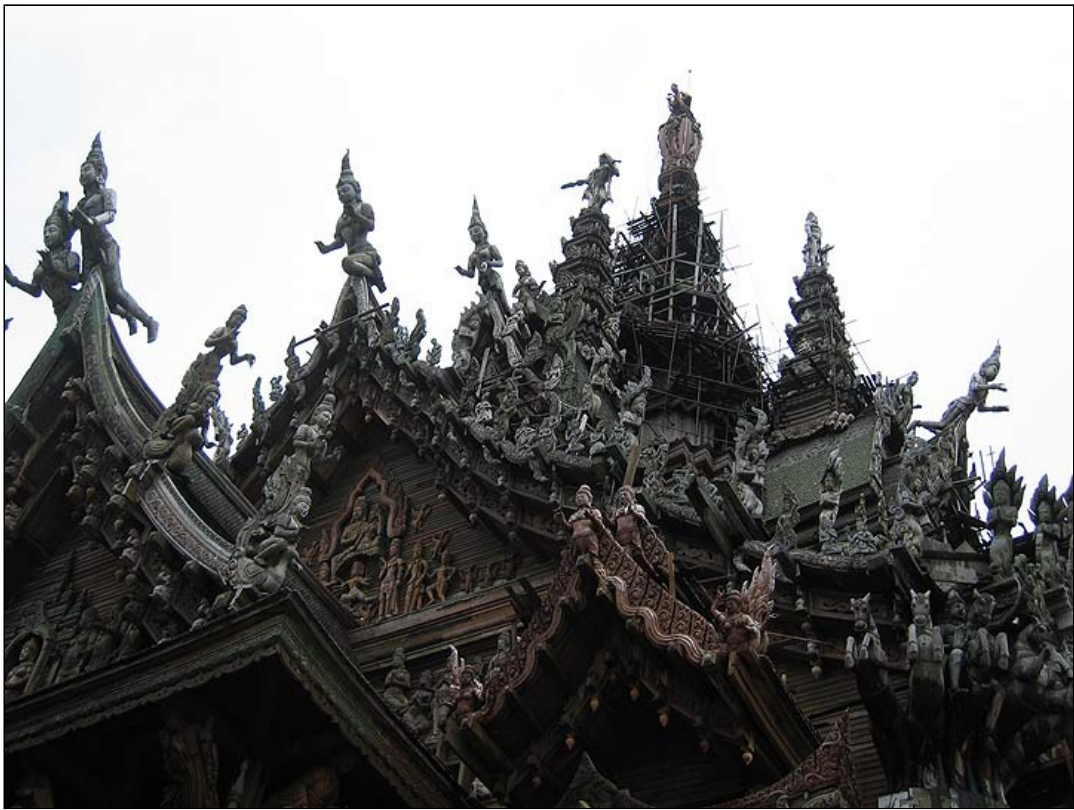


(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

From a plaque at the entrance to the Sanctuary: *From the Cold War era until today, the world has been under the influence of western civilization , accentuated by materialism and devotion to advanced technology. Many natural areas have been degraded , and men have drifted away from their old values in such a way that morality and spiritual contentment have become irrelevant to many people. Their attempts to control nature have transformed many people into egotistical individuals who are out to destroy one another through incessant wars and economic plundering. Most are after only happiness in this life, and believing that there is no life after this...*



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: From a plaque at the entrance of the Sanctuary: *Wood sculptures in the front gate depict parents as the creators who give life to their offspring. Parental love is clean and pure. It is giving without taking, just like water in a clear stream that refreshes the heart and soul. The kindness of a father and mother is greater than the sky and the ocean.*



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: The central *chedi*



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Rafters in the west wing.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Massive planks that make up the floor.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: The site is surrounded by a Rattanakosin-style wa



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Khmer vaulted roof in the south wing.

Right: Octagonal rafters in the Chinese-themed north wing.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: The central pillar of the site (traditionally thought to contain a ghost)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Cement block foundation encased in wood.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Squared Khmer columns in the south wing



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Model of the structure in a nearby pavilion.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Politics dominates reshuffle – Hopes for merit promotions dashed

September 10, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Politics](#)

[dominates reshuffle – Hopes for merit promotions dashed](#) –

Bangkok Post, September 10, 2005

The much-awaited military reshuffle list, announced yesterday after receiving royal approval, is a disappointment for armed forces officers hoping for changes showing promotions are based on merit and not favouritism, one general said. The list remains almost intact, except for the air force chief's post which went to ACM Chalit Pukpasuk instead of ACM Raden Peungpak...

Singapore Internet Control: As Bad as China?

September 11, 2005

Categories: Singapore

[Singapore](#)

[Internet Control: As Bad as China?](#)

– Friskodude, September 11, 2005

For the first time in Singapore, two bloggers have been charged under the Sedition Act with making racist remarks...

Crash in Yala

September 12, 2005

Categories: Thai Railroads, The Thai Deep South



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

Crash in Yala – September 12, 2005

Mr. John reports: *Police of Yala check the accident where the Yala-Bangkok no. 902 express train crashed with a school pick up car of Thammavitaya Moonniithi School at Thambon Yupo, Yala. The driver and 8 students died and 10 were injured.*

More on the train accident in Yala – rotfaithai.com, September 16, 2005

Wisarut provides more on the tragic accident at Yala Station: *Southern Express No. 38 (Sugei Golok-Bangkok) hit a pickup that was taking female students of Thammawitthaya High School just after finishing the wedding feast. The pickup was hit at 3:25pm on September 11, 2005. 10 dead, 4 hospitalized, 3 injured but treated and released from the hospital. This tragic accident is due to*

- 1) No proper blocking gate to prevent the pickup driver from speeding up the vehicle while the Southern Express was just departing from Yala Station.*
- 2) The Driver (Mr. Ali) wants to speed the truck up before the sunset without taking a look at the speeding Southern Express or he thought that the train already departed from Yala so he can speed up... and he paid for his blunt errors by heading to gubor (Muslim cemetery).*

This cause the pickup to be stuck under the bogie of HID Loco No. 4511. AHK No. 4230 was sent from Hat Yai to take over the duty of HIS no. 4511.

List of 10 dead:

Mr. Ali (pickup driver), Miss Sanit Manmah, Miss Mariya Luebaesa, Miss Kanisa Ismae, Miss Paosiya Jehmamah, Miss Kaliyah Kloopae, Miss Kaliyah Daraning, Miss Farida Seng, Miss Farida Madiyah, and Noorisan Doomad (about 14 years old)

4 In hospital:

Miss Karimah Haman (both legs broken along with the cracked pelvis), Miss Maseetau Deesaeh (broken right leg, wounds on the face and arms), Miss Anisa Sarai (head injured), and Miss Ainee Salah (right head injured, wound on the face under the eyes, and both legs broken)

3 injured but have returned home:

Miss Usaimah Yehyae, Miss Kariyah Dahayah, and Miss Sarina Hasae

The consequence is that MOTC Minister has to pay immediate compensation to the victims of this tragic accident and compel SRT to install a proper blocking gate around Yala Station (especially at the accident site) to prevent another tragedy. The gates will be installed in 30 days.

On the forum: [Yala Level-Crossing Tragedy](#)

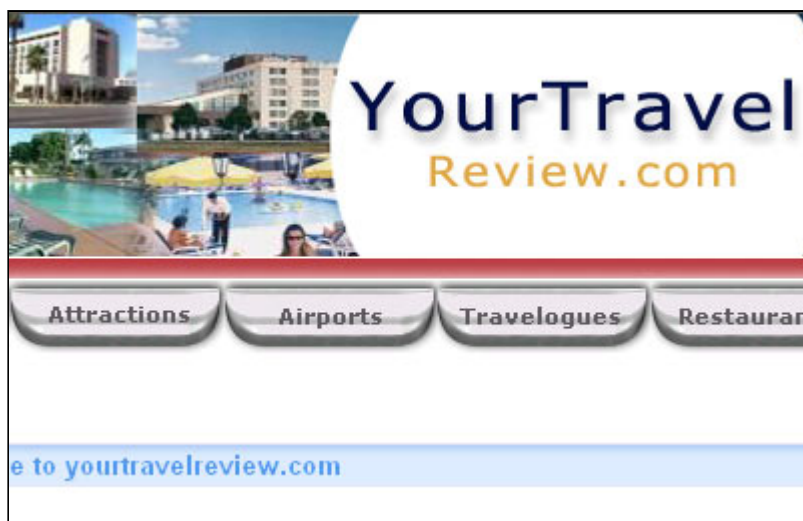
More on [Troubles in the South](#)

Losing MCOT.org

September 12, 2005

Losing MCOT.org
– September 12, 2005

MCOT.org is the home of Channel 9 and the Thai News Agency and is one of the most widely linked-to Thai news sites. For some reason the MCOT.org domain has been allowed to expire and now it points to a generic travel site (below). MCOT is using MCOT.net, but their website header (right) still prominently displays 'MCOT.org.'



Foreign airlines hiring Indian crew to cut costs

September 12, 2005

Categories: Airports and Airlines

[Foreign airlines hiring Indian crew to cut costs](#) –

Bernama, September 12 , 2005

In what could well become a normal scenario of the future for many foreign airlines anxious to cut costs and yet have good service on their planes, some US-based airlines are thinking of hiring in-flight crew members from India...

More on Thai workers in Kaohsiung

September 12, 2005

More

on Thai workers in Kaohsiung – September
12, 2005

From the Taipei Times.com:

[Workers](#)

[seeking better life find torture](#)

[Kaohsiung](#)

[riot exposes flaws of brokerage system](#)

[Thugs,](#)

[lies and anarchy mark domestic workers' lives](#)

[Administration's](#)

[sincerity questioned over workers' rights](#)

[Editorial:](#)

[Riots rooted in injustices](#)

*...Although the workers are not prisoners, their freedom is restricted
to almost the same degree and the conditions they live in are not
dissimilar to a jail...*

[Thai](#)

[workers riot against 'unfair' firm](#)

Thailand or Taiwan?

September 14, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

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Dr.
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Chiang
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from
e groups traveled through Chiang Mai to study the many



Courtesy of Joanne Ehmantraut

The main gate in Taipei, Thailand is one of the many sights students of the study abroad course, The Spirit of Thailand, saw. The trip lasted 19 days during the summer, and in that time, the class visited Chiang Mai, Bangkok and Phuket. The goal of the course was to immerse students in another society to study its people, cultural diversity and religions.

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Thailand
or Taiwan? – September
14, 2005

[A student report about a trip to Thailand](#) included this photo (right). Apparently someone has a hard time differentiating Thailand and Taiwan (as well as spelling Taipei).

Hotel design a worry for Asians

September 14, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Hotel](#)

[design a worry for Asians](#) – *The Nation*,

September 14, 2005

...But the hotel might find it difficult to attract Asian visitors, who are mostly Buddhist and who may feel the hotel looks too much like a temple. For Asians, staying in a place like the Dhara Dhevi could feel like staying overnight at a temple – something only ghosts do.

Even representatives of the 39 Chinese companies visiting Chiang Mai this month didn't want to stay at the hotel...

‘HarrisBlackWatch.com’

September 15, 2005

[‘HarrisBlackWatch.com’](#)

– September 15, 2005

Strange story... If you scroll to the bottom of the page: *In September 2005, Harris Black returned to Thailand.*

Notes on canceling Muang Thai Rai Sapdah

September 17, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

Notes on canceling *Muang Thai Rai Sapdah* – September 17, 2005

MCOT has terminated the program "Muang Thai Rai Sapdah" ([Ch 9 drops Sondhi for royal references](#) – The Nation, September 16, 2005) after being too critical toward Premier Thaksin—especially the Royal power case on the nomination of the new Supreme Patriarch who is the alliance with Dhammakaya—even though the old Supreme Patriarch is alive and well... while keeping the ultra right wing television program of Governor Samak alive and well.

This kind of heavy hand on the media after the hostile takeover of Matichon and Bangkok Post has generated storms from the media and the Senate toward Grammy Entertainment PCL. Even the failure to take over Matichon, Grammy could reap the profit from the stock price anyway.

Reference on the termination of a TV program by the Manager Group [here](#) and [here](#).

Reference on Grammy Entertainment Affairs [here](#).

Reference on the massive closing down of pondoks [here](#).

[Political talk show axed by Channel 9 – Latest victim of govt meddling, says Sondhi](#) – Bangkok Post, September 16, 2005

A political talk show known for its forthright criticism of the government was axed by Channel 9 television yesterday, effective immediately. The programme, Muang Thai Rai Sapda (Thailand Weekly), was produced by Thai Day.Com Co and hosted by Manager newspaper founder Sondhi Limthongkul and news commentator Sarocha Porn-udomsak...

[Activist warns of plot to control the media](#) – Bangkok Post, September 16, 2005

Suriyasai Katasila, secretary-general of the Campaign for Popular Democracy, has asked why MCOT Plc has not taken off the air a programme hosted by ultra-conservative commentators Samak Sundaravej and Dusit Siriwan, which he said had criticised people in breach of their rights and freedom. The Samak-Dusit Kid Tam Wan (Samak-Dusit's Daily Thoughts) programme is broadcast on Modernine (Channel 9) TV from 11 to 11.30am, Monday to Friday.

Mr Suriyasai said Muang Thai Rai Sapda is the only programme on free TV that "speaks the truth" about political and social woes, and so is popular among viewers.

Abolishing the programme, he said, was part of an organised campaign to control and take over the media under the "Shinawatra model" or the "one minister-one medium" programme...

[Press freedom violated, says watchdog](#) – Bangkok Post, September 17, 2005

...Opposition leader Abhisit Vejjajiva said the decision was not unexpected, given the programme's biting criticism of the government.

Mr Abhisit said he did not agree Mr Sondhi's comments damaged the monarchy. "On the contrary, the show helped people value the monarchy and royal prerogatives," Mr Abhisit said.

Rosana Tositrakul, of the Confederation of Consumer Organisations, Thailand, said protests would intensify because the government was trying to control the media.

Overland-Underwater.com

September 17, 2005

Overland-Underwater.com

– September 17, 2005

Two years in the planning, four friends have teamed up to organise the ultimate lifetime experience... during the next year and a half we will be raising money for CARE International by undertaking a challenging journey of 65,000 km to drive from the United Kingdom to New Zealand...

Thailand's "Iron Lady" pressured to leave key post after exposing government corruption

September 18, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Thailand's "Iron Lady" pressured to leave key post after exposing government corruption](#) – AP, September 18, 2005

The biggest problem for Jaruvan Maintaka is that she knows too much – about corrupt politicians, shady tycoons and multimillion-dollar rip-offs. And that may well cost Thailand's "Iron Lady" her job as the country's first auditor-general.

Jaruvan has been locked out of her office and had her salary frozen, but she refuses to resign unless King Bhumibol Adulyadej endorses the government's pick to replace her. In a move with few precedents, the revered constitutional monarch hasn't signed off on the nomination.

The case has heightened political tensions, generated debate about possible rifts between the government and Royal Palace and focused the spotlight on massive corruption in and around the regime of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

"Jaruvan's tenacity in going after big-time crooks has become the stuff of legend," The Nation newspaper wrote recently. "With only half of her term gone she has amassed a menagerie of adversaries – from vested interests to corrupt politicians – and in the process became a target for elimination."

The 58-year-old civil servant was appointed in 2001 to head the new auditor-general's office, an independent body created to track state financial transactions and spot signs of corruption.

Initially viewed as a "paper tiger," she set about her job with aggressiveness and a razor-sharp intellect. Soon the MBA graduate from Michigan State University had gained a reputation for outspokenness and what she jokingly describes as male-like behavior that comes from being the eldest sibling and thus treated like a boy by her father.

A devout Roman Catholic in this predominantly Buddhist country, Jaruvan, a mother of three children, says she also gains strength and protection from her faith and God.

In her new job, Jaruvan dug into unscrupulous deals and exposed corrupt tactics that boggle the mind by their subtle deviousness and scale. She estimates that corruption in state-related projects costs the country more than \$9.7 billion every year.

Her probes, which resulted in the removal of top ministry officials, uncovered corruption or irregularities in highway construction projects, Bangkok's new international airport, procurement of medicines at government hospitals, long-distance telephone service in rural areas and a government plan to compensate farmers whose chickens were infected with avian flu.

"I have been a fighter all my life, and if I am right I will continue to fight," Jaruvan said in an interview with the Bangkok Post earlier this year. "If I had just turned a blind eye or looked the other way, none of this would have happened."

Jaruvan's troubles began in July last year when the Constitution Court ruled that the process leading to her appointment was unconstitutional. But critics and opposition politicians say that minor legal points were brought up simply to bring her down and that the move was a trademark of Thaksin's regime – eroding independent, democratic institutions for the benefit of the ruling elite and its cronies.

When a new candidate, Visut Montriwat, a former senior official in the Finance Ministry, was submitted for royal endorsement June 10, the king did not assent – for the first time since Thaksin took power in 2001 –

and Jaruvan in turn said she would only resign by royal command. The deadlock continues.

“What the king is doing is to make things right and he has the right to do so according to the Constitution,” says Sulak Sivaraksa, a social critic who has written books on the Thai monarchy. “If Thaksin understands this, he has to immediately revise the decision. He should not push (the issue) further.”

Algeria tempts Thai contractors to infrastructure projects

September 19, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Algeria](#)

[tempts Thai contractors to infrastructure projects](#) –

TNA, September 19, 2005

Algeria called for Thai contractors to launch varied construction projects in the North African nation...

Thai-China trade expected to triple in next five years

September 19, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thai-China](#)

[trade expected to triple in next five years](#)

– *The Star Online*, September 19, 2005

Trade between Thailand and China is expected to triple from the current US\$15 billion (euro12.2 billion) annually in the next four to five years as more incentives are granted to Chinese investors, the national news agency said Sunday...

‘Bouble Impact’

September 19, 2005

‘Bouble Impact’

– September 19, 2005

A funny typo: On September 9, a prominent graphic appeared

at the top right of *The Nation* website. Over the next week it changed as one of the typos was removed. It still says "Leran" though.

Update

The final typo was fixed today...

September 9 >



September 12 >



September 19 >



The de-mystification of PM Thaksin

September 20, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[The de-mystification of PM Thaksin](#) – Bangkok Post, September 20, 2005

Since his Thai Rak Thai party garnered more than 75% of lower house seats in the February general election, the present political standing of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra—who finds himself challenged on several fronts—suggests that much of Mr Thaksin's political capital has been depleted and squandered over recent months. Much of the mystique that accompanied his populist policies and characterised his first-term in power has been eroded...

These episodes have further corroded Mr Thaksin's aura of invincibility. Indeed, he seems to have lost his Midas touch. He now looks like just another politician out for political survival, rather than a crusader bent on transforming the Thai economy and society...

Tension Marks Thai Leader's U.S. Visit

September 20, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Tension](#)

[Marks Thai Leader's U.S. Visit](#) – AP,

September 20, 2005

...But a group of U.S. lawmakers is also pushing Bush to publicly take Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to task for his cozy relationship with the military dictatorship in neighboring Myanmar (also known as Burma) and for pummeling the democratic freedoms of Thai citizens...

New Road in 1930 and Taking a bath

September 21, 2005



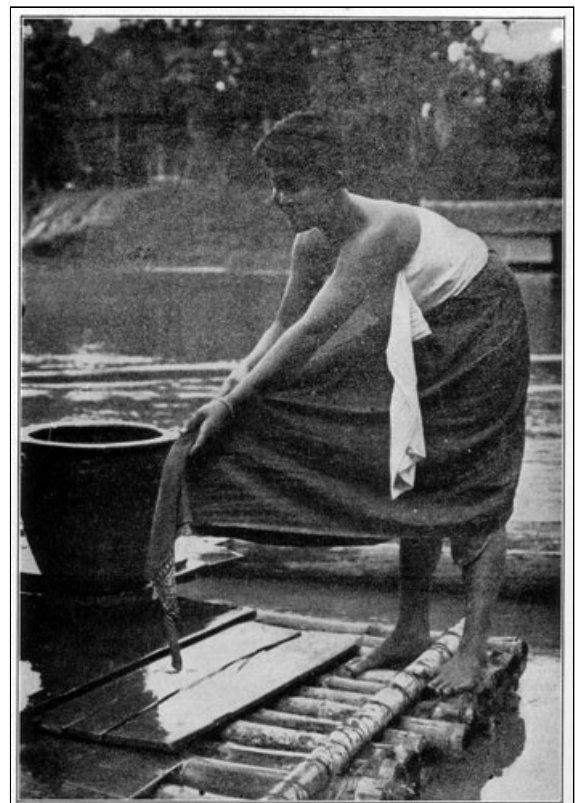
New Road in 1930 and Taking a bath
– September 21, 2005

The two plates here are reproduced from *Bangkok to Bombay*, Frank Carpenter, Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc, 1930

Left: Caption of the photo reads: *Not so many years ago New Road, the main thoroughfare of Bangkok, was only a winding elephant track along the Menam River. Nowadays motors, rickshaws, and handcarts are mingled in the stream of traffic flowing past temples and pagodas.*

(Photo: *Bangkok to Bombay*, Frank Carpenter, Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc, 1930)

Right: Caption of the photo reads:
Although they are a good-natured and happy-looking lot, the Siamese girls and women, even when taking their daily baths, are not exactly alluring. They all wear their hair boy-style and most of them chew betelnut, which blackens their teeth and stains their lips.



(Photo: *Bangkok to Bombay*,

Frank Carpenter, Doubleday, Doran and Company,
Inc, 1930)

But will a Bt2 coin cause confusion?

September 23, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

FRIDAY

BUG: But will a Bt2 coin cause confusion?

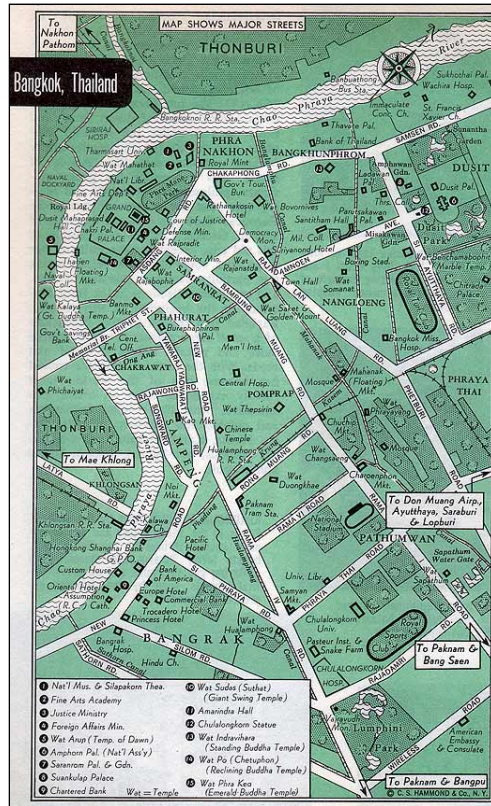
– *The Nation*, September 23, 2005

...So why don't they just introduce a Bt3 coin to reduce the production cost to a third of the normal rate? The Treasury Department didn't say this in its press release, but everyone knows that the word "three-baht" is a jinx. It often conjures up images of the creepy three-baht ghost, the leading character in the popular Thai cartoon series and blockbuster movie of the same name...

Bangkok City Map, 1958

September 24, 2005

Categories: Maps



(Photo: Hammonds City Atlas, 1958 from the 2Bangkok.com collection)

Bangkok 1958 – September
24, 2005

Bangkok map from a 1958 Hammonds City Atlas. Interesting things on this map: Mahanak (Floating) Market? Santitham Hall (where the UN building is now)? The Royal Mint (where the Pinklao Bridge is now)? Sunantha Garden on Samsen Road?

On the forum: [More on the Hammonds Atlas map of Bangkok](#)

“The Siamese Premier’s daughter”

September 24, 2005

Categories: Old photos and films



"The Siamese Premier’s daughter"

– September 24, 2005

The caption of this photo reads "Nang Sao Rajanibul Phibul

Songgram, the Siamese Premier’s daughter"

From *A New Guide to Bangkok, Second Edition*,
compiled

by Kim Korwong and Javid Rangthong, Hatha Dhip
Company, 1950

(Photo: *A New Guide to Bangkok, Second Edition*, 1950 from the 2Bangkok.com collection)

Hi Phi Phi

September 24, 2005

Categories: Communities

[Hi Phi Phi](#) – September 24, 2005

[Hi Phi Phi](#) is a

community-based initiative of local Koh Phi Phi residents and non-Thais, working to help the people of Phi Phi rebuild their lives after the Indian Ocean tsunami of December 26, 2004.

Islanders and volunteers have worked side by side to clean streets and reefs, repair homes and bring back smiles on Thailand's most beautiful tropical paradise. Although much long-term work remains ahead, Phi Phi is back on its feet and ready for business.

Mandala Airlines and killer durians

September 26, 2005

[Mandala](#)

[Airlines and killer durians](#) – friskodude,

September 26, 2005

Also: [The](#)

[People's Paradise – Love it or loathe it, Pattaya is where Asia's mass tourism started](#) – Time, September, 2005

Website of the Black and White Photographic Society of Thailand

September 26, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Website of the [Black
and White Photographic Society of Thailand](#)

– September 26, 2005

New Pantip Plaza outlets planned – Two local department stores sold to Charoen

September 26, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[New Pantip Plaza](#)

[outlets planned – Two local department stores sold to Charoen](#)

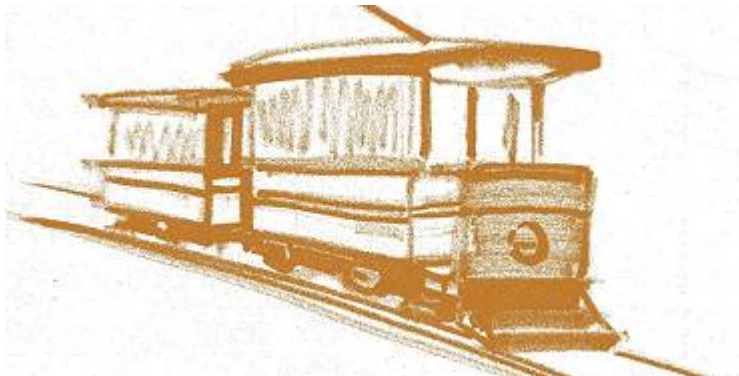
– *Bangkok Post*, September 26, 2005

Banglampoo Department Store Co, one of the oldest Thai-owned department store operators, has sold two of its three outlets to liquor tycoon Charoen Sirivadhanabhakdi, according to an executive from the department store operator. The two outlets are located in the Bang Pho area and on Ngam Wong Wan Road. The company is currently involved in a legal dispute over its third store, in Banglampoo, with the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, the source said...

Tramway-Related Companies

September 27, 2005

Categories: Trams



Profiles of companies involved in Thai mass transit in the past

[The Siam Electricity Company Ltd.](#)

[Bangkok Electricity Authority](#)

[The Siamese Tramway Company, Ltd.](#)

[The Menam Motor Boat Company, Ltd.](#)

[The Mae Klong Railway](#)

[The Paknam Railways](#)

[Return to the Bangkok Tramways main page](#) **Transit history notes: Foreigner owners, the Siam Electricity Company, and share prices** – September 27, 2005

Wisarut provides these transit history notes: By 1925, Belgian businessmen (Messr. Jadot, etc.) had control of two-thirds of the Siam Electricity Company. The other one-third was controlled by the Crown Property Bureau even though most workers in Siam Electricity Co. Ltd. were Siamese (the Chinese workers were the majority in the tram rolling stock maintenance unit in Siam Electricity Co. Ltd. and the Danes controlled the management section).

The company wanted to reduce the share price to reduce its liabilities. After Siam Electricity Company changed its name to Siam Electricity Corporation on May 5, 1927, the share price of the company was slipped down. The company wished that after changing its name from Siam Electricity Corporation to Thai Electricity Corporation on September 28, 1939, the company would be allowed to reduce its share price from 50 baht per share in September 1939 to 25 baht per share. However, the government prohibited the company from doing so after changing its name to prevent further damage to shareholders (such as the Crown Property Bureau) due to share depreciation.

Siam Electricity Co. Ltd. (one of shareholders in Paknam Railway Co. Ltd.) helped the company to install the electric tram and run the service. Therefore, Siam Electricity Co. Ltd. had to pay the lease of the line to Paknam Railway at the rate of 3,000 baht a month so as to run the electric tram services without problems with other Paknam Railway shareholders.

The Siam Electricity Company Ltd.

from *Twentieth Century Impressions of Siam*, Arnold Wright and Oliver T. Breakspear, 1908

	Bangkolem – Car miles run	Bangkolem – Receipts, Ticals	Samsen – Car miles run	Samsen – Receipts, Ticals
1907	900,929	568,036	764,540	322,996
1906	879,324	581,586	630,365	324,870

1905	652,067	531,256	475,175	337,155
1904	536,802	449,321	432,443	315,431
1903	518,976	404,051	433,217	303,013
1902	437,378	305,786	422,609	256,054
1901	361,746	275,268	Started in September	Started in September
1900	370,812	247,983		
1899	326,552	190,057		
Increase in previous 7 years	169%	206%		
Increase last year	2%	-2%		

Many of those duties and responsibilities usually associated with municipal enterprise are in Bangkok undertaken by the Siam Electricity Company—a company of Danish origin, in which Danish capital is principally employed. They contract with the Government to water certain of the streets; they supply the whole of the city with electric light, own and operate one-half of the tramways, besides being largely interested in the Siamese Tramway Company, which controls the Dusit, Hualampong, and City Wall lines, and, in addition, are responsible for equipment and maintenance of a fire brigade.

To trace the company's growth would be but to sketch the career of the chairman and general manager, Mr. Aage Westenholz, who on account of his energy, powers of organisation, and financial ability is entitled to a most worthy tribute. Mr. Aage Westenholz was born in Denmark in 1859, and educated at the Polytechnical High School in Copenhagen, from which institution he graduated as a civil engineer, and after a few years of European practice came to Siam in 1886. For some time he interested himself in business on his own account, and constructed a horse tramway in Bangkok, of which he was appointed manager.

An electrification of the system followed, but shortly after this Mr. Westenholz severed his connection with the company he had thus far steered in safety, and once more interested himself in private civil engineering work until he took over the management of the then existing Electric Light Company, in which position he remained until the amalgamation of this company with the Tramways Company, from which stage the concern was known as the Siam Electric Company, Ltd. In the war of 1893 against the French, Mr. Aage Westenholz enlisted as volunteer in the Siamese Army, and was present at the battle of Paknam. Previous to his taking over the management of the Siam Electric Company, Ltd., the concern was not in a very flourishing state. Its present-day value, however, may be gauged by the fact that its concession from the Siamese Government extends until 1950.

The first and principal branch of the company's work is that of electric lighting. By an agreement, dated November 9, 1901, the Government undertake to consume 50,000 units of current from the company in each calendar month such supply to be entirely for the use of the Government and not for sale or transfer to private persons for the purpose of lighting in streets and buildings is supplied from central power station, situated in the middle of the distributing area. We are indebted to officials of the company for the following particulars and details of the contents of this huge building. The engine and boiler room at the power station are iron-constructed buildings separated with a heavy brick wall. The floor is concrete, so the whole construction is made as fireproof as possible. In the boiler-room are installed eleven Babcock and Wilcox

boilers are adapted for paddy husk or liquid fuel, and others for coal or liquid fuel. The husk, which is chiefly used, is supplied to the boilers by means of a screw conveyer.

The machinery in the engine-room includes—

I. For lighting (2,050 volts, single phase, alternate current, 100 complete cycles per minute):—

Four 100-kw. generators of Mordey's type, rope-driven by Brush compound vertical engines, to which the exciters (65 v.) are connected.

Two 343-kw. Siemens-Halske generators directly connected to Burmeister & Wain triple-expansion vertical engines with exciters placed at end of the main shafts.

One 180-kw. General Electrical Company (Schenectady) generator, directly connected to a Belliss & Morcom compound engine, exciter on main shaft.

One 4-cylinder Burmeister and Wain Diesel motor, directly connected to a 150-kw. generator, exciter on main shaft.

One 150-kw. Brown-Boveri motor generator for the purpose of utilising the tramway machinery as a reserve in case of breakdowns in the lighting plant,

2. For tramways (500-550 volts direct current):—

One 50-kw. short dynamo, belt-driven by a Ball & Woods horizontal compound engine.

One 135-kw. Siemens-Halske dynamo, belt-driven by a Ball & Woods horizontal compound engine.

One 200-kw. Westinghouse dynamo, belt-driven by a Ball & Woods, horizontal compound engine.

One 200-kw. General Electrical Company (Schenectady) dynamo, directly connected to a Ball & Woods horizontal compound engine.

One 200-kw. Dick, Kerr & Co. dynamo, directly connected to a Browett, Lindley & Co's compound engine.

One 500-kw. General Electrical Company (Schenectady) dynamo, driven by a Curtis vertical steam turbine.

Within a year the company will have to add considerable units to their machinery both for lighting and tramways.

The switchboards erected in the engine-room are made of marble for the 2,030-volt alternate current and of slate for the 500-volt direct current.

The alternating current for light and power is distributed over the town by twelve different circuits fitted with automatic switches. There are ten circuits for tramways power, out of which six are for the company's own lines, 1-wheel. The whole distributing system consists of over-head wires fixed on wooden posts. At the spot of consumption the alternating current is transformed to 100 volts. The amount of current consumed by customers is measured by meters at customers' residences. The company has at its premises a meter-testing department fitted with Siemens-Schuckert's newest instrument for this purpose.

Tramways

The tramways of the Siam Electricity Company Ltd., are of a total length of 11.83 miles, single line with 46 sidings, divided into the following sections:—

Bangkolem line 5.63 miles

Samsen line 5.37 miles

Asadang line 0.33 miles

Rachawongs line 0.50 miles

The Bangkolem line runs from a point opposite the flagstaff at the royal palace through several minor streets in the city to Seekak Phya Sri, and thence along the entire length of New Road, the main artery of Bangkok, to Bangkolem Point on the River Menam. There is a very heavy traffic on this line, about 25,000 passengers being carried daily. It is extremely difficult to accommodate so many persons on a single line, but so far the Government authorities have not given their consent to a double line being laid, owing to the narrowness of the New Road. Trail cars, however, will soon be put in use and will relieve the difficulty.

The Samsen line connects the suburbs Bangkrabu and Samsen with the city, through which it runs to a point near the Paknam railway station, cutting the Bangkolem line at the Royal Barracks and Sam Yek.

The Asadang and Rachawongs lines connect landings on the river with the main lines. The rails are grooved, 79 lbs. per yard, joined with substantial fishplates and copper bonded. The over-head material consists of

double hard drawn copper wire. No. 00, and overhead feeders. The system is divided in six feeder sections with automatic switches.

Excepting ten obsolete cars, most of the cars are of the General Electricity Company (Schenectady) make. Up to the present only single motor-cars of 25-37 h.p. have been used, but double motor-cars with trail-cars are now being introduced. The car bodies are of teakwood and constructed locally. There is accommodation for 126 cars in the company's three car-sheds while the workshop has room for 14 more.

The total daily car-mileage on the company's lines is 5,130 of which 2,617 are run on the Bangkok line. The number of cars in daily traffic is 48. Great trouble has been taken by the management to assure exact time and to avoid delays, with the result that there is now immediate connection at all junctions. Cars are run at four-minute intervals on all the company's lines. A remarkable feature about the traffic is the small number of accidents which take place. This result is achieved by careful inspection and strict rules. The operators, all of whom are natives, are remarkably well paid, but heavily fined or dismissed in case of carelessness.

Siam Electricity Share Prices (May 5, 1927 – September 22, 1939) from the National Archives

May 5, 1927: 100 baht/share (total 225,632 shares)

February 12, 1935: 90 baht/share (total 225,632 shares)

May 7, 1937: 80 baht/share (total 225,632 shares)

June 1, 1937: 60 baht/share (total 225,632 shares)

March 21, 1939: 50 baht/share (total 225,632 shares) -> the minimum limit

September 22, 1939: the cabinet approved Siam Electricity Corporation's request to change their name to "Thai Electricity Corporation" effective September 28, 1939. However, the cabinet did not allow TEC shares prices to go further from 50 baht/share to 25 baht/share.

Bangkok Electricity Authority from the National Archives

After December 21, 1951: ceased services for the following lines:

1. Bang Krabue Pier – Bang Krabue Intersection, with a distance of 353 m
2. Chao Phraya River – Sukhothai Palace Intersection (Now Vajira Intersection), with a total distance of 526 m

New Line (definitely using materials from the defunct lines) Ploenchit Extension -> Rajprasong Intersection-Soi Ruenrudee with a distance of 1100 m. Initially, Bangkok Electricity Authority wanted to construct it to Soi Watthana (Sukhumvit 19) with a total distance of 1900 m, but the Maenam Railway line (Makkasan – Maenam) barred them from doing so. The Skytrain has replaced the Yotse tram line, Silomline, and Ploenchit tram line (almost).

August 13, 1951: 202 trams constructed before WWII were run by the Bangkok Electricity Authority. Most of them were in very dilapidated condition. Bangkok Electricity Authority planned to buy 100 trams from Birmingham with a price tag of 350,000 baht/car. Furthermore, Bangkok Electricity Authority proposed 8 trolley bus lines as substitutes for trams and needed a loan of 126,889,420 baht to implement such projects. However, the government refused to approve the project since they were in very weak financial condition.

The Siamese Tramway Company, Ltd.

from *Twentieth Century Impressions of Siam*, Arnold Wright and Oliver T. Breakspear, 1908

The Siamese Tramway Company, Ltd., is a Siamese enterprise. It owes its existence to the initiative of H.R.H. Prince Naradhip, who secured the concession for three tramlines in Bangkok in the year 1903. Having formed a joint stock company for the working of the concession, the lines were opened on October 1, 1905. Encouraged by the signal success of the Siam Electricity Company's tramways, great expectations of the company as a money-making concern were held by the promoters, and the shares went up to rather fantastic prices even before operations were commenced. The company works under the financial disadvantage of a very high Government track rent, and has therefore so far given the promoters scanty returns for the capital invested.

In 1907 the majority of shares were brought up by the Siam Electricity Company, Ltd., and the two companies are now under joint management.

The total length of the Siamese Tramway Company's lines is 11.63 miles, single lines, with 41 sidings, dividing in the following lines:—

Dusit line – 6.25 miles

Hualampong line – 3.75 miles

City Wall line – 1.63 miles

The Dusit line runs from a point near the River Menam in Samsen district, through several minor streets, through the Dusit Park and along the City Wall, passing the Royal Palace on the riverside to the terminus at Ta Chang Wang Na.

The Hualampong line runs from a point near the Paknam railway station along Sapatoom road to Seekak Sao Ching Cha, and through Bantanao road to the terminus at Ta Chang Wang Na.

The City Wall line is a branch line running along the City Wall and connecting the two above-mentioned lines. The rails are grooved, 33 1/2 kilogrammes per metre, joined with substantial fishplates and copper bonded, and the overhead material consists of double soft drawn copper wire No. 2/0, with overhead feeders. The system is divided into 4 feeder sections. All the cars are of Dick, Kerr & Co.'s single motor type of 25 h.p., the bodies being of teak-wood and constructed locally. There is accommodation for 56 cars in the company's lines is 2,819, and the number of cars in daily traffic is 30.

The company's power station is situated at Wat Samo Kreng, on the river. There are two 200-kw. Dick, Kerr & Co.'s 500-volt direct-current dynamos directly coupled to Browett, Lindley & Co.'s comp. engine. Steam is supplied by two Babcock & Wilcox boilers of 250 h.p. each.

The Menam Motor Boat Company, Ltd.

from *Twentieth Century Impressions of Siam*, Arnold Wright and Oliver T. Breakspear, 1908

The Menam Motor Boat Company, Ltd., is a Siamese company started by Mr. Westenholz in 1906 for the purpose of maintaining a passenger service on the River Menam, which should work in conjunction with the Siam Electricity Company's tramways. There are at present 10 motor boats and 2 steam launches running on three different routes. The company, which is under the management of Mr. John Brown, also operates a tramway in the small town, Paklat, on the west bank of the river four miles south of Bangkok.

All about the Maenam Motorboat – December 28, 2005

Wisarat found some amazing data in the rare book room of National Library...

From *Tramways in Bangkok* from *Geography of Bangkok Circle* by Mr. Thad Phrammanop, 1931 (2000 copies sold at 1 baht each)

1) Maenam Motorboat has boat service from Bang Kho Laem Pier along Bang Khun Thian canal all the way to Bang Khun Thian Police Office with a ticket price of 20 satang.

2) Maenam Motorboat has boat service from Bang Krabue pier to Nonthaburi and Pakkret along Chao Phraya River... as well as both service to Bang Bua Thong via Bang Bua Thong canal. The service from Bang Krabue to Nonthaburi start from 6am to 11pm. The ticket price from Bang Krabue to Nonthaburi was 20 satang and Bang Krabue to Bang Bua Thong was 50 satang.

3) Maenam Motorboat has boat service from Bang Kho Laem Pier to Pak Lad. Further boat service with Ford gasoline engines will connect by tram to Phra Padaeng province (now the Phra Padaeng district of Samut Prakarn) with a price tag of 25 satang. After reaching Pra Padaeng, the passengers can go to Samut Prakarn, Bang Chak and Bang Na. The passengers can go all the way from Bang Kho Laem pier to Samut Prakarn by paying for a ticket at 40 satang.

Ferry service across the Chao Phraya is mostly run by Thai people. The monopolized piers cost the passenger 2-3 satang while the general pier would be 6-10 satang. Further distance depends on bargaining on

the price.

There is boat service along Saen Saeb canal (Bang Kapi canal) from Pratoonam Prathumwan near Chaloe Lok market (Pratoo Nam market) near Chaloe Loke bridge all the way to Bang Kapi District and Min Buri province. It takes three hours to reach Minburi with the ticket price from 25-50 satang.

There is a boat service along Chao Phraya from Tha Tian (red boat) to Ayuthaya province via Ban Paen market, Sena District of Ayuthaya, Ang Thong, Singhburi and other places in the Ayuthaya Circle.

There is a boat service along Bangkok Yai canal from Ratchawongse pier to Wat Nuan Noradit (Phaseechoen) via Talad Ploo with a price tag of 10 satang from Ratchawongse to Wat Nuan Noradit. This boat can connect the passengers with Mahachai Railway at Talad Ploo. This boat service was run by Bang Luang Co. Ltd. with the office at Ong Ang canal, near Wat Bophit Phimuk.

Furthermore, Bang Luang Co. Ltd. was running a boat service along Bang Kok Noy canal from Wat Mahathat Pier to Bang Kruay, Bang Khoowiang, and Bang Yai via Bang Kok Noy canal, Bang Kruay canal and Mae Nam Om canal with a price tag of 30 satang.

Boats for rent can be arranged either on an hourly or daily basis at Bang Luang Boat Service Co.Ltd. at the office near Ong Ang canal.

The Mae Klong Railway

from *Locomotives & Carriages/Wagons*, State Railway of Thailand, 1991

Also: [MaeKlong railway news](#)

MaeKlong Railway was a private concession founded by Phraya Phiphatkosa (Mr. Selestino Xaviar—a Portuguese who worked as Portuguese Consul in Bangkok and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and 10 foreigners as Tha Chin Railway Co.Ltd. after being granted a concession on May 17, 1901. The line was inaugurated by Crown Prince Vajiravut (King Vajiravut) at 09:08 on December 29, 1904. The train started from Klongsarn Station at 12:45 and reached Mahachai Station at 14:10. The line was open for public services on January 4, 1905. The line went from Klongsarn (now Klongsarn Pier) near Fort Pid-Padjanuek to Mahachai near Fort Wichian-Choduek with a total distance of 33.1 km.

Later on, Mae Klong Railway Co.Ltd. was founded by Royal Concession on June 10, 1905, and became effective on August 15, 1905. The line ran from Wat Ban Laem Station to Mae Klong Station with a total distance of 33.864 km. Therefore, the passengers from Bangkok had to take a ferry ride from Mahachai to Tha Chalom to connect with Mae Klong line. Both companies were merged to form Mae Klong Railway Co.Ltd. on July 12, 1907, with Royal approval from King Chulalongkorn on October 6, 1908.

Mae Klong Railway become more popular, so the company decided to run electric tram service on the railway track from Klongsarn Station to Wat Sai Station on February 12, 1926 with a total distance of 7.6 km. Later on in 1927, the tram service was extended 1 km. more from Wat Sai Station to Wat Singh Station. Tram service had 30-minute interval with a one-way ticket at a price of 5 stang (a price of daily newspaper of that day).

The concession of Tha Chin section was expired on November 23, 1942 and the Mae Klong section on August 14, 1945. After that, the government decided to nationalize Mae Klong Railway Co.Ltd. and turn the company into "Mae Klong Railway Organization", an organization within Royal State Railway Department, Ministry of Transportation. Royal State Railway Department was reorganized as a state enterprise (State Railway of Thailand) by SRT Act of 1952 effective on July 1, 1952 which also turned Mae Klong Railway Organization into "Mae Klong Railway Office." Tram service on Mae Klong Railway track was discontinued on February 1, 1955 so as to follow the regulation of SRT.

The traffic around Klongsarn-Wongwian Yai area become so congested that Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat (Premier from October 20, 1958 to December 8, 1963) decided to shorten Mae Klong Railway by moving the eastern terminal from Klongsarn to Wongwian Yai on January 7, 1961. Initially, the strongman wanted to shorten the line to have the eastern terminal at Wat Singh station. However, people in Thonburi told him that it would be much more convenient to have the eastern terminal at Wongwian Yai and he agreed with them.

Premier Sarit also planned to move the Bangkok Railway Station from Hua Lamphong to Bang Sue Junction after terminating Pak Nam Electric Railway on January 1, 1960. However, he could only move the railway cargo terminal which was next to Klong Phadung Krungkasem to Bangsue Junction area (Chatuchak Park was conceived in 1975).

Maeklong Railway

from the National Archives

Also: [Maeklong railway news](#)

August 14, 1945 – Government nationalized Maeklong Railway

November 13, 1945 – Government purchased both sections of Mae Klong railway lines with a price tag of 2 million baht even though Mae Klong Railway Co.Ltd. asked the government to pay either 4 million baht for the whole system or the separate price -> 1.02 million baht for the line from Klongsarn – Mahachai and 2.00 million baht for the line from Ban Laem to Mae Klong.

May 12, 1950 – The tram system from Klongsarn to Wat Singh and Paknam railways were in very dilapidated condition. Field Marshall Plaek asked if the Royal Railways Department could shorten Paknam Railway to Saladaeng or Klong Toei and abolish Maeklong railway altogether. Royal State Railway Dept. declined such a proposal since RSR was going to buy two new sets of electric railway systems with a price tag of 1.5 million baht as a replacement for broken motors.

April 30, 1952 – Mae Klong Railway Organization was founded as a state enterprise within RSR Dept. before being absorbed into SRT.

Paknam Railways

from the National Archives

June 25, 1925 – Prince Damrong was invited to have a discussion with the shareholders about the plan to electrify the Paknam Railway line.

December 31, 1925 – Paknam Railways bought about 9080 baht for the electric tram system install by Siam Electricity Co.Ltd. and Paknam Railway received the rent from Siam Electricity Co. Ltd.

Before September 8, 1936 – An argument between Paknam Railway Co.Ltd and Government of that day: Paknam Railway wanted to sell Paknam Railway and the Electric Tram system to the Government at a price tag of about 507,700 baht. Initially the government was willing to pay 300,000 baht for Paknam Railway and was threatening to run bus and truck services as a substitute for the railway if Paknam Railways did not accept the government price.

September 8, 1936 – Sukhumvit Road line (then Bangkok – Samut Prakarn Road) was opened for service. The shareholders of Paknam Railway accepted the compromise that the government would buy Paknam Railway at a price of 350,000 baht. Royal State Railway Dept. would then control Paknam Railway.

Transit history notes: Maenam Motorboat Co. Ltd. – September 23, 2005

Wisarat provides these transit history notes: Siam Electricity Co. Ltd. was one of shareholders in Maenam Motorboat Co. Ltd. The company had five major piers – Nonthaburi, Kiawkhakha (Bang Krabue), Tha Tian (opposite Temple of the Dawn), Thanon Tok (the end of New Road), and Phra Pradaeng (Wat Protket near Wat Prot Ket, and Talad Thahin opposite to Poochao Samingplai pier).

In 1908, Maenam Motorboat raised the price of tickets as follows:

2nd Class: 1 Salueng from Talad Thahin pier to Tahnon Tok pier

1st Class: 2 Salueng from Talad Thahin pier to Tahnon Tok pier

At that time Maenam Motorboat tickets could no longer be used for the Bangkholaem tram to Bang Rak. The passengers had to buy tram tickets on their own at Thanon Tok Terminal.

[Return to the Bangkok Tramways main page](#)

Thai media and the different truth – The unreported riot

September 27, 2005

Categories: The Thai Deep South

From the Thai-language press:

Thai media and the different truth – The unreported riot – editorial translated from *Prachachat*, September 27, 2005

The cruel event when two marines were killed in Ban Tanyonglimor, Amphur Rangae, Narathiwat was a sad event that happened again in Thai society. This was the same as an event that happened a few hours earlier when unknown thieves shot villagers at a tea shop in Ban Tan Yonglimor causing three innocent people to die. Whatever the complex knot is, we want to condemn those who conduct both events and we ask the justice process to work accurately and not to discriminate whether people are in uniform, part of the government or a normal villager.

We ask all media to revise the role of presentation of news to question and find the cause of why Ban Tanyonglimor villagers do not trust. This should be without prejudice or try to explain for the hypothesis of the that villagers tie the event to be an international issue.

The villagers are afraid of threats from officers especially Ban Tanyonglimor and they assume that the officers are part of the shooting event at the tea shop. This caused a riot, but this was not mentioned in mass media—especially television. Although villagers are afraid of threats, the threat may be a rumor or it may be true.

We see that the Thai media loses the villagers' trust because media avoids the true presentation of the villagers' view. So it is not surprising that some villagers give interviews that say that the Thai mass media friend of the military and may participate in the events of shooting in the village or join to hector the village for a long time. This is in line with the base ways of Thai security unit that called this village a "red village."

"This truth" which is different will be gone if every side reveals the truth and proves it. Do not conceal the truth or give importance to only one view.

Otherwise, both events (shooting people in the tea shop and the siege that killed two marines) is just the beginning again of the long violence.

Vendor fires M16

September 27, 2005



(Photo: A reader)

Vendor fires M16

– September 27, 2005

A reader comments on Monday's [report](#) about an M16 being fired at an international school: *Interesting how when you know the facts, the reporting seems lousy. The building is Fortune Condotown 2 not Fortune Tower. His stall was seized for continually impeding the public footpath in front of the building, as he well knew... It's obvious it wasn't a dispute about 500 THB a month since he had just consumed more than 500 THB of booze... (He was also living in an apartment block where unfurnished units are 15 K+ a month.) He was pissed off about the stall being seized, but the trigger was a fight with a farang in Bangkok Garden (above the school). The real reason was that he was out of his mind drunk, but he had to make up something more sensible... Spot the damage in the attached photo!*

Yesterday: [Vendor](#)

[fires M16 at international school](#) – *The Nation*,
September 26, 2005

A food-stall owner opened fire on an international school with an M16 assault rifle early yesterday in what he said was just a way to vent his anger...

BEC-Tero told me to lie: ex-beauty queen

September 27, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[BEC-Tero](#)

[told me to lie: ex-beauty queen](#) – *The*

Nation, September 27 , 2005

...Angela said one of the reasons she walked out from the title is because BEC-Tero wouldn't provide her financial support.

Apart from the Bt1 million cash, she wasn't not getting paid with a salary. There was no housing provided. She requested to be paid Bt150,000 per month and a lodging with gym facilities but BEC-Tero didn't respond.

More on the Indonesian volcano

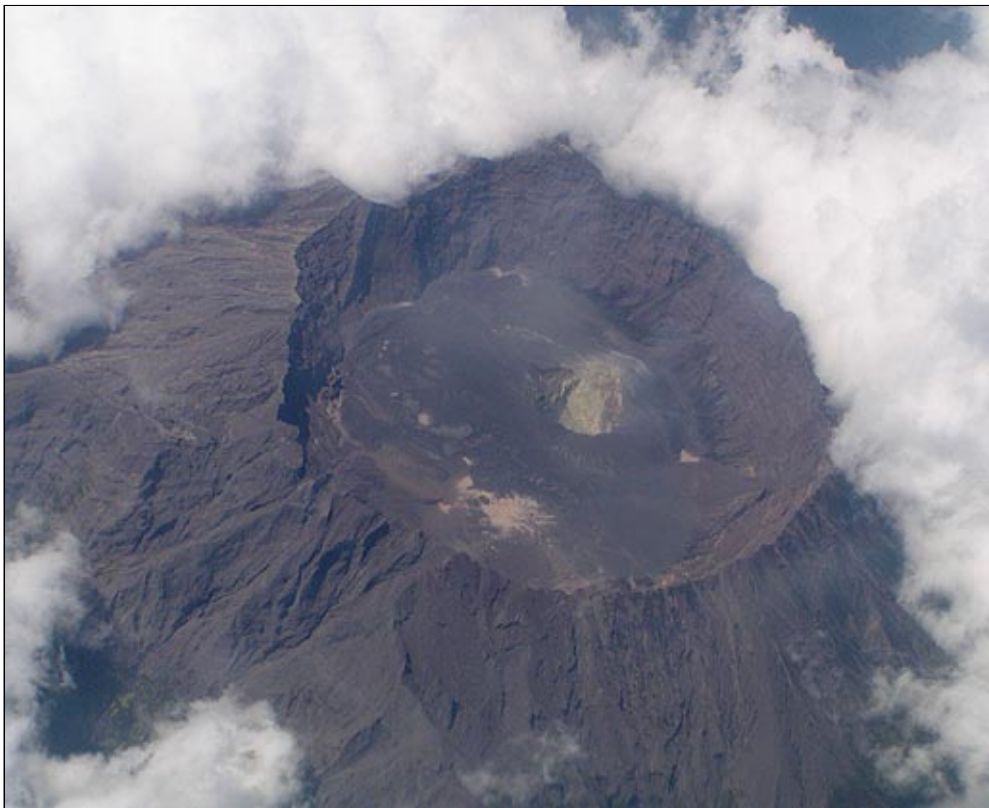
September 28, 2005

More on the Indonesian volcano

– September 28, 2005

Jerry writes: *...It is not one of the major Java volcanos.. Krakatau, Merapi, Semeru or Kelut. This is one of two possibles:... Ijen is 150 kms North West of Denpasser or it could be Tengger Caldera and Bromo which is approx. 250 kms west north west of Denpasser... [This page](#) gives great detail of Indonesian volcanos.*

Steven writes: *Refer to your website about the Indonesian Volcano that Terry has taken the picture from his Jakarta-Bali flight, I think it should be [Mount Bromo](#) in East Java.*



(Photo: Terry King)

Earlier: Indonesian volcano – September 26, 2005

Terry Kings writes: *Here is a photo I took on a flight from Jakarta to Bali. It is in East Java but I haven't been able to identify the volcano yet... I was able to lean over and take a couple of shots before it was out of view.*

Anyone know what volcano this is?

Russian break-dancing

September 28, 2005

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Russian break-dancing

– September 28, 2005

Once 2Bangkok.com gets linked on a foreign-language websites it seems we are targeted for spam in that language. Russian spam is particularly odd. Above is spam for a breaking-dancing school.

The constitution is dead?

September 28, 2005

Categories: Thai Politics

From the Thai-language

press: The constitution is dead? – editorial of *Thairath*,
September 28, 2005

Is it a coincidence that two days ago there was one academic (Mr. Somkiet Pongpaiboon, Rajabhat of Rachasima University) and one politician (Abishit Vejjachiva, Democrat Party leader) who gave the same opinion of the present political situation?

Ajarn Somkiet said at the seminar of “The Senate listens to the people” that this senate came from political reform and had independence to oversee the law for the first two years. However by the third year, we can see that it was interfered with by the government so it can be controlled and direct lots of votes. This interferes with its independence and standards.

Mr. Abisit gave a special lecture to Master Degree students in the Political Science Faculty that independent organizations are not really independent because no organization that can resist the power of the big party. The mass media group is also covered and newspapers were bought. Other media concealed the news that was different from the government and recently the “The Weekly Thailand” program which criticized government was withdrawn.

It is accepted that not only the senate, but also the Election Commission, Constitutional Court and the Auditor-General cannot operate in their work independently.

The first Auditor-General after the office began, Khunying Jaruwan Maintaka, had done well checking the strange details of big projects such as Suwanabhumi construction and long distance local call through satellite, etc. This becomes a big obstacle for government officials and politicians who are corrupt and face their fate as we have seen.

The independent organizations’ work was independent and accepted by people at first because it was not interfered. But when the powers realized that the independent organizations had the power to penalize or put politicians in jail or obstruct political power, the situation changed.

At present, independent organizations have problems such as the Election Commission of Thailand and the State Audit Commission, etc. The most important is

the peoples' trust because this is not the peoples' hope. For the solution, even the former constitution drafter, Mr. Kanin Boonsuwan, may have to write a book called "The Constitution is Dead."
Is the Constitution now only letters on paper?

Maeklong Railway News 2003-2005

September 29, 2005

Categories: Thai Railroads

Also: [Fate of the ex-Maeklong railroad stock](#)

Also: [More Maeklong railway stock](#)

Also: [Riding the Maeklong Railway](#)

Also: [Rail pier: Maeklong](#)

Also: [History of the Maeklong Railway](#)

Transit history notes:

Seizing the Maeklong Railway

– September 29, 2005

Transit history notes: According to the data

from National Archives, the Supreme Commander Headquarters applied Article 12 of the Martial Law Act of BE 2457 (AD 1914) to seize control of Maeklong Railway Co.Ltd., electricity generation, and tram services of the Thai Electricity Corporation on January 26, 1942 (a day after the war declaration). Supreme Commander Headquarters told the Minister of Interior to send officers from Samsen Power Plant to take control of Thai Electricity Corporation.

Supreme Commander also asked Royal Railway Dept. to send officers to make a supervision on the government control of Maeklong Railway and report the conditions and current status of Maeklong line—two sets of trams on the railway tracks, some steam locomotives, passenger bogeys, and other types of bogeys. Even though the company could install the power line for the tram from Klong Sarn to Bang Bon (Wat Singh – Bang Bon, approved by Prince Boriphat in 1931), the actual implementation could reach Wat Singh.

Supreme Commander Headquarters also asked the Royal Power Plant (AKA Samsen Power Plant) to send the head of engineers to take control of Wat Laib Power Plant and tram services. Most workers in TEC were Thai people (Chinese workers became the majority in the maintenance section which was directed by a Chinese engineer graduated from Belgium). Even though the concession of Thachin section expired on November 23, 1942, the government at that time refused to pay any single penny as the compensation to Maeklong Railway even though the company asked the government to purchase Thachin section at the price of 1,020,000 baht. The talk about the compensation dragged on until the concession of the Mae Klong Section expired on August 14, 1945.

On May 16, 1945, the Supreme Commander Headquarters allowed a raise in the tram ticket price from 6 satang/3km to 10 satang/2.5km.

The Army Headquarters (replaced Supreme Commander Headquarters in August 1945) terminated the controls imposed by Martial Law on Thai Electricity Corporation on October 25, 1945 and Maeklong Railway on November 2, 1945 (the peace declaration was on August 16, 1945). After that, the government at time paid 2,000,000 baht to purchase all sections of the Maeklong Railway, even though the company estimated the price of the railway line to be 4,000,000 baht in 1945.



(Photo: Nils)

Above: Maeklong Market

Closing down Maeklong Station!

– translated and summarized from

Matichon, June 9, 2005

10:30am, June 8, 2005 – There was meeting of the committee on the relocation of Maeklong Station to solve the traffic problem and the mess and danger from the market along the railway track at Samut Songkram Provincial Hall. The Mayor of Samut Songkram Municipality and SRT Assistant Governor has come up with the resolution that

- 1) The new Maeklong Terminal Station must be moved to a new place 2 km away before reaching the old terminal next to Lad Yai stop.
- 2) Preserve the Maeklong Terminal Station which is 107 years old.
- 3) SRT must improve the area along the railway tracks within Maeklong Municipality.
- 4) SRT must regulate the stalls along the railway tracks with the Maeklong Municipality.

It is a fortunate that they decided to preserve the old Maeklong Terminal Station instead of demolishing it because a termination sign can be posed on the single paper while preservation is very hard to do so.

Reaction to Mae Klong Station closure plans

– June 15, 2005

Wisarut reports: *I visited Mae Klong Station and told the railwaymen about the plan to close Mae Klong Station by Maeklong Municipality. They exclaimed that "that must be a dirty scheme of vested interests within Maeklong Municipality. They even dare to violate the decree of Princess Sirindhorn who asked Samut Songkram Provincial Hall to preserve the whole Mae Klong Line."*



(Photo: Nils)

Above: Maeklong Market after the train has passed through.

Sunday train ride: Plans for the
Mae Klong & understanding SRT anger – August
25, 2004

Wisarat reports: *I visited the Architecture Department of KMITL (King Mongkut Institute of Technology – near NBIA) to make a photocopy of the OTP report about the plan for the Mae Klong railway track. There are two versions of the plan: The summary version for the cabinet and the complete version. I made a full photocopy of the summary version and partial photocopy of the complete one.*

I got the information that after the full project is completed, Mahachai Station, Ban Laem Station and Mae Klong Station have to be moved to other places while the old ones will be abandoned or revived for those who want to make a short trip to Mahachai and Mae Klong.

From KMITL, I walked a long way to Hua Takhae Station (a station still inside KMITL campus but too far for students to walk so SRT has to set up Phra Jom Klao stop for KMITL student which is 850 meters from from Hua Takhae) to ride the train to Phetburi stop.

I asked the SRT officer how I could visit Makkasan Depot & Maintenance center. SRT officers said "You must get a permission only from the SRT Director!" It must be a lot of red tape to try to make contact with the SRT Director.

After SRT opened the double track from Hua Mark to Chachongsao, the riding quality improved since the new double track use concrete sleepers with steel fastenings produced by Italian Thai Development PCL. Furthermore, it uses 100 lb/yard type A welded rail (20 yard/bar)–the heaviest rail type available.

This 100 lb/yard type A must be used for modernizing Mae Klong Railway since Mae Klong Railway uses only 70lb/yard rail (Wongwainyai – Mahachai section) and 50 lb/yard (Ban Laem – Mae Klong section). The latest improvement of Mahachai section was done around 2002 while the earliest improvement

of Mae Klong was done in the 1960's.

According to the proposed plan for Mae Klong Railway, the track must be 100 lb/yard with concrete sleepers. Furthermore, the electrification of the new Maeklong EMUs will be 1.5 kv DC power since the relatively short distance with frequent stops for commuters has restricted the application of 25 kv AC 3 phase power. Using electric locomotive is not a good deal for commuter systems. Only the intercity rails will have electric locos to pull the unpowered bogies.

When I ride the regular train No 286 (Chachoengsao – Bangkok), I could see the white signs that read "The space for the construction of Suvannabhumi Airport linking Phayathai – Suvannabhumi Airport" along the tracks.

However, this No 286 train also shows the strong prejudice of SRT railway workers toward both BTSC Skytrain and MRTA Subway—the train refuses to stop at Phayathai Stop while the train does stop at Ratchaprarob stop.

The prejudice against MRTA is quite understandable. Even today, SRT workers are still angry that MRTA has robbed them of the permanent way from Bangsue to Klongtan even though it was SRT that got the land from Bangsue to Klongtan (now, Ratchadaphisek, Thiam Ruam Mitr Road and RCA Road).

Furthermore, the Skytrain route is not going to Makkasan Railway Station and have an interchange as once planned. This has caused serious face losing to SRT as their supremacy has been challenged by BTS and MRTA. Not surprisingly, SRT workers keep ranting against MRTA and BTS without making any improvement to their stations to serve both Subway and Skytrain. Since the train did not stop at Phetburi, I have rode all the way to Hua Lamphong...

The plan for improving

Mae Klong Railway – translated and summarized

from *Akharn and Thee Din Weekly*, Vol.5, No. 249, February 28-March 5, 2004

The Traffic Policy Office has come up with a plan to connect Hua Lamphong with the Southern Railway (Pak Tho Station) via Mae Klong Railway with total distance of 91.6 km. Mae Klong Railway has to be electrified and laid with double track. This will allow the Red Line commuter to be extended to Mae Klong and Pak Tho and cut down the distance of Southern Railway by 45 km.

There will be 3 services for this link

- 1) Standard Commuter Train
- 2) Express Commuter Train
- 3) Long Distance Train

There will be 3 section for this Railway:

- 1) Hua Lamphong – Mahachai -> 35.5 km with a bridge across Chao Phraya at Si Phraya
- 2) Mahachai – Mae Klong -> 35 km with a bridge across Tha Chin
- 3) Mae Klong – Pak Tho -> 21.1 km with a bridge across Mae Klong

The power line will be 25 KV Catenary.

The routes will be:

Section 1) Elevated Railway Line from Hua Lamphong to Talad Ploo (one end of Bangkok Southern Transportation Center) and there will be a new station between Talad Ploo and Chom Thong to be the center of the Bangkok Southern Transportation Center.

Section 2) The line will follow Mae Klong Railway until it reaches km 31 (between Ban Khom and Klong Chak) and the line will be elevated across Ekkachai Road and then go along Rama 2 Highway from km 26.8 to km 32.16 and turn left to go back to Mae Klong railway.

Section 3) The line will go along Mae Klong Railway to reach km 66 after passing Bang Kraboon Station to go parallel with Highway 325 and then

go across Mae Klong at km 40.85 of Route 325 before going along Route 3093 to reach Pak Tho. The total budget for this project is 42.423 billion baht.

There will be 3 options for Mae Klong railway Improvement:

- 1) Hua Lamphong – Pak Tho -> 2006 – 2010
- 2) Hua Lamphong – Mahachai -> 2006 – 2010 and Mahachai – Pak Tho -> 2006 – 2010
- 3) Hua Lamphong – Mahachai -> 2006 – 2010, Mahachai – Mae Klong -> 2011 – 2015, and Mae Klong – Pak Tho -> 2016 – 2020

A
trip on the Maeklong Commuter – August 2, 2003

Nils Renneberg writes: As an old railway aficionado, I decided to make a trip with the “Maeklong Commuter” to Samut Sakhon and Samut Songkhram last weekend.

It was quite nice. Actually you don’t go from Bangkok to Samut Sakhon and Samut Songkhram if you take the train, but the terminal stations of the first section are of course called Wong Wian Yai and Mahachai, then the line is disrupted because there’s no railway bridge across the Mae Nam Tha Chin and you have to take a ferry boat to the other side of the river if you want to continue from Ban Laem station to Maeklong station, which, quite logically, is situated besides the Maeklong River in Samut Songkhram. And more often than not, the locals also like to refer to the two cities like that, Mahachai and Maeklong.

I thought maybe you want to post the station names and timetables on your site, as they are quite hard to come by:

Mahachai Line (18 stations)

Wong Wian Yai – Talat Phlu – Khlong Ton Sai – Chom (Jom) Thong – Wat Sai – Wat Sing(h) – Bang Bon – Kan Keha – Rang Sakae – Rang Pho – Sam Yaek – Phrom Daen – Thung Si Thong
– Bang Nam Juet – Khok Khwai – Ban Khom – Khlong Chak (Jaak) – Mahachai

Maeklong Line (15 stations)

Ban Laem – Tha Chalom – Ban Chi Pha Khao – Khlong Nok Lek – Bang Sikhot – Bang Krajae – Ban Bor – Bang Thorat – Ban Ka Long – Ban Na Khwang – Ban Na Khok – Ket Muang – Lat Yai – Bang Krabun – Maeklong

Note: these are the official station names taken from a timetable in Thai language; the trains don’t necessarily stop everywhere, though, it seems.

Timetables (as of July 2003).

Maeklong – Ban Laem		Ban Laem – Maeklong	
>6:20	7:20	7:30	8:30
9:00	10:00	10:10	11:10

Dr. Volker Wangemann writes (September 1, 2003): *For all the railway enthusiasts who are interested in that line I can give you the official station names with the exact kilometers.*

WONGWIAN YAI	KM 0.0
TALAT PHLU	KM 1.78
KHLONG TON SAI	KM 3.35

11:30	12:30	13:30	14:30
15:30	16:30	16:40	17:40

Mahachai – Wong Wian Yai	Wong Wian Yai – Mahachai
4:30	5:30
5:20	6:25
5:55*	7:00*
6:25	7:40
7:00	8:35
8:00	9:40
9:35*	10:40*
10:40	12:15
11:45	13:20
13:15*	14:25*
14:25	15:25
15:25	16:30

CHON THONG	KM 4.13
WAT SAI	KM 5.76
WAT SING	KM 7.15
BANG BON	KM 9.76
KHAN KOHA	KM 10.23
RANG SAKAE	KM 10.53
RANG PHO	KM 14.25
SAM YAEK	KM 15.83
PHROM DAEN	KM 17.29
THUNG SI THONG	KM 18.76
BANG NAM JUED	KM 19.97
KHOK KHWAI	KM 22.99
BAN KHOM	KM 26.76
KHLONG CHAK	KM 29.76
MAHA CHAI	KM 31.22
BAN LAEM	KM 0.0
THA CHALOM	KM 0.84
BAN CHI PHAKHAO	KM 3.71
KHLONG NOK LAK	KM 5.41
BANG SI KHOT	KM 6.72
BANG KRACHAO	KM 8.68
BAN BO	KM 10.72
BANG THORAT	KM 13.64
BAN KA LONG	KM 15.60
BAN NA KHWANG	KM 17.76
BAN NA KHOK	KM 19.79
KED MUANG	KM 23.55
LAD YAI	KM 27.48
BANG KRABUN	KM 29.98
MAE KHLONG	KM 33.57

16:00*	17:05*
16:30	17:35
17:35	18:35
18:10*	19:10*
19:00	20:10

* denotes air-conditioned trains

One more remark: of course the times in my first timetable referred to departure from Maeklong and arrival at Ban Laem, and the other way round. The second one shows only departure times.

I don't think these schedules will change very often. In order to find out for sure, you would have to go to one of the stations and have a look at one of the big timetables or try to get a printout in Thai language from a friendly SRT employee.

Both sections are approximately 30 km in length, as already mentioned somewhere in your tramway articles, and serviced by Diesel Railcars, with the ride taking about 1 hour and costing 10 Baht in each case. Ticket booths in the terminal stations open about half an hour before the trains depart, or tickets can be bought right on the train. The ferry in Samut Sakhon costs a whopping 2 Baht. Well, if that isn't a trip for Cheap Charlies!

Soon after you leave Wong Wian Yai, the high building density (partly very close to the tracks; even more so near Maeklong station, where the final 500 m of the line run right through a busy market and the stalls are within 10 cm of the rumbling cars!) quickly decreases, and you'll find yourself in a quiet rural landscape mostly made up of khlongs and orchards. (Of course there's still the occasional factory or Western Outer Ring Road...) In the section behind Samut Sakhon the landscape is of course much more open, with all those fields and saltworks – not really that beautiful, but the view still being nicer than the one from the nearby motorway, I'd say.

The trains aren't all that slow. They accelerate to a maximum of about 45 to 50 kph after all, and at most stations they stop for just about 10 seconds. And there are no traffic jams. Plus they are astonishingly punctual! Other than on the SRT main lines, they actually leave the stations on time. And as there's not so much traffic on these

routes, they don't have to wait for oncoming trains very often, though of course there's only a single track. Certainly an old and worn-out (though charming) system, but still a practical (and cheap) alternative to road traffic for many people from the southwestern suburbs.

The only inconvenient and somewhat silly thing is that the timetables of the two sections are not synchronized. Most of the trains reach Mahachai and Ban Laem at about the same time (or five minutes earlier, or ten minutes later) the second train leaves on the other side of the Tha Chin River, meaning you cannot get a direct connection, but have to wait for 45 minutes, 1 hour or even more. Of course you could spend some time in Samut Sakhon (probably eating noodle soup or buying something from the shops near the station), but it's not utterly interesting there... one stopover should be enough for most people in any case, so on the way back you might consider taking one of the busses that leave frequently from the main road down to the pier at Mahachai, which I did.

Here's a scan of the tickets from my Maeklong trip... Please note that I am NOT a woman; they seem to print it on all the tickets.

การรถไฟแห่งประเทศไทย A1656-25940
STATE RAILWAY OF THAILAND
ตั๋วโดยสารรถไฟ
สถานี / ORIGIN: MAEKLONG COMMUTER
ปลายทาง / DESTINATION: มหาชัย MAHA CHAI
เลขที่ตั๋ว: 4307
วันเดินทาง: 26 ก.ค. 46
เวลาออก: 16:30
เวลาถึง: 17:26
ชั้น: ประเภที่ 2
ค่าโดยสาร: 2 บาท. 00
ที่นั่ง: 01-01
ราคาตั๋ว: 10
1432-287-00053-01/01 442020 26 ก.ค. 46 16:11

การรถไฟแห่งประเทศไทย A1621-14244
STATE RAILWAY OF THAILAND
ตั๋วโดยสารรถไฟ
สถานี / ORIGIN: MAEKLONG COMMUTER
ปลายทาง / DESTINATION: บ้านแหลม BAN LAEM
เลขที่ตั๋ว: 4386
วันเดินทาง: 27 ก.ค. 46
เวลาออก: 15:30
เวลาถึง: 16:30
ชั้น: ประเภที่ 2
ค่าโดยสาร: 2 บาท. 00
ที่นั่ง: 01-01
ราคาตั๋ว: 10
2305-288-00055-01/01 064300 27 ก.ค. 46 15:13

The two cities themselves are not really worth a visit, except in case you like fish (which I don't), then maybe Samut Sakhon is good for you. But as far as I am concerned, the most pleasant thing is that in both towns, you feel like being far away from Bangkok (note: I like Bangkok very much, too!), partly due to the quiet pace of life there, partly because no foreigner ever seems to go there! (Many supposedly remote places, like Kanchanaburi, OK, maybe not a very good example – well, let's say Nongkhai, are much more touristy.) Accordingly, the local people are very laid-back and friendly and don't hassle you at all. That's especially true for tuk-tuk and samlor drivers. No “hey you”, “where you go”, they just leave you alone. In general, people rather seem to regard you with a sense of curiosity: What the heck is that Westerner doing here? Heads turn around and children might stare or point at you, and you hear people whisper, “farang, farang.” Just as if you were in some Isaan village. Well, of course you could also go to Chachoengsao – also by train! –, for that matter. Close to Bangkok, but with a “provincial” flair, unlike Samut Prakan or Pathum Thani provinces (though the capital of the latter is a very small and sleepy town on the right bank of the Chao Phraya, by the way).

I saw only one other farang during the whole trip. I stayed in Samut Songkhram for the night (in a shabby 150 Baht hotel, which had friendly employees, though; don't know if something better is available there – at least not in the town center, for lack of tourists).

Plus I met some nice people during this journey.

It started with the taxi driver who brought me to Wong Wian Yai, a smart guy from Loei who had taught himself to speak English and was quite good at it (though I have to say my Thai was still a bit better). Had a funny and very entertaining talk with him all the way. Then in Samut Songkhram I came across a very nice middle-aged lady when I bought some clothes from her shop inside the market. And on the way back to Bangkok, I met a young couple who handed me their printed timetable after watching how I took notes of the station names! Needless to say they were curious as to what I did in Thailand and, more specific, in that train, and they accompanied me all the way to Ban Laem, on the ferry and on the final leg by bus to Sai Tai Mai.

More comments on the “Maeklong Commuter”

– August 4, 2003

Ian Brooker writes: *What a great article by Nils Rennenberg! The Maeklong branch has always fascinated me. When I arrived in Thailand in 1988 to work for SRT I kept on coming across references to the line, which were always separate from the main accounts of the railway. I used to ask about it, and I was told with absolute certainty that it had closed.*

After a few months of this, I decided to go for a look myself by car. When I got to Samut Songkhram I found the station, but it was pretty clear that the railway was indeed closed as the station was surrounded by a market. I was about to leave when I heard the whistle of a train, and the market parted to see a DMU work its way in straight through the middle. The market closed up again behind the train!

Many years later, in fact about two years ago, I got my ride on the branch. At Wong Wian Yai I was told that it was impossible to get a ticket or train to Samut Songkhram, and it would be better to take a bus (true!). I persevered and got my ticket, and took the train anyway. I confirm what Nils says – the two timetables do not coincide. It is better to spend your time in Samut Sakhon than cross and wait as there is nothing the other side apart from a noodle stall!

The line on the Samut Songkhram side is in very bad repair, and the DMUs look clapped out to me – not surprising given the isolation of this branch.

However, I would say both Samuts are worth visiting. I found them both incredibly vibrant – possibly it was market day and I was lucky. The river crossing is also fascinating, with kites and terns fishing around you. I know Thailand pretty well, and as Nils says, you have to go a long long way to see places as unspoilt as these. Make the most of it – its pretty clear that SRT would love to close the line or convert it to a modern route, and all the charm will be lost.

A wonderful but grueling day trip!

Still more comments on the “Maeklong Commuter”

– August 4, 2003

A reader writes: *Thank you very much for your positive response and additional remarks about the Maeklong Railway. I especially liked the way you described how the market in Samut Songkhram "opens" and "closes" around the trains. And then you also reminded me of something..... you know, when I went to Wong Wian Yai a week before*

actually taking the train, just in order to check the timetable, the taxi driver insisted that the station was closed and the trains didn't run anymore! Having been there once before, I knew he couldn't be right, simply replied "Oh, yes?" and went there anyway. And of course the station was bustling with life; there was a board which stated that there were about 15 trains every day; and one of them was just arriving (on time!) from Mahachai.....

Very strange, isn't it? Hundreds or even thousands of people use these trains every day, yet some people in Bangkok are convinced the line is dead (and has been for many years already)! It is indeed a very special railway, disconnected both in the middle and from the rest of the Thai railway network, and most people don't seem to know much about it – apart from the Thonburi commuter community. One final message to everyone: use the opportunity to take these trains now! They could REALLY disappear in the future, at least in the current (charming) form.

High-speed Mae Klong rail line map from

2000 – July 30, 2003

With high-speed railways in the news lately we thought we would remind our readers of this proposal we first reported in March, 2000. The [Thai-language map \(70 K\)](#) of the proposed high-speed Mae Klong rail line. We hope we live long enough to see it made a reality! Click [here](#) for more info on early ideas for this project (February, 2000).

[A ride on the Maeklong Commuter](#)

– November 11, 2003

Nils writes: *Wisarut posted this [link](#) in the [forum](#).*

If you scroll down, you'll find a photo story about a trip on the Maeklong Commuter in 1998. My comment: "...this Japanese guy (Takashi Koto) also has a complete photo story of the Mahachai and Maeklong lines! Including the procedure where the train passes through the busy market in Samut Songkhram. And he writes a funny English..."

Want a sample? "Small red sheet is attached at the top left side on the front window. It describes Buddha. Maybe it is a prayer of safety. Shop masters often open the parasol near the railroad very much. And most people, both children and adults, often throw garbage to outside of the train through the window during run. Many stations keep clean but there are much garbage near the railroad. Garbage sometimes returns into the car from other window then we have to be careful."

Also: [Fate of the ex-Maeklong railroad stock](#)

Also: [More Maeklong railway stock](#)

Also: [Riding the Maeklong Railway](#)

Also: [Rail pier: Maeklong](#)

Also: [History of the Maeklong Railway](#)

On the forum: Combusto & Thai Knowledge Co.

September 29, 2005

On the forum: [Combusto
& Thai Knowledge Co.](#)

Yesterday: Website – [‘Cumbusto’](#)
– September 29, 2005

ThaiAntiTobacco.com

September 29, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

ThaiAntiTobacco.com

– September 29, 2005

Troubles in the South – October 2005

October 1, 2005

Categories: The Thai Deep South

Troubles in the South

– October 2005

[Troubles in the South index page](#)



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

Almost like
being there: Shooting on a Yala street
– October 31, 2005

The motorcycle of Pol. Sgt. Maj. Charoon Sakdarattanakul, 58 lies on a small Yala street that looks like any other street in Thailand. The policeman was shot in the chest and leg by two men on a motorcycle at 11:30am on October 31, 2005.

The policeman on the left takes a digital photo of a broken mobile phone. (TNA reports that the injured policeman was found ["lying in a pool of blood,"](#) but the only blood we can see in the variety of photos of the scene we have is the small spot to the left of the "1" marker.)



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

Almost like being there: Wat Takienthong
– October 30, 2005
Monks inspect a burned-out truck at Wat Takienthong.
Insurgents attacked the wat by burning monks' living
quarters and vehicles.



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

Almost like being there: Train
derailment – October 27,

2005

Mr John writes: *Here is the place where the bad guys planted bombs and derailed train no.454 from Nakornsrihammarat-Sungaikolok making the locomotive and for cars fall off the track. One villager was injured. A bomb made from a fire extinguisher made the track break.*



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



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

Almost like being there: Resisting the thieves – October 27, 2005

Mr John writes: *Mr. Maruding Mazae, 45-years-old, from Amphur Muang Yala was at home when the bad guy tried to steal his gun, but he fought and was shot by the gun. He was sent to the Yala center hospital urgently. The police summarize the events of the day: the bad guys stole 37 guns in Yala province and stole six private guns. It is expected there were more than 50 bad guys. The Yala governor declared anyone who can give clues about the missing guns will get 10,000 baht per gun.*



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

Almost like being there: Bomb placed under a truck – October 26, 2005

Mr John writes: *The police investigated the government car of Pol. Sen. Sgt. Maj. Seri Hayiding, commander at Takbai, Narathiwat which exploded as he was driving from his house in Amphur Ruesor to the railway station. He was seriously injured and was sent to Narathiwat Rachanakarin Hospital.*

Almost like being there: Inspecting the damage – October 19, 2005

Mr John writes: *Mr. Suwat Lippatapunlop, Deputy PM went to investigate the temple where the bad guys burned and killed three persons (monks and followers) at [Wat Promprasit Amphur Panarae](#), Pattani. The monks are afraid it will happen again, but the Deputy Prime Minister promised to adjust the plan for the safety of the southern temples.*



One year anniversary of the Tak Bai incident – October 25, 2005

[Tak Bai massacre leaves deep wounds in Thailand's deep South](#) – October, 2005

... "I feel I am no longer a Thai because of this incident," said Fatima, whose 21 year-old-son was among the 78 men who suffocated

(Photo: Mr. John for

*to death on army trucks as they were taken from
Tak Bai town to Pattani army camp a year
ago...*

2Bangkok.com)

Earlier: [The Tak
Bai VCD](#)



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

Almost like being there: Alms
and bombs – October 22,
2005

Above: Taking alms in the Deep South

Right: A bomb planted in a pickup truck
detonated inside the Yala provincial hall
compound.



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



(Photo: Dr. Has for 2Bangkok.com)

Almost like being there: Views
from the Deep South – October
27, 2005

Above – Dr Has writes: *On October 14, 2005 Pol. Col. Narasak Chiengsook, Deputy Superintendent of Yala Province took his team to visit people at the Mosque of Raman and discuss the unrest. He said he wants people to take care so their children do not become the movement's tool. His team also gave provisions to cook with during Ramadan.*



(Photo: Dr. Has for 2Bangkok.com)

Above –
DR Has writes: *On October 15, 2005, lots of people come to a market in Amphur Raman to buy finished food and sweets for the Ramadan month.*



(Photo: Dr. Has for 2Bangkok.com)

Above and below

– DR Has writes: *On*

October 16, the Matha Foundation of Wanmuhamad Nor Matha invited people to join the Ramadan ceremony at the Mahat Foundation Meeting room. There were 600 people who came to participate.



(Photo: Dr. Has for 2Bangkok.com)

One year anniversary of the Tak Bai incident – October 25, 2005

[Tak](#)

[Bai massacre leaves deep wounds in Thailand's deep South](#) – October, 2005

... "I feel I am no longer a Thai because of this incident," said Fatima, whose 21 year-old-son was among the 78 men who suffocated to death on army trucks as they were taken from Tak Bai town to Pattani army camp a year ago...

Earlier: [The Tak Bai VCD](#)

Bangkok

losing grip on restive south

– *The Straits Times*, October 25, 2005

...Prof Chaiwat warns that Thai nationalist sentiment being drummed up by events in the south is dangerous and could become difficult to control.

The NRC sees a need to teach the Thai public that the country's cultural diversity is a strength, not a liability, he said. But even commission members worry that the space for a peaceful approach keeps shrinking.

The military is readying an unspecified new strategy in the south, while dozens of security agencies continue to trip over each other there...

SIDELINES:

A tempting final solution for the southern crisis

– *The Nation*, October 23, 2005

...This is a dilemma for the Thai people. The majority of poor folks in rural areas remain addicted to Thaksin's soft sell and gimmicks. The powerful propaganda machine continues perpetuating their blind faith.

The urban middle class and those in the know of political tricks are too afraid to risk their own interests and personal safety for the sake of the public good. They have seen that reprisals and punishment comes swiftly to those who stand up to the PM. The rule of law does not apply when dark influence reigns.

What is a reasonable solution then? Surely, there is no quick fix. The situation has deteriorated. There has been so much death, and there are so many bereaved families. It will continue to be like this as long as this question remains unanswered.

But not all is lost. There is a tempting idea that has been raised but not yet tried: a change of leadership at the top. Thaksin should display his true patriotism by stepping down, and the sooner the better if he wants the three provinces to remain part of the Kingdom.

How can we be sure that such a plan, seemingly one of last resort, would work? We can't. But we won't know what better measures can be taken until Thaksin is out of office and somebody with clean hands, credibility, competence and good intentions replaces him...



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

Almost like being
there: Evening sun at Songkhla Beach –
October 18, 2005

Mr. John writes: *Lots of people come to relax on Songkhla Beach especially on weekends. The terrorist events in Hadyai and Songkhla on April 3 changed the behavior of people from shopping at Hadyai to going to the beach instead. They feel safer there.*



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



Almost like
being there: Bombs in the South –
October 20, 2005

Police check the tracks between Yala and Pattani
province after a bomb exploded at a railway
checkpoint in Pattani.

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



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



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

Above: For the railfans,
loco 4032

Below: A pickup truck was bombed near the provincial
governor's office in Yala province.
No one was injured in the explosions.



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



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



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

Almost like being there: Exclusive
photos from Wat Promprasith
– October 17, 2005
Wat Promprasith in Pattani was attacked by separatists
yesterday who burned the wat and killed three.



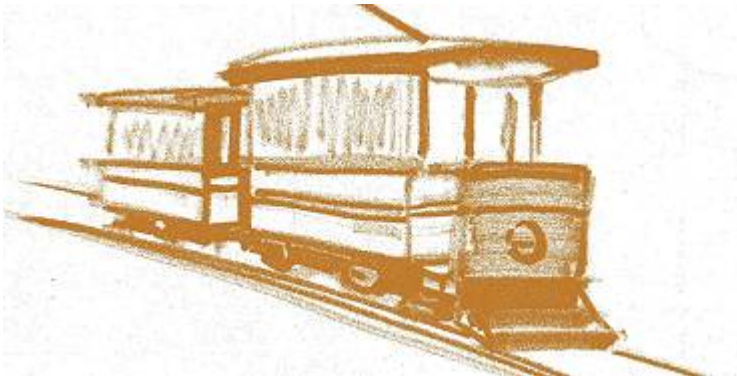
(Photo: Mr. John for 2Bangkok.com)

[Troubles in the South index page](#)

Tram screen captures from a pre-WWII Swedish documentary

October 1, 2005

Categories: Trams



[Return to the Bangkok Tramways main page](#)

Return of the Daily Tram –
October-November, 2005

Here is the first in a series of frame captures from a silent film about the Bangkok trams. The National Film Archives identifies this as a Swedish film from the 1920s. However, it has a English-language title cards.

[Some](#)
[on the forum](#) believe this film is from Denmark.
The original Daily Tram photos we ran in 2004 are [here](#).















Note the interesting conductor's uniform.







Street scenes showing the 'tram corridor'
inside power poles along the street.





Street scenes from the tram film.
It is hard to imagine the streets of Chinatown with just a few rickshaws.

Traffic-control
lowers—prettier than those
of New York " " "





We wonder if any of these 'traffic control towers' have been preserved anywhere.







Here, a tram sprays water along the route (to keep down dust?).



These frames show Bangkok street life and people walking along the street. Throughout the film it is interesting to note how many men wears hats.



[Return to the Bangkok Tramways main page](#)

Shenzhen Western Corridor photos

October 1, 2005

Categories: Bridges, China



Shenzhen Western Corridor photos

– October 1, 2005

Earlier: [Shenzhen Western Corridor](#)

– December 13, 2004











Prince Mahidol in Chicago in 1916

October 1, 2005



(Photo: Chicago Daily News negatives collection,
Chicago Historical Society)

Above: 1916 – "Prince Mahidel of
Siam, standing on the sidewalk in front of the Auditorium Building
at 504 South Michigan Avenue, facing the camera."

Prince Mahidol in Chicago in 1916
– October 1, 2005



(Photo: Chicago Daily News negatives collection,
Chicago Historical Society)

Above:

1916 – "Prince Mahidel of Siam, facing an unidentified man,
who is reading some papers, in front of the Auditorium Building."

‘Negotiations on Thai-US FTA on well progress’

October 1, 2005

[‘Negotiations
on Thai-US FTA on well progress’](#)

-TNA, October 1, 2005

A charmingly worded headline from TNA...

Ministering Culture: Hegemony and the Politics of Culture and Identity in Thailand

October 1, 2005

Categories: Culture and Society

[Ministering](#)

[Culture: Hegemony and the Politics of Culture and Identity in Thailand](#) – *Critical Asian*

Studies, Oct-Dec 2005

Interesting abstract...

FIRST FIRE, NOW EVICTION – Communities face many problems when residents are asked to move elsewhere

October 2, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[FIRST FIRE, NOW EVICTION – Communities face many problems when residents are asked to move elsewhere](#) – Bangkok Post, October 2, 2005

A major fire consumed the Klong San Chao Khrut community near Pin Klao Bridge in 1996. Nearly a decade after the 40-family community rebuilt itself, it is grappling with a new crisis—an eviction order. Not far away, another community, Siri-amart, which is at the back of Royal Hotel on Ratchadamnoen avenue, is facing a similar fate. The first community has been forced to leave the land the residents have occupied for generations to pave the way for a Siriraj Hospital plan to build a new rehabilitation centre and a dormitory. Siri-amart, which houses 30 low-income families, will give up the land for a public park as part of the Rattanakosin development plan...

Poor still facing eviction woes

October 2, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Poor still facing eviction woes](#) – *Bangkok Post*, October 2, 2005

...Bangkok appears to be the worst affected area due to the high number of development projects planned in several urban areas. These include the old town conservation project on Ratchadamnoen avenue and in the Rattanakosin area, a new economic zone project on Rama III road, the construction of a city administration centre and business complex in the Klong Toey area, a town restoration project in Din Daeng, as well as transport projects from Rangsit to Mahachai and from Taling Chan to Suvarnabhumi airport. In addition, landscape improvement programmes exist in canalside areas...

Thai PM sues media tycoon in \$12 mln slander case

October 3, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Thai PM sues media tycoon in \\$12 mln slander case](#)

– Reuters, October 3, 2005

...The suits said Sondhi and co-host Sarocha Pornudomsak had accused Thaksin several times of being disloyal to the monarchy during the Thailand Weekly show aired on September 9 on state-run Channel 9, Sondhi's newspaper, Manager, said on its web site.

...Sondhi is running a "We Love the King" campaign, accusing the government of infringing on the monarchy's powers...

1975 operation to recover the hijacked merchant ship SS Mayaguez in the Gulf of Siam

October 3, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[SS Mayaguez – American Merchant Marine at War website, October 3, 2005](#)

[1975 operation to recover the hijacked merchant ship SS Mayaguez in the Gulf of Siam.](#)

Lumpini Park

October 3, 2005



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Lumpini Park

– October 3, 2005

Lumpini Park today (above) and in December 2003 (right)

when a fountain was being installed. Before this, the area in front of the statue was a parking lot.

Below is a photo from 1959 of a modern-style [tram](#) in front of the park.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: Wally Higgins)

Schemes to control the weather clouded by failure

October 3, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Schemes to control the weather clouded by failure](#)

– Live Science, October 3, 2005

...A 2003 report published by the National Research Council (NRC) put a damper on the idea of weather modification, saying there was no convincing scientific proof that cloud seeding works...

Scary living for India's ghost man

October 3, 2005

Categories: India

[Scary living for India's ghost man](#) – AFP, October 3, 2005

Must talk about “The Opportunity”

October 3, 2005

Categories: Airports and Airlines

From
the Thai-language press: *Matichon* editorial:
Must talk about “The Opportunity”
– October 3, 2005

TV broadcasts about Suwannapoomi Airport on the day of the auspicious inauguration used language as though people are under an obligation of politicians who created the airport. It may be partly true, but if we think that politicians volunteer to work for people, this issue may be rejected because this is politicians' duty and responsibility to serve the nation not make people feel under their obligation.

If we follow the Nong-ngoohao Airport story since the beginning, more than 40 years ago, it shows the insufficiency of politicians and they were only interested in being elected. Compare with the neighbor or international countries, the sufficiency of our politicians falls far short.

As we know material modernization is a part of economic growth and we have lots of neighbor competitor countries that have lots of abilities. Some are behind us, but at present many more are more modernized than Thailand.

In the view of competition, for the Suwanapoom Airport, the slower we finish, the less successful we are. Because we have obstructed progress by trickery for benefit of a few and this showed we lack professional politicians. We have only electioneers who are insufficient in both ideas and management.

Media work is not easy as holding the microphone or tape recorder in hand. We have to study hard at least knowing peoples' minds really enough to show opinion or vision. If we do not know, we just report the truth that is expedient. At worst, if we can think, instead being people who work for status in government, we should think for those people who lost opportunity from the past up to now because we elected politician to get benefit for themselves. For the airport construction, people have known it was notorious since the beginning. So it is not a surprise to see the electioneers are fatter during this time.

Bad Press: Passports for sale: Thailand's counterfeit culture is world problem

October 4, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Bad Press: [Passports for sale: Thailand's counterfeit culture is world problem](#)

– AFP, October 4, 2005

Anything is available in Bangkok for a price: women, men, children, endangered species, drugs, counterfeit drugs, DVDs — and passports, ready in two hours for just 10,000 baht (245 dollars)...

Successor to Kim may be named this month

October 4, 2005

[Successor
to Kim may be named this month](#) –
Reuters, October 4, 2005

Report: Much tsunami aid wasted

October 4, 2005

[Report:](#)

[Much tsunami aid wasted](#) – CNN, October 4, 2005

Taiwan wants Google Earth to stop calling it a province of China

October 4, 2005

Categories: China

[Taiwan wants Google Earth to stop calling it a province of China](#)

– *The Register*, October 4, 2005

Troubles in the South – September 2005

October 5, 2005

Categories: The Thai Deep South

Troubles in the South – September 2005

[Troubles in the South index page](#)

The 66/23 peace plan – October 5, 2005

Royal Decree 66/23 was policy was set up in the time of General Prem Tinsulanonda (now a privy councilor), Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, and Harn Linanon in 1980. This policy was a multi-point peace plan that started a process that eventually resulted in the remnants of the Communist party in Thailand laying down their arms and participating in being "nation developers." The philosophy of the policy was that the Communists people were really alienated Thais and must be folded back into society through constructive engagement and trust building.

The Democrats are floating this idea to tempt retired political heavyweight Chavalit back into the public eye with an approach in opposition to the PM's. Former NAP party members like Chavalit must also be intrigued by the huge public works projects the government is investing in now.

[PM advised to consider invoking 66/23 peace plan for Muslim provinces](#) – TNA, October 3, 2005

...Democrat Party Spokesman Ong-art Klampaiboon said on Sunday that the prime minister should seek advice from Gen. Chavalit, who earlier succeeded in winning over communist insurgents, turning them into law-abiding citizens under the 66/23 policy decades ago...

The government should also review its current plans and policies toward the troubled region to see if government policy itself might possibly have prompted the emergence of "red villages", or areas where problems are reportedly intensifying and likely to incite violence...

[Thailand goes on full terror alert](#) – Reuters, October 3, 2005

The Thai prime minister said that he has put Thailand's major tourist spots on full alert today, hinting of links between Muslim militants in the south of the kingdom and the terrorists who staged the latest Bali bombings.

"We have something (information) that causes us to be very cautious and call a full alert," Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said in response to a question about how Thailand was reacting to suicide bombs on the Indonesian resort island of Bali that killed 26 people on Saturday...

Slate's articles on the South

Slate's superficial series of articles about the problems in the South...

[From Separatism to Global Jihad](#) – September 26, 2005

From separatist movement to global jihad in a few dumb missteps (via [Friskodude](#))

[Fighting With Ghosts](#) – September 27, 2005

... "Watching that Tak Bai video made my Islamic-ness burn in my chest," he said...

[Surviving Tak Bai](#) – September 28, 2005

[At the Monastery](#) – September 29, 2005

[A Conversation with the Prime Minister](#) – September 30, 2005

...I brought up the subject of civil liberties and press freedom. Every TV channel, for example, is owned and operated by Thaksin's cronies. In 2003, two foreign journalists with the Far Eastern Economic Review were threatened with deportation, editors have been sacked, and unsympathetic reporters investigated for money laundering. Very recently, the prime minister banned all press coverage of the south that the government deems "unfriendly..."

[Anand criticises state media](#) – The Nation, September 26, 2005

...Anand said state media had attempted to jeopardise NRC's proposals by misquoting him as saying that Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat belonged to Malaysia.

"I hereby affirm that I've never said so," Anand said.

"The report was false and fabricated. It was aimed to discredit me..."

[COMMENT: Paper doves won't bring peace to Southern Thailand–Farish A Noor](#) – *Daily Times*, September 24, 2005

...The plight of the Southern Provinces are clear to anyone who visits them: they remain among the poorest and least developed part of the country and for decades successive Thai administrations have allowed the army and police a free hand there. By the late 1990s Southern Thailand was known for its criminal networks, smuggling gangs, religious conservatives and corrupt government and security officials.

Thaksin's promise that the two murdered officers would not die for nothing speaks volumes about the man's lack of local sensitivity and ignorance of the issues that matter on the ground there. Over the past two years the Thaksin administration had offered the restive south the most token and superficial gestures of appeasement: from patriotic rallies to the laughable spectacle of an airdrop of millions of paper doves with messages of peace and love on them...

[Veteran Thailand Insurgency Leader Grant Interview](#) – *The Irrawaddy*, September 23, 2005

A veteran Thailand insurgency leader has warned in a recent interview that militants from Indonesia and Arab nations might join the fight in Thailand's violence-wracked southern provinces...

['A Century of Muslim resistance in southern Thailand'](#) – *Pravda*, September 22, 2005

What Pravda is reporting: The roots of Thailand's Muslim insurgency go back to the late 18th century when Siam, as Thailand was then known, invaded the independent Sultanate of Pattani, killing its ruler and enslaving large numbers of his subjects...

[Newest rebel group headed by Indonesian](#) – *Bangkok Post*, September 20, 2005

A relatively new group, reportedly headed by an Indonesian, is involved in the current wave of violence in the far South, according to an intelligence source. The source identified the group as the South Warriors of Valaya (SWV), whose goal is to split the so-called Pattani state – the southernmost Muslim-dominated provinces – from Thailand.

The SWV, or "Warriors of the South Sea", was headed by an Indonesian identified only as Mudeh. Sapae-ing Basor, principal of Thammawithaya Foundation School in Yala, who is on the run, was acting as his deputy...

Artamart website – September 23, 2005

Wisarut reports: Now, the sense of patriotism along with anti-Americanism and anti-PULO has reached another high point. Look at the [Artamart website](#). Artamart means the Border patrol Unit during the day of Ayutthaya.

[PM vows no 'liberated' zones on Thai soil](#) – *TNA*, September 22, 2005

Taiwan English teacher Association – September 19, 2005

[SSETT – Work Advisory Warnings Taiwan](#)

[Islamic separatists say Thai candidate for next UN chief 'unacceptable'](#) – *AFP*, September 17, 2005

A Thai Islamic separatist movement has told the United Nations Thailand's deputy prime minister was an "unacceptable" candidate to head the world body because his country violated human rights...

[Surrender 'or else'](#) – *Bangkok Post*, September 18, 2005

...He said about 10 students from Ramkhamhaeng and Yala Rajabhat universities who had just returned to their homes in Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat were forced to play the part of surrendering separatists. Authorities claimed the students were on the government's blacklist and they would be arrested unless they surrendered. This surprised the students as they had done nothing wrong, Mr Ahmadsomboon said...



(Photo: Dr. Has for 2Bangkok.com)

Almost like being there: Budi Market – September 17, 2005

Dr. Has reports: *Budi Market is a market selling second-hand goods and it is the biggest market in the deep south. It located in Tambon Budi, Muang Yala. There were lots of people coming to shop here, but nowadays, there are less merchants and only Yala people come to buy.*



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

Almost like being there: Seizing war weapons – September 11, 2005

Mr. John reports: *Mr. Pracha Taerat, Narathiwat Governor (second from left) has a press conference about seizing a big amount of war weapons in the forest near Long Gong fruit orchard in Ban Yurrapae, Tambon Suwaree, Amphur Ruesor, Narathiwat. The officers suspect that the terrorists hid.*

Almost like being there: Finding bombs – September 11, 2005



Mr. John reports: *143 of 1/4 pound dynamite bombs were seized by the police and soldiers who join to reconnoiter for safety and peace near the border of Malaysia, Bala-hala forest area, Mu 9 Tambon Aiyaweng, Amphur Betong, Yala next to Amphure Huluperak , Perak state of Malaysia and Amphure Janae, Amphure Rangae, Narathiwat, in the big camp of former Chinese communist thief.*

(Photo: Mr.

John for [Clues to Thailand's insurgency](#) – CNN, September 15, 2005
2Bangkok.com) *The residents of Lahan village are trying to keep outsiders out, amid a bloody insurgency in south Thailand.*



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

Almost like being there: Murder in Yala – September 11, 2005

Mr. John reports: *Hit the person who slit rubber: The police investigate the place and close the route where the bad guy hit Mr. Kongkumzeng Zaekum, 60-years-old, who stay in Amphur Betong, Yala. He was hit on head and back and died on the spot while he was going to slit rubber trees. At the beginning the police suspected that was done by bad guys (separatists) in that area who want to aggravate the situation.*



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



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

Almost like being there: Repair at a temple – September 8, 2005

Mr. John reports: Repair the temple pavilion: 30 marine officers who are technical and construction team demolish the ruins and construct a new roof at Panason Temple, Thambon Kokkien, Narathiwat. A bomb damaged the pavilion and injured six persons in the village safety team—one died.



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

Almost like being there: Practice – September 7, 2005

Mr. John reports: *Practice for emergency event: The Had Yai Airport company practiced the first practice for emergency events in 2005 under the name of Homex-05. These drills are set up by ICAO and require that the airport should have emergency training one time every two years for at least one hour. This practice was successful as planned.*



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

Almost like being there: Booby-trapping a car – September 8, 2005

Mr. John reports: *Officers investigate Pol. Cpl. Seksan Duelamae's Toyota (license 3414). He is a policeman at Sungai-kolok, Narathiwat. The bad guys hid a bomb under his car and detonated it by mobile phone when the car came to the check point in Amphur Takbai. Four people in the car were injured.*



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

[Thailand appoints first Muslim army commander](#) – Reuters, September 8, 2005

Overwhelmingly Buddhist Thailand, struggling to end an increasingly bloody insurgency in its largely Muslim south, appointed its first Muslim army chief on Thursday...



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

Almost like being there: Asking for Peace – September 10, 2005

Mr. John reports: *Lt. Gen. Kwanchat Klaharn, director of the Southern Border Provinces Peace-building Command, and Pracha Taerat, Narathiwat Governor were chairpersons of the ceremony "Declare the intention that we are against the unrest and terrorizing the people in Kaliza, Rangae, Narathiwat. Mr. Waedueramae Mamingji, chairperson of the Islam Committee, Pattani, lead the remarks to 1000 people including clerics doing Lamad Hayad asking for peace at the ground of Bankanua school, Amphur Rangae, Narathiwat.*

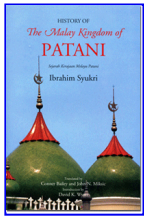


(Photo: Mr. John for 2Bangkok.com)

Almost like being there: Peace Bird Statue – September 10, 2005

Mr. John reports: *Mr. Yongyuth Tiypairat, Natural Resource and Environment Minister is the chairperson of*

a ceremony setting up the Peace Bird at the fountain roundabout in Kromluang Narathiwat Ratchanakarin Park, Narathiwat. This is a memorial statue showing the concern of Thai people who folded paper birds for peace in the deep south on December 2, 2004.



[Kingdom of Conflict](#) – *The Irrawaddy*, August, 2005

Left: ...Little has changed since then, but it is Thailand's strength that a book like this can now be published in the country. And that could be the beginning of a meaningful discussion about the roots of the problem in the South and what the way forward should be.



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

Almost like being there: Closing the village – September 7, 2005

Mr. John reports: *Children in Ban Lahan, Tambon Paluroo, Amphur Sungaipadi, Narathiwat bring wood to close the village. They do not want officers to enter because they wonder if the officers were involved in the death of Mr. Satopa Yuzo, cleric of village mosque.*

On September 4, TNA reported the Narathiwat did visit the building and the situation was diffused:

[Narathiwat governor meets family of slain religious leader](#) – TNA, September 4, 2005

Almost like being there: Bombing a van – September 6, 2005

Mr. John reports: *A Nissan van that Mr. Kloy Chuvit, an driver officer for the Sungai-kolok municipality, was driving to pick up 14 officers in Thambon Paluru was bombed. Two tires exploded and the windscreen was broken. Fortunately no one was injured.*



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

Almost like being there: Dead merchant – September 8, 2005

Mr. John reports: *The police investigate Mr. Sama-ae Jehvae, 50-years-old, of Amphur Rangae, Narathiwat, who was shot by the bad guy who followed him as he went to buy long kong fruit in another village. He was died on the way to hospital.*



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

[Rebels control 2 districts PM told](#) – Bangkok Post, September 9, 2005

Insurgents have control over two districts of Narathiwat where up to 99% of local people are their sympathisers, a group of southern opposition Democrat MPs told the government yesterday. Songkhla MP Thavorn Senniam said insurgents wielded much influence over Narathiwat's Cho Airong and Sungai Padi districts and several other areas...

[Thailand urges UNHCR away from Muslims fleeing unrest](#) – The Nation, September 6, 2005

... "These people are not refugees, and it's unlikely the UNHCR needs to get involved," he said. "This is a case of illegal entry. Many people go back and forth across the border, this just happens to be a large number of them," he said...

[Malaysia is as responsible as Thailand for the situation in southern Thailand](#) – mggpillai.com, September 4, 2005

The Malaysian foreign minister, Syed Hamid Albar, has called on Thailand to win over its Muslims. He meant the Malay provinces of southern Thailand, which has remained provinces of Thailand for over a century, as Kelatantan and Trengannu was until 1942 and during the war years part of Japanese empire. It was only after the war that it became part of Malaya...



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

Almost like being there: Bombing a monk
– September 2, 2005

Mr. John reports: *Bombing a monk: Police checked the area where the bad guys planted bombs in front of a business card making shop. The explosion injured a monk and one soldier who was protecting the monk as he was collecting offering. The monk's leg was badly wounded.*

Troubles in the South

[Thai Embassy clarifies](#) – Jakarta Post, September 5, 2005

I refer to the article of Thang D. Nguyen titled Thaksin can learn from Indonesia that appeared in the Aug. 25 edition of The Jakarta Post, making an analogy between problems in the southern provinces of Thailand and Aceh.

...We, Thai people, always believe that violence begets more violence. Therefore, the need for a peaceful solution to conflict is well embedded in the hearts and minds of Thai people to the extent that it has become their way of life.

The new round of violence in the southern provinces, which started in January 2004, is a result of a complicated mixture of factors. It is no secret that the area has been subject to a threat by separatists for quite some time, especially during the 1970s and 1980s.

To assume that the root cause of the problem in southern Thailand is a demand for independence is awfully wrong. The 70 percent turnout in the last general election in February 2005 in the five southernmost provinces clearly showed what the majority of people want...

[Thai "no-go zone" village says hardline policy stokes rebellion](#) – AFP, September 4, 2005

Thai Muslims from this village which has declared itself a "no-go zone" to authorities say the government's hardline response to a Muslim insurgency has terrorised and radicalised them...

[Malaysia not to hand back Thai Muslims](#) – Arab News, September 3, 2005

...Malaysia is under some pressure domestically to treat the group sympathetically. But it also risks upsetting Thailand which, according to Syed Hamid, has denied the group's claims. "I have spoken twice today to the Thai foreign minister and he has told me there is no truth to them," he said, referring to media reports that the Thais were afraid to return home...

[Bangkok urged to win hearts and minds of Thai Muslims](#) – Bernama, September 3, 2005

The Thai government should take the initiative to win the hearts and minds of the six million Muslims in southern Thailand and avoid using force which had proved ineffective in solving the region's troubles, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said.

He said Bangkok should hold negotiations with the leaders of the Muslims to resolve the problems in the region...

[Thailand rejects Malaysian opposition politician's advice on Thai Muslims](#) – TNA, September 4, 2005

... "Such criticism, whether intentional or not, clearly shows that Datuk Nik Aziz ignores or fails to realize the significance of any effort which the Thai government has been trying to apply to resolve the problem in the region," Mr. Sihasak said in a Ministry statement. "His remarks go against the spirit of close cooperation between Thailand and the Malaysian government to promote co-existence along the border..."

Almost like being there: Investigation – September 1, 2005

Mr. John reports: *Police investigate the bad guy who killed Mr. Abdul loh Mali, 38-years-old, from Tambon Yupo, Yala. He was a religious teacher of Isam Pattanavittayamoonniti, Tambon Lummai, on his way to work to teach.*



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

[Troubles in the South index page](#)

Don't trade in one dimension

October 5, 2005

Categories: Health

From the Thai-language press:

Matichon editorial: Don't trade in one dimension – October 5, 2005

After the the Public Health Ministry declared businesses must not display and advertise cigarettes, 80% of shops all counties cooperated except 7-11 shops which have 3200 branches. The fine for violation is 200,000 baht per time.

This reflects the confidence of a giant company that is close to a political group. So social groups, youth, and family networks came out to protest the CP 7-11 company.

However, the reason that CP 7-11 did not follow the declaration is that the company was waiting for the arbitration of the royal decree to see if 7-11 company displayed correctly. This is the company's confidence that as a big business with lawyers and consultants that suggest that they not give in and try to maintain the advantage of displaying cigarettes.

It is sure that CP 7-11 company may be concerned more about business than society. Cigarettes are a harm to smokers' health in the long term and also a waste of the public health budget. There was one cigarette trading representative who commented with no concern on the social side that "cigarette traders must fight by the principle of the law and with no consideration of social or media demands."

Whenever the big company is only concerned about its own benefit, it may face a bad image. CP 7-11 company should not trade only in one dimension—making the most profit and not considering the social dimension and the health of consumers. Otherwise this may effect to the company's image. Don't assess peoples' demands as meaningless.

Before the National Stadium

October 5, 2005

Categories: Communities, Old photos and films

**Before
the National Stadium
– October 5, 2005**

Right: Hor Wang, which housed the old Chulalongkorn University Library. The National Stadium is located on the site today.



The interview mindset

October 5, 2005

[The
interview mindset](#) – October 5, 2005

Something funny from Ajarn.com: ...*I had a teacher arrive once with no resume, no degree, no TEFL certificate – just the shoes he stood up in. When I asked where his documentation was, he replied "I didn't think it was going to be that kind of interview"*
The question of how many kinds of interview there are still baffles me to this day...

Aura of fear pervades Thai media

October 5, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Aura of fear pervades Thai media](#) – IHT, October 5, 2005

...Thailand once boasted of having one of the liveliest and freest media in Asia. A Constitution introduced in 1997 set out to protect the public's right to know from attempts to interfere with the press by power-hungry generals.

But the election of Thaksin, a billionaire tycoon, in 2001 has presented the Thai media with challenge. In addition to a mass electoral base and a dominance of Parliament that leaves opposition parties little leeway to shape legislation, Thaksin has powerful allies in business. Some say he appears all too willing to deploy his political, financial and legal weapons against the more independent-minded of the Thai press.

"There is now a real sense of fear," Sunai Phasuk of Human Rights Watch said...

For the moment, however, Sondhi remains defiant. He continues to broadcast his talk show live on the Internet and satellite television from a Bangkok university auditorium that draws audiences that spill out into surrounding grounds.

"And if you criticize Thaksin," he adds, "your newspaper sells out on the newsstands."

Aura of fear pervades Thai media

By Nick Cumming-Bruce International Herald Tribune

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2005

BANGKOK If Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra had hoped, as critics suggested, to scare Thailand's journalists by filing libel lawsuits that seek more than \$12 million in damages from a media group owner and his partner, he has at least partially succeeded.

Senior newspaper editors and publishers plan to gather in a Bangkok hotel Thursday for an emergency meeting called by Thailand's Press Council to discuss the plight of the media under a government they fear is determined to crush their independence and, in the process, change the country's political landscape.

The libel actions prompting this concern occurred Friday. Thaksin filed a criminal defamation suit against Sondhi Limthongkul, owner of the Manager publishing group, and Sarocha Pornudomsak, his co-host on a recently terminated television talk show. A civil suit seeks damages of 500 million baht, or \$12.1 million.

The lawsuit alleges that Sondhi and Sarocha defamed the prime minister by accusing him of disloyalty to the monarchy, a highly sensitive subject here. As a result, the prime minister's had a negative impact on his family, his dignity and his personal life were negatively affected, the suit claims.

Also named in the suit were Sondhi's company, Thaiday Dot Com, the producer of the talk show and publisher of the English-language newspaper ThaiDay, a daily distributed in Thailand with the International Herald Tribune.

Thailand once boasted of having one of the liveliest and freest media in Asia. A Constitution introduced in 1997 set out to protect the public's right to know from attempts to interfere with the press by power-hungry generals.

But the election of Thaksin, a billionaire tycoon, in 2001 has presented the Thai media with challenge. In addition to a mass electoral base and a dominance of Parliament that leaves opposition parties little leeway to shape legislation, Thaksin has powerful allies in business. Some say he appears all too willing to deploy his political, financial and legal weapons against the more independent-minded of the Thai press.

“There is now a real sense of fear,” Sunai Phasuk of Human Rights Watch said.

A government spokesman declined to comment Wednesday on the assertions of the prime minister’s critics or on the lawsuits, saying they were filed by Thaksin, not the government.

Thailand’s radio and television channels, most of them directly or indirectly controlled by the government, offer audiences little independent or critical comment. The worry now, media analysts say, is that Thaksin or people sympathetic to him are making a concerted push to gain control of the print media as well.

Emergency powers introduced by Thaksin in August in response to a bloody insurgency in Thailand’s southern provinces, which are mainly Muslim, have underscored the more difficult political environment. The powers give the government extensive latitude to censor reporting it considers a threat to national security.

Particularly worrying to media groups is the financial pressure brought to bear in recent weeks, not least through other libel actions.

In July, court proceedings were started in a criminal defamation suit brought by a telecommunications company owned by Thaksin’s family against Supinya Klangnarong, a media reform activist. Her offense was a newspaper article that said the company, Shin Corp., had profited handsomely since Thaksin became prime minister. For that she also faces a civil action seeking damages for 400 million baht.

July also saw Matichon, Thailand’s most respected newspaper and magazine publishing group, slapped with two defamation suits seeking damages totaling 15 billion baht by Picnic Energy. It was the largest suit ever brought against a Thai media company, the South East Asian Press Alliance said. The company was set up by the deputy commerce minister, Suriya Larpwisuthisin, who resigned from the government in July when members of his family who were running the company were charged with fraud.

In addition, Matichon faced a hostile takeover bid last month by GMM Grammy, Thailand’s biggest entertainment conglomerate, led by Paiboon Damrongchaitham, a longtime associate of the prime minister’s who has acted for him in other business dealings. Paiboon bid at the same time to take control of Bangkok Post, Thailand’s largest-circulation English-language daily. Thaksin denied having had anything to do with the Bangkok Post transaction, which fell through when Paiboon backed off in the face of a storm of public opposition, but the prime minister’s denials did little to reassure or persuade his critics.

“We don’t know who exactly is maneuvering, but we see a political move to silence the media,” said Ubonrat Siriyuvasak, a professor of mass communications at Chulalongkorn University, in Bangkok. Not surprisingly, Thaksin’s libel action against Sondhi and Sarocha Pornudomsak is seen in similar light.

It is part of what Sunai, of Human Rights Watch, calls a trend in Thai politics to try to intimidate critics by the threat of ruinous damages, but it also breaks new ground. The case is thought to be the first ever brought by a serving Thai prime minister on a political, rather than a purely personal, issue.

The fact that Thaksin is not suing the owners of the television channel that aired the talk show raises suspicions that the case is politically motivated, Sunai said. Thaksin’s most serious allegation is that Sondhi defamed him by accusing him of disloyalty to the monarchy, an almost sacred institution whose incumbent, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, is widely revered as the father and moral guide of the nation.

The sensitivity of the issue has led many in the news media to treat it with circumspection. Sondhi, in his talk show and his publications, has pursued it with vigor.

“I’m not surprised he sued me because he cannot answer the questions I address to the public,” Sondhi said in an interview. “I’m the only media man who dares to stand up to him, and that he hates.”

That was not always the case. In the first few years of Thaksin’s premiership Sondhi was an outspoken supporter. Media analysts say Thaksin backed Sondhi financially after Sondhi was forced into bankruptcy

during the 1997 Asian financial crisis. In recent months, however, Sondhi has become among Thaksin's sternest critics and says he is now locked in "all-out war" with the prime minister.

His opinion of Thaksin changed, he said, when he started to see the prime minister's "true colors."

Sophon Ongkara, a senior editor at the English-language newspaper The Nation, said that by taking legal action, Thaksin was "killing two birds with one stone."

"Thaksin wants to get even with Sondhi and can use this case as a warning to the media that he won't be idle if he is strongly criticized," he said.

For the moment, however, Sondhi remains defiant. He continues to broadcast his talk show live on the Internet and satellite television from a Bangkok university auditorium that draws audiences that spill out into surrounding grounds.

"And if you criticize Thaksin," he adds, "your newspaper sells out on the newsstands."

A tide of generosity swamps tsunami towns with boats

October 5, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[A tide of generosity swamps tsunami towns with boats](#) – *The Age*, October 5, 2005

Thanks to Danny for pointing out this interesting article: ...*The names painted on the boats attest to the breadth of the response to one of nature's most ferocious episodes: Oklahoma City Church of Christ, the Indian Temple Association of New Jersey and the American Embassy School in New Delhi, among others...*

Concern grows over Burma's rapidly increasing inflation

October 6, 2005

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

Concern

grows over Burma's rapidly increasing inflation

– *The Irrawaddy*, October 6, 2005

...Analysts are blaming the junta's insistence on a crude economic policy whereby Burmese kyat is printed on demand to repay the country's burgeoning budget deficit. This policy has seen the currency plummet on the black market from less than 900 kyat to the US dollar in January to an all-time low of 1,355 kyat to the dollar today...

Would Thaksin dare to sue a monk?

October 6, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Dare the prime minister sue a monk?](#) – Bangkok Post, October 6, 2005

...Believed to be a saint, Luangta Maha Bua commands a nationwide following who believe in his every word.

When he made his unhappiness with the Chuan administration public, for example, the Democrat-led government did not last long.

Last week, the popular forest monk, who used to be Mr Thaksin's staunch supporter, slammed Mr Thaksin with a far more serious accusation than that of Mr Sondhi's. We have to wait and see if Mr Thaksin dares sue the monk or not...

Dare the prime minister sue a monk?

In the realm of image-making, reality does not count all that much. Perception does. That is why Thaksin Shinawatra's image makers must have a big headache right now.

The laments expressed in Mr Thaksin's defamation lawsuit against his former ally, media tycoon Sondhi Limthongkul, clearly show how critical Mr Thaksin's image problem has become these days.

It is no big deal for politicians to face corruption allegations. One must grin and bear it as part of the job. But being painted in a negative light in relation to the country's two most sacred institutions, namely the monarchy and the Buddhist clergy, is any politician's worst nightmare. Few have survived such political assassination.

In his 500-million-baht lawsuit, Mr Thaksin complained that Mr Sondhi has not only accused him of being disloyal to the monarchy but also of intervening in monastic matters by appointing his family's favourite monk as the acting Supreme Patriarch, which he said was completely false.

But if Mr Thaksin's image makers think that the lawsuit would effectively prevent the empty allegations from creating even more false perceptions about their boss, then they might be in for a big surprise.

To start with, the lawsuit will surely arouse more public interest in the allegations, not douse them. Those who have not heard of the allegations before will now certainly like to find out if Mr Sondhi's concerns have grounds or not.

To Mr Thaksin's dismay, believers of Mr Sondhi's conspiracy theories will find plenty of material to back them up, be it the notorious picture of Mr Thaksin in the Emerald Buddha Temple, the auditor-general stalemate, Pramual Rujanaseri's book on royal powers, to name just a few.

For those who have heard of the allegations, they will have plenty of opinions to spice up the debate which will do no good to Mr Thaksin's image. In other words, the rumour mill will continue to dog Mr Thaksin for a long time yet.

Mr Sondhi, meanwhile, is not Mr Thaksin's most fearsome critic.

Believed to be a saint, Luangta Maha Bua commands a nationwide following who believe in his every word.

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Last week, the popular forest monk, who used to be Mr Thaksin's staunch supporter, slammed Mr Thaksin with a far more serious accusation than that of Mr Sondhi's. We have to wait and see if Mr Thaksin dares sue

the monk or not.

It is widely known that Luangta Maha Bua does not see eye to eye with Somdet Phra Phuttacharn, leader of the Mahanikaya sect. During Mr Thaksin's first term, his loyalty still lay with Luangta.

Even when a large number of monks took to the streets to demand the setting up of a Ministry of Buddhism and to declare Buddhism the national religion, Mr Thaksin bluntly turned down the proposal, which was believed to have been endorsed by Somdet Phra Phuttacharn.

Many also believe the Ecclesiastical Council's proposal to restructure its administration through the drafted new Sangha Bill was turned down for the same reason.

Mr Thaksin fell out of Luangta's favour when his government refused to amend the Sangha Bill to return to His Majesty the King his old royal authority to choose a Supreme Patriarch.

Any remaining ties were cut when the government appointed Luang-ta's arch-enemy, Somdet Phra Phuttacharn, as acting Supreme Patriarch. The decision is also widely resented by the Supreme Patriarch's followers.

Whether the allegations against Mr Thaksin are true or not has become secondary to the question: why are so many people willing to believe them?

If Mr Thaksin cannot answer this question and look at himself honestly in the mirror, his image problem will continue to dip further as public perception increasingly turns against him.

Sanitsuda Ekachai is Assistant Editor, Bangkok Post.

‘Victims of Communism Memorial’ planned

October 6, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[‘Victims of Communism Memorial’ planned](#) – AP, October 6, 2005

Officials gave initial approval Thursday to a memorial for victims of communist regimes that would be located within sight of one of the icons of democracy...

Doesn't add up?

October 6, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Doesn't add up? – October
6, 2005

Cormac notes: *The front page of the Nation yesterday covered a government policy aimed at easing personal debt ([PERSONAL DEBT: Relief plan under attack](#), The Nation, October 4, 2005). Ministers were quoted (in several places, and highlighted in subheadings) as saying that the programme would cover debtors whose bills did not exceed Bt200,000; and that about 100,000 debtors would be eligible, with total debts of Bt30 billion. That works out at an average of Bt300,000 per debtor.*

Buses “so damned jam-packed that my baby is going to come out of my womb!”

October 7, 2005

Categories: Buses

Thai humor: Buses "so damned jam-packed that my baby is going to come out of my womb!" – translated and summarized from "Viva BMTA Bangkok Bus", originally at Pantip.com and published in [Khao Hua Rau weekly magazine](#), courtesy of *Khao Hua Rau*, No. 778

1) BMTA No. 510 – Pra Padaeng – Rangsit (now shortened to either Rangsit – Victory Monument or Talad Thai – Victory Monument)

This one is the most arrogant and snobbish line. They seem to refuse to stop to pick up passengers. Even when they stop to pick up passengers, they usually go beyond the bus stops. This one is also very hard to find.

2) No 8. Pakklong Talad (Memorial Bridge) – Happy Land

This legendary line has the fastest driver in Thailand. The drivers are just unemployed Formula One Racers. Many of them look as if they were just released from Bang Kwang Prison or Lad Yaop Prison. You should never sit in front or your head will smash with the front glass. Better hold the handles and fasten your seat belts. Better harden your bones though. You can fly any time.

It can run from Happyland to Pakklond Talad in 30 minutes. Even if the driver does not hold the steering wheel it can go around the curve. Some even can fly at the bridge before reaching Saphan Lek (Sam Yod Intersection). It can be jam-packed like Bus No 504 any time despite the very fast running.

3) No. 506 Phra Padaeng – Pakkret.

This is the longest route—starting from Pa Padaeng then goes into Bangkok city center passing Wat Arun, Memorial Bridge, Wat Po, Tha Tian, Sanam Luang – Wat Phrakaeo until it reaches Pakkret with a package tour of 18-20 baht. You can bring the whole family with you since the speed limit is just 40 kph. The tour will start from 5am to 9:30pm. The system will have very hot aircon to prevent freezing. The fire extinguisher usually rolls out of the locker, the aircon and the bus usually break down. Sometimes the bus engines just turn into an explosive car bomb – with a few sparks and smoke before explosion. Run for our lives!

4) No. 504 Rangsit – Vibhavadee – Krung Thep Bridge

The most sardine-packed bus in Thailand. Women better take birth control pills and condoms to prevent pregnancy without wedlock during the jam-pack and it is a heaven for sexual molesters. Even kittens will be crushed to death due to the jam-pack

5) No 113 Minburi – Hua Lamphong

This one has broken automatic doors – better rely on manual opening. During the return trip to Minburi, the line will go to Banthat Thong Road and Yommaraj instead of going along Rama 4 Road and Phyathai Road to pick the passengers at Sam Yan and Pathumwan. Bus No 113 used to be white red, but now it is white blue with electric fans installed and the ticket price of 5 baht.

Now No 113 has aircon buses, but the air is not working very well and

there are very few passenger in this aircon bus. Only aircon bus No 547 has fewer passengers— you can talk with the bus conductors since you may be the only passengers on that No 547 bus.

6) Bus No 501. Pakklong Talad – Minburi

This bus is running from Minburi – passing Ramkhamhaeng to Phra Khanong via Klong Tan before heading to Siam before ending up at Pakklong Talad. No hope to get a seat during Saturday and Daily Rush Hour. However, it becomes empty when it passes Sukhumvit 24.

7) Bus No. 33 – Pathum Thani – Sanam Luang

This is the bus from HELL run by the Lord of Death with surname of Harn Sawat. Running from Pakkeret to Sanam Luang in 25 minutes. Many passengers have fallen from this bus during the run along the curves. Some even float in the sky for three seconds when it runs on the bridge—and the glass and mirrors have several cracks.

Children and pregnant people should NEVER ride this bus at all. Those who have to ride this bus must wear amulets, charms, crosses, talisman and Mandala sheets to protect themselves.

This bus line also has several drivers possessed by fallen Formula One racers. No wonder they need Mandala and Amulet to protect themselves and better have insurance policies with them. However sometimes this bus runs very low. Poor maintenance is norm for this line—it can break down any second even at speeds of 100 kph.

8) No. 356 – Pakkret – Rangsit – Thammasart (Rangsit Campus)

This bus is really slow—speed limit at 40 kph can take about a hour from Pakket to Laksi. This bus will park to pick up those female factory workers and there will be at least five buses of this line to pick up the factory workers. The conditions of this bus are incredible—unbelievable that it can run to Thammasart. Many times, passengers such as factory workers, children, monks, and pregnant women have to go down to push the bus to get it started again. Even the drivers complain that they can never get spare parts for reliable services from their boss.

9) No. 57 Taling Chan – Klong San

This bus has been haunted by motorcycle taxi ghosts at Pho Sam Ton. After that they will face another haunt from the truck drivers under the influence of speed pills at Pinklao – Nakhon Chaisri Highway. This bus will stop only when it hits the cars of other people. Even the passengers could seen the road from the floor of this bus.

10) Aircon Bus No. 545 (ex Aircon 126) Nonthaburi – Samrong

This line is courtesy of The Mall Group since this it passes The Mall Ngam Wongwan, The Mall Bang Kapi, and The Mall Ram Khamhaeng. Now, this bus has more support from the Jaor Group since it passes Major Ratchayothin, Major Ram Khamhaeng, and Major Ekkamai. However, some people have considered aircon bus 545 as the "Haunted Bus" due to the dilapidated condition as well as very dim lighting and so few passengers.

11) Aircon bus No. 157 (Aircon Ex No 32) Bang Pakok – Mochit 2

Those who feel very sick can ride this bus since it passes Siriraj Hospital, Ramathibodee Hospital, King Vajiravut Hospital, Children's Hospital, Paolo Hospital, and National Cancer Institute.

12) Minibus No. 11 – Pratoonam – Phatthanakarn

This one is the only serious contender to Bus No 8 and No 33 due to the speed. Some of them just did not stop until it passes 5 bus stops after when the passengers ring the bell—no matter how much yelling to the drivers. Sometimes they even see the pregnant woman turns mad like the mad elephant

since it is like canned sardines inside—she yells "so damned jam-packed that my baby is going to come out of my womb!"

When the driver of this bus slams the brakes, the back seats just blow out. When this bus passes behind Metro (near Makkasan station and Bangkok

Place Hotel) it just drives on two side wheels and the other two up in the air.

13) Bus No 207 (Ram 1 - Ram 2)

Driver of this bus usually jumps the bridge across Prawet canal. Those who want to go to Seacon will have to be careful.

14) Bus No 56

So many Bus No 56 , but at least 3 busses come within 10 minutes.

15) Bus 159

So few of this bus—have to wait for 45 minutes and then three busses come together.

16) Bus 71 – Pathamawikorn – Wat Tha Thong

The drivers just slam the brakes every three minutes. They can make any sharp turn any time they want. During the night trip, the driver will just become a speed racer and make sharp turns at Klong Tan and jump the bridge across Saen Saeb Canal before reaching Klong Tan intersection and then decelerate from 60+ kph to 0 in 10 meters.

17) Minibus in Chiang Mai

These buses can park at the whim of the drivers. Sometimes just cut into the lanes of other drivers.

18) Bus No 28 (Ratchayothin – Southern Bus terminal)

Drivers of this bus usually slam the clutch and make a sudden change of gear which causes the passengers to fall. Those who stand better train their grip to prevent falling out of the bus.

What has happened to Burma's "first families" these days?

October 7, 2005

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[What](#)

[has happened to Burma's "first families" these days?](#)

– *The Irrawaddy*, October 7, 2005

...Has Snr-Gen Than Shwe gained or lost weight? Health can be an important political or economic indicator. Is he smiling or frowning—and at whom? With whom is he standing? Are they new members of an inner circle? Or are they soon to join the ranks of dispossessed cronies currently in prison? Who is standing closest to the esteemed general? Perhaps the next prime minister? Such questions by readers lead to the wildest rumors—almost always misleading and patently unreliable, but nonetheless influential...

Armored monkmobile

October 7, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Armored monkmobile](#) – *Taipei Times*, October 7, 2005

iPod Skytrain

October 8, 2005

Categories: Signs and Billboards



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

iPod Skytrain – October
8, 2005

By popular demand, more photos of the iPod Skytrain...

More on the [Bangkok
Skytrain](#)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

More on Dschinghis Khan

October 8, 2005

More on Dschinghis Khan

– October 8, 2005

Nothing to do with Thailand, but interesting. Nils writes: *Now*

there's finally some info on [Wikipedia](#)

about Dschinghis Khan. They were 2 Germans, 2 Hungarians, 1 Dutch girl and 1 dancer from South Africa, assembled by composer Ralph Siegel for the Eurovision Song Contest.

And don't miss the video ([MPEG](#)

or [Flash](#),

complete with lyrics and some comments in Swedish) for the song

"Moskau", from German television show "Disco",

1979 or 1980!

The Big Melt – As polar ice turns to water, dreams of treasure abound

October 10, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[The](#)

[Big Melt – As polar ice turns to water, dreams of treasure abound](#)

– *New York Times*, October 10, 2005

For those who like maps, do not miss the two clickable graphic halfway down the left side of the page. One is ‘Unlocking an Ocean’ which shows the various shipping routes opening up at the North Pole and the other is ‘Two Ways to Split Up the Arctic Ocean’ that shows current territorial claims along with two standard methods of dividing the area—the median line method and the sector method.

Front page news: 'Alleged sex fiend pays for hogging pig'

October 10, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Front page news: ['Alleged sex fiend pays for hogging pig'](#) –
The Nation, October 10, 2005

...Sa-ngad said she saw the man, identified only as Chid, 30, taking a bath beside her pig pen, wearing only underpants, when she headed out to see what happened.

“One of my sows was found walking nearby outside the pen with swollen genitals. My neighbours insisted they saw the man having sex with the pig after they came out to see why it was squealing,” she said...

Supinya Klangnarong Vs SHIN Corporation

October 10, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Supinya Klangnarong Vs SHIN Corporation](#) – wacc.org,

October 10, 2005

...WACC condemns the \$10 million (400 millions

Bahts) libel suit filed by the Thai media and telecommunications giant Shin Corp owned by Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's family, against Supinya Klangnarong, a WACC scholar, journalist and freedom of speech campaigner.

Supinya had noted, in an interview published in the Thai Post, that Shin Corp profits had soared since Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra had come to power and had questioned the relationships between politics and commercial interests. Shin Corp was founded by the Prime Minister and is now owned by his family.

Petition

You may sign the petition calling for Shin Corp to drop the criminal proceedings against Supinya , already signed by Noam Chomsky, Bob McChesney, Ariel Dorfman, Bernard Cassen, Armand Mattelart, Ursula Owen, Sheila Coronel, Phasuk Pongpaijit, Ji Ungphakorn, Ubolrat Siri-yuwasak and Vitayakorn Chiangkul.

Click here to add your name to the petition. Thank you.

This is a translation of the original, offending, article which the libel case has been brought on: [NGO](#)

[Slammed Shin Corp Getting Rich after Five Years of Thai Rak Thai in Power](#)

SMS for Burmese mobile phones

October 10, 2005

[SMS](#)

[for Burmese mobile phones](#) – *The*

Irrawaddy, October 10, 2005

GSM mobile phone users in Burma will now be allowed to use SMS, or Short Message Service, for the first time. According to reports from Rangoon, the Ministry of Communications, Posts and Telegraphs has confirmed to users that SMS would be available starting on October 2. Messages must be sent in English at a cost of 25 kyat (US 2 cents). All messages will be censored, and any text deemed "seditious" will be flagged. Analog cellular service was launched in Rangoon in 1993, and the GSM system went online in 2002. It is estimated that there are less than 200,000 cell phones in use in the country, with most used by the military and Burma's politically connected business elite. The official price of a GSM phone is 1 million kyat (about \$1,100), but on the black market such phones sell for more than \$2,000.

Vegetarian Festival in Had Yai

October 11, 2005

Categories: Culture and Society, Thai Holidays and Festivals

Vegetarian Festival
in Had Yai – October 11, 2005

Mr. John writes: *This is the Vegetarian Festival of year 2005 at Hadyai, Songkhla. There was a parade of Buddhas and holy items that Thai and Thai-Chinese people worship. It also had a miracle-performing ceremony that used sharp iron and other stakes being pushed through the cheeks of participants. The festival was organized on October 2-11 and also provided free of vegetarian food.*



(Photo: Mr. John for 2Bangkol



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



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



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



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



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



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



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

What road?

October 12, 2005

Categories: Communities, Old photos and films



What road?

– October 12, 2005

Yesterday we asked: Is this really Samsen Road? What is the building in the distance? Is this looking north or south?

Today Parinand answers: *Referring to the question about Samsen Rd. on today's 2Bangkok.com front page, the street in the old photograph was Inner Rajdamnoen Avenue (Thanon Ratchadamnoen Nai) not Samsen Road. I think it must have been taken before 1930s.*

The picture was looking north. The building in the distance was the Badman and Co. department store, which was later turned into the Law School of the Ministry of Justice and finally became the Public Relations Department before it was demolished. (The Law School was expanded to become the University of Moral and Political Sciences two years after the 1932 Revolution and later moved to the current campus at Tha Phra Chan; the university is now known as Thammasat University)

Tamarind trees lined the left side of the street, while old colonial-style buildings were found on the right. These buildings were later demolished and replaced with the more modern-looking court house in 1940s. The court house still exists today and it houses the Supreme Court and other minor courts of justice.

More photos of the area are halfway down this [page](#).

Dialogue is not bad

October 12, 2005

Categories: Thai Politics, The Thai Deep South

From
the Thai-language press: *Thairath* editorial:
Dialogue is not bad – October
12, 2005

It is not clear if PM Thaksin Shinawatra is afraid Malaysia will become involved in the three southern border provinces making it a problem between nations or if he is afraid to lose prestige. For whatever reason, he denied to open a dialogue with Malaysia that was proposed by the Foreign Ministry of Malaysia and said he has no agenda to ask for cooperation in solving the problem.

Although Thai government always confirms the unrest in the south is a domestic problem, solving the problem will not succeed if we do not get cooperation seriously and sincerely from Malaysia. This is because our border connects to Malaysia and both peoples have similar nationality, language, religions, and relationships as we often visit to each other.

But when the misunderstanding happened when 131 Muslims fled to Malaysia, both governments should have a quiet dialogue and not necessary argue back and forth.

The Thai government should thank Mr. Anand Panyalachun, Chairperson of the National Reconciliation Commission, who used his status as a former of PM and old diplomatic agent to privately discuss with PM Badawi and Ex-PM Mahathir at Kuala Lumpur and get confirmation that Malaysia did not support the separatism.

It is normal that Thais may doubt, but the way that the Defense Minister accused Mahathir as being a backer of the separatists should have been considered in a circumspect manner. Mahathir was Malaysian PM for 20 years and the southern situation was at peace. Recently Mahathir also condemned the bombs at Bali saying it was not the Islam way and this damages Islam.

We have to understand Malaysia has a problem with Muslim violence as well. The UMNO Party of the government is opposed to the opposition PAS party and it is the government that governs Kelantan State that is next to Thailand. The PAS Party wants to govern with the Islam way but UMNO separates the religious domain from the state and controls religious teaching so it will not incite violence.

Dialogue with Malaysia is not bad. On the contrary, it makes a closer relationship, more understanding, and cooperation.

In the past, our government cooperated to solve unrest in the south. The best example is the solving of the Malaya Communist Terrorist Party or, as we call it, the Chinese Thief Communist Movement.

Annual Hindu procession

October 13, 2005

Categories: Thai Holidays and Festivals



(Photo: Cormac)

Annual Hindu procession

– October 13, 2005

Cormac writes: *Various scenes from the annual Hindu procession from Sathorn to Sri Mariamman Temple (Wat Khaek) last night.*

Right: Under the Sala Daeng Skytrain Station



(Photo: Cormac)



(Photo: Cormac)



(Photo: Cormac)



(Photo: Cormac)

Left: Traditional miracle ceremony where devotees pierce their cheeks with various steel rods in a trance-like state.

More photos of the ritual: [Vegetarian Festival in Hat Yai](#) – October 11, 2005



(Photo: Cormac)

The Great Flood of 1942

October 13, 2005

Categories: Floods, History, Old photos and films



October 13, 1942 at Sanam Luang

The great flood of 1942

Manager had an [interesting article](#) on the great flood of 1942.

Translations of the photo captions in the article:

The first photo: In 1942 a heavy rain in the northeast and northwest of Thailand make a big flood and caused lots of damage to farms, field, and houses in the central, northeast and northern region. This was in September, October, and November and was one of biggest floods in the history of Thailand.

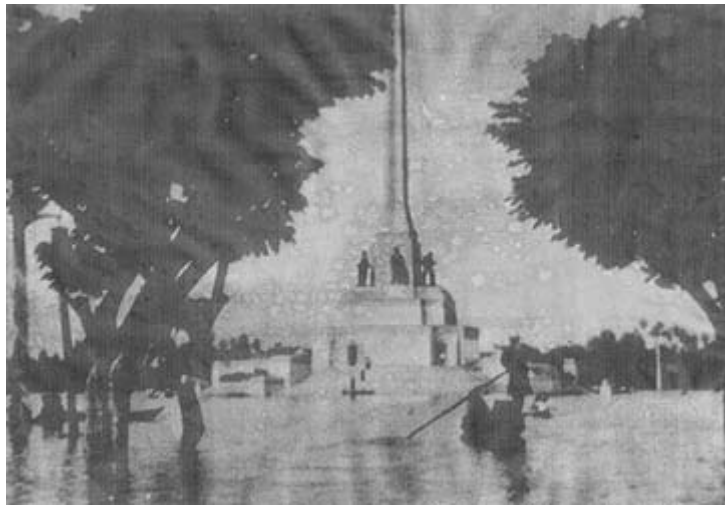
The second photo: This make Rajadamnoen Road became to be a lake.

The third photo: Also Victory Monument became a lake in 1942.

The fourth photo: Because of the big rain people traveled by boat instead car.

The fifth photo: This old man explained that at the time he was very young (15 years old) so it was very fun for him, but the adults feel grief and sadness because it caused damage to people. He also said the water level is over people's head especially at parliament by King Rama 5 statue. People couldn't stand so they use boats and if someone has boats they felt smart or cool and will take women to travel with. The schools were closed so the students play in water and race boats. Some people fished and could catch lots of fish. At that time the water was clean which is different than today.

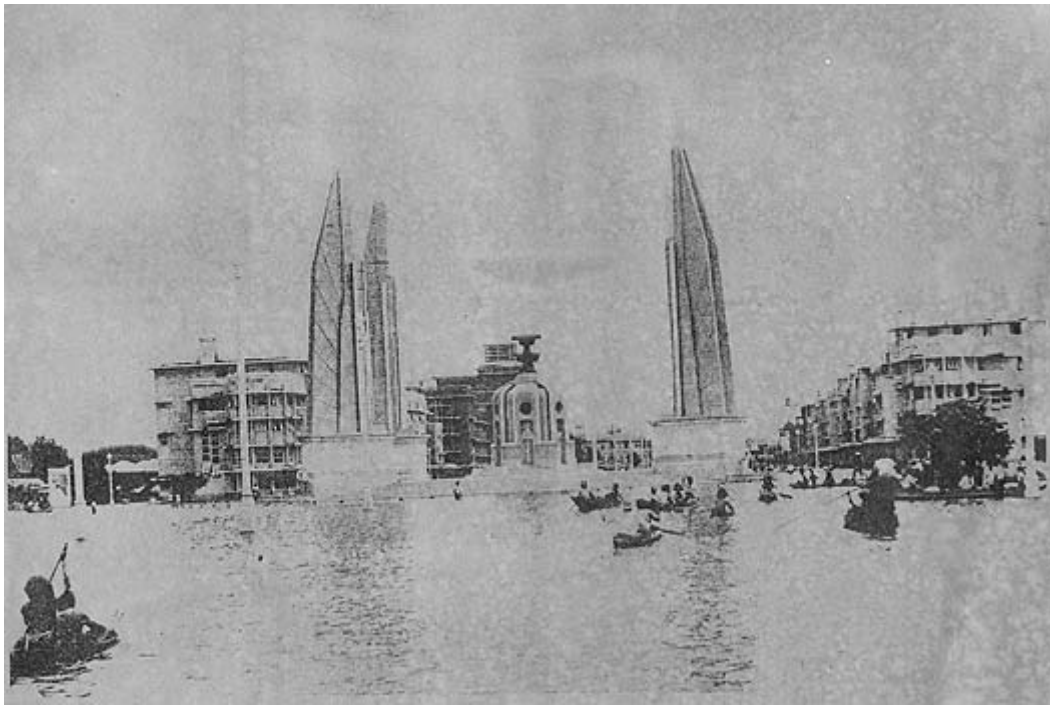
Some account from the Great Flood of 1942 can be found [here](#), including a photo of a tram on a flooded street (just search for the word "flood" on the page).



Victory Monument



The Great Flood of 1942 in front of Hualampong Train Station



October 12, 1942 – Democracy Monument
Taken from the front of the Suksahpanpahnit Shop (a bookshop) toward
Pan Fah Lee La Bridge.



The gang to exploit poor people

October 13, 2005

Categories: Labor

From the Thai-language press:

Thairath editorial: The gang to exploit poor people – October 13, 2005

Although it is quite late, it is not too late for the Investigation Commission of which Gen. Thanu Sriyakul, is Chairperson, to specify that employment agencies and many government officials of the Labour Ministry who took a high brokerage fee from 1,700 Thai workers. The amount taken was more than the law allows (which is 90,000-150,000 baht). The total extorted from the Thai workers is 60 million baht.

This made us believe that there was cooperation between the owner of the employment agency and the middle level government officials of the Department of Employment who are in the North and Northeast of Thailand. The ingenious way to avoid detection is to send a large number of workers, but less than 50 workers in order not to be required approval from the high chief.

The riot of Thai workers in Kaohsiung, in the south of Taiwan, to protest the employers' oppression in August, urges the Taiwan government and Thai government to investigate urgently. Taiwan moved faster than Thailand in making their Labour Minister and Lord Mayor of Kaohsiung resign to take responsibility. The investigation specifies that there was a gang formed to oppress and exploit Thai workers.

At first it was understood that only Taiwan was at fault for this, but the investigation of the Thai Labour Ministry found that the Thai employment agent company was also responsible.

60 million baht was fleeced from the workers' sweat by people of the same nationality as the workers themselves. This was a large amount of money to take from poor people. Some must sell their land or take a mortgage or go to the pawnshop to get the brokerage fee. This 60 million baht is likely money from the 1,700 workers. This excludes thousands of other Thai workers in Taiwan. Thailand sends more workers to Taiwan than any other country.

Many countries solve this problem by having the government handling sending workers overseas or giving loans with low interest to workers. Thailand as well seems like it may try to solve this problem with this method, but as it is controlled by the Labour Ministry already, many workers are oppressed and exploited by people

of their same nationality. So it is hopeless now on how to solve this problem. At first, we must penalize those involved and clear up the system.

Fixing a flat on a tuk-tuk

October 13, 2005



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Fixing a flat on a tuk-tuk – October
13, 2005

A man talking on a mobile phone holds up a tuk-tuk while another
man changes the tire.

Koh Samui property on eBay

October 14, 2005

Koh Samui property on eBay

– October 14, 2005

["Koh](#)

[Samui Island Seaview Coconut Land – 4 acres"](#) – An encouraging point in the ad is that they admit only Thais can own land.

Great articles from The Irrawaddy

October 14, 2005

Great articles from *The Irrawaddy*

[Cry
freedom](#) – *The Irrawaddy*,

October 14, 2005

...Bangkok was until comparatively recently regarded as something of a regional free-press bastion—that's print press, because electronic media in Thailand is stifled under an antiquated system going back to communist-threat days, which means almost all TV and radio stations are controlled by the government or military. But now newspapers are also under constant pressure, mainly through selective placement of lucrative advertisements by government agencies and politically-connected businesses—and sometimes use of defamation laws in court, a` la Singapore...

[King
Mindon's ruined vision](#) – *The*

Irrawaddy, October 14, 2005

...Mindon, who ruled Burma from 1853 to 1878, embraced Western ideas, allowed missionaries to work within his realm and was the first Burmese king to seek Western education for his subjects. He and his younger brother sent hundreds of young men to study in Europe, while diplomats were dispatched to Western capitals, led by one of his chief ministers U Kaung. At home, Mindon's children went to missionary schools in Mandalay, riding there in traditional fashion on elephants with armed guards...

[The
Shadow of 1767](#) – *The Irrawaddy*,

October 14, 2005

Old enmities still weigh on Thai-Burmese relationship...

[Book
review: Beyond the Tales of Kings and Wars](#) –

The Irrawaddy, October 14, 2005

*...Many Thai scholars in the past also tended to avoid anything that could be interpreted as controversial and contrary to the officially accepted version of Thai history. The first real attempt to break with that tradition—in Thai, though—came when, in 1957, a young and idealistic academic, Jit Phumisak, wrote his now classic *The Real Face of Thai Feudalism* Today. The following year, the book was banned and its author sent to languish in Bangkok's notorious Lard Yao prison. He later fled to the jungle where he joined the insurgent Communist Party of Thailand—and was killed in an encounter in the Phu Phan mountains in the northeast in 1966...*

[Universal
Burmese language software launched](#) –

The Irrawaddy, October 13, 2005

New computer software that allows Burmese characters to be

written in emails, web pages and word-processed documents on any computer system was announced in Rangoon yesterday...

Kai Tak Airport approach

October 14, 2005

Kai Tak Airport approach –

October 14, 2005

Nils points out: [Simulation](#)

[video](#) of a plane's approach to [Hong](#)

[Kong Kai Tak Airport](#). *Note the accompanying soundtrack—Strauss' famous waltz probably hasn't been put to better use since Kubrick's "2001."*

Ghost photo

October 17, 2005

Ghost photo

– October 17, 2005

Photos depicting ghosts or other paranormal activity are a staple of the front pages of Thai-language newspapers. Here we have the *Khao Sod* front page on October

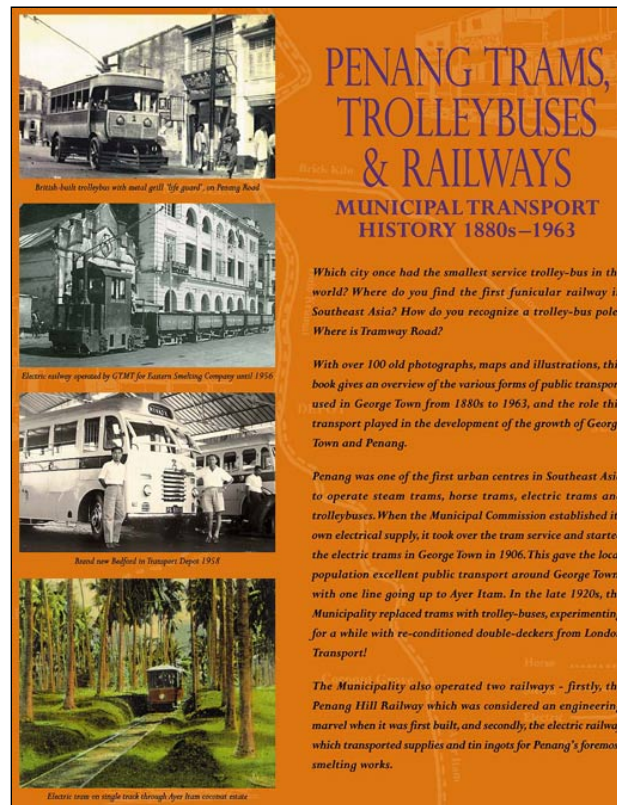
14, 2005 with a [photo](#)

from a Khon Kean school event that supposedly shows the ghost of a student who died. *Khao Sod* is a sensational newspaper put out by the more serious *Matichon* and is intended to compete with other more sensational papers like *ThaiRath*.



Penang Trams!

October 17, 2005



Penang Trams! –
October 17, 2005

Ric Francis writes: *My new book will be released at Christmas in Penang. Attached is the cover of book... All monies raised in sales go to Penang Heritage Trust.*

2Bangkok.com secrets: Inside Fort Mahakan

October 18, 2005

Categories: The Mahakan Fort Community

2Bangkok.com secrets: Inside Fort Mahakan
Including the mysterious man in the fort...

Also: [Latest news on the Mahakan Fort community](#)

Also: [A walk through the Mahakan Fort Community](#)

Right: Gate to the fort from street level



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

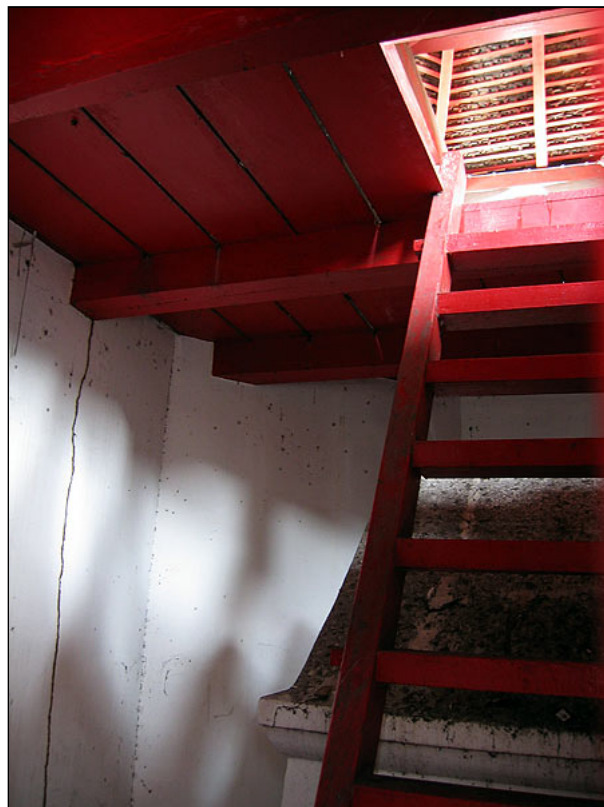


(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Looking towards Phan Fa Bridge



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Stairs to the upper level of the tower. The red slats are the underside of the tower roof. The

rows of tile on the roof hang on the slats.

Right: Locked doors to the inside of the tower.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

The man in the tower

Ron notes: *I could just catch a glimpse of a man in Muay Thai trunks practicing Muay Thai moves inside the tower. It was strange because the door to the tower seemed to be padlocked from the outside. I knocked on the door to get his attention, but he did not seem to hear me. I tried to take a photo of the man through the crack in the door as he walked back and forth, but each time it seemed I could not capture his image on film. Thinking I must be going crazy, I went outside and waited a long time until the man peeked out from the tower. The photo on the right is a highly lightened detail of the image on the left to show the man. Strangely enough, the man had each of his eyebrows painted red.*



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Looking out over Phan Fa Bridge



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Looking down into the new Fort Mahakan Park



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Also: [Latest news on the Mahakan Fort community](#)
Also: [A walk through the Mahakan Fort Community](#)

Bang Pa-In cablecar

October 18, 2005

Categories: Uncategorized



(Photo: Nils)



Bang Pa-In cablecar

– October 18, 2005

Nils writes: *Do you know the Bang Pa-in cablecar? Next to the palace, which is situated along the eastern bank of the Chao Phraya, opposite an elongated island in the River, you can take a ride with this lovely contraption. It is operated by monks residing in Wat Niwet Thamprawat on the island. Whenever one of the gondolas (?) is full of passengers (there are actually quite a lot of people going for a visit), the person in the 'lookout' on the western side pulls a lever, and an old diesel engine begins its work. The usage is free, but donations are welcomed. I would like to know when this cablecar was constructed...*

(Photo: Nils)

Tuk-tuk sold on eBay

October 18, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Tuk-tuk sold on eBay](#) – October 18, 2005

The tuk-tuk sold for GBP 1,900.00.

Email petition to save BBC's Thai-language broadcasts

October 18, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Email petition to save BBC's Thai-language broadcasts](#) – *The Nation*,

October 18, 2005

...Nopmanee said the 25-minute programme, broadcast twice daily, had been a valuable source of news and entertainment to its dedicated Thai listeners, broadening their world view. Nopmanee urged other disgruntled listeners to speak up through thai@bbc.co.uk...

...Chuan said most journalists working at Thai-owned media outlets were beholden to government officials and so were unable to remain impartial. "They are either on the side of the government or else parrot."

Thanet Aphornsuwan, director of Southeast Asian studies at Thammasat University, agreed. "The BBC can say things that local Thai journalists cannot say," Thanet said. "I think the BBC Thai-language service has played a role in strengthening people's access to news and information. It also keeps Thai authorities on their toes..."

How much does Bill Gates donate and for what?

October 19, 2005

How much does Bill Gates donate
and for what? – October 19, 2005

Bangkok Post is having a little trouble getting the text
right in their new SMS headline service. Below are two typical
messages:

*9:36am – Bill Gates donates US\$15 to Computer History Museum
to maintain the world's largest collection of computing artifacts
such as the rare Cray-1 supercomputer.*

*9:52am – Thai woman tourist, Charitar Kamolnoranath, 41, disappears
on shopping trip in Hong Kong. Polices are searching for her.
Correction: Bill Gates donates US\$15m*

Wires

October 19, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News



(Photo: Susan)

Wires

– October 19, 2005

Susan notes a recently constructed building near Tesco on Sukhumvit Road in Pattaya. It appears the building is built so the wires go through it.



(Photo: Susan)

Phan Phiphop Lila Bridge & intersection over the years

October 20, 2005

Categories: Bridges, Communities

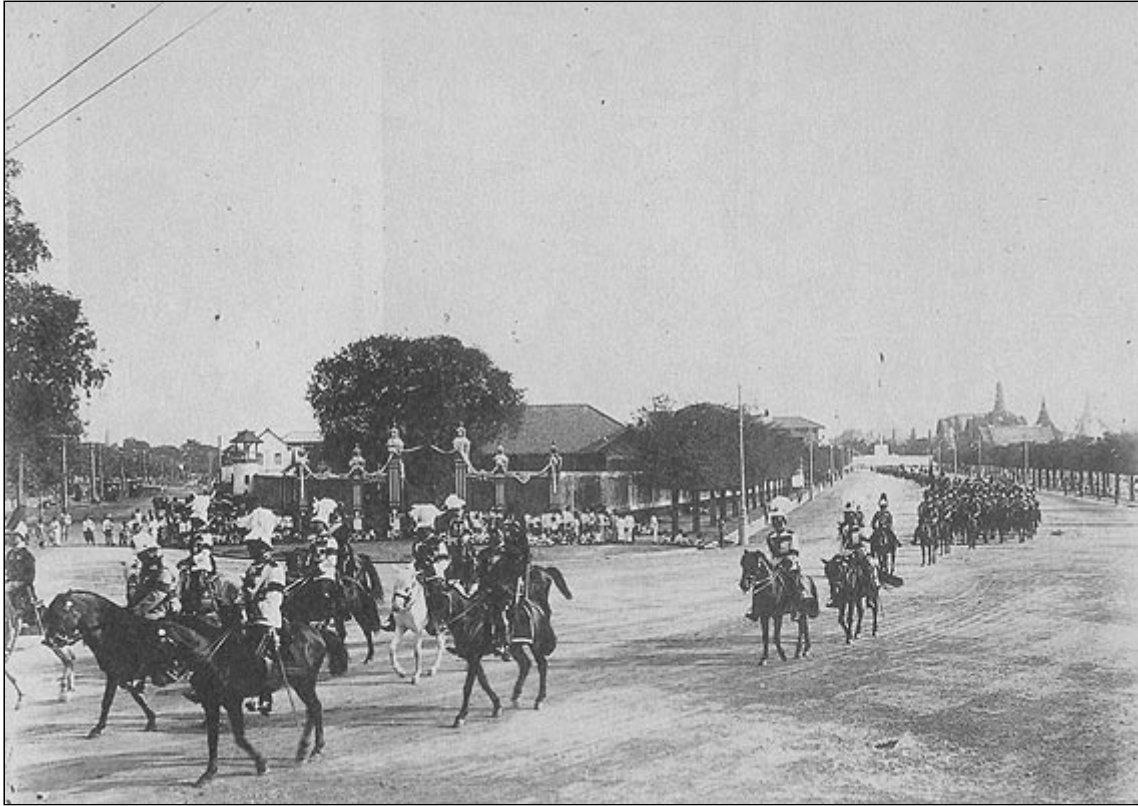


Photo circa 1903 – Procession passing the prison for Minor Crimes (Kong Lahuthot). Note the prison tower on the left. It seems at this time there is no bridge at the intersection. The trees around Sanam Luang (right) were planted in 1902.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Phan Phiphop Lila Bridge & intersection over the years

2Bangkok.com has been collecting images of the Phan Phiphop Lila bridge and intersection for several years.

This is the bridge right before Sanam Luang. It is barely noticeable today as roads have almost completely covered the area around the bridge and the canal is now largely underground.

A sign at the site reads: "Phan Phiphop Lila Bridge – built by Rama V in 1906 to pair with Makkhawan Rangsang Bridge (at the end of Ratchadamnoen Klang Avenue)... Actually the original banisters were very beautiful, unfortunately they were taken to nowhere during the repairation..."



Photo circa 1906 – Notice the power or telephone poles (one is visible right behind the car). The prison for Minor Crimes (Kong Lahuthot) occupies the space where the Earth Goddess statue and the Ministry of Justice will later be built.

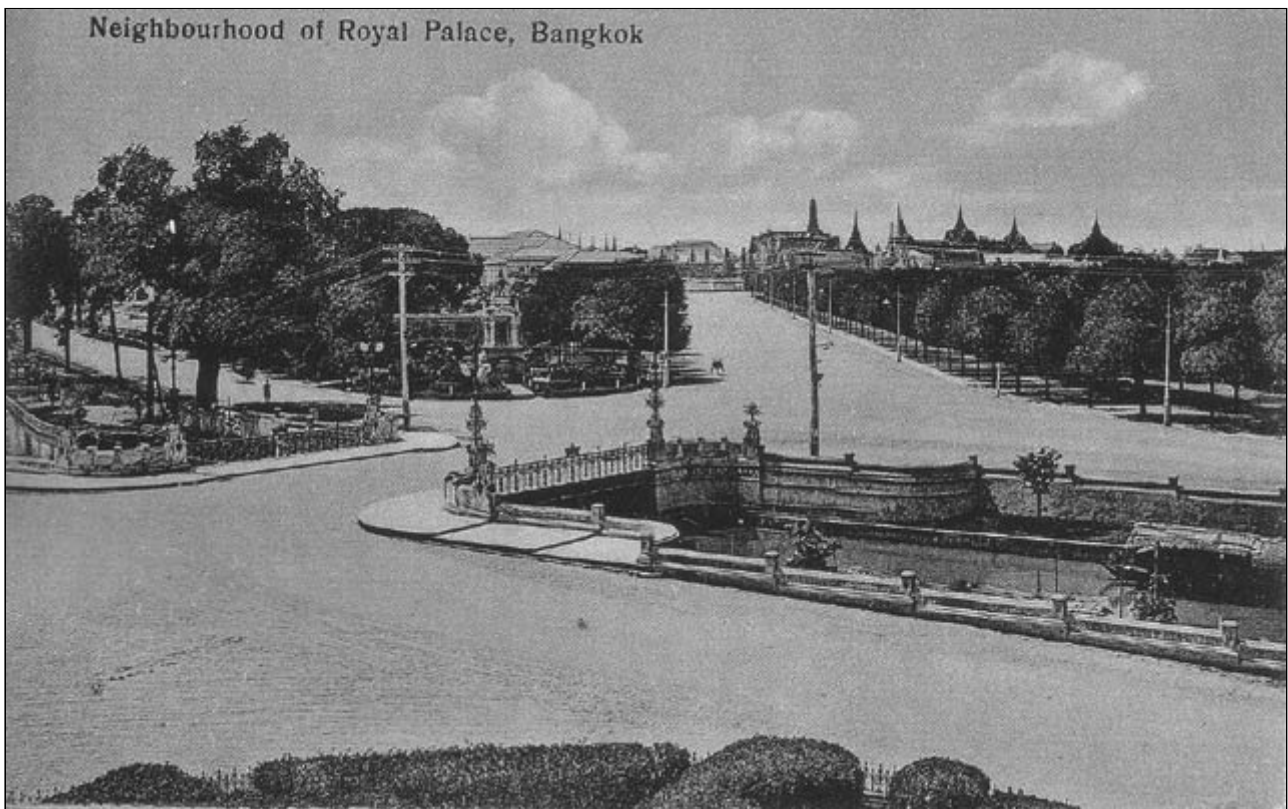
Another early image of the intersection (right). This photo has (from left to right), a horse and carriage, a car, and a rickshaw.



A friend bought this photo (left) for 15 baht from a little old lady sitting under a walkway at Victory Monument. It is on extremely waterlogged and yellowed paper with nothing on the back.



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



(Photo: Postcard from Vichit Turtivong's uncopyrighted *Classic Postcards "Siam"*)

By this time, the Rama V era, the prison has been removed and the Earth Goddess statue has been erected (sometime before 1910). It was initially used as public water tap during a time flooding as a source of clean water. It was built with the donation from Queen Mother Saovabhaphongsri of King Vajiravut . The trees around Sanam Luang have grown and there is a boat in the klong.

This photo of the Rattanakosin Hotel (later the Royal Hotel) is from the post-war aerial survey of Bangkok taken by Peter



Williams Hunt (circa 1946). By this time a new bridge has been built (bottom center of the photo) and the original ornate ironwork has disappeared.

Postwar aerial survey of Bangkok taken by Peter Williams Hunt (circa 1946). Rattanakosin Hotel is on the right. A department store is on the other corner. Later that building will be the Public Relations Department before being replaced by the Revenue Department building which is built out into the road. In 1991, the Revenue Department building was burned down and then removed. Note: The apparent bridge over the river in the top left of the photo is actually part of the plane.



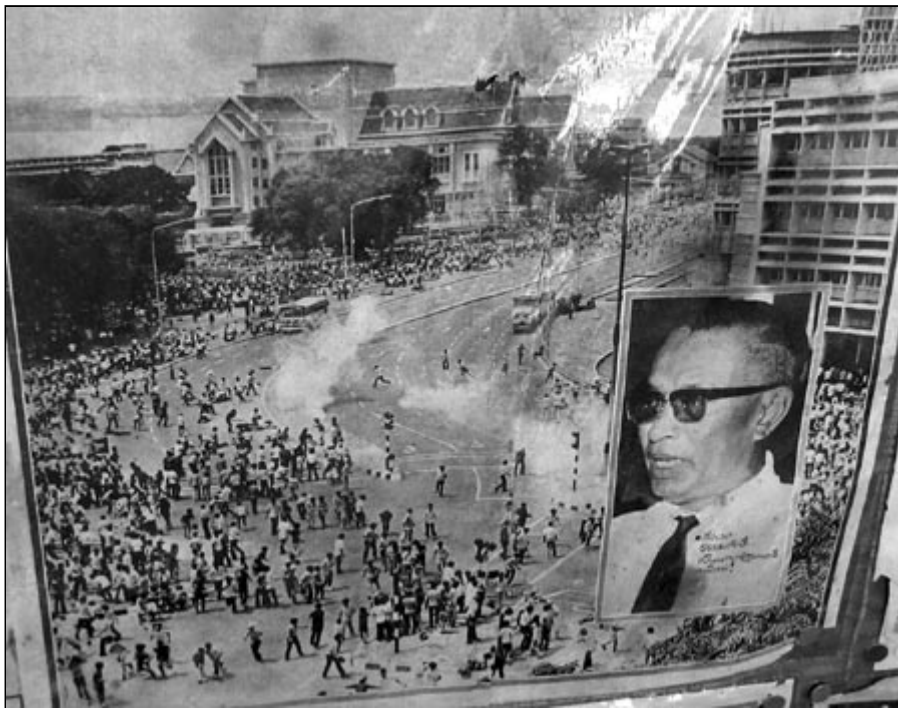
(Photo: Undated postcard from the 2Bangkok.com collection)

Undated photo of Rattanakosin Hotel



(Photo: *ThaiRath* newspaper photo)

Thairath newspaper photo from the 1973 protests shows the Revenue Department building on the right.



(Photo: *ThaiRath* newspaper photo)

Thairath newspaper photo from the 1973 protests show the Revenue Department building on the right. Ratchadamneon Avenue has been routed around the building which sticks out into the former route of the road.



Screen grab from footage of the 1973 protests showing the Revenue Department in the center of the road.

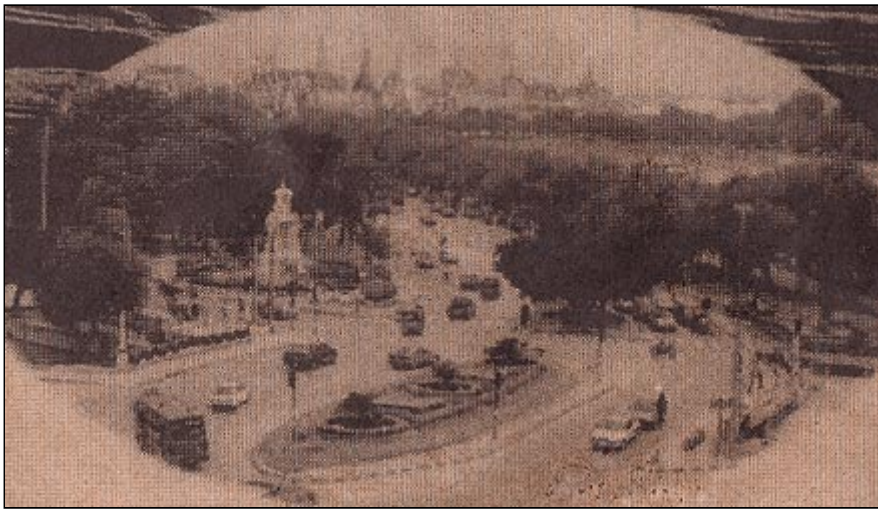


Screen grab from footage of the 1973 protests showing the Revenue Department and the National Theater in the background



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

2004 – With the Revenue Department building gone, there is a clear, unobstructed view to the National Theater



Blurry photo from the mid-1990s showing
a planter in the middle of Phan Phiphop Lila bridge.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

A [new statue](#) erected at the
intersection in 2003.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

2004 – Standing on Phan Phiphop Lila Bridge
looking towards Sanam Luang



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

2004 – Above and below: More modern-day
views of the intersection and bridge



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

‘I Will Eat Your Dollars’

October 20, 2005

Categories: Scams

[‘I Will Eat Your Dollars’](#) – *LA Times*,

October 20, 2005

...Their anthem, "I Go Chop Your Dollars," hugely popular in Lagos, hit the airwaves a few months ago as a CD penned by an artist called Osofia:

"419 is just a game, you are the losers, we are the winners.

White people are greedy, I can say they are greedy

White men, I will eat your dollars, will take your money and disappear.

419 is just a game, we are the masters, you are the losers."

"Nobody feels sorry for the victims," Samuel said.

Scammers, he said, "have the belief that white men are stupid and greedy. They say the American guy has a good life. There's this belief that for every dollar they lose, the American government will pay them back in some way..."

Soi Leunrit News

October 21, 2005

Categories: Communities



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Soi Leunrit News

Variously spelled

‘Luenrit’

(*Bangkok Post* spelling)

‘Reuangrit’ (*The Nation* spelling)

‘Loenrit’ (spelling used by some area businesses)

‘Luanrith’ (English spelling on street signs in the area)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Soi Luenrit saved?

– October 23, 2005

It appears the redevelopment of historic Soi Luenrit into a shopping and office complex has not gone forward. Even the slick sales office promoting the scheme is now vacant.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

What's planned for Soi Leunrit
– May 4, 2004

This morning we visited the Soi Leunrit site office to see the renderings of what is planned for the site. No one was in the office, but we snapped these shots of the drawings through the glass. There is some reflection from the glass, but we thought 2Bangkok readers would want to see them anyway. The Sampeng Trade Center building is to be six stories high with what appears to be shophouses around the exterior. The interior looks suspiciously similar to the failed Old Siam Shopping Center a few blocks away. A successful example of this concept is [Bugis Junction in Singapore](#).



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above:
Interior of 6-story building planned for the site

Left: Soi Leunrit shophouses with Langsuan Building and a temple prang in the background



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

A tale of two newspapers
– Latest on Soi Luenrit – April 12, 2004

Today the the *Post* has a generalized version of what is happening over at Soi Luenrit. Contrast it with the [article from the Thai language](#) paper

(which we first ran a couple weeks ago) which points up allegations of dirty deals and gives all the details.

No backdown on Luenrit plan

– *Bangkok Post*, April 12, 2004

...In 2002 the CPB awarded a 30-year lease over the property to Metro Regent. Residents have opposed the redevelopment, because they would be forced to leave the area, which is famous for its historic architecture dating to the reign of King Chulalongkorn. Bureau director-general Chirayu Isarangkun na Ayutthaya said the contract would not be cancelled even though residents had offered a new deal, including higher rents.

"We cannot end the contract just because someone makes a new offer," Mr Chirayu said.

The shopping mall's blueprint had already been revised and approved by the Fine Arts Department, he said.

The design details have not been made public, but the bureau insists the area's cultural significance will not be harmed.

Luenrit people protesting
against capitalists' march! Petitioning to the King to
protect Soi Luenrit community! –
translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Sawatdee
Krungthep*, March 19-25, 2004

Local people around Soi Luenrit Community (a community in between Yaowaraj Road and Chakkrawat Road) have delivered a petition to appeal the His Majesty to protest against capitalists who are going to build a 10-floor Sampheng Trade Center in Sampheng area which requires the destruction of Luenrit Community as well as historical buildings built during the King Chulaongkorn period (circa 1900-1910). On September 5, 2002, the BMA City Planning Office has invited people of Soi Luenrit to restore and improve Soi Luenrit community as historical place in Bangkok.

Those Sino-Thai people have rented the buildings around Soi Luenrit to set up a local community for three generations. After the lease contacts expired in 2002, the local people are waiting for the new contract while paying monthly rent to Royal Crown Property Bureau (the landlord). However the Royal Crown Property Bureau signed a contract to set up Wang Subsins Co.Ltd as a joint venture with Metro Regent Co.Ltd. to develop Soi Luenrit community. The Royal Crown Property Bureau will be paid 400-500 million baht for the 30 year contract.

Metro Regent Co.Ltd was been set up on September 10, 2002 with a registered capital of 250 million baht. There are 4 people on the board of directors of Metro Regent Co.Ltd.:
1) Mr Santisuk Sajjathap, 2) Mr Ramez Kularbrai, 3) Mr Ajit Sajjathap, 4) Mr Parinya Sajjathap

This is a very irregular deal since the deal has been signed with urgency while there is an interlude period (the period before the the new contract has been renewed).

However, Wang Subsin Co.Ltd. has send a notice to people in Soi Luenrit that Wang Subsin Co.Ltd. is going to evict all the people in Soi Leodrit in 30 days after March 12, 2003 to transfer the land to Metro Regent Co.Ltd./Nexus Property Consultant Co.Ltd. To set up Sampheng Trade Center at Soi Luenrit.

Furthermore, Metro Regent Co.Ltd. Has sent another notice that: "Those who want to stay at Soi Luenrit must pay rent at the rate of 130,000 baht/sq meter and they can rent only the 3rd floor and up – the 1st and 2nd floor renting is strictly prohibited."

This kind of deal will enable Metro Regent to get tens of billions of revenue.

Even worse , the proposed Sampheng Trade Center has not been approved by BMA City Planning Office. No building higher than 16 floors and no building modification allowed within 50 meter radius from temple areas.

Therefore, Luenrit Community Board has asked Momratchawognse Sukhumbhan Boriphat (Bangkok MP, Saphanthawognse District) on February 15, 2003 to help the community from being destroyed by the companies.

Luenrit Community Board has asked the Department of Fine Arts three times to register buildings around Luenrit community as "Historical Building" since the proposed Sampheng trade Center has violated the building code in many cases such as

- 1) Building higher than 10 floors
- 2) Destroying historical buildings and architecture from the King Chulalongkorn period
- 3) Destroy an old trading center

The communities also said they are willing to pay 1.8-2 million baht/ blocks to compensate the landlord for canceling the deal.

On March 9, 2004, Luenrit Community Board asked the Dept of Fine Arts to halt the project until His Majesty can deliver the final verdict whether local people of Soi Luenrit community could stay at the same place.

However, it seems that the Director of the Dept of Fine Arts might be involved with the dirty deal so he yelled at the journalists and the local people of Soi Luenrit to GET OUT of the office.

People around Soi Luenrit Community have made an analysis on this issue and conclude that:

- 1) Sampheng trade center will worsen traffic.
- 2) Sampheng trade center will forever change the relationship between traders and customers. Modern retailers have tried to make a deal here but utterly failed to prosper—such as Cathey Department Store, Merry King Wangbborapha, and ATM Department Store.

Those who live in Soi Luenrit for generations know the ways to capture the hearts of customers which modern retailers will never be able to duplicate. Those who are going to run Sampheng Trade Center will never be able to make successful business without the knowledge of local people which they are disregarding now. We will see who will be the winner—the

local people who want to preserve local identities or the capitalists who march to destroy the architecture, economy, culture and social system with the disguise of "Development with Conservation" and FAKE culture.

Conservation
committee looking into Luenrit case –

Bangkok Post, January 21, 2004

...Luenrit Community, which has received a relocation order from the Crown Property Bureau. The bureau has awarded a 30-year lease contract to a developer, Metro Regent, which plans to build an 11-storey shopping centre at the site. However, the plan has faced strong resistance from the community, which wants the area preserved as a national heritage site.

...Metro Regent initially wanted to demolish the old structure, which comprises rows of two-storey shophouses built in the reign of King Chulalongkorn. The developer agreed, however, to revise the blueprint as a compromise to avoid objections from the Fine Arts Department.

Residents

say sitework will kill trade – *Bangkok Post*,
October 16, 2003

Residents of Soi Luenrit, who are to be relocated to pave the way for a new shopping centre in the old Chinatown area, yesterday stepped up calls for the right to stay and to conserve their homes, rows of majestic shophouses built in the reign of King Chulalongkorn. The Crown Property Bureau, owner of the 225-unit shophouses, awarded a 30-year development contract to Metro Regent which wants to turn the old garment market into a shopping complex... "We do not want 'the Old Siam' development model," one resident said at a hearing yesterday in Chinatown. He referred to the development of Old Siam Plaza, also by the Crown Property Bureau, in the Pahurat area in which residents were kicked out of their homes...

Soi Luenrit
to be shopping center – *Bangkok Post*, September
22, 2003

The old-style architecture in Soi Luenrit, at the intersection of Yaowarat and Chakrawat roads, could soon be torn down for a multi-level mall and parking building... "Luenrit is a trial case. If it becomes a successful project, it would inevitably lead to more projects and more communities being affected in a similar way," he said, referring to the Ratchadamnoen Development Master Plan, which is believed to affect more than 20 original communities in the inner part of the Rattanakosin area. Mr Chuchai said he did not want to see a repeat of the Old Siam Plaza saga, where modern buildings went up to replace historic ones.

Chinese tourists getting a bad image

October 21, 2005

Categories: China

[Chinese tourists getting a bad image](#) – *The New*

York Times, October 21, 2005

...The surge in package tour groups from China, an important source of income for the region, is also giving rise to an unflattering stereotype: the loud, rude and culturally naive Chinese tourist. Sound familiar? The tide of travelers from China mirrors the emergence of virtually every group of overseas tourists since the Romans, from Britons behaving badly in the Victorian era and ugly Americans in postwar Europe to the snapshot-happy Japanese of the 1980s. ...None of this may come as a surprise to anyone who has traveled through China. In a country of 1.3 billion people, getting where you want to go often means literally pushing someone else out of the way...

Huge 11km canal for new city

October 21, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Huge 11km canal for new city](#) – *The Nation*,

October 21, 2005

...To maintain the role of the area, a canal measuring 60-metres wide and 11-km-long will be created to link Klong Samrong and the Gulf of Thailand to the south of the airport.

When roads are built on either side of the canal, it will be 100 metres wide, or three times the width of Rajdamneon Avenue.

More than Bt10 billion would be needed to complete the canal project.

The Cabinet has already approved the project and the land is “being expropriated”...

Asian girl band made up of former men soars to the top of the charts

October 22, 2005

Categories: Music

[Asian](#)

[girl band made up of former men soars to the top of the charts](#)

– *The Independent*, October 22, 2005

Chulalongkorn Day

October 23, 2005

Categories: Chulalongkorn Day

[Vintage images of King Chulalongkorn from the world media](#) – October 23, 2006.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Wreath stands – October 22, 2006

Above and below: Wreath stands ready for the public and businesses to place wreaths on Chulalongkorn Day.

[Google Earth Placemark](#)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Almost like being there: Chulalongkorn
Day 2005 – October 24, 2005

Chulalongkorn Day in Thailand on October 23 celebrates King Rama V (1853-1910). A statue of the king on horseback stands in the Royal Plaza in front of the old parliament building in downtown Bangkok. On Chulalongkorn Day, wreaths are placed around the statue and candles are lit to honor the monarch.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Click the image for the [full-size panorama \(193kb\)](#) More [Thai panoramas](#)

Also: [KING](#)

[CHULALONGKORN DAY: A TALE OF TWO WILY MONARCHS](#)

– *The Nation*, October 23, 2005

Last year: [Thais](#)

[nationwide lay wreaths in memory of "Phra Piya Maharaj"](#)

– TNA, October 23, 2004

Thai people from all walks of life on Saturday joint a nationwide celebration to commemorate one of the country's great Kings, King Chulalongkorn or King Rama V the Great, who abolished slavery

system and reformed the country.

Tens of thousands of civil servants, state enterprise workers, students, businesspersons and the general public took part in a ceremony today in Bangkok to lay wreaths in the memory of the late beloved King at his status at the Royal Plaza.

King Chulalongkorn or 'Phra Piya Maharaj' has been regarded as one of Thailand's great Kings, as he established the civil service and introduced schools, railways, roads, hospitals to the country, and also built the nation's first postal office.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above:

Wreaths placed in honor of the king from various organizations including the police, military, and the ruling TRT party (the backwards 'N' at the lower left).



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above:

More wreaths and the dome of the parliament building in the background.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

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

‘LUNG’ UNDER THREAT – Bang Krachao eyed by greedy speculators

October 23, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News



(Photo: Don)

‘LUNG’

UNDER THREAT – Bang Krachao eyed by greedy speculators

– Bangkok Post, October 23, 2005

... In 1977, the government approved a plan to develop Bang Krachao into a garden city, similar to Singapore's Sentosa Island. About 3.2 billion baht was used in the project, which included a small park called Sri Nakhon Kuenkhan, which was opened in 2003, and a flood prevention wall.

In order to achieve the goal, the government issued a land expropriation decree to reclaim all private property, only to face strong opposition from locals. As a result, only 1,276 rai, accounting for 10% of the total area, was appropriated.

A strict town planning code, which prohibits high-rise buildings and large factories and real estate, contributes enormously to the maintenance of Bang Krachao's "green" attributes.

... Mr Sumeth said land prices have increased three-fold over recent years. Riverfront plots could fetch as much as five million baht per rai.

Kobelco says it developed ‘world’s tallest’ demolition machine

October 23, 2005

Categories: Nothing to do with Thailand, but Interesting

[Kobelco](#)

[says it developed ‘world’s tallest’ demolition machine](#)

– *Kyodo*, October 23, 2005

Nothing to do with Thailand, but interesting...

“What bomb?” ask cowed locals

October 24, 2005

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[“What bomb?” ask cowed locals](#) – *The Irrawaddy*,

October 24, 2005

A new round of draconian price increases has left Rangoon people stunned but resigned, and reluctant even to talk openly about a new bomb attack in the city center...

Gasoline is not just eight times more expensive this week than last, it's also severely rationed. My taxi driver showed me his ration book, allowing him six gallons (27 liters) every three days. No exemption is made for taxi operators, who run Rangoon's only reasonably comfortable form of public transport...

Forsaken Land wins top award

October 24, 2005

Forsaken Land wins top

award – 4:45pm, October 24, 2005

Bangkok Post reports: *Sri Lankan movie Forsaken Land wins top award at the World Film Festival of Bangkok.*

Also: [Interesting](#)

[article](#) about *Sulanga Enu Pinisa (The Forsaken Land)* being unofficially banned in Sri Lanka.

European sewers

October 24, 2005

[European
sewers](#) – *Europe Underground*,
October 24, 2005

Flyover construction at Phahonyothin and Suthisarn

October 25, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Flyover construction at Phahonyothin and Suthisarn intersections – October 25, 2005

Flyover construction on Weepahwahdeerangsit Road at Phahonyothin and Suthisarn intersections—the new flyovers are in red.

Above: Construction rendering looking south down Weepahwahdeerangsit Road. Note how the plans include straightening the traffic flow on Phahonyothin Road.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Left: The ‘traffic nightmare’ approaching the Weepahwahdeerangsit-Phahonyothin intersection—traffic reduced to a lane and a half.

Below: Construction rendering looking north on Weepahwahdeerangsit Road at the Suthisarn intersection. Just a month ago it was reported that the Suthisarn flyovers would be delayed so as not to exacerbate the traffic situation at Weepahwahdeerangsit–Phahonyothin, but it appears the Suthisarn flyovers are going ahead as planned.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Suu Kyi's 10 years detention marked worldwide

October 25, 2005

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[Suu Kyi's 10 years detention marked worldwide](#)

– *The Irrawaddy*, October 25, 2005

The 10 years that Burma's pro-democracy leader Aung San

Suu Kyi has spent under house arrest were marked on Tuesday at meetings and demonstrations in Burma and around the world...

‘You Mansion’

October 25, 2005

Categories: Uncategorized



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

‘You Mansion’

– October 25, 2005

Left: Interestingly named mansion in the Little Korea area off Ratchadapeisek Road.

SS Richard Montgomery

October 26, 2005

Categories: Nothing to do with Thailand, but Interesting

[SS](#)

[Richard Montgomery](#) – October 26,

2005

Ron Angel writes: *Nothing to do with Thailand, but interesting:*

For 60 years the rotting masts of the SS Richard Montgomery have poked eerily from the sea at low tide, surrounded by buoys. ...If the Second World War American cargo ship was to blow up, a report warns, it would be one of the biggest non-nuclear explosions ever and could devastate Sheerness (population 11,000). Experts estimate the force of the blast would be 700 times that of the 1995 Oklahoma City bomb in the US...

Don't try to surf a tsunami

October 28, 2005

[Don't](#)

[try to surf a tsunami](#) – *LA*

Times, October 28, 2005

The city of Malibu has a message for its residents: When a big quake hits, don't wax up the surfboard and head to the beach...

Freedom of the press plummets into a gorge

October 28, 2005

Categories: Censorship, Thai Politics

From the Thai-language

press: *Thairath* editorial: Freedom of the press plummets into a gorge

– October 28, 2005

Freedom of the press is one index that measures the democracy of nations along with an independent judiciary service, political freedom, and rights such as holding elections. Every time in the past in surveys, Thailand is on the top level of Asia following Japan. In the world survey it is quite high on the middle level.

But recently, the survey “Index of the World Press’ Freedom“ from “Reporters Without Border” showed that freedom of the press in Thailand is down abnormally. The ranking fell into a gorge from the 59th level in 2004 to 107th—this is in a ranking of 167 countries. Thailand is bested by even Cambodia (90th) and East Timor (58th).

The survey found that newly democratic countries in Latin America and Africa have no more freedom of newspapers, but many countries in Asia are worse. The better countries are South Korea (34th) and Taiwan (51st). The best freedom of press are in rich countries in Europe, Denmark , Finland, Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands, etc.

So it is remarkable that Thailand is poor in freedom of the press which fell off from last year’s level by 48 places. This is also sad because it happened under a democratic government and under the constitution which is praised to be the most democratic and having no dictatorial passages like in the past.

The foreign organizations who set the level did not tell the reason why Thailand fell 48 places so we have to look back the press association which always watches the freedom of media. It declared that year 2002 was the "year of interfering in media", year 2003 was “year of rounding up media” and year 2004 was “year of splitting and destroying media.”

For 2005, Thaksin talked big to foreign reporters that Thai newspapers have lots off freedom and they can criticize even the PM. However, the press association has not yet declared what kind of year 2005 is. The media may all agree that year 2005 is year that hidden attempts were made to grab media by buying stock and controlling the business by unfriendly people—as

in the hope to grab the giant presses of *Matichon* group and *Bangkok Post*.

Freedom of the press is the measure of the nation's democracy. It is a valuable asset that can be transferred into immense capital on the political and diplomatic world stage. Freedom of press came from our earliest reporters' struggle from the pioneer to the generation of today. So it is very sad if we finally lose press freedom in the time of democracy.

‘Central New Road’ – Wonderful details

October 29, 2005

Categories: Communities



‘Central New Road’ – Wonderful
details – October 29, 2005



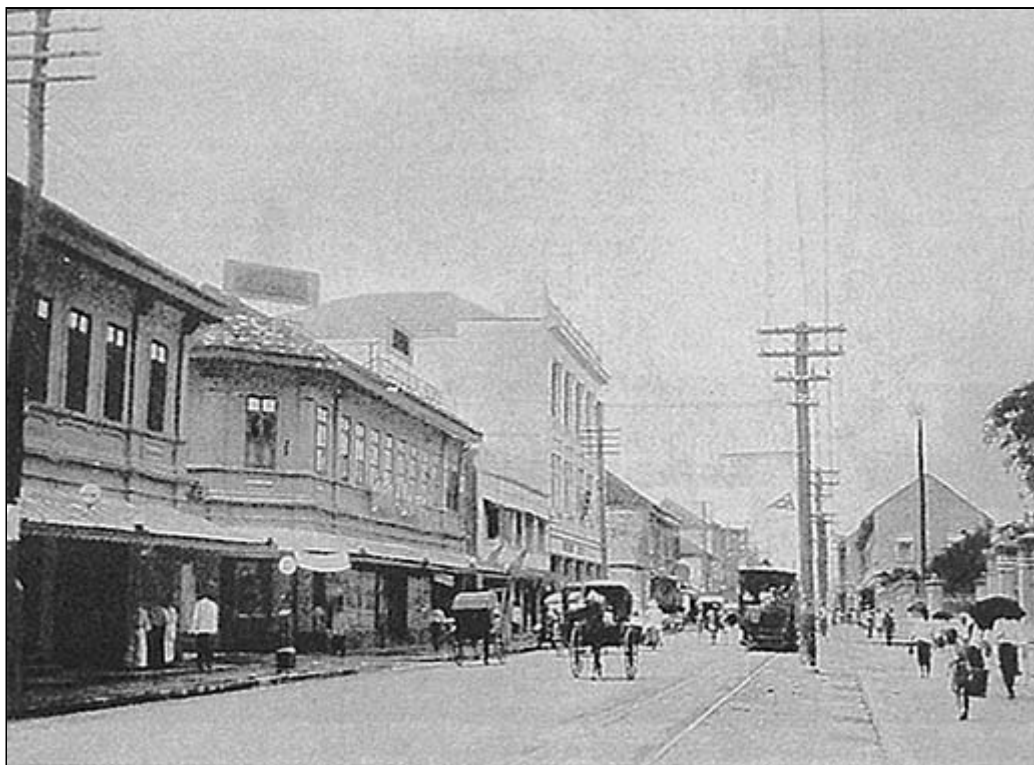


(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Yesterday and today: New Road images

– November 12, 2005

We think this the approximate view of New Road today (above) at about the same spot as the photo below. Directly to the right in each photo is the location of the General Post Office.



More New Road images

– October 31, 2005

Here are three more images from the 2Bangkok archives of the New Road view featured yesterday ('Central New Road' – Wonderful details, October 29, 2005). The image above seems to be the earliest one as the 'H. Swee' sign has not been painted on the building and the trees are smaller. A thread about these photos is [here](#).



Postman in the Rama V era

October 29, 2005

Categories: Old photos and films



Postman in the Rama V era –
October 29, 2005

‘Doctors warn of perils of nipping off to Thailand to get something tucked’

October 29, 2005

Categories: Health

[‘Doctors warn of perils of nipping off to Thailand to get something tucked’](#)

– Sydney Morning Herald, October 29, 2005

...The so-called "Thailand tuck" has become so popular that the Thai Government expects 1.5 million foreign patients this year – 400,000 more than in 2004.

...The trend has alarmed Australian doctors, who say they are left to patch up the damage after overseas operations go wrong.

... "A patient flies to Thailand, gets an infection on the plane on the way home and who fixes it? It's done under Medicare," Dr Olbourne said. "You end up with the Australian taxpayer subsidising Thai surgeons."

419ers form Irish football squad – in Bangkok, naturally

October 29, 2005

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[419ers form Irish football squad – in Bangkok, naturally](#) –

October 29, 2005

...BASIC REQUIREMENTS:each

player must be 17 – 29 years old,each player must report at the teams hotel camp here in bangkok thailand for the screening and trial of the player.Interested players should reply to the adress below for more informations on the travel procedures.

Who will tell the emperor he has no clothes?

October 30, 2005

Categories: The Thaksin Years

SIDELINES:

Who will tell the emperor he has no clothes?

– *The Nation*, October 30, 2005

...Is it time for us to tell him that he should step down and let somebody else try to reverse the situation for the sake of Thailand's

national interests? Of course, we can, though this runs the risk of reprisals, which could come in various methods. They won't be pleasant for sure.

But if we don't tell him, who will? The majority of the members of the House of Representatives are not exactly representing the public interest. They prefer enjoying benefits in the form of hand-outs and special pay-offs from the ruling party's financiers. It's preferable to facing Thaksin's wrath.

The opposition is powerless and regarded as a mere nuisance. Public pressure groups are more or less in the same dire straits. Academics are not any better. Some military commanders are becoming too submissive, or were already loyal to Thaksin because they had been classmates with him.

The media are weakened, preoccupied about their commercial survival or the threat of heavy-handed retaliation for saying the wrong things. Some journalists are simply hypocritical, ignoring their professional responsibility and betraying their responsibility to the public.

It's the people who must speak up and stand up. Who will be the first to tell Thaksin that his stepping down is quite overdue, because of his mishandling of the crisis in the South? Is it more difficult than telling the emperor that he has no clothes?

Nationalism and Right-wing Politics during the Thaksin years

October 31, 2005

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

[Intimidation of BBC reporters](#) – BBC, December 22, 2004

...The next thing I heard was them mentioning my name as a journalist who had done damage to national unity with my 'unpatriotic reports' on the incident.

'She has interviewed people whom she shouldn't have interviewed,' said one of the presenters, a freelancer who had hired airtime on a national radio channel which belongs to the Thai parliament.

I assume they were referring to my attempts to talk, not just to government officials and Buddhists, but to Muslims in the south, whom the authorities regard as being at the heart of the violence.

...But they did give their audience some information about my background, saying that after I had worked as a reporter in the country for some time, I 'fled the country', apparently for no particular reason.

They even mentioned, casually: 'Well, we do quite understand it really. Since she took the money from the outsiders she has to do it.' ...

Then the presenters and the listeners who called into the programme discussed how to arrange a protest against any representative of the UN who would want to visit Thailand to investigate the incident.

The tone of the programme sounded very extreme. It reminded me of the atmosphere leading up to the massacre of student activists at Thammasat University in October 1976, when soldiers killed students whom they thought were a communist threat.

And, to my horror, the presenters also stated clearly to their listeners that I was in fact staying in the country "at this moment".

To me, that was a clear case of intimidation...

Fear – December 9, 2004

It is election season and academic forums are keeping up the drumbeat against the government. The *Bangkok Post* even adds the controversial claim that the government executed 19 footballers. *The Nation* has a further article perhaps illustrating this trend—the police are prohibiting people from possessing video of the Tak Bai incident.

[THAMMASAT FORUM: Government's 'reign of fear' spreading: academics](#) – *The Nation*, December 08, 2004

... "Fear is no longer confined to vulnerable groups," she said. "I asked a nurse about the symptoms of a patient who lost his leg in the Tak Bai crackdown. The nurse looked at me and asked in a cold voice, 'Who are you?'" ...

[PM reviving culture of fear, warn critics – Kraisaak: 19 youths 'executed' in South](#) – *Bangkok Post*, December 9, 2004

...Mr Kraisaak said he was most disturbed to learn of the mass slaying of 19 young football players in Sabayoi district of Songkhla. The youths were allegedly blindfolded by "state authorities" who shot them in the heads execution style.

" This should not be happening," he told the seminar organised by the Peace News Centre, Thammasat University's Foundation for Study of Democracy and Development, and nine civic groups...

[Police crackdown on 'illegal' Tak Bai VCD](#) – *The Nation*, December 9, 2004

...Piya Partha-silpine, district chief of Tak Bai, said individuals who possess or distribute VCDs of the crackdown on October 26, which ended in the death of at least 85 unarmed demonstrators, would be considered to have broken the law...

Piya did not elaborate on why it is declaring the Tak Bai VCDs illegal six weeks after the event or on what legal grounds the authorities could prosecute those who possess copies...

[Village Scouts gathering at Sanam Luang](#) – November 28, 2004

[VILLAGE SCOUTS MEETING: Rally for peace raises concern](#) – *The Nation*, November 22, 2004

Despite good intentions, scouts' planned assembly sparks fears of a nationalist revival. Tens of thousands of village scouts are expected to converge on Bangkok's Sanam Luang on Sunday to promote peace efforts in the deep South, said the public relations chief for the Village Scout Operation Centre... It will be the biggest political gathering of the group since they were deployed in 1976 to help suppress pro-democracy students...

'Blood Siam' – November 1, 2004

Last week we mentioned [right wing politics in Thai](#) and today Wisarut describes a nationalistic site: [Blood Siam](#) is a site where some Thais released their frustration over the Tak Bai tragedy. They have fed up with the media that shows sympathy toward Muslims while never showing any sympathy toward officers, students and judges who have been murdered by PULO and BRN. They contend senators, NGOs, and media like Matichon, the Nation Group, Naew Na and Thai Post have betrayed their motherland to such extent that sooner or later they will follow those dead Muslims to the crematoriums and graveyards. (It is a GeoCities site that is already making the rounds by email so it is often down when the bandwidth is exceeded.)

Hidden in Thai: Nationalistic comments – October 28, 2004

Judging only from what is printed in English, the view about the Tak Bai deaths is one of outrage and solemn condemnation mixed with feelings that 'Thaksin is in trouble now.'

However, there is a long-standing nationalistic, rightist strain that goes through Thai political thought that is usually self-censored in English. The prevalence of this strain of thought would probably surprise foreigners who think all Thais are at heart, gentle leftists, and that hard right-wing leanings are confined to military men.

The troubles in the South have brought out hard-line feelings and it would be a mistake to think (as some English-language publications contend) that P.M. Thaksin stands alone in pushing a tough attitude toward Muslim 'troublemakers.'

Wisarut adds: *Some people's response to the headlines printed in local newspapers ([here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)) are much harsher than responses to foreign correspondents since such opinions would offend human right activists. You can see such responses at Manager Online as well as pantip.com and mthai.com. Nobody would dare to translate local Thai's reactions which will offend the human right activists as well as those NGOs. Some even say, "we should never pay taxes to feed those ingrate Senators who become a bunch of traitors by acting like human right activists!"*

While the government is known to have people mass post on opinion boards to sway public opinion, this tough talk in defense of national pride and the desire to harshly stamp out that which threatens the nation is likely a genuine sentiment.

Also: Interesting thread touching on this subject: ["Jai Dee is for us only."](#)

'Down With Pax Americana, Long Live Thailand!' – October 29, 2004

Some anti-American rhetoric on the [Manager site](#).

On the forum: In support of the government action

If you do not read Thai, you probably are not aware of the [strong nationalistic mutterings](#) in support of tough action against Muslim separatists.



(Source: Channel 9, MCOT)

[What is being said on the Samak-Dusit Show?](#) – October 31, 2005

Messy Pattaya draws new cash

October 31, 2005

Categories: Pattaya

[Messy Pattaya draws new cash](#) – *The Nation*,

October 31, 2005

...So even as old troubled projects are washed out, new ones are sweeping in, bringing more cash to one of Thailand's messiest, worst governed towns. Twenty years after it became a registered township, Pattaya is still filled with potholes, unpaved roads and half-finished esplanades that are left to rot in the open for a year or more.

Many foreign retirees here are resigned to the ways of local efficiency and provincial-level competence. ...Eerily, the first Pattaya real-estate crash came in 1979-1980 following the "Raja Finance" stock-market crash. At the time there were also many global chains that had opened large hotels in Pattaya, Hyatt among them. All faded out after the crash as the properties reverted to Thai hands.

The second Pattaya crash, in 1989, also followed a real-estate meltdown. As prices in Pattaya outpaced Bangkok the bubble burst and it took 15 years for Pattaya to claw back.

The current boom started two years ago and since then, the Pattaya housing market has climbed and slumped.