### Political battle for Bangkok to heat up

January 2, 2006

Categories: The Thaksin Years

#### Political battle for

Bangkok to heat up – Bangkok Post, January 2, 2006

...Mr Apirak's plan to launch a Bus Rapid Transit system, one of his election campaign pledges aimed at alleviating traffic congestion in the city, also faced difficulties when the government rejected the BMA's request for the government to reverse a cabinet resolution which makes the Bangkok Mass Transit Authority the sole authority over bus routes.

In a bid to gain ground politically on Mr Apirak, the cabinet has assigned PM's Office Minister Newin Chidchob to oversee traffic affairs in Bangkok for the government.

Mr Newin, who was earlier assigned by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to oversee several ad hoc assignments, including the "one million cows to farmers" project, responded quickly to the trust put in him by the prime minister. He has proposed the "roads of smiles" project, which aims to provide parking space for taxis at government offices, department stores and in designated areas on the city's streets. The project, which is due to kick off this month, appears to aim to compete with the "smart" taxi stand project launched by Mr Apirak in 2005...

### Tsunami remembered with tawdry displays

January 2, 2006

Categories: 2004 Tsunami, The Thaksin Years

#### <u>Tsunami</u>

remembered with tawdry displays – The Nation, January 2, 2006

...There was notably little focus on genuine condolences in the proceedings. The shallow tone of the events was well symbolised by the souvenir given to relatives of foreigners killed in the disaster and VIP guests: a gold-plated chart of the foundation-stone-laying ceremony for a tsunami memorial, prominently featuring the name of the prime minister.

Seeing the big poster welcoming Thaksin, receiving the gold-plated astrological time-chart with Thaksin's name on it and hearing Dr Sax Chamber Orchestra performing Mozart's rather upbeat "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik" that afternoon on the pristine beach one might have been misled into thinking that this was the foundation-stone-laying party of the premier's newest resort home!...

#### MTV's "Whatever Things"

January 3, 2006 Categories: Film and TV

MTV's "Whatever Things" –

January 3, 2006

Don writes: Have you seen MTV's "Whatever Things"?
We don't have cable, but for some reason our building pipes in MTV out of Tawain and a couple other networks. "Whatever Things" is actually based here in Bangkok, at least for this season, and it's stupid and funny both. A bunch of guys and an Indian girl playing weird pranks.

Best is the Tourist Police segment. Two of them dress up as Thai cops, and accompanied by real police, they go to Khao San Road and stop tourists for weird reasons. Tonight they tried to fine two female South Korean tourists 2,000 baht for walking across the street (Khao San Road). The Indian girl, dressed in a wedding dress, was going up to farangs at The Emporium and Siam Discovery Center's Au Bon Pain and screaming why did they not show up for their wedding. It's on twice a weekend. Saturday night at 9:00pm, then they rerun it on Sunday afternoon at 5:00pm.

They are into season reruns now. They capped the season off a couple of weeks ago by fastening a bunch of helium balloons to one of them and floating him over Hong Kong's Victoria Harbor. They even showed the HK police coming out to see what was going on.

Our hands-down favorite stunt was in the season's final episode, when two of the guys dressed up as ladyboys and tried to pick up men in Soi Cowboy. They actually picked up this little Thai man, and I mean physically lifted him up in the air, and started running off with him. He was freaking out and screaming for help. We were rolling.

According to MTV Thailand's <u>show</u> <u>schedule</u> it is on tonight at 19:30. Something about the show <u>here</u> and <u>here</u>.

## Is Thailand safe?

January 3, 2006

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Is
Thailand safe? – Times Online, January
3, 2006
...The Koh Samui Tourism Association is more specific in its advice for female visitors: "Women especially should not accept an invitation from a stranger to walk on the beach at night, no matter how attractive he or she may be."

Association to the Koh Samui Tourism Association, driving ou viding

...According to the Koh Samui Tourism Association, driving or riding on the back of a motorbike is "easily the most dangerous activity for visitors to the region".

# New Year's Expressway Fan

January 3, 2006 Categories: 2Bangkok News



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com) New year's expressway fan – January 3, 2006
Fan being given out at expressway tollbooth for the new year from ETA and BECL. A message on the back pledges good service in the new year.

### Proposal for future South Asian Union (SAU)

January 4, 2006

Proposal for future South Asian Union (SAU)

– January 4, 2006

We get unusual emails: A proposal to build a South

Asian Union (SAU) like European Union by expanding SAARC states...

The mass people of this region want to abolish visa system for themselves in order to enjoy traveling facility freely and free trade among the regional counties like EU states. We can include Iran, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei, China, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, Japan & Philippine.

The Afghan president his Excellency Mr. Hamid Karzai and his Government also shows interest for entering into SAARC.

If we can include twenty three more countries (Iran, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Myanmar,

If we can include twenty three more countries (Iran, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei, China, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, Japan & Philippine) with the seven counties of SAARC (Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives)...

### German Sutterlin Script on a Postcard

January 6, 2006

Categories: 2Bangkok News



(Photo: Postcard circa 1945 from the 2Bangkok.com collection)

Above: Two views of the Golden Mount from Phan Fa Bridge

Message on the card – January 10, 2006

Dick van der Spek translated the Dutch message on the back of this card. The card was sent from within Europe. It reads: Dear Nank and niece,

Because it is next Sunday 21 Oktober fun fair, I take freedom to invite you, so we expect you without any problems Sunday or Monday.

Receive also the best wishes from us all

your niece Anna Neijens Address: Mr. Jacob Heelen Schoofsheide

Neeroeteren



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



(Photo: Postcard circa 1909)

More on German Sutterlin script
– January 6, 2006
<u>Wolfgang</u> writes about

the postcard written in Suetterlin script: Your Comment is:

Merry Christmas and good luck in the New Year from your friend....

Well, it is almost correct. Exact translation is: "Merry
Christmas and good luck in the New Year wishes your friend K.

Jubel" (I learned to read and write Suetterlin at primary
school, about 1960) Cheers to you, keep up the fabulous work
with your website!

Earlier: Translation of the "Greeting from Siam" card – December 27, 2005

ncr writes about the postcard above: ... That's the already mentioned old-fashioned German Sutterlin script once again, and the card reads "Frohliche Weihnachten und Gluck im neuen Jahr wunscht dir dein Freund K....." (Merry Christmas and good luck in the New Year from your friend.... (I cannot actually read that, but it's quite easy to guess the words; however, I cannot decipher the name, though my 90-year-old grandmother probably could). As for the date – 26 November 1909 – well, I think back in those times, before the arrival of air mail services, you had to send such things 4 weeks in advance....!

# Children without citizenship found in 20 'ghost' Myanmar border villages

January 6, 2006

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

#### Children

without citizenship found in 20 'ghost' Myanmar border villages

- TNA, January 6, 2006

We wonder if these, or other ghost villages, could be spotted on

Thousands of children without Thai citizenship have been found living in over 20 villages not included on the map of the northern Thai-Myanmar border province of Mae Hong Son, according to non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Like ghosts, the villages do not appear on maps or in government records, though some adults in the villages have proper documents. Located far from government services, children do not have access to schools...

# Asia's next trendsetting beach: SIHANOUKVILLE, Cambodia

January 6, 2006 Categories: Cambodia

Asia's
next trendsetting beach: SIHANOUKVILLE, Cambodia
- International Herald Tribune, January 6, 2006

# Malaysian blogs cover youths detained at metal concerts

January 6, 2006 Categories: Malaysia

<u>Malaysian blogs cover youths detained at metal concerts</u> – BoingBoing, January 6, 2006

# Rude elephant

January 6, 2006 Categories: Local Beliefs



Rude elephant

– January 6, 2006

We are not sure what this elephant is doing on this Paper Stories greeting card (left), but showing one's foot this way is a Thai insult. Do not give this card to your boss!

# Nudie calendars as art, artifact and taboo

January 6, 2006

Nudie calendars as art, artifact and taboo – IHT, January 6, 2006 ... While the 1976 calendar had insulted the police, because it showed Sirikwan unbuttoning her khaki outfit (which was similar to the police uniform), Mehkong's 1990 offering was something else. The ensuing public controversy prompted police to confiscate the calendars. As long as they kept a low profile, says Anyamanee, the calendars were regulated but never banned...

### Tale of two newspapers: Chilling or lust?

January 6, 2006 Categories: A Tale of Two Newspapers

Tale of two newspapers: Chilling or lust? – January 6, 2006 The *Post* has a much franker story than the *Nation*...

# "Lost' model was chilling on the beach

- The Nation, January 06, 2006

Following a massive search, police yesterday located a Brazilian model on a popular beach. She was unharmed... He quoted Rierro as saying that she voluntarily went out with two Thai men. Before she was located, the men on Wednesday night reported themselves to police to declare their innocence. They said they did not lure Rierro.

'A tale of two newspapers' archives

# Missing model's night of lust – Bangkok

Post, January 6, 2006

...Miss Rosini wanted to stay over but Mr Sanchai did not want to bother his parents. He then took her to a motel where they had sex which Mr Sanchai insisted was totally consensual.

The next morning, Miss Rosini told Mr Sanchai she wished to join a friend who was vacationing in Koh Samui. He bought her a ferry ticket, gave her some pocket money, drove her to the pier and saw her off on her journey.

...Pol Maj-Gen Santhan Chayanont said Miss Rosini told him on Koh Samui that she had gone with the men and slept with Mr Sanchai of her own free will.

# Nightlife-themed Heineken ads

January 7, 2006 Categories: Signs and Billboards



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Nightlife-themed Heineken ads

— January 7, 2006

Under the Saladaeng Skytrain Station on Silom is a series of rotating billboards each themed on a different Silom soi. Above is Patpong and below is one for Soi 2 (a soi with many gay bars) and a more generic ad featuring Soi 4.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

### Blurring of Smoking on Thai TV

January 7, 2006

Categories: Censorship, Health





Also: Complete set of Thai cigarette warning labels









Above: Occasionally there are some odd oversights— Bart blowing bubbles is blurred, but Ralph in an opium den smoking a pipe is not.





Above: Smoking monkeys are also blurred

Earlier: Smoking on Thai TV – September 29, 2002

2Bangkok.com was once informed that UBC had an understanding with the authorities so that UBC would not have

to blur out images of smoking. They would instead put a Thai-language

warning across the bottom of the screen when people smoke. They did



this for awhile, but in the last few months it appears

they have gone back to the original, government- dictated method of blurring the

screen when people smoke.

The blurring follows the cigarette as it moves around the screen,

but often they miss (as you can see by the frame below).

Another example was a documentary about Dino De Laurentis. He always has a cigar in his mouth and every time his face was shown it was blurred. Here's an article about <a href="Thailand's ban on smoking on television">Thailand's ban on smoking on television</a>.





# Road in front of Siam Paragon to be off-limited to private vehicles

January 8, 2006 Categories: Security

Road in front of Siam Paragon to be off-limited to private vehicles – *The Nation*, January 8, 2006

#### Jakarta mass transit

January 9, 2006

Jakarta mass transit – January 9, 2006
Danny points out these Jakarta mass transit articles: <u>City</u> redirects 29 bus routes to make way for busway and <u>Sutiyoso set on busway launch, ignores backseat drivers</u> and <u>Jakarta Monorail ends rift, starts work</u>.

# Expressionist paintings of Bangkok nightlife

January 9, 2006 Categories: Art

Expressionist paintings of Bangkok nightlife – January 9, 2006 Chris Coles writes: You might be interested in adding the following site of Expressionist paintings of Bangkok Nightlife... There's a show of 20 of these paintings in New York in February if you happen to be passing through there.

#### **Airport Link News 2004-2009**

January 10, 2006

Categories: Airports and Airlines

#### <u>Dao Khanong-Srirat route to be reviewed - Expressway scheme runs into opposition - Bangkok Post</u>, June 24, 2006

Caretaker Transport Minister Pongsak Raktapongpaisal has ordered the Expressway and Rapid Transit Authority (ETA) to review the new Dao Khanong-Srirat expressway route following complaints from Thon Buri residents who face land expropriation. A group of people in Thon Buri's Suksawat area met the minister on Thursday to demand a review of the project...

The new expressway route was aimed at reducing traffic volume on Rama IX bridge and at the Tha Rua interchange. It could be built in the Klong Toey area instead of parallel to the existing Rama IX bridge as designed by the ETA, he said...

A source at the ETA said that actually there are four alternative routes for the Dao Khanong-Srirat expressway project.

One of the proposed routes is to stretch about 9km from the Bang Khlo interchange to Dao Khanong. Its middle section will cross the Chao Phraya river near Rama IX bridge.

The three other routes basically run from Chan road, become elevated on Charoenrat road and cross the river to join Rama II road, or cross the river and go over Rat Burana canal to reach Dao Khanong.

One of the project opponents, Sanpong Anantachaiyong, said the new expressway was unnecessary because an industrial ring road, now under construction, a planned southern ring road and new mass transit projects would effectively help relieve traffic congestion at Rama IX bridge and the Tha Rua interchange...

#### <u>Highways Dept to seek foreign investment in 6 new routes of motorways</u> - TNA, January 17, 2006

...The six routes comprise Bangpa in-Saraburi-Nakhon Ratchasima with a distance of 200 km, Bangyai-Nakhon Pathom-Kanchanaburi with 98 km, Nakhon Pathom-Samut Songkram-Cha-am with 134 km, Pattaya-Mab Ta Pud with 38 km, Saraburi-Bang Pa Kong with 150 km, and a third ring road of Bangkok with 250 km...

#### All road contracts plagued with graft- State audit body slams local authority work - Bangkok Post, November 25, 2005

...One project worth 48 million baht was to build a bridge to connect Sirae island to Phuket town, with four million baht set aside for a temporary road until the bridge was completed.

However, the temporary road was never built and the four million baht put aside for it just vanished, said Mr Kriengsak.

Surin's provincial administration organisation wrote in one contract that one million baht was needed for transport costs and obtaining soil and earth. However, the soil was dug from the area where a road was being built at no extra cost...

#### BMA bemused by rejection of road projects - Bangkok Post, November 24, 2005

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration has questioned why the cabinet rejected its three road projects worth about ten billion baht although they are necessary for traffic relief and justified. The government on Tuesday rejected an elevated road project on Ramkhamhaeng road, a road from Phran Nok to Phutthamonthon Sai 4 road, and the expansion of Krungthep Kritha road. The decision was based on a considerable increase in the projects' budgets...

#### 'No' to three BMA road projects - Bangkok Post, November 23, 2005

...The first project is an elevated road above Ramkhamhaeng road from Lamsalee junction to Bang Chan canal. Its budget was raised from 550 million baht to 1.7 billion baht. The second project involves the construction of a new road from Phran Nok to Phutthamonthon Sai 4 road. Its budget shot up from one billion baht to 3.9 billion baht and its completion was to be delayed from 2008 to 2014.

The third is the expansion of the Krungthep Kritha road, the construction costs for which are now estimated at 4.7 billion baht, three-times the original cost of 1.8 billion baht. On top of that, it would also have faced a two-year construction delay from 2008 to 2010.

...Meanwhile, the cabinet gave the greenlight to 10 other projects proposed by the BMA, including the construction of flood prevention walls worth some 1.7 billion baht along the Chao Phraya river, a 800-million-baht budget for improving the Srinakarin road from Phatthanakan junction to Sukhumvit 103 road, and the construction of a new road from Pattanakan to Suan Luang Rama IX.

In another development yesterday, the BMA agreed to sign hire contracts with Italian-Thai Development Plc (ITD) and Unique Engineering and Construction Co to build the Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) project on two routes \_ Ram Intra Km8 to Mor Chit route, and the Surawong-Rachaphruek route \_ as they have agreed to cut their quotes by about 20 million baht each to meet the BMA's median prices.

#### ETA planning to construct 11 expressways - The Nation, November 22, 2005

The fourth choice of the expressway across the Chao Phraya: last choice for ETA – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, August 17, 2005 ETA has come up with the fourth choice for the new expressway across the Chao Phraya–an expressway parallel with the existing expressway and Rama 9 Bridge. If local people refuse the fourth choice, ETA has to scrap the new expressway across the Chao Phraya.

Bang Na Trat connector expressway open - translated and summarized from Bangkok Biznews, June 16, 2005

On June 15, 2005 Premier Thaksin opened S1 section of the expressway (4.7 km) connecting the 1st stage expressway and the 3rd stage expressway with Bang NA-Bang Pakong expressway. This allows motorists to go from expressway to expressway without having to go down to Bangna Intersection at km 6 toll gate.

OTP pushes the Sri Nakharin Expressway – Scrapping S2 Expressway due to high expropriation cost – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, June 17, 2005 OTP is asking for 394 million baht for the design of the Yellow Line LRT, Pink LRT and budget for Sri Nakharin Expressway along with Lum Salee Interchange. All to be done in July 2006.

On the other hand, OTP decided to scrap the S2 Expressway connecting S1 Expressway with the Southern Outer Ring road due to the high cost of land expropriation while coming up with Sri Nakharin Expressway as a substitute since it can be constructed along Sri Nakharin Road with little payment on land expropriation for Toll Plazas

Commentary by Wisart: OTP decided not to construct mass transit system to IMPACT (Convention center) since the owner of IMPACT, Khun Anan Kanchanaphak), is the brother of the owner of BTSC Skytrain, Khun Khireen Kanchanaphak and a supporter of the Democrats. They have to deprive the Kanchanaphak Family and run a BRT as a substitute.

On the other hand, they want to secure votes from Pakkret and Nonthaburi by extending the Pink LRT from Pakkret to Kae Rai (Nonthaburi).

These plans please automobile vested interests such as Transport Minister Suriya's Family (owner of Thai Summit auto parts–supplier for Toyota (Thailand)) by constructing the expressway along both Sri Nakharin and Highway 304 (Ram Indra – Pakkret Road) along with Lum Salee Interchange...

Highway 4 in Phetchaburi province – February 18, 2005

A reader asks: I was wondering whether you know what is going on with Highway 4 between Phak Tho and Khao Yoi in Phetchaburi province. They have demolished the rather attractive canal and hedgerows on the east side of the highway, and appear to be installing drainage tubes. The drainage tubes would seem to have less than one-tenth the carrying capacity of the existing canal. Also, in some places they seem to be filling in the canal and widening the road (on the east side only), whereas in other places they are simply leaving a huge and ugly hole — more than five metres deep, 20 metres wide, and several kilometres in length. Is there an overall plan? What will it be like when it is completed? ...

International bus between Thailand-Laos - translated and summarized from Transport Journal, December 16-31, 2004

The implementation of Udornthani-Viangchan international bus has been quite a successful enterprise. It is not surprising that the Transportation Co.Ltd. is going to implement the second Thai-Lao international bus from Ubon Ratchathani to Champasak, after the new Ubonratchatyhanee bus terminal is equipped with an immigration office and customs house. However, the Lao government has not come up with the counterpart for this project—either the local government of Champasak's state enterprise or the Viangchan Bus State Enterprise Co. Ltd.

After the Friendship Bridge across Mekhong at Mukdaharn is opened in 2006, the third bus route (Mukdaharn – Savannakhet – Danang) will be implemented. So far, the roads from Muang Phin to Seno (130 km) and Daen Savan to Mung Phin (75km) are under construction. The first one from the JICA loan and the 2nd one is from ADB (32 million baht) and Thai Exim Bank (8 million baht) loans.

Increasing usage of Donmuang Tollway - translated and summarized from Manager Daily, December 15, 2004

Minister Suriya is asking Donmuang Tollway to cut the toll from 53 baht (Dondaeng – Rangsit – 43 baht for Donmaung Tollway and 10 Baht for the Highway Department) to a 20 baht flat rate for 3 months with a provision that the government will help construct an additional ramp at Rangsit-Ongkharak Intersection. For nationalization, Donmuang Tollway PCL said they would sell stock at par (10 baht/share) while MOTC said they will purchase the stock at only 6 baht/share. Few drivers use Donmaung Tollway since the ticket prices are too high. Therefore, the discount would bring more drivers to use this tollway. There are about 200,000 cars along Vibhavadee Rangsit Highway, but only 100,000 cars use the tollway, so the discount will add an extra 30,000-40,000 cars to the tollway–even at the expense of revenue loss of 200,000 baht/day (6 million baht a month) for the section from National Memorial-Rangsit and 1 million baht a day-1/3 of daily revenue).

Donmaung tollway has the capacity to handle 180,000 cars a day, but actual use is 100,000 cars.

If this discount works, the Highway Department will negotiate with Donmaung Tollway to compensate for the revenue loss-either the contract extension or the debt negotiation, but not nationalization which has dragged on for a long time.

ETA site intro - September 20, 2004

Expressway and Rapid Transit Authority has a humorous flash intro that seems to say: "how to solve traffic problems? Elevated expressways!



(Photo: Pascal)

Bangna Trad Highway - July 14, 2004

Pascal of <a href="www.pasci.org">www.pasci.org</a> sent in a great photo of Bangna Trad Highway (above). This expressway has a much more eye-pleasing design than the elevated expressways in town.

Tearing down elevated expressways - May 17, 2004

Pas of <u>Bangkok Highrises</u> writes: This is not related to Bangkok, but here's an interesting urban renewal proposal in Seoul <u>to dismantle an elevated expressway</u> and restore it with the stream that once meandered through the city.

This is a fascinating article that has many parallels to Bangkok and its covered klongs.

#### ETA agrees to look at alternative route - Bangkok Post, April 28, 2004

Local people proposed an alternative, a new bridge that would run parallel to Rama IX bridge, at a meeting yesterday. About 2,000 residents from Bang Kholaem, Rat Burana and Chom Thong districts turned up to put their objections...

Under the original plan, thousands of families would have been relocated, they said.

... About 1,000 houses were moved when the first stage of the Srirat-Dao Khanong expressway was constructed about 12 years ago.

The extension of the Srirat-Dao Khanong expressway, which links Charoenrat road in Bang Kholaem district and Rama II in Dao Khanong, was launched in 2002. The target date for completion was set at 2008.

Earlier: 400 Chinese families suffer from land expropriation for the Sri Rat-Dao Khanong Expressway - Than Setthakij, April 4-7, 2004

Earlier: Seminar for Sri Rat-Dao Khanong Expressway failed – Consultants telling blatant lies to the public and issuing sham questionnaire – Thairath, March 24, 2004

Earlier: Expressway from Ram Indra to Kanchanaphisek (Lum Lookka) - Dailynews, March 16, 2004

Earlier: 3,000 families suffer from the New Road-Expressway project – Than Setthakij, March 7-10, 2004

ETA agrees to look at alternative route-Angry residents say they've had enough - Bangkok Post, April 28, 2004

Local people proposed an alternative, a new bridge that would run parallel to Rama IX bridge, at a meeting yesterday. About 2,000 residents from Bang Kholaem, Rat Burana and Chom Thong districts turned up to put their objections...

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400 Chinese families suffer from land expropriation for the Sri Rat-Dao Khanong Expressway – translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, April 4-7, 2004 380 Sino-Thai families around Soi Yoodee and Soi Nam Heng Lee still suffer from the expressway since all proposed routes are directed to go through their communities.

They have already suffered from the Sri Rat Expressway (Bang Klo-Chang Watthana) and they thought that the suffering from moving will be at an end after moving to the new community, but the new expressway will add even more suffering.

Furthermore, ETA has to review their budget since it does not include land expropriation yet. It needs another 1.650 billion baht for removing and reinstalling infrastructure including the new 24 ky power lines for MEA and 2.5-3 billion baht for land expropriation—thus the budget increases to 8.5-10 billion baht.

'Consultants telling blatant lies to the public and issuing sham questionnaire' - March 25, 2004

Ed.: While the English-language reading populace is looking at the genteel news reported in the English papers, tens of millions of Thais are reading something different such as this article below from ThaiRath. ThaiRath is often criticized for its sensational news and sometimes slipshod reporting, but the paper does often bring up issues and stories that eventually covered in more sedate papers. This article keys into some commonly held beliefs, such as that road and transit routings are politically motivated and that questionnaires and polls are often tricks to give the authorities the right to say 'the people support this' when the opposite is the case.

Seminar for Sri Rat-Dao Khanong Expressway failed – Consultants telling blatant lies to the public and issuing sham questionnaire – translated and summarized from *Thairath*, March 24, 2004

After the seminar with those who will get detrimental effects from the Sri Rat-Dao Khanong Expressway on March 23, representatives from Anothai Village told *Thairath* correspondents that the consultant on this project has come up with a sham seminar which gave villagers no information at all about the progress of this project. Even worse, the information the consultants gave to the villagers is so contradictory that nobody would believe those blatant lies.

First they said 2 communities will suffer from the 2nd route. Then after asking for details the consultants said 672 families will suffer from the 2nd route—which the villagers believe is a very blatant lie since this route will strike through the communities where thousands of families will live.

The consultants claimed 430 families will suffer from the 1st route—another blatant lie since the route will go through the middle of a road and very few families will suffer.

Furthermore, the questionnaire issued by the consultants have carry very misleading questions which could fool those who know nothing about the project. This would lead many to say "yes" for the project to strike through communities even though most villagers would say "no" to anything to do with the Expressway Authority.

The selection of the best route is a good example of this manipulation.

Therefore, the people will burn those questionnaire forms into a pile of ash and they will come up with their own version of questionnaire to be submitted to the consultant and the Expressway Authority.

Commentary by Wisarut: If the Expressway Authority and consultants insist on the unpopular second route (widely believed to be favored because it would benefit Sia Charoen-a close friend of Premier Thaksin), Thai Rak Thai might suffer election woes in the Yannawa-Bang Kho Laem district.

22 communities are impacted by the Rama 6 Expressway - translated and summarized from Dailynews, March 24, 2004

The consultants will call three seminars on Rama 6 expressway and invite those who will get detrimental effects from the project to express their opinions. The list of communities and agencies that will get detrimental effects from the project:

- 1) Hor Wang High School
- 2) Saint John University
- 3) Central Patthana PCL (owners of Central Plaza, and Central Department Store)
- 4) Central Department Store
- 5) Km11 Railway Community
- 6) Chaiyaphruek Railway Community (Talingchan District)
- 7) Phruek Udom Community (Talingchan District)
- 8) Wat Pleng Community (Bang Plad District)
- 9) Klong Suan Prik Community (Bang Plad District)
- 10) Phatthana Soi 85 (Bang Plad District)
- 11) Saeng Thong Community (Bang Plad District)
- 12) Ruam Jai Phatthana Community (Bang Plad District)
- 13) Sut Soi Somthawin Community (Bang Sue district)
- 14) Saphan Dam Community (Bang Sue district)
- 15) See Nam Nguen Community (Bang Sue district)
- 16) Rama 6 Bridge Community (Bang Sue district)
- 17) Soi Chotiwat Community (Bang Sue district)
- 18) Ratchada Prachachuen Community (Chatuchak District)
- 19) Phaithoon Niwet Village (Chatuchak District)
- 20) Suan Phak Community (Chatuchak District)
- 21) Village Headmen of Moo 1, Moo 5, Moo 7, Moo 9, Bang Kruay Commune, Bang Kruay district of Nonthaburi
- 22) Village Headmen of Moo 4, Moo 6, Wat Chalor Commune, Bang Kruay district of Nonthaburi

Rama 6 expressway with new bridges across Chao Phraya - translated and summarized from Dailynews, March 16, 2004

Team Consultant and the Traffic Policy Office had some up the two sections of the Rama 6 Expressway:

1) 6-lane elevated way, 2) new railway bridge

There are 2 forms of the bridge:

1) Staggered bridge - upper section of the expressway and lower section for new commuter line and DMU, 2) Separated bridge

However, the consultant will have to spend another nine months (from the proposed 14 months) for construction costs, construction period, and atheistic impact – with a price of 125 million baht.

They will also take the information about the integration of the Mae Klong line with the Main line into account since the integration of the Mae Klong line will cut much of the Southern Railway traffic—except the section to western regions (Kanchanaburi, Nakhonpathom Suphan Buri and Ratburi).

No need for further land expropriation except the ramp to go up to the expressway and down to the road. The design must be done before finding the right places for the ramp.

The rail section from Bangsue to Talingchan via Rama 6 Bridge will not be removed due to historical concerns. Rama 6 Bridge has been registered with the Fine Art Department as a historical site. It was the sole link for the Northern and Southern Railway and it has been through the turmoil of WWII and the transformation from road-rail bridge to a rail bridge with double tracks.

Expressway from Ram Indra to Kanchanaphisek (Lum Lookka) - translated and summarized from Dailynews, March 16, 2004

The Ram Indra-Kanchanaphisek expressway has a price tag of 13.709 billion baht -> 7.011 billion for land expropriation (40m wide), and 6.583 billion baht for construction. 58% (3.884 billion baht) will be paid by the Central Government and 42% (2.814 billion baht) paid by the Expressway Authority. It will take two years to construct and be ready in October 2008.

This 6-lane expressway is for the New City by connecting with Chalong Rat Expressway (Ram Indra – At Narong Expressway) and then goes northeast to pass Sukhaphiban 5 (km 11) and end up at Kanchanaphisek (9.25 km). There will be two inbound toll booths at Kanchanaphisek and Sukhaphiban 5 (km 11) and 2 outbound toll booths at Ram Indra and Sukhaphiban 5 (km 11).

The Expressway Authority now has to deal with the 4 expressways:

- $1. \ Ram \ Indra-Kanchanaphisek-still \ in \ the \ consultant \ stage$
- 2. Sri Rat Dao Khanong still in the consultant stage
- 3. Bangsue Bormmarat Chonnanee (Rama 6 Expressway) still in the consultant stage
- 4. Third Stage Expressway (Ngam Wongwan Nawamin) under construction despite strong opposition from those who live around Kasert Nawamin road.

#### 3,000 families suffer from the New Road-Expressway project - translated and summarized from Than Setthakij, March 7-10, 2004

The Land expropriation for the new roads and 4 expressways within downtown will definitely dim and extinguish the value to land.

1) the connection between Lad Phrao Expressway and Bangsue – Rama 6 Expressway which require the land of Union Mall as well as Hor Wang school, the Waterwork Office, 100 SRT houses -> there will be 3 choices for the connection route:

1.1) MRTA Park and Ride – Lad Phrao Road – Saint John University – Dept. of Civil Aviation Service – Railway Park – Kamphengphet -> total 3.2 km – 700 million baht plus 1400-1500 million baht land expropriation -> no housing has to be removed

1.2) MRTA Park and Ride – Lad Phrao Road – Union Mall (Side Part) – Hor Wang Road (gobble both Central Lad Phrao and Hor Wang) – Than Setthakij Building, Vibhavadee Rangsit highway – MWA Vibhavadee Office – SRT Housing – Kamphaengphet Road-> total 3.8 km – 900 million baht plus 1000-1200 million baht land expropriation -> 150-170 housings get expropriation

1.3) MRTA Park and Ride – Lad Phrao – Union Mall (back part – with housing behind Union Mall) – Lotus Lad Phrao – Phaholyothin Rd. – housing behind Hor Wang School – MWA Vibhavadee office – SRT Housing – Kamphaengphet – total 3.5 km – 800 million baht plus 2200-2300 million baht land expropriation – due to the housing area compensation on 130-150 houses and compensation to Tesco Lotus

2) Sri Rat – Dao Khanong will gobble 1500 houses – There are 3 choices for the route – to be concluded in April 2004 so as to start the project in February 2005 and be done in 2009 with the price tag of 9 billion baht. The consultant will choose by taking the engineering aspect into account by 30%, financial aspect by 30% and environmental aspect by 40%

- 3) Lad Phrao Elevated Way will gobble another 1300-1400 houses to make 9 ramps of 700-800 m length and 3 story high for the 8.4 billion baht Lad Phrao elevated way 100-150 housing expropriated per ramp.
- 4) Ratchada Ram Indra Highway -> using Royal Decree to expropriate the villages and Nitingel Sport Complex -> 2 sections
- 4.1) 8-lane highway from Nawamin Road to Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road (km 9.2 to km 11.5 -> 2.3 km) with a price tag of 1.2 billion baht-> and expropriated the following suburb villages and stores:
- 4.1.1) Nuanchan Villa
- 4.1.2) Siam Jusco
- 4.1.3) Kunya House
- 4.1.4) National Housing Authority (some part)
- 4.1.5) Nitingel Ram Indra Sport Complex
- 4.2) Other villages will follow until it reaches Ratchadaphisek
- 5) S2 Third Stage Expressway -7.8 km (Bagg Na Poochao Saming Phrai Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Naval Academy Samut Prakarn) with 4 Interchanges at bang NA, La Salle, Poochao Samingphrai, Samut Prakarn take 4 to 7 years to be done -> starting in 2007.
- 6) Ram Indra Kanchanaphisek (Lum Lokkaka) to the new City (19 km) Extending the 3rd stage expressway from Nuan Chan to Kanchanaphisek at Lum Lokka to be constructed in 5 years and done in 2008.
- 7) Other expressway projects ->
- 7.1) Sri Nakharin Bang Na Samut Prakarn
- 7.2) Rama 2 Phetkasem Nonthaburi
- 7.3) Samut Prakarn Suksawat Rama 2
- 8) BMA Projects 4 bridges across Chao Phraya and 30 new roads

Commentary by Wisarut: The Expressway projects have alienated villagers to such extend that they said "No More Expressways! -> We Want Skytrain-Subway Line!" since they suffer from expensive and unfair expressway tolls as well as traffic gridlock and accidents... Any more expressway seem to fit into the vested interests and the politician's interests, but not the interests of people.

Don Muang Tollway troubles - translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, February 12-14, 2004

Don Muang Tollway now has a grace period that expires in March 2004 and the financial situation of Don Muang Tollway is very bad. After the grace period, Don Muang Tollway will have to pay the interest rate at market price, not MLR -2% as they are paying. Don Muang Tollway PCL wants to sell and dissolve the company due to heavy debt – 10 billion baht debt and 5.5752 billion baht loss. The debt payment for 2004 is 155 million baht and increasing so as to go up to the average 857 million baht. The price for the tollway is 8 billion baht (800 million stock at 10 baht).

However, the government said the price is too high. The government will invest in other projects with better connections to the first stage expressway if the tollway cannot lower the price. However the government does not want the tollway to increase prices for a trip to the airport. If Don Muang Tollway were to go bankrupt, the Ministry of Finance will lose money since it is the major shareholder.

Bang Na-Trat expressway connecting section being built – January 28, 2004

A reader reports: The peculiar (4.2 km) gap in the Bang Na Trat Expressway (where is is not possible to travel from the inner city expressway to the elevated Bang Na Trat expressway) is finally being built: Work on five test piles started in mid September 2003 and the installation of working piles commenced in the middle of November and will take a maximum of six month to complete. As almost everywhere in Bangkok, adequately loadbearing soil strata for heavy foundation loads are found only at depths of about 50 m or below.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

What are these? – December 16, 2003

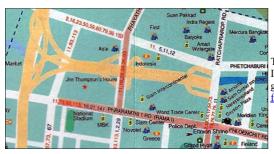
In the center of the extension of Ngam Wongwan Road east of Phahon Yothin Road are a series of numbered pillars. Anyone know what these are for? Oran reports: About those pillars in the middle of the Ngamwongwan extension... according to ETA's website, they are the pillars which will be used for the 3rd Stage Expressway (38.8km) North Section (26.2km) which starts from Nonthaburi to New Bangkok-Chonburi Highway (at the point where it meets the 2nd Stage Expressway, Part D). Planned partial completion in 2009.

#### Plans to build and expand roads - Bangkok Post, November 18, 2003

...projects included a 400-million-baht tunnel at Kasetsart intersection, a 5km road and flyover from Nawamin road to Ram Inthra road worth 240 million baht, expansion of the road from Wat Phra Sri Mahathat intersection to Lak Si intersection from four to eight lanes, expansion of the entry and exit expressway ramps at Bang Na to eight lanes and construction of more U-turns on Bang Na-Trat road. The Ram Inthra-Nawamin road replaced the Ratchadapisek-Ram Inthra project which required a huge land expropriation budget because it would cut through several dense communities...

The rest included construction of ramps to and from Nong Ngu Hao airport at Onnuj, King Kaew and Rom Klao roads worth 90 million baht, 150 million baht and 1,400 million baht respectively, and improvement of a 7km section on the Min Buri-Lat Krabang road and a section from Bang Na-Trat road to Nong Ngu Hao airport which would cost 515 million baht and 800 million baht respectively.

The cancelled expressway extension - October 27, 2003



The maps printed by BMA (Bangkok Metropolotian Administration) that are being given out at Immigration are pretty old. They show the planned, but cancelled, expressway extension that was to go through the historic Ban Krua community. This defunct extension was recently discussed in the forum.

Warning on killer junction - The Nation, August 25, 2003

Police have warned motorists to exercise extra caution while approaching the sharp, curving left turn toward Dao Khanong on the Bang Na-to-Din Daeng stretch of the expressway after a woman was killed when her car hit a concrete wall and plunged to the street below early yesterday. Expressway officials insisted that the accident, the second of its kind at the Y-shaped section, was not caused by a flawed traffic engineering layout or poorly placed signs. Last year, a couple were seriously injured when their car fell off the road at almost the exact same spot.

Two-way traffic on Ratchadapisek, Phetchaburi, and Sukhumvit! - Bangkok Post, July 12, 2003

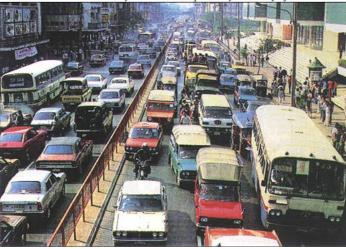
Under the two-way traffic system, motorists who drive from Queen Sirikit Convention Centre on Ratchadapisek road can go straight ahead and enter Asok road by using only one lane.

On Phetchaburi road, motorists can drive from Asok intersection to Urupong intersection using two inbound lanes and can turn left at Pratunam intersection to enter Ratchadamri road.

On Sukhumvit road, motorists can drive from Pong Phraram intersection in the Yosse area until Ploenchit tollgate. They can also turn right at Pathum Wan and Chalermpao intersections. The new route is recommended for people wanting to enter the expressway only since they cannot go any further from there.

Bangkok roads in 1980 - July 14, 2003

The following views of Bangkok roads are from Suburb Mass Transit Systems in the Expressway Authority of Thailand - 8th Year Anniversary



Above: In front of Siam Square in 1979-80 - Full two-way traffic and no Skytrain. Notice bus No. 25 and the green-fronted Siam Square.



Left and below: Rama IV Road circa 1979-80 - Notice bus No. 4 and No.13... probably around Klong Toei.



A few links

ETA - Expressway and Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand, controlled by the Interior Ministry

The \$1 billion, 54 km Bang Na-Bang Phli-Bang Pakong Expressway (BBBE) - the longest in the world

The Second Stage Expressway

 $Some \ interesting \ info \ from \ \underline{Pyramid}. \ They \ consult \ and \ contruct \ flyovers, \ expressway, \ and \ bridges \ in \ Thailand$ 

More transit links are here

The Hopewell Project was also to have an expressway

# Only gasohol 95 to be sold in 2007 in Thailand

January 10, 2006 Categories: Energy

Only gasohol 95 to be sold in 2007 in Thailand – RedNova, January 10, 2006 Only gasohol 95 to be sold in 2007 in Thailand...

# Thailand uses protective strategy via FTAs

January 10, 2006

Thailand
uses protective strategy via FTAs –
Business Day, January 10, 2006
Thailand has continued to apply proactive strategy to expand international trade via FTAs. During last year, there was favourable progress in FTA negotiations between Thailand and its trading partners which resulted in tariff reductions between the two as follows ...

# Graft watch group makes Thailand more transparent

January 10, 2006

Categories: 2Bangkok News

watch group makes Thailand more transparent –
Business Day, January 10, 2006
Thailand's leading academics, opposition
politicians, members of civic societies and pro-democracy activists
have recently joined hands in creating an anti-corruption body
to trails of corrupt activities within the government circles...

# Disaster brings Thailand fortune

January 10, 2006 Categories: 2004 Tsunami

Disaster
brings Thailand fortune – BG News, January
10, 2006
Severe floods that washed away homes, bridges and lives apparently have compensated hapless villagers in southern Thailand with a treasure – gold...

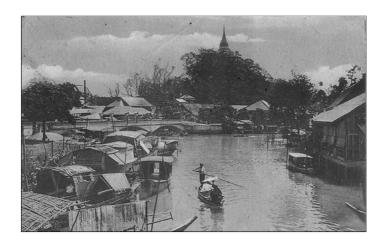
# Chinese ban on Wikipedia prevents research, users say

January 10, 2006 Categories: China

Chinese ban on Wikipedia prevents research, users say – Globe and Mail, January 10, 2006

### Message on the card

January 10, 2006 Categories: Uncategorized



(Photo: Postcard circa 1945 from the 2Bangkok.com collection)

> Above: Two views of the Golden Mount from Phan Fa Bridge

Message on the card – January 10, 2006 Dick van der Spek translated the Dutch message on the back of this card. The card was sent from within Europe. It reads: Dear Nank and niece, Because it is next Sunday 21 Oktober fun fair, I take freedom to invite you, so we expect you without any problems Sunday or Monday. Receive also the best wishes from us all your niece Anna Neijens Address: Mr. Jacob Heelen

Schoofsheide

Neeroeteren



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

# Giant catfish protected in Cambodia

January 11, 2006

Categories: Wildlife and Nature

Giant
catfish protected in Cambodia – UPI, January
11, 2006
Conservationists in Cambodia are working to save the giant catfish
— the largest freshwater fish in the world...

Cambodia's freshwater dolphins face extinction – AngolaPress,
January 11, 2006
Wildlife preservation officials are worried that Cambodia's rare freshwater dolphin species will be extinct in the next 10 years, local newspapers reported on Tuesday...

# Covering the sex industry

January 11, 2006

Covering the sex industry – January 11, 2006
The Thai Day section of the *IHT* seems to be paying more attention to the seedy aspects of Thailand than is usually tolerated. Expect some grumbling if these types of articles continue...

Eyes
wide or shut – *IHT*, January 10, 2006
Bombs
take their toll on sex tourism – *IHT*, January 10, 2006

# Tour of Thai culture goes where guidebooks don't

January 11, 2006

Categories: Books, Tourism

Tour
of Thai culture goes where guidebooks don't –
The Plain Dealer, January 11, 2006
Thai-American Rattawut Lapcharoensap's exceptional debut collection of stories, Sightseeing (Grove, \$12), stands out for its vivid narratives and resonant voice. With seven stories set in Thailand, Lapcharoensan takes readers on a tour of Thai culture, hitting Lapcharoensap takes readers on a tour of Thai culture, hitting everything the guidebooks miss...

# Rumours spread of 'days of danger'

January 12, 2006

Categories: The Thai Deep South

Rumours
spread of 'days of danger' – Bangkok Post,
January 12, 2006
Deputy Prime Minister Chidchai Vanasatidya has dismissed rumours
that further violence would occur in the three southernmost border
provinces during a period of so-called "19 days of danger"
coinciding with the Chinese New Year holidays...

# In Asia, English is useful but Mandarin is rising

January 12, 2006

In
Asia, English is useful but Mandarin is rising —
CSM, January 12, 2006
Thanks to Nils for pointing out this article.
...Welcome to the cutting edge of Thailand's flirtation with
Chinese, an ancient language increasingly seen as the new dialect
of diplomacy and trade in East Asia. In the last few decades, China's
economic rise has rinnled across the globe, inling policymakers economic rise has rippled across the globe, jolting policymakers and dazzling investors...

# **World Electric Guide**

January 12, 2006

World
Electric Guide – January 12, 2006
Interesting site that shows power voltage around the world...

### **Mysterious Company Wins Massive Airport Contract**

January 13, 2006

Categories: Airports and Airlines, Business

'Frobisher'
NOT 'Forbisher' – December
30, 2005
Nils writes: A search for "Frobisher" at
the link that you gave yields Reg. No. 199700311R.

Right: Mystery firm Frobisher's shareholders



(Source: Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA), Singapore)

#### **Elusive**

#### contractor breaks her silence -

The Nation, January 13, 2006

The elusive woman behind the company that won the lucrative ground-services contract at Suvarnabhumi Airport has broken her silence while allegations of questionable dealings surround her company.

Rawadi Jantawit, who owns 50,000 shares in Singapore-based Frobisher Pte Co Ltd, this week granted Nation Weekender an exclusive interview about her life and business dealings. The weekly news magazine's January 16 issue hits news-stands

today.

Most of the interview involves Rawadi's other business, Maxima

Master Co Ltd, the licensed producer of Maxima in-built furniture,
of which she is managing director.

Rawadi flatly refused to discuss Frobisher and granted the interview on the condition the subject would not be broached...

### A little sleuthing reveals true identities of new bag-handler

- The Nation, December 27, 2005

...However, using a little imagination, it is most likely that Forbisher, which is a nonsensical name in English, is a misspelling. It is far more likely that the correct name is Frobisher, an old English name, as in Sir Martin Frobisher, the 16th-century explorer who became the first man to navigate the Northwest Passage.

A quick 5-Singaporean-dollar (Bt123) search on line with the Singapore Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority for Frobisher Pte Ltd and bingo! It is a live company registered in Singapore in 1997 with paid-up capital of S\$100,000 and a registered address of 128 Tanjong Pagar Road, Singapore 088535. There are two shareholders, who are also the company's two directors: Lee Shvu Fang, a Singaporean permanent resident, and Rawadi Jantawit, a Thai national who resides in Bang Kapi, Bangkok.

Earlier: What is Forbisher Pte. Co. Ltd.? - December

29, 2005

Forbisher Pte. Co. Ltd. is an "obscure Singapore firm"

(Mystery

firm gets airport windfall, The Nation, December

20, 2005) that won the contract for ground services at the <u>new airport</u>.

We attempted to look it up in the Singapore Business Directory (<u>Here</u>

and here - Directory

of Business, Company and Limited Liability Partnership Names

— This is a comprehensive listing of names of all business firms,
local companies, foreign companies and limited liability partnerships
(LLP) registered in Singapore), but there seems to be no
record of it...

We had hoped to publish their incorporation papers in the same way we posted the incorporation papers of the <a href="Phuket">Phuket</a> <a href="Pass Project Limited">Pass Project Limited</a>, a company created to conduct the Kra Canal study. Another mysterious contract-winning company from this year was <a href="Quatrotec">Quatrotec</a>.

Update: The

<u>house likely to haunt Suvarnabhumi authorities</u> – The

Nation, December 29, 2005

...Rawadi is one of the two shareholders in Frobisher, having held the same amount of shares as the firm's Singaporean director

since June 23. According to the official Singaporean document, she has a registered address at 1330 Nawamin Road, Klong Chan, Bang Kapi, Bangkok.
With the help of the post office, the address was traced to this deserted two-storey house, which shows no address number.
..."An episode of the television programme about mysteries
— Miti Pissawong — was also shot here," the neighbour said...

# India's 'girl deficit' deepest among educated

January 13, 2006 Categories: India

India's 'girl deficit' deepest among educated – CSM, January 13, 2006

# \$2-BN TAKEOVER: PM's clan agrees to sell Shin Corp. to Singapore

January 13, 2006 Categories: The Thaksin Years

\$2-BN TAKEOVER: PM's clan agrees to sell Shin to S'pore – The Nation, January 13, 2006 Shin Corp denies reports of sell-off by Thai PM's family – TODAYonline, January 11, 2006

# Beijing traffic

January 14, 2006 Categories: China

Beijing traffic – January, 2006 Interesting info from the latest edition of the always intriguing <u>CarFree Times</u>:

Car ownership in Beijing has climbed from 564,000 in 1993 to 2,350,000 today. By the year 2010, ownership of private motor vehicles may reach 3,800,000, and possibly 5,000,000 by 2020, reaching a level of 0.8 cars per household. To make matters worse, it seems that newly-motorized Chinese tend to use the car far more than residents of New York or London, and this is a major cause of the terrible traffic in Beijing. A recent proposal to deal with the crisis includes four main points...

# Thai murder reveals dark side of paradise

January 15, 2006

Categories: Crime, Thailand in the International Media

murder reveals dark side of paradise – The
Observer, January 15, 2006
... 'Koh Samui and Phangan have changed over the past five years, and crime is a growing problem,' says Joe Bindloss, author of Lonely Planet's guide to Thailand's islands and beaches. 'Drugs have always been there, but with more tourists has come an increase in demand. Over the past few years cheap, dangerous drugs have come in from China and foreigners have had mental health problems after taking dodgy batches.

Last June, Koh Samui and Koh Phangan were listed by Justice Minister Suwat Liptapanlop as two of three districts in the southern province of Surat Thani facing a rapid spread of drugs. He said the return of tourists following the 2004 tsunami had attracted drug dealers and intensified the islands' problems.

While the government made Koh Samui the focus of an initiative to tackle drug use in tourist spots in June, it has been notoriously bad at dealing with the issue. Basically the police operated a shoot to kill policy,' says Bindloss. Around 2,000 people, mainly gangsters and dealers, were killed by police, drug prices shot up and many addicts were driven to crime to pay for their fixes...

# Thaksin's Reality Show

January 16, 2006 Categories: Thai Politics

Spending the night with Thaksin – January 16, 2006

Below are some screen captures from the first night of the Prime Minister's reality show, *Back Stage Show*, on UBC channel 16. After the sun went down the images became surreal and grainy and the only sounds were crickets.



(Source: Back Stage Show, UBC)

 $10:22\ pm-Men\ sit$  at a table and shuffle papers around.



(Source: Back Stage Show, UBC)

10:25 PM – A man in a yellow shirt spends a long time writing something.



(Source: Back Stage Show, UBC)



(Source: Back Stage Show, UBC)

10:36 PM – Thaksin steps outside and does some exercises.



(Source: Back Stage Show, UBC)

11:26 PM – A soldier looks around with night vision goggles.



(Source: Back Stage Show, UBC)

 $11{:}28\ PM-Solders\ mill\ around\ outside\ the\ compound\ smoking\ cigarettes.$ 



(Source: Back Stage Show, UBC)

Action around midnight: A soldier wanders around under the camera with a bottle of water.

PM launches "reality show" starring himself – Bangkok Post, January 16, 2006
...A survey conducted by Assumption University of 1,538 people in Bangkok, some 29 per cent said they disapproved of the "reality TV" plan, 20 approved and 51 had no opinion on the show.

Others have been downright critical.

"Solving the country's problems is not something to toy with. It certainly isn't a political fantasia," said Thirayudh Boonmee, a well known sociologist and government critic, referring to a popular Thai reality show "Academy Fantasia"...

### Name changes of roads and lanes in Bangkok

January 16, 2006

Categories: Highways and Roads

Name changes of roads and lanes in Bangkok – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Thairath*, January 16, 2006

Deupty BMA City Clerk Ratthaphon Methanathaworn said that after the discussion with the Highway Department, BMA has decided to change the names of the following roads and lanes.

- 1) (Old) Kaset Nawamin -> (New) Prasoed Manookrit from Kaset Intersection to Nawamin Intersection with total distance of 9.10 km.
- 2) Upgrading Sangkhom Songkrau Lane (Soi Sangkhom Songkrau AKA Chokchai 4 Soi 6 to Sangkhom Songkrau Road (Thanon Sangkhom Songkrau) even though it is a 2-lane road. This is due to the fact that Thanon Sangkhom Songkrau has become a shortcut linking Chokchai 4 Road (Lad Phrao 55 Road) with Lad Phrao 71 Road as well as Pradit Manootham Road (Ram Indra- At Narogn Expressway) with a distance of 1.4 km.
- 3) Changing Trimit Road in Samphanthawongse district (Bangkok Chinatown) to "Thanon Mitraphab Thai -Chin" (AKA Sino-Thai Friendship Road) as the commemoration for 30 years diplomatic relations between Thailand and mainland China.

All changes have to be done by May 2006. Furthermore, BMA has agreed in pinciple that they should introdue number on the lanes (sois) in Yaowaraj Road from Odean Circle (now Chinatown Gate) to Ratchawongse intersection.

The left side would be Yaowaraj Soi 1, 3, 5 while the right side (from Odean Circle) is Yaowaraj Soi 2, 4, 6. The old names of Sois would be preserved within brackets on the signs. However, Songsaawat Road and Phadung Dao Road would not change into numbered lanes for Yaowaraj Road. However, the final approval would is pending.

The plan to change Soi Inthamara into Soi Sutthisarn to be in line with Suthisarn Road has been suspended for a while until the decision from the Administration Court has been handed down after the Inthamara family has filed the case in Administration Court.

# Chinese New Year hailed with kitschy pop songs at mall

January 16, 2006 Categories: China

<u>Chinese</u> <u>New Year hailed with kitschy pop songs at malls</u> – sukimon, January 16, 2006

## Thai Expressways

January 17, 2006

Categories: Highways and Roads

#### <u>Dao Khanong-Srirat route to be reviewed - Expressway scheme runs into opposition - Bangkok Post</u>, June 24, 2006

Caretaker Transport Minister Pongsak Raktapongpaisal has ordered the Expressway and Rapid Transit Authority (ETA) to review the new Dao Khanong-Srirat expressway route following complaints from Thon Buri residents who face land expropriation. A group of people in Thon Buri's Suksawat area met the minister on Thursday to demand a review of the project...

The new expressway route was aimed at reducing traffic volume on Rama IX bridge and at the Tha Rua interchange. It could be built in the Klong Toey area instead of parallel to the existing Rama IX bridge as designed by the ETA, he said...

A source at the ETA said that actually there are four alternative routes for the Dao Khanong-Srirat expressway project.

One of the proposed routes is to stretch about 9km from the Bang Khlo interchange to Dao Khanong. Its middle section will cross the Chao Phraya river near Rama IX bridge.

The three other routes basically run from Chan road, become elevated on Charoenrat road and cross the river to join Rama II road, or cross the river and go over Rat Burana canal to reach Dao Khanong.

One of the project opponents, Sanpong Anantachaiyong, said the new expressway was unnecessary because an industrial ring road, now under construction, a planned southern ring road and new mass transit projects would effectively help relieve traffic congestion at Rama IX bridge and the Tha Rua interchange...

## <u>Highways Dept to seek foreign investment in 6 new routes of motorways</u> - TNA, January 17, 2006

...The six routes comprise Bangpa in-Saraburi-Nakhon Ratchasima with a distance of 200 km, Bangyai-Nakhon Pathom-Kanchanaburi with 98 km, Nakhon Pathom-Samut Songkram-Cha-am with 134 km, Pattaya-Mab Ta Pud with 38 km, Saraburi-Bang Pa Kong with 150 km, and a third ring road of Bangkok with 250 km...

#### All road contracts plagued with graft- State audit body slams local authority work - Bangkok Post, November 25, 2005

...One project worth 48 million baht was to build a bridge to connect Sirae island to Phuket town, with four million baht set aside for a temporary road until the bridge was completed.

However, the temporary road was never built and the four million baht put aside for it just vanished, said Mr Kriengsak.

Surin's provincial administration organisation wrote in one contract that one million baht was needed for transport costs and obtaining soil and earth. However, the soil was dug from the area where a road was being built at no extra cost...

#### BMA bemused by rejection of road projects – Bangkok Post, November 24, 2005

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration has questioned why the cabinet rejected its three road projects worth about ten billion baht although they are necessary for traffic relief and justified. The government on Tuesday rejected an elevated road project on Ramkhamhaeng road, a road from Phran Nok to Phutthamonthon Sai 4 road, and the expansion of Krungthep Kritha road. The decision was based on a considerable increase in the projects' budgets...

### 'No' to three BMA road projects – Bangkok Post, November 23, 2005

...The first project is an elevated road above Ramkhamhaeng road from Lamsalee junction to Bang Chan canal. Its budget was raised from 550 million baht to 1.7 billion baht. The second project involves the construction of a new road from Phran Nok to Phutthamonthon Sai 4 road. Its budget shot up from one billion baht to 3.9 billion baht and its completion was to be delayed from 2008 to 2014.

The third is the expansion of the Krungthep Kritha road, the construction costs for which are now estimated at 4.7 billion baht, three-times the original cost of 1.8 billion baht. On top of that, it would also have faced a two-year construction delay from 2008 to 2010.

...Meanwhile, the cabinet gave the greenlight to 10 other projects proposed by the BMA, including the construction of flood prevention walls worth some 1.7 billion baht along the Chao Phraya river, a 800-million-baht budget for improving the Srinakarin road from Phatthanakan junction to Sukhumvit 103 road, and the construction of a new road from Pattanakan to Suan Luang Rama IX.

In another development yesterday, the BMA agreed to sign hire contracts with Italian-Thai Development Plc (ITD) and Unique Engineering and Construction Co to build the Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) project on two routes \_Ram Intra Km8 to Mor Chit route, and the Surawong-Rachaphruek route \_as they have agreed to cut their quotes by about 20 million baht each to meet the BMA's median prices.

### ETA planning to construct 11 expressways - The Nation, November 22, 2005

The fourth choice of the expressway across the Chao Phraya: last choice for ETA – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, August 17, 2005 ETA has come up with the fourth choice for the new expressway across the Chao Phraya–an expressway parallel with the existing expressway and Rama 9 Bridge. If local people refuse the fourth choice, ETA has to scrap the new expressway across the Chao Phraya.

Bang Na Trat connector expressway open - translated and summarized from Bangkok Biznews, June 16, 2005

On June 15, 2005 Premier Thaksin opened S1 section of the expressway (4.7 km) connecting the 1st stage expressway and the 3rd stage expressway with Bang NA-Bang Pakong expressway. This allows motorists to go from expressway to expressway without having to go down to Bangna Intersection at km 6 toll gate.

OTP pushes the Sri Nakharin Expressway – Scrapping S2 Expressway due to high expropriation cost – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, June 17, 2005 OTP is asking for 394 million baht for the design of the Yellow Line LRT, Pink LRT and budget for Sri Nakharin Expressway along with Lum Salee Interchange. All to be done in July 2006.

On the other hand, OTP decided to scrap the S2 Expressway connecting S1 Expressway with the Southern Outer Ring road due to the high cost of land expropriation while coming up with Sri Nakharin Expressway as a substitute since it can be constructed along Sri Nakharin Road with little payment on land expropriation for Toll Plazas.

Commentary by Wisart: OTP decided not to construct mass transit system to IMPACT (Convention center) since the owner of IMPACT, Khun Anan Kanchanaphak), is the brother of the owner of BTSC Skytrain, Khun Khireen Kanchanaphak and a supporter of the Democrats. They have to deprive the Kanchanaphak Family and run a BRT as a substitute.

On the other hand, they want to secure votes from Pakkret and Nonthaburi by extending the Pink LRT from Pakkret to Kae Rai (Nonthaburi).

These plans please automobile vested interests such as Transport Minister Suriya's Family (owner of Thai Summit auto parts-supplier for Toyota (Thailand)) by constructing the expressway along both Sri Nakharin and Highway 304 (Ram Indra – Pakkret Road) along with Lum Salee Interchange...

### Highway 4 in Phetchaburi province – February 18, 2005

A reader asks: I was wondering whether you know what is going on with Highway 4 between Phak Tho and Khao Yoi in Phetchaburi province. They have demolished the rather attractive canal and hedgerows on the east side of the highway, and appear to be installing drainage tubes. The drainage tubes would seem to have less than one-tenth the carrying capacity of the existing canal. Also, in some places they seem to be filling in the canal and widening the road (on the east side only), whereas in other places they are simply leaving a huge and ugly hole — more than five metres deep, 20 metres wide, and several kilometres in length. Is there an overall plan? What will it be like when it is completed? ...

International bus between Thailand-Laos - translated and summarized from Transport Journal, December 16-31, 2004

The implementation of Udornthani-Viangchan international bus has been quite a successful enterprise. It is not surprising that the Transportation Co.Ltd. is going to implement the second Thai-Lao international bus from Ubon Ratchathani to Champasak, after the new Ubonratchatyhanee bus terminal is equipped with an immigration office and customs house. However, the Lao government has not come up with the counterpart for this project—either the local government of Champasak's state enterprise or the Viangchan Bus State Enterprise Co. Ltd.

After the Friendship Bridge across Mekhong at Mukdaharn is opened in 2006, the third bus route (Mukdaharn – Savannakhet – Danang) will be implemented. So

far, the roads from Muang Phin to Seno (130 km) and Daen Savan to Mung Phin (75km) are under construction. The first one from the JICA loan and the 2nd one is from ADB (32 million baht) and Thai Exim Bank (8 million baht) loans.

Increasing usage of Donmuang Tollway - translated and summarized from Manager Daily, December 15, 2004

Minister Suriya is asking Donmuang Tollway to cut the toll from 53 baht (Dondaeng – Rangsit – 43 baht for Donmaung Tollway and 10 Baht for the Highway Department) to a 20 baht flat rate for 3 months with a provision that the government will help construct an additional ramp at Rangsit-Ongkharak Intersection. For nationalization, Donmuang Tollway PCL said they would sell stock at par (10 baht/share) while MOTC said they will purchase the stock at only 6 baht/share. Few drivers use Donmaung Tollway since the ticket prices are too high. Therefore, the discount would bring more drivers to use this tollway. There are about 200,000 cars along Vibhavadee Rangsit Highway, but only 100,000 cars use the tollway, so the discount will add an extra 30,000-40,000 cars to the tollway–even at the expense of revenue loss of 200,000 baht/day (6 million baht a month) for the section from National Memorial-Rangsit and 1 million baht a day-1/3 of daily revenue).

Donmaung tollway has the capacity to handle 180,000 cars a day, but actual use is 100,000 cars.

If this discount works, the Highway Department will negotiate with Donmaung Tollway to compensate for the revenue loss-either the contract extension or the debt negotiation, but not nationalization which has dragged on for a long time.

ETA site intro - September 20, 2004

Expressway and Rapid Transit Authority has a humorous flash intro that seems to say: "how to solve traffic problems? Elevated expressways!



(Photo: Pascal)

Bangna Trad Highway - July 14, 2004

Pascal of <u>www.pasci.org</u> sent in a great photo of Bangna Trad Highway (above). This expressway has a much more eye-pleasing design than the elevated expressways in town.

Tearing down elevated expressways - May 17, 2004

Pas of Bangkok Highrises writes: This is not related to Bangkok, but here's an interesting urban renewal proposal in Seoul to dismantle an elevated expressway and restore it with the stream that once meandered through the city.

This is a fascinating article that has many parallels to Bangkok and its covered klongs.

ETA agrees to look at alternative route - Bangkok Post, April 28, 2004

Local people proposed an alternative, a new bridge that would run parallel to Rama IX bridge, at a meeting yesterday. About 2,000 residents from Bang Kholaem, Rat Burana and Chom Thong districts turned up to put their objections...

Under the original plan, thousands of families would have been relocated, they said.

... About 1,000 houses were moved when the first stage of the Srirat-Dao Khanong expressway was constructed about 12 years ago.

The extension of the Srirat-Dao Khanong expressway, which links Charoenrat road in Bang Kholaem district and Rama II in Dao Khanong, was launched in 2002. The target date for completion was set at 2008.

Earlier: 400 Chinese families suffer from land expropriation for the Sri Rat-Dao Khanong Expressway - Than Setthakij, April 4-7, 2004

Earlier: Seminar for Sri Rat-Dao Khanong Expressway failed – Consultants telling blatant lies to the public and issuing sham questionnaire – Thairath, March 24, 2004

Earlier: Expressway from Ram Indra to Kanchanaphisek (Lum Lookka) – Dailynews, March 16, 2004
Earlier: 3,000 families suffer from the New Road-Expressway project – Than Setthakij, March 7-10, 2004

ETA agrees to look at alternative route-Angry residents say they've had enough - Bangkok Post, April 28, 2004

Local people proposed an alternative, a new bridge that would run parallel to Rama IX bridge, at a meeting yesterday. About 2,000 residents from Bang Kholaem, Rat Burana and Chom Thong districts turned up to put their objections...

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400 Chinese families suffer from land expropriation for the Sri Rat-Dao Khanong Expressway – translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, April 4-7, 2004 380 Sino-Thai families around Soi Yoodee and Soi Nam Heng Lee still suffer from the expressway since all proposed routes are directed to go through their communities.

They have already suffered from the Sri Rat Expressway (Bang Klo-Chang Watthana) and they thought that the suffering from moving will be at an end after moving to the new community, but the new expressway will add even more suffering.

Furthermore, ETA has to review their budget since it does not include land expropriation yet. It needs another 1.650 billion baht for removing and reinstalling infrastructure including the new 24 ky power lines for MEA and 2.5-3 billion baht for land expropriation—thus the budget increases to 8.5-10 billion baht.

'Consultants telling blatant lies to the public and issuing sham questionnaire' - March 25, 2004

Ed.: While the English-language reading populace is looking at the genteel news reported in the English papers, tens of millions of Thais are reading something different such as this article below from *ThaiRath*. *ThaiRath* is often criticized for its sensational news and sometimes slipshod reporting, but the paper does often bring up issues and stories that eventually covered in more sedate papers. This article keys into some commonly held beliefs, such as that road and transit routings are politically motivated and that questionnaires and polls are often tricks to give the authorities the right to say 'the people support this' when the opposite is the case.

Seminar for Sri Rat-Dao Khanong Expressway failed – Consultants telling blatant lies to the public and issuing sham questionnaire – translated and summarized from *Thairath*, March 24, 2004

After the seminar with those who will get detrimental effects from the Sri Rat-Dao Khanong Expressway on March 23, representatives from Anothai Village told *Thairath* correspondents that the consultant on this project has come up with a sham seminar which gave villagers no information at all about the progress of this project. Even worse, the information the consultants gave to the villagers is so contradictory that nobody would believe those blatant lies.

First they said 2 communities will suffer from the 2nd route. Then after asking for details the consultants said 672 families will suffer from the 2nd route—which the villagers believe is a very blatant lie since this route will strike through the communities where thousands of families will live.

The consultants claimed 430 families will suffer from the 1st route—another blatant lie since the route will go through the middle of a road and very few families will suffer.

Furthermore, the questionnaire issued by the consultants have carry very misleading questions which could fool those who know nothing about the project. This would lead many to say "yes" for the project to strike through communities even though most villagers would say "no" to anything to do with the Expressway Authority.

The selection of the best route is a good example of this manipulation.

Therefore, the people will burn those questionnaire forms into a pile of ash and they will come up with their own version of questionnaire to be submitted to the consultant and the Expressway Authority.

Commentary by Wisarut: If the Expressway Authority and consultants insist on the unpopular second route (widely believed to be favored because it would benefit Sia Charoen-a close friend of Premier Thaksin), Thai Rak Thai might suffer election woes in the Yannawa-Bang Kho Laem district.

22 communities are impacted by the Rama 6 Expressway - translated and summarized from Dailynews, March 24, 2004

The consultants will call three seminars on Rama 6 expressway and invite those who will get detrimental effects from the project to express their opinions. The list of communities and agencies that will get detrimental effects from the project:

- 1) Hor Wang High School
- 2) Saint John University
- 3) Central Patthana PCL (owners of Central Plaza, and Central Department Store)
- 4) Central Department Store
- 5) Km11 Railway Community
- 6) Chaiyaphruek Railway Community (Talingchan District)
- 7) Phruek Udom Community (Talingchan District)
- 8) Wat Pleng Community (Bang Plad District)
- 9) Klong Suan Prik Community (Bang Plad District)
- 10) Phatthana Soi 85 (Bang Plad District)
- 11) Saeng Thong Community (Bang Plad District)
- 12) Ruam Jai Phatthana Community (Bang Plad District)
- 13) Sut Soi Somthawin Community (Bang Sue district)
- 14) Saphan Dam Community (Bang Sue district)
- 15) See Nam Nguen Community (Bang Sue district)
- 16) Rama 6 Bridge Community (Bang Sue district)
- 17) Soi Chotiwat Community (Bang Sue district)
- 18) Ratchada Prachachuen Community (Chatuchak District)
- 19) Phaithoon Niwet Village (Chatuchak District)
- 20) Suan Phak Community (Chatuchak District)
- 21) Village Headmen of Moo 1, Moo 5, Moo 7, Moo 9, Bang Kruay Commune, Bang Kruay district of Nonthaburi
- 22) Village Headmen of Moo 4, Moo 6, Wat Chalor Commune, Bang Kruay district of Nonthaburi

Rama 6 expressway with new bridges across Chao Phraya - translated and summarized from Dailynews, March 16, 2004

Team Consultant and the Traffic Policy Office had some up the two sections of the Rama 6 Expressway:

1) 6-lane elevated way, 2) new railway bridge

There are 2 forms of the bridge:

1) Staggered bridge - upper section of the expressway and lower section for new commuter line and DMU, 2) Separated bridge

However, the consultant will have to spend another nine months (from the proposed 14 months) for construction costs, construction period, and atheistic impact – with a price of 125 million baht.

They will also take the information about the integration of the Mae Klong line with the Main line into account since the integration of the Mae Klong line will cut much of the Southern Railway traffic—except the section to western regions (Kanchanaburi, Nakhonpathom Suphan Buri and Ratburi).

No need for further land expropriation except the ramp to go up to the expressway and down to the road. The design must be done before finding the right places for the ramp.

The rail section from Bangsue to Talingchan via Rama 6 Bridge will not be removed due to historical concerns. Rama 6 Bridge has been registered with the Fine Art Department as a historical site. It was the sole link for the Northern and Southern Railway and it has been through the turmoil of WWII and the transformation from road-rail bridge to a rail bridge with double tracks.

Expressway from Ram Indra to Kanchanaphisek (Lum Lookka) - translated and summarized from Dailynews, March 16, 2004

The Ram Indra-Kanchanaphisek expressway has a price tag of 13.709 billion baht -> 7.011 billion for land expropriation (40m wide), and 6.583 billion baht for construction. 58% (3.884 billion baht) will be paid by the Central Government and 42% (2.814 billion baht) paid by the Expressway Authority. It will take two years to construct and be ready in October 2008.

This 6-lane expressway is for the New City by connecting with Chalong Rat Expressway (Ram Indra – At Narong Expressway) and then goes northeast to pass Sukhaphiban 5 (km 11) and end up at Kanchanaphisek (9.25 km). There will be two inbound toll booths at Kanchanaphisek and Sukhaphiban 5 (km 11) and 2 outbound toll booths at Ram Indra and Sukhaphiban 5 (km 11).

The Expressway Authority now has to deal with the 4 expressways:

- $1. \ Ram \ Indra-Kanchanaphisek-still \ in \ the \ consultant \ stage$
- 2. Sri Rat Dao Khanong still in the consultant stage
- 3. Bangsue Bormmarat Chonnanee (Rama 6 Expressway) still in the consultant stage
- 4. Third Stage Expressway (Ngam Wongwan Nawamin) under construction despite strong opposition from those who live around Kasert Nawamin road.

## 3,000 families suffer from the New Road-Expressway project - translated and summarized from Than Setthakij, March 7-10, 2004

The Land expropriation for the new roads and 4 expressways within downtown will definitely dim and extinguish the value to land.

1) the connection between Lad Phrao Expressway and Bangsue – Rama 6 Expressway which require the land of Union Mall as well as Hor Wang school, the Waterwork Office, 100 SRT houses -> there will be 3 choices for the connection route:

1.1) MRTA Park and Ride – Lad Phrao Road – Saint John University – Dept. of Civil Aviation Service – Railway Park – Kamphengphet -> total 3.2 km – 700 million baht plus 1400-1500 million baht land expropriation -> no housing has to be removed

1.2) MRTA Park and Ride – Lad Phrao Road – Union Mall (Side Part) – Hor Wang Road (gobble both Central Lad Phrao and Hor Wang) – Than Setthakij Building, Vibhavadee Rangsit highway – MWA Vibhavadee Office – SRT Housing – Kamphaengphet Road-> total 3.8 km – 900 million baht plus 1000-1200 million baht land expropriation -> 150-170 housings get expropriation

1.3) MRTA Park and Ride – Lad Phrao – Union Mall (back part – with housing behind Union Mall) – Lotus Lad Phrao – Phaholyothin Rd. – housing behind Hor Wang School – MWA Vibhavadee office – SRT Housing – Kamphaengphet – total 3.5 km – 800 million baht plus 2200-2300 million baht land expropriation – due to the housing area compensation on 130-150 houses and compensation to Tesco Lotus

2) Sri Rat – Dao Khanong will gobble 1500 houses – There are 3 choices for the route – to be concluded in April 2004 so as to start the project in February 2005 and be done in 2009 with the price tag of 9 billion baht. The consultant will choose by taking the engineering aspect into account by 30%, financial aspect by 30% and environmental aspect by 40%

- 3) Lad Phrao Elevated Way will gobble another 1300-1400 houses to make 9 ramps of 700-800 m length and 3 story high for the 8.4 billion baht Lad Phrao elevated way 100-150 housing expropriated per ramp.
- 4) Ratchada Ram Indra Highway -> using Royal Decree to expropriate the villages and Nitingel Sport Complex -> 2 sections
- 4.1) 8-lane highway from Nawamin Road to Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road (km 9.2 to km 11.5 -> 2.3 km) with a price tag of 1.2 billion baht-> and expropriated the following suburb villages and stores:
- 4.1.1) Nuanchan Villa
- 4.1.2) Siam Jusco
- 4.1.3) Kunya House
- 4.1.4) National Housing Authority (some part)
- 4.1.5) Nitingel Ram Indra Sport Complex
- 4.2) Other villages will follow until it reaches Ratchadaphisek
- 5) S2 Third Stage Expressway -7.8 km (Bagg Na Poochao Saming Phrai Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Naval Academy Samut Prakarn) with 4 Interchanges at bang NA, La Salle, Poochao Samingphrai, Samut Prakarn take 4 to 7 years to be done -> starting in 2007.
- 6) Ram Indra Kanchanaphisek (Lum Lokkaka) to the new City (19 km) Extending the 3rd stage expressway from Nuan Chan to Kanchanaphisek at Lum Lokka to be constructed in 5 years and done in 2008.
- 7) Other expressway projects ->
- 7.1) Sri Nakharin Bang Na Samut Prakarn
- 7.2) Rama 2 Phetkasem Nonthaburi
- 7.3) Samut Prakarn Suksawat Rama 2
- 8) BMA Projects 4 bridges across Chao Phraya and 30 new roads

Commentary by Wisarut: The Expressway projects have alienated villagers to such extend that they said "No More Expressways! -> We Want Skytrain-Subway Line!" since they suffer from expensive and unfair expressway tolls as well as traffic gridlock and accidents... Any more expressway seem to fit into the vested interests and the politician's interests, but not the interests of people.

Don Muang Tollway troubles - translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, February 12-14, 2004

Don Muang Tollway now has a grace period that expires in March 2004 and the financial situation of Don Muang Tollway is very bad. After the grace period, Don Muang Tollway will have to pay the interest rate at market price, not MLR -2% as they are paying. Don Muang Tollway PCL wants to sell and dissolve the company due to heavy debt – 10 billion baht debt and 5.5752 billion baht loss. The debt payment for 2004 is 155 million baht and increasing so as to go up to the average 857 million baht. The price for the tollway is 8 billion baht (800 million stock at 10 baht).

However, the government said the price is too high. The government will invest in other projects with better connections to the first stage expressway if the tollway cannot lower the price. However the government does not want the tollway to increase prices for a trip to the airport. If Don Muang Tollway were to go bankrupt, the Ministry of Finance will lose money since it is the major shareholder.

Bang Na-Trat expressway connecting section being built – January 28, 2004

A reader reports: The peculiar (4.2 km) gap in the Bang Na Trat Expressway (where is is not possible to travel from the inner city expressway to the elevated Bang Na Trat expressway) is finally being built: Work on five test piles started in mid September 2003 and the installation of working piles commenced in the middle of November and will take a maximum of six month to complete. As almost everywhere in Bangkok, adequately loadbearing soil strata for heavy foundation loads are found only at depths of about 50 m or below.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

What are these? – December 16, 2003

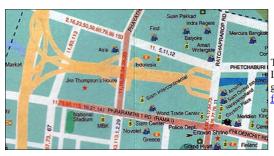
In the center of the extension of Ngam Wongwan Road east of Phahon Yothin Road are a series of numbered pillars. Anyone know what these are for? Oran reports: About those pillars in the middle of the Ngamwongwan extension... according to ETA's website, they are the pillars which will be used for the 3rd Stage Expressway (38.8km) North Section (26.2km) which starts from Nonthaburi to New Bangkok-Chonburi Highway (at the point where it meets the 2nd Stage Expressway, Part D). Planned partial completion in 2009.

### Plans to build and expand roads - Bangkok Post, November 18, 2003

...projects included a 400-million-baht tunnel at Kasetsart intersection, a 5km road and flyover from Nawamin road to Ram Inthra road worth 240 million baht, expansion of the road from Wat Phra Sri Mahathat intersection to Lak Si intersection from four to eight lanes, expansion of the entry and exit expressway ramps at Bang Na to eight lanes and construction of more U-turns on Bang Na-Trat road. The Ram Inthra-Nawamin road replaced the Ratchadapisek-Ram Inthra project which required a huge land expropriation budget because it would cut through several dense communities...

The rest included construction of ramps to and from Nong Ngu Hao airport at Onnuj, King Kaew and Rom Klao roads worth 90 million baht, 150 million baht and 1,400 million baht respectively, and improvement of a 7km section on the Min Buri-Lat Krabang road and a section from Bang Na-Trat road to Nong Ngu Hao airport which would cost 515 million baht and 800 million baht respectively.

The cancelled expressway extension - October 27, 2003



The maps printed by BMA (Bangkok Metropolotian Administration) that are being given out at Immigration are pretty old. They show the planned, but cancelled, expressway extension that was to go through the historic Ban Krua community. This defunct extension was recently discussed in the forum.

Warning on killer junction - The Nation, August 25, 2003

Police have warned motorists to exercise extra caution while approaching the sharp, curving left turn toward Dao Khanong on the Bang Na-to-Din Daeng stretch of the expressway after a woman was killed when her car hit a concrete wall and plunged to the street below early yesterday. Expressway officials insisted that the accident, the second of its kind at the Y-shaped section, was not caused by a flawed traffic engineering layout or poorly placed signs. Last year, a couple were seriously injured when their car fell off the road at almost the exact same spot.

Two-way traffic on Ratchadapisek, Phetchaburi, and Sukhumvit! - Bangkok Post, July 12, 2003

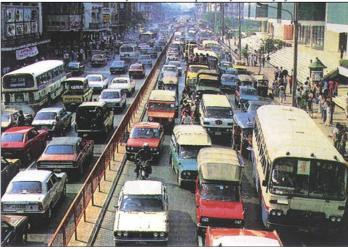
Under the two-way traffic system, motorists who drive from Queen Sirikit Convention Centre on Ratchadapisek road can go straight ahead and enter Asok road by using only one lane.

On Phetchaburi road, motorists can drive from Asok intersection to Urupong intersection using two inbound lanes and can turn left at Pratunam intersection to enter Ratchadamri road.

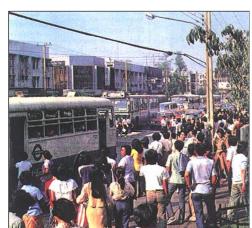
On Sukhumvit road, motorists can drive from Pong Phraram intersection in the Yosse area until Ploenchit tollgate. They can also turn right at Pathum Wan and Chalermpao intersections. The new route is recommended for people wanting to enter the expressway only since they cannot go any further from there.

Bangkok roads in 1980 - July 14, 2003

The following views of Bangkok roads are from Suburb Mass Transit Systems in the Expressway Authority of Thailand - 8th Year Anniversary



Above: In front of Siam Square in 1979-80 - Full two-way traffic and no Skytrain. Notice bus No. 25 and the green-fronted Siam Square.



Left and below: Rama IV Road circa 1979-80 - Notice bus No. 4 and No.13... probably around Klong Toei.



A few links

ETA - Expressway and Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand, controlled by the Interior Ministry

The \$1 billion, 54 km Bang Na-Bang Phli-Bang Pakong Expressway (BBBE) - the longest in the world

The Second Stage Expressway

 $Some \ interesting \ info \ from \ \underline{Pyramid}. \ They \ consult \ and \ contruct \ flyovers, \ expressway, \ and \ bridges \ in \ Thailand$ 

More transit links are here

The Hopewell Project was also to have an expressway

# Thailand tells tourists it's serious about safety

January 18, 2006 Categories: Tourism

Thailand
tells tourists it's serious about safety
— International Herald Tribune, January 18, 2006
Thanks to Danny for pointing out this article: Two Thai fishermen were sentenced to death Wednesday for the rape and murder of a British tourist in a verdict that was intended not only as a deterrent but as an invitation...

### **COMMENT:** Rape is almost never about sex

January 18, 2006 Categories: Crime

<u>COMMENT: Rape is almost never about sex</u> – *Bangkok Post*, January 18, 2006

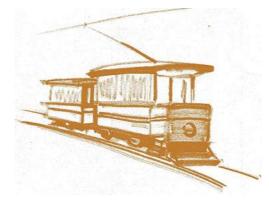
...Perhaps these men are committing the criminal act that proves they are men because they don't feel like men at all. In cities like the ones where the recent rapes occurred, when motorcycle drivers and fishermen look around they probably see two things: glamourous resorts where foreigners are making or spending more money than they'll ever know, and foreigners luring their women away with the very same commodity. Do some common Thai men who have been left out of tourism's prosperity feel angst about being at the bottom of everything? Probably. Are they mad about the money and the men? It would be hard not to be.

In the Horton case, news stories have reported the two rapists boasting about their disgusting and despicable deed afterwards as if it was something worth praise. One has to wonder: Is raping foreign women their way of settling the score?

We can only speculate, but if this is true, and it's certainly a possibility, something needs to be done, and all the executions in Thailand won't be enough of a deterrent in stopping such sex crimes. These men are poor, irate, powerless and unafraid of punishment. It's been proven the reason why most people don't commit crimes is not because they don't want to do the act, it's because they fear the punishment. For these rapists, life as a free but lesser man must not be much better than one behind bars.

### Bangkok Trams (1894-1968) Main Page

January 19, 2006 Categories: Trams



Tram Overview
Rusting trams

The Bangkok Tram Song!

End of the line

Links

Tram routes including the 1996 proposal for

tramlike buses

<u>Tram maps – 1917 and 1963</u>

<u>Tram map and route description - 1958</u>

Tram fares

Tram stop signs

Tramways stock certificates

The daily tram

Details: closeup views of Tram 120

Stills from the tram video

Tram Photos – 1959 Remembering the trams and the

Paknam Railway

Tram Photos – 1962

<u>Tram Photos – from the collection of Charlie</u>

Sullivan

<u>Tram Photos – three great color photos</u>

Tram Photos – various

<u>Tram Photos – trams around town today</u>

<u>Tram Photos – a few shots of the Paknam Railway</u>

Tram photos - trams in Black Silk (1961)

Tram accounts sent to use from those who rode the

trams

Thai tramway accounts from famous Thai writers – Cost of living in 1941-1942, cost of living in 1946, the Japanese arrive in Bangkok, Allied bombing of Bangkok & bombing of power plants, the Great Flood of 1942 (with car-boat collisions!), tram drivers' strike (with old-time strike busters!), the Thai people sue for libel, and Bangkok Triad War

Profiles of companies involved in Thai mass transit in the past

Mae Klong Railway

Siam Electricity Company Ltd.

Bangkok Electricity Authority

<u>Siamese Tramway Company, Ltd.</u> <u>Menam Motor Boat Company, Ltd.</u>

The Paknam Railways

Historic mass transit maps

Dick van der Spek's historic mass transit maps

Lopburi tram map (221kb) – Singapore Steam Tramway (178kb) and Singapore Electric Tramway (208kb)

Ban Buathong Railway map – Paknam 1937 map (693kb) and Bangkok trammap 1930 (559kb) – Railway map (494kb) of Thailand and maps of the Burma-Siam Railway map (114kb) – Greater Bangkok Mass Transit – Past and Future (1.6MB) – Paknam Railway-1958 (807kb) – Mae Klong Railway map (629 kb) – Bangkok Tram map 1950 (176kb)

### Latest Tram News

Tram for Chinatown will be in service this month - The Nation, February, 2009

The project to develop Bangkok's Yaowarat area is more than halfway complete and the "red route" tram service should be running by the end of this month, a senior official said Thursday...



(Photo: Wally Higgins)

Jett of Jettcycles design writes: I just read <u>BANGKOK ELECTRICAL</u> <u>SUPPLY Reprint of The Far Eastern Review, May 1931</u> and I remembered my late father talking about his early memories of the Bangkok trams.

My father grew up in the 1950's and went to school at Assumption boy school on Charoen krung rd. His family lived in a 1920's built shophouse on Songwad rd, which is still standing, and he traveled to school by tram on the Bang Kholaem line each day.

My father had a lot of school-days stories, but my favourite was of the student fights and their unique 1950's approach to them.

As the school was very strict about fighting, students went to great lengths to avoid getting caught fighting on school grounds. Instead, they would catch the Silom line tram to Lumpini Park, which was a perfect venue as it was virtually deserted at the time. But it was on the tram that the tension would mount. The opposing camps would face off on the tram, silently trying to intimidate the opposition. Nobody would say or do anything aggressive due to the strict social order at the time. Plus the students were wearing uniforms bearing the school name.

At the park it was a different story. The couple would fist fight and wrestle while the crowd cheered on. At this point I would always ask my father "who won?" He would tell me with a smile that no one won, "We would fight until we just ran out of breath." My father would always assure me that the fighting pair would end on friendly terms, going their separate ways with a smile. He would always end his stories with "that's how we did it back in the days"

Bangkok Electrical Supply, Far Eastern Review, May 1931

Thanks to Ric for sending this



(Photo: Ryoichi Sakuma)



(Photo: Ryoichi Sakuma)



(Photo: Ryoichi Sakuma)

HO-gauge tram!!! - November 7, 2007

Ryoichi Sakuma writes: I'm happy to show you two Bangkok trams I made in HO gauge (1/87) recently. Every photo on the Bangkok tram has been very useful and helpful for me to make it. I wish 2Bangkok. com will be successful more and more.

#### <u>Charming, tramming Bangkok</u> – Bangkok

Recorder, August 30, 2007

...The first, the Red Line, will open in the next two

weeks, running only on weekends. The tram will start from Hualumphong subway station and go through China Town, Charoen-krung Road and return to Hualumphong.

The second, Yellow Line, will launch in late October, running in the Rattanakosin Old Town area, starting from Wat Phra Kaew and ending at Tha Chang pier...

Bangkok horse trams and the Chinatown gang wars - October 28, 2006

Ric Francis provides the following translated from an old SEC magazine: Probably the most extraordinary event the tramways became involved in was in the early days when they became embroiled in a battle between government troops and a gang of Chinese Mafiosi called the "Ang Yi."

'It' was' early 1889 and, the Trams, which were then still drawn by horses, were used to transport soldiers to suppress the "Ang Yi" gang which controlled what is now the Yan Nawa area. For years the "Ang Yi" had been above the law and terrorised the local residents. But in 1889 the gangs split into two factions and a classic gang war' situation developed.

What was to be the beginning of a showdown between the two gangs -the Tang Kong Si and the Siew Lee Kue – began on June 19, when they declared part of the Charoen Krung Road a "war zone," building huge road blockades out of zinc sheets, removing furniture and whatever they could lay their hands on in preparation for a pitched battle which followed that the same night.

#### Fight

The fight which involved all kind of weapons ranging from simple wooden batons and knives to various types of guns lasted all night and continued the following morning. The casualties mounted until there were at least 20 dead and more than a hundred injured.

As the fight raged on, the situation clearly was beyond the ability of the local police to handle and the troops were called in. And it was no small operation. The soldiers' maneuvers were mapped out during a meeting of the top brass held by Army Operations Department Commander Krom Phraya Panuphandhuvong, the department's ,Ipsp, or General Krom KbuR Narisra Nuwattiwong, Assistant Army Commander-in-Chief Krom' Muen Damrong Rajanuparp and Commodore Phraya Chollayuth Youthin who would provide Jiavy support from the Chao Phya River front.

### **Efficient**

D-Day was set for the next morning of June 21. It was then that the mission planners decided to select the trams to mobilise the ground troops to the "front line," as they represented the only efficient mass transportation system in the city at the time. The trams which were making their regular early morning rounds to Lakmuang terminal were commandeered by the government force and hundreds of troops clambered aboard ready for action.

The tram drivers, upon learning about the mission, volunteered to drive their trams turned-war chariots to the battlefield.

At the clash, site, fierce gunfire erupted when the gangs turned their weapons on the government troops. The bloody battle lasted for five hours before being put to an end with 10 law-breakers killed, 20 wounded and 800 - eight of whom were members of Ang Yi's top echelon - arrested.

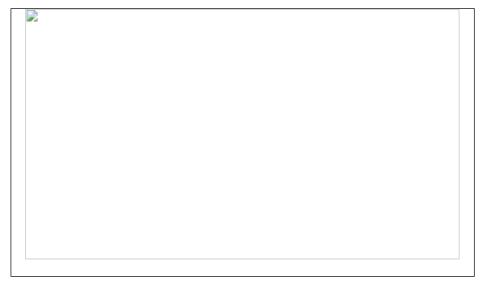
Throughout the battle the trams served the vital function of, providing reinforcements for the government troops at the battle scene. Their role was hailed by both local and foreign 'residents alike.

### Notes on the tram – June 22, 2006

Heinrich writes: While I was browsing today though your pages about Bangkok tram. I

noticed the legend to the very first pic (Bangkok9 jpg?) on this page. It reads: "Probably around Saphan dam area." I don't know, where Saphan Dam exactly is, but this photo is definitely at "Saphan Charoen Rat 31" over Khlong Lod, which is right next to Pak Khlong Talad.

I also found other pictures near that place on your "Daily Tram" pages — September 8, 2004 (Tram-05-mid-way-on-line.jpg?) and The daily tram — September 13, 2004 (Tram-06-crossing-bridge.jpg?) Compare the unique building on the corner behind the bridge. And compare the parapet with the pictures on my page.



Forty. The content of the article is probably what you already know, but the picture is of interest. It shows the subtle differences between the modernised trams, probably with the imported English parts and the local version. The numbers displayed might be expected to be service running numbers, but as they are so obviously posed, they may well represent the tram numbers for the occasion – 203, 17 and 3. Note also that the two modern trams are not fitted with towing gear.



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

Tram 18 info - January 11, 2006

Wisarut comment on the photo we ran at the weekend: ...it is the Yellow Tram line (Bang Kho Laem line) in front of Wat Sam Jin (Wat Trai Mitr), near Odean Circle. This photo must originally be from the National Archives...

Bangkok trams on Google Earth – January 11, 2007

Dick van der Spek writes: On the Google Earth Community I found a Bangkok trammap projected on Google Earth, source: 2Bangkok.com. Very nice to know for our forum friends. 1950 Bangkok Tramway Network

<u>View in</u>

Google Earth View in Google Maps

A 1950 map of Bangkok tramways. Tramlines ringed Rattanakosin Island and peeled out along Rama 4 Road and Sukhumvit. The routes along Rame 4, Rajadamri and Sukhumvit are identical to the more modern rail systems, the BTS and MRT. Plus ca change... Copyright Dick van der Spek (more information on Mr van der Spek and his excellent historical transport maps at www.2bangkok.com)

Tram map and route description (1958) - January 7, 2005

Remembering the trams and the Paknam Railway - December 17, 2005

<u>Tram Photos – 1962</u> – December 7, 2005

Return of the Daily Tram - November 15, 2005

<u>Take a ride through Bangkok on a tram in the 1920s</u> – October 8, 2005 A thread about the footage is <u>here</u>.

Bangkok Tram at the Ministry of Public Health - rotfaithai.com, September 9, 2005

TRAMWAYS et ELECTRICITE de BANGKOK SOCIETE ANONYME - May 21, 2005

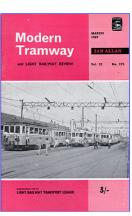
The closing of the Bangkok tramways – January 29, 2005
We recently obtained a copy of *Modern Tramway* (March, 1969) which contains a contemporary account of the closing of the Bangkok tram system in 1968.

<u>Article</u> (186kb) – <u>photos</u> (140kb) – <u>map</u> (55kb)

The last tram sign – September 26, 2004 Bangkok tram stop sign near Wat Chai Chana Songkhram intersection in Chinatown (right and below).







(Photo: 2Bangkok.com) (Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Tram map with stations - September 15, 2004

Ric Francis sent in this great tram map. The undated map came from Robert Sechler in the USA who obtained it in Bangkok from the "Manager of the Tramways." It is a blueprint image in three parts 1 (369kb), 2 (439kb), and 3 (347kb).



(Photo: Dick van der Spek)

### Bangkok Tram map - September 10, 2004

Dick van der Spek created this map of tram routes in 1950, but it is more than that-it is a look at Bangkok's surprisingly comprehensive fixed mass transit routes of the time...

Rusting mass transit - February 23, 2004



(Photo: Terry King)

Tram tracks - November 12, 2003

Terry King writes: I thought that you might find this interesting. The trams are gone, but there are still some tracks to be seen. I found these old tram tracks near the Bangkok City Pillar (Lak Meuang). The building on the left in the photo is the Lak Meuang building. The photo was taken facing east with my back to the Grand Palace. I think that the street is called Thanon Lak Meuang. There may be other tracks around, but these are the first that I have noticed.



(Photo: Charlie Sullivan) Above: Tram #9, circa 1964-65

Wisarut comments on this photo: The tram taken by Mr. Sullivan (Tram # 9) is definitely taken at Phan Fah Intersection (on Ratchadamnoen Avenue). The pinkgrey building is the SAS office in Bangkok. SAS was the partner of Thai Inter when Thai Inter was just starting up. Today that building is home to Deves Insurance PCL (an insurance company in which the Crown Property Bureau is a major shareholder).

Bangkok mulls reviving the electric tram - AFP, November 17, 2003

perennial traffic woes, according to a Sunday report.

New tram video - October 21, 2003

Dr. Volker Wangemann writes: I would like to inform every visitor of 2Bangkok.com who is interested in the history of the Bangkok Tramways, that there is a new video: "TRAMWAY EXOTICA-1: VIETNAM AND THAILAND." It is available for 18 English Pounds from LRTA Publications, 13A The Precinct, Broxbourne EN 10 7 HY, United Kingdom. It includes scenes not only of the classic 4-wheelers of Bangkok (including film from the 1920s), but also the tram and the short-lived trackless trolleys of Hanoi and the veteran AECs of Singapore!



Tram photos from 1906 – September 16, 2003 Ric Francis sent in some frame grabs from a 1906 film of the Bangkok trams.

Trams for Phuket? - The Phuket Gazette, November 22, 2002

Serious consideration is being given to an electric tram service around Phuket... What these studies usually find is that creating a tram system is a lot more expensive and complicated than laymen (and politicians) expect.

Tram maps - October 20, 2002

Check out this old <u>map</u> from the Royal Military Survey Department, Royal Siamese Army (now the Supreme Command Headquarters)



### Bangkok streets in 1959!



Here they are! Stills from the never-before-seen tram footage circa 1959. Wilf Watters of Online Video (no website as of yet) brought the tape from England to show to Dr. Sanpsiri at the Thailand Railway Hall of Fame. The 16mm color film shows various trams gliding through the city, workmen fixing tram wires, the tram depot, and a trip out of Bangkok on a gleaming steam train. Even Dr. Sanpsiri seemed surprised and excited by this wonderful footage. There are plans to collect and issue all the tram footage on one tape. This footage is sharper and clearer than any existing footage of trams in the National Archive.











### Should the Trams Return? – June 17, 2001

Sumet Jumsai, a leading Thai architect recently elected to the Honorary Fellowship of the American Institute of Architects, suggests in a *Nation* article that the trams be brought back as a means of mass transport in the Rattanakosin area. More on the Rattanakosin Island can be found <a href="https://example.com/here-transport-transp

#### Sightseeing on Simulated Trams - February, 2001

BMA has busses painted like the trams of old that drive around Rattanakosin island passing many attractions such as the Ministry of Defence, the Flower Market, Wat Pho, the National Museum, Phra Arthit Road, Banglumpoo and Kaosarn Road. They leave every 30 minutes from the triangular island outside the front gate of the Grand Palace (this is a small sidewalk area where the road turns around Sanam Luang). The bus runs Monday-Sunday (9:00-16:00). Tickets cost 30 baht and the trip takes about half an hour. For more info, see the BMA website (What's the point? The link has already changed!) or call the Bangkok Tourist Bureau, Tel: 225 7612-4.



# Condo row shows no sign of easing up

January 19, 2006

Categories: Property and Development

Condo
row shows no sign of easing up – Bangkok
Post, January 19, 2006
Residents of a prestigious condominium on Rama IV road say the
management is intimidating them and violating their rights. The
disgruntled residents allege that management of Waterford Condominum
Rama IV have barred them from public sites, including parts of the
car park, entrance gate, as well as an area used for storing rubbish...

# MP says PM's joke inappropriate

January 19, 2006

Categories: The Thaksin Years

MP
says PM's joke inappropriate – Bangkok
Post, January 19, 2006
An MP representing the area in which an air force plane crash-landed here yesterday has taken Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to task for saying the pilot who was killed might have been distracted by a huge billboard featuring former premier Banharn Silpa-archa on the ground below. The prime minister made the comment over lunch with members of his cabinet in At Samat district of Roi Et where he is leading an anti-poverty campaign broadcast live on URC cable. he is leading an anti-poverty campaign broadcast live on UBC cable channel 16...

# Activist couple claiming Lao royal blood killed

January 19, 2006 Categories: Laos

Activist
couple claiming Lao royal blood killed –
The Nation, January 19, 2006
...The couple were US citizens from North Carolina. Anouvong
is a Lao native of Vientiane while his wife Oulayvanh is a Thai
native of Nong Khai's Sri Chiang Mai district, and both claim
original royal blood ties from the ancient capital of Luang Phrabang.
They arrived in Thailand a week ago to attend a seminar on the
"Restoration of Lao Culture" in neighbouring Udon Thani...

# Some 15 military officers, civilians arrested

January 20, 2006 Categories: Terrorism

Some 15 military officers, civilians arrested – January 20, 2006

About 100 commando police raided 18 areas in Bangkok and other central provinces Saturday morning and detained some 15 military officers and civilians for questioning regarding the Bangkok bomb attacks on New Year's Eve...

# "Get out" protesters

January 20, 2006

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008



(Photo: Russell)

"Get out" protesters - January 20, 2006 Russell reports that there was a small "mob" on Silom on Friday. He writes: About 20 people wearing "GET OUT" shirts and jackets were handing out flyers in front of CP tower at lunch yesterday. At least as many photojournalists there as well. At one point there were up to 3 policemen there, apparently just seeing what was going on and phoning in their observations, before leaving.

Right: The flyer they were handing out.

 $The flyer \ references \ two \ websites: \underline{www.anticoup-network.org} \ and \ \underline{www.nocoup.org} \ (which \ seems \ to \ be \ the \ alternate \ address \ for \ the \ often$ blocked www.sep19.org)



Earlier: No Friday night "mob" – January 19, 2006
During this time of political tension, Fridays have become a time for rumors. Several readers reported rumors circulating that a protest group (or "mob" as Thais call it) had occupied Silom Road on Friday night, closing the road to traffic. Below is Silom Road at about 19:00-no "mob."



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

# Lucky number license plates for sale

January 20, 2006



Lucky number license plates for sale – January 20, 2006
License plates with "significant" numbers are very valuable in Thailand. Above is an ad in a car magazine for a company that sells such plates. The first section is for single numbers or multiple lucky numbers, then sequential numbers, varied repeats, thousands, two pairs, one pair, etc. The company website is <a href="mailto:thumber.com">thumber.com</a>.

## Suthisarn Road in the past

January 21, 2006

Categories: Communities, History



(Photo: Gary Kay)

**Above:** Suthisarn 39 from Suthisarn Road in 1963.

**Below:** The entrance of Suthisarn Soi 39 in 2006 (compare to the dirt road on the left side of the above photo).



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

**Above:** Suthisarn Soi 39, east-west (this is the road that runs from left to right in the 1963 above)

Suthisarn Road 1963/2006

– January 21, 2006

Gary Kay writes: I just found a page on your web site, 2Bangkok.com, from your September 2004 edition "News and Views" section regarding a photo taken in or around 1963 of Suthisarn Road. You compared a building shown in that photo with that same building shown in a photo taken in September 2004. I am the person who took the "old" photo, probably sometime in 1963.

I was delighted to find this photo and comments from your site. The change in that area from my time of over 40 years ago is simply astounding!

I took that photo standing in a road or street that led from Suthisarn Road down to a house I rented at that time. This dirt road led to a dead end at or near a klong. Your web site identifies the location of the building in the old photo as being across from Soi Inthamara 27 and at Inthamara 24. I have an old map of Bangkok whose date of publication is not known, but it was certainly published after I left Bangkok. I say that because it shows a "superhighway" called Mittaphap Road between Soi Inthamara 31 and 33...

My house was located in an area and on an apparently unnumbered street between Soi Inthamara 27 and Soi Inthamara 29. This road is clearly shown on my old map. I took the photo of the old building on Suthisarn Road while standing in the entrance to this road, which led down to my house. As information, this road went a short distance before taking a sharp right turn, and then another quite short distance before taking a sharp left turn. The road then led to a dead end. My house was located on the left side of the road about four or so houses down after that sharp left turn.



(Photo: Gary Kay)

One other photo that appears with the "old and new" photo described above was also taken by me (above). It is actually a combination of two photos that I took from the balcony of my house. Your site incorrectly identifies this road as Suttisarn Road. In fact, it is that dead end road described above. The house on the far left belonged to my neighbor, a man I knew only as "Don" who worked at Don Muang Airport for—I believe—Thai Airways. As I was leaving Thailand in April 1964, Don met me at the ramp leading up to the aircraft and gave me a Thai silk tie, which I treasure to this day. It was an act of kindness and remembrance that was typical of the Thai people of the early 1960s...



(Photo: Gary Kay)

**Above: 1963 Below: 2004** 

Earlier: Suthisarn Road 1963/2004 – September 18, 2004 When we saw the above photo on the <u>Seri</u>

Court website from 1963, we immediately recognized the old-style two-story shophouse near the present-day Vipahwahdee intersection. It is on Suthisarn Road at Inthamara 24 and directly across from Inthamara 27. It was recently gutted and repainted after years of being in a dilapidated and unpainted state. Strangely, it is now back to the same color it was in 1963. Across the street, there is wooden construction in the 1963 photo and a 30-story building in 2004. However since the present-day street is lined with shophouses, it is impossible to get the edge of the high-rise into the photo.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Also: <u>Last</u> glimpse of Saphan Kwai Market and <u>Saphan</u> Kwai in 1968

# Tourists shun hotels to stay with Thai families

January 21, 2006 Categories: Tourism

Tourists
shun hotels to stay with Thai families – Mail
and Guardian, January 21, 2006
When Brian Hauff came to visit Thailand, he decided against a
resort hotel and joined the increasing number of foreigners who
are staying in the homes of local villagers instead...

# 1956 Topps card

January 21, 2006 Categories: 2Bangkok News



(Source: Topps Flags of the World card, circa 1956 from the 2Bangkok collection)

1956 Topps card– January 21, 2006



(Source: Topps Flags of the World card, circa 1956 from the 2Bangkok collection)

# The Prejudice Map

January 21, 2006 Categories: Uncategorized

The Prejudice Map – January 21, 2006
According to Google, people in the world are known for... Thanks to Thaitronic for pointing this out.

# Thailand and Myanmar open new bridge across border

January 21, 2006 Categories: Border Issues

### **Thailand**

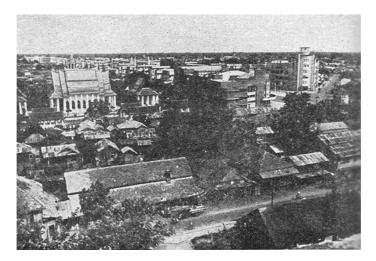
and Myanmar open new bridge across border

- Channel NewsAsia, January 21, 2006

Thailand and Myanmar on Sunday opened a new "friendship bridge" across the Sai River that divides the two neighbours, which Thailand hopes will boost trade with its neighbour and with nearby China...

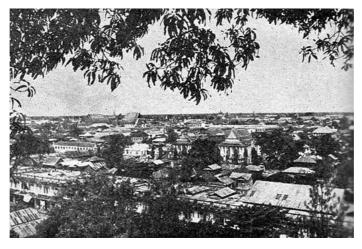
# 1950: Views from the Golden Mount

January 21, 2006 Categories: Old photos and films



(Source: A New Guide to Bangkok, Second Edition, compiled by Kim Korwong and Javid Rangthong, Hatha Dhip Company, 1950)

1950: Views from the Golden Mount – January 21, 2006



(Source: A New Guide to Bangkok, Second Edition, compiled by Kim Korwong and Javid Rangthong, Hatha Dhip Company, 1950)

# New pollution-free tourist destination discovered in southern Thailand

January 22, 2006

Categories: 2Bangkok News

#### New

# 'Huge number of unidentified bodies' in Thailand

January 22, 2006 Categories: 2Bangkok News

'Huge number of unidentified bodies' in Thailand – Asia News Network, January 22, 2006 There may be as many as 100,000 missing people in the records in Thailand accumulated over the past several years, celebrity forensic scientist Porntip Rojanasunan believes...

# Negative headlines: "Thai murder island"

January 23, 2006

Negative headlines: "Thai murder island" – January 23, 2006

Police
suspended on Thai murder island – icWales, January 21, 2006

Three senior police officers on the Thai island where student Katherine Horton was raped and murdered have been suspended from active duty...

Increasing
violence against tourists threatens Thailand's tourism industry – The Straits Times, January 18, 2006

# Sales of adult diapers soar over holiday journeys

January 24, 2006 Categories: China

Sales of adult diapers soar over holiday journeys – chinaview.cn, January 24, 2006

# **Black Metal culture banned**

January 24, 2006 Categories: Malaysia

Black Metal culture banned – The Star, January 24, 2006

# Thai councilman shooting spree

January 25, 2006 Categories: Crime

Thai councilman

shooting spree – Bareknucklepolitics.com, January 25, 2006
Also here: Local

council chairman goes on shooting spree at meeting (has a downloadable video of the event as well)

Shortly after a meeting began, Pongsak Chanchom, chairman of tambon Si Chiang Mai municipal council, drew a .22 calibre pistol and pressed it against the head of mayor Chula Chananto who was sat next to him. Chanchom fired one fatal shot...

### **Chatuchak Weekend Market leasing controversy**

January 26, 2006 Categories: Communities



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Chatuchak Weekend Market

#### Chatuchak Weekend Market leasing controversy

BMA agreeing to clear outstanding debts with SRT – 10% revenue sharing as the only acceptable level – translated and summarized from *Thairath*, January 26, 2006

Chatuchak Weekend Market Director Chaloemchai Khiawprat told the press that they agree with SRT to pay back the outstanding debts from rent to SRT from year 2001 at 50 baht/sq-m/month paid up to December 2005 with a total payment of 27 million baht. However, BMA agrees to pay SRT the rent at 397 baht/sq-m/month. If SRT refuses to accept the pay back at this rate, BMA would offer only 5-10% of revenue sharing instead of 30% revenue sharing as asked by Khun Phanloed Baiyok (Director of the commercial section, SRT Board). The rest would go to keep the branches of Chatuchak Weekend Market at Minburi and Rama 3 (Bangkok Square Market) afloat as well as the internal expenses (hiring personnel and utility bills) and major renovation of the market after 24 years of service. Chatuchak Weekend Market Director said the major renovation is a must since the customers have filed the following complaints to BMA and Chatuchak Weekend Market Board:

- 1) Inadequate and dirty restrooms need to build even more/better restrooms.
- 2) Uncollected garbage that litters the market.
- 3) Blistering heat need water-cooling fans installed around the market
- The first phase of renovation is to be done by the end of April 2006.

SRT board raising the rent and extracting outstanding debts from BMA - translated and summarized from Thaipost, January 17, 2006

The SRT board has changed the rules on leasing SRT land by changing the terms into a partnership and 30% revenue sharing and calling the private sector to bid for SRT leases. The highest bid would get the SRT land concession with a 30-year leasing period.

The leasing hike has been approved by the SRT board and SRT is asking BMA to pay back the outstanding debts from the new leasing rates unpaid for 3 years. Mr. Phanloed Baiyoke (the owner of Baiyoke Tower 1-2)—Chairman of the Board for SRT Land and Asset Development said the SRT board has approved the new rules of leasing SRT land which consists of

- 1) A leasing hike
- 2) 30% revenue sharing in addition to a leasing hike
- 3) This new leasing rule will be applied to the public sector and state enterprises that lease SRT land including Chatuchak Weekend Market of BMA.
- 4) Leasing SRT land by the private sector requires bidding. The highest bidder would get the 30-year concession or even longer.
- 5) The private sector whose contract with SRT has expired would follow the new SRT standard for leasing-at the market rate of the first year of the contract.
- 6) The private sector from giant corporations who lease SRT land would have to pay the lease at the current market prices which are readjustable.
- 7) The new leaseholder of SRT land would have get incentive to develop the vacant land of SRT.
- 8) The public and state enterprise who lease SRT land can be considered as partners and the leasing would be according to the percentage of shareholding. Chatuchak Weekend Market is the first target since BMA has paid SRT only 3 million baht a year even though BMA gets 100 million baht of revenue a year and BMA has leased SRT land for 25 years. Even worse, BMA has not paid the rent to SRT of 3 million baht a year for about 3 years. The SRT land of 200,000 rai would need the new rating along with the new scheme to multiply the revenue at market rates.

 $BMA\ opinions\ on\ the\ Chatuchak\ Weekend\ Market\ leasing\ hike\ issue-translated\ and\ summarized\ from\ \textit{Thairath},\ January\ 17,2006$ 

The correspondent at BMA City Hall has reported about the discussion on the Chatuchak Weekend Market leasing hike issue between the BMA Governor and the Chatuchak Weekend Market Board. They have pointed out the following about the 30% revenue sharing scheme:

Proc.

SRT would write off the outstanding debts from leasing the area for Chatuchak Weekend Market of 30-40 million baht Cons:

- 1) SRT would make a significant grab at the revenue of Chatuchak Weekend Market. BMA has to give away 30 million baht revenue to SRT from the assumed 100 million baht revenue.
- 2) BMA still has to carry the burden on the personnel expenses and the revenue to keep the loss-ridden Chatuchak 2 Weekend Market at Minburi afloat. The revenue sharing would dry up the BMA revenue after paying off the personnel expense and the subsidies of the new weekend market at Minburi despite the fact that BMA has turned the normal weekend market into the well-known market around the world without help from the central government.
- 3) BMA refuses to accept any SRT men who are going to meddle in Chatuchak Weekend Market affairs since SRT is going to send 3-4 men from the SRT board to control the Chatuchak Weekend Market—a third of the Chatuchak Weekend Market board.

Therefore, BMA has come up with the resolution that

- 1) BMA agrees to pay higher rent to SRT from 32 baht/sq-meter/month to 397 baht/sq-meter/month
- 2) BMA refuses to pay the rent at the rate higher than 397 baht/sq-meter/month
- 3) The settlement with SRT would be done by the end of February 2006.

BMA insisting that SRT has no right to modify the leasing contract before expiration – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, January 17, 2006
Deputy BMA Governor Phanit Wikitset told the press that BMA could accept a gradual increase of the leasing rate from the current 32 baht/square-m/month to 50 baht/square-m/month in the first year (BE2545/AD2002) which will become 397 baht/square-m/month in the 6th year (BE2550/AD2007 – the last year of contract)—not a sudden 397 baht/square-m/month rate as requested by the SRT board.

Furthermore, BMA refuses to allow the SRT board to put their men on the Chatuchak Weekend Market board by insisting their independence to run Chatuchak Weekend Market which SRT cannot do because of their bureaucracy. No amount of threats from Chairman Phanloed Bayoke (e.g. terminating the leasing contract before 2007) would force BMA into submission on the Chatuchak Weekend Market leasing controversy. Even if SRT gets the private sector to run Chatuchak

Weekend Market, SRT would have to set up a much higher leasing rate to please the new private sector (which could be TRT cronies) compared to BMA who have built up the fortunes of Chatuchak Weekend Market.

The SRT board of land and asset management must answer to the people how can they have come up with such exorbitant rates of land leasing instead of gradual increasing rates.

BMA would fight against SRT on the Chatuchak Weekend Market issue-fighting at all costs to make SRT accept the BMA scheme for gradual increase of lease payment.

Controversial revenue raising by SRT – translated and summarized from *Prachachart Thurakij*, January 12-15, 2006 and *Thairath*, January 11, 2006 Six companies that are renting Lad Krabang ICD have complained that SRT is going to raise the leasing price from 30 baht/sq-m/month to 84 baht/sq-m/month according to advice from consultants instead of the consent of the customers who rent the space. The customers who rent at Lad Krabang ICD demand only a 50 baht/sq-m/month rate. 84 baht/sq-m/month would compel the company to raise container costs from 1200 baht/box/month to 1700 baht/box/month. Even worst, the continuing red tape and the plan to monopolize the container box moving (570 baht/box) have outraged many shipping companies, prompting the reconsideration to use the container yards at Klong Toei port and ICD at Laem Chabang port instead of Lad Krbang ICD. This would definitely increase traffic jams. The SRT plan to raise the revenue has run into conflict with the government's policy to cut down logistic costs.

Also, the revenue raising scheme at Chatuchak Weekend Market is

- 1) Raising rent from 32 baht/sq-m/month to 397 baht/sq-m/month
- 2) Revenue sharing scheme of 30% from those who rent space at Chatuchak Weekend Market for those who are unwilling to pay higher rent
- 3) Add a representative from SRT to the Chatuchak Weekend Market board so as to define a new policy on the Weekend Market
  Such revenue raising scheme has already outraged both BMA who runs Chatuchak Weekend Market because they thought that increasing the leasing rate would be
  enough for SRT. Furthermore, BMA is handling Chatuchak Weekend Market very well and feel very distrustful of SRT trying to handle Chatuchak Weekend Market
  or other leased space.

# 3-year-old who smokes

January 26, 2006 Categories: 2Bangkok News

<u>3-year-old who smokes</u> – January 26, 2006

# Oishi to expand restaurants, beverages

January 26, 2006

Categories: Food and Drink

#### Oishi

to expand restaurants, beverages – The Nation, January 26, 2006

A reader sends this link and comments: "I've noticed a pattern.
There's a core of occurrences being blamed for EVERYTHING. Now it's bad green-tea sales. This story blames it on, once again, "higher oil prices, bird flu, the aftermath of the tsunami."

"higher oil prices, bird flu, the aftermath of the tsunami."
Did the bottles get swept away, I wonder?"
...Tan said he would like to maintain Oishi green tea's leading position in the domestic market for the next three to five years.
"The total market for bottled green-tea drinks last year was lower than my expectations," said Tan. "There were many negative factors hurting sales, including higher oil prices, bird flu and the aftermath of the tsunami. Plus the government order to all green-tea beverage manufacturers to reduce retail prices led to confusion among consumers about the price of the products," said Tan...

# Anwar sues Mahathir for gay 'slur'

January 27, 2006 Categories: Malaysia

Anwar sues Mahathir for gay 'slur' – BBC, January 27, 2006
...Dr Mahathir repeated the allegation – first made when the two leaders became rivals in 1998 – last September.
"Imagine having a gay prime minister. Nobody would be safe," he said...

# The Rotiboy phenomenon

January 27, 2006



The Rotiboy phenomenon – January 27, 2006

Singapore bakery "Rotiboy Bakery Shoppee" is taking Bangkok by storm as lines of over 100 people form outside the shops day and night to buy pancake and surup-flavored buns.

**Left:** Long line outside the Rotiboy on Silom Road

The <u>Rotiboy website</u> is an annoying Flash-heavy site that explains their "plans for 2004."

# Henry M.

January 27, 2006

Categories: Nothing to do with Thailand, but Interesting

Henry.
M. – Brain Connection, January 27, 2006

Nothing to do with Thailand, but interesting: When twenty-seven year old Henry M. entered the hospital in 1953 for radical brain surgery that was supposed to cure his epilepsy, he was hopeful that the procedure would change his life for the better. Instead, it trapped him in a mental time warp where TV is always a new invention and Truman is forever president. The removal of large sections of his temporal lobes left Henry unable to form any new personal memories, but his tragic loss revolutionized the field of psychology and made "H.M." the most-studied individual in the history of brain research.

# Google vs Google China

January 27, 2006

Google vs Google China - January 27, 2006

Right: Falun Gong on Google.com Below: Falun on Google.cn

 $Google.com - \underline{Falun}$ Gong  $Google.cn - \underline{Falun}$ Gong

Google.com - Tibet independence Google.cn - Tibet independence

Google.com - Taiwan independence Google.cn - Taiwan independence

Truth on "Falun Gong" - www.china.org.cn - [翻译此页 вета]

The Tragedy of Falun Gong Practitioners. Falungong Accused of Intercepting S Signal. Falun Gong Practitioners Jailed for Libeling Gov't. ... Why "Falun Gong" Policies & Laws Case Studies Ideological Education Voice of Repentance ... www.mingjing.org.cn/e-falun/index.htm - 21k - 补充材料 - 网页快照 - 类似网页

Truth on "Falun Gong" - [ 翻译此页 BETA] The Cult of "Falun Gong", Li Hongzhi & "Falun Gong". Falun Gong Evil Falun Gong Members Found in Slander Case, Heretical Cult -- The True Gong. Fooled by Li's false faces. The manipulator doomed. ... Falun Gong www.mingjing.org.cn/e-falun/cult/index.htm - 9k - 补充材料 - <u>网页快服</u>

[www.mingjing.org.cn站内的其它相关信息]

Outlawing Falun Gong Cult - [ 翻译此页 BETA]

Chen Shumin, general manager of a Chongqing-based technology company and Gong cult practitioner, and four other people received ... Teng Chunyan: I Am Pleased to Shake off the Spiritual Shackle of the Falun Gong Cult (11/20/01) ... rww.china-embassy.org/eng/zt/ppflg/default.htm - 47k - 2006年1月24日 - <u>國页</u>

QIANLONG.COM--Beijing Portal--Falun Gong hijacks HK satellite Falun Gong hijacks HK satellite. Beijing Portal 2004-11-23 15:07:40. A Hong Kon based satellite company accused on Sunday the Falun Gong cult, that has been on the Chinese mainland, of hijacking its satellite and disrupting its normal ... www.beijingportal.com.cn/7838/2004/11/23/1821@2387514.htm - 16k - 补充材料

Falun Gong Doctrine Self-contradicted: Practitioner - [ 網译此页 ВЕТА] ... China, Falun Gong Doctrine Self-contradicted: Practitioner. ... However, he cal

(Source: Google.cn)

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After the persecution began, the actual number of Falun Gong practitioners
Falun Gong members has been reparted in the West as a maint ...

(Source: Google.com)

Google.com - Tiananmen Square Google.cn - Tiananmen Square

Google.com - Wang Lixiong (author of Yellow Peril) Google.cn - Wang <u>Lixiong</u> (author of <u>Yellow</u> Peril)

Google.com – <u>democracy</u> in China Google.cn - democracy in China

They missed this one: Google.com - Wang Weilin (the tank man) Google.cn – Wang Weilin (the tank man)

#### Historical Thai Railroads/SRT News 2003-2006

January 28, 2006 Categories: Thai Railroads

Thai Railway/SRT news – Historical Back to the main Thai Railways/SRT page

SRT in 1953 - March 28, 2006

Airlana writes: I recently got a copy of <u>The Railway Magazine (July 1953)</u> which has an article on the State Railways of Thailand... Thai trains reviewed in 1970 – February 15, 2006

page one -

page two -

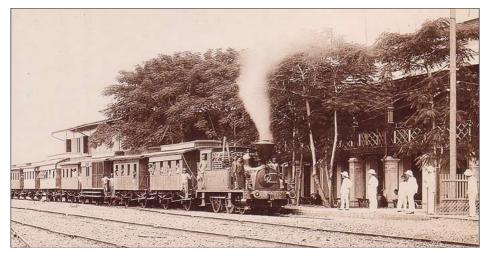
page three -

page four -

page five -

page six -

page seven



Thai train - November 12, 2005

Bangkok-area trains circa 1931 - December 30, 2005

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

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

International Express Bangkok – Prai Departure from Bangkok at 07:40 every Sunday and Wednesday Arrival to Bangkok at 16:50 of every Wednesday and Saturday

Chiang Mai Express Bangkok – Chiang Mai Departure from Bangkok at 16:00 every Sunday and Wednesday Arrival to Bangkok at 09:55 of every Wednesday and Saturday

Regular trains from Bangkok to Phetburi, Rajburi, Nakhon Pathom, Ayutthaya, Lopburi and Chachongsao-going to those places in the morning and going back to Bangkok in the evening of the same days.

Commuter Tram services from Bangkok to Klong Rangsit and other station within Bangkok Circle several times a day.

Bangkok Station is the most important station in all the Royal Siamese Railway, with the clock in front of the station, with the space to park rickshaws and motorcars at separate facilities. Those who ride the tram can make a drop near Bangkok station since there are Tram stops nearby.

Bangkok station and its locomotive depot are as long as Rong Muang road.

Porter fee at the platform is 50 satang/trip or 5 satang/piece (then *Bangkok Daily Mail* cost the reader 5 satang). One baht fee would apply for the luggage over 100 kg—with the cart that carries only one piece of heavy luggage over 100 kg.

Bangkok Noy railway station is near the mouth of Bangkok Noy canal, Thonburi province. It used to be a terminal for all Southern trains until the opening of Rama 6 bridge.

There is a feeder service between Bangkok Noy and Talingchan junction. Those who want to go to Nakhon Pathom, Ban Pong, and Rajburi prefer Bangkok Noy since the tickets are cheaper. There is a commuter tram services between Bangkok Noy and Nokhon Pathom. Those who go from Phra Nakhon side will have to pay 2-3 satang for ferry row from Tha Phrachan pier. Most cargo trains from the South terminated at Bangkok Noy.

Bangsue Station is at the end of Techawanit Road near Siam Cement Co. Ltd. It will become a very important junction and a great station since the trains from the Northeast, North, and South meet at this station. Bangsue will have the main loco shed along with a railway yard gathering the passenger/cargo carriages and other railway facilities.

Special Royal station is on Sawankhaloke road, near Chitladda Palace. It has been named "Chitladda Royal Station." This special station is for His Majesty for the royal train trips and it will be the station for royal guests from abroad.

Makkasan station is the main RSR factory and maintenance center with a branch line to Maenam station at Chong Nonsee to receive the materials for RSR and for cargo to the port.

The facilities to receive rice and paddy from Paknam Pho and other places will be at Bang Son station near Rama 6 bridge so they can send the rice to the oceangoing ships at Mae Nam by using a steam crane. This is the reason why there is cargo service between Bang Son and Mae Nam.

Railway from Paknam Railway Co Ltd. The terminal is at Hua Lamphong Rama 4 road, not far from Bangkok station. It takes an hour for trams from Hua Lamphong to Pak Nam with the price tag of 50 satang. The tracks and trams (along with the old trains) looks very well-maintained

Mae Klong railway has a terminal at Pak Klong San, Thonburi province, opposite to Klong Phadung Krung Kasem (the new city moat). This line ends up at Tha Chin (Mahachai market, Samut Sakhon). There is a ferry to goes to another train that goes to Mae Klong. Those who live in Thachin used this line to carry fish and other seafood to Bangkok. The track from Pak Klong San would pass the fruit orchards all the way to Talad Ploo (the main community in Thonburi). This track would pass Pak Klong San District, Bang Yee Ruea district, Bukkalo district, and Bang Khun Thian district of Thon Buri. The electrified track is from Pakklong San to Wang Singh.

Those who live in central Bangkok or northern Bangkok should ride the boat from Ratchawonse pier to Talad Pool before connecting with Mahachai railway since it is cheaper and more convenient to go from Ratchawonse pier than from Si Phraya pier.

Bang Bua Thong railway is the narrow gauge railway with a terminal at Wat Boworn Mongkhon, opposite to the northern mouth of Phadung Krungkasem (Thewet). The tracks pass orchards to Bang Plad district, Talingchan district of Thonburi and Bang kruay district, Bang Yai district, all the way to Bang Bua Thong (Talad Phra Phimon) with an extension to Rahaeng Commune of Lad Lumkaeo district, Pathumthani. This has a branch line to Bang Yai and Nonthaburi (Bang Seethong Pier). There are several trains from Wat Lignkhob to Bang Bauthong Bangyai, Rahaeng and Nonthaburi while there is a cargo train from Nonthaburi to Lad Lumkaeo via Bang Buathong.

#### Thai sugar mills - November 4, 2005

Wisarut provides the following about sugar mills and locomotives in Thailand: For the case of Kyosan locomotives that ended up at sugar plantation (The steam engine on this page.), I think it should become a locomotive to transport tin ore in Phang-Nga or Phuket .....

The first industrialized sugar mill in Thailand was founded at Lampang in 1937 and the second industrialized sugar mill in Thailand was founded at Uttaradit in 1942. Both were state enterprise mills.

In 1942, the Government at that time founded Thai Industry Promotion Co. Ltd. as a state enterprise. The company purchased both Bang Buathong Railways (Bang Yeekhan – Nonthaburi and Bang Yai – Lad Lum Kaeo) and Tharuea Railways Co. Ltd. (Tha Rua – Phraphutthabat) on July 29, 1942 (requested on July 16, 1942) since the owners of both companies said the were no longer be able to carry the burden from the operational loss. Therefore, 60-cm gauge locomotives from both companies ended up at sugar mills!

Even though there are sugar mills around Thailand, most of them are in Kanchanaburi, Lampang, Kalasin, Chonburi, or Ratchaburi. It's unlikely that there would be any sugar mill in Songkla—even though there is a possible sugar plantation in Phatthalung... Nevertheless, I believe that some part of the sugar plantation belonged to the Faculty of Agro-Industry, Prince of Songkla University.

#### Transit history notes: Relocation of Bangkok Terminal to Bangsue in 1959 – September 24, 2005

Wisarut provides these transit history notes: Royal State Railway had expropriated large land plots from farmers around Bangsue in 1941 and during the 1950s around Chatuchak-Ladphrao to prepare for the future relocation of Bangkok Terminal. There was a committee for the relocation of Bangkok Terminal to Bangsue in 1959. However, the committee was dissolved in 1964 after the demise of Premier Sarit since there was strong demands to keep Hualamphong alive and well as the terminal

#### Transit history notes: Financial report of Paknam Railway company in 1925 – September 23, 2005

Wisarut provides these transit history notes: The Financial Report of Paknam Railway Company in 1925 says that the company purchased the first set of electric rolling stock and related equipment for the price of 9,080 baht in 1925. The electrification of Paknam Railway and Thachin section of Mae Klong Railway (Klongsarn – Wat Sai) was approved by King Vajiravut in 1921, but the discussion about the plan to purchase the equipment for electrification of Paknam Railway was not started until September 25, 1925. The economic downturn after WWI dragged the electrification project down. A similar situation occurred with the electrification of Mae Klong Railway (Tahchin section).

### Transit history notes: Electrification of Railways – September 24, 2005

Wisarut provides these transit history notes: The Royal State Railway proposed the electrification of railways in 1927-1929 (Bangkok – Rangsit, Bangsue – Talingchan, Bangkok Noy – Talingchan, Bangkok – Maenam, Bangkok – Makkasan – Chachoengsao). However the estimated cost for electrification was enormous and diesel locomotives had proved to be a good alternative to the steam engine locomotives. Therefore, the electrification project was frozen since then.

Info from the National Archives shows that Maeklong Railway even planned to electrify the section from Wat Singh to Bangbon (2 km). This was approved by Prince Boriphat (a regent when King Prajadhipok and Queen Rambhaibannee were visiting USA) in 1931. However, further electrification beyond Wat Singh could not materialize even though the company did make a profit on the line.

#### Transit history notes: Phraphutthabat Railway – September 21, 2005

Wisarut provides these transit history notes: The 100 Year Thai Railways mentions the Phraphutthabat Railway. It was opened for service in 1902 from Tha Rua Station of Ayutthaya to Phraphuttabat District of Saraburi to facilitate those who make a pilgrimage to Phraphutthabat (Buddha's Footprint), Saraburi. The Royal Siamese Railway passed only Saraburi provincial district and Kaeng Khoi, but not Phraphuttabat. Therefore Prince Narathip (the owner of the Red line tramway) decided to set up a rail track to Phraphuttabat. Tharuea Railway (the company running Phraphuttabat Railway) signed a concession with the Royal State Railway around 1922 so as to follow the Railways and Highways Act of BE 2464 (1921). The concession was to expire January 1, 1958. However, the WWII changed all of that since Mom Luang Nitiyaport sent a letter to the Minister of Transportation on July 16, 1942 for the cessation of Tha Rua Railway when the service become unprofitable after Phaholyothin Road has expanded to Lopburi (passing Phraphuttabat district). There were five stations along the railway line from Tha Ruea to Phraphuttabat.

#### Out to raise a sunken train - The Nation, April 14, 2005

Denizens of Ratchaburi may soon witness a Japanese steam-engine locomotive rise from its watery grave – if, that is, the attempt to retrieve the World War II-era train does not undermine Chulalongkorn Bridge...

Suchart went on to say his divers had taken pictures of the submerged train wreck. Subsequent inspection ascertained it was a Japanese model C56, with the locomotive and carriages lying close to each other...

### All about Chachongsao Line - March 29, 2005

Wisarut writes: I just dug into the archives and found a book about the Opening of Chachongsao Line (Printed in 1933)...

### All about Chachongsao Line - March 29, 2005

Wisarut writes: I just dug into the archives and found a book about the Opening of Chachongsao Line (Printed in 1933).

The construction of Eastern railway to Chachongsao started in Ror Sor 124 (AD 1905). Opening date was January 24, Ror Sor 126 (Now AD 1908).

So fan I found the list of station as follows:

So far, I found the list of station as follows:

- 1) Bangkok
- 2) Bang Krasan (now Makkasan)
- 3) Klong Saen Saeb (now gone and Klong Tan Station is a replacement originally a halt, upgraded later to Station Class 3)
- 4) Ban Hua Mark (now Hua Mark)
- 5) Ban Thub Chang
- 6) Klong Thee Song (now gone and Lad Krabang station is a replacement)
- 7) Hua Takhe
- 8) Klong Luang Phaeng
- 9) Klong Preng (AKA Klong Phraya Decho station, now Preng station)

10) Klong Bang Phra

11) Muang Chachongsao (AKA Paed Riew Station)

The inaugural trip started from Bangkok at 9:48:58am and it reached Muang Chachongsao station (AKA Paed Riew Station) at 11:00am.

The total distance from Bangkok to Chachongsao (AKA Paed Riew) is 63.4 km.

The price of land purchased by Railway Dept – 29 baht/rai (at the day 1 GBP = 11-13 baht) -> total 45,000 baht.

Rail type: Standard Gauge - 25 kg/meter.

The Railway Dept used rice husk as the core of the track bed with clay and mud to cover the rice husk and ballast will cover the clay and mud later. The price of the track bed is 500,000 baht.

There were two wooden bridges, 10 iron bridges with the pillars made from bricks and some iron bridges with steel pillars and Railway Dept covered the steel pillars with cement later on.

Sleepers came from from Khorat and Ballast came from Pak Priaw (Saraburi) and Chong Khae (Chong Khae district of Saraburi).

Only Chachongsao Station had brick buildings with roofs made from ceramic tiles with loco shed and a turntable as well as a resting place for loco drivers and officers of the maintenance section.

The Railway Department ordered 16 locos, 1 inspection car, and 85 good bogies from Prussia. Furthermore, 73 passengers cars were imported from Britain and 180 rice bogies from Belgium.

Total construction costs: 3.2 million baht (51000 baht/km)

There was a single trip from Bangkok to Chachongsao and another return trip from Chachongsao to Bangkok.

Note: 1) Saen Saeb canal station was in Nakhon Khuenkhan Province (The Phra Khanong and Klong Tan area was in the jurisdiction of Nakhon Khueankhan province).

2) Klong Thee Song (Second Canal) was in Minburi province.

Also: I got the info from the 50 Year Thai Railway (Published by Railway Dept in 1947) that Khun Tan Tunnel was originally designed for standard gauge so after regauging into meter gauge, there was a space left inside the tunnel.

Engine from Japanese WWII military train to be recovered - Bangkok Post, February 19, 2005

After six decades lying under water, a locomotive from a Japanese military-owned train that was bombed by the Allies during World War II will be retrieved from the Mae Klong river in Muang district and put on display as a tourist attraction...



(Photo: Nils)

Working steam locos – January 22, 2005

Nils reports: From December 4-6 we were in Kanchanaburi once again, and that trip finally provided me with the opportunity to see Thai steam locomotives in action for the first time. After arriving (by minibus) near to the train station, I was taking some pictures of the Garrett type loco that is plinthed in front of the station, when suddenly I heard the sound of a steam whistle! I ran towards the platforms and became witness of the arrival of two fully operational steam locomotives which subsequently carried out some shunting manoeuvres and refilled their water supplies.

These two locos were part of the activities for the annual River Kwai Festival and were used in the Sound and Light Show at the bridge that we watched later that evening...

Do you know something about these two locos no. 713 and 715 used for the River Kwai Festival Light and Sound Show at the beginning of December? Such as manufacturer (certainly Japanese make), type, year, usage history, where are they kept now?

Wisarut explains: It is C56 Mogul wheel (2-6-0) produced by Hitachi. There are 164 locos of C 56 type produced by Hitachi from 1935 to 1942 and the first 90 locos are regauged and sent into the SEA battlefields some were lost and only 46 locos of C56 type were retrieved.

C56 locos were very popular for both driver crews and maintenance staffs alike. The only catch is due to the limited size of water reserve (10 cubic meters) and small tender necessitates water stops and wood resupply en route. C56 locos are almost always kept in Thonburi sheds.

Look at C56 photo taken by Moh Rakphongse (a physician from Kanchanaburi-the head of Thai Railfan Club).

For the case of Garatte, this type of locos had been used in the section between Kaeng Khoi to Pak Chong (55 km)—one of the most troublesome section of the Thai railway due to steep hill (26 mill). RSR had used the powerful 0-10-10 Hanomag loco for this section before, but the result was not very satisfactory. So in 1929, RSR had to order six Garatte locos (No. 451-456) from Henschel for this troublesome section after observing the successful function of Garatte in Burma and India. Even though the first batch worked pretty well, the the firebox is too modest for the hill section and requires lots of water and firewood.

The second batch (No 457-458) ordered in 1936 were a much improved version of Garatte due to increased firewood and water capacity and an enormous firebox. However, Garatte class is not a very popular class for Thai railway workers since it requires heavy firewood and water so no further orders for Garatte. They just reduced the loading for Kaeng Khoi to Pakchong section so as to run the standard Mikado steam locos ordered from Japan (from 1936 to 1951). After the 1950's, SRT retired those Garatte once more diesel locos were available as a replacement.

This 457 Garatte loco was stationed in Kaeng Khoi until its retirement in 1964. Later on, it was moved to be preserved at Bangsue until Thai Railfan discovered that it was in a very sorry state of preservation. Therefore, this loco was moved to Kanchanaburi which has more open space to show locos to the public than Bangsue which is off-limits to the public.



(Photo: Nils)

Bang Buathong Railway in 1930 - January 19, 2005

Wisarut provides background for a historic railway for 2Bangkok.com historic map buffs: Here is a <u>scanned map of Bang Buathong Railway in 1930</u> (873kb) from the National Archives. The line intersects with Southern Railway at Bang Bumru station. Note that the line has reached Wat Rahaeng, Lad Lumkaeo district of Pathum Thani even though Phraya Woraphongsephiphat (the founder of Bang Buathong Railway) wished that his railway would eventually reach Suphan Buri to enable Suphanburi people to link with the rest of the country by land. At that time the only transportation to Suphanburi was by boat from Thatian up stream to pass Lan The (near Bang Sai) and then connect with the place where Chao Phraya and Thachin has branched out—taking about two days to reach Suphanburi. Now, there is a railway to Suphanburi, but sadly there is only one trip to Suphanburi and one trip back to Bangkok. SRT is planning to turn the section from Nong Pladuk to Suphanburi. Only 2-3 passengers ride all the way to Suphanburi. Highways constructed by the company run by former PM Banharn Silpaacha are the big killers for the Nong Pladuk-Suphanburi line.

#### Railroad routes extended - January 8, 2005

Wisarut reports: The Southern Thai Railfan says that the railway from Ban Thung Pho was extended from Khirirat Nikhom to Ban Takhun because the railhead has been extended to Khao Phanom Benja. However, the section from Khirirat nikhom to Khao Phanom Benja is sunk in Ratchaprapha Dam...

Thai railway models - January 5, 2005

Thai railway workers at Ban Phachi Junction have customized model trains to look like Thai trains.

Kwai track question - November 10, 2004

Nils asks: Why are there 4 rails on the River Kwai Bridge (right)? Is that a mixed gauge? But it is only like this on the bridge! The inner rails end at the bridge head.

(Photo: Nils)

Old train photos - July 10, 2004

Wisarut found Khuntum's selection of historic Thai Railway photos along with his own photographs taken as he rides bicycle along the rails.

Fate of the Meaklong Railway locomotives - May 11, 2004

Tales of obscure SRT stations – April 20, 2004

writes: There are lots of anecdotes and stories from the time I was there (1988-1990). I was closely involved in the development of the Sattahip to Bangkok freight service, and in anything else freight related at that time.

As a starter, I once was taken on a 7 day guided tour of freight locations in Southern Thailand. The highlight for me was a trip to Kiri Rathanikhom. We started from Surat Thani and used a taxi which was a huge American car from the sixties. It rained heavily the whole way. The rain started dripping onto me and my Thai railway colleague through the broken rear window. We used the Bangkok Post rolled up to channel the water away from us and down the loudspeaker housing on the rear shelf of the car, much to my colleague's amusement.

Because of the rain, it was dark. Darker still as most of the journey was through deep rubber plantations. The roads were flooded, and driving through the red mud was like driving through thick tomato soup, with the car swinging across the road from side to side.

Eventually we got to a small amphur, with a new bank and a few houses. We found the station and woke up the station manager, who, unusually for SRT, was in his vest rather than a smart uniform. To say he was astonished to see us would be an understatement. My colleague was asked to sign the station record to say that he had visited – apparently the first railway manager for many years!

Kiri is served by a single passenger train each day – which we missed seeing. It also has a small freight terminal for timber which is hardly ever used. It appears to be a remnant of SRT's ambitions to serve Phuket. But at least I can say I have been there...

2Bangkok.com regular Reiner responds: I have been there, too...

Some time last year I decided that I wanted to go as close as possible by rail to Phuket. On 22nd May we set out on the daylight special express diesel railcar no.43 to Surat Thani. The 2-car Daewoo(APD 2537,2541), well serviced, left Hua Lamphong punctually at 07:45, for arrival Surat Thani at 16:20. The one and only train to Khiri Ratthanikom was to depart at 16:55. Fearful of SRT's not always strict schedule-keeping, we sought reassurance that the connecting train would wait for us. No, it will not, was the answer and that was an indication to the volume of long distance travellers changing at Surath to Khiri. In fact there were probably none, except for our small party on this day. Fears were groundless; no.43 arrived perfectly in time and found Henschel no. 3015 with 4 BTC (Bogie,trailer,3rd class) waiting for departure.

It gradually filled, practically to capacity, with an assortment of school-children and students, and seats, if not occupied by passengers, were packed with school bags. Few were other than students, but all seemed to know each other – except for

those strangers – where were they going to and why? Khiri Ratthanikom??? I counted a total of 7 or 8 intermediate stops after Ban Thung Pho Jct were the line branches off at km 631 of the Southern Line. 3rd stop – Bankanai – many off, say my records and

5th stop – big pig next to the platform; one boarding passenger – and then the train went on through thick vegetation and insufficiently cut tree branches which scraped the cars, for a total of 31,765 km.

Khiri Ratthanikom prides a classical; wooden station building, a long passing loop and friendly SRT staff who were wondering what, at 6 o'clock in the evening, we were up to. Hotel? No hotels in this village and next and only train back at 6 next morning. Prior to accommodation concerns were

at 6 o'clock in the evening, we were up to. Hotel? No hotels in this village and next and only train back at 6 next morning. Prior to accommodation concerns were worries about nightfall before we could see the end of the line and what would be beyond the end... The station master meantime kindly showed us the sanitary facilities of the station and offered to sweep the wooden floor

in one of the rooms for us to spend the night unless finding something "better". – I had been intrigued by several maps showing the line extending beyond Khiri for at least another 20 km near to a place called Ban Thakun. Beyond the buffer we found, indeed,

track extending into the unknown of undergrowth, crossing a gravel road (underneath the gravel) and continuing beyond sight.

The "better" solution for the night was a songteow to Ban Thakun, not the least in the vague and eventually disappointed hope of finding the "real" end of the line, possibly close to the road to Egat's facilities at Ratchaprapha/Chieo Lem Dam.

No public transport is provided between no. 401 highway from Surat Thani and the reservoir; no songteows vie for passengers. A friendly Egat-official helped us to and fro and even guided us to a wonderful tour of the lake. Why does SRT not make better use of their line, including the last 20 km, and allow visitors an easy access to the lake and the associated Khao Sok National Park?

Construction of the line, supposed to ultimately reaching Phuket, commenced in 1952 (or 1951?), and was under way in 1953 over 83.340 km from Tung Pho to Thanun. A preliminary survey had been budgeted for the extension to Phuket province. Total expenses incurred to date were THB 26,156,990.25. By the end of fiscal year BE2498(1955) THB 35,814,093.12 had been spend

but there had been no budget grant during that year and 4,691,261.30 came out of SRT's own coffers. In 1978 SRT's annual report lists 31,765 km "under operation". What happened to the missing 52 km? Why were about 20 km built but never used? Why

can we still reach neither Phangnga nor Phuket by train? Why are 32km of track maintained and operated by one train a day with a locomotive and 4 cars at 8 Baht per full-paying passengers (but there were practically only concession fares on board) and that in one or the other form probably for the last 50 years, or so? SRT-enigma! Who knows more?

Distance (km)	Station
2.3	Sala Deng (Saladaeng)
5.2	Klong Toi (Klong Toei)
7.1	Ban Kluei (Ban Kruay)
8.9	Prakonong (Phrakhanong)
10.5	Bangdjak (Bang Chak)
12.0	Bang Na
14.8	Samrong
17.3	Chorakhe
18.8	Bang Nang Greng (Bang Nangkreng)
20.0	Mahawong (Mahawongse)
21.3	Paknam

Paknam Railway Stations in 1916 – April 20, 2004 Wisarut writes: I got this list of Paknam Railway Stations from the National Achieves. This one is from 1916. There were two additional intermediate stations before nationalization on September 12, 1936. Stops only at the request of the passengers Only 4 trips from Bangkok to Paknam and another 4 trips from Paknam to Bangkok from 6am to 6pm. Also, the trains can depart from the station 5 minutes ahead of schedule.

Foundation stone of Paknam Railway Station - April 8, 2004

Wisarut reports: SRT workers feel very angry at Uncle Sanphasiri (the founder of Railway Hall of Fame and Thai Railfan) since he has not returned the foundation stone to make the terminal of Paknam Railway Station. I would suggest uncle Sanphasiri to make a replica of the Foundation Stone before returning it to SRT so that SRT could put it in the permanent Railway Museum.

SRT to open three railway museums in Bangkok - translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from Transport Journal, March 1-7, 2004

- 1) the second floor of the Main Building of Thonburi Station (now transferred to Siriraj Hospital)
- 2) Hua Lamphong
- 3) The area around The Railway Library, SRT School of Engineering (Building 11, Railway Park).

After the three railway museums are set up in Bangkok, SRT will set up the provincial Railway Museums in Chaingmai, Hat Yai, Kanchanaburi, and Ayutthaya.

Wor Waen signs - February 24, 2004

Wisarut recently explained in the forum what the 'Wor Waen' signs along railroad tracks mean: If you see the sign "Wor" during the railway trip, that is the sign to indicate a whistle should be blown.

There are different kinds of Wor Waen signs.

- 1) The first one Wor Waen on a white circular sign of 2 feet in diameter common locomotive whistle. Look at the old dilapidated <u>Hatyai-Songkla line</u> as the example (photo right).
- 2) The second type <u>long whistle</u> for a crossing without a block to prevent cars from passing.
- 3) The third type for a <u>crossing with a block</u>, but no traffic light.
- 4) The fourth type for a crossing with a block and a traffic light.
- 5) The fifth type the rarest -> for a crossing with a block and only a railway traffic light.

Wor Waen is letter "W" in Thai alphabet. It is a short name for "whood rotfai" (railway whistle).



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Hualampong monument - February 13, 2004

Phatraphon Uno sent in this photo (right) of the monument at Hualampong that marks the birthplace of rail transport in Thailand (end of the platform 6-7).



(Photo: Phatraphon Uno)

All about the delivery of locomotives to Thailand in the 1950's - January 26, 2004



C.Thomas Wagner, from Kassel, Germany writes: I have recently come across the two diesels built by Henschel (mfr. nos. 25404 & 25405, filling up war- lost order nos.) for this "outer suburban" light railway system in 1956, delivered 1957, and designated SRT "D1" (and presumably "D2"); and in hope someone of both your audience will remember them, I do submit the attached digital copy (85kb) of a 46-year-old local press clipping from Friday, 28 December, 1956, of the local Kassel press.

It reports about the test delivery of a blue-liveried lightweight diesel- hydraulic locomotive of "prairie" axle arrangement to the second Kassel suburban tramway system, running at metre-gauge in contrast to Kassel's city trams.

I would generally refer to the info by following quotation: "BANGKOK's other suburban line, the Meklong Railway, connected the Thon Buri section of Bangkok on the west bank of the Chao Phraya River with the town of Ma Klong. The 34 km route was divided into two unconnected sections by the Meklong River at the fishing village of Maha Chai. The eastern section of the line was electrified in 1926-27 after the company was purchased by the government. It was de-electrified in 1955."

Herkulesbahn tramway was built in 1902 to convey lignite and basalt rock lumps from mines and quarries of the western local hills to the Kassel-Wilhelmshoehe freight station. It operated electrically from the very beginning, and started passenger operation in 1903, conveying passengers to the "Herkules" monument on the hills west of Kassel. 1924 marks the introduction of regenerative braking on freight trams, which saved 25% of electricity thanks to the load direction being downhill. Suffering lack of investment and modernization since being taken over by City tramways in 1927 (the normal rail-killing "investment jam"), the line closed for freight in 1961, and for passengers in 1966.

Kassel's Henschel locomotive works (now a subsidiary of Bombardier Rail Transport division) had established a long-standing customer relationship with Siamese railways since 1910, always delivering modern technology to Thai metals, as Garratt steam in 1929, diesel- electric bogie units in 1930, 1947, and 1950 (in cooperation with Brown-Boveri, Sulzer, and Oerlikon, of Switzerland). Late in 1956, the order by SRT for two novel lightweight 440-hp MAN-powered diesel-hydraulic locomotives had taken shape in the Kassel production sites, and with the units being somewhat novel in having side-rods, yet no jackshaft whatsoever, there was a desire to have them tested under load prior to delivery to the customers, who were known to have very tight specification rules for commissioning trials. With the Swiss "Rhetian Railways" (RhB, test site for the preceding heavier RSR diesel-electric mainline locos) unavailable, and German metre-gauge either decrepit, in the then-Soviet Eastern part, or already shut down, the second Kassel tramway system "Herkulesbahn" was the straw to rescue the situation. This line was commissioned as a "Light Railway", not a "Tramway", so running a railway loco wasn't a problem for authorities. On 27 December, 1956, a road lorry with a "lowboy" carrier trailer conveyed the blue (Henschel- liveried) loco to the roadside near the Herkulesbahn depot, to unload it via temporary and run trials overnight. I have no indication that the steep final incline to the "Herkules" monument (permitted for passenger trains only) was included in the trials, but the line was suitable for an axle load of 9 tonnes (metr.) and had been built not only to accommodate 2.4 m wide domestic rolling stock, but also with lateral clearances of 1.5 metres between any lineside obstacle and the track axis. Wires were high enough to permit 4.8 m high vehicles (i.e. the steeple- cab freight motors). Thus, the SRT Meklong Railway "D1" could have felt instantly "at home". Quarry trailers might have provided a suitable load – 50 tonnes

I wonder if any of the two locomotives still exists, or how they fared. Somewhat sad to learn that they seem to have "helped" in de-electrification of the "Meklong" railway line.

The positioning of the hydraulic transmission is yet to be clarified. Normally, a cardan shaft from the diesel crankshaft drives the Voith torque converter, which was / is directly linked to the reverse and maybe the fast/slow transmission gearboxes, who then propel the jackshaft, or later, the cardan shaft(s) linking to the angular gearboxes of the bogies (as proved to be the case with the 1964 delivery of Henschel's RSR class 3000- locos 3001 – 3027). In these lightweight "DH 400 IC1" "prairie diesels" the propulsion shaft off the reverse gearbox must have driven pinion and spur gears in turn driving one of the rod- coupled centre wheelsets. I deem it unlikely that a hollow shaft with flexible drives embraced one of the axles, yet permit vertical misalignment due to deflection of the suspension. Rather, the entire gearbox may have been resting on that axle as the propulsion shaft proper, and thus considerably increase the "unsprung mass" (bad for the tracks & pointwork). However, I am prepared to learn more of the locomotives, as no-one in Kassel seems to remember them.

There is literature (Henschel-Lokomotive-Pocketbook 1960, pp.453, 508) confirming the data as given in the German text, as 7 m (2+3+2) m wheelbase, 33.4 t operable tare weight, 7 tonnes max. axle load, 6 t on pilot axles, 914 mm driving wheel diam.; 440 hp MAN 8-cyl. turbocharged 1100 rpm diesel, 540 L fuel cpy., 55 km/h (34.2 mph) max. speed, 63 kN max. tractive effort, 90 metres minimum radius. Previously, Deutz of Cologne had built a similar lightweight unit in 1950 for Sri Lanka, but for 762 mm-gauge.

I personally did not witness the Kassel scene, and have only recently been sent a digital copy of the press clipping, which had been collected by deceased local enthusiast F.Schoentaube. By contrast, there are still lots of reminiscences of the RSR class 3000, which did comprise lots of standard German Federal Railways loco parts, and indeed were test-run on special 4ft, 8.5in standard-gauge bogies towing real 1200- tonne freight trains, instead of a class 44 decapod steamer.

### Related link: A trip on the Macklong Commuter

More on the D1 & D2 locomotives - January 27, 2004

Wisarut comments: I would like to tell Herrn. Wagner that both D1 and D2 Diesel-Hydrolic Locomotives are gone for good. The last time the author of Railways of Thailand saw these locomotives at Maeklong shed was in 1987. However, both of them disappeared in 1989. The 72-Year Thai Railway book (published by the defunct SRT Press in 1970) said that the electric tram from Klong Sarn to Wat Sai was shortened to Wongwian Yai on January 1, 1961 and then the tram on railway tracks (Wongwian Yai – Wat Sai) was gone for good after the cabinet resolution on December 19, 1961.

Now the Tokyu DMUs have taken over the task of those old diesel locomotives on the Mae Klong line. I hope that after the construction of the bridge from Maha Phruttharam to Lad Ya, an elevated railway line connecting Hua Lamphong and Wongwian Yai together could be constructed too to help modernize Mae Klong Railway (at least the Mahachai section).

SRT wallpaper – January 26, 2004

Some interesting shots-including the former Thonburi Station.

Thai railway links - November 6, 2003 Wisarut points out the following: The locomotives and Bogeys of Thai Railways
Terminals of Thai Railway Networks – and the old Steam Locomotives
The Terminals – Junctions

Back to the main Thai Railways/SRT page

# The Suvanabhumi Airport news 2002-2006

January 28, 2006

Categories: Airports and Airlines

Bangkok Airport Watch - Older news (2002-2006)

See the Latest News page for more info.

Lego model - December 29, 2006

From The Nation: A Lego staff <u>uses lego pieces to build Suvannabhumi Airport model</u> on Thursday. The model will be displayed at a luxurious department store during the New Year festival.

#### Take-off from Suvarnabhumi - December 19, 2006

Shane writes: I'm a big fan of 2Bangkok.com! I recorded a video clip from inside a small plane taking off from Suvarnabhumi last week, fantastic view of Suvarnabhumi. It's on youtube; I thought you might like to post a link to it from your site, maybe some of your visitors would like to see it. The flight was from Bangkok to Hua Hin, the landing is up there too. Take Off – Landing

Suvarnabhumi: Bogged down in Bangkok - Official Airline Guides, December 19, 2006

Few airports can have been unveiled in the wake of more chaos and confusion than Thailand's Suvarnabhumi. After a muddied history...

#### Don Muang may be re-opened: official - Agence France-Presse, December 21, 2006

...Chiaisak Angkasuwan, director general of the civil aviation department, said there was a chance commercial flights would resume at Don Muang airport because of unsolved problems at Suvarnabhumi, which means 'golden land' in Thai.

"We are considering reopening Don Muang airport as problems at Suvarnabhumi airport have yet to be resolved due to poor management," said Chiaisak.

"Don Muang could be reopened for domestic flights and those of low-cost airlines, but I could not say when," he told AFP...

#### New airport faces partial shutdown - Mistakes, graft found in almost all contracts - Bangkok Post, December 25, 2006

Poor construction at Suvarnabhumi may force parts of the new airport to be shut down for repairs. This would open the way for the recently abandoned Don Muang airport to be re-opened to serve Bangkok's air traffic needs...

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#### An appalling case of neglect - Bangkok Post, December 16, 2006

...But no praise is due to those who skimped on such modern-day necessities as attending to the needs of disabled passengers, many of them tourists. The opinions and recommendations made by representatives of the disabled during the airport design and construction phases appear to have been largely ignored. This is in total contrast to the disabled-friendly subway system where everyone worked together and succeeded in getting it right.

...The Association of the Disabled of Thailand predicts the airport will fail its first big test when the country hosts the 9th Asian ParaGames next year if faults are not fixed in time. They may well be because attitudes have changed since the coup and efforts are now being made to rectify all the costly blunders that could so easily have been avoided...

"Call to close Bangkok's new airport as problems mount" - MICE/BTN, December 15, 2006

Hundreds of cabbies blocked the taxi terminal at Suvarnabhumi Airport last night in protest at a police arrest and ticketing of a driver. As many as 300 police were deployed to the protest – The Nation, November 26, 2006



(Photo: Jerry)

Towing vehicles at the new airport – November 25, 2006

Jerry reports: Many moaners on the forum complaining about airport security guard corruption, but yesterday I was very happy to see security guards actively removing cars parked in front of departures using three recovery vehicles. Why they even allowed the driver to get out and lock the car in the first place, is another story! Picture attached. Also found a very cheap and comfortable place to rest, eat and drink at the terminal...on level one at the very left end of the terminal. The food court inside on level one at the right end is usually overcrowded. Another good place to eat is Puff & Pie at the bus terminal...but closes at 5pm.

Airport not fit to open 'officially' for six months - Bangkok Post, November 18, 2006

Bangkok airport experiences severe birthing pains - IHT, November 12, 2006

..."I hear so many complaints from my clients I don't know where to begin," said Onsuma Prompong, 38, the owner of the Tour Agency Travel Corner. "The most common are the crowding in the check-in areas, delays in check-ins and this marathon walk passengers have to endure when they're trying to reach the plane.

"Dirty toilets are also a big concern," she said. That is, when travelers can find a toilet.

Every new airport, especially one as big as Suvarnabhumi, which has the world's largest single terminal, has teething problems.

But while some of the problems at the airport are being addressed, others will be more difficult to fix, such as the overcrowding, which is a "structural restriction resulting from the design," Raveewan said...

#### More toilets for new Thai airport - CNN, October 24, 2006

...The sprawling Suvarnabhumi International Airport only has some 100 toilets for the more than 100,000 daily passengers, sparking frustration and anger among those having to stand in long lines.

"We are aware of this burden on the passengers and I have ordered a quick resolution to this problem by ordering the building of 200 more toilets...

"I guarantee that by then passengers and visitors to the airport will find convenient relief," Chotisak said...

#### Rail line to join with Airport Link urged - Bangkok Post, October 27, 2006

...According to Mr Opas, the Don Muang-Phaya Thai rail link is part of the state's Red Line train project that will stretch from Rangsit via Phaya Thai to Maha Chai in Samut Sakhon, and from Taling Chan via Phaya Thai to Makkasan.

The 32km route is estimated to cost 40.6 billion baht, and to serve 700,000 passengers a day when completed.

The advisory council will also push for two other "much needed" electric railways: the Purple Line, 23km long from Bang Yai to Bang Sue and the Blue Line, 27km long from Hua Lamphong to Bang Khae, and from Bang Sue to Tha Phra. Both lines are estimated to cost 103 billion baht altogether...

#### Letter: Ecological, environmental and social impact of airport – The Nation, October 26, 2006

I am a Thai citizen with a business based in Thailand. I travel a lot during the course of my work and, having seen most airports round the world, have a collection of pleasant tales and horror stories similar to those I have been following in The Nation about our new airport...

#### Trip report: Flight into Bangkok - October 24, 2006

Robert writes: You might like to link to this report on 2Bangkok.com. The report is written by an Emirates Airlines 777 captain after his DXB-BKK-HKG-BKK-DXB flights last week.

His comments, at some length, on BKK's new airport are spot on! It is also a great read – these guys do work some pretty dreadful hours!



Moving - Krungthep Turakit, September 28, 2006

Moving: A caravan of trucks move things from Don Muang airport on the circle ring road to Suwannabhumi airport that formally opened today.

First day at the new airport - September 28, 2006

Airport ready to open - September 27, 2006

Busy? I'll show you busy, says Thai airport boss - Reuters, September 27, 2006

...The move, which involves shifting 1.8 million pieces of equipment — much of it the space of a few hours — across the sprawling metropolis, is being billed as one of the largest logistical operations in aviation history.

"Busy? I'll show you busy," he told Reuters at a recent business lunch before removing six mobile phones from his pockets and lining them up on the table.

"This one is for my friends, this one for my staff, this one for my customers and this one for ministers. This one is the prime minister and this one my wife. If I don't answer the last one, that's when I get big trouble," he said...

<u>A Thaksin legacy: Thailand's new airport comes with political baggage</u> – IHT, September 26, 2006 Thanks to Danny for pointing this out.

### <u>Eerie experience interrupts rite</u> – Bangkok Post, September 24, 2006

... Yesterday's rite was presided over by 99 monks who chanted en masse to improve the luck of the new airport, set to open commercially on Thursday. However, halfway through the rite, a man appeared, quivering, and began to speak in a commanding voice claiming to be "Poo Ming", a guardian spirit of the land partially developed into the airport.

He ordered that a proper spirit house be built at the airport to allow for its smooth operation. The man, who was unidentified, later passed out and woke up to find the spirit had left him...

Some veiled figures have sometimes been spotted on the 6km-long road..

"Whatever you make of it, it is the belief associated with the Thai way of life. For the non-believer, it is best not to act disrespectfully," he said.

# Popular eating spot to close with Don Muang - Rent at new facility 'multiplied 150 times' - Bangkok Post, September 19, 2006

...She said many customers tried to talk her into moving to the new airport, set to officially open on Sept 28, but the rent would be stratospheric. Mrs Kruem pays 1,000 baht a month in rent at Don Muang train station. The rent at Suvarnabhumi would be more than 150,000 baht...

### Trouble spots identified at the new airport - Bangkok Post, September 18, 2006

...The potential danger spots include the car park building and its walkway leading to the terminal's third floor, revolving doors, sharp-edged air-conditioners fixed on the floor, escalators, and the slippery marble floor at the departure area for out-bound passengers.

...Although the lines are beautiful and make it look like a "see-through" building, the safety of drivers has been brought into question because if they reverse their cars carelessly they could plunge to the ground.

...An unusually "large space" was also seen at the corner of the walkway, which is again fenced by an aluminium structure and slings. It connects the car park building and the terminal's third floor. The space is too wide and would put the life of small children in danger if they were around as they could accidentally fall through it...

#### Bangkok's airport faces nervous start - BBC, September 14, 2006

Anyone travelling to Bangkok from the end of September will find themselves flying not into the dilapidated old airport at Don Muang, but into a brand new, state-

of-the art airport situated 25km east of the capital...

The politics of Suvarnabhumi Airport - The Nation, September 13, 2006

Airport info - September 14, 2006

From an Amcham report: Current plans call for full international service at Suvarnabhumi beginning September 29. These dates are subject to change. Suvarnabhumi will inherit Don Muang's "BKK" international airport code and Don Muang will be recoded as "DBK". Therefore, travelers are strongly encouraged to reconfirm destinations with airlines if your travel falls on or near these dates. Information on the new airport can be found at: <a href="https://www.bangkokairportonline.com">www.bangkokairportonline.com</a>

Students' safety 'risked in rush to open airport' - The Nation, September 7, 2006

..."Siriwat said each time the institute consulted the government about other possible effects, it would simply set up a committee which failed to take any action. He said the formation of more than 100 committees had failed to solve the problems..."



Airport protest - Krungtep Turakit, September 6, 2006

Left: The sign says "A great airport, but the habitants "are in trouble"

Photo caption reads: Ask for promise: Member of Suwannapoom Service cooperative Ltd. gathered in front of government house to ask a promise be kept. The government promised to more than 2500 families that when the government asked them to move from Nong Ngoohao and will give work for them in Suwannapoom airport. But until now the airport nearly opens and they have not been called to work as promised.

No fanfare for Don Muang close - TNA, September 4, 2006

There will be no major ceremonies for Don Muang International Airport when it closes on September 27 after more than eight decades of service...

Airport fiasco an embarrassment - The Nation, August 11, 2006

Thai's labour union is right to resist the dangerous demands of an unstable political leader...



Suvannabhumi transportation guidelines – August 11, 2006  $\underline{\text{Pdf}}$  (1.44MB)

Thai airport security tight - Bangkok Post, August 11, 2006

Increased security was ordered yesterday at all international airports across Thailand. Airports of Thailand managing director Chotesak Artpawiriya said hand scanners were being used in addition to regular measures. At Don Muang airport military dogs were posted at entrances to search for explosives...

New Bangkok Airport Location and Opening Date Confirmation - etravelblackboard.com, August 09, 2006

...Novotel Suvarnabhumi Airport Hotel is only a five minute walk from Bangkok's new international airport... The current rack rate for this hotel is 7200.00 ++ Hotels Near The New Airport – SC Park Hotel, Novotel Bangna, Royal Princess Srinakarin...

Global experts say new airport is ready - Bangkok Post, August 10, 2006

Suvarnabhumi airport will be able to open on Sept 28, the date targeted by the government, but only for a limited amount of air traffic, according to the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)...

Pilot takes fright after 'no airport' warning comes up – Bangkok Post, August 10, 2006

New airport to take local flights from Sept 15 - The Nation, August 8, 2006

Airport bus routes - August 8, 2006

Opening of Thailand's new airport worries airlines - Financial Times, August 3, 2006

Suthin Kongchoodi, a 33-year-old hospital maintenance worker, travelled six hours by bus from north-eastern Thailand to Bangkok last weekend for a chance to gawk at the capital's \$3.7bn Suvarnabhumi International Airport...

New uses for an old airport - Bangkok Post, August 2, 2006

'Don't play if you don't want to pay,' AoT president tells carriers - Bangkok Post, August 1, 2006

... "If you are so unhappy (with airport charges), simply don't come," AoT president Chotisak Asapaviriya said in response to complaints by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) about the 15% rise in landing and parking charges at Bangkok's new airport.
"Stop intimidating us through the media and passing on half-truths to the public," he said in an interview...

Airport has 'high risk' areas - Bangkok Post, July 28, 2006

Risk, what risk? - The Nation, July 29, 2006

...Somsak's sturt marks a desperate attempt to reassure the public that Bangkok's new airport, scheduled to receive paying passengers for the first time today, is ready for operation...

Deadline confirmed for new airport's full operation - Bangkok Post, July 22, 2006

AOT leaves new airport buildings uninsured - The Nation, July 21, 2006

#### Airport to get certified, but for what? - The Nation, July 17, 2006

...According to Chaisak Angsuwan, the director-general of the DCA, it is not the ICAO's mandate to issue such certificates, but the organisation three years ago set new guidelines that can be used by member governments to conduct their own certifications.

Somchai Sawasdeepon, general manager of Suvarnabhumi Airport, said: "Technically, we do not need to have any international certification to operate

Fingers crossed for airport move - Stickman Weekly, July 9, 2006

Stickman's column has some interesting notes about the new airport: ... Concerned about glitches in the opening of Suvaranbhumi, Hans discussed other Asian airport openings. The Kuala Lumpur Airport, designed for about half the passengers as Suvaranbhumi, opened 10 days after the disastrous opening of the Hong Kong International Airport. Hong Kong news coverage allowed the problems at KL to go relatively unnoticed. Of note, however, on opening day of the KL airport, 25% of the staff did not show up because they thought there would be too many problems to deal with. Hans also explained that the baggage handling system is really the key to successful airport operations. The new Bangkok airport will be tested July 27 when volunteer passengers will be used to simulate operations.

#### AFP graphic about the new airport - July 2, 2006

...world's largest single building...

#### Suvarnabhumi gets interim code - Bangkok Post, July 6, 2006

To the international aviation industry, Suvarnabhumi airport will soon be known under the code-name NBK while Bangkok's international airport moves from Don Muang to the new site.

The code will be used for a period after the hoped-for opening of Suvarnabhumi airport for commercial services on Sept 28, until operations run smoothly. Then the IATA code for the 125-billion-baht new airport will be changed to the designated name for Bangkok's international airport-BKK-which is currently used by Don Muang airport.

Don Muang is being stripped of the BKK code as it will no longer serve as Bangkok's international airport after the much-delayed Suvarnabhumi opens... Reservation slips for the inaugural commercial flights from Don Muang to Suvarnabhumi on July 29 will be BKK-NBK...

#### <u>Industry hopes for smooth opening – Don Muang airport decision welcomed</u> – Bangkok Post, June 22, 2006

Although airlines remain sceptical about whether Suvarnabhumi airport will be ready for commercial use on Sept 28, they have welcomed the government's decision to close Don Muang airport. Airlines and industry groups contacted by the Bangkok Post were not convinced that the new airport would open when scheduled and warned that rushing operations could result in costs and embarrassment for the country...

Cabinet approves plan for Maha Nakhon Suvarnabhumi - TNA, June 20, 2006

Exclusive airport link construction photos - June, 2006

#### Test flights for new airport set on July 29 - Bangkok Post, June 9, 2006

Thailand's domestic and budget carriers will conduct test flights in and out of the new Suvarnabhumi airport on July 29. Airlines, including Bangkok Airways, Nok Air, One-Two-Go, PB Air and Thai AirAsia, yesterday agreed to take part in the drill as politicians and authorities set their sights on opening the airport on Sept 28 after numerous delays...

Authorities indicated earlier that Don Muang would remain open for domestic, low-cost and charter flights...

Suvarnabhumi Airport set to open on Sept 28 - TNA, June 8, 2006

Bangkok's new Suvarnabhumi Airport is now set to open for commercial purposes on September 28, the Transport Ministry announced here on Wednesday...

#### Airport lift for Bangkok - AP, May 26, 2006

The Thai government is aiming to open Bangkok's new international airport by September after a rush to mend troubles from a leaking roof and runway cracks...

Thaksin says Suvarnabhumi will open no later than September - The Nation, May 26, 2006 Suvarnabhumi Airport to open before October - TNA, May 25, 2006 Caretaker Transport Minister Pongsak Raktapongpaisal on Wednesday confirmed that Bangkok's new Suvarnabhumi Airport would be opened for commercial services before the high season would begin in October...

Opening date of Suvarnabhumi Airport to be announced in June - TNA, May 16, 2006

#### Democrat calls on Govt to set exact opening date of Suvarnabhumi airport - The Nation, May 7, 2006

The Democrat Party Sunday called on the government to set exact opening date of the Suvarnabhumi International Airport.

Democrat spokesman Ong-arj Klampaibool said the uncertainty of the airport's opening had affected confidence of representative of international airlines. Ong-arj said confusion occurred after Deputy Transport Minister Gen Chaiyanan Charoensiri had said the airport's construction could not be finished in time for the initial opening schedule in June or July while Transport Minister Pongsak Ruktapongpisal and acting caretaker Prime Minister Chidchai Vanasatidya said the airport would be opened as initially scheduled.

### Airport to open in August 'at latest' - Bangkok Post, May 3, 2006

The much-delayed Suvarnabhumi airport will open in August at the latest, caretaker Deputy Prime Minister Chidchai Wannasathit said yesterday. "The government will announce the exact opening date in June," he said...

Tale of two newspapers

#### Suvarnabhumi Airport to be opened in July as scheduled: Chidchai - The Nation, April 28, 2006

... Chidchai said the new airport would be opened in July as scheduled...

'A tale of two newspapers' archives

#### Delays foreseen in opening of new airport - TNA, April 29, 2006

Caretaker Deputy Transport Minister Gen. Chainant Charoensiri has expressed his concern that a planned opening of Suvarnabhumi international airport this July could be delayed due to extensive repairs on the passenger terminal and of roofing fabric on concourse buildings...

### IATA urges Thailand to delay opening – Bangkok Post, April 16, 2006

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has urged Thailand to postpone the opening of Suvarnabhumi airport from around early July to December, citing problems by member airlines in entering a passenger building to set up their service systems...

#### Mystery over fate of Don Muang - Bangkok Post, April 11, 2006

..Mr Pongsak yesterday indicated that all air-transport activities, except chartered flights, at Don Muang would be moved to Suvarnabhumi, east of the capital. The statement contradicted his words on Saturday, when he said Don Muang would continue to cater for domestic and chartered flights, while the 125-billion-baht new airport would serve international flights and other air services..

### Suvarnabhumi Airport to open for commercial use by year end - TNA, April 6, 2006

Bangkok's new Suvarnabhumi International Airport will be operable by the end of 2007 though later than originally understood...

#### Airport won't open in June - The Nation, April 3, 2006

Suvarnabhumi Airport is unlikely to be ready to begin commercial operations in June, Deputy Transport Minister General Chaiyanan Charoensiri said Monday. Chaiyanan said work was still to be completed in several parts of the terminal, including the roof, ahead of a comprehensive safety test to be carried out by the International Civil Aviation Organisation...

#### Bangkok's new Suvarnabhumi airport seven months from completion - TNA, April 3, 2006

It will take at least seven months to give the finishing touches to the Thai capital's new Suvarnabhumi airport, Deputy Transport Minister Chainant Charoensiri said Monday.

It is impossible for the Suvarnabhumi airport to be opened commercially in June as earlier scheduled as an added seven months is still needed for testing systems and to complete unfinished work such as furnishing about 200 shops in the passenger terminals, Gen. Chainun said.

In addition, the specialised heavy-duty canvas used to cover the roof needed repairing and it would take about seven months, he said...

# <u>Airlines skeptical of airport's launch date</u> – IHT, March 16, 2006

Despite repeated assurances from Airports of Thailand (AoT) officials that Suvarnabhumi International Airport will be operational in June, executives of international airlines said the multibillion-dollar airport is more likely to open by the end of the year...

#### PM reaffirms Suvarnabhumi Airport to open late June - TNA, January 28, 2006

#### New Bangkok airport to open on time despite fire - TNA, January 19, 2006

Bangkok's new Suvarnabhumi International Airport will open for commercial use in June as scheduled despite a fire at a flight catering building of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited (THAI) inside the airport Wednesday evening, Transport Minister Pongsak Raktapongpaisal said...

#### Cost-cutting causes peeling on runway - Bangkok Post, January 19, 2006

Repairs are needed to the southern end of the west runway at Suvarnabhumi airport which has begun to peel because of cost-cutting during construction, and Deputy Transport Minister Chainant Charoensiri has launched an inquiry. Gen Chainant said yesterday he had assigned Bancha Pattanaporn, acting president of Airports of Thailand (AOT), to have the runway section repaired and improved to the same high specifications of the remainder of the surface...

#### Free flow: Can new Thai airport deliver the goods? - International Herald Tribune, January 18, 2006

...Future clients of the airport say that with the all-new facility, Suvarnabhumi's managers, Airports of Thailand, have an opportunity to start afresh with services that are efficient and cost-effective by world standards, unlike Don Muang, where efficiency was undermined by a lack of transparency and decisions made on the fly...

#### SUVARNABHUMI FIRE: Hundreds flee airport blaze - The Nation, January 19, 2006

And Cracks found in western runway - The Nation, January 19, 2006

#### Suvarnabhumi Airport to be ready for use in 180 days: PM - The Nation, December 28, 2005

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said Wednesday that he would inform all airlines that the Survanarbhumi International Airport will be ready for use in 180 days ...

#### Need for full testing may push opening beyond June target - Bangkok Post, December 22, 2005

The opening of Suvarnabhumi airport, now tentatively set for June next year, could be further delayed until all systems have been thoroughly tested. Transport Minister Pongsak Raktapongpaisal said yesterday the construction of the airport in Samut Prakan was almost finished, but he could not say for certain whether it would open in June...

### Official opening of new Suvarnabhumi Airport likely to postpone - TNA, December 22, 2005

The government has not yet set the exact date for the official opening of Bangkok's new international airport, the Suvarnabhumi Airport, as the airport's inauguration for commercial purposes is likely to be postponed from June 2006, the Ministry of Transport announced here on Wednesday...

#### 'CRACKED' RUNWAY REPORT: Source had link to ruling party - The Nation, December 21, 2005

Fired 'Bangkok Post' editor says cousin of top TRT figure fed him information; sues for Bt13m damages and return of job...

#### New Bangkok Airport AIMS testing to be complete in April - TNA, December 1, 2005

The overall testing of the new Suvarnabhumi Airport's administrative and information management system (AIMS) is expected to be complete by April next year, two months prior to the official opening to commercial traffic set in June, according to Airport Director Somchai Sawasdeepol...

### Government urged not to rush airport - Fate of Don Muang to be decided today - Bangkok Post, November 24, 2005

..."It would more realistic to assume that the new Bangkok international airport is ready toward the end of next year or early in 2007," said Dr Virabongsa, who is also a board member of the Bangkok Airways.

...Prime Minister Thaksin is due to have the final say on recommendations for Don Muang's role today...

# Minister concerned by construction delays at Suvarnabhumi Airport - TNA, November 19, 2005

...Gen. Chainant promised to fully exercise his mandate to push for completion o the Suvarnabhumi Airport within the timeframe set by the government so that the airport could be opened by mid-2006 as announced by the Thai government.

"The scheduled opening for commercial purposes of the airport is the government policy which must be met," he stressed...

#### SUVARNABHUMI FRESH DELAYS HIT AIRPORT - Opening may be put off again - TNA, October 27, 2005

...Mr Thaksin admitted yesterday the AIMS was delayed, but said contractors insisted it could be accelerated to meet the June deadline. Gen Chainant said the AIMS was a major concern as the software was still being written.

#### OVERDRIVE: Suvarnabhumi paean proves prophetic - The Nation, October 21, 2005

Photos from the airport 'opening' - October 8, 2005

Victor writes: I found some pictures of the "soft-opening" flight on Sept. 29th, on this architecture forum. They've got some pretty sweet pics!

#### Thai PM opens unfinished airport - BBC, 2005

... This extravagant spectacle was organised on the orders of Prime Minister Thaksin, because he had promised the country that the airport would be completed by Thursday.

The expanses of bare concrete, unsurfaced roads and half finished buildings told a different story though.

Even the government now concedes the airport will not be ready to handle commercial flights until June next year...

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.

No kind word for the new airport – September 30, 2005

The Nation has several articles about the airport's soft opening—all with an extremely negative spin. Post has a tough editorial...

# SUVARNABHUMI'S SOFT LAUNCH: Airport passes 'test' – The Nation, September 30, 2005

Thaksin dodges tough questions as controversy-plagued facility is unveiled to the world with gala ceremony

Suvarnabhumi Inter-national Airport passed another significant milestone in its controversial history yesterday when its inaugural test flight — which Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra turned into a major publicity stunt — landed safely. The "soft launch" of the incomplete airport, plagued by massive corruption charges and arguably the world's longest-running project of its kind, reportedly cost taxpayers in the vicinity of Bt10 million.

When asked by a BBC reporter why the government had to organise yesterday's event to "test" the airport now, Thaksin replied: "I didn't expect this sort of question from the BBC..."

EDITORIAL: Premature bash for new airport – The Nation, September 30, 2005

# OVERDRIVE: The Guinness world records of Suvarnabhumi – The Nation, September 30, 2005

...Suvarnabhumi has the world's largest runway, capable of accommodating any size of aircraft that Boeing or Airbus plans to manufacture. Another equally controversial emergency decree will be issued to bar vendors from selling their food along the new airport's runway...

# STREET WISE: PM's 'coolie' remark chafes – The Nation, September 30, 2005

Yesterday, everyone involved in the Suvarnabhumi Airport development had every reason to be jubilant, and no one had a bigger grin than Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

Even though he had the Thai refugee issue on his mind, he was in a buoyant mood. As the airport construction is nearing completion, he thanked everybody, "Last but not least," he said, "I also have to thank the 'coolies' – those who worked so hard in the construction..."

# PM praises new airport — Suvarnabhumi 'can match any in world' — Bangkok Post, September 30, 2005

...When asked by a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) reporter what the purpose of yesterday's exercise was, as the airport was still a long way from being completed, Mr Thaksin appeared a little upset.

"I don't expect this kind of question from the BBC. But I will explain, anyway. We needed to set a date so that the work could be finished as soon as possible. "If we didn't set a date, the schedule would slip further behind and this would have cost the country more ... We set today so that everyone had a goal, so that they could work actively," he added...

# <u>Punters look to airport test for lucky numbers</u> – Bangkok Post, September 30, 2005

Thais were glued to the television yesterday to watch the landing and take-off trial at Suvarnabhumi airport, in the hope it would yield lucky numbers for tomorrow's lottery draw. "People called me to book numbers 929, 919, 29, 92, 992 and 229 or those numbers backwards. I think major bookies might have to suspend the booking or pay winners only half of full prizes," a major bookmaker said...

Media given chance to see scanners in action – Bangkok Post, September 30, 2005

<u>Bullets prey on mind of THAI's test pilot</u> – Bangkok Post, September 30, 2005 ... Capt Norahat said THAI feared for the safety of passengers on the flight because of the troubles in the South. Consequently, six Royal Thai Air Force F16s were deployed to provide protection at both the front and rear of the airplane ...

A publicity stunt just to save face—Bangkok Post, September 30, 2005
...In preparation, both the French—and American-made aircraft had done test
runs over two days. That means eight trips to Suvarnabhumi and another eight
trips back to base. Sixteen trips by high-powered passenger aircraft belonging
to the national flag carrier and fighter planes of the Royal Thai Air Force burn
a lot of petrol on taxpayer money. That made no sense when a test flight has to
be made six months before the commercial opening...

<u>Successful landing gives big boost – But experts warn against rush to open – Bangkok Post, September 30, 2005</u>



(Photo: Manager)

Thai Humor: Egrets vs. the vultures - September 30, 2005

Poojadkuan jokes: Nong Ngoohao – The head of cattle egrets submitted a letter to Minister Pongsak begging him not to chase them from the airport and said the vultures are more of a danger. If he wants to chase he has to use the same standard and no discrimination because they (the cattle egrets) have lived there for a long time.

More Poojadkuan columns

### TNA's take on the airport opening

PM's inaugural flight successfully lands on Suvarnabhumi Airport – TNA, September 29, 2005 Thailand to welcome the New Year at Suvarnabhumi Airport – TNA, September 29, 2005

#### Set for take-off - The Nation, September 28, 2005

...It was an awkward moment that reflected the overall anxiety at the airport ahead of tomorrow's "first technical flight" by Thaksin and hundreds of honoured guests aboard an Airbus 340-600. Members of the press will board a separate flight from Don Muang to Suvarnabhumi Airport on a Boeing 747-400. Although the new airport won't be commercially operational until next year, airport staff are still eager to ensure a perfect landing.

Originally, the government planned to open the airport for commercial use from tomorrow to mark the fifth anniversary of the bestowing of its auspicious name,

Suvarnabhumi (meaning "golden land") by His Majesty the King on September 29, 2000. But delays have forced the Thaksin government to scale down tomorrow's ceremony from a grand opening to a simpler ceremony marking the first technical flight...

First plane lands at Suvarnabhumi Airport – Bangkok Post, 1:40pm, September 27, 2005

Post reports: The first plane lands at Suvarnabhumi Airport – Thai Airways Airbus 340-600 practising Thursday's planned flight to carry Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

#### Rehearsal of inaugural flight at Suvarnabhumi Airport successful - TNA, September 27, 2005

...On the inaugural flight, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra will lead his cabinet members to board the THAI Airbus 340-600 aircraft, named Watana Nakhon, to leave the Don Muang Airport at 8:29 a.m. to land on the Suvarnabhumi Airport's eastern runway at 9:09 a.m. on September 29.

Journalists will be invited aboard a THAI Boeing 747-400 aircraft to land at the airport's western runway.

The prime minister will walk through Gate E1 to a passenger terminal...

### <u>Suvarnabhumi Airport lesson for mega-projects</u> – TNA, September 27, 2005

...Mr. Sripoom, now President of the Aviation Industry Association of Thailand, said that design and construction of the Suvarnabhumi International Airport had been so time-consuming and riddled with numerous changes that business opportunities had been lost and hundreds of million baht in funding wasted...

PM confident Suvarnabhumi Airport to open by June next year - TNA, September 27, 2005

#### Suvarnabhumi Airport opening-June '06 - The Nation, September 15, 2005

Bangkok's new Suwarnabhumi international airport will open for commercial operations in June of next year at the earliest and October at the latest, Transport Minister Pongsak Raktapongpaisal said Thursday...

#### All set for new Bangkok airport inaugural flight - TNA, September 6, 2005

...Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra will be aboard the first aircraft to land. His Airbus 340-600 is due to arrive at 0939 on September 29th. A planeload of journalists and other media representatives will follow in a Boeing 747...

#### NBIA opts for 'Scenario Two' - Homes to southeast to get worst airport noise - Bangkok Post, September 2, 2005

...Under the selected scenario, the north end of the western and eastern runways will be mainly used for landings.

The south end of the eastern runway will be primarily used for takeoffs. The south end of the western runway, meanwhile, will be left idle.

This means people living southeast of the airport will be hardest hit by aircraft noise as a plane's takeoff creates a much louder noise than the landing...

#### World leaders to be invited to airport opening – The Nation, August 25, 2005

... Thaksin will preside over the initial trial flight. He and his entourage will be passengers aboard a THAI Airbus A340-600 departing from Don Muang Airport that morning. The aircraft will fly over the Central Plains and land on Suvarnabhumi Airport's eastern runway.

The group will be processed through Immigration and Customs and out into the arrival area. They will then return to the aircraft, undergoing standard boarding procedures, and then fly back to Don Muang...

#### Construction of Suvarnabhumi Airport to be accelerated - TNA, August 4, 2005

...He admitted finding that the airport's construction was about 8 months behind schedule since the beginning...

### Opening of Suvarnabhumi Airport to be delayed by 6-8 months - The Nation, July 28, 2005

Prime Minister Thaksin Thursday admitted that Suvarnabhumi Airport will miss its scheduled September opening by 6 to 8 months.

The delay is due to landscaping and road links into and around the airport, Thaksin said...

#### PM threatens to blacklist airport contractors for delay - The Nation, July 27, 2005

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra on Wednesday threatened to blacklist contractors from future government projects if Bangkok's long-delayed new international airport is not finished within two months...

# Airport could be delayed a year - Bangkok Post, July 23, 2005

Construction work which is behind schedule could delay the opening of Suvarnabhumi airport for a year to September next year at the latest, a source at New Bangkok International Airport Co (NBIA) said yesterday...

But Mr Suriya still expected construction to be finished by Sept 29 this year as planned...

#### New airport a hub of graft? - Bangkok Post, July 22, 2005

The multi-billion-baht Suvarnabhumi Airport project which is due to be completed in September continues to be dogged by corruption scandals. With the controversy over CTX bomb detectors still fresh in the memory of the public, a new scandal has emerged about another important airport facility and, this time, it implicates a sibling of the Shinawatra family.

Democrat MP Alongkorn Polabutr has publicly accused Mrs Yaowaret Shinawatra, a sister of Prime Minister Thaksin, of receiving 25 million baht in kickback from Rush Fur Thai Company, allegedly in exchange for helping the firm win a contract to build a car park at the new airport...

#### Suvarnabhumi Airport at Don Muang - July 18, 2005

Nils writes: Here is a model of Suvarnabhumi Airport as seen in Don Muang's domestic terminal.



(Photo: Nils)



(Photo: Nils)

# Firms face fines as new airport is delayed – The Nation, June 27, 2005

Construction of the Suvarnabhumi Airport has been delayed by 6.95 per cent as of April, an Airport of Thailand Plc source said yesterday.

Nine construction contractors face being fined for the delay including ITO group, which is responsible for the construction of passenger buildings worth Bt15 billion. Construction was scheduled for completion on March 31 but has been delayed by 9.26 per cent due to hold-ups with interior decoration and the security system as well as passenger-bags checking...

# CTX scandal delays construction of new Bangkok airport - TNA, June 27, 2005

The overall construction of the New Bangkok International Airport (NBIA), or Suvarnabhumi Airport, as at the end of April 2005 is almost 7% behind schedule

partly because of the CTX bribery scandal, according to a source at Airports of Thailand Co., Ltd. (AOT)...

#### Just don't ask when? - Bangkok Post, June 3, 2005

...Thai Airways International's president Kanok Abhiradee yesterday fell victim to the international press after a meeting of the Star Alliance chief executive's board in Nagova, Japan.

Journalists fired salvoes of questions at the THAI president about the opening, originally slated for September 29 this year.

Indeed, they deserve to know the date, given that the government is touting the airport as the cornerstone of Thailand's transformation into a regional aviation hub... Kanok initially confirmed fears that the opening may be postponed. And so reporters turned their attention to the next obvious line of questioning: When will the airport open?

Faced with that stickler, Kanok offered no comments of substance.

"The opening date remains what the government said. If there are any changes, the government will make an official announcement itself," Kanok said.

But the reporters didn't stop there; they pursued the matter along the lines of whether Thai Airways envisaged any possible revenue disruptions as a result of further delays.

"We are ready and will be ready to move to Suvarnabhumi whenever it is ready. If it's not ready, we can still operate at Don Muang . It won't affect our operations," he said.

Well, that certainly didn't answer the question. It seems nobody knows when the airport is going to open.

But one thing is certain: "When?" is a question that no one feels confident about answering.

#### Scanner scandal may delay new airport's opening - TNA, May 29, 2005

...Meanwhile, aviation officials have expressed concern that a delay in the opening of the new international airport could affect Thai Airways International business and allow Singapore's Changi Airport to become the region's aviation hub.

...Only sixty percent of the work on the terminal has been completed...

#### SUVARNABHUMI: Contractor warns over airport delay - The Nation, May 7, 2005

After keeping his lips sealed for two weeks, Premchai Karnasuta, president of Italian-Thai Development Plc, emerged yesterday declaring that his company-led consortium should not be liable for any delay to the opening of Suvarnabhumi Airport due to the complications in scanner procurement.

"We should not be held responsible for this incidental error," he told a press conference in his first public appearance since the airport scandal broke. Despite the government's attempts to blow this affair up into a matter of national honour, Premchai played down the chaos...

#### Consultant's proposal for deadline extension rejected - Bangkok Post, May 4, 2005

Airports of Thailand Plc has rejected a consultant's proposal that the deadline for the completion of the passenger terminal and aircraft boarding bridges at Suvarnabhumi be extended from March 31 to Sept 28.

The contract with the ITO Joint Venture Group stipulates a 2.5 million baht fine for each day of delay...

Although the airport is due to open in September, Transport Minister Suriya Jungrungreangkit recently admitted a delay was inevitable, but that it would be no later than "next year".

#### Historic plane to be first to use new Bangkok's airport - MCOT, April 26, 2005

...thanks to the efforts of aviation enthusiasts, a replica of 'Miss Siam' could be the first aircraft to land on the runway of Bangkok's new Suvarnabhumi...

#### New airport to open sometime 'next year' - Bangkok Post, April 4, 2005

Transport Minister Suriya Jungrungreang-kit has admitted for the first time that delays in Suvarnabhumi international airport's opening are inevitable but vowed it would be no later than "next year"...

On Feb 5, the chairman of the Airports Authority of Thailand, Srisook Chandrangsu, cited March 2006 as the date when Suvarnabhumi international airport would take over from Don Muang. The minister had planned on revealing the new launch date last Thursday, but has now opted to wait for another month...

"I knew from the beginning it would be difficult to meet that deadline. But the deadline had to be set to avoid complacency," he said...

#### New airport construction 'to be completed on schedule' - TNA, March 1, 2005

Transport Minister Suriya Jungrungreangkit today insisted that construction on Bangkok's new Suvarnabhumi Airport would be completed on schedule by 29 September, but confirmed that the actual opening would be delayed...

# New airport's opening delayed by six months - Bangkok Post, February 26, 2005

Airports of Thailand admitted for the first time yesterday that Suvarnahumi Airport will open six months after its originally scheduled opening date of Sept 29. AoT chairman Srisook Chandrangsu said the delay to March next year is aimed at ensuring the safety of airline passengers. The delay will be spent test-running systems being installed at the new Bangkok international airport, he said.

But he dismissed a notion that the delay was forced by construction problems, saying most construction was only slightly behind schedule and workers would be able to finish projects on time...

Suvannabhum Airport opening may be postponed to March 2006 – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi <u>Thai Post</u>, February 24, 2005 Suvannabhum Airport opening may be postponed to March 2006 due to a delay in x-ray machine delivery from USA. ITD + Takenaka will have to pay 2.5 million baht a day as a fine for project delay. The company in the USA has not delivered 10 new x-ray machines despite a deadline of February 28, 2005...

#### Bangkok's new airport prepares for landings on 29 September - TNA, February 10, 2005

Airliners will be able to land at Bangkok's new international airport from 29 September this year, the airport authority confirmed today, while admitting that the official date of opening was still dependent on the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)...

#### ICAO experts to help launch massive check on new Bangkok airport - TNA, February 5, 2005

Experts from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) will help thoroughly check operational and safety systems at Bangkok's new Suvarnabhumi Airport before it is open later this year...

Their advise came out of worries that accidents had occurred before in several countries, including at airports in Hong Kong and Korea, because they wanted to open the airports as soon as possible, causing accidents, which affected confidence among global passengers, he said...

He stressed that his office would listen to advise of the ICAO's experts.

Construction at the airport is now 86% completed, a delay from an earlier schedule by about 1.8%, and the delay in work is expected to be eliminated within the next one-two months, according to the AOT's chief.

#### What will the new airport code be? BKK? - January 25, 2005

Dave Milam comments: Just posted about this on Airliners.net. Yes, codes can be transferred. DEN and HKG did it. Next month central Japan Chibu will open and take the NGO airport code. Katami (old Nagoya) will remain open for 50 seats and fewer aircraft and will have a new code. In Osaka KIX opened and OSA was changed to ITM and is still open. SEL is now the new airport with GMP (Gimpo) getting a new code.

So most likely BKK will transfer to the new airport and they will find a new code for Don Muang for whatever use it will have.

Military bases have airport codes also. I used to love my dad's old bag tags from MAC (Military Airlift Command) now AMC (Air Mobility Command). jpatokal adds: New airport is not SEL, it's ICN (Incheon). SEL is a virtual code referring to ICN & GMP, just like TYO (Tokyo) refers to both NRT and HND. LON(don) is the record-holder here, with one virtual code covering LCY, LGW, LHR, LTN, and STN!

There is also a thread about this on the forum.

# New airport proceeding well: THAI – The Nation, January 25, 2005

...At a press conference yesterday, Kobchai said progress on the construction of the new airport's cargo and mail centre is 76 per cent, catering service facilities are 85 per cent complete, the operations centre is 43 per cent finished, the aircraft maintenance centre is 80 per cent complete and ground support equipment service is

76 per cent complete.

"They should all be ready for service when the new airport opens on September 29," Kobchai noted...

#### Construction of Bangkok's new airport set for March completion - TNA, January 24, 2005

Construction on Bangkok's new Suvarnabhumi Airport is likely to be completed in March, well ahead of the airport's scheduled September 2005 opening, according to Thai Airways International Public Company Limited (THAI).

Although construction on the airport has been characterized by setbacks, Mr. Chokchai Panyayong, Vice President of the national flag carrier's Project Development Department, insisted vesterday that building work was now 78.7 percent complete...

#### Slow-coaches at new airport told they face blacklisting - The Nation, January 13, 2005

The Transport Ministry has threatened to blacklist companies whose progress in the construction of the New Bangkok International Airport (NBIA) is 7.5-per-cent slower than set out in their bidding proposals...

The companies believe the project cannot be completed as scheduled on September 29, he said, so they don't see the need to rush.

### New airport to be opened in 2005 - TNA, December 25, 2004

Thailand's Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said today he was optimistic that Bangkok's new Suvarnabhumi Airport would be completed and opened in 2005...

Airport progress update: "delayed 2%" - December 23, 2004

(from 'Twin city planned near new airport,' Bangkok Post, December 23, 2004) ... As for progress on Suvarnabhumi airport, Mr Thaksin said construction was delayed about 2% but acceleration was possible to keep to the target opening date of Sept 29.

The airport's conveyance belt system faced the biggest delay. The building to house the Airport Information Management System was also delayed but only slightly. Transport to the new airport would initially depend on road links as the high-speed railway from Makkasan will not be finished until two years after the airport

# SUVARNABHUMI AIRPORT: Terminal delayed by 6 months - The Nation, December 8, 2004

...completion to be delayed by about six months to April 2006...

#### Cracks at new airport spark fears - Faults may be due to rush to meet deadline - Bangkok Post, November 20, 2004

...Responding to the questions by the Bangkok Post, Mr Srisook said he had not been told about the cracks. However, sources said several authorities, including the NBIA, had been alerted but nobody paid attention.

The NBIA chairman said construction consultants would be responsible for ensuring quality before the project was handed over to the NBIA.

"I am confident the cracks will have no effect on the project or the safety of the airport. They can be repaired," he said.

Panoramas from inside the new airport - November 14, 2004



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above (full-sized image – 324kb) and below (full-sized image – 281kb) looking north from the check-in hall. In the photo above, the escalators on the right go down to the underground train station. Other Thai Panoramas



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

#### New concern over new airport - Rushing construction may increase hazards - Bangkok Post, October 14, 2004

The Thai Concrete Association has appealed against rushing the construction of Suvarnabhumi airport in Samut Prakan, citing potential safety risks and long-term structural problems..

Lapses in monitoring, inspection, or complete negligence of important procedures could result in substandard work that may bring long-term structural problems and compromise the safety of operators and users, he said.

..."They may cast concrete when it's raining," weakening the strength of the product because the rain increases the water-to-cement ratio, he said.

...The TCA president's warning followed accidents at Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris on May 23, and at Dubai airport in the United Arab Emirates on Sept 27. ..The New Bangkok International Airport company called for a review of the safety of the passenger terminal at Suvarnabhumi airport after the accident at Charles

de Gaulle airport. The concourses at both terminals share similarities in the tube-like shape, and use of glass for the roofs and walls although the American-led Murphy Jahn/TAMS/ACT consortium designed Suvarnabhumi.

# 'Suvannabhumi airport construction on schedule' - TNA, October 2, 2004

The Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, said that the Suvannabhumi international airport would be completed on time and opened on 29 September next year...

A tale of two headlines: The new airport on opening day – September 29, 2004

The Post and the Thai News Agency have the same story with the same facts, but the Post does a good job explaining what is really being said- that a plane or PM: New airport may not open on schedule - Bangkok Post, September 28, planes will land at the new airport on the opening date, but the airport might not 2004 be open for service (this is what 2Bangkok.com has been predicting for some time).

#### PM confident Suvarnabhumi Airport will be opened as scheduled - TNA, September 28, 2004

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra yesterday confirmed the New Bangkok International Airport (NBIA), or Suvarnabhumi Airport, would be ready for the takeoff and landing of planes as scheduled on September 29, 2005...

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra admitted for the first time yesterday that Suvarnabhumi airport might not be open to passenger flights on Sept 29 next year as scheduled.

"It will be fine if the opening is postponed for one or two months next year," the prime minister said..

"I confirm that on Sept 29, 2005 aircraft will be able to touch down at the new airport, but whether it can open for service depends on the ICAO issuing a licence to operate," he told reporters...

One year from today the new Bangkok airport is scheduled to open Airport countdown: 365 days until the Suvarnabhumi Airport opens.

#### Spirit house for the new airport - Bangkok Post, September 27, 2004

Some people believe delays in getting the Suvarnabhumi (originally known as Nong Ngu Hao) airport project off the ground stem not from man-made errors but supernatural phenomena.

Srisook Chandrangsu, the transport permanent secretary and chairman of the New Bangkok International Airport (NBIA), believes the absence of a shrine might have caused many problems affecting the project. One has now been built...

#### On-schedule completion of airport 'still possible' - Bangkok Post, September 27, 2004

The smooth integration of all computerised systems and successful test runs are crucial if Bangkok's new international airport is to open on Sept 29 next year as planned, the chairman of the New Bangkok International Airport Co (NBIA), Srisook Chandrangsu, said...

#### IATA expresses concern over new airport completion – TNA, September 25, 2004

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) yesterday expressed concern over Thailand's ability to construct Bangkok's new international airport on schedule, with IATA representatives grilling Transport Minister Suriya Jungrungreangkit on safety issues and landing fees.

Speaking after meeting IATA executives yesterday afternoon, Mr. Suriya said that he had given confirmation that while the construction of Second Bangkok International Airport, or the Suvarnabhumi Airport, was currently experiencing delays, it would be opened on schedule in September next year if all parties cooperated to ensure its completion.

Nonetheless, he hinted that the government's confidence might be wavering, saying that if the airport could not be completed on time, the government would inform IATA by February 2005 at the latest.

On 28 September Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra has promised to hold a special cabinet meeting at the airport construction site to review its construction progress ...

#### Government: Bangkok airport on schedule - Reuters, September 21, 2004

Thailand's new international airport is on track to open in September next year as part of the country's plan to become a regional aviation hub, Transport Minister Suriya Jungrungreangkit said on Tuesday ...

#### Airport will not open on time: NBIA - The Nation, September 21, 2004

... "Despite all efforts, there seems to be no way that the airport is going to be open in September next year," said a source at New Bangkok International Airport Co (NBIA), which is overseeing its progress.

..Last month, the International Air Transport Association estimated Suvarnabhumi would fall 12 to 18 months behind schedule.

The current situation makes this seem almost inevitable. However the government has so far refused to admit any degree of failure or hold up.

#### How late will the airport be? - Bangkok Post, September 13, 2004

...He said if all construction work at the new airport proceeded as planned, the airport could start operations on Sept 29 next year. The government has asked all contractors to speed up their work to meet the construction timetable.

He said the government will know in January if the airport will be able to begin operations on time. At the moment, he said, he was only 80% sure the deadline

Currently, work at the airport was 68% complete, or about 1.6% behind schedule, the minister said.

Also: (from Suvarnabhumi Airport to be opened next year: MOT) The Second Bangkok International Airport, or the Suvarnabhumi Airport, will be officially opened in September 2005, as earlier scheduled, Transport Minister Suriya Jungrungreangkit has confirmed.

Mr. Suriya told journalists here today that the Suvarnabhumi Airport would be officially opened on 29 September as scheduled...

#### Response to airport delay? - September 11, 2004

We have yet to hear any government response to the delays in the new airport construction. At the beginning of August, there were days of claims and counterclaims over a reported 3-6% delay. Now we hear the opening is 18 months behind schedule and not a peep from the government.

#### 'Significant delay for new airport' - The Nation, September 7, 2004

The opening of Suvarnabhumi International Airport is likely to be delayed between 12 and 18 months beyond the original schedule of September next year, International Air Transport Association (IATA) executives said yesterday.

New Bangkok International Airport – the project operator – has a zero chance of getting the airport ready on time, said David Inglis, assistant director for safety operations and infrastructure at IATA...

IATA blasts Thailand for planned hike in airport fees – AP, September 6, 2004 ... The government had initially set a target of Sept. 29, 2005, for completing the project, but construction delays will push back the opening date by at least two years, said David Inglis, IATA's assistant director in charge of infrastructure.

...Because of the high costs of doing business in Bangkok, British Airways has moved its hub operations to Singapore. Italy's Alitalia also suspended operations, as did South African Airways...

### How foreigners see the airport construction - August 11, 2004

A reader found this pessimistic article on the new airport (After 40 years Thailand's mega airport still struggling to materialise, AFP, August 9, 2004): ...It will also be the only airport in the country capable of handling Airbus' new 555-seater A380, and could potentially accommodate 100 million passengers a year once a planned fourth runway is completed.

..Construction only began in January 2002 and that year the International Air Transport Association ominously warned that while it calculated all new airports are 90 percent construction and 10 percent politics, "here in Bangkok it is 99 percent politics."

..."At one point we had to replace all of those (thousands of steel bracing rods) because we found out they were below the size that we needed," he said.

...Despite being just over a year away from opening, the enormous skeletal frame of Suvarnabhumi Airport's futuristic passenger terminal — covering 536,000 square metres — still sits at the end of a long dirt road surrounded by churned wasteland and mud.

Thaksin said he was concerned no deal had yet been signed which would see a sealed road built between the freeway and airport, saying the current arrangement would be "uncomfortable and undignified" for passengers...

### Bangkok's new airport to be build on time: Contractor - TNA, August 9, 2004

... Premchai Kannasutra, Executive Chairman of Italian-Thai Development, said the reported delays in the airport construction earlier this year was the result of problems in only two projects.

First, the power distribution construction & ductbank network system which is well behind the original schedule.

Secondly, the construction of the airfield pavement which is some 12% behind its schedule.

The building boss said these delays had been caused by the rescheduled delivery of the work site by New Bangkok International Airport Co., Ltd. (NBIA)...

#### PM blames new airport delays on contractors - TNA, August 8, 2004

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra today accused building contractors of being responsible for delays in the construction of Bangkok's new international airport, denying that the Ministry of Transport was in any way at fault.

...However, he noted that the huge level of government interest would strike enough fear into the contractors to ensure that the work was completed on time.

### PM orders building of third runway at new Bangkok airport - TNA, August 8, 2004

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said today that he had ordered the building of the third runway at the Second Bangkok International Airport, or the Suvarnabhumi Airport, which is now under construction.

ITD disputes airport delays - translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from Manager Daily, August 4, 2004 & Thaipost, August 5, 2004

ITD is arguing against the Premier Thaksin's clams of a 7% project delay on the new airport. ITD said the project has been delayed only 2-3%. ITD is handing 34% of Suvannabhum Airport construction.

Of 52.505 billion baht:

- 1) Main contractor 11.768 billion baht
- 2) Joint venture 28.166 billion baht
- 3) Subcontracting 12.561 billion baht

So far, ITD has finished government projects at a total price of 24 billion baht. Another 12 billion is waiting for a signing ceremony and they expect growth to reach 30 billion baht revenue for this year.

#### PM to accelerate construction of Suvarnabhumi Airport - TNA, August 2, 2004

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra has ordered the acceleration of construction works of the Second Bangkok International Airport, or the Suvarnabhumi Airport, conceding that the construction of the airport is now 7% behind schedule.

When visiting the airport this morning to inspect progress of its construction works, the Thai leader expressed his dissatisfaction with the delay.

"I saw that the construction of the airport is still 7% behind schedule. This is not good, and the construction must be accelerated, as there are only 14 months left before the new airport is scheduled to be officially opened", he told journalists.

The government has ensured that the new Bangkok International Airport will be officially opened in September 2005, as scheduled.

The prime minister wants the construction of the airport to be completed six months before the schedule so that it will be opened for unofficial test runs.

Mr. Thaksin said that he would seek for explanations of the delay at the forthcoming meeting of New Bangkok International Airport Co., Ltd.'s board, scheduled to be held here next week.

### Suvarnabhumi Airport 'to open on schedule' - TNA, July 30, 2004

Bangkok's new international airport will open on schedule in September next year despite concerns over the rising cost of fuel, the chairman of the New Bangkok International Airport Company (NBIA) confirmed yesterday.

Speaking after an NBIA board meeting, Mr. Srisook Chandrangsu said that progress on the airport's construction was now 70 percent complete, and that all building work would be finished by 31 March 2005, with the airport opening its doors to passengers on schedule on 28 September 2005...

Once the Suvarnabhumi Airport is in full operation, the Don Muang Airport will be modified to act as an aircraft maintenance centre and Air Force training ground.

#### Airport aerial photo - July 25, 2004

Kai reports: I just found a nice aerial picture of the Suvarnabhumi airport that shows the construction progress 3 months ago.



(Photo: Pascal)

Pascal of www.pasci.org took this photo of the new airport on July 14, 2004.

#### Airport architects - July 1, 2004

The winning design was from the MJTA group of consultants, comprising Murphy Jahn Architecture and TAMS consultant (US) and ACT Engineering consultant (Thailand). From the Murphy Jahn website one can see how the design is similar to their other work.

### Aerial photo of the new airport - July 1, 2004

Pongthai C. writes: A photo on www.airliners.net may interest 2Bangkok. It's the <u>bird's eye view of Suvarnabhumi Intl</u> (392kb). P.S. I really love your website, keep it updated. thanks for your dedication on it.

### June 2004 - "Three months behind schedule"

Work on Suvarnabhumi airport was already three months behind schedule. (from 'More red tape ties up plans for airport,' Bangkok Post, June 3, 2004)

### Designers to check safety at passenger terminal - Bangkok Post, May 26, 2004

...New Bangkok International Airport Co (NBIA) acting head Gen Somchai Somprasong said the new airport's concourses were similar to the one in Paris which collapsed on Sunday...

The concourses of Suvarnabhumi and Charles de Gaulle were tube-like and designed for glass roofs and walls.

Suvarnabhumi's design belongs to the Murphy Jahn/TAMS/ACT consortium but the French design was the work of another firm which lost out in the Suvarnabhumi bidding contest

Mr Thaksin was worried about delays in the construction of a new train terminal in Makkasan to connect the airport to Bangkok's city centre...

### Airport renderings - May 25, 2004

Chatchawal Phansopa points out these great renderings of the new airport interiors from ACT Consultants Co., Ltd.

### Changes in design to speed work - Bangkok Post, July 28, 2003

Mr Thaksin, speaking after chairing a meeting of the Suvarnabhumi International Airport Development Committee, said the project was now four months behind schedule.

### Mistrust breeding new airport delays - Bangkok Post, July 14, 2003

Distrust over legal issues between the contractor, the developer and the designer of Suvarnabhumi airport is threatening to further delay the multi-billion baht project. Transport Minister Suriya Jungrungreangkit said the three parties were so preoccupied preparing legal defences against any possible future problem that they were failing to meet their construction deadlines. "They are fully occupied trying to best protect their own interests," he said...

### <u>Supertruss!</u> – thaiengineering.com, February 28, 2003

Thanks to Pas of Bangkok Highrises for alerting us to some photos of the 'super truss' roof structure (right) for SBIA terminal.

### Prime Minister: New airport to open on Sept 29, 2005 - Bangkok Post, February 1, 2003

... A source said the airport inauguration date was symbolic in that His Majesty the King had given the new Bangkok airport its official name on Sept 29 last year....



# Airport delay inevitable unless Bangkok wants flight chaos - Business Day, January 17, 2003

- \* The new airport was designed to handle 40 million passengers a year, but by the time it opens Thailand may have as many as 45 million visitors a year.
- \* Security screening of baggage at the new airport will not meet the international standards that apply from 2006.
- \* There is "no way" that the second runway will be ready in time for the scheduled opening.
- \* Not enough has yet been done on important issues to ensure the smooth running of an international airport, such as catering, cargo handling, maintenance and cleaning. These points are further detailed in Concerns about the new airport Business Day, January 17, 2003

State of the new airport construction - Business Day, January 14, 2003

Report from the site: Officials of the new airport admitted that the east runway, pointed out as barely disturbed ground seen through tall grasses, was running three months late. One reason was that lorries bringing landfill for the runway were prohibited from carrying loads of more than 21 tonnes, whereas previously they could carry up to 36 tonnes. What will one day be the main passenger terminal and concourse has hardly been started. Some concrete pillars and steel supports have been erected and the area is littered with heavy building materials waiting to be removed by giant cranes, so that it is recognisable as a budding building, but nothing yet that resembles the splendid glass palace in the scale models. The roads to the new airport are rough-hewn broad tracks full of dust passing through what is largely still a greenfield site. And the government's response: Suriya attacked NBIA, the project operator, for its lack of coordination with government agencies involved in the airport construction.

## Consultant named for airport - Bangkok Post, December 26, 2002

The airline has also made some adjustments to the company's project schedule, opting for fast-track construction management to ensure the project completion by the end of December 2004 and all system testing by March 2005. THAI expects to require another six months to achieve full operational readiness at the Suvarnabhumi airport, in time for its opening scheduled in September 2005.

Airport faces lengthy contractual delays - The Bangkok Post, November 8, 2002

Very brief blurb: A lengthy process for choosing contractors is delaying work on Suvarnabhumi airport, says Sombat Uthaisang, head of the project's acceleration committee.

The 2005 opening date seems increasingly unrealistic... Thai businesses question on-time completion of Suvarnabhumi Airport

September 3, 2002 – PM Thaksin says constuction will be done by December 2004, ready for test run on the system on December 5, 2004, and then official opening on August 12, 2005. and in the same article: So far, the NBIA is 20.1% done (from a 20.5% target)

#### Response to foreign critics (from the Bangkok Post)

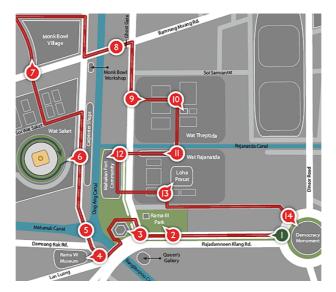
Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra has promised to have the airport at Nong Ngu Hao completed in 2005 as scheduled. He said he viewed foreign critics of the project as outsiders who did not have all the information but ventured to comment... "As insiders, we know well what we are doing. I don't think there will be a problem. Do not think the foreigners who criticised us are great. We can solve our own problems and I have got confirmation that it will be completed in time," Mr Thaksin said.

Update (January 17, 2003): The Airport's offical construction status report is here (here in Thai). However, it has not been updated since September 30, 2002.

See the <u>Latest News</u> page for more info.

# On the forum: MP3 audiotours of Rattanakosin

January 28, 2006 Categories: Uncategorized



(Source: SoundTrek)

On the forum: MP3 audiotours of Rattanakosin – January 28, 2006 ... We are collecting tour content from as many sources as possible. If you have information concerning any of these sites listed below, please post it in the appropriate folder and we will include it in the tours. If you are a writer, musician, or artist with works related to the sites we would be more than happy to promote them...

Maps are here (pdf 209kb) and here (pdf 208kb)

# Dhaka delays airport takeover by Thailand airways

January 28, 2006 Categories: Airports and Airlines

<u>Dhaka delays airport takeover by Thailand airways</u> – Indo-Asian News Service, January 28, 2006

# "Hilltribe of upper Siam"

January 28, 2006 Categories: Old photos and films



(Photo: Siam by Karl Dohring, 1923)

"Hilltribe of upper Siam" - January 28, 2006

Left: Photo from Siam by Karl Dohring, 1923

# **Dupe ID Smart Cards Snafu – Problem serious, report sources**

January 29, 2006 Categories: 2Bangkok News

<u>Dupe ID Smart Cards Snafu - Problem serious, report sources</u> - content-wire.com, January 29, 2006

# River taxi photos

January 29, 2006 Categories: Uncategorized

River taxi photos – James Gosling: on the Java Road, January 29, 2006

# Making fun of Bangkok fashion victims

January 29, 2006 Categories: 2Bangkok News

<u>Making fun of Bangkok fashion victims</u> – *Bangkok Recorder*, January 29, 2006

### Bangkok could benefit from Hong Kong transit model

January 29, 2006 Categories: Mass Transit

WATCHDOG: Bangkok could benefit from Hong Kong transit model - The Nation, January 29, 2006

...From the outset, the Hong Kong government provided loan guarantees to the state agency responsible for MTR development.

This allowed the state-owned MTR authority to acquire credit at low interest rates, which was suitable for a large and long-running investment in the infrastructure of its system.

As for Thailand, part of this model was used by the MRTA about a decade ago when it invested in the infrastructure for the first 20 kilometres of the subway line. Unfortunately, the additional cost of some Bt20 billion to purchase rolling stock and related equipment was later shouldered by private firm BMCL, which was in return granted a concession to run the subway.

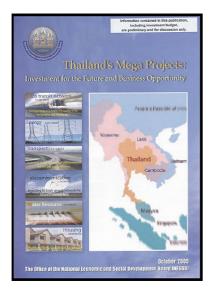
According to de Baecque, private investors are not suitable for this kind of long-term investment. He cited the BTS company as an example. When BTS first invested more than Bt50 billion in the 23-kilometre Skytrain, the project was hailed as the first 100-per-cent private-investment scheme of its kind in the world. In the wake of the 1997 Asian financial crisis, BTS technically went bankrupt due to huge foreign loans and exchange losses.

Today the company is still struggling with its unfinished debt-restructuring programme. Hence 100 per cent private investment in mass transit does not work in the long run...

### Bangkok Master Plans 1979-2006

January 30, 2006 Categories: Master Plans

#### Mass Transit News main page



(Source: Cover of the NESDB pdf)

Mass transit System:

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(Source: Page 5 of the NESDB pdf)

NESDB promotes investment in Thailand with map from 2Bangkok.com - January 30, 2006

When the Thai government wants to explain their mass transit plans to investors, where do they get the map? From 2Bangkok.com, of course. An anonymous reader pointed out that the NESDB published a pdf, Thailand's Mega Projects: Investment for the future and Business Opportunity. (2.10MB) on their modernizethailand.com site featuring the mass transit map Chatchawal made for 2Bangkok. No wonder investors are confused—the map is from 2004. It also refers directly back to 2Bangkok.com in the barely readable fine print of the map.

Earlier: Future

Bangkok mass transit map and Singapore mass transit

<u>map</u>

# $2005-{\sf Master\ Plan\ Maps}$

Another future mass transit map - April 5, 2005

Pas of Bangkok Highrises writes: Here's a map in Thai (221kb) showing all the future subway lines from an MRTA advertisement inside the March 20, 2005 Bangkok Post.



(Source: Bangkok Metro)

Mass transit maps - March 8, 2005

Chatchawal Phansopa writes: Bangkok Metro Public Company Limited has revamped its <u>company website</u>. Occasional use of strange English but the content is still largely comprehensible by non-Thai viewers. Check out the <u>route map</u>, which is also available in PDF format from the website. (Too bad they changed it. In the previous version of the site they linked frequently to 2Bangkok.com and even made their homepage banner out of photos stolen from 2B. The new Bangkok mass transit map they feature is in the style of the classic <u>London tube maps</u>. See also this <u>fantastic page with a history of London underground maps</u>.)



TRT pamphlet with promises for future Bangkok mass transit – January 29, 2005

Wisarut scanned the campaign map for the Bangkok mass transit expansion (875kb) with up to eight new lines. Fascinating in that the Skytrain is totally omitted from future plans (the Skytrain is being <u>punished</u> for resisting nationalization). Read Wisarut's comments on the routings <u>here</u>. Another mass transit map from the TRT campaign (483kb).

Dick van der Spek's mass transit map of greater Bangkok (1.5MB)

More of van de Spek's maps are here

### 2004 – Master Plan Maps

Chatchawal Phansopa has created two extensive maps of all the planned mass transit systems.

Also: Governor Samak's mass transit plans remembered - Matichon Daily, January 5, 2004

### 2003 – Master Plan Maps

Wisarut found these very interesting <u>new maps and other info</u> on the <u>SRT website</u>. There's no readable sized graphic at this time. 2b is trying to find a more readable copy and when we do, we will post it.

Wisarut comments on some of the main depots planned: There will be several sub depots and park and ride facilities by the year 2021 or so...

### 1) Major Depots

BTS-Mochit

MRTA – Huay Kwang

SRT – Bangsue

### 2) Sub depots

BTS – Klong Sam (Lam Look Ka), Thepharak , BSTC (Bangkok Southern Transportation Center near Talad Ploo)

MRTA – Bang Yai, BSTC (Bangkok Southern Transportation Center near Talad Ploo)

SRT – NBIA (Eastern Line), Wat Singh (Machai Line)

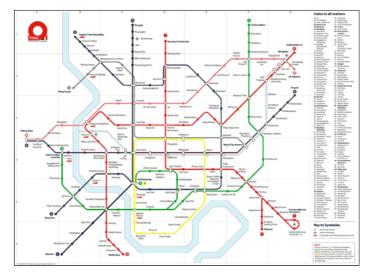
Yellow Line - Sri Nakharin (near Carrefour)

### 3) Park and Ride

BTSC – Onnut (will be moved to Samrong after Samrong Extension is done), Samut Prakarn (near ther Paknam terminal), Klong Sam (Lam Lookka), Klong Ha (Lam Look Ka) Yellow Line – Thepharak

MRTA – Minburi, Bang Kapi, Lad Phrao, Bang Yai, Sanambinnam, Bang Khae, Rama II Highway, Rat Boorana





(Photo: Wit Pimkanchanapong)

'If There Is No Corruption' map - January 25, 2005

Wit Pimkanchanapong, an artist, a designer and lecturer at Bangkok University wrote: In 2002-2003, I did a project called ITINC map which is a map that mixed existing transportation system with planned, promised, or even my own ideas. I printed 5000 copies of them and distributed them as a kind of art work: ITINC – ITINC is the cultural spam map about the (never) completed mass transport system in Bangkok. Like London-'Underground', Paris-'Metro & RER', Newyork-'Subway' here in Bangkok we have 'ITINC' which coming from 'If There Is No Corruption.' There are 5,000 copy of map and it had really been distribute in Bangkok city on the early of 2003. Download the map (2.1mb)

### 2001 – Bangkok Area Transport Master Plan

Bangkok Area Transport Master Plan (1.05MB)

Here is a scan of the transport master plan for the Bangkok city area. The original map is made up of a mosaic of satellite photos with colored lines indicating the expressway, fixed mass transit, and main road systems. It was scanned in 15 sections and compressed as much as possible, but since the map is so large (70 cm x 95 cm) and the text so small, it had to remain very big (1.05MB) to be readable.

The map is produced by the Expressway and Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand. This agency is not in charge of all of these projects—it is charged with producing the map to coordinate all the various projects.

**KEY** Even in the original it is a bit hard to tell which route is which since some of the route colors appear to be identical, so here are some notes that might help figuring out the map.

SRT refers to defunct Hopewell Project and runs from the Airport to Hua Lum Pong (the main train station).

BMA refers to the Skytrain and is the very thin green line in the inner city area.

MRTA refers to the subway project. The pink area marked "workshop" indicates the depot for the subway.

Below the bottom of the map is the sea. Since there are no routes in that area, this part has been truncated to reduce file size.

## 2000 – Bangkok Mass Transit Interaction

Bangkok Mass Transit Interaction - Thai (38kb)

Map (August, 2000) courtesy of Wisarut. This map shows the proposed subway extensions.

KEY Green - BTS Skytrain

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

Blue dotted - Blue line subway (proposed)

Orange – Orange line subway (proposed)

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

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

### 1995 – Bangkok Mass Transit Interaction

Bangkok Mass Transit Interaction – Thai (191KB)
Bangkok Mass Transit Interaction – English (234KB)

This is a topological-style map from a 1995 issue of *Manager Magazine Weekly* (<a href="http://www.manager.co.th">http://www.manager.co.th</a>) redrawn by Wisarut. He has made both a Thai and English-language version. The map shows the interaction of the various transit options being constructed in Bangkok.

 $KEY\ Outer\ Black\ Line - Outer\ Ring\ Road$ 

Red Line that starts at Minburi and end at Samrongtai – Orange Line Subway

Red Line that starts at Rangsit - Hopewell Elevated Train

Green Line – Skytrain Lines (including extension routes which are still being studied)

Blue Line - Blue Line Subway (including extension routes which are still being studied)

Pink Line – Purple Line Subway

<u> 1979 – Bangkok Mass Transit Masterplan</u>

# 450 skydivers to set new world records in Thailand

January 30, 2006 Categories: 2Bangkok News

<u>450 skydivers to set new world records in Thailand</u> – TAT, January 30, 2006

# Builders under pressure to complete Pyinmana parade ground

January 30, 2006 Categories: Myanmar/Burma

Builders under pressure to complete Pyinmana parade ground – The Irrawaddy, January 30, 2006

Burmese government engineers and private contractors are reportedly under pressure to complete work on a military parade ground in Pyinmana, the country's new administrative capital, before the next Armed Forces Day, in late March...

# Time to go underground?

January 30, 2006

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

Time to go underground? – The Irrawaddy, January 30, 2006
Foreign book retailers in Burma are waiting on the government for permission to distribute Time magazine's
January 30 issue, which covers the affairs of the country's politics and economic. The cover article by Michael Schuman—"Bankrolling Burma"—and a commentary by anti-regime US Senator Mitch McConnell criticize the Asian countries that help the Burmese regime stay in power while its people remain "trapped in a time" warp of poverty, oppression and economic misrule..."

# No booze or jokes for Googlers in China

January 30, 2006 Categories: China

No booze or jokes for Googlers in China - CNET, January 30, 2006

# **Driving Creek Potteries and Railway**

January 31, 2006 Categories: Thai Railroads

<u>Driving Creek Potteries and Railway</u> – January 31, 2006 Cormac points out "New Zealand's only narrow-gauge mountain railway along with a working pottery and wild life sanctuary" and comments ...someone really should build something like this in Thailand.

# Khao Maneethe Royal Cats of Siam

January 31, 2006 Categories: 2Bangkok News

Khao Manee – the Royal Cats of Siam – January 31, 2006

### **Troubles in the South – February-April 2006**

February 1, 2006

Categories: The Thai Deep South

#### **Troubles in the South index page**

Stop making preposterous accusations, Thai newspapers told - Bernama, April 29, 2006

Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak asked Thai newspapers to stop making preposterous accusations in their reports, saying there is a training camp in Malaysia to train Thai separatists...

### Detention camps reportedly feed insurgency - The Irrawaddy, April 27, 2006

...Every day, a group of anxious parents gathers outside the whitewashed walls of the Sabri, who was one of a group of 19 Malay-Muslim men kept in captivity with no access to legal help, denied the charges when he spoke to IPS soon after his release. "I don't know why I was arrested," he said. "One of my friends was also arrested and freed later."

His three weeks of incarceration included being kept in solitary confinement in a room where the lights were never turned off. There were long stretches of interrogation by officers in plain clothes.

"They questioned me from nine till 12 in the morning and then for five hours in the afternoon," said Sabri. "There was no physical abuse but their words were strong. They kept saying I was involved in a plan to murder a policeman."

...A Thai military intelligence officer, who spoke with IPS on condition of anonymity, said there were about 20 such camps in the south, in Bangkok and in the central province of Lop Buri. "We arrest them to change their minds," he said. "Some are charged if they are linked to attacks and some are sent home."...

### Blacklist should be reivewed: SBPPBC - The Nation, April 26, 2006

The Southern Border Provinces Peace Building Command (SBPPBC) on Wednesday demanded the concerned intelligence agencies review the "blacklist" of suspected militants after a rare public comment by the army chief over its accuracy....

Reports about the lists surfaced in mid2004 with each security agency, including the military and police, believed to have prepared its own version. The people on these lists were said to be targets of manhunts or summary executions by rogue officials...

#### Rottweilers make popular pets in deep south - translated and summarized from Komchadluek, April 25, 2006

Many villagers in three southern provinces have bought rottweilers as guard dogs. The owner of a dog farm in Bangkok recently said that about 30 dogs were being ordered by southerners each month. Although rottweilers are renown for their fierce temperament and difficulty in handling, the number of dogs purchased is still on the increase. Nophadol Tantiyawut – the Chairman of the Rottweiler Club of Thailand – said that the residents of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat Provinces had endured many threats to their personal security in recent years. This trend had resulted in many villagers buying guard dogs for their homes. Some orders were made by phone, but other customers preferred to come to his Bangkok farm to purchase the dogs. Rottweilers of 2-3 months old are just the right age to be trained for guard duties. The cost of each dog ranges between 7,000 and 10,000 baht. Rottweilers are also being bought from Malaysian breeders. Villagers report feeling far more secure with big guard dogs around their properties. Indonesian villagers, in conflict zones, have also been known to keep rottweilers.

Montree Kaewnaseng, a rottweiler breeder from Surat Thani Province, has also reported selling large numbers of his dogs to villagers in the deep south during recent years. Rottweilers are naturally aggressive dogs, that will always bark at strangers. The spacious rubber gardens owned by many southerners are especially suitable for a breed of dog that requires a great deal of exercise.

Some dogs are being delivered to their new owners by air. This delivery method means that the dogs are first carried from Surat Thani to Bangkok, and then south again to Songkhla Province. There are no direct flights between Surat Thani and Songkhla. This means that the transport costs of the dogs can exceed 1,000 baht, which probably explains why some clients prefer to collect their dogs in person from the Surat Thani farm.

### 'Southern Thailand is new terror ground' – The Philippine Star, April 23, 2006

..."Our prediction is Thailand will become like Mindanao in the next five years unless the Thai government takes decisive steps to control and contain the local insurgency," Rohan Gunaratna, head of the Singapore-based International Center for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, told an international counterterrorism conference in Cebu City.

A Thai government official disagreed with the assessment, however, saying that most Thai Muslim insurgents are not radicals and that the situation "cannot be compared anywhere..."

### Thai police patrol Thai Muslim town of Ruso - AlertNet, April 22, 2006

That police patrol the That Muslim town of Ruso, 1,200km (745 miles) south of Bangkok April 22, 2006, a day ahead of the by-elections...

What does the National Reconciliation Committee (NRC) report on violence in the deep south say?—April 14, 2006 The details have seemed to been missed by the English-language press, but 2Bangkok has the story...

Violence in deep south should not be disregarded - translated and summarized from Krungthep Thurakit, April 4, 2006

...Recently, the National Reconciliation Committee (NRC) has reported that structural conflicts are a vital ingredient in the present turmoil of the three southernmost provinces. Sources of discord include economic injustice, skewed resource allotment, educational discrimination, and inequality in the judicial process. All of these disparities fall into stark relief when compared with the situation in other parts of the country. This comparison creates a perspective of two different "countries" within Thailand's social and physical boundaries.

The NRC study concluded that ethnic and religious dissimilarities are not the real causes of this protracted conflict. However, the study also commented that these same ethnic and religious differences have often been used to discriminate against locals caught up in the army's violent quelling of the insurgency. The study added that this discriminatory action is conducted with the tacit approval of certain powerful sectors of our society. This appears to explain why Thailand's bourgeoisie—not living in the conflict zone itself—seems so apathetic about the ongoing unrest while at the same time being so vehemently outraged by the tax-free takeover of Shin Corp. Hundreds of thousands of people pay far more attention to the tax evasion of the Shin Corp takeover than to the massacre at Krue Se Mosque or the brutal suppression of the Takbai protest.

Elsewhere in the NRC study, it is stated that over an 11-year period (1993 to 2005) there were 748 violent incidents in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat Provinces (with the occasional inclusion of Songkhla and Satun Provinces). This averaged out at 68 incidents per year. During 2004 and 2005, there was a shocking escalation of the violence. There were 1,843 incidents in 2004, and 1,703 in 2005, making a total of 3,546 violent incidents: a statistic 374% larger than that of the entire preceding 11-year period.

The NRC report also describes many instances of injustice that have occurred to the people of the three southernmost provinces. One such case was the arrest of Dr. Waemahadi Waedaoh and his associates for their alleged membership of Jemaah Islamiyah. There have also been illegal juvenile arrests and the unlawful interrogation (torture) of detained suspects to ensure their confession within the legal detention period. Other instances of injustice include the 130 deaths arising from the Takbai protest and the disappearance of lawyer Somehai Neelapaichit.

The NRC has also collected data on economic problems in the southern border provinces. This data shows that the region has displayed very limited economic growth in comparison to other regions of Thailand. Between 1998 and 2003, the agricultural sector expanded 5.5 % yearly. The fishing sector, an important mainstay of the three provinces, grew at only 0.3 % per year. Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat are the poorest provinces in the South, a region that covers 47.6% of Thailand's entire landmass. Consequently, there is great unemployment in the three provinces.

The NRC's study indicates that the southern border problem has not arisen from the agitation of malicious insurgents alone. Its comments that the authorities need to realize their own mistakes and admit their incomplete knowledge of the region's structural problems in its economy, educational system, resource accessibility and local culture.

According to the Issara News Center (an offshoot of the Journalists' Association of Thailand), the crisis in the deep south was exacerbated by the royal enactment of the "Emergency Administration Decree" on July 16, 2005 (2548 Buddhist Era). The decree has acted as a constant pitfall to the authorities as the insurgency has expanded its circle of victims from government officials to the wider public—male and female, young and old, Buddhist and Muslim

The Emergency Decree provided almost unlimited powers for government officials to carry out searches, inquires, and even arrests without the normal need for warrants. This has created a widespread mutual distrust amongst villagers. According to a survey conducted soon after the enactment, 55.7% of local residents believed that the security of their lives and property had greatly deteriorated as a result of the decree.

A concrete example of this communal distrust was the assassination of an Imam in Narathiwat Province's Lahaan Village (Paluroo Commune, Sungai Padi District). The Imam's murder created a torrent of trepidation amongst the villagers. This fear resulted in the villagers barring the army from carrying out search operations in their village. This event was followed by the exodus of 131 scared villagers to a neighboring area of Malaysia's Kelantan State. It also eventually led to the "Tanyong Limo Crisis" which resulted in the deaths of three villagers and two marines.

A problem has also arisen from the government's policy of ordering local officials—such as Kamnan and Puyaiban—to create black lists of local people who have fallen under the shadow of suspicion. These lists were created with the intention of separating the insurgents from villagers. Unfortunately, this policy has often been carried out indiscriminately. Many locals have been coerced into surrender and arrest on the grounds of flimsy allegations. This has helped to tilt the villagers, away from an already rampant distrust, towards a seemingly irrevocable animosity to authority...



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

Almost like being there: Recording votes in the deep south - April 2, 2006

Dr. Has reports: The atmosphere of counting votes in the area zone 2 of Yala province—the one place that got over 20% of votes. More on Troubles in the South



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

900 people arrested under the Emergency Decree? - translated and summarized from Komchadluek, March 28, 2006

...Recently, an informed source from the Young Muslim Association of Thailand disclosed that 19 administrative teachers at Thammawittaya Moolaniti School in Yala Province have been arrested, despite their efforts to demonstrate their sincerity to the authorities. The police arrests took place under the powers of the royally enacted Emergency Decree, which is active in some areas of the south. The association also stated that there are presently more than 900 people under arrest by the police in the deep south, with government officials trying to conceal this fact from the mass media.

More on the leaflets – March 21, 2006

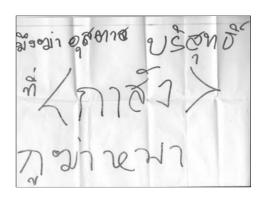
Many readers asked for more details on the leaflets we featured on Saturday. These leaflets (below) were left at the site where teachers from Luemu were shot on February 3. Kasang is the name of village in Bannangstar district where there is a religious school.

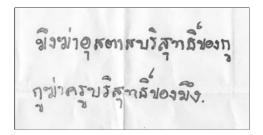
While officially all the killings in the south are attributed to "bandits," the "You killed my innocent ustaz" phrase means the separatists are accusing the government of being behind the killing of some religious teachers.

Earlier: Messages from the deep south – March 18, 2006

Two flyers left by separatists in Yala. These were left to explain killings by separatists.

Right: You killed an innocent ustaz at Kasang... I killed a dog.





Left: You killed my innocent ustaz. I killed your innocent teacher.

Pattani entry on Wikipedia - Wikipedia, March 2, 2006

...According to local sources, 4,000 Malay men were enslaved and made to work on Bangkok's system of khlongs (canals). To further humiliate the Pattanese, the symbol of Pattani's military strength – the Seri Patani and Seri Negara cannons, were brought to Bangkok and it is today displayed in front of the Ministry of Defense...

#### 'Thailand could learn from Malaysia's harmony' - Asia News Network, February 25, 2006

Sitting in the lobby of a Chinese-owned hotel in the heart of this backwater state capital controlled by a conservative Islamist party for most of two decades, recently elected Kelantan assembly member Hanifi Mamat predicted more cross-border trade with Thailand's restive South if and when Umno (the United Malays National Organisation) takes over...

Conference concludes Thaksin contributes to southern unrest – translated and summarized from *Phujatkan*, February 22, 2006
A seminar was recently convened to discuss the insurgency in the deep south. One conclusion reached by academics and senators at the conference was that Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's policies had contributed to the violence in the three southernmost provinces (Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat). The Premier has been quoted as saying that he would favor the arrest of at least ten insurgents each month. He has also advocated the use of violent methods to control the insurgency. Many conference-goers concluded that the implementation of the Emergency Decree has given certain authorities even greater opportunities to abuse state powers. They suggested that the Prime Minister should apologize to innocent victims of these abuses, as his policies were clearly not working.

### Thais 'ill-informed about the South' – IHT, February 23, 2006

As the National Reconciliation Committee (NRC)'s one-year mandate draws to a close, Chairman Anand Panyarachun said this week that the majority of Thais are still ignorant about the causes of the violence in the southern border provinces...

Confessions of 'brainwashed' southern bombers - translated and summarized from Komchadluek, February 15, 2006

Three teenagers gave interviews to the press last week at a conference organized by the security forces. The three told reporters how they had become embroiled in the insurgency.

"If I could turn back time, I would not take an oath of allegiance to the separatists again," said Asawan Awaegaji (26). Asawan became part of a separatist group three years ago, when he was studying at a vocational school in Narathiwat. He said that an elderly man had persuaded him to attend a meeting of one of the factions pressing for the independence of Patani. His attendance at one such evening meeting had persuaded him to leave school and become an active member of the movement. He was assigned to the task of making the bombs planted in Narathiwat Province.

"I learned how it took less than ninety minutes to make a bomb. I was so scared. However, I knew I wouldn't be able to escape, as I had sworn an oath to join the group."

Asawan said that orders for his bombing missions arrived by letters or by word of mouth from other group members. Bomb materials would then be delivered to a location near the intended bomb site.

Asawan was behind the bombing at the Telephone Exchange in Narathiwat. He was supposed to have been paid a thousand baht for each bomb, but sometimes he made bombs without being paid. These payments were later cut to 500 baht.

Asawan said that he had collaborated with two other members to build over a hundred bombs. He was arrested on November 13, 2005. His partners-incrime were arrested at a later date.

One of Asawan's two colleagues said that he had also been persuaded to join meetings at which the attendees were brainwashed. At the time, he had no regrets when he heard that his first bomb had killed some government officials. His motivation had been revenge on such officials, who frequently mistreated local villagers. He began to realize that he had been deceived after the bombs' victims began to include women and children. He was glad when he was arrested, as it had given him a chance to pursue a different path in life.



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

Almost like being there: The banality of violence - February, 2006

Dr. Has reports: This is an event that people have gotten used to seeing. Above: Police are interviewing a witness who took a man who had been shot to the hospital. Below: The aftermath of a violent event in Yala on February 2–a bomb at Thara Restaurant in the center of Yala province.



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

32 youths to be sent to re-education camps – translated and summarized from Komchadluek, February 13, 2006

The chairman of the teachers association in the three southern border provinces, Wichan Atikapan, said PM Thaksin Shinawatra's visit to the south could boost the morale of teachers in the short term.

Wichan said the fear in the teachers would return after PM Thaksin returned to Bangkok as the situation continued to be unstable. Teachers in remote areas were the most frightened, he said.

Wichan said 35 teachers held hostage at Ban Joh Koh School in Narathiwat last week for the release of the local imam really terrified teachers and he asked the government officials to prevent such incidents in future.

asked the government officials to prevent such incidents in future.

Sanya Suwanapoh, chairman of the teachers association in Yala, said PM Thaksin had promised to provide extra protection to teachers in the south. He

said Thaksin's promise helped boost the morale of the teachers as they had long been in fear.

In Narathiwat, 32 misguided youths between the ages of 21 and 30 surrendered. 23 were from Sungai Kolok district and nine were from Sungai Padi district.

Narathiwat governor Pracha Terat said he was glad that the parents had complied with the government's policy and encouraged their children to

participate in the re-education camp. This helped bring peace to the southern border provinces, he said.

Governor Pracha said the insurgent leaders still recruited young men to carry out violent incidents. They were residing in the districts of Joh I Rong, Sungai Padi, Rangae and Bajoh, he advised.

The government officials are following these insurgents closely and will arrest some of them very shortly, he said.

It was reported that Sidi Kaje (23) was shot dead while having dinner with his wife at home in Mayor district, Pattani. His wife, Geeroh Doloh (22), said the gunman entered the house and fired twice into the neck and chest of her husband.

Police suspect the shooting might involve personal conflicts, but did not rule out the possibility of insurgent involvement.

### Bush recalls the capture of Hambali in Thailand - Scoop.co.nz, by Richard S. Ehrlich, February 13, 2006

...Immediately after capturing Hambali in room 601 of the Boonyarak Apartment block in Ayutthaya, he disappeared under U.S. custody and has not been publicly seen since — amid speculation he was being tortured via a "rendition" to Jordan, or caged for brutal interrogation by Americans in Guantanamo Bay, or on the U.S.-occupied Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia, or in Bagram, Afghanistan. ..."Hambali planned to carry out bombings in Thailand against the US and British embassies, nightclubs in Phuket and Pattaya, and the Israeli check-in counter at Bangkok's Don Muang airport," London's Sunday Times reported in October 2003, citing Hambali's purported "interrogation transcript".

"Hambali and two Al Qaeda assistants also considered attacking an Israeli restaurant with a Star of David above it, in the backpacker area of Khao San Road," the British report said.

The popular restaurant, in a street perpetually jammed with thousands of tourists and Thais, has since removed its large six-pointed advertisement.



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

Almost like being there: Kid's party – February, 2006

Dr. Has reports: Amusement in the bad situation: Although the situation in the south continues, schools try to organize a party for children. This is the "Three in One Party" that combines three days, New Years, Children's day and Harirayorordilatha at Ban Talohhalor school, Raman, Yala.

Southern teachers request 'Luang Poh Tuad' amulets and holy water at Wat Chang Hai – translated and summarized from Komchadleuk, February 11, 2006

A group of southern teachers recently traveled to Wat Chang Hai Rat Buranaram—a Buddhist temple in Pattani Province—to request amulets of the revered (long-deceased) monk Luang Poh Tuad. They also requested holy water to ensure future prosperity. Pra Mahacharutch Udjaro, the temple's assistant abbot, disclosed that the southern insurgency had left many teachers fearful of falling victim to violence. These fears have recently led many teachers to force the closure of their schools. During these school closures, many teachers have decided to visit the temple. The teachers believe that revered Buddhist objects will help them to survive the current danger. Pra Mahacharutch also said that Wat Chang Hai is extremely pleased to be able to help these teachers. He commented that many teachers had fallen victim to terrorism over the last two years and they had not been provided with sufficient security at work.

The temple has also produced 5,000 prayer books with which government officials and ordinary people can seek peace of mind. However, it appears that the prayer books have not been produced in sufficient numbers. The temple is preparing to produce more books, but still lacks the necessary funds to do so.

The Governor of Pattani Province has also made Luang Poh Tuad amulets available to people who wish to invoke their own safety through the worship of Buddhist images.

More on Troubles in the South



(Photo: GWR)



(Photo: GWR)

**Note:** Above is a photo of a Luang Poh Tuad amulet. The amulets are hard to come by as they are in very heavy demand. Right is a modern portrait of Luang Poh Tuad, who died over 200 years ago. Luang Poh was said to be able to perform the miracle of walking on water among other things. Wat Chang Hai is one of the most hallowed and popular temples in the south. It also has its own railway station

School besieged – Teachers taken hostage to gain release of arrested Toh Imam – translated and summarized from *Komchadluek*, February 10, 2006 In Narathiwat Province yesterday, a group of teachers' bodyguards were attacked while they were on patrol. One of the patrol group was injured during the ten-minute gun battle. A bomb also damaged the patrol group's pick-up truck. A five-kilogram bomb was also found at the scene. In Narathiwat's Cho Ai Rong District, more than 300 security personnel raided the house of Toh Imam Abdulpadi Aree. A gallon of fuel was found during the raid. Abdulpadi was taken into custody and interrogated. At this point, over 300 people rallied in front of Ban Joh Kroh School. The protesters took 32 teachers hostage and demanded that the police release Abdulpadi. Around 500 security personnel were sent to the school. Negotiations with the protestors lasted for two hours. The police finally released Abdulpadi.

Father awaits recovery of son's body - translated and summarized from Komchadluek, February 8, 2006

"My wife and I have never asked for any compensation for our missing son. We know that won't bring our son back. I'm just trying to be strong. What I really want is to recover his body". These are the recent plaintive words of Senior Sergeant Major Narong Wisetsuwannapum (57), a police officer in Pattani Province. His only son, Ekasak (27), was gunned down and decapitated on July 26, 2005.

Ekasak's decapitated head was found in a plastic bag in front of a roadside building in Tambon Rahan in Pattani's Saiburi District. There were many wounds on the head. Six months have passed and Ekasak's body has not yet been recovered.

Senior Sgt. Major Narong said his son had left home one day before the incident. This was entirely normal, as Ekasak liked to stay overnight with his many friends. So Narong was not worried when his son did not return home.

"On July 26, a police officer asked me to identify my son's remains. When I saw my son's head, I suddenly felt faint, but tried to act normally. I didn't want to show weakness even though I knew I had lost my son."

"My wife was so sad and fainted when she heard the terrible news. We tried to console each other, but my wife became very depressed. I kept telling her that we had lost our son and that it was pointless to dwell too much on our grief so we had to be strong. My wife has gradually accepted this truth."

"My wife makes merit for our son every Buddhist holy day. We place offerings in front of his picture which is surrounded by pictures of his relatives.

Every time we perform these offerings, we think of him. Everything in our house recalls his memory. We had only one child. Without him, we have no one."

Senior Sgt. Major Narong talked about his love for his only son, saying he had always wished Ekasak well. He had sent his son to study in Bangkok. He also wanted Ekasak to work away from home as he knew the southern provinces were not a safe place to live. Recent news of local violence only increased the family's sense of insecurity.

"But he wanted to come back home. He didn't want to live in Bangkok, because he wanted to be with his friends here. He was born in Saiburi, and grew up here too. He had a lot of friends and many were Muslims. I didn't get to know all of his friends. It's normal for a teenager to have many friends. The only thing I ever asked him to do was to keep away from violence and drugs. I told him that I was a police officer and that I didn't like that kind of stuff."

Senior Sgt. Major Narong also talked about his son's behavior just before his murder. His son had asked for permission to convert to Islam. Narong could not agree to this and neither could his wife and relatives. However, Ekasak did not get angry about their refusal.

"I thought my son's request was a bit strange at the time. I was afraid that he might be led astray. I'm a police officer, and I know there are insurgents out there pretending to be normal teenagers. I feared that my son might be friend these people. It's too late, now that I've lost him."

"The murderer has yet to be caught. Suspects have been interrogated, but there is no evidence. I try not to feel indignant about this although the murderer remains unpunished. I want to leave this case to the judicial system and not concern myself too much about when the case will end. My son's dead and cannot be brought back to life."

"What I want most is to recover Ekasak's body, as we have still only found his decapitated head. No one has any idea where his body might lie. At his funeral, we arranged his clothing to represent his missing body. The funeral ceremony has long since passed, but I still want his body back so that his body and soul will be intact for his next reincarnation."

Senior Sgt-Major Narong has only a few years left in the police force and will shortly retire. In the meantime, both he and his wife have lost the will to work. They once devoted their life's work to their only son's benefit. Now that their son has departed, they have lost their sole motivation. Now, they are just working to survive.

"I have just submitted a request to move to Sating Phra District in Songkhla Province. I want to spend the rest of my life with my wife in a safe place. We might look after some cousins there. We have got to be very careful living in Saiburi. A lot of people here know who we are, but we don't know them at all and so we don't feel secure. I don't know what might happen in the future. I don't want anything bad to happen to us."

"The Provincial Authority has allocated us some monetary compensation. I don't really care if I get the money or not as it can never replace our son. However, we do wish to thank the authority for its help."

This really is a huge loss for the Wisetsuwannapum family. The father and mother have been waiting with some hope over the past six months for the recovery of their son's body.

The accused admits plan to kill three teachers in Yala – summarized and translated from *Matichon*, February 2, 2006

Twelve insurgents were arrested during a raid on January 31. Among them was the leader of the group, Isma-ae Sama. He confessed that he was planning to shoot local teachers in Yala Province and that authorities were to blame for the killing of an ustaz and the arrest of an ustaz from Tadika School on January 29. Local security news agencies reported that the separatists will kill 15 local innocent people. It is said that two million baht in cash will be given for information which leads to the arrest of Isma-ae Rayalong, known as Ustaz Soh.

On February 1, Police Captain Krissada Wattadham brought authorities to inspect four torched houses in Narathiwat Province's Cho Ai Rong subdistrict. Materials suspected to have been used in the arson were similar to those used in arson attacks on 36 schools in 1993.

**Troubles in the South index page** 

### 70 Billion Baht Deal: The Shin Corp Sale

February 1, 2006

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

See also: High tension in Thailand

STOPPAGE TIME: Forget about PM's unpaid tax bill, the government already has - The Nation, February 1, 2006

...The Constitution Court in 2001 didn't even cast its eyes on Ample Rich when it acquitted Thaksin Shinawatra of share concealment charges. The Anti-Money Laundering Organisation insisted this week there was no need to investigate a possible breach of its laws (as opposed to the urgency shown in probing journalists' bank accounts when the agency received an anonymous letter in 2002). As for the Revenue Department, the Stock Exchange of Thailand, and the Securities and Exchange Commission, they have all but called us idiots whenever an alarm was raised over possible tax avoidance and share manipulation.

...And laugh out loud the next time Thaksin says you envy his wealth. His wife had to take the blame when he first was accused of concealing assets, and now it's his two innocent children's turn to go through an undeserved political storm. If the kids are really to be fall guys, it won't be a question of his legitimacy as prime minister, but a matter of his dignity as a father. Forget the taxes issue and try to be happy. If you still can't, here's some wishful thinking: People are saying the Shinawatras are getting away with the dubious Temasek deal scot-free, but the real cost they have to pay may have just started to accumulate.

Korbsak Sabhavasu's website on Thaksin's "Ample Rich" company- February 13, 2006

### Heavily sued Supinya in a bind over case - The Nation, January 29, 2006

..."Some people have advised me to write a letter to Temasek," Supinya told The Nation on Friday, referring to the Singaporean conglomerate which is the new owner of Shin Corp, previously owned by the Shinawatra family.

Supinya and Thai Post were sued for Bt400 million in damages for statements that the premier's policies were benefiting his family's businesses...

#### SHIN SELL-OFF: Ample Rich deal queried - The Nation, January 27, 2006

Just to confirm that there is a company named "Ample Rich." As well as "Billion Million" and "Lucky Fortune."

PM hits out at 'bullies' - The Nation, January 28, 2006

'Extensive reshuffle looming' - The Nation, January 28, 2006

CAPITAL INFLOW: Temasek deal 'won't affect baht' - The Nation, January 25, 2006

#### Thai PM rings up a billion reasons for family affair – The Age, January 25, 2006

...All the journalistic spadework on the impending transaction was done by Thai journalists writing mostly for Thailand's English daily The Nation and the Thai-language business newspaper Prachart Thurakit.

Ridiculously, Singapore's journalists had to report on their Government's impending multibillion-dollar acquisition by doing a cut-and-paste job on whatever appeared in Bangkok newspapers. Singapore's journalists are not encouraged to be investigative, particularly when their own Government is concerned...

Shin Corp sale official – January 24, 2006

On the forum: Press Release from the Stock Exchange of Thailand's website SHIN SALE: Two Thai banks to fund deal – The Nation, January 23, 2006

Structure of Shin sale will have tax implications – Bangkok Post, January 23, 2006

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT: The apple of Singapore's eye - The Nation, January 23, 2006

Thai Prime Minister Thaksin's Family Sells Control of Shin Corp - Bloomberg.com, January 22, 2006

### On the Forum: Shin Corp takeover

Than Setthakij has confirmed that both Temasek and Crown Property Bureau (Siam Commercial Bank PCL) DID takeover Shin Corp through 49.6% shares for Temasek and 5-10% for SCB.

Crown Property Bureau (Siam Commercial Bank PCL) has sent Khun Phongse Sarasin (son of former PM Poj Sarasin – he used to run Thai Pure Drink PCL, Thai distributor for Coca Cola) and Dr. Wijit Suraphongsechai from SCB to run ShinCrop...

Total: 1.456 billion btock – 49.6% of registered capital = 72.8 billion baht -> the biggest transactions since the first day for Thai Stock Market at 30

Even though the sale is supposed to pay 15% Tax to Revenue Dept, Khun Thanong Phitthaya insists that this massive transaction is NOT subjected to tax collection due to Thai-Singapore Treaty for Taxing from capital transaction. If Temasek DID pay the tax to Singaporean Revenue Dept at least 15% of payment, the tax to Thai Revenue Dept is exempt.

### SHIN CORP SALE: MP warns against any special deal - The Nation, January 22, 2005

...If Temasek decides to buy more than 25 per cent of the shares in Shin Corp from the prime minister's family, it would be required by the SEC to make a tender for the rest of the shares held by all minor shareholders at the same price.

"There have been market rumours that the Singapore group doesn't want to do it that way because the deal would cost much more, up to Bt200 billion for 100-per-cent ownership, not Bt80 billion just for the 40-per-cent-plus holdings to be sold by the premier's children and relative," Korn said. "As a result, it wants to split the deal into two parts so as to avoid making the tender. This is wrong."...

## CURRENCY MOVEMENT: Baht's rise due to Shin deal - The Nation, January 20, 2005

Bank of Thailand Governor MR Pridiyathorn Devakula said the baht's appreciation was due mainly to the inflow of foreign capital for the purchase of Shin shares

"It is for the purchase of Shin shares," he said. "There was a 'broker' selling currency in the market. I just learned about it today, but don't know how much money it has. I don't know how many shares they're going to sell."

Pridiyathorn said the central bank had not intervened in the market yesterday and added that when the capital inflow ceases, the exchange rate would "he normalised"...

### Speculation heats up over Temasek purchase of Shin Corp stake - CNA, January 19, 2006

... Bank of Thailand Governor Pridiyathorn Devakula was asked to comment on the strength of the Thai baht, which hit its highest level in nine months

He said the strength was due partly to inflows related to an impeding major transaction in shares of Shin Corp...

THAI PRESS:Shin Corp To Announce Deal With Temasek Friday – Dow Jones, January 18, 2006
Thailand's Shin Corp. PCL (SHIN.TH) will likely file Friday a statement to the Stock Exchange of Thailand to inform the bourse about its stake sale to Temasek Holdings Pte. Ltd. (TEMAH.YY), Prachachat Business newspaper reports.

The sale will involve the entire 49.61% stake, owned by the family of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, to Temasek, the paper said quoting sources close to Thaksin.

The value of the deal is expected to be more than THB70 billion, according to the paper.

Meanwhile, Matichon newspaper quoted sources at Shin Corp. as saying that Siam Cement PCL's (SCC.TH) former president Chumpol NaLamlieng has been approached by Temasek to head Shin Corp.

Chumpol is currently the chairman of Singapore Telecommunications Ltd. (T48.SG.).

Temasek has a controlling stake in Singapore Telecom, which is a 19.3% strategic partner of Shin's flagship mobile phone operator Advanced Info Service PCL (ADVANC.TH).

\$2-BN TAKEOVER: PM's clan agrees to sell Shin to S'pore - The Nation, January 13, 2006

Shin Corp denies reports of sell-off by Thai PM's family - TODAYonline, January 11, 2006

# Meklong Railway in 1961

February 1, 2006 Categories: Mass Transit



(Photo: Wally Higgins)

Past transit: Meklong Railway in 1961 – February, 2006 Meklong Railway: 4-6-2 12 (Henschel 1952) and train in Mae Klong station, 1961.2.25

# Service charge now imposed on helpline '1133'

February 1, 2006

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Service charge now imposed on helpline '1133' – TNA, February 1, 2006
A service charge is now imposed on one of Thailand's most popular helplines, 1133, after members of the general public could access to the service free of charge over the past 40 years.

The service provider, TOT Corporation Public Company Limited (TOT), began to impose the service charge—Bt3 per minute nationwide—from February 1...

# FIRE TRUCKS: Samak admits placing order, still tries to blame Apirak

February 1, 2006 Categories: Thai Politics

FIRE TRUCKS: Samak admits placing order, still tries to blame Apirak - Bangkok Post, February 1, 2006

Former Bangkok governor Samak Sundaravej has admitted to ordering 176 fire trucks from Austria for use by City Hall and accused his successor Apirak Kosayodhin of failing to cancel the contract upon detecting irregularities in the deal. The procurement hit the headlines after the Thai-language Daily News newspaper reported on Monday that the price of the trucks, at 6.8 million baht, including import tariffs, was three-times that of the locally-produced model. It was also found the trucks were made in Thailand, exported to Britain, acquired by the Australian firm and then shipped back to Thailand...

More on Samak: What is being said on the Samak-Dusit Show?

### Where Thailand's hybrid truck/canoes came from

February 1, 2006

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Where Thailand's hybrid truck/canoes came from - BoingBoing, February 1, 2006

<u>This BoingBoing post</u> has an interesting comment on where the giant-engined longtail boats came from:

...It's not well known that those boats originate from a change in the British government's motor vehicle Construction and Use Regulations in the late 1960s. What with the new motorway construction programme well under way, the (largely old) truck fleet had begun to get in the way. So the then Ministry of Transport introduced a minimum power-to-weight ratio.

This meant that a ton of trucks with Gardner LX 105hp (mostly) or Perkins P4 engines suddenly became obsolete. Exporting second-hand trucks to places that would accept them (essentially, the third world) was not great business, so they were either scrapped or retrofitted with more wallop. Hence a mass of very reliable, very user-serviceable diesel engines going begging.

Some sly fox saw a chance, and went round the country buying the engines and shipping them to Hong Kong and Singapore for sale to chandlers. As the engine arrived complete with the reverse box and the end of a propshaft, they just put in a length of shaft and a prop. Local boat builders came up with the rest and a new, unmistakable craft was born.

They still have (even brand-new ones with much later power units, radar and GPS) the traditional eyes on each side of the bow, a custom recorded everywhere from the Mediterranean to Japan and back into pre-classical antiquity.

# Committee agrees to reinstate Jaruvan as auditor-general

February 1, 2006

Categories: The Thaksin Years

Committee agrees to reinstate Jaruvan as auditor-general - The Nation, February 1, 2006

...The SAC previously assumed that Jaruvan was disqualified from holding office because the court had ruled against the selection process leading to her appointment, he said. The verdict did not address her job status, however.

"Upon re-examining its stand, the SAC cannot find any provisions in the Constitution or relevant laws to justify the removal of Jaruvan. Meanwhile, the royal

command remains intact as there is no justification for overruling it or disqualifying Jaruvan," he said...

# Saxena could be killed or tortured in Thailand, court told

Categories: Crime

Saxena could be killed or tortured in Thailand, court told - Bangkok Post, February 1, 2006

...Lawyer Russ Chamberlain argued that Mr Saxena would be tortured in Thailand, where human rights were abused and prisoners routinely beaten, shocked with cattle prods and placed in metal cages, the Vancouver Sun newspaper reported...
"To be electrocuted in the genital area would shock the conscience of any fair-minded person, in my respectful submission," Mr Chamberlain told a panel of three

judges in Vancouver, British Columbia on Monday, the report said.

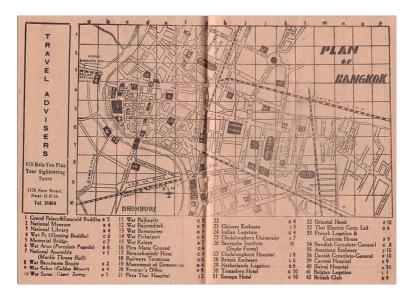
He also said his client would be discriminated against in Thailand as an Indian foreigner.

"There is some evidence that Indians are on the lowest scale of people who live in Thailand," Mr Chamberlain said...
"There is a risk that Mr Saxena will be killed extra-judicially," Mr Chamberlain said. Reading from an affidavit, he said people would rather see Mr Saxena dead than testify against them in court...

# Bangkok in 1953

February 2, 2006

Categories: Old newspapers, Old photos and films



(Source: *Bangkok by Week*, Vol. 7, No. 8, March 20, 1953)

Bangkok in 1953 A series of scans from a KLM Bangkok tourist booklet from 1953. Also: Bangkok in 1966



(Source: *Bangkok by Week*, Vol. 7, No. 8, March 20, 1953)



(Source: *Bangkok by Week*, Vol. 7, No. 8, March 20, 1953)



(Source: Bangkok by Week, Vol. 7, No. 8, March 20, 1953)



(Source: *Bangkok by Week*, Vol. 7, No. 8, March 20, 1953)



(Source: *Bangkok by Week*, Vol. 7, No. 8, March 20, 1953)



(Source: *Bangkok by Week*, Vol. 7, No. 8, March 20, 1953)



(Source: *Bangkok by Week*, Vol. 7, No. 8, March 20, 1953)

CHINESE FOOD

THAT There has bus fall and the second of the property of the pr

(Source: Bangkok by Week, Vol. 7, No. 8, March 20, 1953)

# GOING TO EUROPE ? To go where you wish and see all you wish a car is essential. But there is no need to incur the expense and trouble of bringing your own car. TRAVEL ADVISERS (Thoresen & Co.-SEAT) can arrange for a car to meet you, with or without a chauffeur. They can provide driving licence, insurance and all necessary travel documents and will supply maps and routes for your journeys if you wish. CINEMAS and THAI THEATRES Chalerm Krung Silpakorn Theatre Chalerm Thai Chalerm Nakorn Capitol Sri Ayudhya Sri Rajawong Check with your daily newspaper for cinema programs. Daily Shows: 14.00 16.00 19.00 21.00 New Odeon Texas Sri Krung

(Source: Bangkok by Week, Vol. 7, No. 8, March 20, 1953)

#### WHERE TO ENTERTAIN AND BE ENTERTAINED ......

AND BE ENTERTAINED.

In the control of the control

coad, opposite General Post
Office. Tel. 3008.

Office. Tel. 3008.

HOTHEN LAO DANCE HALL.
On the top floor of one of
Bangkok's hest Chinese restaurants. Dancing until midnight. Dance partners. San
Pelh Road.

LA ROULETTE. Nightelub on
Plernchit Road near the Britith Embassy. Open daily
from 239 p.m. until midwong Road. Tel. 3064.

For list of restaurants serving Chinese and Thai foed,
see page 27
26



Bank of Amer	ina	Opp. G.P.O.	Tel. 3234
Bank of Asia		Sam Yack	Tel. 2221
Bank of Ayudh		Sam Yack	Tel. 2100
Bangkok Bank		Rajawong Road	Tel. 2249
Bank of Canton		Yawarai Road	Tel. 2233
Bank of China		Near Hua Lampong	
Banque de l' In	Jackins	Oriental Avenue	Tel. 3237
Chartered Ban		Chartered Bank Lane	
Hongkong & Sha			Tel. 3132
Hongkong & Sha Indian Oversea		Rajawongse Rd.	Tel. 3134
Laem Thong B		Opp. G.P.O.	Tel. 3016
Mercantile Bar		Bush Lane	Tel. 301
Nationale Hand		Opp. G.P.O.	Tel. 309
Provincial Ban		Thai Nivom Bldg.	Tel. 222
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Siam City Ban			
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(Source: *Bangkok by Week*, Vol. 7, No. 8, March 20, 1953)

Bank of Amer	ica	Opp. G.P.O.	Tel. 3234
Bank of Asia	TO MALL	Sam Yack	Tel. 2221
Bank of Ayudh	Va.	Sam Yaek	Tel. 2100
Bangkok Bank		Rajawong Road	Tel. 2249
Bank of Canton		Yawarai Road	Tel. 2233
Bank of China		Near Hua Lampong	Tel. 2071
Banque de l' In	dochine	Oriental Avenue	Tel. 3237
Chartered Ban		Chartered Bank Lane	Tel. 3053
Hongkong&Sha			Tel. 3132
Indian Oversea		Rajawongse Rd.	Tel. 3134
Laem Thong B		Opp. G.P.O.	Tel. 3016
Mercantile Bar		Bush Lane	Tel. 3011
Nationale Hand		Opp. G.P.O.	Tel. 3095
Provincial Ban		Thai Niyom Bldg.	Tel. 2228
Siam City Ban		Rajdamnern Avenue	Tel. 2339
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Union Bank of			Tel. 2078
			Tel. 2293
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(Source: *Bangkok by Week*, Vol. 7, No. 8, March 20, 1953)

# BECOMING A BANGKOKIAN

RESIDENTIAL PERMIT This is the first thing to take care of upon your arrival here. Report to the Immigration Department in Surisak Road. There is a perilo of three days grace, but it is best to take care of this the day after you reach Bangkok. Take with you sphotographs and Tes. 1,000.00 for the Residential Permit fee. You will find that the officials in charge speak English, so you will not need an interpreter.

not need an interpreter.

IEENTIFY CARD or Alien Registration Certificate

you will learn to call It Buf Ibaq Da— is the next document, to obtain for which you will have to apply at the

common state of the district in which you are living for

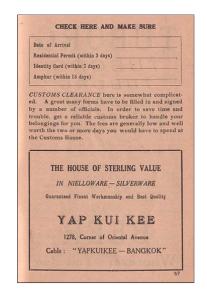
the time being. This must be done within 7 alays from the
day on which you received your Immigration or Residential Permit. You will need 3 photographs size 6 cm.

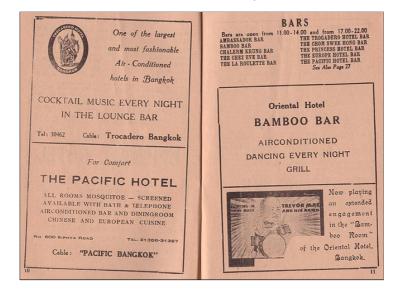
wide by 6 cm. long. The Identify Card may be issued for
one year, in which case you will pay a fee of Tex. 400.00,

or for a period of 5 years, the fee being Tex. 1,000.00.

CHANGE OF RESIDENCE If, when you move luto your own home, you move into another Amphur (Amphur means registration district, also District Registration Office), you will have to check out from the original district, taking your Identity Card with you so that the change may be recorded in it. Also check out at your local Police Station. You must then report to the District Police Station of your new home within 7 days, the Registration Office within 15 days of taking up your new residence.

FORMS Get all necessary forms before you see any of these authorities and have them filled in -in That. This will save you a great deal of time at the various offices. FINES Be sure to act according to these regulations as heavy fines are imposed for any contraventions.





(Source: *Bangkok by Week*, Vol. 7, No. 8, March 20, 1953)







(Source: *Bangkok by Week*, Vol. 7, No. 8, March 20, 1953)

# GETTING AROUND TRICYCLE TAILS (known as asmior to the Bangkokian) are Bangkok's most typical form of transport. But it is also a leisurely one, so take a taxe when you are in hurry. A similor diven in the control of the control of



TRANSPORTATION

Since distances in Bang, kok are relatively great, a car is an absolute necessity for the permanent resident. If you have not brought a car with you, you will almost certainly find your favourite make for sale here. Recent import restrictions, however, have resulted in waiting lists for most popular makes.

While waiting for delivery of your car, it may be worth-while renting a car from either the Anglo-Thai Motors Ltd. or from some local resident going home on leave.

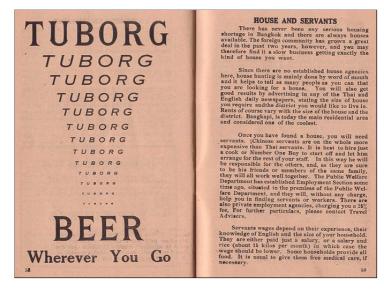
DRIVING LICENSE:

At the Criminal Investigation Department, Rama I Road,
Take with you two 3° photographs, your identity card,
passport and, if you have one, previous vail driving
license, A valid license is such out taking a cest. Other
obtains you clearly control of the con

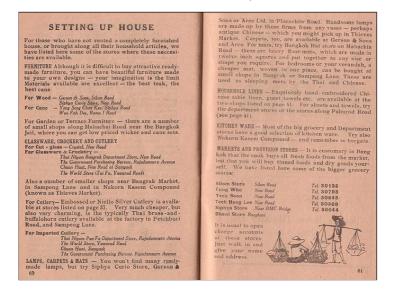
(Source: Bangkok by Week, Vol. 7, No. 8, March 20, 1953)







(Source: *Bangkok by Week*, Vol. 7, No. 8, March 20, 1953)



(Source: *Bangkok by Week*, Vol. 7, No. 8, March 20, 1953)

Left: On the forum: <u>1953</u> <u>Bangkok medical facilities – KTM brochure</u>





**CLUBS** and **SPORTS** 

page 25 is quite similar, requiring sponsorship of new members by a proposer and seconder. You can ascertal the exact amounts of entrace and monthly fees from the club secretaries.

club secretaries.

TENNIS The British Club (for British Nationals only)
The Silom Club
The Royal Bangkok Sports Club
The Cosmopolitan Club
GOLF The Royal Bangkok Sports Club
The Royal Bangkok Sports Club
The Royal Turf Club
RIDING The Bangkok Riding and Polo Club
The Cavalry Glub

(Source: *Bangkok by Week*, Vol. 7, No. 8, March 20, 1953)

# BANGKOK DAILY NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES Although there are over thirty Thai and Chinese daily newspapers and magazines in Baughok, there are only three daily newspapers in English; The Bangkok Prott (Evening) The Liberty (Evening) The Bangkok Trothen (Morning) and only one locally published weekly magazine. The Standard, which appears every Saturday. You can obtain a number of pictorial magazines published shround at the higger booktores. LEARNING THE LANGUAGE You will most probably wish to acquire at least some knowledge of Thai. Your chiffen will speak it fluently within three months of arrival - but an adult generally has some difficulties with the five tones of the language. But don't an discouraged, there are some excellent teachers here. The Y.W. C. A. has regular classes both for beginners and advanced stadents. The American University Alumni Association also teaches two courses in Thai. BOOKS ON THAILAND We have listed here some of the books written about Tailind, which would interest the newcomer to Bangkol. All these are available at the Belison Bays Library in Servivong for the standard of the Company of the Service of the Service range in Section and one-Section of the Section of books on South England the Croshy Sam At The Country of Section of Service Sam At The Country of Service Section of South Country Impressions of Section Twontieth Center, Impr

# Odds and ends

February 3, 2006

Odds and ends

- February 3, 2006

\* From the <u>Sunday</u>
<u>Mail</u>: Under Thai law, jet skis may only be operated
by people holding a valid Thai sea captain's licence but the regulation
has never been enforced in Phuket.

\* And an <u>interesting</u>
<u>comment</u> from the <u>Pattaya Mail</u> about rail transit to
Pattaya.

# Sondhi's protest instructions

February 4, 2006

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

Sondhi's protest instructions

- February 4, 2006

Back to the High tension in Thailand
main page

This is a small booklet being handed out around town giving details and instructions about the protest at the Royal Plaza on February 4.

**Right:** Rescue the nation – 4 February





**Left:** Make protest signs in English too because English-language signs are honored by being in the international media...



A few of the tips in the booklet (everything points for people to be prepared for a long stay):

- Bring some mouthwash

   Don't forget to bring your cell phone charger and batteries

   Bring a hat

   Women should know all the things they need to bring

   Underwear: some can only wear for one day, others can go for several days
  - Women can wear long skirts, but pants are better
     Bring several pairs of socks to change into

More on High tension in Thailand



 $\frac{Back\ to\ the\ \textbf{High\ tension\ in\ Thailand\ main}}{page}$ 

# February 4, 2006 protest news

February 4, 2006

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008





Headlines - February 6, 2006

Thai Rath (above left): The political situation is very hot – a minister resigns – follows Pa-U

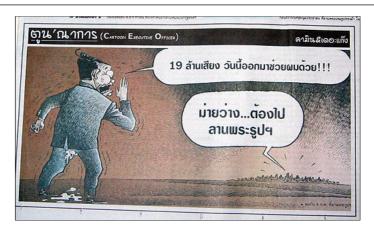
Komchadluek (above right): Waking up millions to collapse Thaksin - Sondhi leads the mob

Komchadluek (detail, left): These days, every leader is being compared to Hitler...

Matichon (above left): Maew talks impolitely about the King saying that if the King wishes him to leave, he is ready to leave immediately

Surfers flock to net for news of rally - The Nation, February 7, 2006

Saturday's February 4 "Liberation Rally" was credited for driving a record number of Thai Internet users to media websites as they sought out real-time updates of the situation...



(Source: Phujatkan, February 4, 2006)

# Front page editorial from Phujatkan - February 4, 2006

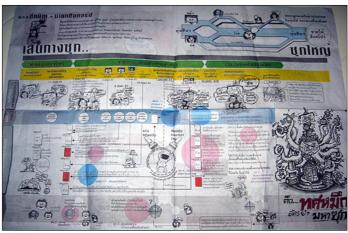
Thaksin (wetting his pants): 19 million who voted for me, come today to help me. The people: We are busy because we are going to the King Rama V monument

<

February 4 protest broadsheet - February 4, 2006

**Right and below:** Cartoons and explanation from the protest broadsheet explaining the alleged profiteering of Prime Minister Thaksin and his family.







# Flyer from the February 4 protest – February 4, 2006

**Left:** It is time for a new PM. I volunteer to be the new Prime Minister. Dalan Kongkuaboon from "People who want to end the national debt."

More flyers from the February 4 protest – February 4, 2006

Right: Sticker: Who sells the nation?

**Below:** Police flyer telling people to remain nonviolent at the February 4 protest.







(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Almost like being there: Sondhi's anti-Thaksin rally - February 4, 2006



Anti-Thaksin protests - February 4, 2006

BANGKOKIAN: Kingmaker returns from the sidelines of political obscurity – The Nation, February 4, 2006

..."I once asked his wife why they needed tens of billions of baht and was told, 'Since politics requires money, and I have to pay a lot, I have to consider it a kind of business'. I once warned The Man, but he went all quiet and acted offended. I can't speak about this within the party. Can't even say it in Parliament. That's why I said is like being in jail..."

**Left:** The Nation front page from February 4, 2006.

Sondhi's protest instructions – February 4, 2006

 $\textbf{Right:} \ \textit{Rescue the nation} - 4 \ \textit{February}$ 



<u>ANTI-THAKSIN RALLY: DAY OF RECKONING</u> – *The Nation*, February 4, 2006

...Ongoing tensions over Thak-sin have led to speculation that there are four directions in which he could head — stay on in defiance, resign in disgrace, dissolve the House or leave the country...

More on High tension in Thailand

Thai students in Hawaii to protest - translated and summarized from Krungtep Turakit, February 3, 2006

Krungtep Turakit reports that Thai students in Hawaii will protest Thaksin on February 4. They also sent an open letter to Phokin Polkul, the Chairperson of the House of Representatives to assure freedom, rights and freedom of the people.

More on High tension in Thailand

Intercepting people – translated and summarized from Nation TV, February 3, 2006

Many people have been intercepted many places.

Thaksin said he does not know what to do... If he resigns, what will happen to people who selected him...

More on High tension in Thailand

# BANGKOKIAN: Kingmaker returns from the sidelines of political obscurity - The Nation, February 4, 2006

..."I once asked his wife why they needed tens of billions of baht and was told, 'Since politics requires money, and I have to pay a lot, I have to consider it a kind of business'. I once warned The Man, but he went all quiet and acted offended. I can't speak about this within the party. Can't even say it in Parliament. That's why I said is like being in jail..."

More on High tension in Thailand

Quotes from Uraiwan - February 4, 2006

From <u>Culture Minister Uraiwan Thienthong resigns</u>, The Nation: "The current political situation is not conducive and I have to uphold the proper political ethics of good governance," she told a news conference.

From Uraiwan resigns, undermines Thaksin, Bangkok Post: "I can't understand the current state of political etiquette and morality,"

From **Uraiwan told reporters**, "A politician must have morals," *Komchadluek*: "Pa U left the Culture Ministry's chair to keep political ethics. "Thaksin doesn't care. He will set up Mr. Surakiet to maintain the ministry instead. He went to Klong Toei community and asked people do not to join with Sonthi."

More on High tension in Thailand

Pa U's son said she resigned because she is feeling conflicted that her husband contradicts with Thaksin – translated and summarized from *Komchadluek*, February 4, 2006

Wang Nam Yen MPs gather at a Muang Thong Thani house to seriously discuss the future of their Group. Meanwhile "Sorawong" pointed she resigned because of feeling conflicted that Sanoh contradicts with PM Thaksin.

More on High tension in Thailand



Thai newspaper websites ready for the protests – February 3, 2006 Manager website (above) and The Nation (below)



# Rumors

Shin employees told to leave office afterwork - The Nation, February 3, 2006

Some employees of Shin Corp received mails from the higher-ups in the afternoon to leave office immediately after work, following a rumour that those who are dissatisfied with the company's share sale to Temasek Holdings would storm into the office.

The message was then passed on to other employees who worked in the Shin I Building on Phaholyothin Road. They were informed of the rumour that those protesters gathered in front of the Revenue Department and they would move onto the Shin building

"I don't understand why we have to encounter this," an employee said with watery eyes.

But no protest turned up at the office as feared.

Thai central bank says weaker baht unrelated to politics – Reuters, February 2, 2006

The Thai baht weakness on Friday was due to a stronger dollar and unrelated to domestic politics and a planned public rally against Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, Bank of Thailand Governor Pridiyathorn Devakula said...

Government denies rumors about February 4 demonstrations - Komchadluek, February 2, 2006

The Interior Minster denied the rumor that the government said an unrest group will take bombs to the antigovernment rally on Saturday, February 4. More on High tension in Thailand

 $U.S.\ Embassy\ Bangkok: "...please\ do\ not\ approach\ the\ demonstrators"-February\ 2,2006$ 

Public Announcement from US Embassy Bangkok

Attention American Citizens:

The Royal Thai Police (RTP) authorities have confirmed that a large demonstration is expected to occur in the area of the King Rama 5 statue, Rajdamneon Avenue, near Sanam Luang and Government House in Bangkok on Saturday, February 4. Police estimate up to 100,000 people will gather in an anti-Thai Prime Minister Thaksin demonstration headed by Sonthi Limthongkul, a prominent Thai government critic. The crowd will include several diverse groups of demonstrators and is expected to start assembling in the morning with no announced starting or ending times. Organizers have not indicated a marching route, should they leave the area. Bangkok demonstrations are usually peaceful in nature, but all demonstrations are unpredictable and conditions can change unexpectedly. The RTP has indicated that 2,000 – 3,000 police officers will be on hand to maintain public order. There are concerns that anti-Sonthi groups may attempt to confront the demonstrators, which could lead to violence. For this reason, please do not approach the demonstrators.

The Embassy encourages all Americans to avoid this area. Should you find yourself in or near the demonstrators, move indoors for shelter until the demonstration has passed, or ask for police assistance to leave the area. While the demonstration is not expected to pass near U.S. Embassy facilities, Embassy entrances and functions may be restricted depending on circumstances.

For the latest security information, Americans living and traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs Internet web site at http://travel.state.gov, where the current Worldwide Caution, Public Announcements, and Travel Warnings can be found. Up-to-date information on security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the U.S., or, for callers outside the U.S. and Canada, a regular toll line at 1-317-472-2328. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

The Nation covers the run-up to February 4, 2006

# POLITICAL CRISIS: PM defiant as outrage surges - The Nation, February 3, 2006

...An urgent meeting was called at Ban Chan Song La, Thaksin's residence to analyse the political crisis after growing anti-government sentiment from the Shin Corp sell-off.

At the tense meeting, a person known as one who Thaksin respects suggested that the prime minister resign as a pre-emptive move to stop the rally amid fears it could turn violent. He believed that Sondhi could mobilise a formidable crowd in the capital after two weeks touring the provinces to seek support. The meeting went into detail about which MPs would be best suited and who Thaksin would trust to take over his job.

However, other top party officials wanted more than just a face-lift, arguing a House dissolution was the only way out. They disagreed over the method of having Thaksin resign, reasoning that it would not end the current conflicts because Thai Rak Thai Party would still be running the country...

# OVERDRIVE: Thaksin's dilemma: Cash out or stay put – The Nation, February 3, 2006

...Nobody can really predict whether the rally will spill over like the May tragedy in 1992, or whether it will fizzle out like the previous demonstration at Government House. Still, if the political situation were to worsen, Temasek Holdings of Singapore, or other foreign buyers, would not risk buying Shin Corp and Thaksin's window of opportunity to sell Shin Corp would be closed forever. Selling Shin Corp for almost US\$2 billion was, as Thaksin said, not as easy as selling khanom kheng. To play it safe, Thaksin decided to seal the deal with Temasek before February 4. It's normal that if you're not certain about the future, you prefer to have cash in hand rather than stocks or other assets...

# Analysis: Echoes of '92 as Saturday shapes as day of drama – The Nation, February 3, 2006

... Yet it must be incomprehensible to him that a "just" decision by Channel 9 in mid-September to cancel Sondhi's weekly TV programme — claiming the media maverick had insulted His Majesty and the monarchy — might send his administration to the brink of collapse...

Back to the High tension in Thailand main page

# Sondhi's anti-Thaksin rally

February 4, 2006 Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Almost like being there: Sondhi's anti-Thaksin rally - February 4,  $2006\,$ 

Back to the **High tension in Thailand**<u>main page</u>



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Panorama of the scene  $-\frac{\text{full}}{\text{version } (171\text{kb})}$ 



 $\label{eq:Photo:Bangkok.com} (Photo: 2Bangkok.com)$  Protesters surround the Rama V statue.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

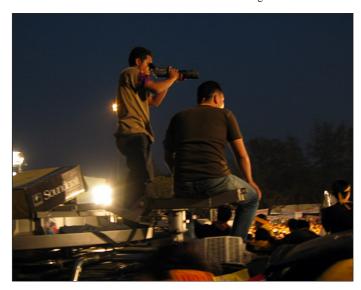


(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

A reporter standing on a box gets ready to report.



 $\label{eq:conditional} \mbox{(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)}$  Protesters with bathroom buses in the background.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)
Security keeps an eye on the crowd.

Back to the **High tension in Thailand** main page

# Comments on the Black May 1992 story

February 4, 2006

Categories: Black May 1992





Remembering Black May 1992
An eyewitness account with never-before seen photos from the 2Bangkok.com archives

Part I - Background & A night on the bridge

Part II - Crossing the lines

Part III – A hot afternoon

Part IV - The shooting starts

Part V - Ian Neumegen, a foreigner killed in the disturbances

 ${\bf Part~VI-\underline{Soldiers~advance~through~Banglampoo}}$ 

Part VII - Aftermath

Comments on the Black May 1992 story

Comments on the Black May 1992 story - June 29, 2004

After noting in the final part of the Black May 1992 story that very few people seemed interested in the events of Black May, 2Bangkok.com received quite a bit of email...

\* I'd just like to say that I enjoyed reading your series of articles on the Black May in Bangkok. Hard to imagine that these things happened just 12 short years ago. It is puzzling that you would receive so little feedback on what would seem to be a fairly significant event.

\* Great site. Thought the Black May memorial was excellent. Very sad and very telling.

\* I am very surprised to read that no one contacted you about the Black May reports. In fact, I have read all parts of it and actually waited for any part to appear. It was very interesting to me because back then I was not interested in Thailand yet and while the LA riots got a lot of news coverage in Germany I cannot remember to hear anything about the Bangkok shootings. When you started the photo series I put a link on some German Thailand forum and many people where thankful of that.

By the way, I really like 2Bangkok.com and looking at it almost every day. Keep up the good work.

\* Your piece on Black May was great stuff. I appreciate it and all of the effort that went into it. Thanks a lot for helping me fill in some of the huge gaps in my understanding of Thai history.



\* Just finished reading the pages on Black May after a friend had send me the link. Very interesting stuff. Did not really know much about this, so thanks for shedding some light on this part of Thailand's history

(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

I tried to show it to a few of my younger Thai friends, but they all refused to see it. I think among younger people there is a kind of embarrassment over the events...

\* I'm a regular and avid fan of 2Bangkok.com. I stumbled upon your account of Black May and was enthralled. Your personal account of a recent historical event with your own photographs is the World Wide Web at its best.

Back to Part I - Background & A night on the bridge

# Tomas' Black May Story

February 4, 2006

Categories: Black May 1992

Tomas' Black May story - February 4, 2006

Tomas From writes: In 1992, I had spent some weeks in northern Thailand with Chiang Mai as my base. I had read some about the demonstrations around the Democracy Monument in the Bangkok Post, but I was a little bit unsure what it was all about. I had been out for about 5-6 months (this was my second trip to Asia) and it was getting time to return home. Having some stuff left in Melaca, Malaysia (bag of clothes and a CD-stereo I bought in Singapore), I went south. I managed to lose my VISA card the last day in Chiang Mai.



(Photo: Tomas From)

I arrived Bangkok 17th of May and managed to get a room at a guesthouse at Samsen north of Khao San Road where I had stayed before. Running low on cash and with no VISA card, I struck a deal with the lady that managed the guesthouse that I could pay for the room and the food when I checked out. I took the Chao Phraya express boat down to the GPO to make a collect call to the VISA center in London to cancel my stolen VISA card and try to get a new card.



(Photo: Tomas From)

VISA could not really tell me how I could get a new card. After a brief discussion we agreed that I should phone back the day after and they would find out how to help me by then. The day after, the 18th of May, there were alot of discussions at the guesthouse on what was really happening in Bangkok. I went down to the area around Royal Hotel/Sanam Luang/Democracy Monument to find out for myself. After hanging around for a while and taking some pictures I felt that I had seen enough.



(Photo: Tomas From)

I spent my last baht on the Chaopraya Express down to the GPO and phoned the VISA center again. They urged me to go to Kuala Lumpur where they could issue a new VISA card. The problem was whether or not there was a curfew in Bangkok because they were not allowed to issue VISA cards in countries with a curfews. I explained that I didn't even have money enough to take the Chaopraya express home so Kuala Lumpur was out of the question. We agreed that they would phone me the day after at my guesthouse after finding out whether there was a curfew or not. With absolutely no cash I started the long walk home. It was getting dark.



(Photo: Tomas From)

At one place I walked passed two burnt-out police cars on a deserted street and it was now pitch-black. I took a picture of them (above). Just after I took the picture there was a volley of 4-5 tracers fired from a distance of maybe 100 meters coming in really close.



(Photo: Tomas From)



(Photo: Tomas From)

I could hear the bullets whizzing around me. This was the first time I realized that they were actually shooting at people. I thought maybe they misinterpreted the camera flash for a weapon firing and then shot back. I think this was the last picture I took. I did not dare using my flash after that. Feeling uneasy I decided to go home. I managed to get to Khao San Road where at the top of Khao San Road by the police station I started to talk with a German guy (or maybe he was Swiss or Austrian, I think he spoke English with a German accent anyway). I told him about the incident at the car wreck and as we spoke some Thai guys torched a civilian car just where we stood. It was so unreal, we just stood there and looked. The Thais got agitated, shouting in Thai pointing their fingers at the police station. I turned and looked and I could see rifle barrels sticking out the windows on the top floor of the police station.



(Photo: Tomas From)

All of us started running down the street towards Royal Hotel/Sanam Luang at the same time. When I and the German guy came down there we saw that the barbed wire blocking Ratchadamnoen Avenue between Royal Hotel and Democracy Monument earlier that day was gone now. There was sporadic gunfire from Phan Fa Bridge and what I guess was from somewhere in Sanam Luang. You could see tracers now and they were flying quite high so I assumed they were firing in the air trying to disperse people. I wanted to go home, but I did not dare return to the police station at Khao San Road. Ratchadamnoen Avenue, which looked quite deserted now seemed like a bright idea. We walked towards the Democracy Monument and came about halfway when they started shooting up Ratchadamnoen Avenue from Democracy Monument. You could tell by the angle of the tracers that they were not firing in the air now. We took cover behind one of the flowerbeds.

We lay there for maybe 15 minutes and we saw some people being carried past us towards the Royal Hotel. Then a tankcar full of petrol or oil was driven up on the opposite side and torched. The heat became intense. We agreed that this was not the best place to be in so we rose up and tried to make it back towards the Royal Hotel. I guess I only came 10 meters before I was hit in the back, flew five meters and landed on my hands. I turned around just in time to see the German guy fall in a way it looked like he took a bullet in his hip or thigh (I've never seen him since). A few seconds later there were Thais everywhere picking us up and running towards the Royal Hotel where there were a lot of ambulances parked outside. It took maybe 10-15 minutes to Ramathibodi Hospital. There was no traffic in Bangkok that night which seems kind of unreal when you walk in Bangkok nowadays. After 10-15 minutes in the emergency ward, I was rushed to surgery.



(Photo: Unknown)

I got a picture of some of the nurses, one of them had just graduated before I was admitted (above). I remember her name was Jintana. They took really good care of me for three weeks. I do not remember what ward it was, but I think it was on the fifth floor. Like everybody who had to stay more than two days in the hospital, I got compensation from the Thai government. I think it was 32,000 baht which was just enough for a plane ticket home and return three months later. One funny detail is after three weeks in hospital I overstayed my visa by five days and had to pay a fine before I could board the plane to leave Thailand.

Having to move back to my mothers house at age 23 and not be able to work (I was not in really good shape). I managed to get a scholarship and I returned to Chiang Mai and studied Thai for six months before I returned to Sweden to continue with my life.

Another Black May 1992 story

# Siamese Actors – Love Scene

February 4, 2006 Categories: Old photos and films



(Source: Undated postcard, circa 1925)

Siamese Actors – Love Scene – February 4, 2006

# Thailand's drive on fake passports, other forgeries

February 4, 2006 Categories: Scams

Thailand's drive on fake passports, other forgeries –
The Manila Times, February 4, 2006
...European police consider Thailand a haven for forgery. In the past two years, Thai police have seized more than 1,400 fake passports and arrested 17 foreigners for possessing them...

# Thai record labels target Japan online

February 4, 2006 Categories: Music

Thai record labels target Japan online – AFP, February 4, 2006
Thailand's music industry is cashing in on Japan's booming market for digital music downloads, using the Internet to introduce new artists in hopes that Thai pop will be the next big thing...

# **Hunting the Thai hitmen**

February 6, 2006 Categories: Crime

Hunting the Thai hitmen – The Australian,
February 6, 2006
... The latest clean-up follows a long history of blood-splattered campaigns often referred to as "the killing season", with candidates hiring mui phuen, or gunmen, to rub out their connectition. competition...

# Regime nervous about US and Thai intentions

February 7, 2006

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

# Regime

nervous about US and Thai intentions – The

Irrawaddy, February 7, 2006

A "top secret" document obtained by The Irrawaddy reveals that Burma's military leaders are fearful of possible attack or invasion by the US, and closely monitors Thailand, which is one of the US's most important allies in the region...
The document also says that senior military leaders wanted to counter Thailand's annual joint military exercises with the US, known as "Cobra Gold." It adds that Burma will match "Cobra Gold" with an "Operation Hawk," though it did not elaborate on the nature of this exercise.
The Thai annual exercise once took place along the Thai-Burmese border. That exercise was held under the command of former Thai army chief Gen Surayuth Chulanont, setting off alarm bells in Rangoon...

# Scientists hail discovery of hundreds of new species in remote New Guinea

February 7, 2006

Categories: Wildlife and Nature

hail discovery of hundreds of new species in remote New Guinea

- The Independent, February 7, 2006

In a jungle camp site, surrounded by giant flowers and unknown plants, the researchers watched rare bowerbirds perform elaborate courtship rituals. The surrounding forest was full of strange mammals, such as tree kangaroos and spiny anteaters, which appeared totally unafraid, suggesting no previous contact with humans...

# Chiang Mai Mass Transit News 2004-2006

February 8, 2006 Categories: Mass Transit

# Chiang Mai Subway Map

Although no colors have been assigned to the Chiang Mai Subway routes, they are colored in this map to make the routes clearer.

Line 1- Red Line 2 - Blue Line 3 - Green Line 4 - Grey

The old city moat is the black square.



## Latest News

# Traffic relief for Chiang Mai - The Nation, May 7, 2006

...Narong said the city would likely opt for a bus rapid transit (BRT) system, using 18-metre-long public buses running inside dedicated traffic lanes.

...At this stage, it is still unclear which local authority will be in charge of operating the planned mass transit.

The Provincial Administrative Organisation has the jurisdiction, but it may lack experience in running a system of this scale so an alternative is to set up a special organisation to oversee the system.

The CTS scheme was approved in principle by the Cabinet several years ago, but the funding details have never been finalised...

Google Earth placemark for Chiang Mai

Tunnel route study approved by cabinet - Mae Hong Son to Chiang Mai shortcut - Bangkok Post, February 8, 2006

...The Ministry of Transport would be in charge of studying the viability and construction costs of the project, which would help shorten the route between Chiang Mai to Mae Hong Son by 60km, said government spokesman Surapong Suebwonglee...

The existing Chiang Mai-Mae Hong Son route was well-known for being tough on drivers as it has almost 2,000 curves, but this was part of the innate charm of these northern provinces, he said.

The cabinet yesterday also approved around a five-billion-baht budget for development projects in Chiang Mai and all seven upper northern provinces. The approved projects include a 300 million baht to tackle floods in Chiang Mai, a plan to build another knowledge park in Chiang Mai, similar to Thailand Knowledge Park (TK Park) in Bangkok, a plan to introduce the sufficiency economy concept to Karen communities and the preservation plan around Chiang Mai's old city duct

For the upper northern provinces, the cabinet approved around 27.6 million baht for a plan to develop the Wiang Lor archeological site in Phayao and 13 projects under the strategy to turn the region into a software and medical hub as well as to become a gateway for investment and transportation, connecting the Greater Mekong Sub-region countries and members of the Bangladesh-India-Myanmar-Sri Lanka-Thailand Economic Cooperation, or Bimstec.

The projects include a new road running parallel to the railway between Chiang Mai and Lamphun, and improvement of Mae Hong Son airport...

CHIANG MAI: Elevated train network plan over 5 years - Bangkok Post, February 6, 2006

Work is underway on a mass transit master plan that should lead to a network of above-ground electric rail lines here in five years...

# Chiang Rak and turnkey projects - December 6, 2005

Premier Thaksin said that he objects the proposal of OTP and Pheng who ask to terminate intercity trains at Chiang Rak due to complaints from riders. Furthermore, Premier Thaksin said he perfers turnkey projects with contractors with deep pockets—even though most people know that turnkey projects are corruption prone.

The defunct Hopewell would be a good reminder of the perils of turnkey projects, but Premier Thaksin has few choices due to budget constraints along with sliding popularity. More can be seen here.

Minister Pheng handling the proposed Chiang Mai LRT - translated and summarized from Than Setthakij, September 15-17, 2005

Minister Pheng is going to handle Chiang Mai traffic jams by the order from the PM by solving three problems:

- 1) Inadequate mass transit systems
- 2) Traffic jam
- 3) Pollution

The short term solution is to revamp the minibus routes with total distance of 555 km with 150 buses and 1500 mini buses and a price tag of 700 million baht. Phase 2 would require 270 more buses and 500 more minibuses to cover another 589 km route with a price tag of 1.2 billion baht. This is to be started in 2010. Phase 3 would require a 414 km expansion of bus routes without extra investment started in 2020.

The middle term and longer term resolution is to realize Chiang Mai LRT to be handled by OTP with two phases to implement.

- 1) 35 km LRT lines within the municipal area with 3 routes and a price tag of 6 billion baht
- 1.1) Chiang Mai Government Center Buak Krok (11.47km)
- 1.2) Land Transportation Office San Sai (13.2 km)
- 1.3) Chiang Mai Zoo Chiang Mai Land (14.4 km)
- 2) The expansion of Chiang Mai LRT by 35 km along with 34-km BRT routes with a price tag of 6 billion baht.

However, MOTC would ask OTP to define the elevated section, at grade section and underground sections, especially the section within/around the City Moat along with the project synchronization. Furthermore, these projects must not hurt the old city of more than 700 years old like Chiang Mai and they have to listen to the local people to minimize detrimental impacts.

Three lines of Chiang Mai LRT - translated and summarized from Siam Thurakij, June 15-17, 2005

OTP has come up with the following mass transit plan for Chiang Mai to start in 2006 and be complete by 2025.

- 1) Electrifying and double tracking of Chaing Mai-Lamphun section for local trains
- 2) Finishing the Denchai-Chaing Rai Railway
- 3) Intercity motorway from Chaing Mai to Mae Hong Son and Lampang to Nan via Phrae and Phayao to cut down traveling time from 5-6 hours to 2-3 hours
- 4) Reorganization of Chiang Mai Red Minibus along with the introduction of Chaing Mai aircon buses
- 5) Chiang Mai LRT three routes with a total distance of 33 km and target number of passengers of 300,000 a day for the whole system
- 5.1) Chiang Mai Bureaucrat Center Sankamphaeng via City Moat, Chaing Mai Bus terminal and Chiang Mai Railway Station
- 5.2) Chiang Mai University Chiang Mai Land via City Moat

- 5.3) San Sai Chiang Mai International Airport Hang Dong
- 6) The completion of the missing link in the Chiang Mai Ring Superhighway (about 4 km) which may a TBM drilling machine to complete.
- 7) The 2nd Chiang Mai International Airport

Chiang Mai transit notes - translated and summarized from Manager Daily, May 26, 2005

Chiang Mai LRT study is not finished yet-it will wait until OTP receives a budget in 2006.

Even though the Chiang Mai Municipality is desperate for better buses as well as a Chiang Mai LRT to replace the Mafia-plagued red minibus, the loss ridden BMTA would not be a good role model for Chiang Mai buses. Even though there are 34 concession red minibuses in Chiang Mai, only 8 lines follow specified routes. The rest merely go where they need to go. The concession line system uses a map, not people, as the main criteria for the lines.

Chiang Mai Municipality may have to allocate 100 million baht from 300-400 million baht vehicle taxes to finance Chiang Mai bus and even more for a Chiang Mai LRT.

MOTC investing 170 billion baht in 15 years for northern transport development - translated and summarized from Manager Daily, May 13, 2005

MOTC has planned to invest 170 billion baht in 15 years to develop the northern transportation system to turn the northern region into a gateway – by realizing Denchai-Chiang Rai railway, new highways, and new Chiang Saen Port. MOTC also invites the local government to join with these MOTC northern transportation development schemes to cut redundancy.

After the seminar with OTP in Chiang Rai, OTP said MOTC is going to invest 170 billion baht over 15 years to turn the northern region into the full fledged northern gateway connecting with China, Burma or even the Indian subcontinent. In 2006, the first 1-2 billion baht would start to support this massive project. The list of projects are:

- 1) Denchai Chiang Rai (250 km) with a price tag of 40-50 billion baht
- 2) Chiangmai International Airport Expansion with a price tag to 3 billion baht
- 3) Chiang Saen 2 Port 1 billion baht to cope with busy cargo between China and Thailand. Chiang Saen 2 port will be on 400 rai of reformed land ready for service in 2008 with space for an additional 20 cargo boats for agricultural products and PTT oil tankers. China and other countries along the Mekhong have signed an agreement to guarantee that the Mekhong would have water at least 2 meters deep which allows all season river transportation.
- 4) Turning the 4-lane highways into 8-lane highways for the 17 northern provinces.

MOTC would allow local people and governments to participate this plan to minimize redundancy which has wasted billions of baht.

# Chiang Mai bus service delayed - The Nation, May 12, 2005

...The launch of 26 eco-friendly municipal buses designed to alleviate traffic congestion along two major routes servicing several schools has been delayed indefinitely because of delays in the approval of concessions.

...Representatives of the Lanna Transport Cooperative, comprised of owners and drivers of the songteaw passenger pickup buses that have maintained a monopoly on Chiang Mai's mass transportation system, assert the planned bus routes would overlap with their regular transport routes...

# Songtaews imperil bus plan - The Nation, March 22, 2005

...The dispute has raised a commotion in Chiang Mai. Local newspapers, radio stations, and web boards have been inundated with comments from residents critical of the songtaew cooperative, which is seen as supporting the ill-mannered road behaviour of songtaew drivers and their long record of protesting any form of competition.

The songtaew drivers warned that if they are taken off the streets, they would demand compensation of Bt1 million per vehicle from the government of, or a total of more than Bt2.7 billion...

Earlier: Finally! Public transportation in Chiang Mai - The Nation, February 25, 2005

...The three main routes for the trial service are Nong Prateep intersection to the foot of Doi Suthep (17 kilometres), Nong Hoi intersection to the 7th Infantry in Mae Rim (12km), and Chiang Mai railway station to Huay Kaew Road (13km).

The routes have been established for some time, with yellow buses having plied them more than 10 years ago...

OTP planning for Chiangmai transportation hub: 176 billion baht price tag – translated and summarized from *Transport Journal*, December 16-31, 2004 OTP is planning for a Chiangmai transportation hub after receiving the request from Premier Thaksin to support the BIMSTEC economic zone (Bangladesh, India, Myanma, Thailand, China–southwestern provinces), The project has the price tag of 176 billion baht. The selected projects are:

- 1) Chiangmai LRT a study on the viable routes done by Chiangmai University to be delivered to OTP. LRT is the only option for an old city like Chiangmai.
- 2) Airport Railway (or Airport LRT) connecting Chaingmai International Airport with downtown Chiangmai–either old Chaignmai or New Chiangmai Airport.
- 3) Reorganization of Chiangmai Red minibuses to function as feeder lines
- 4) New motorways linking Chaingmai with other northern cities such as Mae Hongson, Chiang Rai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phrae, Nan, Phayao
- 5) Double tracking of Chaingmai-Lamphun as both suburban lines as well as support for cargo
- 6) Realization of Denchai-Chiang Rai route with the extension to Chiang Khong Port

Short-term solutions are to construct flyovers and tunnels around Chaingmai to be done in 2006 with a price tag of 1 billion baht. Medium-term solutions are to construct road networks with a price tag of 40 billion baht from 2007 to 2013.

The long term is to implement Chiang Mai LRT network, double tracking of Chiangmai-Lamphun, the new Denchai-Chiang Rai railway and ultimately, the second Chiangmai International Airport. This has to be done from 2014 to 2024.

# Govt speeds up Chiang Mai's mass transit project - TNA, November 18, 2004

...Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra has approved 140 million baht for the study at a roving cabinet meeting, held in Thailand's northern city of Lamphun, two months ago.

The electric rail system, other rail transit systems, private local taxi services and the municipality's air-conditioned buses will be included in the study.

... "The construction period should not be longer than two years," he said...

German experts invited for Chiangmai LRT system - translated and summarized from Manager Online, August 7, 2004

The Traffic Policy Office is inviting German experts to study the Chiangmai LRT so as to find the right system for Chiangmai. The plan will be started by the end of this month.

After the cabinet resolution for the study of the Chiangmai LRT, Chiangmai City Hall needs experts from other countries to get more data for the right system for Chiangmai–after discussion to demarcate the preliminary routs for the LRT.

So far, Chiangmai City Hall trusts German technology for mass transit system since their work in Bangkok has been a proven success.

Commentary: The opinions about the proposed Chiangmai LRT can be seen <a href="here">here</a>. Most netters have very positive viewpoints except those who have a vested interest on the red minibus whose owners happen to be Premier Thaksin's sister.

Chiangmai LRT becoming a reality by the end of 2006 – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, July 12, 2004 & *Dailynews*, July 13, 2004
The Traffic Policy Office is planning for the 4-billion baht Chiangmai LRT proposed by the Chiangmai Municipality to be done by the end of 2006 after receiving 147 million baht in study funds. At the same time, the Traffic Policy Office is asking Chiangmai Municipality to reorganize some parts of the little red Chiangmai minibus by the mid-2005.

This 147 million baht study fund will enable both the Traffic Policy Office and Chaingmai Municipality to collect additional data from the existing proposed routes (Chiangmai New Government Office – Chotetana Road – Chaingmai Airport – Hang Dong), the cost for system implementation and so on. This will help Chaingmai to handle traffic which is going to increase from 1 million trips a day in 2004 to 2.5 million trips a day in 2014.

It will take 9 months to come up with the right form of LRT as well as the suitable routes and details of the construction so that Chaingmai will have the new LRT by the end of 2006.

The little red Chaingmai bus will be reorganized (1,200-1,500 buses from 2,800 buses at present) by the middle of 2005.

# Chiang Mai's mass transit scheme agreed in principle - Bangkok Post, June 30, 2004

...Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, a Chiang Mai native, suggested an elevated monorail system in outer areas and a subway system in inner areas, Mr Torpong said. The mass transit project for Chiang Mai is likely to cost five billion baht..,

Chiang Mai Subway quick facts

What is the present status of the project? A November 4, 2000 seminar at Chiang Mai Unoversity conluded the project is unlikely to get off the ground in the next 10 years. In 2003, new routes were proposed. In 2004 the cabinet approved studies for a light rail system instead of a subway (see articles on the right).

How many lines were planned? Four. See below.

What are the costs? The Mae Rim route is expected to cost 10 billion baht. All four routes are estimated at 41 billion baht.

How many passenger would it carry? Planners estimate it would carry about 169,000 passengers a day if it begins operations in the next five or six years.

When will the project start/finish? The whole project would take four years to complete. The project is just in the planning stages now—no timetables have been set. The man in charge at the Expressway Authority of Thailand told me he does not want people calling him up and asking "when's the subway going in?" He does not know!

Are there plans for subways in Thai cities other than Bangkok and Chiang Mai? The Expressway Authority of Thailand has made surveys for mass transit projects in Korat and Phuket as well, but only Chiang Mai has progressed to the point where a route map has been made.

## **Chiang Mai Subway Lines**

These are the pre 2003 station lists. 2003 routes are here.

# 1) Chiang Mai Bureaucrat Center - Upakhut - Buak Krok

Recommended to be the first line constructed.

This line will follow Highway 1006 to the Chotana Intersection and then will follow the Upakhut Road to Jaeng Sriphoom. It will go underground after passing Jaeng Sriphoom and continue east to Upakhut Temple, Chiang Mai Railway Station, and hit the Super Highway (Highway 11). The line will end up at the depot at Buak Krok.

There will be two park and rides: one at Chiang Mai Bureaucrat Center and the other at Buak Krok Depot.

Eventually a northern extension will go to the 7th Artillery Battalion and the Mae Rim Intersection, and an eastern extension will go to San Kamphaeng Station

# **Station List:**

Above ground:

- 1.1) Chiang Mai Bureaucrat Center
- 1.2) Chiang Mai Provincial Administration Organization
- 1.3) The 33rd Army Circle Stadium

Underground:

1.4) Chotana Intersection

Above ground:

- 1.5) Muen Dam Phra Khot Road
- 1.6) Municipal Stadium
- 1.7) Jaeng Śriphoom Junction to Chiang Mai-Jaeng Sriphoom Line

Underground:

- 1.8) Wat Upakhut Junction to Hangdon-Sansai line
- 1.9) Wat San Pa Khoi
- 1.10) Chiang Mai Railway Station

Above ground:

- 1.11) Super Highway
- 1.12) Nong Pa Krang Commune
- 1.13) Buaak Krok the line depot

# 2) Hang Dong (Four-way) Intersection - Chang Klan - San Sai Tee (Three-way) Intersection

Recommended to be the second line constructed.

The line begins at Chiang Mai Airport and goes to the Golf Driving Field, Hai Ya Road, Wat Srisuphan, Hai Ya Gate, Saeng Tawan Intersection, and follows Highway 118 to end at San Phra Nate commune.

There will be two park and rides: one at the Airport and the other at San Phanet Commune.

Eventually, a western extension will go from the Airport to Hang Dong intersection and a southeast extension will go from San Phranet Commune to San Sai intersection.

# **Station List:**

Above ground:

- 2.1) Chiang Mai Airport
- 2.2) Golf Driving Field

Underground:

- 2.3) Hai Ya Road
- 2.4) Wat Sri Suphan
- 2.5) Hai Ya Gate
- 2.6) Saeng Tawan Intersection Junction to Saeng Tawan Intersection-Chiang Mai Land
- 2.7) Upakhut Temple Junction to Chiang Mai Bureaucrat Center-Upakhut-Buak Krok line
- 2.8) Chaing Mai Hospital
- 2.9) Wichayanon Road.
- 2.10) Phayap University
- 2.11) Highway 118 Fah Ham Commune
- 2.12) San Phanet Commune

# 3) Chiang Mai University - Jaeng Sriphoom (Sriphoom corner of City Wall)

Line suspended due to the short distance.

This line will follow Suthep Road to Jaeng Sriphoom and will be completely underground.

# **Station List:**

Underground:

- 3.1) Chiang Mai University
- 3.2) Chiang Mai Polytechnic College
- 3.3) Kad Suang Kaeo
- 3.4) Jaeng Hua Lin the end of Suthep Road
- 3.5) Jaeng Phueak Gate
- 3.6) Jaeng Sriphoom Junction to Chiang Mai Bureaucrat Center-Upakhut-Buak Krok line

# 4) Saeng Tawan (Four-way) Intersection - Chiang Mai Land

Line suspended due to the short distance.

Eventually a southern extension will be an above-ground train to (1) Nong Hoy Intersection-Highway 1317 and (2) Saraphee Intersection.

Station List: Underground:

- 4.1) Saeng Tawan Intersection
  4.2) Wiang Phing Hospital
  4.3) Rakaeng Road-Montfort School
  4.4) Lanna Palace Hotel
  4.5) Chiang Mai Land

# Holidays declared for June Royal events

February 8, 2006

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Holidays
declared for June Royal events – TNA, February
8, 2006
Thailand is preparing for an extraordinary burst of celebrations and ceremonies to mark the 60th anniversary of His Majesty the King's accession to the throne later this year. The government today has declared June 12-13 as special public holidays for government and private offices in Bangkok and the surrounding provinces...

# 'Secret' FTA details on the net

February 8, 2006 Categories: Business

# 'Secret'

FTA details on the net – The Nation,
February 08, 2006
Details of US proposals in free-trade talks with Thailand
— perceived by many Thais as "forbidden information" the government has tried to cover up—were recently posted for all to see in cyberspace. Witoon Leanchamroon, director of BioThai, a non-government organisation working for bio-diversity and community rights, said at a press conference yesterday he had been told a group of Americans involved in public health issues had posted a full text of the patent chapter from the Thai-US free trade talks at www.bilaterals.org... <u>IPR</u>

text proposed by US to Thailand – More
IPR text proposed by US to Thailand – US-Thai
FTA info

# Lottery scam email

February 8, 2006

Lottery scam email -February 8, 2006

DATE: 7TH OF FEBRUARY 2006.

FROM: THE DESK OF THE VICE PRESIDENT.

ASIAN PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL PROMOTIONS ORGANIZATION PRIZE/AWARD

BANGKOK THAILAND.

BATCH: EGS/ 22504002/03: REFERENCE: 15/0018/IPD

ATTENTION: CONGRATULATIONS!

RE: PRIZE/AWARD NOTIFICATION.

... Your name was attached to ticket number 085-12876077-09 with serial number 51390-0 that drew the lucky numbers of 03-05-12-14-28-38, which consequently won the lottery in the 5th category. You have therefore been approved for a lump sum pay of 800,000.00. (EIGHT HUNDRED THOUSAND UNITED STATE DOLLARS ONLY), in cash credited to file with REF: N.EGS/3662367114/13. This is from a total cash prize of 70,020.225.00, shared among the twenty-five international winners in this category.
CONGRATULATIONS!!!

Your fund is now deposited with our Bank/Security Company Bangkok Thailand and insured in your name. Due to mix up of some numbers and names, we ask that you keep this award from public notice until your claim has been processed, and the money remitted to your account, as this is part of our security protocol, to avoid double claiming and unwarranted taking of advantage of this program by participants, as has happened in the past...

We hope your lucky name will draw a bigger cash prize in the subsequent programs. To begin your lottery claims, please contact our Co-ordinator as follows with your winning informations (Batch No., Serial No., Ticket No.,):

NAME: Robert Wood TEL: (66) 90724282

EMAIL: promocoordinator@asia.com

...An original copy of your lucky winning ticket and your deposit certificate will be sent to you by Administrative Remittance Operation Manager of Siam City Bank Bangkok Thailand...

# Hong Kong's Magic Kingdom struggles to attract Chinese who 'don't understand' park

February 9, 2006 Categories: China

#### <u>Hong</u>

Kong's Magic Kingdom struggles to attract Chinese who 'don't understand' park – WSJ, February 9, 2006

Li Zeng, a fourteen-year-old Chinese tourist, wandered Hong Kong Disneyland yesterday — and left after two hours.

Mr. Li isn't that familiar with Mickey Mouse and his companions, and he and his father didn't take any rides, buy souvenirs, or eat food. "We don't understand this park," said the teenager, waiting for his tour bus. "We gave up looking at the map..."

Most mainland Chinese still take vacations through package tours, and they make up about 50% of the Chinese visitors to the park. The guides who direct these tours frequently select hotels, restaurants, shopping stops and even tour destinations based on where they share in the profits. Because of lucrative deals with tour operators, one Hong Kong transvestite cabaret brags that its five-times-a-day \$20 show draws more Chinese tourists on a regular basis than Disneyland...

# B-2 Spirit at the 2005 Edwards AFB Airshow

February 9, 2006

B-2 Spirit at the 2005 Edwards AFB Airshow – February 9, 2006

## **High Tension in Thailand Main Page**

February 11, 2006

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008



February 11, 2006 protest news

Back to the High tension in Thailand main page

(Photo: Peter)

Almost like being there: Royal Plaza Anti-Thaksin rally - February 11, 2006

A tale of two newspapers: Gaining strength or losing steam? 5,000 or 100,000? - February 13, 2006

Who to believe? AFP reports the latest rally turnout was low and the movement to oust Thaksin is losing steam. *Reuters* reports the turnout at 10,000-20,000. VOA implies the crowd was in the thousands, rather than tens of thousands like the week before. BBC ventures "about 5000 people."

Meanwhile *The Nation*'s banner headline screams the movement is gaining momentum and the number of protests was "about 50,000." *Komchadluek* reports 30,000-50,000 and both *Komchadluek* and *Matichon* say the police estimated the crowd at 30,000.

The Bangkok Post also reported the number of demonstrators at 50,000 and said the movement was a "steadily expanding alliance of senators and pressure groups". Unlike the rest of the foreign press, <u>Bloomberg</u> eites The Nation figure of 50,000.

Not surprisingly, Manager (Sondhi's newspaper), repeated Sondhi's claim during the rally that 100,000 people were in attendance.

Our police sources say that if the area of the Royal Plaza is completely filled with seated people, the count is at least 30,000.

Gauging crowd size is always a politically sensitive matter with all sides over or underestimating numbers to serve their needs. It may also be that some foreign sources were reporting crowd sizes during the day or while the crowd was walking to the Royal Plaza in the afternoon. Many more people joined the rally in the evening.

## Protesters call for Thai PM to quit, but rally turnout low - AFP, February 12, 2006

...Sondhi claimed a turnout of 100,000 but police said that partly because of confusion over the venue there were only about 15,000 demonstrators at the rally—well down from the 50,000 who massed in the royal square a week ago.

...But the low turnout is likely to be seen as indication that the anti-government movement is losing steam...

## Thai leader considers referendum - BBC, February 11, 2006

By late afternoon about **5,000** people had gathered at Bangkok's Royal Plaza, chanting anti-Thaksin slogans... A protest last Saturday drew at least 50,000 people – the largest since Mr Thaksin came to power in 2001...

## Thousands urge Thai PM to quit as he vows referendum - Reuters, February 11, 2006

At least 10,000 Thai protesters rallied in central Bangkok on Saturday demanding Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra resign...

## Five years on, Thai PM faces calls to go - Reuters, February 11, 2006

...20,000 protesters chanted "Thaksin, get out!" in central Bangkok...

## Thailand Announces Referendum on Amending Constitution Amid Anti-Government Demonstrations - VOA, February 11, 2006

...There were fewer people than last Saturday, when tens of thousands held an all-night vigil in the same place. Organizers said the crowd was smaller because police, up until the last minute, said they would not allow the rally...

## ANTI-THAKSIN RALLY - Coalition gains momentum - The Nation, February 13, 2006

The new Royal Plaza alliance of senators and civic groups has boosted the credibility of the movement to oust Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and produced an array of new issues from free trade to human rights violations and the plight of the rural poor

Yesterday's rally drew about 50,000 people, who listened to a diverse range of speakers criticising the PM. Media firebrand Sondhi Limthongkul vowed to stick with the new alliance until Thaksin was ousted...

Almost 100,000 people gather to light candles to restore the nation and will gather again on February 26 - Manager, February 12, 2006

Also: 'A tale of two newspapers' archives

## SAMAK-PREM UPROAR - Samak calls it a day - The Nation, February 13, 2006

TV commentator Samak Sundaravej and co-host Dusit Siriwan announced Monday that they would stop hosting all radio and TV programs following uproar over their criticism against the privy council chairman...

Earlier: What is being said on the Samak-Dusit Show?

## Protest timeline

### Royal Plaza, 23:53 - February 11, 2006

\* One of the leaders speaks on the stage and asks people to thank to police who take care and the Bangkok city office that provides mobile toilets. Now all the leaders are coming to stand on the stage including the independent senators. They will light candles. Sonthi will be the first person to light the candle. He is speaking now. At the end they will listen to the national anthem.

### Royal Plaza, 23:34 - February 11, 2006

- \* Nation TV reports: People will begin leaving the Royal Plaza soon the leaders of the rally say.
- \* One of the leaders, Suriyasai Katasila, said he expects next time there will be 100,000 people to join.
- \* On February 14, the anti-Thaksin forces will meet to plan the February 26 rally.

### Royal Plaza, 23:29 – February 11, 2006

\* Nation TV reports: Protest leaders plan the next anti-Thaksin rally at Sanam Luang on February 26, 2006. They hope to attract 100,000 people under the slogan "Give Thailand Back."

### Royal Plaza, 23:01 - February 11, 2006

\* Nation TV reports: The police say they will not disperse the crowd at 24:00.

## Royal Plaza, 22:53 - February 11, 2006

\* Nation TV reports: The army said if by 24:00 people the people do not move out, they may disperse them.

### Royal Plaza, 22:42 - February 11, 2006

\* Nation TV reports: Augkana Nilapaijit, wife of Muslim lawyer Somchai, who vanished and was killed, allegedly by government agents, speaks to reporters. This is the first time for her to speak up for people who do not get justice. She believes that people who join the protest today are not doing it for their own benefit.

\* Nation TV reports: Now the leaders are discussing seriously the next step for the protest. The mainstream media have been banned from reporting on the protest.

### Royal Plaza, 21:05 – February 11, 2006

- \* Manager reports people are still coming to join the rally and now estimate there are 50,000 people.
- \* Manager reports that at 18:30 a man distributed leaflets supporting Thaksin to create turmoil in the protest, but he was arrested and finally he confesses that he was hired for 2000 baht.

## Photos from today's rally

### Royal Plaza, 20:33 - February 11, 2006

- \* Kraisak Choonhawan talked about FTA to the crowd. Kraisak is former PM Chatchai's son. After Kraisak, the secretary of the Student Federation spoke.
- \* Sonthi is back on stage with quite strong words against Thaksin.
- \* TRT Bangkok MP Apichart Halumchiek and deputy secretary PM Preecha Suwanarat are observing the proceedings.
- \* The Nation Channel says 30,000-40,000 people are at the plaza.

### Royal Plaza, 19:40 - February 11, 2006

- \* The Nation Channel reports that when Thaksin has arrived back to Bangkok from his trip to the deep south, he stopped by to see the situation near the Royal Plaza and see how many people came.
- \* Now the representative from the Railway workers talks on the stage. Sonthi will speak again at 20:00.
- \* Polices distribute 50,000 leaflet to tell people to protest by peace like last Saturday.
- \* Police also provide who vehicles with drinking water for the crowd.

## Royal Plaza, 18:30 – February 11, 2006

- \* Sondhi has just finished speaking to the crowd.
- \* The Nation Channel reports the crowd this week is much larger that last week's rally.
- \* ITV is presenting blanket coverage of Thaksin's visit to the deep south including long interviews with the PM with an emphasis on how hard he is working and how tired he is.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Royal Plaza, 11:20 - February 11, 2006

Schedule for the rally - The Nation, February 11, 2006

Above: Bomb-sniffing dogs are used to check the base of the Rama V equestrian statue.

**Below:** Media trucks lined up right outside the plaza.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Source: Undated postcard, circa 1917)

Another protest - February 11, 2006

Barricades thrown up against PM's opponents - The Nation, February 11, 2006

## Cash is king in the upper chamber, senators say – The Nation, February 11, 2006

Several senators have alleged that many of their colleagues receive cash from the Thai Rak Thai Party every month while others receive funds occasionally... Chirmsak Pinthong, a member of Senate committee on corruption, said he had heard that some senators receive up to Bt100,000 a month...

## Prem 'hurt' by Samak gibes, army brass want show axed - Bangkok Post, February 11, 2006

... Radio and television channels were told by the Public Relations Department to ensure Mr Samak did not overstep the mark when referring to a third party in his talk show. If not, the show risked being taken off the airwaves.

... Former supreme commander Gen Ood Buangbon warned that Mr Samak had clearly overstepped the mark and Gen Prem's proteges have prepared a "counter action". He did not elaborate.

An association of former military officers released an open statement yesterday demanding that Mr Samak apologise to Gen Prem for his "senseless" remarks without delay.

Channel 5 must also cancel the "This Morning in Thailand" programme or the association would take appropriate action against Mr Samak and the channel... Earlier: What is being said on the Samak-Dusit Show?

Alliance to go ahead with Royal Plaza rally despite ban by metropolitan police - The Nation, February 10, 2006

PM Thaksin flies south on eve of mass protest - TNA, February 10, 2006

Email forwards: Anti-Thaksin cartoons - February 11, 2006

## Another caution from the U.S. Embassy – February 10, 2006

Thailand has recently experienced a number of large, unrelated public demonstrations in Bangkok and Chiang Mai. These protests have been mainly peaceful in nature, and have targeted, among other issues, the Thai-US Free Trade Agreement, the listing on the stock exchange of a large brewery, and opposition to Thai Prime Minister Thaksin. The crowds often include several diverse groups of demonstrators which assemble with no set starting or ending times...

Should you find yourself among or near the demonstrators, move indoors for shelter until the demonstration has passed, or ask for police assistance to leave the area...

Same story, different emphasis - February 10, 2006

Poll finds majority want PM, main critic to reach compromise - TNA, February 9, 2006

Next anti-Thaksin rally to be bigger: survey - The Nation, February 9, 2006

A thread about this story is here.

## Prem's speech

Prem cites King's advice on leadership - The Nation, February 9, 2006

Privy Council president General Prem Tinsulanonda yesterday cited royal advice on public administration, saying a good leader should aim to serve the public interest rather than those of families and cronies.

"His Majesty the King's coronation speech, 'We will rule the land with justice for the happiness of Siamese people', should serve as a lesson for everyone in the state sector," he said...

Samak lambastes Prem, Palakorn - The Nation, February 9, 2006

...Speaking in his talk show aired by Channel 5, Samak said Privy Council president General Prem Tinsulanonda and Privy Councillor Palakorn Suwannarat had acted inappropriately...

Opposition banking on TRT rift to mount censure debate - IHT, February 7, 2006

## Anti-Thaksin rally at Royal Plaza allowed - TNA, February 8, 2006

The government has softened its stance, announced on Wednesday that it would allow the next-round of anti-Thaksin demonstration to be organized at the Royal Plaza if the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and the Metropolitan Police Division give the green light...

## <u>Is Temasek complicit in scandal?</u> – Bangkok Post, February 6, 2006

Singaporean government firm may not have received what it thought it was paying for when it acquired what many in Thailand consider tainted assets...

Back to the High tension in Thailand main page

# Anti-Thaksin Rally at the Royal Plaza

February 11, 2006 Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008



Almost like being there: Royal Plaza Anti-Thaksin rally – February 11, 2006

 $\frac{Back\ to\ the\ \textbf{High\ tension\ in\ Thailand}}{main\ page}$ 

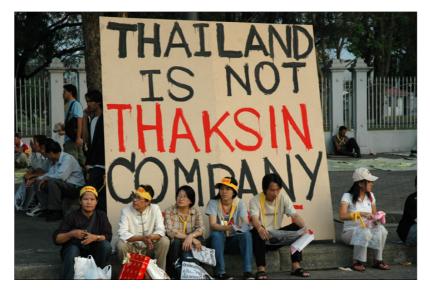
(Photo: Peter)



(Photo: Peter)



(Photo: Peter)



(Photo: Peter)



(Photo: Peter)



Right: Jealous of me? Shin Jang (Jang = Khun) Stupid. Hiding the share deal. Look at him...even his shit is gold.

(Photo: Peter)



(Photo: Peter)



(Photo: Peter)



(Photo: Peter)



(Photo: Peter)

**Above:** Suwit Watnoo from People Alliance For Democracy group. To the right is Samran Rodpetch, spokesman.



(Photo: Peter)



(Photo: Peter)

Above: The end of fairness/justice

Back to the High tension in Thailand main page

# **Roi Et cattle show**

February 11, 2006 Categories: Culture and Society



(Photo: Jerry)

Roi Et cattle show

- February 11, 2006
On his way to photograph the Mukdahan
bridge to Laos, Jerry took these interesting photos at a cattle
show in Roi Et.



(Photo: Jerry)



(Photo: Jerry)



(Photo: Jerry)



(Photo: Jerry)

# On eBay: Kiss me, I'm Thai t-shirt

February 11, 2006



On eBay: <u>Kiss</u> <u>me, I'm Thai t-shirt</u> – February 11, 2006

## **Anti-Thaksin cartoons**

February 11, 2006

Categories: Editorial Cartoons - Manager

Thanks to Peter for pointing out these *Manager* cartoons being circulated by email...



(Source: Manager)

Thaksin tells stories to his children before sleeping...
"Once upon a time, there was an island named the British Virgin Islands. This is a magic (amazing) island. Whatever we hide-gold, money, or shares-nobody will know."



(Source: Manager)

Oh!... these are 19 million people after knowing they were cheated.



(Source: Manager)

If you did not distribute money to the poor people at At Samart District, Roi-et, we would be richer by thousands of baht.



(Source: Manager)



# $Rescued\ by\ monkeys-now\ ready\ to\ marry$

February 12, 2006 Categories: 2Bangkok News

Rescued by monkeys – now ready to marry – Sunday Monitor, February 12-18, 2006

# Japan firm raided in nuke investigation

February 13, 2006

Japan
firm raided in nuke investigation —
AP, February 13, 2006
...Mitutoyo Corp. is suspected of exporting two three-dimensional measurement machines that can be used for uranium enrichment \_ a technology that can produce nuclear fuel or bombs \_ to subsidiaries of Japanese firms in China and Thailand in 2001, according to a report carried Sunday by the Yomiuri Shimbun, Japan's largest daily...

# Great old Thai photos from the Thai Web Museum

February 13, 2006 Categories: Old photos and films

<u>Great</u> <u>old Thai photos from the Thai Web Museum</u> – February 13, 2006

## Bush recalls the capture of Hambali in Thailand

February 13, 2006

Categories: 2Bangkok News

#### Bush

recalls the capture of Hambali in Thailand – Scoop.co.nz, by Richard
S. Ehrlich, February 13, 2006

S. Ehrlich, February 13, 2006
...Immediately after capturing Hambali in room 601 of the Boonyarak
Apartment block in Ayutthaya, he disappeared under U.S. custody
and has not been publicly seen since — amid speculation he was
being tortured via a "rendition" to Jordan, or caged for
brutal interrogation by Americans in Guantanamo Bay, or on the U.S.-occupied
Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia, or in Bagram, Afghanistan.
..."Hambali planned to carry out bombings in Thailand against
the US and British embassies, nightclubs in Phuket and Pattaya,
and the Israeli check-in counter at Bangkok's Don Muang airport,"
London's Sunday Times reported in October 2003, citing Hambali's
purported "interrogation transcript".
"Hambali and two Al Qaeda assistants also considered attacking
an Israeli restaurant with a Star of David above it, in the
backpacker area of Khao San Road," the British report said.
The popular restaurant, in a street perpetually jammed with thousands

of tourists and Thais, has since removed its large six-pointed advertisement.

## Fake passports made here a hit in London

February 13, 2006 Categories: Crime

#### Fake

passports made here a hit in London – Bangkok Post, February 13, 2006

...It was difficult for police to catch them because the gangs printed the fake passports at night in rented publishing houses in the city. Chinese and Pakistani counterfeit gangs operated in Bang Rak; Indian, Bangladeshi and Sri Lankans in the Pahurat area, and Africans (especially Nigerians) in the Nana and Thong Lo areas.

These gangs used the latest technology to produce passports which were close to flawless, he said.

Other gangs operating on Khao San road were selling counterfeit passports for roughly 8,000 baht each to tourists wanting to rent vehicles and rooms and commit credit card fraud and to illegal Shan and Karen workers in need of Burmese passports...

# Thailand's anti-flu weapon: Nosy neighbors

February 13, 2006 Categories: Health

<u>Thailand's</u>
<u>anti-flu weapon: Nosy neighbors</u> – *International Herald Tribune*, February 13, 2006

Thailand has mobilized about 750,000 volunteers, like Pattama Wongeak, right, to teach friends to stay on alert for possible symptoms of avian influenza...

## Newspapers from 1964 and 1965

February 13, 2006

Categories: Old newspapers



From *Kietisak*, August 7, 1965 Dying Textile workers strike against employers Vijitra holds the white flag (of defeat) over article 17 of the government Asked Tawee to stay at home in Sapankwai temporary 2 diamond traders killed each other at the golf field, Suan Lumpini

Front page from 1964



From Bangkok Times, July 20, 1964

The headline reads: Daughter of Sarit reveals life – Blocked from seeing her father until his death – Field Marshal Sarit's soul came to her in a dream.

Do a ceremony to meet Field Marshal Por – Sarit asked to drink young coconut milk

The important person confirmed Field Marshal Por separated from Sarit

Eldest daughter of Field Marshal Sarit gives interview to the Bangkok Times telling her depressing life story since divorce of parents – Saying that Sarit sent diamond pendant for her – She sobbingly asked to see her father, but was prevented until after his death

Bangkok Times, March 6, 1964 – The headlines read: Sarit's mistress/concubine – Not to face broken home situation and hopeful for support

Survive because of a charm -

Senior colonel revealed the miracle –

The Bangkok Times reveals the latest miracle of Luang Poh Tuad who was well known by Thai people for the miracle life saving of the high-ranked soldier unbelievably

Revelation of the estate case of His Excellency Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat that could be well disputed... many mistresses are to be supported and not to wander





# 10-digit phone numbers due in June - All mobile users need to add an '8'

February 14, 2006 Categories: 2Bangkok News

10-digit
phone numbers due in June – All mobile users need to add an '8'
– Bangkok Post, February 14, 2006
... Mobile-phone users will have to add an '8' in the middle of the existing two-digit prefix, followed by the existing seven-digit number, in order to make a mobile-to-mobile call. For example, numbers starting with 01 and 09 will become 081 and 089 respectively...

# Why Asian Muslims didn't explode

February 15, 2006

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Why Asian Muslims didn't explode – The New York Times, February 15, 2006

... For all we share as Muslims, we Southeast Asians don't really know what it's like to inhabit the cultures or politics

of the Middle East.

Nor is the West a unitary culture. Europe's fervent secularism reminds me that the nation of the Great Satan, with its crowded churches and Sunday preachers who fill sports stadiums, is actually more like my world than Europe is...

# Thai Abstraction: Somyot Hanuntasuk, Somboon Hormtientong, and Thaiwijit Poengkasemsomboon

February 15, 2006 Categories: Art

Thai
Abstraction: Somyot Hanuntasuk, Somboon Hormtientong, and Thaiwijit
Poengkasemsomboon – Absolutearts.com,
February 15, 2006 Sin Sin Fine Art is pleased to present "Thai Abstraction" - a group exhibition of three leading talented Thai artists who have formed close artistic ties with Germany – Somyot Hanuntasuk, Somboon Hormtientong, and Thaiwijit Poengkasemsomboon. Perhaps

it is due to this strong connection with Germany, their art stand

out among other contemporary Thai artists...

# Israeli Anti-Semitic Cartoon Contest

February 16, 2006 Categories: Nothing to do with Thailand, but Interesting

Israeli
Anti-Semitic Cartoon Contest – Drawn, February
16, 2006
Some Israeli cartoonist have decided to have their own anti-semitic cartoon contest...

# Tourism plan ruled out for Phi Phi island - Govt decision to keep Dasta away welcomed

February 17, 2006 Categories: Tourism

Tourism
plan ruled out for Phi Phi island – Govt decision to keep Dasta
away welcomed – Bangkok Post, February 17, 2006

Tsunami-ravaged Phi Phi island will not be redeveloped as a special, high-end tourism destination and its rehabilitation will be left in the hands of government agencies. The decision, announced yesterday, was welcomed by local residents and business

# Pyinmana Subject of Seminar in Bangkok

February 17, 2006

Pyinmana
Subject of Seminar in Bangkok –
The Irrawaddy, February 17, 2006
... "Thatland may have more limitations accessing information about the government because of the Pyinmana move, particularly because of its hidden location," said Sunait Chutintaranond, a historian from Chulalongkorn University's Southeast Asian Studies Centre, and the main speaker at the seminar. "Besides this, the Thai government should prepare a military strategy to be ready for any future emergency."

Burma's new capital at Pyinmana is geographically closer to
Thailand than Rangoon—just 210 km (130 miles) from the border
with Thailand's Mae Hong Son province...

# Foreign ownership – World's on Mbeki's side

February 17, 2006 Categories: Business

Foreign ownership – World's on Mbeki's side – Financial Mail, February 17, 2006

...In fact, it's easier to list the countries that have no restrictions on foreigner property ownership: Germany,
France, the UK, Portugal, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg,
Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay and Uruguay.
All the rest have controls ranging from a total ban on foreign
ownership – by Saudi Arabia and Cambodia – to the recording of foreign ownership by the US federal government...

## Airline's new owner thought to be a front

February 17, 2006

Categories: Airports and Airlines

Airline's new owner thought to be a front – Bangkok Post, February 17, 2006

A consumer advocate and opposition MPs suspect the three-day-old Asia Aviation Co Ltd, new majority owner of Thai AirAsia, of being a front company after they found only empty office space at the firm's address...

The office, on the 15th floor of Phahon Yothin Place building, Phahon Yothin road, was empty with only an "E.com Internet Work Co Ltd sign in front of it...

"This only proves that Asia Aviation Co Ltd is a non-existent company and a nominee for possibly Shin Corp and consequently Singapore's Temasek Holdings. The Ministry of Commerce is at fault for letting this slip through its hands," said Ms Rosana... Democrat party list MP Kiat Sitheeamorn, meanwhile, questioned the legitimacy of Asia Aviation Co Ltd and asked how a company with only five million baht in registered capital could buy into a company such as Thai AirAsia, worth more than 200 million baht

Mr Kiat also questioned why Mr Sithichai, with his 51% stake in Asia Aviation Co Ltd and thus a 25% holding in Thai AirAsia, does not have a seat on the board. Normally someone with a 5% stake in a company would hold a seat on the board of directors, which raised the question of who Mr Sithichai actually is...

## Traffic police could face charges of extortion

February 17, 2006 Categories: Thai Police

## **Traffic**

Police could face charges of extortion

- The Nation, February 17, 2006

...He urged the public to file complaints of police corruption at the website www.jaray.police.go.th,

or by calling the hotline 1299, or (02) 205 1148 and (02) 205

1299. The lines are open 24 hours a day.

Somyos also identified 14 places where illegal tolls are allegedly collected, including Vibhavadi-Rangsit, Rama IV, Kanchanapisek, Phaholyothin and Rachapreuk roads. Checkpoints have been set up near areas where minor traffic infractions are common. For example, for the inbound lanes of Vibhavadi-Rangsit Road, a checkpoint was set up about 100 metres from the passenger pick-up spot in front of Jae Leng Plaza.

Rather than directing traffic and helping motorists, officers at the checkpoint were focused on collecting money from taxi drivers who picked up passengers outside the authorised zone, he said. Police at three other checkpoints — near a police housing compound on Ratchayothin, the entrance of Din Daeng tollway and in front of Don Muang Airforce Base — spend much of their time ticketing drivers for illegally switching lanes.

Illegal tolls are also allegedly collected at Soi Charan Sanitwong 13, and Tripetch, Ngarmwongwan, Sathorn Nua and Phetburi roads, as well as at the Surawong and Urupong intersections.

# **Siamese Paper**

February 18, 2006 Categories: Uncategorized

Siamese Paper

- February 18, 2006
Scan of two pages (1, 2) from *Manufacturer*and *Builder*, Volume 2, Issue 4, April 1870] Page(s) 110-111
detailing Siamese paper making in the late-nineteenth century.

# North Korean Cheerleaders Imprisoned

February 18, 2006 Categories: North Korea

North Korean Cheerleaders Imprisoned - CNN, February 18, 2006

# US carmakers warn on Thailand, S. Korea trade talks

February 18, 2006 Categories: Business

carmakers warn on Thailand, S. Korea trade talks –
Reuters, February 18, 2006
...The Big Three U.S. automakers are worried about the harm possible free trade agreements with Thailand and South Korea could do to their industry in the United States, the head of the carmakers' trade council said on Friday. Stephen Collins told a hearing set up by US Senate Democrats that Japanese automakers had essentially moved their entire production of pickup trucks from Japan to Thailand.
"This means that when the US sits down with their Thai counterparts, it is not Thailand alone asking for US automotive tariffs to be reduced — it is the Japanese auto industry," Collins said...

## Furore over sea-walking abuses - Tourists kill coral, marine life

February 18, 2006 Categories: Tourism

## **Furore**

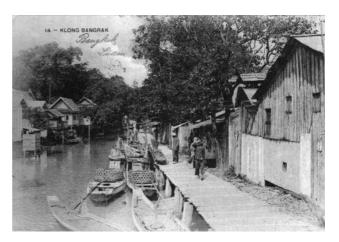
over sea-walking abuses – Tourists kill coral, marine life; officials urged to bring business under control – *The Nation*, February 18, 2006

... Concern about sea walking arose after a commentary by a tourist was put on a website called Taleythai.com. The observer wrote she had witnessed a sea walking guide at Koh Larn damaging corals and sea animals to entertain tourists. She said she was shocked by the guide who fed bread to fish and put them in plastic bags for tourists to take home. The guide also struck sea urchins, urged tourists to touch giant clams and hold sea anemones as they posed for photographs...

# Klong Bangrak, circa 1910

February 18, 2006 Categories: Old photos and films

Klong Bangrak, circa 1910 – February 18, 2006



(Photo: Postcard, circa 1910)

## Asian rights watchdog honours dead Thai lawyer

February 19, 2006 Categories: Uncategorized

Asian rights watchdog honours dead Thai lawyer – Reuters, February 19, 2006
An Asian human rights watchdog on Monday honoured a prominent Thai lawyer who is presumed dead after disappearing nearly two years ago while representing Muslim suspects in a bloody separatist insurgency...

## Thailand hunger strike relay begins in front of Chinese Embassy

February 20, 2006 Categories: 2Bangkok News

Thailand hunger strike relay begins in front of Chinese Embassy — More than 40 people participate on day one — Epoch Times, February 20, 2006

## Bangkok feels the heat

February 20, 2006

Categories: Health, Tourism

Bangkok
feels the heat – Travel Industry
Wire, February 20, 2006
Travel Industry Wire Figures released by Cheapflights.co.uk
reveal that bird flu appears to be having an impact on travellers
as they make their 2006 holiday decisions.
January 2006 saw a marked decrease in searches for flight
to Bangkok on Cheapflights.co.uk, causing the city to fall
almost 10 spots from 6th to 14th place. almost 10 spots from 6th to 14th place.
Holiday destinations benefiting from the Asian health crisis include New York (1), Tenerife (2), Malaga (3) and Paris (7). The biggest jump, however, went to Barcelona, which moved into the top ten from 12th to 8th place...

## Coral reef discovered near Thailand

February 21, 2006 Categories: Wildlife and Nature

Coral
reef discovered near Thailand – The
Age, February 21, 2006
A previously unknown and healthy coral reef has been discovered
off the coast of Thailand, a rare piece of good news for the
planet's beleaguered oceans, a top global environmental group
said...

## **Pakkret Bridge Photos**

February 23, 2006 Categories: Bridges



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Pakkret Bridge construction – February 23, 2006



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Looking south with Koh Kret Island in the distance.

Latest Pakkret Bridge photos

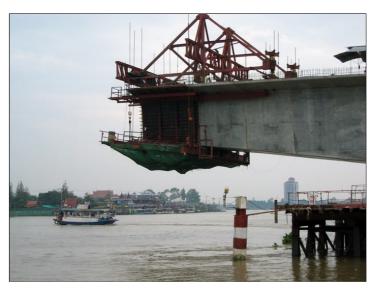
– October 23, 2005

The 'Pakkret Bridge' at the end of Chang Wattana Road.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

**Above:** Bridge span on the Pakkret side of the river.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

**Above:** Looking north from the Nonthaburi side.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Workers crossing to the main bridge pillar.



Above:
One lane traffic on Chang Wattana Road.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com) **Above:** Pillar cushions at the water level.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Bridge being built over the Chao Phraya at Chaeng Watthana Road – March 1, 2005 **Above:** Beginning of the bridge on the Thonburi side of the Chao Phraya River at the end of Chaeng Watthana Road.

## Now Detroit does not like free trade with Thailand

February 23, 2006 Categories: Business

Now
Detroit does not like free trade with Thailand –
Detroit News, February 23, 2006 6:38
... Thailand is unquestionably the best friend the Big
Three have in Asia. Building on this momentum, Thailand and the United States opened talks on a free trade agreement in 2004.

in 2004.
But the Big Three backers in Washington want no part of it. They declare that Thailand is an offshore platform for Japanese auto makers who want to find a backdoor into the American market. Shipping trucks from Thailand to America and not paying the 25 percent import tax would be "very threatening to the pickup truck industry in the United States," Collins said Collins said...

## Lone sentinels of the Indian Ocean

February 25, 2006 Categories: India

Lone
sentinels of the Indian Ocean –
Deccan Herald, February 25, 2006
Dhananjaya Bhat traces the history of lighthouses in
India which are essential for the safety of seafarers even
today. Often people consider lighthouses an anachronism
in the 21st century...

# Making fun of farangs

February 25, 2006 Categories: Humor

Making fun of farangs

- Bangkok Recorder, February 25, 2006

Bangkok Recorder continues its series of funny and mean-spirited photos here, here, and here.

## Megaprojects first casualty of snap vote

February 25, 2006 Categories: Mass Transit

Megaprojects
first casualty of snap vote –
Bangkok Post, February 25, 2006
The government's vaunted megaproject programme worth
1.8 trillion baht is the first casualty of yesterday's move
by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to call a snap election. Rising political uncertainty had already raised doubts about whether any of the high-profile infrastructure projects, seen as a major tonic for the economy, would get off the ground this year...

## **Strange Politics for Strange Days**

February 25, 2006 Categories: The Thaksin Years

- Strange
  politics for strange days

   The Nation, February 25, 2006
  ...1. The silent treatment for all questions...

  2. Silencing of the media. Libel and defamation suits are the best strategy for shutting up critics, not to mention frightening them...

  3. Politicians not being answerable to their conscience. Instead of serving the public, various politicians today serve only their "master..."

  4. Independent organisations that are not independent...
- 4. Independent organisations that are not independent...

## High tension in Thailand - February 26, 2006

February 26, 2006

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008



Daily News: Return power to the people – Parliament dissolution – 2 April re-general election – Maew declared openly and specifically he cannot accept mob power is above the law

Dissolution headlines
– February 26, 2006



*Khaosod*: Re-general election 2 April – Maew criticizes the mob power



*Thai Rath*: Parliament dissolution is not solving the problem – Chamlong said Thaksin should step down



Komchadluek: The mob does not give up protesting and ignores the parliament dissolution – Chamlong repeats the standpoint that must get out



Matichon: Maew claimed he dissolved parliament because he is afraid of chaos – Blacklists Sanoh five people from Wangnamyen

Back to the **High tension in Thailand** main page

## High tension in Thailand – February 26, 2006

February 26, 2006 Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

Almost like being there: Start of the rally – February 26, 2006

Back to the **High tension** in Thailand main page

Great photo set from Peter...



(Photo: Peter)



(Photo: Peter)



(Photo: Peter)



(Photo: Peter)



(Photo: Peter)



(Photo: Peter)



(Photo: Peter)



(Photo: Peter)



(Photo: Peter)



(Photo: Peter)

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## High tension in Thailand – February 26, 2006

February 26, 2006 Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

February 26 anti-Thaksin protests

– February 26, 2006

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main page



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



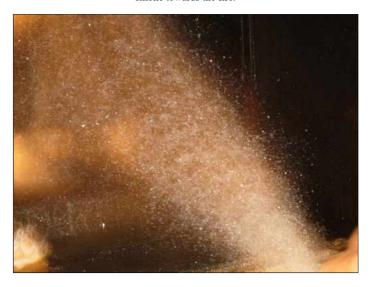
(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

**Above:** View from the stairs to the stage – a fire breaks out at 8:17pm and causes a stir in the crowd.

You can't get any closer: Putting out the truck fire at the anti-Thaksin protests - February 26, 2006



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com) **Above:** Rushing through the smoke towards the fire.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

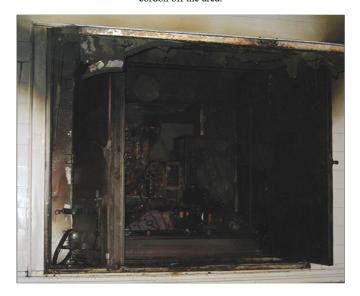
**Above:** You can't get closer than this – police stray water into a burning generator truck.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com) **Above:** After the fire, police cordon off the area.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com) **Above:** The burnt-out generator



Above A relicemen sives

**Above:** A policeman gives a briefing to the press after the incident.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above:
The ever-popular Thaksin-Bush banner



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above:



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

# Notes on the protests: The authorities have restricted the protesters into exactly one half of Sanam Luang. There was a pleasant cool breeze blowing all evening long. We stopped by the Agriculture Ministry twice on our way to and from the event. It had been alleged that the government had been assembling a mob there to possibly attack the protesters. The

ministry building was brightly lit with all of its door open as if to show there was no mob gathering inside.

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#### High tension in Thailand – February 13-26, 2006

February 26, 2006

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

#### Back to the High tension in Thailand main page

Thaiinsider.com has not been "closed down" (yet) – February 26, 2006

At the beginning of each recent anti-Thaksin protest, *The Nation* reports cryptically that <u>Thaiinsider.com</u> and other rabidly anti-government sites have been "closed down by the government." It is never clear if they mean the site has been blocked or removed from local servers, etc. And since they always get the url wrong (this time is was "Thaiinside.com"), it does give someone the impression the site is down. However, this time, as in all previous times, the site is still up.



Websites gear up for the protests - February 26, 2006

The Nation has recently started creating unintentionally humorous Flash intros to their site during anti-Thaksin protests. As of 17:30, their latest Flash intro locks people out of their site. The link to their protest coverage is broken and "Enter the Nation website" replays the Flash intro. "Gallery" is not linked at all. 18:37 – Some of the links are working now...



AFP's photo of tonight's protest - February 26, 2006

At 1:22pm Bangkok time, AFP already has a photo of tonight's protest (and an article here). The photo must be a stock photo from an earlier protest.

Chidchai claims third party plans to create violence - The Nation, February 25, 2006

Deputy Prime Minister and Justice Minister Chidchai Vanasatidya said on Saturday that a third party group had planned to create disturbance and violence during the anti-Thaksin rally on Sunday.

Chidchai said he received a report from Armed Forces Security Centre; under supreme command that a third party wanted to create disturbance and violence on Sunday.

When asked why the government would not arrest the group first, Chidchai said the government learnt about it through intelligence sources so arrests could not be made now.

Quick analysis: While 'third party' violence is a real possibility at this point, such pronouncements have also been used as a way to discourage people from attending anti-government rallies. Before the first anti-Thaksin rally on February 4, a first-hand source revealed to 2Bangkok that police had been ordered to spread rumors via taxi drivers that people should not participate because of the danger of violence.

However, the fact that a prominent cabinet member is now publicly making this kind of statement is probably an indication of government unease over how untoward incidents at the rally could impact the government now that so many powerful factions have committed themselves to toppling Thaksin. These factions probably cannot wait until the upcoming elections and risk another mandate for Thaksin so the desire for destabilizing factors between now and the elections is high... and the sooner the better.

What will happen today?

**6:16pm, February 24, 2006** – The Nation reports: Urgent: Thaksin announces House dissolution – The iTV station announced that Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra has announced a House dissolution. More details to follow.

Earlier: 5:17pm, February 24, 2006 – *The Nation* reports that only cabinet appointments will be made tonight: A new Cabinet line-up expected to be announced this evening

Earlier: 11:32am, February 24, 2006 – Our sources indicate that Thaksin will dissolve the house tonight and call for new elections.

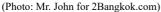
Quick analysis: This would be the type of action to take on a Friday night so markets can recover and assimilate the change over the weekend. This action is the

best way out for Thaksin and punishes TRT MPs agitating for his ouster by leaving him firmly in charge and locking them into their party affiliations. The gamble is that TRT will not necessarily be in a position to control the inevitable investigations of Thaksin's business dealings and other TRT missteps after the election. Sources also inform us that TRT power brokers have been negotiating a soft landing for Thaksin to step down and leave TRT in power. However, it is difficult to make a deal with someone who is already a billionaire. If Thaksin were to step down, TRT MPs could stay in control, blame Thaksin for everything, and also guide any future constitutional reform.

Thaksin, not being a political animal, but a business leader not adverse to failure, is more interested in regrouping and staying in charge where he believes he belongs. He will not step into the shadows like a canny career politician, but try to weather the storm like an embattled CEO guiding his company through a sales downturn.

This is where the eventual conflict could come because Thaksin will not play by Thai political rules and step aside once 'society' (academics, politicians, and activists, but not necessarily voters) has judged him to have lost legitimacy to rule.







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

**Left:** *Get out* from the People's Alliance for Democracy. **Right:** *Yik Thaksin – Yik* is Southerner's dialect meaning to chase or drive out.

Anti-Thaksin rally in Songkhla - February 20, 2006

Mr. John reports: These leaflets were handed out to persuade people from Songkhla and nearby provinces to gather to drive out Thaksin. On February 19, students and the Alliance to Restore the Nation joined with the People's Alliance for Democracy to stage a rally demanding the PM to quit and have political reform. This gathering started at 16.00 at Lotus Pool, Samila Beach, Songkhla.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Chamlong during the 1992 Black May protests

ANTI-THAKSIN MOVEMENT: Chamlong demands Thaksin's resignation - The Nation, February 19, 2006

Former Palang Dharma Party leader Chamlong Srimuang, who brought Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra into politics, Sunday called on the prime minister to resign and threatened to lead his "Dharma force" to join the anti-government rally at Sanam Luang on February 26...

Government: This isn't 1992 – Bangkok Post, February 19, 2006

The Thai government is urging those planning to attend a mass rally demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra next Sunday to remain peaceful and not carry weapons.

Government spokesperson Surapong Suebwonglee's raised the question of a repeat performance of the bloody May 1992 uprising only hours after 1992 hero Maj-Gen Chamlong Srimuang turned against his old friend and protege Mr Thaksin.

Maj-Gen Chamlong, meanwhile, said he believed there would be no bloody violence next week, as there was in May 1992. But if there is violence, "The government will have to take responsibility..."



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

Protesting Thaksin at Thaksin University - February 19, 2006

Mr John reports: Last Sunday (February 19) the student community of Thaksin University, Songkhla launched an anti-Thaksin protest saying he used dishonest tricks to get votes. They propose he step down from a political role and open the way to have the second political reform, and warn him not to insult student power. The student insisted to continue meeting although being pressured by the university. They said they protest the PM and also can protest the executives of the university and distribute statement to the people there.

Historic Thai protests dwarfed by shopping mall democracy - Pacific News Service, February 17, 2006

...Thai citizens are trying out new democratic methods in the recent mass protests against their government. But will it trump the greater democratic pastime embraced by the Thais: shopping for Western products?

Money no longer talks for Thai PM - The Age, February 18, 2006

Manager gains from Sondhi's campaign – Bangkok Post, February 16, 2006

...Krungthep Turakij, the perennial leader, has slipped to second place and Post Today, the sister daily of the Bangkok Post, from second to third...

PM prolongs political game by playing golf – ThaiDay, February 14, 2006 ... "There is no special political significance," Thaksin told newsmen at the Lakewood golf course on the Bang Na-Trat highway. "The armed forces commanders had asked to play a round of golf, and so, since we are all free today, we decided to get together to do it. The various ministers are here just to help entertain the guests." All the senior top brass were present, including Supreme Commander Gen Ruangroj Mahasaranont, Army Commander-in-Chief Gen Sonthi Boonyaratakalin, Navy Commander-in-Chief Admiral Sathiraphan Keyanont, Air Force Commander-in-Chief ACM Chalit Pukpasuk and National Police Chief Pol Gen Kovit Watthana. Among the ministers present were Defense Minister Gen Thammarak Isarangura Na Ayutthaya and Transport Minister Pongsak Raktapongpaisal...

Chang Noi: Ten easy steps to selling the country - The Nation, February 13, 2006

.10. There is one regulatory body not under your control. The big one. There's some risk you could come back as a flea, or even get stranded in the Lokanta depths. Try bargaining. Promise to give away all your property several times over in your next life. This is only a bit more outrageous than what you promise the people at election times. It might work...

Back to the High tension in Thailand main page

### High tension in Thailand – March 21-31, 2006

February 26, 2006

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

High tension in Thailand: March 21-31, 2006 news Back to the **High tension in Thailand** main page

Narongsak Manee and Surat Chaiyaphan - Have you heard of these people?

Some 400 motorcyclists protest at Manager head office – The Nation, March 31, 2006

Some 400 pro-government taxi motorcyclists rallied briefly outside the head office of Manager Group of Sondhi Limthongkul Friday afternoon but were quickly driven back by anti-Thaksin protesters...

Manager Online reported that the group of motorcyclists were led by Narongsak Manee and Surat Chaiyaphan...

#### <u>Luxurious shopping complex to close due to planned anti-Thaksin rally</u> - TNA, March 28, 2006

...Siampiwat Co.Ltd and Siam Paragon Development Co. Ltd, which run the luxurious shopping complex, said they would close three shopping centers, including Siam Paragon, Siam Discovery Center and Siam Center on March 29 and 30 following news reports that Rama I Road in front of the three high-end department stores is likely to close due to traffic congestion....

#### Police stand ready to disperse anti-government protesters - TNA, March 28, 2006

Police have accused the antigovernment People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) of planning a deliberately provocative demonstration in the heart of the capital on Wednesday, warning that the protest may be broken up...

Does Thailand have a "Presidential Crisis?" - March 27, 2006

Interesting to note CNN's on-screen title for its report on the political crisis that reads "Thailand's Presidential Crisis." It is likely CNN is confusing Thailand with the Philippines.

Numbers - March 27, 2006

Police - 300? 5000?

Protesters - 4000? 10,000? 300,000?

Saturday's rally – lower numbers? no sign of losing momentum?

<u>AFP</u> – ...The protesters, whom police numbered at **4,000**, also took aim at Singapore's state-linked investment firm Temasak, which recently acquired Shin Corp, the telecoms giant Thaksin founded before entering public office...

<u>Reuters</u> – ...Some 300 police kept watch as 10,000 protesters left the National Stadium early on Sunday with thousands more expected to join the march as it moved down Sukhumvit Road.

The lower numbers at Saturday night's rally compared to previous one attended by 100,000, appeared to back up a poll this week showing that people in Bangkok, the centre of the anti-Thaksin campaign, were getting fed up after weeks of protests.

TNA – A large number of demonstrators led by a coalition of anti-prime minister groups on Sunday began marching to Bangkok's key business district to rally support among the silent majority of Bangkokians...

Security has been increased along the route with nearly 5,000 police manning key areas to prevent any untoward incidents...

The anti-Thaksin campaign shows **no sign of losing momentum** as more than 100,000 demonstrators turned up at late Saturday rally, the biggest crowd ever since major street rallies began in February...

ASTV via The Nation – 10:52 am: ASTV reports that the front of the procession is still at Siam Paragon while the tail is still in front of the National Stadium. It says the number of protesters is expected at about 100,000 as the line is longer than one kilometre.

<u>The Nation</u> – Chamlong Srimuang, a decision maker of the People's Alliance for Democracy, told the protesters that their number could be around 300,000 at 11:25 nm

<u>Bangkok Post</u> — ....Attempts to stage the largest peaceful protest in Thai history **fell flat** this morning after leaders of the movement to force the resignation of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra called for half a million people to march on Sukhumvit Road.

News agencies estimated that between 10,000 and 30,000 turned out for the Sunday march. Police estimated the peaceful, occasionally noisy crowd at 4,000. And while many considered it the anti-climax of the attempt to get Mr Thaksin out, organisers said it was not the last...

#### Thailand's tarnished tycoon - Financial Express, March 25, 2006

In 2001, Thai voters, still reeling from the 1997 economic crisis, handed power to Thaksin Shinawatra, a successful and self-confident telecommunications tycoon, who pledged to use his business savvy to restore Thailand's wounded pride and get the sputtering economy back into high-gear...

#### TV news editor axed after report-Bangkok Post, March 24, 2006

... Over the past few months, Channel 9 has won praise from media scholars for being fair and balanced in its coverage of the political crisis. Recently, it broadcast interviews with government critics including former prime minister Chuan Leekpai, who said the station had not approached him for an interview for the past five years...

Protesting Thaksin in Thailand - radioopensource.org, March 18, 2006

### TRT sues papers, Democrats, PAD - Bangkok Post, March 24, 2006

The Thai Rak Thai party is pressing multiple charges against government opponents and newspapers on grounds ranging from defamation to obstruction of democracy. Caretaker Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra yesterday filed a complaint against four core leaders of the People's Alliance for Democracy and four newspapers for defaming him over his family's sale of Shin Corp to Singapore's Temasek Holdings...

#### Army swings in behind poll-Bangkok Post, March 24, 2006

The army has shown its support for the April 2 poll, saying candidates can campaign for votes over its airwaves. Until March 31, the army will provide free airtime on its 126 radio stations nationwide for party leaders to deliver campaign speeches...

PM close to quitting? - March 25, 2006

With pressure on Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra reaching fever pitch, the People's Alliance for Democracy expect tomorrow's anti-government rally to be the most significant yet, and one that could drive the final nail into his coffin...

The end may be near... (Day 2) - March 16, 2006

The end may be near... – March 15, 2006

Government House besieging Day 2 - March 15, 2006

10:35 am: Announcer Samran Yodphet tells the crowd that Thaksin appears to soften his stand. He quotes Thaksin as saying that the call for him to make a political break is "an interesting proposal" but he would have to consider it thoroughly. "We may have good news tomorrow or day after tomorrow," Samran tells the protesters.

#### Government House besieging - March 14, 2006

9:32 pm: People roar with cheer when Manoonkrit says the military no longer support Thaksin.

9:13 pm: Chirmsak asks Pichet Pattanachote which one of two rumours were true between Thaksin was preparing to announce the state of emergency and he was asking the Air Force to fly him out of the country.

Pichet replies that Thaksin would like to announce the state of emergency but the military did not support him.

5:50 pm: Somboon Suphannafai, a teacher, tells the crowd to be patient as he believes Thaksin will definitely leave office.

3:01 pm: Announcer Samran Yodphet says there seems to be good sign for the protesters but he would withhold the details waiting for the PAD leaders to announce in the night.

1:13 pm: Sondhi says live broadcast on TVs alert people of the national problem. He says Thaksin's wife, Pochamarn, and children became "resigned to the fate" after seeing so many people joining the protest. He tells the crowd that Thaksin is planning to take a leave and make a foreign trip and appoint Chidchai as caretaker prime minister.

8:23 am: PM's Office Minister Newin Chidchob denied speculation that Thaksin had offered to take a sick leave instead of resigning in exchange for protesters to stop besieging Government House.

REAL-TIME COVERAGE: From Sanam Luang Day 1 – February 26, 2006 REAL-TIME COVERAGE: From Sanam Luang Day 2 – February 27, 2006 REAL-TIME COVERAGE: From Sanam Luang Day 3 – February 28, 2006

#### Embattled Thai PM regains ground in Bangkok - poll - Reuters, March 23, 2006

Bangkok residents are increasingly fed up with a lengthy street campaign to oust Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and more now support for the beleaguered Thai leader, a poll showed on Thursday...

#### Don't listen to his words, just read his trembling lips- The Nation, March 23, 2006

...Lies, half-truths and prevarications are the order of the day. The more he isolates himself by relying on the misguided advice of only a few underlings with their own self-seeking agenda, the more Thaksin detaches himself from reality.

The real guide to understanding his actions these days is to read his lips and stare into his eyes, and not listen to the words that constantly shift between extreme anger and mysterious calm, and jerk from wrath to serenity and vice versa in a matter of hours, if not minutes.

That's why when he keeps saying he won't quit no matter what, he is really saying that he is close to calling it a day. If he says he has done nothing wrong, what he means is that he wants a guarantee that his family's assets won't be frozen when he has no choice but to step down.

And when he says he is ready to "die on duty, here in Thailand," he simply means he is scared to death.

#### Things to improve from now: Chidchai - The Nation, March 23, 2006

...The turmoil in Thailand will subside because the Brahma statue at the Erawan Shrine has made a self-sacrifice and borne the bad luck troubling the country, said Pol General Chidchai Wannasathid, acting deputy prime minister.

"I have talked to an astrologer who told me that the incident could be seen as a self-sacrifice of Phra Phrom. The situation should now start to improve," he said...

There is a rumour that a high-ranking politician has linked his own luck with Phra Phrom at both Government House and Erawan Shrine, so that when people worship the Brahma statues, they also pray for his long life and power.

#### Panthongtae Shinawatra in Wikipedia - March 22, 2006

The entry has been updated to remove the personal attacks... And see the <u>Talk Page</u> for the article. As someone notes on the page, *I'm no fan of the subject either, but an article like this is a slap in the face of everything that wikipedia stands for.* 

#### POSTBAG - No similarity between Hitler & Thaksinomics - Bangkok Post, March 23, 2006

In the Bangkok Post of March 20, a news report compares Mr Thaksin with Adolf Hitler, quoting Prof Banjerd Sinthudecha of Thammasat University's faculty of law: "Hitler killed Jews but he did several things for his country. He was more useful for the country than Mr Thaksin was."

You may like or dislike Mr Thaksin's performance and policies, but comparing him to Hitler shows ignorance or lack of knowledge of history. After World War Two, it took years for many countries to recover from the devastation caused by the Nazis. Several others have not yet recovered. It is also to ignore the actual fact that millions of people were murdered and suffered under the hands of the Nazi regime. There is no similarity between Hitler's dictatorship leading his country to World War Two, and Thaksinomics.

EMBASSY OF ISRAEL

#### Thailand: Number of anti-Thaksin demonstrators 'exaggerated' - AKI, March 21, 2006

..."One wonders whether such disagreements over policies can justify the attempt of pushing him out of office," said Nelson. "Aren't those things classic factors to be decided in elections?" he asked...

#### Thaksin era beset by evil omens- The Nation, March 22, 2006

...Samrit Klomkliang, who claims he has been a long-time personal astrologer for Thaksin's family, said the destruction of the statue was a sign that there would be bloodshed in Thailand if the prime minister doesn't quit before March 29.

But blood has already been shed. A protester from Nakhon Si Thammarat, Rerng Ketkaew, slashed his finger to draw blood in front of Government House and call for Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's resignation.

Thanakorn Pakdeepol, the 27-year-old man who destroyed the Phra Phrom statue, was killed near the Erawan Shrine after committing this most unnatural act. His blood spread on the pavement.

## <u>Thailand More Democratic Than Philippines, Says Filipino Senator</u> – *The Irrawaddy*, March 20, 2006

#### 60,000 Chinese and Singaporean tourists cancel Thailand visits due to political crisis - TNA, 20 March 20, 2006

Thailand's tourism has begun to feel the pinch of ongoing political crisis as more than 60,000 Chinese and Singaporean tourists have cancelled trips to the kingdom during the past three weeks, Thailand's tourism agency said Monday...

#### Caretaker PM slams The Nation for making up story - TNA, March 21, 2006

Caretaker Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra on Monday took an English-language newspaper to task for its <u>report on a change</u> in the chairman of the organizing committee responsible for holding the country's grand event to commemorate the 60th anniversary of His Majesty the King to the throne, saying it is very unethical for the press to do that...

Back to the High tension in Thailand main page

## Sino-Thai gem trade loses its lustre, needs big push

February 26, 2006 Categories: 2Bangkok News

Sino-Thai gem trade loses its lustre, needs big push — The Nation, February 26, 2006
After a 90-per-cent drop in gemstone exports to China since 2000, sales could jump 20 per cent in the next few years if the industry puts its heart into a strong promotional campaign, according to the Thai Gems and Jewellery Traders' Association...

### High tension in Thailand – February 27-March 8, 2006

February 27, 2006

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

#### <u>Luangta Maha Bua asks Thaksin to resign</u> - The Nation, March 8, 2006

News about this influential abbott is always front-page news in the widely read *Matichon* and other Thai-language newspapers.

... The abbot of Wat Pa Ban Tat, in Udon Thani's Muang district, said it was time for Thaksin to abandon the "rotten system he is presiding over". He described the government as "wicked, corrupt, power-hungry and greedy"...

On the forum: Boycott list

This is the boycott list mentioned in this **AFP** article.

#### March 14: a big day for many reasons - The Nation, March 8, 2006

...The second part of the Temasek's buyout is a mandatory tender offer for the remaining 51 per cent of Shin from other shareholders. Temasek could have to dish out another US\$1.8 billion (Bt70.6 billion) for the remaining shares. This part of the takeover closes today, with payment due to be made on Tuesday (March 14). If the tender offer ends well by March 14, then Thaksin will no longer have any obligation to remain in office amid mounting pressure for him to resign. He can't weather the political storm ahead without backing off because the country is enduring a political crisis of enormous magnitude with a bitter divide among the populace and various institutions...

#### Shin deal 'is starting to unravel' - The Nation, March 8, 2006

...Since March 2, Cedar Holdings and Aspen Holdings have been tendering for Shin stocks at Bt49.25 a share. They have set 4.30pm tomorrow as the deadline for them to "alter the terms of the tender offer" in case that there are incidents that might affect the status or the assets of Shin.

It is not clear what they mean by "altering the terms of the tender offer". But rumours in the market are that Temasek might call off the tender if there is a mass demonstration outside the Singapore Embassy, attempts to destroy Shin's assets or to boycott its products and services.

After the March 9 deadline, the deal is considered done.

People familiar with the deal could not confirm whether there is any similar clause or "put option", which would allow Temasek to terminate the deal with the Shinawatra and Damapong families in the event of unexpected incidents that affect the status or assets of Shin.

"Only the Shinawatras and Temasek know about this detail. But I believe the Shinawatras would never make a buy-back deal," said one financial source.

#### On the forum: Hostility toward Singapore

...There even was a racial slant to the editorial. "We should be aware of the danger from the black-haired and small-eyed foreignersa` "We won't have anything left over the next few years because those black-haired and small-eyed foreigners came to be involved in every single policy in Thailand..."



#### Army chief orders Channel 5 to cover anti-Thaksin protest - The Nation, March 6, 2006

Army Commander-in-Chief Gen Sondhi Boonyaratklin has instructed the editorial department of Channel 5 to cover and report on the demonstration against Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra at Sanam Luang.

A well-informed source said Sondhi ordered the editorial staff to make reports accurate and fair to all sides.

#### Talk show is axed for being too heavy on politics - Bangkok Post, March 8, 2005

... Mr Piroon said several radio programmes on FM 94 have been scrapped as part of the station's restructuring plan.

He admitted the talk show was removed because it focused too much on politics and this went against the light-hearted concept of the programme... Show 'too serious' for Open Radio – The Nation, March 8, 2006

...Piroon said the programme was too serious and no one had forced him to axe it...

#### Blowing up Thaksin - Chang Noi, March 6, 2006

...An upcountry vendor said to Chang Noi a few days ago, The only thing this guy ever gives us is our own tax money back. This vendor had formerly been a strong Thaksin supporter. A business friend recently asked, Suphanburi is smothered with hospitals, schools, and bus shelters supported by the charity of Banharn and his wife Jaemsai. Where do you ever see something sponsored by Thaksin and Pojaman? They dont give, they only take...

Thirteen locations in Pattani torched - translated and summarized from Thai Rath, March 3, 2006

Early on Thursday morning a blaze was reported at the car park of the Pattani province branch of the Telephone Organization of Thailand (TOT Public Company Limited), damaging seven cars and a motorcycle. Five of the cars belonged to TOT. A gallon of oil was left abandoned at the scene. Shortly afterwards, mobile phone signal towers and relay stations owned by AIS, True, and DTAC in the same province were also torched. In Pattani's Yaring district, a wooden one-story building in the Ban Ta Dan School complex went up in flames. The building was badly damaged. A post office was also a target of arsonists, but no damage was reported. Also in Pattani's Panare district, a public telephone booth and a telephone line connection board were torched. While the police are hunting for the arsonists, mobile phone networks in the area are being restored.

Had Yai on watch around the clock – Twenty locations in Pattani in flames – translated and summarized from *Komchadluek*, March 3, 2006
On March 2, two mobile phone signal towers belonging to AIS and DTAC in Songkhla province were in flames. Shortly after that, two more mobile phone signal towers owned by AIS and a public phone booth in the same province were also torched. On the same day in Pattani province, several locations were set ablaze. The first blaze was reported at the car park of TOT Public Company Limited, Muang district branch. Seven cars and a motorcycle were damaged. A gallon of oil was found at the scene. Mobile phone relay towers owned by AIS, True and DTAC were also set on fire. A primary school in Yaring district was severely damaged in a blaze. A Molotov cocktail was thrown into a post office, but fortunately it caused no damage. The police are trying to arrest the arsonists and patrolling the area around the clock to prevent more arson attacks.

TRT: PM has accepted almost all demands - TNA, March 5, 2006

Santi Asoke threatens to distribute anti-Thaksin shame file - TNA, March 5, 2006



(Photo: GWR)

#### Democrat rally in Hat-Yai - March 3, 2006

GWR writes: The Democrat rally in Hat-Yai seems to have been aimed at explaining the boycott to voters. This is a rather poor shot at twilight (18:15). The crowd swelled to about three times this size in less than an hour and when I left it looked like it was going to get a lot bigger. Speakers were shuffling back and forward between this rally and another in Songkhla.

The rally was held on the playing field of Engsiang School, which was originally a Chinese school. It is now a Tessaban school, but uses its sports field for rock concerts and political rally. As you will see from the picture, Hat Yai's Central Mosque is just over the wall, so Friday prayers were having to compete a bit with speeches... After prayers, many Muslims congregated on balconies to listen to speeches.

Opposition leader to take responsibility for boycotting snap election - TNA, March 3, 2006

#### A tale of two sources: Postcards from the people

#### Public flock to mail peace-loving messages to government - TNA, March 2, 2006

Postal officials claimed Thursday the government has received at least 500,000 letters and postcards sent by the public, bearing peace-loving messages and expressing opposition against violence.

The letters, they said, would be handed to caretaker Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra this evening.

Prime Minister Thaksin yesterday opened and announced PO Box 888 and asked the public to write the government that they love democracy, peace and they wish to see no violence and bloodshed.

The prime minister promised to display the letters and postcards in front of Government House.

A TNA reporter said officials have erected tents and a giant metal cage in front of Government House to contain the peace-loving letters and postcards. Officials said the public could also drop by the tent to hand in their letters in person.

#### 300,000 postcards mailed to Thaksin - The Nation, March 3, 2005

...Many of the cards contained similar messages and were in similar handwritings. Most of them had no addresses of the senders.

However, a number of the postcards sent to Post Box 888 of the Government House Post Office urged the prime minister to resign "as a way to end on ongoing political crisis".

Some of the cards called for a salary raise for civil servants, and some others were obviously delivered to a wrong address; they were entrants for lucky draw prizes...

ThaiDay as rabid as Manager? - March 3, 2006

We have noticed that *ThaiDay* (a supplement to the Thai version of *International Herald Tribune*) tends to be as rabid as its parent newspaper, the Thai-language *Manager* 

For instance, overstated or overblown headlines: Thaksin is doomed, say diplomats - ThaiDay, March 2, 2006

Articles that either do not really explain the situation or that downplay the real story: Apirak hopes new team will revitalize City Hall – ThaiDay, March 2, 2006 The article quotes Apirak that the reshuffle "was done because the new policy of 2006 is not focused on megaprojects but community development." Only after 11 paragraphs is there a passing single mention of corruption allegations in the BMA.

In contrast, the *Post* gives the reason for the reshuffle in its first paragraph: "The top-level changes were prompted by a high-profile graft row involving the e-auction of 16 city megaprojects worth 20 billion baht." ("Apirak orders revamp of BMA's operations", *Bangkok Post*, March 3, 2006)

#### Protests may provoke 'silent force' to react - Bangkok Post, March 3, 2006

Any protest action in breach of the constitution, including the sealing-off of Government House, could provoke "the silent force" to express its dissatisfaction with the protesters, government spokesman Surapong Suebwonglee said yesterday. Mr Surapong said article 65 of the constitution allows anyone who disagrees with the protesters to peacefully express their displeasure with actions not in accordance with the modes provided in the charter. "The silent force could show their disagreement in the forms of work stoppages, turning on their car headlights or putting up posters in protest at the anti-government rally," he said...

Thammarak warns top brass against coup bid — Bangkok Post, March 3, 2006

Caretaker Defence Minister Thammarak Isarangkura na Ayudhaya yesterday held an urgent meeting with top military leaders to discuss security measures for two major rallies today and Sunday and warned them against staging a coup. Present at the meeting at army headquarters were permanent secretary for defence Gen Sirichai Tunyasiri, supreme commander Gen Ruangroj Mahasaranont, army chief Gen Sonthi Boonyaratglin, navy chief Adm Sathiraphan Keyanont, air force chief ACM Chalit Phukphasuk and national police chief Pol Gen Kowit Wattana.

Speaking after the two-hour meeting, Gen Thammarak said: "I told them we have been on a democratic path. Whoever is foolish enough to stage a coup will end up in jail. I know they will definitely not do it..."

More on High tension in Thailand

#### Denving rumors

Govt spokesman denies rumor PM to resign - The Nation, March 1, 2006

Supreme commander insists no coup will be staged - The Nation, March 1, 2006

Thaksin denies he plans to resign - The Nation, March 1, 2006

Army chief denies asking Thaksin to resign - The Nation, March 1, 2006

#### Govt 'interfering' with ASTV's signal – Bangkok Post, March 2, 2006

The government is trying to disrupt the operations of Manager Group's ASTV satellite TV channel, according to Pramen Pakdiwapee, the station's director. Mr Pramen says ASTV's internet connections are mysteriously degraded every time it reports important news that could be viewed as anti-government...



Today's headlines - March 1, 2006

**Right:** Daily News – Three parties boycott – old opposition parties hand-in-hand not to apply for the general election – Toeng says that he cannot believe Maew





**Left:** *Matichon* – Three parties overthrow the general election, break up with Maew – 26 senators join the fray against the Committee of Election and urge to "quit"

#### Analyzing Thailand - March 1, 2006

We review many analysts' comments about Thailand and it is clear that most simply have no idea what is going on concerning the present political situation. Local security companies take a single article from the *Bangkok Post* or *Nation* and turn it into a series of bullet points. It is also fascinating the number of analysts who thought (and still think) that the dissolution has solved the political situation and everyone will just wait for a new election mandate. For example: Thai stocks may rise this week after snap election is called – February 26, 2006

... "As an investor, what you want is stability," Kerley said. "Change and uncertainty are never good. What Thaksin has done will take away some of that uncertainty."

Thaksin advised to get plenty of sleep - The Nation, February 28, 2006

Dissolution headlines - February 26, 2006

#### Chidchai claims third party plans to create violence - The Nation, February 25, 2006

Deputy Prime Minister and Justice Minister Chidchai Vanasatidya said on Saturday that a third party group had planned to create disturbance and violence during the anti-Thaksin rally on Sunday.

Chidchai said he received a report from Armed Forces Security Centre; under supreme command that a third party wanted to create disturbance and violence on Sunday.

When asked why the government would not arrest the group first, Chidchai said the government learnt about it through intelligence sources so arrests could not be made now.

**Quick analysis:** While 'third party' violence is a real possibility at this point, such pronouncements have also been used as a way to discourage people from attending anti-government rallies. Before the first anti-Thaksin rally on February 4, a first-hand source revealed to 2Bangkok that police had been ordered to spread rumors via taxi drivers that people should not participate because of the danger of violence.

However, the fact that a prominent cabinet member is now publicly making this kind of statement is probably an indication of government unease over how untoward incidents at the rally could impact the government now that so many powerful factions have committed themselves to toppling Thaksin. These factions probably cannot wait until the upcoming elections and risk another mandate for Thaksin so the desire for destabilizing factors between now and the elections is high... and the sooner the better.

Estimates of crowd numbers vary wildly - The Nation, February 28, 2006

Was it 20,000 or 100,000 or 200,000?...

This *Nation* article is similar to the 2B article on the February 11 protests (<u>Gaining strength or losing steam? 5,000 or 100,000?</u>, February 13, 2006) and mentions an interesting site: <u>ThaiGoogleEarth.com</u>

#### Panlop: Military coup possible - Bangkok Post, February 25, 2006

A military coup may be unavoidable if Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra refuses to budge and political instability persists much longer, said Panlop Pinmanee, deputy chief of the Internal Security Operations Command (Isoc)...

Blast shocks rally site in Bangkok - Xinhua, February 26, 2006

#### Protest leaders apologize to iTV - The Nation, February 27, 2006

...4:40 pm: iTV submits a letter of complaint to the Broadcast Journalist Association of Thailand about the case that its TV crew were besieged and intimidated by protesters at Sanam Luang Sunday night. The station asks the association provide protection for reporters who are doing their duty.

5:00 PM: The Hyde Park at Sanam Luang resumes. Two announcers, Samran Rodphet and Suwit Watnoo, tell the demonstrator that they have reviewed tape of iTV and found that the station did not report the number of protesters Sunday night. They apologise iTV reporter Thapanee Iadsrichai for the misunderstanding and intimidation against her and her crew by demonstrators Sunday night...

Earlier: Angry crowd turns on iTV crew - The Nation, February 27, 2006

Mobs yesterday ousted an iTV news crew from Sanam Luang after its reporters claimed that only 6,000 people had joined the anti-government rally yesterday. Mobs yelled at the reporters, scolding them for having "no ethics", while others tried to physically attack the crews as they bustled them from Sanam Luang. Police rushed in to protect the journalists.

iTV stopped its broadcast and negotiated with the protesters to leave its broadcast van opposite the main stage but the request was rejected, with people screaming they had to leave because their reports were biased.

The crew decided to leave the site with their facilities for fear of their safety. They accused the protesters of being drunk.

New Thai parliamentary polls set for April 2 - AFP, February 24, 2006

Earlier: Despite ridicule all day long, 2Bangkok.com's prediction of a house dissolution on Friday was accurate.

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## Regional study ranks Thailand 10th most corrupt in Asia

February 27, 2006 Categories: Crime

#### Regional

study ranks Thailand 10th most corrupt in Asia

- IHT, February 27, 2006

A regional survey naming Thailand as the only country in Asia where corruption has worsened over the past year does not come as a surprise, anti-corruption advocates said yesterday. The annual survey by Hong Kong-based think-tank Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC) noted in its report high-level corruption cases in Thailand, including the recent sale of a Shin Corp stake by the family of Caretaker Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra... Tortrakul also noted the high-profile case of Khunying Jaruvan Maintaka, who was kept from holding office as auditor general for nearly 18 months, is an indication of the Thaksin administration's lack of resolve to deal with corruption.

"Khunying Jaruvan knows many cases that could push the prime minister out of office," Tortrakul said. "And she has said publicly that her knowledge of the prime minister's wife's buying of government land, although unintentionally, is the reason she was being forced out," Tortrakul said.

"People are aware...of all these corruption allegations, but it seems the government continues to be able to work to avoid them."

# High tension in Thailand – February 28, 2006

February 28, 2006 Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008



(Photo: Peter)



(Photo: Peter)



(Photo: Peter)



(Photo: Peter)



(Photo: Peter)

#### Protest moves to Democracy Monument

23:17, February 27 - Moving to Democracy Monument - This is an attempt to provoke the government to take action against the protesters and keep the issue in the public eye after the crowd dwindled drastically after the first day. It is also the price of the involvement of political king-maker Sanoh Thienthong and other political heavyweights. As we had mentioned in the past, too many major political factions have invested too much in unseating Thaksin. They have no choice but to push the issue now at any cost. It is not clear if the protesters will stay at the monument tonight or disperse.

23:35, February 27 – Sondhi sets March 5 as the deadline for Thaksin to step down.

23:54, February 27 – Dozens of press vehicles have assembled at Democracy Monument awaiting the protesters.
00:27, February 28 – Protesters reach Democracy Monument.

01:20, February 28 – The protest ends and people are told to return for a three day protest March 5-8. Some protesters, including the

Santi Asoke group, will stay at Sanam Luang.

THAKSIN

'MUST QUIT' BY SUNDAY – Bangkok Post, February 28, 2006

# Giant squid on display

February 28, 2006 Categories: Wildlife and Nature

Giant squid on display – BBC, February 28, 2006