

Sixty years after independence, Myanmar remembers in secret

January 2, 2008

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[Sixty years after independence, Myanmar remembers in secret](#) –

AFP, January 2, 2008

...Even the military leadership remembers Aung San's sacrifice on the anniversary of their deaths, which is called Martyrs' Day.

But since his daughter achieved prominence during a 1988 pro-democracy uprising, few people are willing to mention Aung San in public for fear of angering the junta and its ubiquitous informers.

"We never forget our independence leader. He's always in our hearts and minds. People just dare not to show their love openly because they don't want any problems," Khin, a 30-year-old company staffer, told AFP...

Fall of Arakanese sovereignty honored in Denmark, Thailand, and Malaysia

January 2, 2008

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[Fall of Arakanese sovereignty honored in Denmark, Thailand, and Malaysia](#) – *Narinjara News*, January 2, 2008

Wrong tags

January 3, 2008

Wrong tags – January 3, 2008

This is one of a number of wrongly tagged articles about Pakistan—possibly because Pakistan also has a PPP—the "Pakistan People's Party."

[Thailand: How Did Bhutto Die?](#) – ANN, December 30, 2007

BANGKOK, THAILAND: Jehadi groups on Saturday (29 Dec) said they had no link with Benazir Bhutto's assassination and dismissed government claims that a leader of pro-Taliban force was behind the suicide attack on the slain former prime minister and Pakistani opposition leader...

Blacklist threatened for bars that break request for ‘national mourning silence’

January 3, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Blacklist threatened for bars that break request for ‘national mourning silence’](#) – *Phuket Gazette*, January 3, 2008

Muang District Chief Wisit Kurattanavej this afternoon threatened to blacklist entertainment venues that do not follow the government’s request to observe the national mourning of HRH Princess Galyani Vadhana, who passed away early yesterday morning...

Thai press: “People for tomorrow”

January 3, 2008

Thai press: "People for tomorrow" – *Nation Weekend*,
December 28, 2007-January 3, 2008



Thai press: "The war is still not finished!" – *Siam Weekly*, December 28, 2007-January 3, 2008

At bottom left: Lucky Prime Minister

The Suvarnabhumi Airport Main Page

January 4, 2008

Categories: Airports and Airlines

[Background/history of the project](#)

[Airport Quick Facts](#)

[Tallest control tower in the world](#)

[Diagram and model photos](#)

[Latest news](#)

[Links](#)

[Panoramas from inside the new airport](#)

[Suvamabhumi Airport runway cracks](#)

Right: February 2004



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Construction photos

[Inside the new airport](#) – May 20, 2006

November 1, 2004 construction photos

- [Workers at rest](#)
- [Tallest control tower in the world](#)

- [Details](#)
- [Inside looking out](#)
- [Interior views](#)
- [The structure](#)

[August 31, 2004 construction photos](#)

[June 8, 2004 construction photos](#)

[February 9, 2004 construction photos](#)

[August 4, 2003 construction photos](#)

[Airport Rail Link news](#)

Left: November 2004

Airport news

[Suvarnabhumi ranked 24th in poll](#) – Bangkok Post, February 22, 2010

Airports of Thailand Plc (AoT) management are scratching their heads as to why Suvarnabhumi Airport failed to secure a top spot as one of the world's best in the latest polling...

[Bangkok international airport shifts “demons”](#) – Monsters and Critics, November 10, 2009

Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi International Airport is shifting 12 six-metre tall 'demon' statues from arrivals to the check-in section of the terminal after running into a string of bad luck...

[Solution to robbery issues at Bangkok Airport found](#) – ETN, October 23, 2009

...From now, tourist police officers will be the only authorized to deal with alleged cases. Even better, questioning of passengers will be conducted in police premises located WITHIN the airport building and not outside as it has been the case...

[And the worst airport in the world is...](#) – The Age, October 23, 2009

Airport drainage canal – May 5, 2009

[Canal/road between the Gulf of Thailand and the International Airport](#)

[Irrigation canal to pump out water from the airport area to the Gulf of Thailand](#)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Don Muang Airport in September 2006, 13 days before its first closure.

[B73bn plan to expand airport](#) – Bangkok Post, April 18, 2008

...Mr Santi said that at least two projects out of 10 under the scheme will be implemented this year. They are the construction of the third runway and hiring of the Project Management Consultant group (PMC).

The other projects which include the construction of an automated people mover, car park and a noise pollution reduction scheme will be implemented over five years.

Mr Santi said the meeting agreed that construction of a domestic terminal at Suvarnabhumi should proceed without waiting for the second phase.

...Civil Aviation Department chief Chaisak Angsuwan said the third runway will be equipped with an auto-landing system which is considered the safest which the aviation industry has to offer.

With an auto-landing system, aircraft could land even in low visibility conditions, said Mr Chaisak.

Runway safety is measured on a scale of one to three, three being the safest. Runways at regional airports are rated Category 1 while runways at Don Mueang and the existing runways at Suvarnabhumi are rated Category 2...

[Airport link folders](#) –

gallery.web-asia.net, April, 2008

Thomas notes: I discovered a few days ago, that there are already some trains in the depot at Klong Tan. Will try to have a closer look coming days, it seems that they don't like someone sees them, as they covered the sides of the depot with some blue plastic blanked. The pictures I took with tele zoom from Klong Tan railway station, you can also see them very well from the bridge on Ekkamai.

[B73bn plan to expand airport](#) – Bangkok Post, April 18, 2008

...Mr Santi said that at least two projects out of 10 under the scheme will be implemented this year. They are the construction of the third runway and hiring of the Project Management Consultant group (PMC).

The other projects which include the construction of an automated people mover, car park and a noise pollution reduction scheme will be implemented over five years.

Mr Santi said the meeting agreed that construction of a domestic terminal at Suvarnabhumi should proceed without waiting for the second phase.

...Civil Aviation Department chief Chaisak Angsuwan said the third runway will be equipped with an auto-landing system which is considered the safest which the aviation industry has to offer.

With an auto-landing system, aircraft could land even in low visibility conditions, said Mr Chaisak.

Runway safety is measured on a scale of one to three, three being the safest. Runways at regional airports are rated Category 1 while runways at Don Mueang and the existing runways at Suvarnabhumi are rated Category 2...

[Suvarnabhumi struggles with low capacity](#) – Bangkok Post, January 4, 2008

Airports without sufficient capacity, including Suvarnabhumi in Bangkok, had a difficult 2007 as added security requirements have exacerbated problems...

[Thai opposes Don Muang as international airport](#) – Bangkok Post, September 24, 2007

...His comments were made after many suggestions were offered that not less than 45 million passengers would use Suvarnabhumi yearly and that the airport was now reaching full capacity so there is a need to make Don Muang another international airport to ease traffic congestion there...

[Airport "seriously flawed"](#) – The Nation, August 25, 2007

[Suvarnabhumi still dogged with troubles](#) – Bangkok Post, August 27, 2007

...Problems also arose because AoT lacked sufficient management skills to run a large and complex airport such as Suvarnabhumi in the first place, she pointed out.

...Frustrations such as long immigration queues, which sometimes require more than an hour of waiting, still exist. Timelines to solve these problems are nowhere to be found.

Some airlines and passengers have also complained that value for money at the airport is poor.

Landing and parking fees rose by 15% in April and passenger service charges (PSC), more commonly known as an airport tax, increased to 700 baht per person from 500 baht for international flights, while the fee for domestic flights doubled to 100 baht.

That made airline costs at Suvarnabhumi more expensive than at rival Singapore Changi and Kuala Lumpur airports, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

The Board of Airlines' Representatives in Thailand (BAR), an industry group representing 64 international carriers, says Suvarnabhumi's fees are uncompetitive and have deterred airlines from adding flights. In some cases, airlines have even diverted to other airports due to the costs...

[Old Thai airport reopens as new facility is not a runway success](#) – Financial Times, March 25, 2007

...Despite the massive ex-pense of its construction, Suvarnabhumi – a pet pro-ject of Thaksin Shinawatra, the prime minister ousted in a coup just nine days before the airport opened – was built to accommodate just 45m passengers, scarcely more than the 38m the old airport could handle....

On the forum: [Asia's craziest buildings](#)

Bangkok's new airport is #5.

[The Don's agreed, but is it Muang or Mueang?](#) – Bangkok Post, March 24, 2007

...So Mr Pinit turned to linguistic experts, including the Royal Institute and Chulalongkorn University's faculty of arts, to garner advice on the English spelling of the old airport's name. All experts he spoke to at these and other language institutes agreed it should be Mueang, not Muang as it had always been before, he said. "This problem gave me such a headache," he said. "Now I have to keep all evidence with me to back up that decision..."

[Bangkok is Asia's 4th busiest airport](#) – Bangkok Post, March 13, 2007

Hong Kong's passenger traffic hit 44 million, up from 40.3 million in 2005, and Bangkok's 42.8 million rose from 39 million the previous year...

Don Muang flight schedules –

March 16, 2007

Subject: Re-opening Don Muang: Tentative Flight Schedules

Importance: High

Dear AOC Members,

Information received from SQ, which could be useful to you.

Summary of domestic flights operating at Don Muang Airport (DMK) and Suvarnabhumi Airport (BKK)

Thai Airways (tentative)

- BKK YYTG has set a plan to operate 31 domestic flights at DMK and 13 domestic flights at BKK
- At DMK the flights from Bangkok to Phitsanulok (PHS), Khon Kaen (KKC), Udon Thani (UTH), Ubon Ratchathani (UBP) and Surat Thani (URT)
- The destinations operating from both BKK and DMK are Chiang Mai (CNX), Chiang Rai (CEI), Phuket (HKT), Hat Yai (HDY) and Krabi (KBV)
- Flight number operating at DMK will be 4 digits begin with 1 for example TG1100

Nok Air

- All flights will be operated at DMK
- Ticketing booth is still remain at BKK

One-Two-Go

- All flights will be operated at DMK except OX1012 BKK-KBV until 16APR

Next steps

- Document passenger connecting process and procedure between the two airports
- Means of land transportation and costs
- Publish Minimum Connecting Time

[Engineers beat their breasts over airport debacle](#) – AFP, February 10, 2007

... "Ask 200 architects who were involved in the building of Suvarnabhumi to swear in front of the Emerald Buddha that they did not pay under the table to get the jobs or violate other professional ethics, and I'm not sure even two would step forward." ...

[Don Muang airport ready for re-opening within 45 days](#) – The Nation, February 7, 2007

[Thailand's airport mess: Much ado over...](#) – ABS-CBN, February 5, 2007

Some friends of mine who've used Suvarnabhumi, mostly European frequent travelers, profess puzzlement at the brouhaha over what they deem to be simple normal start-up problems at a major international airport, particularly one with the mega-size of the Bangkok facility which is intended to handle up to 45 million passengers a year...

[Bangkok's new airport going to pieces](#) – Xinhuanet, February 5, 2007

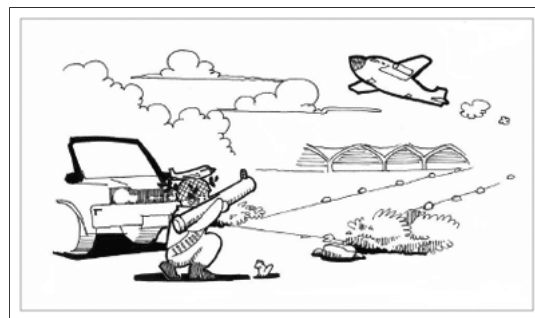
It's brand-spanking new, touted as state-of-the-art, but Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport has so many problems that some airlines wonder if it's safe...



Above: Summarized report I – Progression of study on problems about passengers, staff and people at Suvarnabhumi Airport and resolution.

Report on problems at the new airport – February 3, 2007

A frank and interesting Thai-language summary of the airport problems, [61 problems to be solved and being monitored](#) (pdf) cleverly illustrated with cartoons. There is a thread on the forum with translations of all 61 problems [here](#).



Above: (the caption in Thai reads) It is widely known that runway ends are the areas where people can get nearest to airplanes. People with bad intention might find a way to enter a plane from there and launch a terrorist attack. Runway ends should be under watch to prevent anyone from entering a place without permission. Now, more and more people park their cars at the ends of runways to get a closer look at airplanes or they might intentionally get closer to airplanes. Causes of the problems are failed coordination among traffic police, signs and insufficient control. To lower the possibility of a terrorist attack, clear signs and strict control are needed. The agency responsible for the matter is the Airport Organization of Thailand (AoT).



Editorial cartoon

Thairath, January 31, 2007, by Chai Ratchawat

Left: Passengers, below when you see this it means we are crossing into Thailand.

Middle: Now we are descending to Suwannaphumi airport.

Right: Please fasten your seatbelts, compose yourself and do not panic. The picture you see is the runway of Suwannaphum.

[Cobra Swamp is reclaiming Bangkok's showpiece airport](#) – Times Online, January 30, 2007

Bangkok's showpiece international airport, opened last year, appears to be sinking into the swamp on which it was built...

[Thailand holidays face airport threat](#) – The Age, January 29, 2007

[Post defends dismissal of journalists](#) – Bangkok Post, January 31, 2007

[Scoop journalist vindicated](#) – The Nation, January 28, 2007

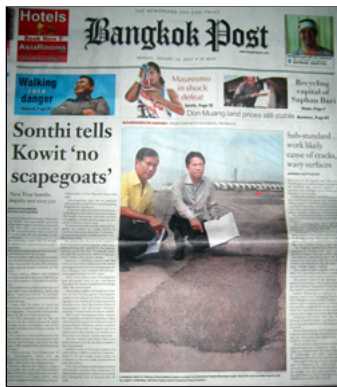
He stood by his story and paid for it with his job, but runway-cracks reporter remains philosophical about events...

Post front page –
January 22, 2007

It is interesting to note the huge photo on the front page of the *Bangkok Post* (left) showing a damaged section of runway at the new airport.

This must be sweet justice to the *Post*.

In August, 2005 the *Post* reported on its front page a story about cracks in the new airport runways. The story was



hotly denied by the government and the *Post* printed a retraction the following day. However, libel suits were filed against the newspaper by government agencies and the *Post* editor was sacked.

Earlier: '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...

[Minister puts brakes on using Don Muang](#) – TNA, January 12, 2007

[New airport makes a statement about modern Thailand](#) – *The Age*, January 1, 2007

Headlines

January 4, 2008

Categories: Uncategorized



Headlines – January 4, 2008

Above: *Khaosod*, January 4, 2008 – Open Dusit Palace for people to pay last respect to the late HRH Princess Galyani Vadhana

Left: *Matichon*, January 4, 2008 – HRH Princess Galyani Vadhana passed away

About [Royal cremations](#)

From [The Nation](#): ...There were reports that vendors selling pink and yellow T-shirts to commemorate the Royal Family had switched to selling black shirts. Vendors along Sarasin Road started selling black and white outfits for the occasion...

[Office of the Prime Minister warns against black shirts bearing Royal Insignia](#) – January 3, 2008

...The Office of the Prime Minister has set out to deal with the situation and has stated that citizens are not to buy or wear the shirts as it would be considered very scandalous...



Bangkok Pills

January 4, 2008

[Bangkok Pills](#) – *News Today Online*, January 4, 2008

Bangkok Pills are a combination drug marketed for weight reduction which had gained notoriety a few years ago for the various serious complications reported...

From NottheNation.com: Post fires reporter for working too hard

January 4, 2008

Categories: Humor

From NottheNation.com: [Post fires reporter for working too hard](#) –

January 4, 2008

...Editors labeled Boonsak's action "the last straw" in a series of breaches of the Post's strict policy of complacency. Editors say Boonsak had also taken to calling sources, fact-checking, writing clearly and caring. Each was a violation of Post Publishing editorial guidelines...

Banking on the Sex Trade

January 4, 2008

[Banking on the Sex Trade](#) – *Asia Sentinel*, January 4, 2008

A unique financial institution helps Indian women break loose from a debilitating and demeaning profession...

Phuket sails upmarket

January 4, 2008

[Phuket sails upmarket](#) – *The Age*, January 4, 2008
Thanks to Danny for pointing this out.

The Missing House

January 5, 2008

Categories: Buildings, History



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

2004



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

2008

The missing house – January 5, 2008

Last look at another vanished wooden house. This was one of the the most striking and best preserved outside of Ratanakosin.

The photos of the house below were taken on April 18, 2004.

A reader reports about the missing house: *...this house has a long history since King Rama 6 give this property to our family and we call “Bann Rachatewi”...*

Related: [Laksamee Wilas Palace – Old Russian Embassy](#) and [2Bangkok.com visits the old Russian Embassy](#) – [Siam Intercontinental Hotel](#) – [The Mahakan Fort community](#) – [Phan Phiphop Lila Bridge over the years](#) – [Suthisarn Road 1963/2004](#) – [Siam Square in 1992 and 2004](#) – [The lost forts of Rattanakosin](#)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: 2008 – Today a massive condo looms over the area. It was built on the site of Hollywood Place Shopping Center.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above and below: 2008 – The site of the house today.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

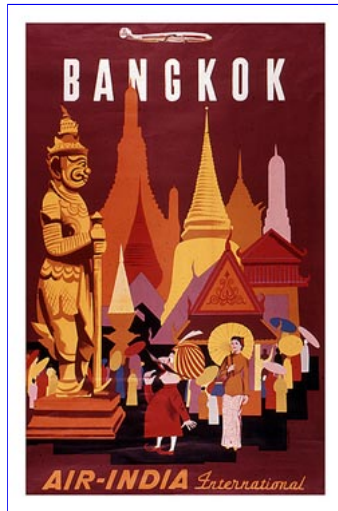
Below: The house still appears on GoogleEarth.



(Source: GoogleEarth)

Stylized travel posters from the 1950s and 1960s

January 5, 2008



[Stylized travel posters from the 1950s and 1960s](#) – January 5, 2008

Left: Bangkok Air-India

Raids new blow to American museums

January 6, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Raids new blow to American museums](#) – AP, January, 2008

...Federal agents raided several Southern California museums on Thursday, mostly in search of artifacts allegedly taken from Thailand's Ban Chiang archeological site, one of the most important prehistoric settlements ever discovered in Southeast Asia. Authorities believe they were smuggled into the U.S. and donated at inflated prices so collectors could claim fraudulent tax deductions.

Court documents say a 79-year-old smuggler involved in the scheme boasted to an undercover agent that he had more items from Ban Chiang than Thailand itself did. He said he was being sent the items as they were being dug up, in violation of Thai and international law...

Film-festival probe may turn into box-office bomb

January 7, 2008

Categories: Film and TV

[Film-festival probe may turn into box-office bomb](#) – Bangkok Post, January 7, 2008

...However, there are growing fears that every effort will be made to thwart the investigation in Thailand. Said one senior official, without elaborating: "Those who are involved will try and prevent the matter from being pursued any further in Thailand."

"Mrs Juthamas has denied everything and threatened to sue the FBI. However, the issue is causing some sleepless nights for several officials, especially those who were known to have been in Mrs Juthamas' camp."

Said one industry executive: "These investigations are problematic for internal morale. There are cliques within the TAT, just like any other large organisation."

...Many in the private sector recalled that they had opposed Mrs Juthamas' appointment as governor in the first place but now say that many things now begin to make sense.

"During the tenure of the Thaksin administration, the TAT enjoyed record budgets," one senior sector executive said. "Thaksin himself had set a target of 20 million tourist arrivals by 2008, even though many in the private sector knew it was totally unrealistic."

"But, by citing the growing competitive nature of the global tourism industry and the marketing budgets of competing countries in Asean, the administration could always find a way to justify the massive budgets."

"And this does not include the huge extra budgets that were sought to justify bounceback campaigns after the various crises, such as Sars in 2003 or the tsunami 2004..."

From Not the Nation: Anonymous Man Flexes Political Muscle

January 7, 2008

Categories: Humor

From *Not the Nation*: [Anonymous Man Flexes Political Muscle](#) – January 7, 2008

...Anonymous people have typically done well in Thai politics. Typically they cannot be criticized—or identified—but they still exert a huge amount of influence. In 2006, former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra claimed that an anonymous “charismatic individual” was trying to overthrow him. The coup occurred a few months later, cementing the influence of anonymous people in the Thai political sphere.

“If you are an identified Thai politician, the last thing you want to do is to get into a fight with a figure that is nearly infallible whose name cannot be revealed,” said a Thai academic, who spoke on condition of anonymity in the hopes that it would increase his stature in society.

Anonymous politicians are thought to be much smarter than named politicians because they can avoid any type of scrutiny. The local press loves the extremely adored older men and will defend them at all costs against attacks by politicians who can be referred to by their real names...

Military rule more efficient?

January 7, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Military rule more efficient?](#) – *Hindu Business Line*, January 7, 2008

Street smarts in Bangkok

January 7, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Street smarts in Bangkok](#) – *New York Times*, January 7, 2008

Mob rule in Buriram

January 7, 2008

Mob rule in Buriram –

translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, January 7, 2008

The general public may be fooled into perceiving that people in Buriram province are showing a keen interest in political matters. This may be especially the case if some get the idea that the recent demonstration in the province was a genuine attempt by locals to maintain their electoral rights.

It was surprising when thousands of Buriram Province citizens, from various districts, recently gathered at the Provincial Hall. Those gathered were protesting against the recent Electoral Commission decision to award ‘red’ cards to three parliamentary candidates for constituencies in the province. This crowd gathered so quickly that one might be forgiven for thinking that Buriram people have been keeping themselves well abreast of political developments. However, it has since been reported (but not proven) that the protesters received 200 baht per person to turn up at the Provincial Hall demonstration.

The protesters’ insistence that the ‘red’ cards should be withdrawn is, in any case, a true example of mob rule in action – as the demonstrators have made it clear that they will not accept the awarding of such cards under any circumstances.

If Buriram people really long for justice and care about their Kingdom, they should spend more time trying to investigate the corruption in their province – instead of gathering to support cheats.

BMA 2 takes shape

January 8, 2008

Categories: Infrastructure



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

BMA 2 takes shape –

January 8, 2008

A few shots of the new BMA site in the Din Daeng area ([GoogleEarth Placemark](#)) that has been under extremely slow construction for at least five years. The site appears to include a huge public plaza as well. Do any readers know of a completion date for this project?



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

New City at Ban Nah/Nakhon Nayok

January 8, 2008

Categories: Infrastructure, The Thaksin Years

New city news 2003-present

This section contains news of the new city at Ban Nah/Nakhon Nayok.

[Back to Master Plan main page](#)

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

If you need help with the acronyms, check out [Thai alphabet soup & 2b glossary](#).

[New town, old idea](#) – Bangkok Post, January 8, 2008

Residents of Nakhon Nayok's tranquil Ban Na district wonder whether Thaksin's plans to build a new city there will ever come to fruition...

New City project violates the constitution? – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, August 17, 2004

Premier Thaksin feels that the New City at Ban Nah project is going to violate the constitution which allows the land expropriation only for the public good, but not for commercial deals. He ask Mr Wisanu Kruea-Ngam (the deputy PM) to find the law to get around the constitution.

Six new satellite cities–masterplan done in six months – translated and summarized from *Siam Turakij*, May 30-June 5, 2004

The Civil Works Dept has designated six provinces around Bangkok to become satellite cities for both Bangkok and the New City at Banna. The masterplan will be done in 10 months.

Thunyaburi is the twin city for the New City of Banna. Civil Work Dept is asking for 50 million baht to deal with the masterplan.

The six cities around Bangkok are:

1) Samut Sakhon – The fishery and agriculture town for many generations

However, it has to transform into food processing industry and the new fishery port connecting with Laem Chabang Deep Sea Port so that it is no longer necessary to distribute the processed seafood to Laem Chabang or other places by trucks. It will also cut down the traffic jam in Rama 9 Bridge – Bangna – Bang Pakong Highway and Sukhumvit Road. Transportation by ship will handle this job.

2) Samut Prakarn – a dense industry town

It has to be transformed into more livable city with much better safety from LPG gas explosions as well as other toxic materials by removing those toxic industries out of municipal areas. The

transportation of products from the factories in Samut Prakarn to NBIA will have to be drastically improved.

3) Nonthaburi – the twin capital with Bangkok

Needs another expansion for the residential area along Rangsit – Pathumthani and Tiwanon road.

4) Pathumthani – industrial/residential town

The area from Klong 1 to Thunyaburi will become a residential area and thus the twin city to support the new city at Banna.

5) Chachongsao – industry and agriculture town with some residential area

6) Nakhon Nayok – Banna District – the new city due to the beautiful environment

Only IT-software industry allowed here.

Traffic Policy Office is going to come up with new electric railway routes to support such major expansions as a new electrified commuter rail network to Nakhon Pathom, Mahachai, Mae Klong with new elevated track across Chaophraya, Thachin and Mae Klong along with a new railway track connecting Maeklong with the Southern railway at Paktho (Ratchaburi).

BTSC Skytrain extension to Samit Prakarn via Bearing and Samrong will be speeded up and the Hopewell revival from Bangsue to Rangsit will be realized as well. Furthermore the new railway tracks from Don Muang to the New City at Banna and from Makkasan to Newcity in Banna via Lad Krabang Chachoengsao and Ongkharak will be started as well.

The ticket price for the new commuter network will be 10 + number of km traveling.

Commentary by Wisarut: For such major expansions of mass transit system, the local assembly for EMU, electrified locos and subway rolling stocks as well as upgrading the steel mills to produce steel rails are a few first things to be done– local assembly of signals or so will follow. Otherwise the cost of major expansion will be prohibitively high.

More New City news is here-> [New City at Ban Nah](#)

New City at Banna–the resolution from the Council of State – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, June 2, 2004

The Council of State has finished checking the area for the New City in Nakhon Nayok. The land expropriation for the New City in Nakhon Nayok will cover 17 communes (tambons)

1) Kaengkhoi District of Saraburi

1.1) Sam Phakphaew

1.2) Tha Maprang

1.3) Cha Om

1.4) Huay Haeng

2) Muak Lek District of Saraburi

2.1) Mittraphab

3) Wiharn Daeng District of Saraburi

3.1) Charoen Tham

3.2) Klong Ruea

3.3) Ban Lam

3.4) Nong Suang

3.5) Wiharn Daeng

4) Banna District of Nakhon Nayok

4.1) Khao Phoem

4.2) Sri Kra-ang

4.3) Ban Phrik

4.4) Pa Kha

4.5) Ban Na

4.6) Ban Phtao

4.7) Phikun Auk

After the resolution is published in the Royal Gazette, the surveyors will come to check the 250,000 rai of land in detail for each plot to check which land plots belong to the temples, which land plots belong to Treasury Dept, which land plots belong to Royal Thai Army and so on to designate compensation.

The land expropriation will be done by the end of 2004 and the city planning will come to allocate which section will be the new government office, the roads, the residential areas, the new urban communities, the commercial areas, the business areas, the educational areas, the giant park, the golf course, etc.

The construction of the new city will start in 2005.

The area will start from the CRMA Intersection – the edge of Muang District, Nakhon Nayok – and the line will follow Suwannasorn Road (Highway 33 -> Hin Kong – Nakhon Nayok – Aranyaprathet). People can follow Suwannasorn road to Ban Na, Wiharn Daeng and Kaeng Khoi.

There is already 30,000 rai of land left over after the construction of CRMA and cadet preparation school. The area along Suwannasorn Road has a few villages while most of them are the paddy fields with hills not higher than 400 meters above sea level.

Three choices for commuter lines to Nakhon Pathom – translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, March 14-17, 2004

After Premier Thaksin promised the electrified commuter line to Nakhon Pathom, the Traffic Policy Office promptly come up with 3 choices:

1) Blue line extension to Nakhon Pathom via Phetkasem Road

2) Electrified double tracks from Bangsue to Nakhon Pathom via Southern railway and the Bangsue – Rama 6 Expressway

3) New standard gauge track (single or double track) with 3rd rail power along Southern railway from Bangsue to Nakhon Pathom via Southern Railway
SRT Governor said he has not received a clear policy from the government yet, so this should be handled by the Traffic Policy Office until the office has assigned which agency is going to handle this task.

The Traffic Policy Office said the section from Bangsue to Nakhon Pathom via the standard gauge with 3rd rail power supply and substation will cost the government 70 million baht/km for single track and 150 million baht/km for double track and the distance from Bangsue to Nakhon Pathom is about 60 km.

The second choice is the electrification of the existing double tracks from Bangsue to Nakhon Pathom. This one will need the electrification and the substations—very good choice since it cuts much of the budget and land expropriation problem since they can use SRT land.

The third possible choice is to extend the Blue line subway from Bang Khae to Nakhon Pathom.

The Traffic Policy Office got the order from Premier Thaksin to come up with the commuter lines to the cities around Bangkok so as to create the satellite cities

Commentary by Wisarut: If the government really wants commuter lines to Nakhon Pathom, Ayutthaya, Chachoengsao, Mahachai as well as the New City and which can speed up to 160 km/hr,

standard gauge with 25 kV catenary supply is a must since the practical speed limit for meter gauge is 120 km/hr.

Further route details on four rail lines to the New City – translated and summarized by Wisarut

Green line:

1) The first section of the Green line will be double tracking from Bangsue to Rangsit (22.28 km) and then pass Future Park Rangsit to Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road (22 km)

2) The second section will turn right to become a single track from Lum Lookka Intersection to the new Motorway (3 km)

3) After passing the motorway, the line become a double track again and pass Thunyaburi and Nong Suea before reaching Ongkharak

4) The fourth section will follow Kaeng Khoi – Klong Sip Kao to reach Wiharn Daeng with elevated double track (25 km -> 23.4+1.6 km)

Total distance 94.94 km

Yellow Line:

1) This section will go from Bangsue to Donmuang – double track (14.74 km)

2) Turn right to through RTAF and then head to Khoo Khot and Lum Lookka – elevated double tracks (20 km)

3) After passing Lum Lokka, the line is still double track for 10 km and then become a 12-km elevated single track along the Motorway until it meets the Green Line. After passing the green line, it will become double track at grade until it reach Ongkharak

4) Follow the Railway track by using elevated double track to Wiharn Daeng (25 km -> 23.4+1.6 km) Total distance 87.54 km

Red line:

1) The line will start from Bangsue to Lad Krabang via Yommaraj and as double tracks (44.024 km). The first 14 km is elevated double tracks and then another 9 km double track at grade and then elevated double track to from Lad Krabang

2) Then the line will go along Chalong Krung (the main street of KMITL) to pass Lad Krabang Industrial Estate, Lum Phakchee, Nongchok

3) Then going through the new short cut to Thunyaburi – Lum Lookka – with double tracks – through the double track at grade.

4) Then following the motorway to Wiharn Daeng. All elevated double track (25 km -> 23.4+1.6 km)

Total distance: 117.31 km

Orange line:

1) The line will start from Bangsue to Lad Krabang via Yommaraj as double tracks (44.024 km)

2) The line will follow the Eastern Railway to Chachoengsao and Bang Nam Priaw (37.55 km)

3) Going from Bang Mak Priaw Bang Nam Priaw through the new line to Ongkharak before ending up at Wiharn Daeng Kaeng Khoi—all as elevated double track (62.8 km)

Commentary by Wisarut: Makkasan station will be modernized to deal with the Airport Link in 2007. Delays have little effect on NBIA since the initial phase will be private cars, buses, and taxis. This 29 billion baht Airport Link will force SRT to elevate the Eastern Line while double tracking the rail from Hua Mark to Phayathai. There will be a single cargo line which will head to ICD. 100 baht for Airport Express from Makkasan to NBIA.

The initial phase of New City is supposed to handle 10000-2000 people since there is no attractive place to go (except for seeing nature). The limit on those who are residents in the center also make very few people want to go.



(Diagram: We are not sure of the source of this diagram. The background map is from the government planning department.)

More on the transport routes to the New City – translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, March 4-6 2004

There will be 1 motorway and 4 railway Lines for the system:

1) **6-lane Blue Motorway** – Kanchanaphisek (Lum Looka) – Wiharn Daeng

This will connect with Ram Indra – Kanchanaphisek Expressway (extension of Ekkamai – Ram Indra Expressway). It will pass Lum Looka (Pathum Thani), Thunyaburi (Pathum Thani), Banna (Nakhon Nayok), and then be parallel with Kaeng Khoi – Klong Sip Kao Railway to pass Ongkharak and end up at Wiharn Daeng with total distance of 66.2 km and budget of 4.96138 billion baht.

2) **Green Line Railway** – Bang sue – Rangsit – Wiharn Daeng

This will follow the Northern Railway to Rangsit and then turn right to go to Klong Luang passing Thunyaburi, Kanchanaphisek Road, Motorway to Ongkharak and then following Kaeng Khoi – Klong Sip Kao Railway to Wiharn Daeng via Ongkharak and Banna – 4 sections – 94.94 km – 51.61405 billion baht (about 543.65 million baht/km)

3) **Red Line Railway** – Bang Sue -Lad Krabang – Wiharn Daeng

The line will follow the Northern Railway down to Chitlada and then go along Eastern Railway to Lad Krabang via Makkasan and then go across Rom Klao – Suwianthawognse – Lum Phakchee area, Thunyaburi and meet Kaeng Khoi – Klong Sip Kao Railway before Ongkharak station and then go along Keng Khoi – Klong Sip Kao line to end up at Wiharn Daeng – 4 sections – with total distance of 117.31 km (4 sections) and construction cost of 53.46292 billion baht

4) **Yellow Line** – Bang Sue – Donmuang – Khookhot – Lum Looka – Kanchanaphisek (Lum Looka) – Wiharn Daeng

This line will go from Bangsue to Donmuang and then pass Prem Pracha village before cutting through RTAF area to Phaholyothin and then passing Khoo Khot area and then Khookhot Lum Looka road to Kanchanaphisek Road at Lum Looka and then following the Blue Motorway to Ongkharak and then following the railway track to Wiharn Daeng – 87.54 km with the budget of 42.95214 billion baht.

5) **Orange line** – Bangsue – Yommaraj – Hua Mark – Lad Krang – Hua Tahkhe – Chachchoengsao – Bang Nam Priaw – Klong Sip Kao – Wiharn Daeng.

This line will go from Rangsit to Yommaraj through the Northern Railway and then follow the eastern railway to Lad Krabang and then further follow the Eastern

railway to Klong Sip Kao via Chachoengsao and Bang Nam Priaw. There will be 4 sections and the total distance is 144.88 km with a budget of 64.21251 billion baht.

This rail line must be electrified railway to enable the system to go from Bangkok to the New City within 1 hour with a speed at least 100 km/hr. Therefore, the yellow line is the best deal. This investment will be a joint venture with local private sector and foreign investors.

New railway routes and motorways for the New City at Ban Nah – translated and summarized from *Siam Turakij*, February 29-March 6 2004

The **new motorway** will go from Ram Indra to Wiharn Daeng via Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road (Lam Lookka) and Banna -> with a price of 4.96138 billion baht.

Of the the four new proposed railway routes to Wiharn Daeng only one will be constructed for now:

1) **Green Line** -> Bang Sue – Donmuang – Rangsit – Future Park Rangsit – Thaya Buri – Lum Lookka – Ongkharak – Ban Na – Wiharn Daeng

This line follows the Hopewell track from Bangsue to Rangsit and then turns right to Future Park and Thaya Buri toward Ongkharak. After that, the line turns left to Banna and ends up with Wiharn Daeng -> 4 sections – 94.94 km 51.61405 billion baht (about 543.65 million baht/km)

2) **Red Line** -> Bang Sue – Yommaraj – Phayathai – Makkasan – Hua Mark – Lad Krabang – Rom Klao – Minburi – Mooban Punya – Lum Lookka – Ongkharak – Ban Na – Wiharn Daeng

This line follows the Hopewell track from Bangsue to Yommaraj and then turns left to Makkasan, Hua Mark and Lad Krabang before turning left to Minburi via Romklao Road and then goes along Minburi – Lum Lookka Road and then follows the Green Line from Lum Lookka to Ongkharak, Banna and ending up at Wiharn Daeng -> 4 sections – 117.13 km 53.46292 billion baht (about 455.74 million baht/km)

3) **Yellow Line** (this route is favored by the government) -> Bang Sue – Donmuang – Rangsit – Future Park Rangsit – Thaya Buri – Lum Lookka – Motorway – Banna – Wiharn Daeng

This line follows the Hopewell track from Bangsue to Rangsit and then turns right to Future Park and Thaya Buri toward the motorway to Banna and ends up with Wiharn Daeng -> 4 sections – 87.54 km 42.95214 billion baht (about 490.60 million baht/km)

4) **Orange Line** -> Bang Sue – Yommaraj – Phayathai – Makkasan – Hua Mark – Lad Krabang – Hua Takhe – Bang Nam Priaw – Ong Kharak – Banna – Wiharn Daeng

This line follows Hopewell track from Bangsue to Yommaraj and then turn left to Makkasan, Hua Mark and Lad Krabang. After that, the line will go to Hua Takhe, Bang Nam Priaw and then turn left to Ongkharak and Banna before ending up at Wiharn Daeng -> 4 sections -144.88 km, 64.21251 billion baht (about 443.21 million baht/km)

The government will choose the Yellow Line since it is the shortest route, but if there is a cost overrun, the Green route will be chosen.

The masterplan for the new city will be done in 2005 -> 40% public land and 60% private land -> compensation paid at market prices of February 2004. By January 1, 2006 the infrastructure must be ready.

Commentary by Wisarut: I have come up with my own choice which is a combination of the four routes since all four routes have shown that those at the Traffic Policy Office are out of touch with the people.

My route will be

1) Gold Line: Rangsit – Future Park Rangsit – Thunya Buri – Nong Suea – Ongkharak – Banna – Wiharn Daeng

2) Silver Line: Ongkharak – Nong Suea – Thunyaburi – Lum Lookka Rom Klao – Lad Krabang –

3) Copper Line: Lad Krabang – Hua Takahe – Changoengsao – Bang Nam Priaw – Klong Sip Kao Junction – Ong Kharak – Wiharn Daeng

Interchanges at Ongkharak, Rangsit and Lad Krabang.

Those who use the Red line commuter and Pink Airport Link are eligible to use their smart card tickets to the New City at Banna without having to buy other tickets. The system must be the same at the Red line commuter and Pink Airport Link. The track from Yommaraj to Hua Mark must be elevated double track to ensure that the system will have the running speed guaranteed at 160 km/hr. The system for yellow line as well as other lines must be the same at the Red Line commuter and Pink Airport Link to ensure system interchangeability.

[New town – Failure to reveal land expropriation plans sparks concern](#) – *Bangkok Post*, January 3, 2004

... "We have mixed feelings over the project. We fear losing our land," said 72-year-old Rak Bamrungjit. "At the same time, we also want to see development within our community," she said.

More on the New City – December 17, 2003

Wisarut Bholsithi reports: According to *Than Setthakij* (December 17, 2003), the new city of Banna has sparked fury with local people from Tambon Cha Om since their area will become government offices within the New City. They said that the government has used a very outdated map (published in 1993) instead of satellite images. Furthermore, the expropriation price is very unfair. The government buys land at 100,000 baht/rai, but sells the developed land at 1,000,000-2,000,000 baht/rai. Therefore, the people ask the government to come up with a concession that allows former landowners to stay at the same old area until the construction plan in detail is done. Measures to prevent speculation must be effective. The government said they will use satellite image to update the data.

Nakhon Nayok people dreaming to be a new tourist area by the new city – translated and summarized from *Prachachart Thurakij*, December 1-3, 2003 The new city in Nakhon Nayok is still not completely defined yet, but the Governor of Nakhon Nayok has set up a team to handle the planning even though the government is just setting up the transportation projects to connect the new city with NBIA and neighbor provinces. Now the government is working on details on land usage even though the government just finished the preliminary details about the land usage.

The preliminary data said the 150,000-rai new city will cover 8 communes in 3 districts such as:

1) Banna District, Nakhon Nayok

1.1) Pa Sa, 1.2) Ban Prik, 1.3) Khao Khem, 1.4) Khao Phoem

2) Wiharn Daeng

2.1) Huay Haew, 2.2) Klong Ruea

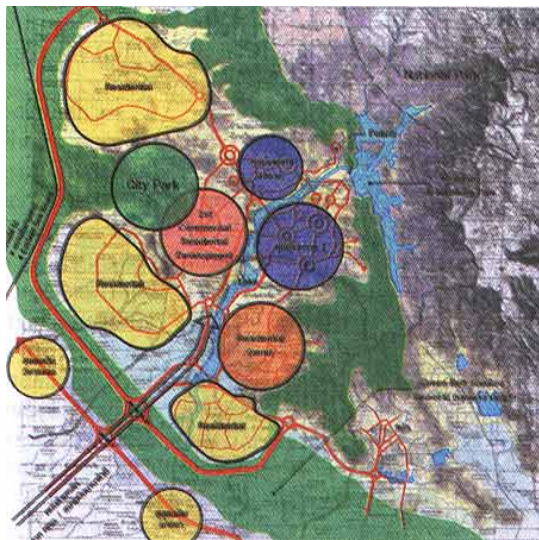
3) Kaeng Khoy and Wiharn Daeng District, Saraburi

2.1) Cha Om, 2.2) Tha Maprang

50000 rai will be a residential area—mostly within Khao Khem commune and Cha Om district of Kaeng Khoy with the other 100,000 for other activities. Some areas will be reserved for tourism and agriculture to feed the city. The area around the city will be swamps and the mountains.

City planners in Nakhon Nayok still have no clue about the new city details. So far Nakhon Nayok will emphasize agricultural areas as well as the environmental tourism. There are already several attempts to rob the land from local people by coming up with fake maps. Even so local residences agree with this project since it will create a new tourist spot with high technology without pollution and set up a good example to other provinces.

The Governor of Nakhon Nayok is asking to set up a new committee to handle the project and communicate news about it to local folks.



Above: The second phase of development in the new city

In-depth report on new city at Ban Nah–2-phase development on 250,000 rai with hundreds of billions of baht for infrastructure – translated and summarized from *Thasetthakij*, Nov 30 – Dec 3, 2003

The Traffic Policy Office has defined the two-phase development plan for Ban Nah new city–42,000 rai for the 1st phase including a new Grand Palace for His Majesty as well as infrastructure and transportation systems for the city while reserving 130,000 rai of land for green space. There will be seven steps to implement the plan to develop the new city in 6 years. The 2nd phase (78,000 rai) will include the residential development, commercial development, and workplaces so as to become a self-sufficient city with full circuit activities. The entire project needs 250,000 rai of land including land expropriation which should be at least 13 billion baht. After development, they will get a return of more than 75 billion baht.

The development will follow seven steps:

- 1) Permanent agency to push the development forward headed by the Prime Minister with a Royal resolution from His Majesty.
- 2) Creation of an agency which functions as an Urban Development Corporation in the same way such organizations execute the development of Putrajaya in Malaysia and Tama New Town in Japan.
- 3) The new agency handles the budget and financial resources for the new city.
- 4) The new agency starts land allocation either as land expropriation and land rearrangement.
- 5) Capital controls implemented to prevent another economic bubble.
- 6) Management plan and basic infrastructure be implemented.
- 7) Human settlement with a permanent agency to function as an administration office in the same way as the one in Pattaya.

Transportation lines for Banna New City will be as follows:

- 1) Ram Indra – Lam Lookka – Nakhon Nayok (60 km) with the new extension to Khorat (another 130 km)
- 2) Bang Na – Bang Pakong Highway Expansion with the new branch to NBIA and Motorway
- 3) New Cord line from Ban Pachee to Klong 19 via Ongkarak
- 4) High Speed rail from Bangkok (Bangsue?) to Khorat via Nakhon Nayok which will take 1 hour from Bangkok to reach the new city – 1 baht/km with 10 baht surcharge – thus about 70 baht a trip.

The government will invest in the rail while asking the private sector to rent the tracks and supply the rolling stock as the way to get around with the 1992 Joint Venture Act since private concession is bound with the act. However, the government has to specify to the private sector about how many trips a day with the government guaranteeing a minimum level of daily passengers. If the private section has done a good job, the government will give a tax break for them, but the private sector must share the revenue with the government in addition to the rent if the numbers of passengers increase.

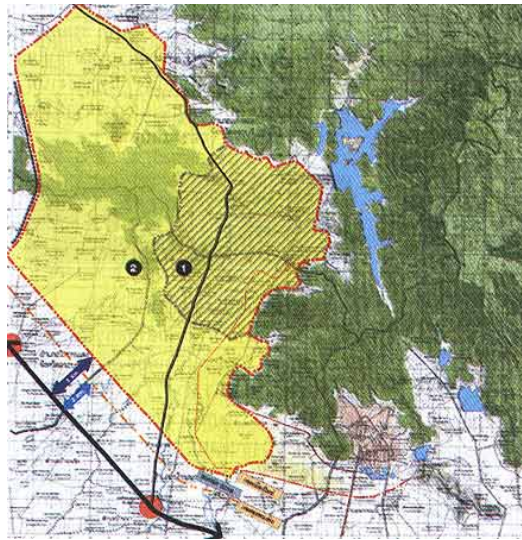
The construction of the new city during the time of economic growth is a very normal activity since Bangkok gets 300,000 new citizens a year due to immigration (legal and illegal) and migration from rural areas and gets so big that infrastructure will be stretched to the limits. Therefore, the government has to come up with development of the new areas as a way to decongest Bangkok in the long term. Good cities should have not more than 2 million people.

The Civil Works Department and the City Planning Department said that the new city at Nakhon Nayok will cover 3 districts -> Banna (Nakhon Nayok), Ongkharak (Nakhon Nayok), and Wiharn Daeng (Saraburi) with a total area of 250,000 rai with a price tag of 100 billion baht, but the real development will be in 40,000-50,000 rai.

The other 200,000 rai will be reserved as agriculture areas and vacant area for future use. The developed area will have all power lines underground and there will be the land allocation for a financial center, commercial zone, vertical (condominium + mansions + apartments) and horizontal (houses for the well-to-do) resident areas, bureaucrat areas, working areas, industrial areas, educational area (new schools and universities) and a new palace for His Majesty.

The land acquisition will come from a Royal decree, land allocation with the participation from the former owners, land purchase by issuing bonds and setting up funds. Investment will come from private concessions paid by domestic and international investors on residential area developments, mass transit systems within the city, waterworks, electric power, and with the Development Company handling all the projects. The water will come from Pasak River and nearby areas to feed all the citizens.

The administration will be like Pattaya while the residential area will be both vertical and horizontal such as 100 square wah single houses, cluster houses of 50 square wah at cheaper prices than the private sector as well as 100,000 units of housing for about 200,000 lower income citizens which will be handled by the National Housing Authority and done within 6 years. The project will be started in 2004.



Above: The first phase of development in the new city

Defining the new city and land hoarding – translated and summarized from *Siamturakij*, Nov 30 – Dec 6, 2003

CP Group and Chang Beer have hoarded thousands of rai of land to be sold to the government—about 160,000 rai. Those who live within the campus of Chulachomklao Royal Military Academy will have their land expropriated—about 25,000 rai. Even top brasses are hoarding land thus the locals feel scared that they will be evicted soon.

The New City project will be started in 2005 and done within 8 years. It will cover Banna Wiharn Daeng and Kaeng Khoi – no longer a need for Muang and Ongkharak District. The government will impose a Royal Decree to expropriate the land.

- 1) Banna District, Nakhon Nayok
 - 1.1) Pa Kha, 1.2) Ban Prik, 1.3) Sri Kra Ang, 1.4) Khao Phoem
- 2) Wiharn Daeng
 - 2.1) Huay Haew, 2.2) Klong Ruea, 3) Kaeng Khoi and Wiharn Daeng District, Saraburi, 2.1) Cha Om, 2.2) Tha Maprang

There will be 20,000 rai of land for residences. The other area which will be integrated into the new city is the CRMA—the area which has been expropriated for military usage since 1941 with size of 75,000 rai. 25,000 rai was used for military purposes and there other 50,000 rai were infiltrated by local people. The people who moved to that area after 1941 will be evicted with no compensation.

The expropriated land of 165,000 Rai and the CRMA area of 25,000 rai will help to create 200,000 rai of land (with 10,000 rai from purchase at market price). Banna is the main gate while Ongkharak is just a passing track.

So far CP has purchased thousands of rai of land for chicken and pig farming for 5 years – initially a farm like Chong Charoen farm will have to borrow 100 million baht from the bank but now CP group has invested in that farm in such levels that this farm alone has thousands rai of land.

Sun Agro (owned by local politicians) has also set up a chicken farm there. 84 Co.Ltd. which works on chicken farming also expanded their business in Ban Prik, Khao Phoem, Pa Kha in Banna district and Kaeng Khoi and Wiharn Daeng district. Both companies must be within the CP Group and are thus aiming to go for those areas.

Beer Chang group has purchased about 10,000 rai of land around Wiharn Daeng district. Khao Kra Ang is also a main target for the land speculation. Colonels have hoarded the land around Ban Hin Dat (the 13th Village) of Khao Phoem commune as "Colonel Houses".

Nakhon Nayok Governor has set up the committee to handle the new city so that the new city will allow no industrial factories to ruin the environment. Nakhon Nayok is an agriculture and environmental tourist town.

Now Klong Tha Dan and Nakhon Nayok-Kaeng Khoi Highway will be expanded to 4 lanes in 2004 and 2005 respectively to feed the new city.

Local folks in Nakhon Nayok feel very confused about the land expropriation and they ask the government to define the area to be expropriated as soon as possible even though they agree that the new city will bring more prosperity to Nakhon Nayok.

Those who live in Khao Phoem commune of Banna say most people are working in agriculture and farming and receiving 60,000 baht a year. Now people in the whole commune feel scared if they have to abandon their old jobs after the whole commune is expropriated -> initially for the Lopburi-Maptaput Motorway, a new palace, as well as the university and government agencies.

[The satellite city](#) – Bangkok Post, November 21, 2003

Construction of Bangkok's satellite city should begin next year on a 150,000-rai land straddling three districts of Nakhon Nayok, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said... The city, tentatively called Muang Mai Nakhon Nayok (New Nakhon Nayok City), would be classified as a special administration zone, just like Pattaya... Mr Sita declined to name the three districts for fear of land speculation. However, a source said two of them were Ban Na and Ongkharak.

Earlier: [Muang Sawan project \(Celestial City Project\) at Ban Nah](#) – Naew Nah, September 30, 2003

[New City: How to realize it](#) – Bangkok Biznews, October 28, 2003

New City: How to realize it – by Pratheep Tangmatitham – translated and summarized from *Bangkok Biznews*, October 28, 2003

Plans for a new city to decongest Bangkok with the area of 200,000 rai have raised grave concerns about land speculation and the government has to come up with a plan to deal with it.

As my 30 year experience can tell, it is absolutely necessary to come with such a new city within one hour traveling time from downtown Bangkok. However, 200,000 rai is too small. People are the primary factors for the new cities, not 200,000 rai of land. Number of people is the starting point for calculations on traffic volume, water usage, wastewater, garbage, parks, schools, hospitals, malls, stadiums, etc.

How many Bangkokians are willing to move into the new cities without turning Bangkok into a ghost town as many American cities have experienced? 5-10% (1 in 10-20 Bangkokians) is a good ratio. Therefore, a new city should not be small at all. 290,000 – 580,000 people would form small towns scattered around Bangkok ('dormitory cities'), but not the new bureaucrat center as the government aims.

If the city is too small, there will be no good facilities. No sport, entertainment, or arts and culture facilities such as stadiums, theaters, art galleries, retailers, thus reducing much of the city's charms. It is very hard to attract people to live and work in new cities.

If the city is for 290,000-300,000 people, it will be the same size as Phuket -> 1 MP, 1 Senator. The density will be 1.45-1.5 people/rai (906.25-937.5 people/sq km). If the city is for 580,000-600,000 people, it will be the same size as Had Yai -> 3 MPs, 2 Senator. The density will be 2.9-3 people/rai (1812.5-1875 people/sq km). Furthermore, the new city for hundreds of thousands of people will take 10-20 years to be completed, not just 5-8 years. The government has to come up with a masterplan and construct the roads, drainage, electric power, waterworks. If it uses a private sector joint venture, the government will get paid back very soon and the land allocation for the private sector will boost financial resources, create more jobs for Thai people, gain more tax revenue and create a new tourist spot like [Putrajaya](#). If the government allocates 45% of land (90,000 rai) for residential buildings, offices, malls, entertainment centers, main stadium, theaters, schools, hospitals, universities, service facilities, it will boost the revenue to pay off the infrastructure and land compensation.

For example:

Purchasing 200 rai of land @ 400,000 baht/rai -> 8 billion baht

Land development and infrastructure @ 1 million baht/rai -> 200 billion baht

Initial Expenses

208 billion baht

Revenue

45% Private Land Development @ 2 million baht/rai -> 180 billion baht

Taxes (VAT, revenue tax, business tax) -> 30 billion baht

Total income -> 210 billion baht -> break even

The new city must be able to handle the National Assembly, 20 ministries, and have a giant stadium for Olympic Games (minimum 100,000 seats), and exhibition halls.

For land speculation, the defense should be a line of ring forests, allowing land developers to develop the land around the forest rings, and then STARVE those who purchase agricultural land at very cheap prices and speculate for high prices from government purchase. The government will not change prices for the land to benefit speculators.

Commentary by Wisarut: The actual number of those who live in the Bangkok area (Nonthaburi and Paknam excluded) should be 6 million people or more. Since Nonthaburi already has absorbed 800,000 people and Paknam has absorbed 1.2 million people. The new city should at least be able to handle a million Bangkokians. MRTA will have to set up the subsidiary to handle the mass transit systems within the city.

200,000 rai of land for 600,000 people is fine. Not so sure if it is expanded to 1 million. The government has a long, long history of blunders in dealing with the planning of satellite cities.

Muang Sawan project (Celestial City Project) at Ban Nah – translated and summarized from *Naew Nah*, September 30, 2003

The proposed new city in Ban Nah district of Nakhon Nayok is mainly for residence—not exactly a new bureaucratic center... only a small temple and a small Hospital. Small SME businesses allowed. No industrial estate or mall allowed in Ban Nah. The funding will be by bonds purchased by landowners.

If it is necessary to move all 20 ministries, it will require 1 million square meters of land while moving only the National Assembly will require only 200,000 square meters of land.

Mr. Korn warns House Speaker Uthai (who insists the area around Pasak Cholasit Dam in Lopburi is the suitable place for the new National Assembly): "The area around Pasak Cholasit in Lopburi is too remote! It needs another 1 million square meters to accommodate hundreds of thousands of people in addition to 1 million square meters for 20 ministries and 0.2 million square meters for the National Assembly."

However, House Speaker Uthai still cannot afford to drop the issue. His wife and relatives have purchased thousands rai of land around Pasak Cholasit Dam.

From internal sources, the government are likely to aim for Ban Nah which will consist of the land around Sri kra-Ang Commune, Ban Phrao Commune, Khaop Phra Commune, Phrom Manee Commune, Ban Yai Commune, Sarika Commune, Hin Tang Commune, and the neighboring area close to Saraburi (between Khao Phra Phutthachai and Khao Cha Ngok) with a total area of 203,000 rai. The project would be named "Muang Sawan project" (Celestial City Project). There will be a new motorway from Ram Indra to Khorat—connecting with Ram Indra—at Narong Expressway to go to Muang Sawan (in addition to the Rangsit-Nakhon Nayok Road). However, the government has not finalized this yet so as not to cause the panic and stampede from speculators.

UPDATE: Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said the government is expected to finalise its decision on the city's location next year, denying speculation that it had already made a tentative selection of a site in Ban Na district, Nakhon Nayok province. ([The Nation, October 1, 2003](#))

Elvis film fest

January 8, 2008



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Elvis film fest – January 8, 2008

The sign reads: Chalermkrung Music House – Elvis' Movies –

Collection of Presley's famous films on January 13th 2007

Presented by Jeerasak Pinsuwan, Lek Presley

Manuel Presley, Jareuk Wiriyakit, Jib (Wasu) Sangsingkaew

Arthur Husen, Nong Camp, Satawas Tungkarat

Nong Pro, Paponwee Weeraprawad, House Presley

MC Edward Vanso

Schedule 2 pm –

Ticket price 700/500 baht –

To make reservation call 0-2225-8757-8, 0-2623-8184-9

In pictures: Eating insects in Thailand

January 8, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[In pictures: Eating insects in Thailand](#) –
BBC, January, 2008

Political developments

January 8, 2008

Political developments –

translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, January 8, 2008

Political reform in Thailand officially began after the 1997 Constitution came into effect in October of that year. After that constitution was ‘torn up’ in 2006, the Interim Constitution and the subsequent 2007 Constitution came in force. Although general elections have been held on four occasions since 1997, it is highly questionable whether Thai politics has moved forward at all in the past ten years.

If we monitor the behavior of politicians and political parties both before and after the December 23 General Election, we see that Thai politics has not changed in the slightest. All political parties still believe that they will ‘starve’ if they are forced to remain in opposition. As such, this means that they constantly trying to be a part of any government that is formed – regardless of any real benefit to the nation.

One political development has arisen in this election, however. Outdated politicians who formed new political parties before the event, in a bid to be a part of the new government, have largely failed to achieve their goals.

The results of the recent general election have done nothing to usher in political reform.

The 2007 Constitution was conceived to create a clean political system, and to reduce the power and influence of money politics. The participation of the public in the election – and their overall verdict – should be respected, however.

The December 23 General Election also led to another new political trend. People are now being urged to gather at protest meetings to pressure the Electoral Commission (EC) into dismissing provincial EC members who have awarded ‘red’ cards to parliamentary candidates. The future of Thai politics is extremely worrisome.

Thaksin Post-Coup Interviews

January 9, 2008

Categories: Thai Politics

[FT interview transcript: Thaksin Shinawatra](#) – *Financial Times*, March 3, 2008

Amy Kazmin, the FT's South-East Asia Correspondent, interviewed Thaksin Shinawatra, Thailand's former prime minister, in Bangkok on Monday, March 3, 2008. Below is an edited transcript of their conversation...

More info: [Thaksin censored on TITV](#) – *Prachatai*, January 9, 2008

... "But this is different. The person that we interviewed is deemed 'uninterviewable'. He has become a forbidden subject for the media, especially TV. There have been examples of defiant journalists who faced an undesirable fate, like the female Channel 5 reporter or other radio hosts. It is less strict with newspapers. But television is deemed to have more impact on the public..."

[Thaksin interview blocked from Thai TV station controlled by military-backed government](#) – *New Sin Chew Jit Poh*, December 28, 2007

A Thai TV news show was blocked from broadcasting an interview with deposed Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, which contained reactions to his allies' victory in last weekend's election, senior editors said Friday (28 Dec)...

Thaksin's speech at IISS – March 3, 2007

[2 Mar 07 – Address – Dr](#)

[Thaksin Shinawatra](#) – On Friday 2 March 2007 Dr Thaksin Shinawatra, Former Prime Minister of Thailand, will give an address on "Democracy at a Crossroads" from 1pm...

The transcript should end up [here](#).

[Ousted Thai PM Thaksin urges reconciliation](#) – *Reuters*, March 3, 2007

The exiled former prime minister of Thailand said on Friday he was willing to participate in a process of national reconciliation after being ousted in a bloodless coup last September...

[Transcript of Thaksin's February 13 interview with Australia's ABC](#)

And you think CNN is the king of softball questions! It is quite incredible no foreign reporter has been able to ask incisive questions of Thaksin...

VATSIKOPOULOS: The coup shattered 15 years of democracy and although most countries condemned it, Thailand is not an international pariah today and hasn't been punished with harsh sanctions. Are you disappointed that most countries have taken a pragmatic approach?

THAKSIN: Well I will not happy if my country has been punished, because of, it's not really punish the country but punish the whole people of Thailand. So Thailand need more investment. Thailand need more trade. Thailand need more tourists. Democracy in Thailand has been developed from baby to adolescence, to teenagers. It's growing to be a mature person. But it's happened to fall down. When you fall down at that age you're strong enough. When you come back you can stand back and you can move forward. You are not turning back to baby again because you are strong enough. So I think after this year the regime have to return the power back to the people, because you know Thai people love democracy, love freedom and liberty. And Thailand has gone too far that they cannot be returned, that democracy cannot be returned. So democracy will prevail back in Thailand again.

[Media groups slam 'Time' magazine](#) – *The Nation*, February 6, 2007

...Time magazine allowed Thaksin to tell lies. Thaksin has the audacity to say that the Thai press printed "groundless information" about him and that he never "intervened" in Thai media activities or closed them down. Let the truth be told.

Before he came to power, the Thai press was considered one of the freest in the world, ranking 29th in the survey done by Freedom House in 2000. During his reign until September 19, the Thai press fell to a depressing 107th position last year...

[Thaksin to attack Govt, CNS through website, satellite TV](#) – *The Nation*, February 4, 2007



...Former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra will step up his attacks by giving video interviews which will be broadcast through a satellite TV and a website, a well-informed source said Sunday.

The source said the clips of his interview would be broadcast through [www.reporter.co.th](#), known to be owned by his aide, Newin Chidchob.

The interviews would also beamed into the country on BTV to be picked up and relayed by certain local cable TV operators, the source said.

[Thaksin rumoured to have rented satellite](#) – *The Nation*, February 5, 2007

...A former Thai Rak Thai member of Parliament said a group of journalists was gathering information in Thailand to counter accusations levelled against Thaksin. These rebuttals would be broadcast using Chinese cable television.

The party member declined to be named but said the journalists worked for the [reporter.co.th](#) website, an instrument once used by former Prime Minister's Office minister Newin Chidchob, a close Thaksin aide. The website was taken down voluntarily after the September coup...

[Foreign media need a history lesson before praising Thaksin](#) – *The Nation*, February 2, 2006

What is going on with the Asian Wall Street Journal, Newsweek and The Economist?

[Thailand: Thaksin's Giant Shadow](#) – *Time*, February 1, 2007

...But for all of Thaksin's repeated protestations that he will bow out of politics, that his family needs him, that his Buddhist beliefs are propelling him to find an inner peace, the atmosphere in his fancy suite is one of expectation, not closure. Thaksin and Thailand are not done with each other yet.

Another Thaksin interview: "[I'm quite confident that if I ran today, I would win. I have no political ambitions.](#)" – *Time*, February 1, 2007

...Will you return to politics?

Right after I was ousted by the coup, I had mixed feelings. The negative

feeling was that this was unfortunate for Thailand and its democracy, that the confidence I tried very hard to restore after the 1997 financial crisis would be lost. The positive part was, oh, I can retire now; I can have time for myself, for my family, I can meet friends and relax. Life is not that long, so if you can bring some happiness to yourself and your family, that's good ... I'm quite confident that if I ran today, I would win, I have no political ambitions. I am calling it quits ...

[Some see Thaksin role in CNN delay](#)

– Bangkok Post, January 28, 2007

...Mr Sirichoke claimed CNN made gains during the Thaksin administration, referring to advertisements of Thailand's Elite Card on CNN. Thailand Privilege Card (TPC), operator of the elite card, bought airtime on CNN worth 149 million baht. The media spending drew attention when Thai Representation Co, representing CNN in Thailand, demanded TPC settle bills. He said the committee picked up the case for investigation only to find that no contract had been signed. The panel had called for documents and was later told that the debts were cleared by phuyai. "Who else can clear if not Mr Thaksin? The party will follow the matter," said Mr Sirichoke...

LOBBYING ISSUES 11. General lobbying issue areas. Select all applicable codes listed in instructions and on the reverse side of Form LD-1, page 1: FOR 12. Specific lobbying issues (current and anticipated): Provide guidance and counsel with regard to Mr. Thaksin's interests in Washington, DC and abroad.

CLIENT A Lobbying firm is required to file a separate report labeled "Self" and proceed to line 10. <input type="checkbox"/> Self 7. Client name: THAKSIN SHINAWATRA Address: MAYFAIR DISTRICT City: LONDON State: Zp:
--

Thaksin's lobbyists –
January 24, 2007

Several Thai-language newspapers have picked up information from korbsak.com about lobbying disclosure papers showing the hiring of Barbour Griffith and Rogers to "provide guidance and counsel with regard to Mr. Thaksin's interests in Washington, DC and abroad."

Another Thaksin interview: ["Thaksin: Thailand's credibility at stake"](#) – Asahi, January 23, 2007

...Thaksin said the September coup was notable in that it resulted in a populist leader being toppled from power. This, he said, highly damaged the country's credibility in the international community...

New UBC blocking screen –
January 23, 2007

UBC is back to blocking Thaksin-related content again today and has replaced the Hollywood movie star montage with a more sedate "Intermission" graphic (right).



Transcript of Thaksin *Talk Asia* interview – January 23, 2006

Here is the [transcript](#) for the Thaksin interview shown in full and initially censored locally.

Transcript of *International Correspondents* discussing the blocking of the Thaksin interview – January 23, 2006

Here is the [transcript](#) for the main segment on International Correspondents, also censored, discussing the junta's tact in blocking international newscasts domestically. Many sensationally negative comments about Thailand...

[Thaksin Shinawatra, former Thai leader, makes case to the world](#) – IHT, January 19, 2007

[Ex-PM Thaksin hires American political lobbyists](#) –

TNA, January 20, 2007

...According to a newspaper report in Hong Kong — the South China Morning Post — Mr. Thaksin met with lobbyists from Barbour Griffith and Rogers (BGR) in Hong Kong last week...

[Thai anxiety](#) – Times Online,
January 21, 2007

...Will new restrictions on foreign ownership in Thailand lead to panic in the property market, asks Michael Sheridan.

British villa owners in Thailand face uncertainty over the legal status of their properties, and might even lose control over their homes following a controversial change in company law by the country's military appointed government...

Thailand may still be the Land of Smiles, but it is not a place where investors should place much faith in contracts, lease renewals or bureaucratic consistency.

Thaksin asks for forgiveness: "...we forgive each other, things come back to normal..." – January 20, 2007

Thaksin's full CNN *Talk Asia* interview runs uncut on UBC in Thailand at 23:00.

We are not sure if this is a reversal of UBC policy or a lapse in censorship.

It is fascinating how the interviewer has no clue

about which questions to ask and how the international media are unable to key in on the subtext of Thaksin's very strategic comments.

This interview very clearly shows Thaksin is still a force to be reckoned with and is not bowing out of politics.



[UBC to block Thaksin interview](#) – *The Nation*, January 19, 2007

...CNN will broadcast the full interview on Saturday, but UBC spokeswoman Kantima Kunjara told AFP that they will not air it because of a request by the Council for National Security, as the junta calls itself.

"Since the CNS has asked for cooperation from broadcasting media not to broadcast statements from former prime minister Thaksin, UBC will cooperate and will not broadcast his interview," Kantima said...

[Thai coup generals worry Singapore's listening in](#)

– Reuters, January 19, 2007

[Thailand asks Japan to avoid Thaksin visit](#) – *Khaleej Times*, January 18, 2007

Thailand has asked Japan for cooperation in handling the visit of ousted prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra to the country Friday and Saturday to avoid a repeat of his recent "high profile" visit to Singapore that soured Thai-Singapore relations...

[CNN reporter says junta tarnishes Thailand's reputation](#) – Contactmusic.com, January 18, 2007

...Many are left wondering ... whether Thailand and its 62 million inhabitants are descending toward autocracy and economic decline."

[Singapore slaps on Thailand's face: FM](#) – *The Nation*, January 19, 2007

[Commentary: CNS media 'censorship' is a big mistake](#) – *Bangkok Post*, January 16, 2007

Whatever the denial by the Council for National Security (CNS) chairman Sonthi Boonyaratkalin that he had nothing to do with the UBC pay television's "censorship" of former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra's interview with CNN, the writing on the wall is too obvious to miss.

The CNS request for cooperation from the broadcast media – not to cover any activities of the deposed prime minister – has, apparently, driven the editor of UBC to apply self-censorship so as to avoid what one CNS member said bluntly: "Use your discretion properly or we impose our own discretion"...

[Thai junta denies censoring CNN interview with ousted PM](#) – AFP, January 16, 2007

Thailand's junta has denied they censored a television interview with ousted Thaksin Shinawatra, a week after they urged broadcasters not to report statements by the deposed leader.

...One foreign news editor with a state-run television station admitted that his channel received the feed from CNN, but decided against putting it on air.

"It's our own decision not to broadcast it, since we were asked to cooperate with the CNS last week," he said.

Junta chief General Sonthi Boonyaratglin denied they had ordered Thai media to block the interview with Thaksin.

"It's cooperation. Everybody cooperated with us," he told Channel 3 television station Tuesday morning...

CNN censored – January 15, 2007

Thaksin's interview from Singapore first ran on CNN International at 22:20. Here is how it appeared to Thai viewers watching the broadcast on local cable operator [UBC](#) (above). The story is cut off by the same montage of young Hollywood stars used to block international broadcasts after the [coup](#) in September 2006.

Above: [The uncensored interview](#)

More [2Bangkok.com on YouTube](#)

[Singapore-Bangkok row over Thaksin](#) – CNN, January 15, 2007

[CNS finds Thaksin Singapore visit 'upsetting'](#) –

TNA, January 15, 2007 Ousted Thai prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra's movements overseas –including his latest trip to Singapore– have caused "uneasiness" and the Thai interim government needs to come up with some actions, according to Air Chief Marshal Chalit Phukbhasuk, vice chairman of the Council for National Security (CNS).

Marshal Chalit commented Monday that Mr. Thaksin's "personal" visit to Singapore from last Saturday, where he sought to meet with the island republic's deputy prime minister, was "worrisome" and suggested that Thailand must restrict the ex-premier's movements abroad, coming to an understanding with the countries the deposed prime minister visit...

[Deposed Thai PM Thaksin quits politics – lawyer](#) – Reuters, January 10, 2007

...The announcement by lawyer Noppadon Patama came just hours after coup leaders summoned radio and television broadcasters, all of whom have to rent air time from the government, not to carry any statements from Thaksin.

"I want to ask every television channel and every radio station not to broadcast messages or statements of the former prime minister and leaders of the past ruling party," General Winai Phattiyakul told a gathering of 100 media representatives.

"If they don't listen, you can kick them out of your station or if you can't use your judgement, I will use mine to help you run your station," Winai said...

[CNS CENSORSHIP – Strong media protest over Thaksin, TRT ban](#) – *The Nation*, January 11, 2007

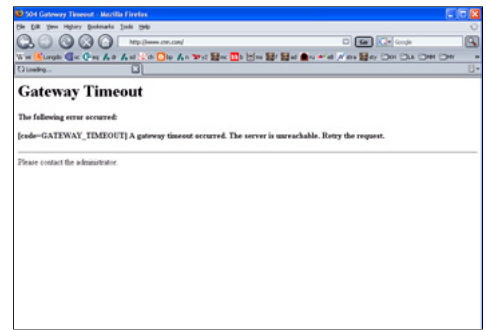
...Supinya Klangnarong, secretary-general of the Campaign for Popular Media Reform, said media censorship by the CNS only further emphasised that democracy would not come under military rule.

"It's all about stifling any opposition," Supinya said. "The CNS is no different from Thaksin in this regard. Today, it is only messing with broadcast media; there is no guarantee it will not try to control the press tomorrow. It only reinforces that autocratic control, not democracy, is its highest priority."...

['Cooperation, not control,' CNS tells media](#) – TNA, January 11, 2007

[Freedom of expression remains intact, says Thai PM](#) – TNA, January 11, 2007

January 16, 2007, 00:24 – Both CNN and BBC are reachable via anonymizer sites...



Government blocks CNN with "fake error message" – January 16, 2007

More on [Website censorship in Thailand](#)

A thread on this subject is [here](#).

FACT – Freedom Against Censorship Thailand reports:

Good News & Bad News, or Woo-Hoo! MICT blocks CNN!!!

Bad News (?):

CNN.com is now completely blocked by Thai (junta) government.

(try <http://cnn.com/> and you will be hold for a minute, then got a fake error message, "504 Gateway Timeout")

Good News (?):

You can still access Amerikan propaganda via proxy servers abroad,

-OR- use "Tor" router program – an efficient way to circumvent censorship.

(Can't) Download Tor (because MICT blocks the website!):

<http://tor.eff.org/>

<http://www.theonionrouter.com/>

How to setup Tor:

<http://facthai.wordpress.com/2006/12/09/tor-setup/>

About Tor:

<http://facthai.wordpress.com/2006/12/09/tor-network/>

Websites blocked by Ministry of Information (ICT), Official Censor of the Military Coup :

13 Oct 2006 = 2,475 sites

11 Jan 2007 = 13,435 sites (more than a 500% increase)

Royal Thai Police state they block an additional 32,500+ sites.

see more : <http://facthai.wordpress.com/data/>

The Gem Scam Main Page

January 9, 2008

Categories: Gem Scam



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

[If you have been cheated and what a refund](#)

Note: This page is current to around 2009. In recent years, as information on the internet led to better informed tourists, scammers switched to targeting Chinese and others Asian tourists instead of Europeans.

Left: Tourist warning sign near MBK – January 9, 2008

The Scam

One of the most pervasive scams in Thailand is the Thai gem scam. Typically, a tourist meets a friendly Thai at a tourist attraction who eventually offers to take them to a “government” gem stone shop where the tourist is told about how they can sell Thai “blue sapphires” or other gems back home and make a 100% profit. It is all lies, of course, and the tourist ends up with a pocket full of overpriced gems. Like Thais themselves, the scam is low-key and the touts are friendly rather than pushy. A rule of thumb for Thais is that “real” Thais do not just walk up to strangers and strike up a friendly conversation. Thais typically “speak when spoken to.” If you are approached at a tourist attraction by a friendly fellow who just walks up and starts speaking to you, watch out!

Too many otherwise wonderful vacations have been ruined by this scam, so watch out. 2B has followed this scam online for over a decade and make no mistake—the authorities have done little to stop it. No official ever dares mention the “protected” gold shops that actually run the scams (**UPDATE:** Gold stores were finally mentioned in a Tourist Police brochure circa January, 2004). One of the tuk tuk drivers who takes victims to be scammed operates in front of the Tourist Information Centre and the local Police Station on Khao Sarn Road.

The funny thing is that over the years the reports are from the *same locations*—only the names of the stores change. Officials claim that just changing the name of the shop prevents them from doing anything to stop the scam. See our [Family Tree of Corrupt Shops](#). As one shop owner bragged to some cheated tourists: “I’ll reopen again, just like I have for 20 years!”

How the scam works

This is a by-the-numbers scam. Most people have the exact same experience. It goes something like this:

1. You are riding in a tuk-tuk
2. The driver tells you that wherever you are going is closed for some reason.
3. The driver tells you he is specially trained to be helpful to tourists.
4. You are told the government has launched a promotion to sell gems to tourists.
5. In the course of riding around with the “friendly” tuk-tuk driver, you “accidentally” meet a well-dressed young man, an older, distinguished man, or even another tourist.
6. The younger man claims he is a student. The older will claim he works for the government and shows you his government ID. (Thai IDs mean nothing. They are readily available for a small fee to anyone.) The tourist will tell you he fiancées his trips to Thailand by buy gems and bringing them back home for resale.
7. This person you meet will “independently” confirm the story the tuk-tuk driver told.
8. Eventually you ask to be taken to the “government” jewelry house and are told that you can make 100-150% profit by reselling the gems back home. It seems okay since the seller writes something like “if everything is not ok we will offer a full refund” and puts an official looking stamp on it.
9. You’ve now been cheated by one of the oldest and most openly practiced scams in Thailand.

Latest News

Note: There are actually newer scam reports than those below, but we receive so many and they are all basically the same story at the same shops. We can just let these reports stand as representative of what is still going on...

[Malaysians falling prey to Bangkok gems scam](#) – Bernama, December 31, 2009

...He said the group members, some of whom he claimed were off-duty policemen, normally preyed on tourists at popular spots like the Grand Palace, Siam Square, Central World, Pratunam, Wat Pho and Khaosan Road.

A spokesman of the Thai Tourist Police said the number of reports of such scam had dropped in recent years, and added that most of the victims were from France, Australia, Israel, as well as Japan, Singapore and Malaysia...

Latest gem scam: [Yindee Lapidary](#) – December 4, 2009

[Jewel scam in Chiang Mai](#) – Lonely Planet, February 12, 2009

[Thai Gem Scam simulation](#) – The Real Hustle, May, 2008

Interesting simulation of the Thai gem scam that gets several key points wrong – the gems are not fake, the scam is recommended “randomly” by two independent sources, and the gems are sold from a “legitimate” shop, not an outdoor kiosk.

[Scam report](#) – April 3, 2008

Scam report – March 27, 2008

From a reader: *I just finished browsing your web site and could not help crying over the scam I just went through this afternoon. The incident is exactly same as what most of people described on your web site, involving friendly thai in front of Grand Royal Palace telling me the palace is closed, best bargain price with 40Bah with Tutu driver, and the worst foreigner claimed himself coming from Belgium. I purchased Blue Sapphire and Red Ruby bracelets with about 135,000 Bah and don't even want to imagine how much they are really worth. I bought them really for personally usage, although the “Belgium” guy claimed those jewelry can be resold with double price. With a bit of suspicion, I search for “Golden Argosy Factory Export Center” and found out about the Gem scams on your web site. I am calling credit card company and Thai tourist police but none of them seem to be interested in helping me to get my refund. I am wondering if you have heard any news that the refund can be made 100%. If you do, please let me know. Thank you very much for posting those scams on the web site. Without your web site, I might think I bought those jewelry at decent price. Gosh, I don't even want to admit how stupid I am to fall into this trap. Thanks for your kind attention to my email.*

Scam report – March 15, 2008

From a reader: *My husband and I were recently scammed by Leela Lapidary in Pranakorn. We would like our money to be returned. Thank you in advance for any assistance you can offer.*

On 1 January 2008 around 11:00 am, my husband and I arrived at the Grand Palace. We were told by a man at the entrance that the palace was full and would not allow more people in until 1:00 pm. He recommended that we visit Wat Benchamabophit and Wat Saket, as well as a place he called "Thai Center," which we thought must be a cultural center. Refer to the map attached where he wrote this information. He called over a tuk-tuk driver and arranged the fare for us. At one of the wats a very friendly Thai man approached us. He told us that it was a good investment to buy gemstones in Thailand, that they would bring us luck, and indicated that the "Thai Center" had very good prices.

The tuk-tuk driver took us to the "Thai Center," which turned out to be the jewelry store Leela Lapidary (address: 589 Prasumeru Road, Wat Borwornives, Pranakorn, Bangkok 10200. Tel: 2629-4513-16.) My husband was lured into buying a sapphire ring by the saleswoman who kept insisting that the rings were such high quality, we would save on taxes, all the Thai people shopped here because of the good wholesale values, etc. He paid 153,300 bhat for a ring that was only worth 85,533 according to Mr. James Corbett, a registered gemologist in Australia. (Refer to the receipt from Leela Lapidary and the valuation/appraisal from Mr. Corbett. Note that the valuation shows Australian dollars. I have written in US dollars.)

We began to realize that we might have fallen in prey of the scam group only on our return to Australia the following day. We would like to inform you about the crooked sales tactics of this shop and ask for your help in getting our money back (preferably in US dollars). Unfortunately, this ruined our wonderful holiday in Thailand.

We will be returning to Thailand on March 26 for a couple of days. We can bring the ring back at that time. We would prefer not to mail it, but will do so, if instructed.

[Older news](#)

Accounts of the gem scam

What do we mean by "Gem Shop Locations involved in the scam?" – Shops that have been known to use touts at tourist attractions to lure shoppers to their stores with false claims of huge discounts and promises that money can be made by reselling the gems back home. The gems purchased are genuine, but overpriced—sometimes many times their actual retail value.

Also: List of [gem shops](#) involved in the scam

[Piyamane](#) – December 20, 2005

[Gem scam flourishing – Why the authorities don't crack down](#) – December 23, 2004

[Bangkok Royal Gems & Jewelry: "Two Friendly Men" ruin a vacation](#)

[Bangkok Trade Center: A typical tale](#)

[Benjarong](#) (March 8, 2002)

[Blue Dragon](#) (April 2, 2004)

[Blue Dragon](#) (May 17, 2004)

[Burapa Lapidary](#) (March 28, 2002)

[Christie's Lapidary](#) (October 30, 2002)

[Komkien Gems and Jewelry](#) (January 4, 2002)

[Komkien Gems and Jewelry](#) (January 29, 2002)

[Leela Lapidary & the new Tourist Police Chief](#) (August 11, 2003)

[Mahachai](#) (October 19, 2002)

[Ma Mere claims more victims](#)

[Marin Gems Company Limited](#) (March 14, 2002)

[Orchid](#) (November 11, 2002)

[Siam \(formerly Komkien\)](#) (July 30, 2002)

[S.S.S. Jewelry Limited Partnership](#) (May 14, 2004)

[Sukothai Jewellers? They've been closed so kiss your money goodbye!](#) (February 5, 2002)

[TGJ Thai Center Co. Ltd.](#) (October, 2000)

[TGJ Thai Center Co., Ltd.](#) (August, 2000)

[Thai Mikimoto scam account I](#) (December 18, 2001)

[Thai Mikimoto scam account II](#) (January 10, 2002)

[Thai Mikimoto scam account III](#) (January 11, 2002)

[Thai Mikimoto scam account IV](#) (January 22, 2002)

[Thai Royal Gems: Gem deals are too good to be true](#)

[Universal Gems and Jewelry Export Co. Ltd](#) (May 12, 2002)

[Vandee Gems Gallery](#) (August 9, 2002)

[Vandee Gems Gallery \(AKA The Export Centre\)](#) (July 22, 2002)

[Vandee Gems Gallery](#) (June 13, 2002)

[Yindee Lapidary](#) (November 30, 2002)

[Yindee Lapidary](#) (November 2, 2002)

Many more shorter reports are on the [older news page](#)

[One day in Bangkok: Nine tourists/1,204,320 baht scammed/police refuse to help](#) – (October 17, 2002)

[Taxi drivers help with the scam](#) (June 6, 2002)

[Foreigners now helping with the gem scam](#)

[Just Embarrassing... \(efforts to stop the scam\)](#)

[Gem scam account: Another experience that's not quite like the rest](#)

August 2006 – State of the gem scam during the Thai Rak Thai government years

Since Thai Rak Thai came to power the government has ceased all action against the gem scam and simply announced that the problem was solved.

The reality was that several key shops—Blue Dragon, SSS, and Piyamane were allowed to remain scamming. Police no longer conducted raids or forced shops to close. Instead, the shops were required to operate under Department of Internal Trade rules that stipulates an 80% refund must be offered to a buyer. While we have heard statistics of the number of police reports of the scam per year, as far we know police no longer take reports, but send the cheated tourist back to the shop for a refund.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Back When...

When we first started following the scam in 1990, it was almost always based around blue sapphires. Many even called the scam the Thai Blue Sapphire scam. The story went that there were lots of cheap sapphires being smuggled in from Burma and Cambodia that foreigners could buy, bring home, and make a fortune. Since then the type of gems mentioned in the scam has become more varied.



Left: Tipnapa Ltd., Part. was the first gem scam shop we investigated in 1992. The shop is long gone, but was located not far from the [Vandee shop](#).

Links

[The Thai Gem Scam Group](#) – website created by a group of tourists who want to end the scam

[Tourism Authority of Thailand Gem-buying page](#) (dead link as of 2007) – "Buying gems or jewellery to resell at double or triple the purchase price is an impossible proposition under any circumstances and should not be attempted."

[Thai Gem and Jewelry Traders Association](#)

Police keep guard over Thaksin, wife

January 9, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

[Police keep guard over Thaksin, wife](#) – Bangkok Post, January 9, 2008

...For quite a while now, Pol Lt-Col Wathunyu has been seen following Mr Thaksin and his wife Khunying Potjaman everywhere they go, including in London. He was with her when she returned to Bangkok from Hong Kong yesterday.

It is not widely realised that Mr Thaksin has had state-paid bodyguards accompanying him over the 15 months of his self-exile...

Russian woman, detained in Thailand, returns home

January 9, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Russian woman, detained in Thailand, returns home](#) –
Itar-Tass, January 9, 2008

Qantas jet ‘lucky’ after power loss

January 9, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Qantas jet ‘lucky’ after power loss](#) – *The Age*,

January 9, 2008

Thanks to Danny for pointing this out.

Patriotic Thai boss not interested in Vietnam switch

January 10, 2008

Categories: Sports

[Patriotic Thai boss not interested in Vietnam switch](#) – ESPN, January 10, 2008

Thailand coach Charnwit Polcheewin says he has no interest in coaching Vietnam's national team because he loves his country too much...

Thai cop on duty despite charge of killing Canadian

January 10, 2008

Categories: Crime

[Thai cop on duty despite charge of killing Canadian](#) – *Reuters*, January 10, 2008

Siam or Thailand: What's in a name?

January 10, 2008

Categories: Local Beliefs

[Siam or Thailand: What's in a name?](#) – Bangkok Post, January 10, 2008

...Contemporary observers also pointed out that the change of name was not simply a rejection of a name that had been imposed by foreigners, it was at the same time a preparation for the Thai to assume a leading role among all Thai peoples.

The former British ambassador Sir Josiah Crosby also clearly identified the underlying reason why Phibun's government decided to change the word Siam to Thailand. Crosby stated: "The fact that the official change of nomenclature should have been made in coincidence with the launching of the Pan-Thai movement may be interpreted not unfairly as the indication of a desire to familiarise outsiders with the claim of Siam to be regarded as the mother-country of all peoples of Thai race."

Typical for the thinking of the 1930s and early '40s, it did not occur to the proponents of a larger united land of all Thai peoples to ask themselves whether or not the peoples speaking related languages were interested in joining such a new venture, nor whether they were willing to accept Bangkok's rule.

Nevertheless, a growing number of Thais could be forgiven for dreaming of a much larger country, one including northern Burma, parts of southern China, Laos, large parts of Indochina and major extensions on the Malay Peninsula.

The dream of more than doubling their territory, at first a murmur with the weakening of the colonial powers and China, became a distinct possibility, a scenario whereby a subtle, clever leadership should be quick to act when opportunity would present itself.

Premier Phibun was just the man for this difficult task, a master at playing off _ telling the British the Thais would remain neutral at all costs while at the same time secretly manoeuvring towards a pact with the Japanese.

...Should a Thai government ever wish to indicate the beginning of a new era, it could hardly find a more effective symbol than a re-investiture of the old name.

95% of Songkhla small, medium-sized fishing operators out of business

January 10, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[95% of Songkhla small, medium-sized fishing operators out of business](#) – *The Nation*, January 10, 2008

Minor damage at Cyber World

January 10, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Minor damage at Cyber World](#) – Bangkok Post, January 10, 2008

...The executive said the fire damaged foil covering the aluminium sheeting on the building's exterior, as well as damaging some sheeting and windows, but there was no damage to the interior or any structure...

New requirements for marriage visas

January 10, 2008

New requirements for marriage visas – January 10, 2008

Don reports: *(We) paid our annual visit to Immigration this morning, to renew my annual visa. There is a new requirement now: We must submit four (4) photos of our residence, with both of us in all four photos. One photo must be of us standing outside the building, with it in the background. The other three must be of us in different locations inside the residence. No mention was made of photo size, but the samples on the desk were rather large. Today is Thursday; I have four days, until next Monday, to submit the photos or else the visa-extension request will be canceled. We saw several people coming in dropping off photos with the officials and wondered what that was all about until the officer explained it to us. So be warned... Also, we had to draw a map to our place. I believe that was another first.*

More details: Officer says shooting victims attacked him

January 10, 2008

Categories: Crime

More details: [Officer says shooting victims attacked him](#) – *Calgary Herald*, January 10, 2008

A thread on this is [here](#).

Brutal killing of (citizen journalist) Wei Wenhua underscores the evils of China's urban management system

January 10, 2008
Categories: China

[Brutal killing of \(citizen journalist\) Wei Wenhua underscores the evils of China's urban management system](#) – CMP, January, 2008

The Cyber World fire

January 10, 2008

The Cyber World fire – January 10, 2008

[All the best photos from SkyscraperCity.](#)

[Rental info for the project](#)

On the forum: [Ratchada's Towering Inferno](#)

Q&A: Opening times of the Cambodian embassy in Bangkok on weekend

January 10, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Q&A: Opening times of the Cambodian embassy in Bangkok on weekends](#) – January 10, 2008

Proof that that no amount of internet technology will improve things if someone is not willing to answer a question.

Community Radio 2002-2008

January 11, 2008

Categories: Community Radio

Also: [‘A tale of two newspapers’ archives](#)

[THAILAND: Police raid community radio station and confiscate equipment](#) – Asian Human Rights Commission, October 17, 2008

[Interference mars community radio](#) – Asia Media Forum, January 11, 2008

A tale of two newspapers: Closing community radio III – June 1, 2005

The gulf between the *Post* and *Nation* could not be wider. *The Nation* article invokes the Prem era and the May 1992 revolt while the *Post* reports paid advertising is the cause of stations "breaching telecom regulations."

[Community-radio crackdown panned](#) – *The Nation*, June 1, 2005

Community radio broadcasters and activists yesterday accused the Thaksin government of trying to silence dissident voices by cracking down on the often feisty medium.

Anchalee Paireerak, a high-profile community radio broadcaster based in Bangkok who has been raided by police several times over the past few months, said freedom of expression was facing its gravest threat since the end of the Prem Tinsulanonda administration in the late 1980s...

Anusorn said the state should understand and respect the fact that the need to safeguard the independence of community radio stations, and keep them free of political and commercial interests, was a result of the May 1992 revolt, when state-controlled radio and television lied to the people.

Democrat MP Apichart Sakdisaet said the government's claim about community radio signals interfering with flight communications had to be substantiated and supporting publicly.

"It must not be used as a pretext for a hidden agenda," he said, adding that those stations being prosecuted appeared to be those that were critical of the government.

[Abuse blamed on regulation](#) – Bangkok Post, June 1, 2005

The Public Relations Department is being urged to revoke a regulation that allows community radio stations to broadcast announcements.

The directive is being pinpointed as the root cause of problems involving community radio stations, several of which are breaching telecom regulations.

It allows community radio stations to air announcements for six minutes an hour. But the regulation also seems to have been misused to air paid advertisements, which explains the sudden boom in community radio stations...

Ms Anchalee said certain politicians and PRD officials have vested interests in the community radio sector.

Supinya Klangnarong, a media reform advocate, called on the government to set up an independent panel to resolve the dispute.

[Radio spat only hurts the public](#) – Bangkok Post, May 25, 2005

...At the heart of the ongoing controversy are the complaints by operators, some members of the Senate and non-government organisations, over the government's efforts to exert its control over the new airwaves. While their concern is valid, those in the community radio business and media freedom advocates will have to admit the rot which has begun to develop within the local radio communities has provided a logical excuse for state interference.

...It would not be an exaggeration to say the problem has now developed to a point that the new broadcasts have become more of an additional airwave pollution than an alternative source of information to the highly commercialised mainstream radio.

...The government has attracted much criticism by its campaign to impose order on community radio stations. But it can do the public a favour and repair the damage to its reputation by helping identify rogue radio operators and getting rid of those who seek profits under the guise of community radio service providers.

A tale of two newspapers: Closing community radio II – May 21, 2005

The *Post* article has 15 paragraphs explaining the government's reason for closing community radio stations before mentioning the allegations that the government targets stations that criticize it. It also adds a police denial that officers attempted to search the station in the TPI building. *The Nation* mentions the allegations in the second paragraph and restates the charges that police attempted to search the station.

[Govt puts the heat on local radio – Warning: Play by the rules or be shut down](#) – Bangkok Post, May 19, 2005

...Pol Maj-Gen Kosin said an official of the Public Relations Department told him the station's powerful transmitter and high antenna caused interference. He then asked his staff to warn the station "gently".

Pol Maj-Gen Kosin denied his officers harassed anyone. He admitted police had no authority to take the action because the authority rested with the NBC but he said a gentle request for cooperation should be acceptable.

He denied a report that two policemen had tried to search the radio station at the TPI building on Narathiwat Rachanakarin road. However, the Senate committee decided to ask the police force to investigate...

[COMMUNITY RADIO: PRD orders closure of stations over legal limit](#) – *The Nation*, May 19, 2005

...Radio FM 92.25 accused police of intimidation after two officers attempted to gain entry to the third floor of the TPI building, where the station is located, on Wednesday. Metropolitan Police Bureau 5 commissioner Maj-General Kosin Hinthao, who was accused of ordering Thung Mahamek police to search the TPI building, defended himself to the House committee on social development and human security against the allegation.

...He said police had no intention of intimidating the station, but he had received a complaint from a PRD official that the station was disrupting other frequencies...

Also: [Broadcaster plans all-out govt attack](#) – *The Nation*, May 21, 2005

A community radio station critical of the prime minister has announced plans to retaliate against a government threat to shut it down by broadcasting its anti-government programmes through other community radio stations around the country...

Also: [Listen to FM 92.25's broadcasts](#)

A tale of two newspapers: Closing community radio

The *Post* has a just-the-facts article with the government side, saying radio stations were being closed "for causing trouble for air traffic radio" by transmitting at higher power levels than allowed. The FM 92.25 controversy is pushed to the end of the article and reported as a separate incident and a disagreement between presenters.

The Nation has an entirely different story about the government closing community radio stations to stifle criticism along with a veiled threat by a "high-ranking police official." *The Nation* then has quotes from senators

[COMMUNITY RADIO: Police muscle in on critical station](#) – *The Nation*, May 18, 2005

A community radio station yesterday accused police of intimidation after the two officers tried to search the TPI Building, where the station is located.

...She said police were attempting to put pressure on her team and scare

who are going to call police before them to explain these actions and gleefully points out that stations owned by Yaowapa Wongsawat, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's sister, are not being shut down.

[17 community radio stations told to close](#) – Bangkok Post, May 18, 2005

The National Telecommunications Commission ordered 17 community radio stations closed yesterday, saying they interfered with other radio stations and air traffic controllers.

Apichart Sakdiset, spokesman of the House committee on telecommunications, quoted the NTC as reporting that it had closed 17 community radio stations for interference. Of the stations, seven frequently interfered with air traffic radio, and the Aeronautical Radio of Thailand Co had complained.

...The move came four days after Minister to the Prime Minister's Office Suranand Vejajiva vowed to crack down on community radio stations for causing trouble for air traffic radio.

...Meanwhile, Smarn Sri-ngarm, a programme host of the FM 92.25 community radio station, complained that two policemen attempted to search the office of the radio station yesterday but security guards stopped them.

He said that no one could stop him from discussing stories in the public interest such as state enterprise privatisation because the public had the right to know.

...Miss Anchalee said a listener told her that Mr Sorayut raised a photograph of the TPI building in his TV programme yesterday morning and indicated that a former journalist who worked at a community radio station there was hired to attack the government.

them. Earlier, a high-ranking police official called her to say she should take care of her staff.

"This is not right and not fair," she said.

Senator Nirand Pithakwatchara, who chairs the House committee on social development and human security, said he would summon Metropolitan Police Bureau 5 commissioner Maj-General Kosin Hinthao, who has jurisdiction over Thung Mahamek police station.

... "The government cannot take action against this station for being critical of the administration. If it's going to cite those directives, then it has to shut down the other local community stations, which are owned by those with ties to the prime minister," Nirand said.

...Meanwhile, the government was accused of discrimination yesterday for closing seven community radio stations and planning to close another 10, including ones critical of the government. The House communications and telecommunications committee yesterday summoned PM's Office Minister Suranand Vejajiva to explain why the seven community radio stations had been shut down.

... The 17 did not include stations belonging to Traffic Corner, owned by the daughter of Yaowapa Wongsawat, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's sister...

Community radio – Bangkok Post, May 8, 2003

And only recently, a compromise seemed at hand. Following grassroots appeals, the Public Relations Department had invited civic leaders to draft temporary measures governing community radio in the absence of relevant organic laws. Their proposal was approved, but the state PR machine then did not table it for cabinet consideration. Instead, it tabled its own draconian version, which places community radio to be under Tambon Administration Organisations. It's common knowledge that the TAOs are dominated by the local mafia, who go on to become local politicians and canvassers with links to national policymakers. We can foresee how community radio will end up a tool to tighten their grip on power instead of being the voice of the civic sector.

[Community radio gets interim frequencies](#) – Bangkok Post, March 31, 2003

[COMMUNITY RADIO GIFT: TRT 'plans to rule airwaves'](#) – The Nation, December 20, 2002

This is the latest in an interesting and long-running story.

Unlicensed community radio stations will be shut down. [Post](#): No broadcasters could operate legally without a licence from the National Broadcasting Commission, which was yet to be established, Mr Visanu said... The constitution guarantees freedom of the media and specifically frees the airwaves for public use, but two bureaucratic agencies must be established first. The National Broadcasting Commission would decide who can broadcast and the National Telecommunications Commission would distribute frequencies.

[Broadcasters fight govt bids to silence them](#) – The Nation, October 11, 2002

The gathering included operators of some 50 stations that currently broadcast to listeners in their own communities – in spite of government legal threats.

Here's an earlier, more in-depth article: [MEDIA-THAILAND: Struggle for Airwaves Still On](#) – The Irrawaddy, June 19, 2002

Some stations broadcast to as few as 100 homes, although the government is trying to stop this. Initially the government supported these small-scale broadcasts: *People began to use the community slots to air grievances about local services and government policies on live phone-in shows, often forcing officials to answer embarrassing questions and respond to the issues raised... The government started to get uneasy about this trend and began curtailing community involvement at its stations, eventually resulting in the PRD calling off the project in mid-2000.... On the one hand, the constitution protects their rights to run community stations, but on the other the government, which owns and controls the nation's 500 radio frequencies, had cut off what seemed their only access to the airwaves.* An excellent read...

Black Saturday in Karenni refugee camp

January 11, 2008

Categories: Refugees and Migrants

[Black Saturday in Karenni refugee camp](#) – *Mizzima*,
January 11, 2008

Burma's long-neck women struggle to break out of Thailand's 'human zoo'

January 11, 2008

Categories: Human Rights

[Burma's long-neck women struggle to break out of Thailand's 'human zoo'](#) – *The Age*, January 11, 2008

...Now 23, her neck is bare, the rings stripped off in anger after provincial authorities in Mae Hong Son, in northern Thailand, refused to let her emigrate to New Zealand, concerned about the negative impact on tourism of an exodus of long-neck women...

Four global giants vie to supply nuclear plants to Thailand

January 11, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Four global giants vie to supply nuclear plants to Thailand](#) – Bangkok Post, January 11, 2008

...Toshiba and Mitsubishi from Japan, Areva from France and General Electric from the US have each contacted the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (Egat) about submitting proposals to build a new nuclear plant. Thailand hopes to have four nuclear plants, each costing at least \$1 billion, in operation by 2020-21. Vietnam and Indonesia are expected to have nuclear plants operational by the same time...

Vietnam has 7 universities in Southeast Asia's top 100

January 11, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Vietnam has 7 universities in Southeast Asia's top 100](#) – *Xinhua*, January 11, 2008

Vietnam has seven universities in the top 100 in Southeast Asia, as ranked by Webometrics, a Spanish ranking system of world universities...

Here's the [full list for Asia](#). Top in Thailand is Kasetsart University which ranks just above Chulalongkorn University.

Protecting good people

January 11, 2008

Protecting good people –

translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, January 11, 2008

The public is becoming highly-critical of the sad fact that most government officials currently appear to be in ‘neutral gear’, and not eager to complete many of their allotted tasks – but rather to await the arrival in office of the next government. There is, however, one government official who is still devoted to his job.

Kasem Wattanatham is the person thus described, and he is currently wearing two ‘hats’: One as the Deputy Governor of Buriram Province, and the other as the President of the Buriram Provincial Electoral Commission.

As the Deputy Governor, Kasem plays a significant role in the investigation of the illegal possession of public land in the province. It’s a job that few relish, as it involves the interrogation of powerful individuals who are widely-feared.

As President of the Buriram Electoral Commission, Kasem was involved in the investigation of corrupt practices in the recent general election – in which the National Electoral Commission awarded ‘red’ cards to three People Power Party parliamentary candidates standing for constituencies in the province.

A normal man would probably not be prepared to undertake such onerous tasks, for fear that the consequences of his actions might impact on his career path.

Kasem has said, however, that the realization that he is working for HRH the King has made him far more daring in his pursuit of the ‘right action’ than might normally be the case. He has also posed the question as to how ordinary people can survive with integrity if government administrators are too cowardly to tackle such criminality.

Kasem is devoted to his job, and fears nothing. Indeed, he is that rare phenomenon today: a highly-respectable individual. It is only right that Thai people should support and protect such a good person.

Indians hit the road amid elephants

January 11, 2008

Categories: India

[Indians hit the road amid elephants](#) – *NYT*, January 11, 2008

Thanks to Danny for pointing this out.

Still life with Apple knockoffs: Thailand

January 11, 2008
Categories: Crime

[Still life with Apple knockoffs: Thailand](#) – January, 2008

CASBAA Releases Thailand in View

January 11, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[CASBAA Releases Thailand in View](#) – January, 2008

...According to the report, Thailand's pay-TV penetration remains relatively low compared with other Asian markets, with just 14.3% of 18.7 million Thai TV households.

...There is also room for significant pay-TV advertising growth. As of now, the Thai government has only given tacit approval for pass-through, non domestic pay-TV advertising, while privately owned pay-TV operators at this time cannot carry any domestic advertising at all, which has suppressed the willingness of industry players to further invest in this sector. The industry hopes that recently-passed broadcasting legislation will unambiguously pave the way for lifting the advertising ban...

Protecting good people

January 11, 2008

Protecting good people – translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, January 11, 2008

The public is becoming highly critical of the sad fact that most government officials currently appear to be in ‘neutral gear’, and not eager to complete many of their allotted tasks – but rather to await the arrival in office of the next government. There is, however, one government official who is still devoted to his job.

Kasem Wattanatham is the person thus described, and he is currently wearing two hats: one as the Deputy Governor of Buriram Province and the other as the President of the Buriram Provincial Electoral Commission.

As the Deputy Governor, Kasem plays a significant role in the investigation of the illegal possession of public land in the province. It is a job that few relish, as it involves the interrogation of powerful individuals who are widely-feared.

As President of the Buriram Electoral Commission, Kasem was involved in the investigation of corrupt practices in the recent general election in which the National Electoral Commission awarded ‘red’ cards to three People Power Party parliamentary candidates standing for constituencies in the province.

A normal man would probably not be prepared to undertake such onerous tasks, for fear that the consequences of his actions might impact on his career path.

Kasem has said, however, that the realization that he is working for HRH the King has made him far more daring in his pursuit of the ‘right action’ than might normally be the case. He has also posed the question as to how ordinary people can survive with integrity if government administrators are too cowardly to tackle such criminality.

Kasem is devoted to his job and fears nothing. Indeed, he is that rare phenomenon today: a highly-respectable individual. It is only right that Thai people should support and protect such a good person.

The return of Pojaman

January 11, 2008



Above: "I come home because I am of thinking of my children." Huddled around her are various PPP/TRT politicians. (from *Manager*, Na Ban Bangkhae, by Bancha, January 11, 2008)

The return of Pojaman – January 12, 2008

Below: Pojaman as puppet (from Arun, *Krungtepturakit*, January 10, 2008)



For the Princess

January 12, 2008



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

For the Princess – January 12, 2008

It reads: We respectfully pay homage to the Princess –

May you rest in peace in paradise – By people in Din Dang – Din Dang Office and Dr. Aphichart Halamjiak

“Because I love...”

January 12, 2008



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

"Because I love..." – January 12, 2008

It reads: Because I love, may I check for alcohol first, please? Please think before you start.

Statue of Liberty and Mickey

January 12, 2008



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Statue of Liberty and Mickey –
January 12, 2008
An odd display in Central World in Bangkok.

Shanghai protests over maglev line

January 12, 2008

Categories: China

[Shanghai protests over maglev line](#) – CNN, January, 2008

... "City planning and environmental departments are very cautious and take very seriously these concerns," the statement said, urging the public not to "disrupt social stability."

It was the second time in two years that the high-profile, costly German-made maglev has generated protests in Shanghai, China's commercial capital. And the government's response underscores how delicately authorities must tread in the face of Chinese who want a say in protecting the homes, jobs and other goods their rising living standards have afforded.

In June, thousands of protesters massed on the streets of another prosperous Chinese port city, Xiamen, forcing the government to delay construction of a \$1.4 billion chemical plant. Like the Shanghai protesters this weekend, the Xiamen demonstrators organized by mobile phone text messages and put photos and video of the marches on the Internet...

Electoral corruption must be considered without bias

January 12, 2008

Categories: Thai Politics

Electoral corruption must be considered without bias – translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, January 12, 2008

The Chairman of the Election Commission has for the first time expressed his concerns over the issue of whether the Deputy Leader of the People Power Party – Yongyut Tiypairat (a party-list parliamentary candidate) – should receive a ‘red card’ for electoral infringements.

The Constitution and its associated laws both fail to spell out what should be done if a party-list parliamentary candidate receives a ‘red’ card. Even the Electoral Commission itself does not know what should be done in this case.

The conundrum is as to whether a political party should be disbanded if a ‘red’ card is awarded to its deputy leader. But electoral law does apparently stipulate that a party should be disbanded if one of its members is involved in corrupt electoral practice. The Election Commission must consider this matter very carefully, with strict regard to the Constitution, if it is to avoid being blamed over this vital decision.

With so many Britons murdered in Thailand, why does our Government not warn of the dangers faced there?

January 12, 2008

Categories: Crime, Thailand in the International Media

[With so many Britons murdered in Thailand, why does our Government not warn of the dangers faced there?](#) – *Independent*, January 12, 2008

...Yet what also emerges from the death of Charnaud and many others is the fact that Thailand, despite its popularity with the British, is among the most dangerous places in the world for UK visitors – a fact that the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) has been reluctant to publicise...

Barrow child porn suspect vows Thai return

January 13, 2008

Categories: Crime

[Barrow child porn suspect vows Thai return](#) – *ic Newcastle*, January 13, 2008

Thai Satellite Company Stops Carrying Hizbullah TV

January 13, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thai Satellite Company Stops Carrying Hizbullah TV](#) – *The Media Line*, January 13, 2008

... "Al-Manar is Hizbullah's main communication tool, through which it spreads anti-Israeli, anti-Semitic, and anti-American incitement," said Dr. Reuven Erlich, who heads the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center (ITIC) in Herzliya, Israel.

Erlich called their carrying of these broadcasts "an outrage," adding that the Thai satellite significantly boosted the resonance of Al-Manar's propaganda messages around the world, since the satellite covers Asia, Australia, Africa, the Middle East, and most of Europe...

It is just a wrong idea...

January 13, 2008

Categories: Editorial Cartoons



"It is just a wrong idea..." – Kaolao Ruammitr by Tin, Matichon, January 13, 2008

Top left to right:

- * If you want to ask the graduate from abroad to be a clerical staff in the front office.
- * If you want to blend oil and water (Under the water bottle: "Party 1," Under the barrel: "Party 2")
- * If you think that the "invisible foot" will allow you a three-month honeymoon period

Bottom left to right:

- * If you want a guy like "Chaiwat" to step backward (In the box: "The first round of election invalid")
- * If you think the "eel" keeps his words (On the flag: "Non truth-oriented")
- * If you think the lady comes back to take care of her children, Oak, Aim and Ung-Ing.

In Bangkok, it's a tough life for elephants

January 14, 2008

Categories: Wildlife and Nature

[In Bangkok, it's a tough life for elephants](#) – *IHT*, January 14, 2008

Protesting the dam

January 14, 2008



(Photo: Sadortu for 2Bangkok.com)

Protesting the dam –
January 14, 2008

Sadortu reports: *This is Ban Thataphang Thambon Maeyuam, Amphur Maesarieng, Mae Hong Son province. As we heard, this village located at the place where it will be built Salawin Dam in the future.*

Above: If there is a flood, where will we be? **Below:** We will stay here forever.



(Photo: Sadortu for 2Bangkok.com)

A handicapped democracy

January 14, 2008

A handicapped democracy –
translated and summarized from *Krungthep Turakit*, January 14, 2008

The Electoral Commission (EC) has not yet approved the selection of the party-list candidate Yongyut Tiypairat – the Deputy Leader of the People Power Party (PPP) – to sit in Parliament. An investigation by the Special Branch of the Royal Thai Police has already concluded that Yongyut broke electoral law in the recent general election.

This sensitive case has been protracted by the fact that Yongyut is an executive of the PPP. Added to which, if his guilt is proven, the entire party could be disbanded. This case demonstrates the inadequacies of the Thai system of democracy when confronted with a contentious electoral result. It also shows that the EC is incapable of efficiently carrying out its official responsibilities. It is known, for example, that some EC members are also supporters of powerful politicians. The current inadequacy of the Thai system of democracy is also partly the fault of our numerous ambitious politicians – who will stop at nothing to be elected.

Poet arrested after coded protest

January 14, 2008

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

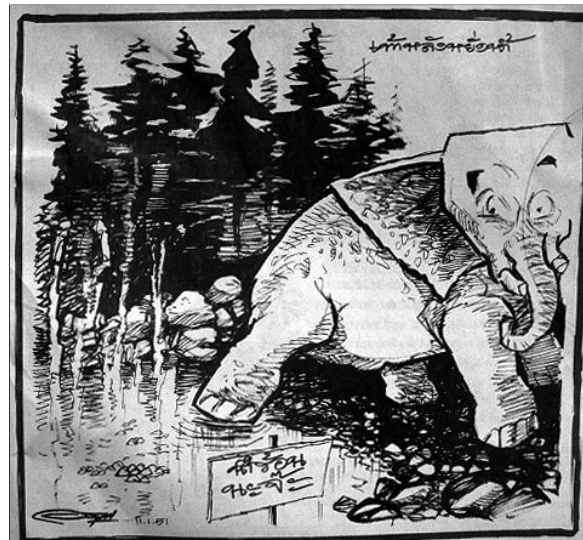
[Poet arrested after coded protest](#) – *The Irrawaddy*, January, 2008

Burmese poet Saw Wai has been arrested after authorities deciphered a piece of his work that contained a hidden message criticizing junta leader Than Shwe, according to sources within Rangoon's literary circle...

More on the return of Pojaman

January 14, 2008

Categories: Editorial Cartoons



More on the return of Pojaman – January 14, 2008

Above: "The back foot probes the water."

The sign reads "Hot water." The elephant has a square face like Thaksin's face. Women are said to be the "hind legs of the elephant" so the elephant's hind leg represents Thaksin's wife who has recently returned to Thailand to test the political climate. (From Arun, *Krungtepturakit*, January 11, 2008)



Above: PPP leader Samak says: "Help me... I was bullied..." While Pojaman's shadow looms over the scene. She hold a sack of money. At the bottom it reads "Whose mom comes, whose tears gush!!!" (From *Krungtepturakit*, January 10, 2008)

Gift of Alcohol

January 14, 2008

Categories: Signs and Billboards



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Gift of alcohol – January 14, 2008

The sign reads: Giving alcoholic drink as a gift = giving a curse

This billboard is put up by the [Thai Health Promotion Foundation](#)

Bangkok Haze: Fog? Smog?

January 15, 2008



(Photo: Graham)

Bangkok Haze: Fog? Smog? – January 15, 2008

Above: Graham's photo of rice fields burning in Nakon Sawan.

Below: [Pascal](#) notes: *...the entire Bangkok area was covered by thick ugly fog this Monday morning. Attached is a photo, taken from the Ekkamai BTS station, down Sukhumvit Soi 42, which is one way, coming from Klong Toey (Rama IV). On the right is the nearly completed condo project from Nassiri (I think, not sure about the spelling). Taken at around 8:00am.*



(Photo: Pascal)

From Not the Nation: Rich Hi-So Girl Overcomes Advantages To Open Unprofitable Business

January 15, 2008

Categories: Humor

From *Not the Nation*: [Rich Hi-So Girl Overcomes Advantages To Open Unprofitable Business](#) – January 15, 2008

Shipping baron daughter Yinlak "Pip" Chinthammit defies the odds and inspires others with her incredible spirit and determination to run her own décor boutique...

Fractional Politics Dampen Thai Business

January 15, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

[Fractional Politics Dampen Thai Business](#) – *Oxford Analytica*, January 15, 2008

...Conditions for foreign investors have deteriorated since the 2006 coup that ousted former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra; an increase in nationalism has coincided with a slowdown in growth. The Japan External Trade Organization warned last month that an increasing number of Japanese companies were relocating to Vietnam due to political uncertainties, as well as rising production costs caused by output constraints. Electronics and automotive industries—Japan's two leading manufacturing segments—have led the exodus. New restrictions on foreign investors have caused particular concern, as well as the extent to which the state is maintaining a role in the economy...

Concern over those who are weary of politics

January 15, 2008

Concern over those who are weary of politics – translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, January 15, 2008

A Dusit Rajabhat University Opinion Poll, conducted on those aged between 8 and 15 years old in the Bangkok metropolitan area, has revealed that many young people are increasingly bored with politics and the sleaze that surrounds it. Many juveniles are reported to believe that national politics is very corrupt and involves numerous conflicts between political groupings. Such opinions are essentially no different from those of our grown-ups, who are also apt to say that they are fed-up with politics. They, too, express dissatisfaction with the kind of politicians who they say will stop at nothing to win an election and gain a position of power in government.

I wish to comment that this is a serious problem for this country, as our youth will one day be eligible to vote. The enthusiastic participation of young people, in the electoral process, will be essential for the further development of our system of democracy.

Worrying about those who have become bored of politics

January 15, 2008

Categories: Thai Politics

Worrying about those who have become bored of politics – translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, January 15, 2008

Most Thais will not be particularly surprised by the results of a recent Dusit Opinion Poll. This poll shows that many young Bangkok people – aged between eight and fifteen – are highly aware that this country has numerous political problems. The problems, this social group thus describe, include ‘disunity’, ‘corruption’ and ‘selfishness’. Most young people say that they do not wish to grow up to be politicians, as they consider such a career to be very stressful.

It is not just kids who have a negative image of Thai politicians and the local political system, as their seniors also appear to have become increasingly disillusioned with the two. Adults are often reported as saying that no matter how many coups occur, most politicians are incapable of changing their power-hungry ways.

The results of this poll are very worrisome. If kids express a hate of politics – not wishing to vote or participate in it – and adults have a similarly negative view, how is the Thai system of democracy ever likely to improve? In this way, our political system would continue to be largely the domain of professional politicians – with the public opting not to intervene in any form that could force change for the better.

Choir complaining about Singapore goes online

January 15, 2008

Categories: Singapore

[Choir complaining about Singapore goes online](#) – *The Nation*, January, 2008

“Family is safe if they wear a helmet while driving a motorcycle”

January 16, 2008

Categories: Signs and Billboards



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

“Family is safe if they wear a helmet while driving a motorcycle” – January 16, 2008

Movie poster

January 16, 2008

Categories: Film and TV



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Movie poster –

January 16, 2008

It reads something like: If you have a chance, what you will do for this land, Simaya people.

This is an advertisement a film that will open on January 31. Does anyone know anything more about this film?

‘War on Drugs’ probe draws a blank

January 16, 2008

Categories: Drugs, The Thaksin Years

[‘War on Drugs’ probe draws a blank](#) – *The Nation*, January 16, 2008

An independent committee probing drug-related killings during the first Thaksin Shinawatra government has found no concrete evidence linking senior figures with the murders, a Justice Ministry source said yesterday...

Also on [this thread](#)

Ayutthaya under threat of delisting by Unesco

January 16, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Ayutthaya under threat of delisting by Unesco](#) – Bangkok Post, January 16, 2008

...Untidiness around the historical site and poor city planning has triggered concern among relevant agencies that the site would no longer meet the standards set for it to retain its status.

Tharapong Sirsucharit, Unesco's secretary for the International Council on Monuments and Sites (Icomos) in Thailand, played down the concern, saying that the overall condition of the site was still good.

But, he said, the Unesco experts might issue a "warning" to the government over poor management of the heritage site's surrounding area...

Threadworms living in human eyes discovered in Vietnam

January 16, 2008

Categories: Vietnam, Wildlife and Nature

[Threadworms living in human eyes discovered in Vietnam](#) – *Vietnam Net*, January 16, 2008

Ha Noi Medical University's Parasitology Department yesterday said they identified a new threadworm parasite present in human eyes in Vietnam...

Sulak Sivaraksa to sue police commander and Gen Surayud for banning his book

January 16, 2008

Categories: Uncategorized

[Sulak Sivaraksa to sue police commander and Gen Surayud for banning his book](#) – Prachatai, January 16, 2008



...On Oct 1, 2007, Pol Maj Gen Sombat Suphajiva acting as printing authority issued Order 5/2007 banning Sulak's book that criticizes Thailand's democracy, alleging that the material 'may cause unrest and degrade good morals' in Thai society. Copies of the book have been confiscated by the police since.

Sulak appealed to Interior Minister Gen Surayud Chulanont on Oct 8, 2007, and never received a response. So he decided to ask the Administrative Court to lift the ban order and have the defendants pay him damages of 1,094,000 baht with an annual interest rate of 7.5% starting from the date of prosecution...

[Download](#)

[Sulak's banned book \(in Thai\)](#)

Thailand needs public media

January 16, 2008

Thailand needs public media –

translated and summarized from *Krungtep Turakit*, January 16, 2008

The Information Technology (IT) Revolution – over the past twenty years – has not only greatly changed the general public’s access to information, but has also significantly changed this country’s economy and society.

In this complex, fiercely-competitive and rapidly-changing world, most citizens are interested in public media that provide advantageous data to abet their daily struggle for survival.

The Thai government has made a good beginning with its decision to convert the TiTV television station into the country’s first public TV channel. The resulting organization will be renamed as the *Thai Public Broadcasting Service* (TPBS-TV). It will be necessary for the government to quickly explain to the general public the necessity of such a station, as most Thais are currently rather parochial – and rather prone to only look for the short-term advantage in any new situation. The new public station will present a significant challenge to both the Thai government and its citizens.

I can speak English

January 16, 2008



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

I can speak English – January 16, 2008
Sign from the window of a Bangkok taxi...

Tesla Downunder

January 17, 2008

[Tesla Downunder](#) – January 17, 2008

Nothing to do with Thailand, but interesting...

Bangkok Thai resident goes on Ya-E rampage

January 17, 2008

Categories: Pattaya

[Bangkok Thai resident goes on Ya-E rampage](#) – *Pattaya Daily News*, January, 2008

Thailand “Party Free”?

January 17, 2008

Thailand "Party Free"? – January 17, 2008

Tony was one of many readers who reported: *According to the headline, Thailand is now “party free”. Thank goodness!:* [Thailand changed from “Not Free” to “Party Free”: US Freedom House](#)

Tsunami warning sign in Phuket

January 17, 2008



(Photo: Graham)

Tsunami warning sign in Phuket – January 17, 2008

Two views of the Battle of Koh Chang

January 17, 2008
Categories: History

[Battle of Koh
Chang](#)

*...a decisive victory by the French over the
Thai Navy.*

[The
Battle of Koh Chang](#)

*The French battle group was forced to
withdraw with heavy damage...*

Man with a lizard and monkey on a motorbike in Krabi Province

January 18, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News



(Photo: Graham)

Man with a lizard and monkey on a motorbike in Krabi Province – January 18, 2008

Airport link bridge span reaching across the expressway

January 18, 2008

Categories: Mass Transit



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Airport link bridge span reaching across the expressway – January 18, 2008

Pioneering Thai stars not paid by City

January 18, 2008
Categories: Sports

[Pioneering Thai stars not paid by City](#) – *The Nation*, January 18, 2008

...Fullback Suree admitted he had signed the City contract without knowing any of the details.

"Nobody told me about the contents of the contract. Some said the deal would take effect from January 1. Worawi told me we would each receive around Bt300,000 a month.

"Almost two months after the contract signing, we still haven't been paid. I survive each day with just the training wage from the national team, which is Bt1,000 a day. That only gets me through the day. I wanted to know the details of the contract but I dared not ask the seniors..."

Reclaiming eyesores

January 18, 2008

Categories: Buildings

[Reclaiming eyesores](#) – *Bangkok Post*, January 18, 2008

Areas under expressways to be developed and put to better use under a plan by Bangkok authorities...

US movie exec charged over Thai festival bribes

January 18, 2008
Categories: Crime

[US movie exec charged over Thai festival bribes](#) – *Guardian Unlimited*, January 18, 2008

Chinese internet users up to 210 million

January 18, 2008
Categories: China

[Chinese internet users up to 210 million](#) – AP, January 18, 2008

Removing the Mahakan Fort Community (2003-2008)

January 19, 2008

Categories: The Mahakan Fort Community

Overview: The area behind the city wall by Mahakan Fort was slated to be turned into a "tourist park" (like [Santichaiprakarn Park](#)) which would involve the relocation of a community of people living in old wooden houses and shanties on the site. Activists have countered with proposals to use part of the land which is already unoccupied for a park and allow the residents to stay. The push to remove the community seems to have lost steam amid the political turmoil of 2006.

[City Hall to delay evictions](#) – Bangkok Post, April 9, 2008

...The community behind the centuries-old fort on Ratchadamnoen avenue sits on a four-rai land plot which is set for expropriation.

Bangkok Governor Apirak Kosayodhin has indicated he prefers a compromise to eviction. But the expropriation decree demands prompt eviction of the community, a move backed by the Council of State which was asked by City Hall to look into the legal aspects of the issue.

"We've never wanted to drive them out. In fact, we want to fix their problems," said Mr Buddipongse at yesterday's meeting.

Up to 312 residents of the Mahakan Fort community have fought for 14 years to maintain the community, which has been earmarked for development into a public park.

Community leader Tawatchai Voramahakun said the legal changes would be a solution to the problem.

However, a source said it was against the principle of any law to change the decree to benefit a certain group of people. The fact remained that the community is on public land.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

The Golden Mount from the parking lot behind the city wall.

[Mahakan Fort community awaiting decision on its future](#) – The Nation, January 19, 2006

...Visitors to the community can still see early Rattanakosin-period (late 18th century) traditional Thai houses, with their characteristic large open spaces underneath; Western-style houses built during the reigns of King Rama V (1868-1910) and Rama VII (1925-1934); and modern wooden houses up to 50 years old. The wooden houses are crowded together without fences, Chatree pointed out in his initial research proposal...

[New deal saves Mahakan Fort community – Preserved as village of vintage houses](#) – Bangkok Post, December 7, 2005

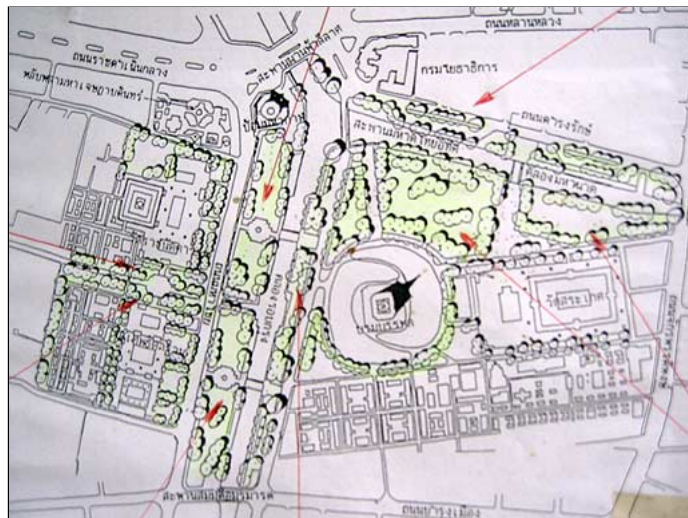
The remaining residents of Mahakan Fort community are now technically safe from eviction as the city administration has agreed to their plan to develop the area into a village of preserved vintage wooden houses...

Chatree Prakintontakarn, of Silpakorn's faculty of architecture, said about 10% of the remaining houses may have to be demolished for the project development... "Urban development is bad news for residential communities. For me, the idea of urban development is to keep the affected community first and figure out how to develop the area later," he said...

Also: [2Bangkok.com secrets: Inside Fort Mahakan](#)

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

A related story: [Removing the Soi Luenrit community](#)



Map of the Mahakan Fort Park – December 2, 2005

City plan for the Mahakan Fort/Golden Mount area photographed on a Mahakan Fort community bulletin board. Note that it requires the removal of the row of shophouses in front of Golden Mount that makes up the old lumber district.

[BMA demolishes house in Fort Mahakan community](#) – The Nation, November 29, 2005

After 13 years of conflict, the first house in the Fort Mahakan community was razed by the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) Tuesday. This happened despite disagreement of other 38 homeowners who did not take compensation money from the city.

Ten more homes were the next to be demolished since the homeowners have received all compensation payments, BMA Public Works Department director Banyat Ooyyamwong said Tuesday...

[MAHAKAN FORT: BMA, residents in tense stand-off](#) – *The Nation*, August 19, 2005

Passions run high as the remaining community members continue to resist efforts to evict them from historic area. City council officials were abused and came close to being attacked when they tried to enter the Mahakan Fort community yesterday, reportedly to do a survey...

The officers were allowed into the community and posted notices on every door telling villagers to move out before October. Throughout their visit the villagers repeated they would not comply with an enforced eviction...

[BMA renews efforts to clear fort community](#) – *Bangkok Post*, August 19, 2005

..."We are terribly sorry. But the city administration already made a decision to clear the community as the project has been delayed for over 13 years," Mr Apirat told the residents who lined up to prevent the team of officials from getting into the community.

[MAHAKAN FORT: Apirak snubs locals trying to save homes](#) – *The Nation*, March 25, 2005

[Mahakan Fort suit rejected](#) – *The Nation*, March 9, 2005

...The lower Administrative Court earlier ruled that of the 104 community members, only 13 were damaged parties with the right to claim compensation for expropriated land. The court ruled that the BMA had the right to proceed with the demolition of the damaged parties' houses because they had received 75 per cent of the compensation but failed to remove their assets from the land within 60 days. The higher court upheld the decision on the same grounds...

[Court upholds city's right to evict residents](#) – *Bangkok Post*, March 9, 2005

The Supreme Administrative Court yesterday upheld the lower court's endorsement of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration's right to evict residents of Fort Mahakan community to turn the area into a tourist park...

[Mahakan Fort: City may allow long-term lease](#) – *Bangkok Post*, December 7, 2004

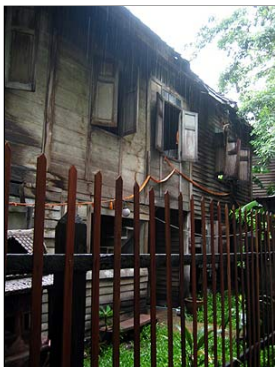
City hall may agree to allow residents of Mahakan Fort to lease the disputed land instead of relocating them. Abhayuth Chatarabha, adviser of the Four Region Slums Network, said the residents had high hopes they would be able to stay on under a 30-year lease contract, ending a decade-long land conflict between the state and the people...



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

First look at the Mahakan Fort park – August 13, 2004

[Full-size image](#) (589kb). The wooden houses are still there, but the parking lot area by the pier has been turned into a park.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Missing Mahakan Fort house – May 3, 2004

One of the most atmospheric houses in the Mahakan Fort community is gone (left).

(from [Residents 'shut out' from city fort plan](#), *Bangkok Post*, April 25, 2004) ...the community has lost one of its ancient teak houses which was demolished by its owner.

Initially, the community had intended to buy the two-storey house, built 100 years ago, and turn it into a community museum, but the owner sold it to someone else so they lost their chance.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: August 31, 2003 – **Below:** May 2, 2004



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

[Residents 'shut out' from city fort plan](#) – Bangkok Post, April 25, 2004

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration is ignoring the public with its plan to develop Pom Mahakan Fort into a park for tourists, academics say. The old community would be evicted under the development plan, approved by the Committee for Conservation and Development of Rattanakosin and Old Towns. ...The eviction of the fort community caused panic in other communities occupying the inner part of Rattanakosin who feared that the state officials might try to kick them out too. Meanwhile, Pornthep Buranaburidet, a fort resident, said the community has lost one of its ancient teak houses which was demolished by its owner. Initially, the community had intended to buy the two-storey house, built 100 years ago, and turn it into a community museum, but the owner sold it to someone else so they lost their chance.

[Military men move in to uproot community park](#) – Bangkok Post, January 21, 2004

Army men moved in yesterday to uproot the Mahakan Fort community park so that it could be replaced by a new public park designed by the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration... Sakchai Boonma, of BMA's Public Works Department, confirmed the eviction plan. He lashed out at activists and academics who lent support to the residents, saying their occupancy, which was unlawful, would not be tolerated.

Phan Fah Pier moved – January 15, 2004

Wisarat reports: Phan Fah Pier has been moved the bank opposite near King Prajadhipok Museum to allow the creation of a new park around Mahakan Fort. It has a budget of 9 million baht for grass and trees, the renovation a 100-year-old building with the dimension 6 x 12 meters, and an archeological excavation of the area. It seems that instead of removing the entire community as originally planned, authorities are starting with the park area and are going to restore rather than demolish the mystery building near the Phan Fah Pier. Residents had previously pointed out that the date on the building and the design were worthy of study and preservation. No word on when or if the rest of the wooden houses will be removed.

[Fort ruling due](#) – Bangkok Post, August 29, 2003

The Administrative Court is expected to rule today on Bangkok Metropolitan Administration plans to evict residents of Mahakan Fort in the Rattanakosin area to make way for a public park.... the Mahakan Fort community dates back to the early Rattanakosin era of Bangkok, to the late 18th century, and some scholars who recognise the importance of the fort want it preserved and its residents given the opportunity to stay where they are and maintain their livelihoods. ...The eviction of the community would undermine the constitution, which recognises the rights of communities to a say in development projects. The problem goes beyond city regulations. The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has raised the possibility of the move violating international laws on human rights with the national government...

[Community loses battle in court](#) – Bangkok Post, August 21, 2003

Probably best to see it while you can... This is the kind of situation where an unfortunate accidental fire occurs and clears the land: The Mahakan Fort community lost a battle with the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration yesterday as the Administrative Court backed the city's efforts to evict them... Michael Herzfeld, an anthropologist from Harvard University, urged the BMA to review its eviction position. The city could lose a great opportunity to create a slice of Bangkok culture that would attract tourists. No western tourists would be interested in a plain park, but a community within a park would make for a real tourist attraction. "The BMA wants a park, now the community has created its own park in the place," he said. The professor lauded the community's land-sharing proposal in which residents agreed to give up part of their land for a public park. The BMA had ignored the proposal, which was backed by academics and housing rights activists.

From the [Post](#): Deputy city clerk Sanan Tothong refused to discuss whether the army had been approached to help. However, Mahakan residents said a group of men in green had surveyed the place twice. The visits sparked fears about the use of force.

[Fort dwellers get support](#) – Bangkok Post, July 31, 2003

City council chairman Samart Maluleem yesterday voiced support for a land-sharing proposal for Mahakan Fort residents, saying the city administration should allow them to continue living in the area.

[More about old buildings](#) – Bangkok Post, July 21, 2003

[Antique houses threatened by city hall's eviction plans](#) – Bangkok Post, July 14, 2003

[Court rules city hall may evict residents](#) – Bangkok Post, August 30, 2003

The Administrative Court yesterday ruled in favour of city hall in the Mahakan Fort land dispute, paving the way for it to uproot the century-old community. Chief Judge Pornchai Manassiripen said city hall's eviction, issued on Jan 24 this year by Governor Samak Sundaravej and Winai Limsakul of the Public Works Department, was legal because the administration had completed all required eviction procedures in May 1995, when it partly paid compensation to eligible land owners.

No more “Hard Talk”

January 19, 2008

No more "Hard Talk" –

January 19, 2008

One of many readers who reported: *You 've probably heard that Thepchai Yong took early retirement from “The Nation” so he could take up temporary duties with the new Thai Public Broadcasting Service without a conflict of interest. ...I’m guessing that means there will be no more [Hard Talk](#); that’s probably why there was not one this week.*

Elephant in a truck 30km north of Supan Buri

January 19, 2008



(Photo: Graham)

Elephant in a truck 30km north of Supan Buri – January 19, 2008



(Photo: Graham)

“BKK”: Mural wall at Chulalongkorn University

January 19, 2008



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

"BKK": Mural wall at Chulalongkorn University – January 19, 2008

Provinces burning

January 19, 2008



(Photo: Graham)

Provinces burning –
January 19, 2008

Graham reports: *Saturday night, about 9pm, 40 km south of Nakhon Sawan*

Minister Hails Burmese Medicines “Best in Southeast Asia”

January 19, 2008

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[Minister Hails Burmese Medicines “Best in Southeast Asia”](#) – *The Irrawaddy*, January, 2008

Burma is producing the best pharmaceuticals in all Southeast Asia, according to Minister of Industry-I Aung Thaung...

Tollway linking ring roads still awaits nod

January 21, 2008

[Tollway linking ring roads still awaits nod](#) – Bangkok Post, January 21, 2008

...If approved, the elevated tollway, stretching 31km, would start from the western part of the eastern ring road at Kasetsart-Nawamin road in Khan Na Yao district, overlap the third-stage expressway, head to Kasetsart University and then the Tiwanond intersection, from where it will connect the Rattana Tibet road, cross the Chao Phraya river and link with the western ring road in Bang Yai district, Nonthaburi...

Subway to profit by 2011 – Passenger numbers still well below target

January 21, 2008

Categories: Subway

[Subway to profit by 2011 – Passenger numbers still well below target](#) – Bangkok Post, January 21, 2008

...The subway, which runs from Hua Lamphong to Bang Sue with a total distance of 20 kilometres, currently carries 195,000 passengers daily. BMCL hopes for 210,000 daily passengers by the end of the year...

... 'It's not until we reach 300,000 daily passengers, which will hopefully happen in the next two to three years, that we would be able to make a profit from the operations,' he said.

...BMCL and Bangkok Mass Transit System (BTS), which operates two Skytrain elevated rail lines, can carry a combined 600,000 passengers a day...

Property in Thailand: Beach huts for the billionaire backpacker

January 21, 2008

Categories: Property and Development

[Property in Thailand: Beach huts for the billionaire backpacker](#) – *Telegraph*, January, 2008

Top Aiba official slams Thailand boxing organizers

January 21, 2008

Categories: Sports

[Top Aiba official slams Thailand boxing organizers](#) – *Inquirer*, January, 2008

The highest ranking international amateur boxing official present here spent official time Friday berating the messy opening of the Asia Olympic Boxing Qualifying tournament, short of announcing that Thailand has no business hosting the prestigious regional event...

Lessons of democracy from Sikkim

January 22, 2008

[Lessons of democracy from Sikkim](#) – *The Nation*, January 22, 2008

Thai army council cedes power to Thaksin

January 22, 2008
Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

FT.com

FINANCIAL TIMES

HOME UK

FT Home > UK

Home UK

US | Europe | Asia

World

US & Canada

Europe

UK

Asia-Pacific

Thai army council cedes power to Thaksin

By Amy Kazmin in Bangkok

Published: January 23 2008 02:00 | Last updated: January 23 2008 02:00

The Thai military council behind the coup that ousted Thaksin Shinawatra, former prime minister, yesterday disbanded itself and ruled out any future at-tempt to return to power.

FT.com

FINANCIAL TIMES

World

FT Home > World > Asia-Pacific

Home

World

US & Canada

Europe

UK

Thai army council cedes power

By Amy Kazmin in Bangkok

Published: January 22 2008 19:27 | Last updated: January 22 2008 19:27

The Thai military council behind the coup that ousted Thaksin Shinawatra, former prime minister, yesterday disbanded itself and ruled out any future at-tempt to return to power.

[Thai army council cedes power to Thaksin](#) – Financial Times, January 22, 2008

“Dead end Road”

January 23, 2008



(Photo: Graham)

"Dead end Road" – January 23, 2008

Ice cream vendor

January 23, 2008



(Photo: Graham)

Ice cream vendor – January 23, 2008

Condoning rape in Thai TV dramas

January 23, 2008

[Condoning rape in Thai TV dramas](#) – Bangkok Post, January 23, 2008

...The most serious concern is the depiction of rape in drama, which somehow appears to be a new trend for this industry. At least three productions – one has gone off the air and one is currently being broadcast – involve male lead characters resorting to rape as a means of revenge or punishment.

The storyline of the three romances is much the same: the lead character is so angry and frustrated with the woman he wrongly takes to be “bad” and so rapes her in order to “punish” her.

Only when he finds out that the victim is actually good and innocent (a virgin, too) does he fall in love with her and tries to win her heart through many travails. It’s also typical that the female loves him back, disregarding the man’s anger management problem. Then it’s a happy ending.

Another similarity is that these productions are likely to be smash hits. Likhit Kamathep, which has just ended, enjoyed huge ratings. Popular actress Ann Thongprasom starred as the lead, who carries the child of her lawful husband’s son after she is raped...

Viet Nam's road project to ease traffic woes choking economic expansion

January 23, 2008

Categories: Vietnam

[Viet Nam's road project to ease traffic woes choking economic expansion](#) – ADB, January 23, 2008

Faced with an inefficient and costly transport system and the growing needs of a rapidly expanding economy, Viet Nam plans to complete a major road project that will help decongest its largest city and economic hub...

Muhammadiyah: Thai govt should use soft power in dealing with the South

January 23, 2008

Categories: The Thai Deep South

[Muhammadiyah: Thai govt should use soft power in dealing with the South](#) – Antara News, January 23, 2008

...Din said, the soft power approach can be made by sending propagators who can convey enlightenment in their propagation. The propagators, he said, will deliver sermons to emphasize that Islam is a religion of peace, justice and development...

Strange fruit in Kalasin

January 23, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Strange fruit in Kalasin](#) – *Prachatai*, January 23, 2008

Could Thailand use a magazine like this?

January 23, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Could Thailand use a magazine like this?](#) – Ajarn MC, January, 2008

...IHT has a good article on Tehelka, a weekly magazine in India that investigates corruption. Maybe Thailand could use a magazine like this...

RIGHTS-THAILAND: War on Drugs Massacre

January 24, 2008

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[RIGHTS-THAILAND: War on Drugs Massacre](#) – Officials Scot-Free – IPS, January 24, 2008

BTS likely to miss 2008 targets

January 24, 2008

Categories: Skytrain

[BTS likely to miss 2008 targets](#) – Bangkok Post, January 24, 2008

...Anat Arbhabhیرama, an adviser to the BTS board, said this year would be the first since the skytrain opened almost eight years ago that daily passenger totals would rise by less than 10%.

At present, roughly 420,000 passengers use the two Skytrain lines on weekdays and 300,000 to 350,000 on weekends, he said...

‘I Little Slave’: An Interview With Bounsang Khamkeo

January 24, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[‘I Little Slave’: An Interview With Bounsang Khamkeo](#) – *World Press Review*, January 24, 2008

Bounsang Khamkeo survived seven years in the secret jungle prisons of the Communist Pathet Lao with the idea that one day he would survive to bear witness...

Steam Trains in Thailand

January 24, 2008

Categories: Thai Railroads

[Steam Trains in Thailand](#) –
Thai Blogs, January 24, 2008

Thailand: Good riddance

January 24, 2008

Categories: 2006 Coup

[Thailand: Good riddance](#) – *Economist*, January 24, 2008

The blundering soldiers who deposed Thailand's prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, in 2006 seem at last to have got something right. This week saw the restoration of an elected government following last month's election. Barring further mishap, the country seems back on the road to liberal multiparty democracy...

Bangkok Dangerous skyline

January 24, 2008

Bangkok Dangerous skyline – January 24, 2008

[Wise Kwai](#) notes: *Maybe other 2Bangkok readers can discern any Bangkok buildings on the [new Bangkok Dangerous poster](#). I sure can't.*

Thanks from the People Power Party

January 24, 2008



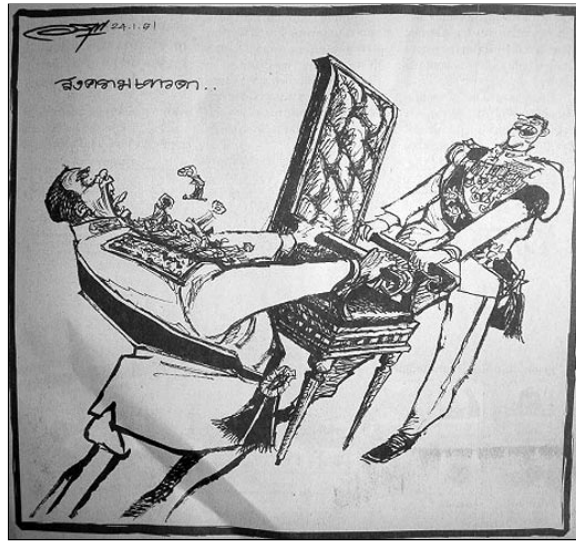
(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Thanks from the People Power Party – January 24, 2008

It reads: People Power Party thanks all the votes for Sutha Chansang, Mana Kongwuttipanya, Sawang Ruckjaran, and the Party.

Fighting for the speaker's chair

January 24, 2008



Fighting for the speaker's chair – Arun, *Krungtepturakit*, January 24, 2008

The caption says something like "War of Angels." We are not quite sure that the point or joke is here. Anyone have an idea?

CB was quick to point out: *The soap opera about bitchy air hostesses that is generating a lot of comment is called "Songkhram Nang Fah" which means "War of Angels" (I'd translate it as "Angels at War" or "Warring Angels"). Air hostess have for obvious reasons always been called angels and "nang fah" is literally "Sky Lady" anyway. So it's a joke that the politicians are obviously no angels.*

And further adds: *Interestingly, the Bangkok Post translates "Songkhram Nang Fah" as "Air Hostess War" while The Nation chooses "Battle of Angels". Without the underlying Thai, it looks like two different shows...*

Calling on the speaker

January 24, 2008

Categories: Editorial Cartoons



Calling on the speaker – *Phujatkhan, Na Ban Bangkhae* by Buncha/Kamin, January 24, 2008

People call out to the chairperson of the house: Your respectful Chairperson of Parliament!

On the speaker's chair is a shoe with a small sign that reads "Thaksin's shoes"

There is reference here to Thaksin's behind-the-scenes organizing of the political situation, but again we are not sure of the exact point or joke. Anyone have an idea?

Nation Group to sell office buildings

January 25, 2008

[Nation Group to sell office buildings](#) – *The Nation*, January 25, 2008

The Nation Multimedia Group (NMG) is selling both its head-office building and the Nation Tower on Bang Na-Trat Road, valued at a combined Bt1.38 billion...

“We are a good partner” – Tesco public relations campaign

January 25, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[“We are a good partner” – Tesco public relations campaign](#) – January 25, 2008

Lust or gluttony: Which sin brought you to Bangkok?

January 25, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Lust or gluttony: Which sin brought you to Bangkok?](#) – *Vancouver Westender*, January 25, 2008

...It's a shame that Bangkok's reputation is often framed by the prominence of its notorious clubs and bars. In a perfect world, Bangkok would be most famous for something else you can pick up on the street — the best variety of wonderful, cheap food anywhere in the world. It's almost miraculous...

Huge airport sculpture to be moved for fire safety reasons

January 25, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Huge airport sculpture to be moved for fire safety reasons](#) – *Bangkok Post*, January 25, 2008

Army warns dispute could have repercussions

January 25, 2008

Categories: Preah Vihear

[Army warns dispute could have repercussions](#) – Bangkok Post, January 25, 2008

The Defence Ministry is concerned about Cambodia's tough stance on seeking World Heritage listing of Preah Vihear, the ancient Khmer ruins on the Thai-Cambodian border. Defence Ministry spokesman Pichasanu Puthakarn said Cambodia has ignored the government's suggestion the two countries jointly propose the historical site for Unesco listing.

If Cambodia does it alone, it is feared that Thailand may lose its land around the ancient sanctuary, which has yet to be demarcated, he said...

Ministry of Public Health to issue complete smoking ban on February 11th

January 25, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Ministry of Public Health to issue complete smoking ban on February 11th](#) – PRD, January 25, 2008

...The new stipulation will completely ban smoking in pubs, bars, restaurants, all types of markets both indoor and outdoor including Chatuchak market, flea markets and all publicly accessed area's both air conditioned and non-air conditioned. The clause will take effect on February 11th...

New mother's death preventable: coroner

January 25, 2008

Categories: Health

[New mother's death preventable: coroner](#) – *The Age*, January 25, 2008

...The Siriwans decided to have their child in Melbourne rather than Thailand, where Ms Siriwan was a Thai Airways air hostess, to get the best possible care. But after the natural birth of her daughter Nerissa, Mrs Siriwan bled heavily, and when her condition deteriorated, her obstetrician Maurice Lichter ordered her transfer to another hospital for a hysterectomy.

But this was delayed by about 20 minutes when Dr Lichter realised the Siriwans did not have private health insurance.

He switched the transfer to Monash Medical Centre, despite Mr Siriwan telling Dr Lichter he would pay for whatever treatment his wife needed, Ms Spanos said in her findings.

Despite having a hysterectomy once arriving at Monash Medical Centre, Mrs Siriwan died there at 2.15pm...

Welcome home – Thakino Pikku

January 25, 2008

Categories: Thai Politics



Welcome home – *Matichon Weekly*, January 25-31, 2008

It reads: Welcome home – Thakino Pikku

"Pikku" is the title for a monk and "Thankino" is the supposed name for Thaksin as a monk. The head monk would give each new monk a new monk-like name based on their given name.

From King Mongkut, who spent 27 years in a monastery after being outmaneuvered for the throne, to dictator Thanom Kittikachorn, whose return as a monk sparked student protests and the massacre of left-wing students, Thais have used the monkhood as a source of protection.



At the bottom left of the cover it reads: Let's run away.

Thanks for the PMship!

January 25, 2008
Categories: Humor



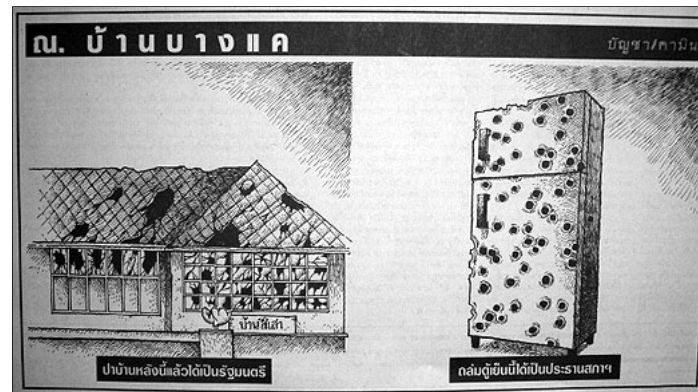
Thanks for the PMship! – *Poojadkuan*, January 25, 2008

Mak pushes Bang to be a military minister as a gift for chasing Thaksin and making Mak to be the PM

Yongyuth, the Refrigerator Man

January 25, 2008

Categories: Editorial Cartoons



Rewards – *Na Ban Bangkhae* by Bancha Kamin, *Poojadkarn*, January 25, 2008

Left: Throw at this house, you will get a minister position.

Right: Attack this refrigerator, you will get the chairperson of parliament position.



Yongyuth, the Refrigerator Man – *Thairath* by Chai Ratchavat, January 26, 2008

People call out to the chairperson of the house: Your respectful Chairperson of Parliament!

US and Thailand: Allies in torture

January 25, 2008

Categories: Thai Secret Prison, The Thaksin Years

[US and Thailand: Allies in torture](#) – atimes.com, January 25, 2008

...Democratic torture

Former prime minister Thaksin Shinwatra's democratically elected government paved the way for the CIA's secret prison's establishment, first by refusing to ratify the previous Democrat Party-led administration's decision to sign onto the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), and second by granting a legal exemption and agreement not to extradite any US citizens who violated the Rome statute on Thai soil to an ICC signatory third country.

His government also, apparently on the US's urging, introduced terrorism-related charges into Thai criminal law. In quid pro quo fashion, Washington rewarded Bangkok in 2003 with the bilateral promise to negotiate a free trade agreement and upgraded Thailand to major non-North Atlantic Treaty Organization ally, which allows the Thai military to procure, sometimes at friendship prices, sensitive military technologies.

Yet the public revelations about CIA-led torture of terror suspects brought to Thailand cast a harsh new light on that special bilateral relationship and raises even harder questions about Thaksin's motivations for allowing the US to violate Thai sovereignty...

“Please dress in a formal manner”

January 26, 2008

Categories: Signs and Billboards



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

"Please dress in a formal manner" – January 26, 2008

Left: Sign in the Immigration One-Stop Shop.

CB was one of many to point out: *Regarding the lovely sign in the One Stop Shop, you missed the obvious point that what they really objecting to is low class dark skinned people. It's correct to be a yellow Chinese Thai guy.*

Grief trucks

January 26, 2008



(Photo: Narut)

Grief trucks – January 26, 2008

Narut sends this interesting photo of a fleet of trucks parked off a Bangkok side street.

Nigerian scam

January 26, 2008

Nigerian scam – January 26, 2008

New take on the Nigerian scam – Refunds for victims:

FIDELITYBANK/ UNITED NATIONS 2008 SCAM VICTIMS COMPENSATIONS PAYMENTS.

FRAUD VICTIMS/\$800,000 BENEFICIARIES.

REF/PAYMENTS CODE:FCB/06654 \$800,000 USD.

Attention,

I write to bring to your notice as a delegate from the Nigerian Government Reimbursement Committee under the strict supervision of the United Nations

to pay 230 Nigerian 419 scam victims the sum of \$800,000 USD (Eight Hundred Thounsand Dollars) each.You are however listed as one of the beneficiaries for these payments.You are expected to get back to us for your immediate reimbursement...

Logo?

January 26, 2008



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Logo? – January 26, 2008

Incredibly phallic logo on a company banner in the Din Daeng area.

Thailand claims to be enforcing copyrights

January 26, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thailand claims to be enforcing copyrights](#) – UPI, January 26, 2008

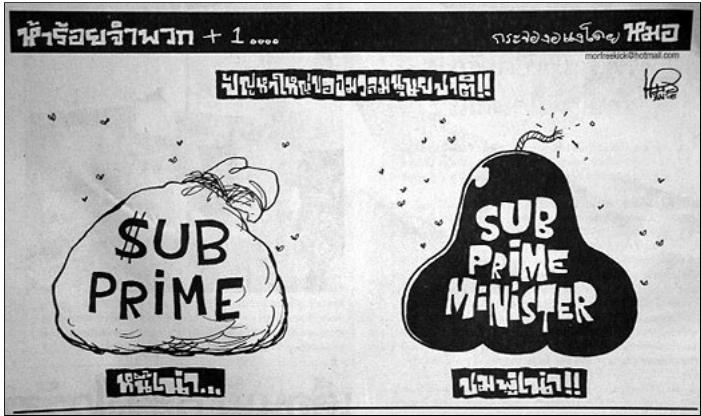
The head of the Thai intellectual property department said Saturday she hopes to convince the United States that Thailand has improved its record on piracy...

[Thailand optimistic US will improve intellectual property status](#) – TNA, January 26, 2008

Armed with substantial confidence that Thailand had sufficiently suppressed the piracy of US intellectual property during 2007, the chief of the Intellectual Property Department said she hoped Washington would upgrade Thailand from the current priority watch list later this year...

The great problem of the people

January 26, 2008



The great problem of the people – Poojadkarn, January 26, 2008

The great problem of the people

Left: Rotten debt

Right: Rotten rose-apple

Thailand Collapses into Democracy

January 27, 2008

Categories: Thai Politics

[Thailand Collapses into Democracy](#) – ShortNews.com, January, 2008

Apparently this "article" was removed from the news summary site, ShortNews.com because it included comedic editorializing.

Here is the version from Google [cached](#): *Without any US invasion, carpet bombing or even massive sanctions, Thailand's rulers have for some unknown reason ended 16 months of military junta and restored parliamentary rule to its citizens.*

Billionaire businessman, Thaksin Shinawatra, the former leader of Thailand, was exiled to Britain in a coup after extensive accusations of corruption. His party, the People Power Party (PPP), won almost half the seats in the lower house.

Current PPP leader Samak Sundaravej will most likely be his successor as Prime Minister. Pundits in Washington are still baffled as to how democracy could take root without their permission and without outside intervention.

Minister – Made in Hong Kong

January 27, 2008

Categories: Editorial Cartoons



Minister – Made in Hong Kong – Arun, *Krungtepturakit*, January 27, 2008

It reads: Minister. Made in Hong Kong

Chuwit Kamolvisit News

January 28, 2008

Categories: Chuwit Kamolvisit



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Chuwit is back – August 21, 2010

The sign reads: Rak Pradet Thai Party – Do not allow someone to divide Thailand – Gathering blood and flesh of Thailand – Chuwit Kamolvisit, leader of the Rak Pradet Thai Party

[Thai soapy massages meet politics](#) – Global Post, May 26, 2010

...But how exactly are you going to fix police corruption?

You catch some official, he goes to jail. Let's say 10 years. Then society will say, "Really? Now someone's really in jail for corruption!"...

[Chuwit setting up a party](#) – Bangkok Post, February 17, 2010



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

New Chuwit billboard – October 25, 2008

It reads: Where are you? 340,616 people – Who choose Chuwit, I appreciate it – I do not give up and will continue to fight for the nation – For nobody but Thais – Fight for Thai

Chuwit: [‘The BMA just rents one room in a house comprised of many rooms’](#) – Bangkok Post, September 22, 2008



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Chuwit's dream – August 1, 2008

The billboard reads: Last night I dreamed that Thai people love each other, but will my dreams come true?



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Give him one more chance... – April 12, 2008

It reads: Stop at Bangkok please. "I will get off" Give Chuwit one more chance to change Bangkok.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Chuwit billboard – March 24, 2008

It reads: Over 6 billion spent on fire the truck project that Bangkokians never use.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: You are a liar. You don't have a standpoint. You disappoint the society. You lie to the people. You make excuses to deceive the public.

Chuwit billboards – February 23, 2008



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: When politicians don't keep their words, what should the public do?

[Chuwit calls on coalition MPs to blindfold themselves when voting for PM](#) – *The Nation*, January 28, 2008

Chuwit: [The people's guard dog](#) – *Malaysia Star*, January 26, 2008

...Since 2004, the Chuwit billboard has been a much-awaited event in Bangkok. There's even an English-language, Thailand-based blog, www.2bangkok.com, keeping track of them.

In June 2006, there he was with his arms stretched out and saying: "I love you. Let's love each other. We are all born in Thailand..."

Banharn! – January 21, 2008

The billboard reads: Person like you.
No veracity, not clear.
The nation does not want you.

This is most likely a reference to Chat Thai's leader Banharn's move to join the People Power Party coalition.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

[Banharn threatens to sue Chuwit for B100m](#) – *Bangkok Post*, January 29, 2008

Chart Thai party leader Banharn Silpa-archa has threatened to file both civil and criminal lawsuits demanding 100 million baht from former party deputy leader Chuwit Kamolvisit for allegedly defaming him...

[Chuwit quits Chart Thai](#) – *The Nation*, November 27, 2007

Chart Thai Party deputy leader Chuwit Kamolvisit said he decided to quit from the party because he could not accept party leader Banharn Silpa-archa's lack of political commitment....



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Chuwit frustrated! – November 13, 2007

It reads: No choices. No exit. No happiness. No truth. That is Thai politics.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Chuwit: Attack dog! – November 14, 2007

It reads: I'm a guard dog for the country. When you cheat, I'll bark. When you're involved in corruption, I'll bite you.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Chuwit: Stay wise, people! – November 13, 2007

The billboard reads: Do you believe this? Debts paid by others. Free gifts. Free tuition fees. Happiness. These are not real. Stay wise, people.

Chuwit watch: [Former massage tycoon won't run for MP](#) – Bangkok Post, October 26, 2007



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Chuwit billboards return! – October 11, 2007

This billboard is at the entrance to the expressway at Huay Kwang: Will you deposit (entrust) the future with a nominee? Chuwit Kamolvisit

[Re-cap of the Chuwit saga](#) – Bangkokeyes, August 17, 2006

Chuwit watch – *The Nation*, July 28, 2006

Outspoken massage parlor tycoon-turned-politician, Chuwit Kamolvisit, [showed up at the gate of the Bangkok Remand Prison](#) with traditional sweet and Chinese noodle for the three jailed ex-EC members. Chuwit's presence was seen as an attempt to further embarrass the EC members who had previously removed him from his MP status.

[Chuwit, Thai Rak Thai lawyer summoned by Criminal Court](#) – *The Nation*, July 28, 2006

...Amnuay said the fact that Chuwit carried foods and drinks for the former EC commissioners after they got jail sentence, led to a quarrel with the EC supporters and caused turmoil in the court's compound.

Amnuay said Thana Benjathikul, a lawyer of Thai Rak Thai leader Thaksin Shinawatra, had strongly criticised the verdict against the EC and criticised the court's decision to deny bail against the former commissioners...

[Chuwit acquitted](#) – *The Nation*, July 13, 2005

...However, charges of damaging property, intrusion, illegal detention and forcing others to act against their will against Chuwit, Lt-Colonel Himalai Phewphan of the Supreme Command, Army Major Thanyathep Thamathorn and 126 others were dismissed by the court on the grounds that the plaintiffs' testimonies did not carry enough weight.

The incident took place during darkness and it was impossible to identify who carried out the demolition, the court said.

...However, the court found evidence of the involvement of lawyer Chanvej Malaibucha, who worked for the Nickel Company that carried out the demolition. He was initially sentenced to one year in jail, but this was reduced to eight months because of his useful testimony.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Chuwit is back and he loves you! – June 23, 2006

Chuwit's new billboard reads: I love you. Let's love each other. We are all born in Thailand.

Chuwit disqualified as MP – *The Nation*, January 26, 2006

The Constitution Court Thursday disqualified Chat Thai party-list MP Chuwit Kamolvisit on ground that he had not joined the party for at least 90 days before the general election last year...



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Chuwit and sledgehammer – January 3, 2005

Chuwit billboard: *Quash the cheating people, expose the evil people, do not fear the influential!*

[Chuwit colour-codes cabinet](#) – Bangkok Post, March 17, 2005

...Yesterday, he unveiled his cabinet guide, which assigns each minister to a group – Mr Thaksin's friends, faction leaders or representatives and the party's financial supporters ...

"Colour-coding zones in the southern-most provinces seemed to backfire on Prime Minister Thaksin, so I have decided to help him out by using it on his cabinet members instead," said Mr Chuwit...

[Chuwit's persona might be annoying but he's an asset, say opposition MPs](#) – The Nation, February 24, 2005

[Massage parlour king makes smashing entry into Thai parliament](#) – Channel NewsAsia, February 18, 2005

Thai massage parlour king turned politician Chuwit Kamolvit made his legislative debut Friday by smashing a bath tub with his trademark sledgehammer and lying in a coffin outside parliament.

"I smashed the bath tub to show that I am no longer involved in the massage parlour business, and I laid down in the casket to show that the old Chuwit has died and now voters have voted to give birth to a new Chuwit," he told reporters...

[Unofficial tally lands Chuwit in Parliament](#) – The Nation, February 10, 2005

Former massage-parlour tycoon Chuwit Kamolvit will make his way to Parliament for the first time after the Election Commission yesterday announced that unofficial results from party-list voting means his Chat Thai Party will win seven party-list House seats...

[Defiant Chuwit won't vote for Thaksin as PM](#) – Bangkok Post, February 10, 2005

... "I am not like other politicians who mostly dare not speak out or do whatever they are told by their parties. I think I will do a better job than they do in parliament. This is because I entered politics with a strong desire to work, and not to sleep or search through pornographic websites while sitting in parliament," he said...

[Party orders Chuwit to tone down speeches](#) – Bangkok Post, December 4, 2004

Billionaire Chuwit Kamolvit has been instructed by Chart Thai leaders to tone down his forceful campaign speeches and avoid making any scathing references to Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra or government policies, a party source said...

[Tycoon's park to open before poll – FTN leader says he's not buying votes](#) – Bangkok Post, November 21, 2004

...Mr Chuwit, who pledged to transform his six-rai plot of land at the corner of Sukhumvit Soi 10 into a park equipped with a library during his recent campaign for Bangkok governor, said he intended to open the park to the public before the Feb 13 general election...

Although the park is privately owned, Mr Chuwit said he would not take the land back and turn it into a commercial complex "at least during my lifetime"... The land, which was home to many bars that were demolished by men believed to be working for Mr Chuwit himself, is valued at about 1.2 billion baht. Mr Chuwit said he had turned down an offer of 700 million baht for the land from an investor.

[Chuwit's talk show cancelled by Army TV](#) – AP, September 16, 2004

A television station has abruptly canceled a planned talk show featuring a sex tycoon-turned-politician famous for his anti-establishment views, raising fresh charges of unfair government influence over the media...

Chuwit's website unregistered – June 11, 2004

The Nation recently announced Chuwit Kamolvit's campaign website would be <http://www.chuwit-online.com>, but it appears the domain name is not even registered...

Earlier: Chuwit's website – June 10, 2004

Massage parlor king/Bangkok governor Chuwit Kamolvit is supposed to have a new website here: <http://www.chuwit-online.com>, but it does not appear to be online yet. Anyone know if this is the correct url?

[Davis Group businesses being sold](#) – The Nation, May 27, 2004

Commercial sex mogul Chuwit is selling off his massage parlors to build a 5-star hotel: "It will be like Phuket right in the heart of Sukhumvit Road. It will look like Siam Intercontinental Hotel," he said.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Chuwit campaign billboard – April 25, 2004

For some reason, 2Bangkok.com gets a lot of email asking ‘What is Chuwit doing these days?’ The answer is running a quixotic campaign for Bangkok Governor. This billboard is near the south end of Wiphawadeerasit Road. It reads “Choose Chuwit to be governor of Bangkok. Governor is marked out and underneath is written man of service. (Conor notes that “servant” is a better translation of this.)

Chuwit’s political party – March 2, 2004

The headquarters of massage parlors mogul Chuwit Kamolvisit’s political party on Ratchadapiesek Road (right). It is called Thon Thrakul Thai – Thai Ancestry Party. “Strong ideas, strong talk, strong action.”



[Have sex, flash your badge and skip the bill](#) – *The Nation*, September 5, 2003

We try not to cover issues that are already well-covered in the local press, but this one had a funny slant—watch for to be reprinted in the Weird or Odd news sections of the international press: Acting Suthisarn Police chief Colonel Varanvas Karunyathat defended the police action, saying that the officers involved needed to have sex with the masseuses to gain evidence for the arrest. He added that the police confiscated hundreds of used condoms from Chuwit’s massage parlours.

(Photo:
2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Chuwit rides the Skytrain – 1:50pm, September 2, 2003

Massage parlor tycoon Chuwit rides the Skytrain from Chong Nong Si to Siam Stations with the press in tow.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

The massage parlour scandal – July 15, 2003

At the beginning of May, 2Bangkok.com reported how the foreign press referred to Chuwit Kamolvisit as the 'king of commercial sex' while the local press were still deferentially referring to the tycoon as a 'Managing Director.' Now even the local press are reporting all the sordid details of his empire and his dangerous war of words with the police.

While this news has been slathered across all the papers, *The Nation* has had several informative articles about how the Chuwit Kamolvisit saga relates to Thai culture:

[Sex still sells for tycoon](#) – *The Nation*, July 13, 2003

Besides Victoria Secret, they mention more details of the Chuwit empire: *Chuwit's other upscale parlours include Honolulu, Emmanuelle, Hi-Class and Copa Cabana. They are clustered around Ratchadaphisek Road, where several other top-end parlours thrive.* (the last one is Julianna)

While we are sure Mr. Chuwit's massage parlours are 'legitimate,' 2Bangkok has been informed repeatedly by numerous sources over many years that the sex industry in Thailand—particularly the extravagant massage parlours that have grown up in recent years—are really used to launder money from various schemes both domestic and foreign.

Also: [Chuwit and the police: a cultural parable](#) – *The Nation*, July 12, 2003

From the police's point of view, Chuwit was guilty of a lack of gratitude. He has been able to run his morally "grey" business simply because the police looked the other way. In the words of police Maj-General Wichienchote Sukhoterat, a deputy permanent secretary of the Justice Ministry, police had already paid back operators of illegal businesses by turning a blind eye, and thus owed no debts to them. "It is rather a quid pro quo," said Wichienchote, referring to Thai proverb yuen moo, yuen maew ("You give me a pig, I give you a cat.")

[Keeping Chuwit in perspective](#) – *The Nation*, September 14, 2003

The massage tycoon alleges bribery and the police allege prostitution. Both sides vehemently deny the charges. But anyone with half a brain can deduce that both charges are true, and anyone who tries to deny them is regarded as a hypocrite and a liar...

Apparently, the people who lost face did not get the money. Either that or the money was not enough. When Chuwit came out with his bribery allegations, even more face and more money was lost. Gen Sant must have felt rather awkward denying that his officers were accepting bribes while at the same time transferring scores of them from their precincts. He lost face and he didn't get paid for it.

A tale of two newspapers: Describing a local tycoon – May 3, 2003

After the [Sukumwit Square demolition](#) controversy, what is interesting is the way the local and foreign press describe one of the central protagonists—Chuwit Kamolvisit. He is typically referred to in the local press as 'managing director of Sukumwit Silver Star Co.' The foreign press has openly referred to him as the 'king of commercial sex.'

[news.com.au](#) states: *Chuwit Kamolvisit, 42, widely known as a boss of the Thai sex industry, was arrested late last week after 10 weeks on the run. Chuwit, who runs nine large massage parlours in Bangkok, has a personal fortune estimated at more than \$250million. He was arrested in connection with the demolition of a whole Bangkok city block of "beer bars" to make way for a new brothel. Australian Federal Police officers in Bangkok are investigating the extent of Chuwit's involvement in the sex industry in Australia and his property interests in this country.*

[The Nation](#), which is usually prepared to go a bit further than other local press in exposing local 'big men,' reports: *Meanwhile, Metropolitan Police have placed anti-drugs banners over Chuwit's family name at a number of police booths around Bangkok. Chuwit donated money for the construction of several police booths in central Bangkok. The police, in recognition of this, placed signs on the booths with the foundation carrying his family name: the Kamolvisit Ancestors Foundation.*

[How much things cost](#) – July 9, 2003

Chuwit Kamolvisit, formerly one of Bangkok's most influential men, admitted he paid police 12 million baht per month in bribes to run his many massage parlors. *"I used to buy whole trays of Rolex watches for police officers. I used to carry cash in black plastic bags for them. But they are still harassing me." Police have already threatened to sue: He said there were about 13,000 metropolitan policemen and it was possible that some of them might be corrupt. "So, we will check to verify the information. If it turns out to be incorrect, we will have to take legal action to protect the reputation of our agency," Damrongsak said.*

Notice that *The Nation* is using the "king of commercial sex," description for Kamolvisit. We think 2Bangkok.com was the first English-language press to mention this back in May: He is typically referred to in the local press as 'managing director of Sukumwit Silver Star Co.' The foreign press has openly referred to him as the 'king of commercial sex.'

UPDATE: Chuwit was [released on bail and is now 'missing.'](#)

UPDATE: Chuwit is found, [claiming to have been kidnapped.](#)

Mr Chuwit said he was disappointed the premier and the police chief thought he invented the story. Before his disappearance, Mr Chuwit said the bribery claim had put his life in danger. One senior officer regularly pocketing tea money was an influential deputy commander of a city police precinct, he claimed. "I never said police were sleazy. In our society, it's a norm to pay your way," said the owner of the Davis Group, one of Bangkok's biggest chains of upscale massage parlours. He was not prepared to be a sitting duck and had to dig up the dirt to defend himself. "But when I finally came out with the truth, I was labelled a liar. How can you be so hypocritical," Mr Chuwit asked.

2,000 lights out at Suvarnabhumi – Visibility at night a problem, say pilots

January 28, 2008

Categories: Airports and Airlines

[2,000 lights out at Suvarnabhumi – Visibility at night a problem, say pilots](#) – Bangkok Post, January 28, 2008

...The delay in fixing the broken lights occurred because AoT placed an order for many lightbulbs at one time, he said.

Mr Chaisak said he had once suggested AoT change its buying method.

Instead of ordering a large number of lightbulbs at the same time, he said, AoT should buy smaller numbers of replacement stock periodically, when only some bulbs were not functioning...

EU takes ‘erratic’ Thai tariffs to WTO

January 28, 2008

Categories: Business

[EU takes ‘erratic’ Thai tariffs to WTO](#) – Bangkok Post, January 28, 2008

...European spirits exporters welcomed the EU's call on the WTO to pressure Thailand to change its "arbitrary" tariff system imposed since the 2006 coup.

BMA requests all districts to cancel entertaining activities during Valentine's

January 28, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[BMA requests all districts to cancel entertaining activities during Valentine's](#) – PRD, January 28, 2008

Thailand praises Suharto's contributions to ASEAN

January 28, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thailand praises Suharto's contributions to ASEAN](#) –

Earthtimes, January 28, 2008

... "Thailand deeply appreciates the enormous contributions His Excellency General Suharto rendered to the causes of peace and security in the region, to our efforts to strengthen regional cooperation as well as the expansion of the relationship between the Kingdom of Thailand and the Republic of Indonesia," said Surayud...

The upcoming Samak government

January 28, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

[Celebrity chef is elected as Prime Minister of Thailand](#) – *Independent*, January 28, 2008

Thailand's parliament has chosen as its new prime minister a pugnacious celebrity chef and self-confessed "front man" for his ousted predecessor Thaksin Shinawatra...

Earlier: [Thailand's tough talking TV cook](#) – AP, January 22, 2008

Samak Sundaravej — the man likely to become Thailand's next prime minister — is known for his sharp tongue and short temper...

[Burmese generals probably happy with Thailand's new government](#) – *The Irrawaddy*, January 29, 2008

The junta no doubt views the new prime minister, Samak Sundaravej, as a proxy for deposed Prime Minister Thaksin Sinawatra, as does most of the Thai public. Thus, they probably anticipate much smoother—and more supportive—relations with Thailand's new government...

[Myanmar migrants fear worst from new Thai government](#) – *Reuters*, January 29, 2008

...However, the prospects of positive change were slim, with many Thai officials deliberately hampering alien worker registration to keep wages low, he said. "The worse the situation for the migrants, the cheaper the labour for the Thai businessmen," Ko Htwe said. "The new government will not change things..."

And another classic from NottheNation: [NTN Editorial: It's Time For Samak To Resign](#)

...Yes, PPP may have won the election, but it's clear to us that all journalists hate Samak with a passion. And if society's gatekeepers of the truth and democracy don't like Samak, how good can he really be?...

Follow Thailand in exporting food culture: council

January 28, 2008

Categories: Food and Drink

[Follow Thailand in exporting food culture: council](#) – *Taipei Times*, January 28, 2008

Taiwan should emulate Thailand by marketing its traditional foods internationally, officials from the Council for Economic Planning and Development said...

The worst building in the history of mankind

January 28, 2008

Categories: North Korea

[The worst building in the history of mankind](#) – *Esquire*, January 28, 2008, 6:57 AM

It's the Ryugyong Hotel in North Korea, where the world's 22nd largest skyscraper has been vacant for two decades and is likely to stay that way ... forever...

PM Samak has two choices: to be a good leader or a mere puppet

January 28, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

PM Samak has two choices: to be a good leader or a mere puppet – translated and summarized from *Krungtep Turakit*, January 28, 2008

Samak Sundaravej is expected to win a parliamentary voting session on January 28 to select the country's new prime minister. Samak's political career has spanned more than three decades. He was a Democrat MP of Bangkok, an interior minister, a party leader, a prime minister, and a Bangkok governor. Samak missed the chance to be Senate chief in 2006 as the military junta staged a coup in September that year. He was later persuaded to lead the People Power Party by the previous prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra. The columnist said it is a good opportunity for Samak to be an incorruptible prime minister and devote himself for the Kingdom. Otherwise, he would be a mere puppet for the previous premier. Actually, Samak himself once said that he was a "nominee" for Thaksin. If he chooses to be just a "nominee" and focus on personal benefits, he will surely be cursed by the whole country.

Popular blogger arrested in Myanmar: opposition

January 29, 2008

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[Popular blogger arrested in Myanmar: opposition](#) – AFP, January 29, 2008

A popular Myanmar blogger who belongs to Aung San Suu Kyi's pro-democracy party has been arrested in Yangon, apparently for violating the nation's tough Internet controls, a party spokesman said Wednesday...

Thailand finances Cambodian power grid to electrify Angkor Wat

January 29, 2008

Categories: Cambodia

[Thailand finances Cambodian power grid to electrify Angkor Wat](#) – EARTHtimes, January 29, 2008

The Export-Import Bank of Thailand and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have agreed to provide 14 million dollars to finance the construction of transmission lines across the Thai-Cambodian border, EXIM Thailand announced Wednesday...

Samak mightn't have an easy path, possibly lose power during May-September

January 29, 2008

Categories: Thai Politics

Samak mightn't have an easy path, possibly lose power during May-September – translated and summarized from *Thai Insider*, January 29, 2008

According to Bunlert Pairin, a well-known fortune teller, the new prime minister Samak Sundaravej is expected to have ill fortune during May 7-September 16, 2008. He might lose his post during the period. The premier recently visited Phrakrun Palad Sopit Chotikul, a senior monk of Wat Arun Rajavararam. The monk wished him good luck with a blow on the new premier's head. The monk said Samak is sincere and is kind to people, no matter they are rich or poor.

Thai Media Project – January 2008

January 30, 2008

Categories: Thai Media Project



Minister – Made in Hong Kong – Arun, *Krungtepturakit*, January 27, 2008

It reads: Minister. Made in Hong Kong



Welcome home – *Matchon Weekly*, January 25-31, 2008

It reads: Welcome home – Thakino Pikku

"Pikku" is the title for a monk and "Thankino" is the supposed name for Thaksin as a monk. The head monk would give each new monk a new monk-like name based on their given name.

From King Mongkut, who spent 27 years in a monastery after being outmaneuvered for the throne, to dictator Thanom Kittikachorn, whose return as a monk sparked student protests and the massacre of left-wing students, Thais have used the monkhood as a source of protection.



At the bottom left of the cover it reads: Let's run away.

Thaksin's eel curry – *Nation Weekend*, January 25, 2007

The illustration portrays PM Samak making a curry with eels (in a Salvador Dali pose). Eels represent the "slippery" party of Chat Thai led by "eel" Banharn Silaparcha who joined the government after pledging not to.

It is "Thaksin's" curry because Thaksin is thought to be the real power behind the People Power Party.





The great problem of the people – Poojadkarn, January 26, 2008

The great problem of the people

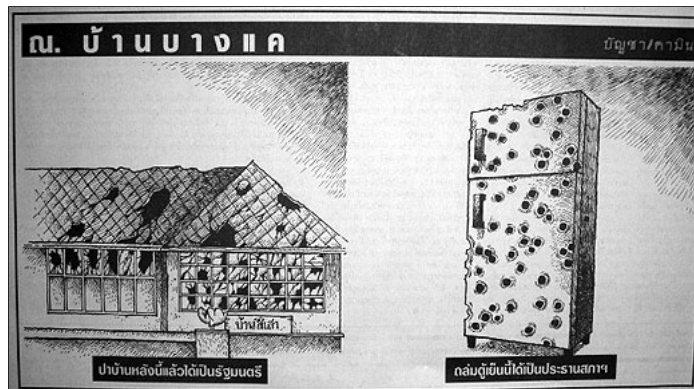
Left: Rotten debt

Right: Rotten rose-apple



Thanks for the PMship! – Poojadkuan, January 25, 2008

Mak pushes Bang to be a military minister as a gift for chasing Thaksin and making Mak to be the PM



Rewards – Na Ban Bangkae by Bancha Kamin, Poojadkarn, January 25, 2008

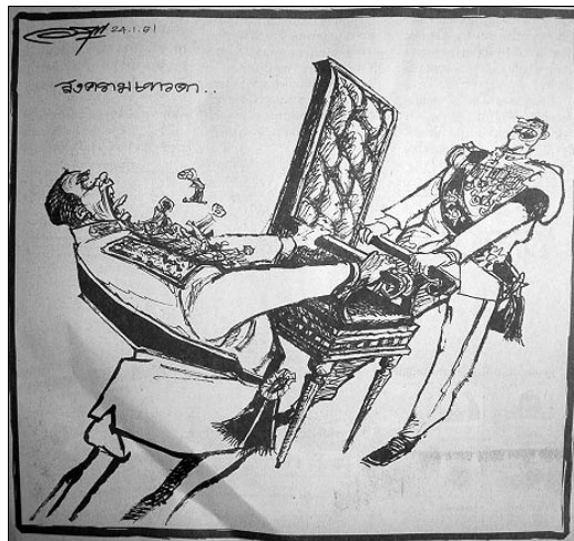
Left: Throw at this house, you will get a minister position.

Right: Attack this refrigerator, you will get the chairperson of parliament position.



Yongyuth, the Refrigerator Man – *Thairath* by Chai Ratchavat, January 26, 2008

People call out to the chairperson of the house: Your respectful Chairperson of Parliament!



Fighting for the speaker's chair – Arun, *Krungrtepturakit*, January 24, 2008

The caption says something like "War of Angels." We are not quite sure that the point or joke is here. Anyone have an idea?

CB was quick to point out: *The soap opera about bitchy air hostesses that is generating a lot of comment is called "Songkhram Nang Fah" which means "War of Angels" (I'd translate it as "Angels at War" or "Warring Angels"). Air hostess have for obvious reasons always been called angels and "nang fah" is literally "Sky Lady" anyway. So it's a joke that the politicians are obviously no angels.*

And further adds: *Interestingly, the Bangkok Post translates "Songkhram Nang Fah" as "Air Hostess War" while The Nation chooses "Battle of Angels". Without the underlying Thai, it looks like two different shows...*



Calling on the speaker – *Phujatphan, Na Ban Bangkang* by Buncha/Kamin, January 24, 2008

People call out to the chairperson of the house: Your respectful Chairperson of Parliament!

On the speaker's chair is a shoe with a small sign that reads "Thaksin's shoes"

There is reference here to Thaksin's behind-the-scenes organizing of the political situation, but again we are not sure of the exact point or joke. Anyone have an idea?



Above: "I come home because I am of thinking of my children." Huddled around her are various PPP/TRT politicians. (from *Manager*, Na Ban Bangkae, by Bancha, January 11, 2008)

The return of Pojaman – January 12, 2008

Below: Pojaman as puppet (from Arun, *Krungtepturakit*, January 10, 2008)



"It is just a wrong idea..." – *Kaolao Ruammitr* by Tin, *Matichon*, January 13, 2008

Top left to right:

- * If you want to ask the graduate from abroad to be a clerical staff in the front office.
- * If you want to blend oil and water (Under the water bottle: "Party 1," Under the barrel: "Party 2")
- * If you think that the "invisible foot" will allow you a three-month honeymoon period

Bottom left to right:

- * If you want a guy like "Chaiwat" to step backward (In the box: "The first round of election invalid")
- * If you think the "eel" keeps his words (On the flag: "Non truth-oriented")
- * If you think the lady comes back to take care of her children, Oak, Aim and Ung-Ing.



More on the return of Pojaman – January 14, 2008

Above: "The back foot probes the water."

The sign reads "Hot water." The elephant has a square face like Thaksin's face. Women are said to be the "hind legs of the elephant" so the elephant's hind leg represents Thaksin's wife who has recently returned to Thailand to test the political climate. (From Arun, *Krungtepturakit*, January 11, 2008)



Above: PPP leader Samak says: "Help me... I was bullied..." While Pojaman's shadow looms over the scene. She hold a sack of money. At the bottom it reads "Whose mom comes, whose tears gush!!!" (From *Krungtepturakit*, January 10, 2008)

Mob rule in Buriram –

translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, January 7, 2008

The general public may be fooled into perceiving that people in Buriram province are showing a keen interest in political matters. This may be especially the case if some get the idea that the recent demonstration in the province was a genuine attempt by locals to maintain their electoral rights.

It was surprising when thousands of Buriram Province citizens, from various districts, recently gathered at the Provincial Hall. Those gathered were protesting against the recent Electoral Commission decision to award 'red' cards to three parliamentary candidates for constituencies in the province. This crowd gathered so quickly that one might be forgiven for thinking that Buriram people have been keeping themselves well abreast of political developments. However, it has since been reported (but not proven) that the protesters received 200 baht per person to turn up at the Provincial Hall demonstration.

The protesters' insistence that the 'red' cards should be withdrawn is, in any case, a true example of mob rule in action – as the demonstrators have made it clear that they will not accept the awarding of such cards under any circumstances.

If Buriram people really long for justice and care about their Kingdom, they should spend more time trying to investigate the corruption in their province – instead of gathering to support cheats.

More restrictive laws, penalizing political parties –

translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, January 9, 2007

Regarding the Electoral Commission moves to probe vote-buying allegations that have arisen from the recent general election. Many 'red' and 'yellow' cards will be awarded to parliamentary candidates of the People Power Party (PPP), if these probes conclude that PPP members have been breaching the electoral laws on vote-buying. This situation has led to a widespread perception that the 2007 Constitution is placing a great deal more emphasis on the penalization of political parties found to have engaged in electoral law breaches. I would like to add that another reason why the PPP is faced with a growing threat of political disbandment is because it is frequently thought to be a proxy of the now-defunct Thai Rak Thai Party – as formerly led by deposed PM Thaksin Shinawatra.

Political developments –

translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, January 8, 2008

Political reform in Thailand officially began after the 1997 Constitution came into effect in October of that year. After that constitution was 'torn up' in 2006, the Interim Constitution and the subsequent 2007 Constitution came in force. Although general elections have been held on four occasions since 1997, it is highly questionable whether Thai politics has moved forward at all in the past ten years.

If we monitor the behavior of politicians and political parties both before and after the December 23 General Election, we see that Thai politics has not changed in the slightest. All political parties still believe that they will 'starve' if they are forced to remain in opposition. As such, this means that they constantly trying to be a part of any government that is formed – regardless of any real benefit to the nation.

One political development has arisen in this election, however. Outdated politicians who formed new political parties before the event, in a bid to be a part of the new government, have largely failed to achieve their goals.

The results of the recent general election have done nothing to usher in political reform.

The 2007 Constitution was conceived to create a clean political system, and to reduce the power and influence of money politics. The participation of the public in the election – and their overall verdict – should be respected, however.

The December 23 General Election also led to another new political trend. People are now being urged to gather at protest meetings to pressure the Electoral

Commission (EC) into dismissing provincial EC members who have awarded 'red' cards to parliamentary candidates. The future of Thai politics is extremely worrisome.

Thai press: "People for tomorrow" – *Nation Weekend*,
December 28, 2007-January 3, 2008



Thai press: "The war is still not finished!" – *Siam Weekly*, December 28, 2007-January 3, 2008

At bottom left: Lucky Prime Minister

Who betrays the people? –

translated and summarized from *Komchadluek*, December 28, 2007

The negotiation between political parties seems to have been finalized. The People Power Party (PPP) sent certain offers to minor parties to persuade them to join its party in a bid to have the power to form the government. The PPP has more chances to form the government than the Democrat Party as it won as many as 233 seats in the recent election. How the coalition government will benefit the people we still do not know. What we know is that some politicians can say one thing and do the other if they are tempted by benefits and money. Thailand is not developing because the people never learn a lesson. They are still deceived by some two-faced politicians.

Happy New Year 2008 – translated and summarized from *Krungthep Turakit*, January 1, 2008

The year 2008 has begun. Thai politicians missed the new year celebration as they had to negotiate for benefits. The People Power Party is more likely to have the power to form the government than the Democrat Party as it has as many as 233 seats, while the Democrat Party has 165 seats. Thailand's economy still depends on the political situation. The author believes the new government will focus on alternative energy to deal with energy problems. He suggests that the government highlight education, transportation, and research and development.

A nation must be a real nation –

translated and summarized from *Krungthep Turakit*, December 27, 2007

The interim government does not seem to care much about people's living over the past five to six months. The inflation rate jumped by three percent during this period, while the global oil price almost hit 100 dollars per barrel. The Surayud administration was initially well-received by most Thai people as it helped reduce political stress. However, most Thais have turned to focusing on their living problems. That is why the People Power Party got the highest number of seats in the general election despite strong opposition against the party. The author wants to see a real nation with a government which has clear administration policies and will restore the people's confidence.

Selecting 'upright' senators –

translated and summarized from *Matichon*, December 29, 2007

A committee is currently looking into the selection of 'appointed' senators in advance of a deadline set for this task on January 2. The committee is comprised of the following: The Constitutional Tribunal Chairman, the Electoral Commission (EC) Chairman, the Chairman of the Ombudsman's Office, the National Counter-Corruption Commission Chairman, the Chairman of the Auditor-General's Office, a Supreme Court judge and a Supreme Administrative Court judge. After the conclusion of this selection process, the EC will be forwarded a list of suitable individuals from many organizations & walks of life, and will have about one month to examine this list. Some of the 150 senators will be selected by an electoral process, while others will be appointed by the above-mentioned process.

I wish to comment that the process of selecting senators is likely to generate some doubt in the minds of the public, if it is not clearly explained to them. The selection of 'upright' senatorial appointees will severely test the abilities of the seven committee members, if they are to conduct the process with both impartiality and fairness.

EC's role should be respected –

translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, January 3, 2007

Regarding the claims of the People Power Party (PPP) that the Electoral Commission (EC) has been attempting to prevent its rise to governmental power through the use of 'red' and 'yellow' electoral penalty cards. The PPP has announced its plan to form a coalition government with 3 minor political parties, and has also said it will abolish the EC once it is in power. I would like to pinpoint the fact that there were many allegations of vote-buying and other breaches of electoral law both

before and during the General Election on December 23. The EC's roles should be respected, as its mission is to put a stop to political sleaze and to support the nation's democratic system.

Political problems and political solutions –

translated and summarized from *Krungtep Turakit*, January 2, 2007

With regard to the current speculation on the possibility of the next government being formed by a coalition of the People Power Party (PPP) and 3 minor parties: Ruam Jai Thai/Chart Pattana, Matchimathipatai and Pracharat. I wish to comment that the Electoral Commission's investigation, of allegations of vote-buying, is likely to cause some grief to the PPP. Another factor to be taken into account is that the PPP and its three allies might experience some hardship, in running the country, if the opposition parties exercise their right to veto their coalition government on its performance .

Monitor lizards crawling around in abundance in Bangkok

January 30, 2008

Categories: Wildlife and Nature

[Monitor lizards crawling around in abundance in Bangkok](#) – Bangkok Post, January 30, 2008

For those who believe an old adage that a monitor lizard, or hia, brings bad luck, this might be bad news – the hia population in the city has increased. Water monitors are still crawling around in abundance in Bangkok and in the provinces, according to Alongkorn Mahannop, a veterinarian at Chitralada Palace. Last year's survey showed there were about 200 water monitors in each district of Bangkok, he said...

Ethnic anger on the rise in Malaysia

January 30, 2008

Categories: Malaysia

[Ethnic anger on the rise in Malaysia](#) – IHT, January 30, 2008

No pirate DVD sales during the Asean summit

January 30, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

No pirate DVD sales during the Asean summit – January 30, 2009

Police have informed DVD shops in Pantip and Fortune Town to cease selling pirated DVDs for the duration of the Asean summit. This is normal procedure during international events. Everything will be back to normal after the summit.

Burmese women in Thai ‘human zoo’

January 31, 2008

Categories: Myanmar/Burma, Refugees and Migrants

[Burmese women in Thai ‘human zoo’](#) – BBC, January 31, 2008

*...The United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) says that for the past two years, the Thai authorities have refused to allow a group of 20 Kayan to leave the country, despite firm offers to resettle them in Finland and New Zealand.
The suspicion is that the women are being kept in Thailand because of the central role they play in the local tourism industry...*

Thailand's inflation probably rose to the highest in 17 months

January 31, 2008

Categories: Economy

[Thailand's inflation probably rose to the highest in 17 months](#) – *Bloomberg*, January 31, 2008

Bangkok's old style bicycle shop

January 31, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Bangkok's old style bicycle shop](#) – TNA, January 31, 2008

PPP revives Thaksin policies

January 31, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

[PPP revives Thaksin policies](#) – Bangkok Post, January 31, 2008

... "We have completed drafting the new government's policies and up to 90 per cent are those that were scrapped after Mr Thaksin's forced departure," said Mr Noppadon. "Some of these include the Small Medium Large village fund scheme (SML), the government (two- and three-digit) lottery and the CEO governor scheme..."

The price of cooking oil has now reached the price...

January 31, 2008

Early work of new government will soon establish its longer-term popularity – *translated and summarized from Krungtep Turakit, January 31, 2008*

The price of cooking oil has now reached the price of one hundred baht for two 1-liter bottles – a price hike that has brought about a significant increase in the cost-of-living for the average citizen. The Commerce Ministry recently approved a four baht price rise for soya bean oil to 49.50 baht per 1-liter bottle, with this hike adding to the discomfort already caused by previous recent increases in the price of palm oil.

The price of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) will also soon increase, by three to four baht for a 15 Kg. gas bottle.

These skyrocketing cost-of-living increases are not balanced by any commensurate increases in people's basic incomes. Such increases should be an indicator to the new government – led by Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej – that it urgently needs to solve the nation's current economic problems. This will be an early challenge to the new administration – through which it will have an opportunity to demonstrate its mettle. The private sector is waiting to see what this new government intends to do to stimulate the economy, boost consumer spending and restore investor confidence.

Wikitravel Press launches first printed guidebooks

February 1, 2008
Categories: Books

[Wikitravel Press launches first printed guidebooks](#) – February 2008

From a press release we received: Wikitravel Press (www.wikitravelpress.com) announced the publication of their first titles, [Wikitravel Chicago](#) and [Wikitravel Singapore](#). The titles are the first in a series of printed guidebooks created using a revolutionary combination of Wiki technology coupled with on-demand printing. And tough words from the [site front page](#):

Wikitravel guidebooks – Written by fellow travelers

Other guidebooks – Rushed together by hired hacks

Welcome to WAG-on-Sea!

February 1, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Welcome to WAG-on-Sea!](#) – *Daily Mail*, February 1, 2008

There are fish leaping out of the water in front of David and Victoria Beckham's tinted French windows.

Nearby, the freshly raked sand on Michael Owen's private beach has not had a single footprint on it all morning, let alone a game of football...

Living under house arrest in Beijing

February 1, 2008

Categories: China

[Living under house arrest in Beijing](#) – *Guardian*, February 1, 2008

Chinese state security police have arrested one of the country's most prominent civil rights activists, [Hu Jia](#). In a video diary, he recorded life under house arrest – and round-the-clock surveillance – with his wife, Zeng Jinyan...

Cabinet line-up looks dismal

February 1, 2008

Categories: Thai Politics

[Cabinet line-up looks dismal](#) – *The Nation*, February 1, 2008

Don't overestimate yourself!

February 1, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

Don't overestimate yourself! – *translated and summarized from Matichon*, February 1, 2008

The recent meeting of military leaders, during a time when politicians were busily trying to form a new government, can only be interpreted as indicating that the Council for National Security is still essentially against the incoming Samak administration. Some people, however, are trying to project this issue in a more optimistic light. There is a groundswell of opinion that military leaders are only human in their desire to let the new Samak Government know their concerns over a power-shift away from them.

The military and the government have different roles in this nation, and it will require a person who possesses considerable skill to manage the shifting relationship between the two. Both sides must be aware of their mortal status in Thai society, and learn to exercise their powers in a careful and responsible manner. It should be borne in mind, however, that the downturn in the fortunes of ousted premier Thaksin Shinawatra began at a time when he became interested in removing some of the powers of Gen. Sonthi Boonyaratglin and other leading military generals.

The new government will need to make a clear decision over who will assume the post of Defense Minister, if it wishes to promote a more positive relationship between itself and the military. This new government needs to act quickly to demonstrate its own moral integrity, and to show that it does not intend to take advantage of those who have opposed it in the past.

It is very likely that the new Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej will be appointed Defense Minister

February 1, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

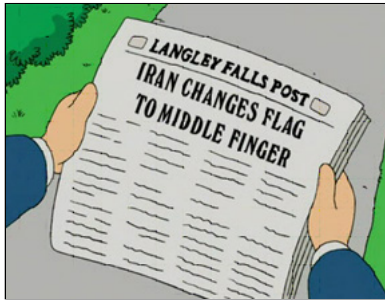
When Defense is under Samak's control, peace will be kept safe and sound in drawer – translated and summarized from *Komchadluek*, February 1, 2008

It is very likely that the new Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej will be appointed Defense Minister. A peaceful relationship between the old power clique and the armed forces is expected to stumble if the premier takes the helm of the Ministry of Defense. His harsh personality will do no good to the relationship. The columnist is confident that the appointment follows an order of a certain person staying abroad. Defense Minister General Boonrawd Samatas worries that the new defense minister will not understand the military forces and intervene in the forces. Rumor has it that General Sonthi Boonyaratglin will be named Defense Minister in the next three months.

Censored Gag from Family Guy

February 2, 2008

Categories: Censorship



Censored gag –
February 2, 2008

Things censored on Thai TV include [cigarette smoking](#), bare bottoms (even in cartoons), [drug references](#), and [weapons being held to a person's head](#).

Occasionally the censors remove other things for obscure reasons.

For the airing of the *American Dad* episode [Black Mystery Month](#), True Visions cable TV completely removed the opening title newspaper gag for some reason.

The uncensored version (left), reads "Iran changes flag to middle finger."

The gag was completely edited out on Thai TV.

It's snow joke for Thailand In Tokyo

February 2, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[It's snow joke for Thailand In Tokyo](#) – Goal.com, February 2, 2008

The SE Asian nation arrived in Tokyo on Saturday night in conditions that couldn't be further from the steamy heat of Bangkok. "There was a blizzard. There's snow on the ground so we're training indoors," team manager Kittirat Na Ranong told Reuters...

Stacy alive in Thailand?

February 2, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Stacy alive in Thailand?](#) – *The Herald News*, February 2, 2008

Joel Brodsky, [Drew Peterson](#)'s lawyer, says he has three new photographs that show Stacy Peterson eating in the food court of a shopping mall in Thailand. Tom Dellaca, a retired police officer from Australia, took them, Brodsky said...

Samak allows PTV to broadcast Govt's policy announcement

February 2, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

[Samak allows PTV to broadcast Govt's policy announcement](#) – *The Nation*, February 2, 2008

Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej Saturday gave tacit support to pro-Thaksin unlicensed satellite station, PTV, by allowing it to broadcast the House session when the government announces its policy statement...

Earlier: [PTV protests](#)

What's for lunch? Roast rat – In the countryside, large rodents have become a cash crop

February 2, 2008

Categories: Food and Drink

[What's for lunch? Roast rat – In the countryside, large rodents have become a cash crop](#) – Bangkok Post, February 2, 2008

...Sompote Srikosamat, of Mahidol University's faculty of sciences, said the population of pig rats, or bandicoots in scientific jargon, in Suphan Buri had sharply increased due to the rapid expansion of paddy fields, which is an ideal food source for the rats...

Mornings across from the Chinese Embassy in Bangkok

February 2, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Mornings across from the Chinese Embassy in Bangkok – February 2, 2008

Better know to Westerners as [Falun Gong](#).



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Rose Apple guy

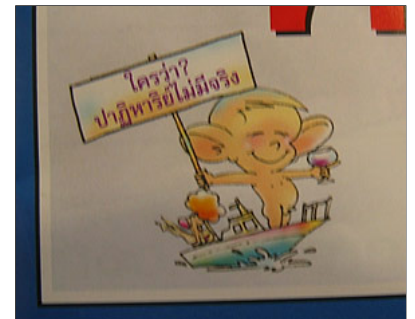
February 2, 2008



Rose Apple guy – *Matichon Weekly*,
February 2, 2008

The headline reads: Amazing Samak

On the bottom left of the cover, a cartoon character holds a sign that reads (right): Who says miracles do not happen?



Say goodbye to the ‘Old Ginger’ government

February 2, 2008

Say goodbye to the ‘Old Ginger’ government – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, February 2, 2008

The Surayud Chulanont Government has already passed over the reins of power to a new administration. The newly-appointed Prime Minister is Samak Sundaravej, the leader of the People Power Party. Some members of the Surayud Government, however, may not be relishing the relinquishment of their posts – while others will feel relieved at the removal of a burden from their shoulders.

If we were to review the military-appointed Surayud administration in an entirely positive and rather uncritical light, we would mention that his sixteen-month government worked hard to explain the reasons for the military coup to the rest of the world. We would also say that his administration tried hard to ease such major problems as the downturn in the economy, the southern unrest and the increasing disunity among Thais.

Considered in a more critical light, however, the Surayud Government failed to pass the exam. During its sixteen-month tenure, it was hardly able to initiate any truly proactive approaches in managing the country’s affairs. Indeed, several ministers were driven to resign their posts through their perception of the inefficiency of the ‘Old Ginger’ administration.

“23+2 Prime Minister”

February 2, 2008

Categories: Thai Politics



"23+2 Prime Minister" – *Nation Weekly*, February, 2008

The headline reads "The 23+2 Prime Minister"

The figure, holding a cooking implement to represent PM Samak, wears a Chinese-style Thaksin mask.

Thaksin was the 23rd Prime Minister and Samak is the 25th Prime Minister. Since Thaksin is thought to be the real power behind the new government and the new PM, the headline dubs the new PM to be the 23 + 2 PM.

Thailand and Laos working on cross border service

February 2, 2008

Thailand and Laos working on cross border service –
translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Post Today*, February 2, 2008

Governor of Nong Khai and SRT are making a discussion with Lao Railways Authority about the cross border railway services between Nong Khai and Tha Nalaeng (3.5 km). Now, SRT has sent the equipment for railway traffic as well as the level crossing equipment. They hope that cross border traffic will be open by May 1, 2008.

The cross border service will be the extension of Express 69 which reaches Nong Khai at about 9:00 AM and it will depart from Nong Khai at 9:10 AM and it will reach Tha Nalaeng at 10:10. It will depart as Express 70 from Tha Nalaeng back to Nong Khai at 11:10 AM and may wait for 7 hours to depart from Nong Khai to Bangkok.

Immigration Process will be done within 20 minutes.

The draft of the cross border treaty will be done in the next two weeks using the cross border treaty between SRT and KTMB as a model for the cross border treaty between SRT and LRA (Lao Railways Authority).

Pattani Provincial Police Station held a press conference

February 3, 2008

Categories: The Thai Deep South

Insurgents say they received 100 baht to bomb soldiers – translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, February 3, 2008

Pattani Provincial Police Station held a press conference at 11:00 am yesterday to announce their arrest of a suspected insurgent named as Ma-ae Kuli (32) – who already had an arrest warrant issued against him. Ma-ae was charged with bomb-attacking a group of soldiers in front of the Mosque in Yarang District's Momawi Commune on January 18. The blast claimed a life of one soldier, and wounded two officers. The arrested insurgent admitted that he had carried out the attack in conjunction with five other insurgents: Isma-ae Pa-ohmani, Yako Ali, Abas Ali, Chugifli Vadeng and Isma-ae Kutae.

Ma-ae named the person who detonated the bomb as Yako Ali – who died on January 23. Isma-ae added that Yako had coerced him into carrying out insurgent activities with a promise that he would eventually receive a large sum of money for his activities. After they had carried out their bombing mission, Yako paid the six men only 100 baht each. Isma-ae also made a statement advised the four remaining bombers to report themselves to the police at the earliest opportunity.

New Thai PM to take defense minister's job to deter military

February 3, 2008

Categories: Thai Politics

[New Thai PM to take defense minister's job to deter military
coup](#) – *Sin Chew Jit Poh*, February 3, 2008

*Thailand's new prime minister said Sunday (3 Feb)
that he will also become the defense minister in a soon-to-be unveiled
Cabinet to deter the military from staging a coup against his government...*

New govt to extend mass-transit routes

February 3, 2008

Categories: Mass Transit

[New govt to extend mass-transit routes](#) – *The Nation*, February 3, 2008

Thank you

February 3, 2008

Thank you –

February 3, 2008

This hard-to-photograph billboard on the expressway entering Bangkok from Bang Na Trat features Democrat leader Aphisit and reads "Thank you all Thai people"—apparently for the Democrats' election victory in Bangkok.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Bangkok's North Korean restaurant: Edible 'sunshine'

February 3, 2008

Categories: Food and Drink, North Korea

[Bangkok's North Korean restaurant: Edible 'sunshine'](#) – The Nation, February 3, 2008

Koreans from North and South laugh warmly together at Bangkok's only North Korean restaurant, suggesting that the 'Sunshine' reconciliation policy really could work...

Ruptures call safety of Internet cables into question

February 4, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Ruptures call safety of Internet cables into question](#) – IHT, February 4, 2008

Four undersea communication cables have been cut in the past week, raising questions about the safety of the oceanic network that handles the bulk of the world's Internet and telephone traffic...

Laos: Poultry imports from Thailand banned

February 4, 2008

Categories: Laos

[Laos: Poultry imports from Thailand banned](#) – Sin Chew Jit Poh, February 4, 2008

Authorities announced a ban on all poultry products from Thailand last week, in the wake of the most recent outbreak of avian influenza in several countries in the region...

Thailand vs A Sensational Foreign Media

February 4, 2008

Categories: Thai Politics

[Thailand vs A Sensational Foreign Media](#) – Thai Blogs, February, 2008

Yesterday: [Is Thailand really so dangerous for foreigners?](#) – *The Statesman*, February, 2008

Ruling on email gets a panning

February 4, 2008

[Ruling on email gets a panning](#) – *The Nation*, February 4, 2008

...He said the Office of the Public Sector Development Commission had conducted a study last year and found that four out of every 10 government officials were using Gmail, Hotmail and Yahoo in communicating official matters...

Lust in the library

February 4, 2008

Categories: Local Beliefs

Interesting example of sensational "moral" front page news exposing the wantonness of modern youth.

Thai Rath (right): **A clear shot** –

Two university students are seen making out on the second floor of Nakhon Si Thammarat public library. Previously, a lot of couples are seen making out there.

Daily News (below): **Making out** –

A news reporter snapped a shot of two university students making out at Nakhon Si Thammarat public library. However, the head librarian said she has seen some couples hugging each other there, but never seen them making out as reported.



“Frightening!”

February 4, 2008

Categories: Editorial Cartoons

"Frightening!" – *Matichon* by Son, February 4, 2008
Government leaders race off a cliff in a pickup truck (the truck makes the sounds "bruen!"). Above it reads
"Frightening!"



Equal rights and opportunities for men and women

February 5, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Equal rights and opportunities for men and women](#) – Adhaalathu, February, 2008

...The solution to divorce and the resulting agony to women does not lie in women leaving the children at home and going for work. The causes of divorce are very well known to us. The first and major reason is that men and women are allowed to mix up freely. Husbands and wives have the opportunity to freely mix up with the opposite sex in their offices, at parties and other social and official functions. Husbands usually fall in love with other women, married or unmarried!...

Disabled angry over sterilisation

February 5, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: It reads: Everything is possible for anyone. Just give them a chance.

[Disabled angry over sterilisation](#) – Sin Chew Jit Poh, February 5, 2008

Many physically disabled women have lost their chance to become mothers as, without their knowledge or even permission, they were subjected to sterilisation...

TAT to update Wiki content on Thailand

February 5, 2008

Categories: Tourism

[TAT to update Wiki content on Thailand](#) – Bangkok Post, February 5, 2008

...The Wiki Mission for Thailand will attempt to involve travellers in improving and editing all of the information about Thailand on Wikipedia.org and Wikitravel.org. The TAT also aims to help members of the local travel and tourism industry by allowing them to post details of their travel products, deals and related information online...

Top court rules Ultraman is not Thai

February 5, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Top court rules Ultraman is not Thai](#) – AFP, February 5, 2008

...The judges found Sompote did not contribute any creativity to the Ultraman character when it was first created more than four decades ago, the official said...

New owner takes wheel of Micro Bus

February 5, 2008

[New owner takes wheel of Micro Bus](#) – *Bangkok Post*, February 5, 2008

Samak's plan to divert Mekong water panned

February 5, 2008

Categories: Thai Politics

[Samak's plan to divert Mekong water panned – Isan scheme feasible, say experts, but costly](#) – Bangkok Post, February 5, 2008

...Under the plan, water from the Mekong river would be diverted through underground tunnels.

Reservoirs would be built and water pipelines laid down to transport water to farmland.

...Montree Chantarawong, campaign coordinator of the Bangkok-based Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance (Terra), said the Samak government should learn from the previous Mekong-Chi-Mun water diversion project which aimed to divert water from the Mekong to the Chi and Mun rivers.

The project was shelved as it caused widespread soil salination.

The region has a vast area of salt deposits which would wreak havoc upon farmland in those areas near waterways or reservoirs...

The Baby Politician

February 5, 2008

Categories: Editorial Cartoons



Small children – Arun, *Kurngtepturakit*, February 5, 2008

On the backpack: Dek Chai Apisit On the hat: Head of the room.

On the bus: Small children vehicle

The person leaning out the window is Prachai. He holds a bag that reads: Dek chai Prachai He says: Stop, stop. Pick up one more of my friends.

We are not sure of the meaning here, other than to link youthful Apisit, who lost out in the last election, with former Machimathipathai leader Prachai Liewpairat who also ended up out of the government and who has been called the “[baby politician](#)”.

Nurse as Deputy Finance Minister

February 5, 2008

Categories: Editorial Cartoons - Manager



From Na Ban Bangkae by Buncha/ Kamin, *Manager*, February 5, 2008

Left: Samak says: I can't stand how we have a nurse to be the Deputy Finance Minister.

Right: Why? How about a cooking teacher being the PM?

[This cartoon pokes fun at the nominee nature of the government with unsuitable figures holding positions only because they are standing in for banned TRT politicians.

In the left panel, Samak complains about Ranongrak Suwanchawee, who is a nurse, being appointed as Deputy Finance Minister. Suwanchawee was no doubt appointed because she is the wife of banned Thai Rak Thai executive Pairote Suwanchawee. Such appointments are a signal that politicians can resist being banned or restricted from politics and will flaunt this fact in the most blatant way possible.

In the right panel it is pointed out that Samak, who has his own cooking show, is now PM.

Communist police ambush Thai firm

February 6, 2008

Categories: Uncategorized

[Communist police ambush Thai firm](#) – intellasia.net, February 6, 2008

For a Thai zinc oxide company, venturing into Vietnam's provincial backwater has proved fatal after being ambushed by the communist country's economic police.

After spending millions of dollars and years of setbacks and prolonged delays in setting up a zinc oxide factory in the poor and remote province of Bac Kan, production finally started in January 2007 at the Viet Thai Zinc Industry Joint Venture Co with output destined for export.

But no sooner had the company finally had its very first consignment cleared by customs and sent to a warehouse in the port city of Hai Phong, the economic police swooped in and seized Viet Thai's goods at the warehouse claiming "economic violations"...

And an earlier claim: [Vietnam loses former investment lustre to Thailand](#)

Malaysian arrested for cheating Thai businessman

February 6, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Malaysian arrested for cheating Thai businessman](#) – *Malaysian National News Agency*, February 6, 2008

Thai coach takes swipe at FIFA over late suspension

February 6, 2008
Categories: Sports

[Thai coach takes swipe at FIFA over late suspensions](#) – *Guardian*, February 6, 2008

... “They have no accumulated yellow cards. Do you think it’s fair? We submitted the list of players a month ago. Is this football or politics?” ...

Thai boy to receive surgery in Canberra

February 6, 2008

Categories: Uncategorized

[Thai boy to receive surgery in Canberra](#) – *ABC Online*, February 6, 2008

SRT: The Maeklong line and Maeklong railway market

February 7, 2008

Categories: Thai Railroads

[SRT: The Maeklong line and Maeklong railway market](#) – *Australian Transport Discussion Board*, February, 2008

Call for strict monitoring of ‘love nests’ for youngsters

February 7, 2008

Categories: Local Beliefs

[Call for strict monitoring of ‘love nests’ for youngsters](#) – Bangkok Post, February 7, 2008

... 'Authorities should strictly monitor and prevent premature sex in these locations throughout the year,' she said. "The sale of condoms at grocery stores also encourages sex among youngsters."

Media hype surrounding Valentine's Day had encouraged teens to skip classes to engage in sexual activity, she said.

Chronic failure in Thai police: HRW

February 7, 2008

Categories: Drugs, High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008, Thai Police

[Chronic failure in Thai police: HRW](#) – *The Nation*, February 7, 2008

...Police brutality and abuses have characterized government efforts to suppress drugs in Thailand in recent years. HRW documented extrajudicial killings and other serious human rights violations in the context of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's notorious "war on drugs" (see the report at <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/thailand0704/thailand0704.pdf>).

Despite the killing of more than 2,000 people, to date there have been no criminal prosecutions of the perpetrators, many of whom are believed to include police officers...

Autocratic States Stage Elections, Claim Legitimacy

February 7, 2008

Categories: Thailand in the International Media

[Autocratic States Stage Elections, Claim Legitimacy](#) – *Epoch Times*, February, 2008

...In 2007, countries like Bahrain, Jordan, Nigeria, Russia, and Thailand, are passing themselves off as “democratic” by merely holding a vote, while engaged in election fraud, severe repression, intimidation and violence against persons of opposition parties, and threats and harassment towards the press...

Baby politician

February 7, 2008

Categories: Editorial Cartoons

Baby politician –
February 7, 2008

This cartoon from *Nation Weekly* shows former Machimathipathai leader Prachai Liewpairat, who was labeled "juvenile" by Sanoh Thienthong and suffered through a series of emotional scandals in 2007.



“Curve of 100 corpses” claims more victims in Thailand

February 8, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[“Curve of 100 corpses” claims more victims in Thailand](#) – *Monsters and Critics*, February, 2008

Thai referee gets a beating by entire soccer team

February 8, 2008

Categories: Sports

[Thai referee gets a beating by entire soccer team](#) – *Reuters*, February 8, 2008

Tortured Arguments

February 8, 2008

[Tortured Arguments](#) – Prachatai, February 8, 2008

....A spokesperson from the Department of Labour pointed out that torture is an integral component of police and national security work and as such is exclusively reserved for Thais. "Foreigners can't expect to come to Thailand and just torture people," said a Department spokesperson, "especially without a work permit. If they want people tortured, they should ask the relevant Thai authorities to do it for them."

When Prachatai took up the issue with the Special Interrogations Division of the National Police Office, an officer, requesting anonymity since he was not authorized to make official statements, said that there was no need for the CIA to conduct torture on Thai territory. "We have fully developed torture facilities in Thailand and can guarantee a first-class service." He noted that waterboarding has long been part of the Thai security services' repertoire. "In fact, we could probably teach the CIA a thing or two," he added...

Orange County man wanted for child porn found in Thailand

February 9, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Orange County man wanted for child porn found in Thailand](#) – ABC Action News, February, 2008

....After several years of searching for the suspect he was located in Thailand, where he was teaching at a school for boys.

Mr. Betts was deported by Thailand Immigration and transported to Los Angeles where he was arrested and booked by Los Angeles County Officials. He is now awaiting extradition.

Thai liquor tycoon may take large chunk of Shin Corp.

February 9, 2008

Categories: Business

[Thai liquor tycoon may take large chunk of Shin Corp.](#) – *Forbes*, February, 2008

...Singapore's Business Times on Monday illustrated the frenzied attempts by Temasek to unload part of its Shin stake, citing an investment banking source as saying that it had approached even Thaksin, who is living in exile in London since being ousted by a military coup, for a possible sale, in addition to Charoen and other Thai tycoons such as agrobusiness magnate Dhanin.

...Charoen listed Thai Beverages on the Singapore exchange in May in 2006, months before Thaksin lost his premiership, prompted by a political campaign at home to thwart his listing an alcohol-producing business in a Buddhist country like Thailand. He was seen as a potential threat to Thaksin's rule at the time.

Buying a strategic stake from Temasek in Shin would serve as fitting payback for the troubles Charoen encountered at home two years ago.

Overseas and Oversexed

February 9, 2008

Categories: Thailand in the International Media

[Overseas and Oversexed](#) – *Financial Post*, February 9, 2008

... "Then there are the guys who are old, fat and bald, without any prospects of attracting the attention of a smart, young, attractive Western woman, but discover that they can be attractive because of their affluence or visa status to a whole range of women, and strike up a relationship with one of them, not realizing that in the eyes of their friends and other Asians, they look at best fools and at worst predators," he adds...

The New Government and the Old Government

February 9, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Law Society warns Chalerm not to use summary executions in war on drug](#) – *The Nation*, February 9, 2008

[New Interior Minister apologizes for tainted past, swears to work justly](#) – *The Nation*, February 8, 2008

...Police Captain Chalerm said that his opportunity to assume the position of interior minister was a blessing that he would work to deserve...

[Thailand junta admits failure, ends its role](#) – *Gulf Times*, February 7, 2008

Thailand's military junta that staged a 2006 coup officially ended its role yesterday, admitting that it had failed in its political objectives and promising to avoid further coups...

[Thailand will not interfere in Myanmar](#) – AP, February 7, 2008

Thailand's newly elected government will maintain a policy of noninterference in military-ruled Myanmar, the foreign minister said Thursday, adding that democracy and human rights are "domestic issues..."

Police say ‘ponytail bandit,’ husband, have fled to Thailand

February 10, 2008

Categories: Crime

[Police say ‘ponytail bandit,’ husband, have fled to Thailand](#) – *Austin American-Statesman*, February, 2008

Police said that the woman known as the “ponytail bandit” and her husband have fled to Thailand after committing a series of bank robberies...

Agencies told to adjust Bkk subway plans

February 10, 2008

[Agencies told to adjust Bkk subway plans](#) – *Bangkok Post*, February 10, 2008

MP flown to Thailand by the taxpayer

February 10, 2008

[MP flown to Thailand by the taxpayer](#) – *Telegraph*, February 10, 2008

Britain kow tows to China as athletes are forced to sign no criticism contracts

February 10, 2008

Categories: Uncategorized

[Britain kow tows to China as athletes are forced to sign no criticism contracts](#) – *Daily Mail*, February 10, 2008

...The BOA took the decision even though other countries – including the United States, Canada, Finland, and Australia – have pledged that their athletes would be free to speak about any issue concerning China.

To date, only New Zealand and Belgium have banned their athletes from giving political opinions while competing at the Games...

Disney bus

February 10, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Disney bus – February 10, 2008

It reads: I'm younger, so I should go first.

Thai embassy responds

February 10, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

[Thai embassy responds](#) – *Jakarta Post*, February 10, 2008

...The article's attempt to juxtapose Thaksin with the King is not only simply ludicrous but more importantly, highly insensitive to Thai people's feelings...

Giveaways and discounts offered again

February 10, 2008

Giveaways and discounts offered again – translated and summarized from *Komchadluek*, February 10, 2008

The new Cabinet has indicated that it intends to work for the benefit of the country as a whole, with all of its ministers having put together policies that aim to please both government officials and the general public.

The Public Health Minister has announced a raise in the basic salary of the government officials it employs, but has not expressed any intention to improve his ministry or to stem the spread of bird flu.

The Finance Ministry has also revived the populist policies of the past, by allocating thousands of billions of baht to projects that will increase its popularity with the poor – and help to revive their hopes.

The new government plans to boost the economy by spending money in a way that will increase consumer purchasing power; but such policies could have a negative impact, and waste the expenditure of a government that is already working on a tight budget.

This administration has no ministers who are particularly experienced in economic management, so it will be forced to heed the advice of outside economic experts and gurus.

More Thai goods on Carrefour shelves

February 11, 2008

[More Thai goods on Carrefour shelves](#) – *Bangkok Post*, February 11, 2008

...Thailand has lost its market share on food products sent to Carrefour's global network in the past 2-3 years to the Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia, due mainly to higher prices...

Doing business with Myanmar

February 11, 2008

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[Doing business with Myanmar](#) – *The Nelson Mail*, February, 2008

...Now, it is back in focus, in a very small way – at least in this country – after revelations that a state-owned business has enterprisingly landed a deal helping to build cellphone towers. Government broadcast and telecommunications business Kordia has almost completed an \$80,000 deal with the pariah state's military rulers.

National's foreign affairs spokesman Murray McCully suggests inconsistencies, given the Government's "tantrum" over Air New Zealand planes being chartered by Australia to carry Iraq-bound troops, and its imposing of some sanctions on Fiji after the latest military crackdown there...

Colors of the new cabinet

February 11, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

Colors of the new cabinet – translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, February 11, 2008

When compared to the former ‘Old Ginger’ government, the new administration seems to be more highly-motivated – with its revival of populist policies such as the Ua Arthorn low-cost housing project

The new Minister of Foreign Affairs began his term with a speech that touched on his initial diplomatic engagements and the return of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. He might well have forgotten that he is supposed to be a representative of all Thai people, rather than just a Thaksin spokesman. Meanwhile, the Public Health Minister commenced the first day of his term with the announcement that compulsory licensing was to be reviewed.

The Finance Minister has already hinted that the 30% Reserve Policy will be scrapped, while the Education Minister has indicated that he will revive the Student Loan Program.

The Interior Minister has vowed he will eliminate the widespread availability of illegal drugs. He might wish to remind himself, however, that his position no longer possesses quite the same power it once had.

In conclusion: Many new ministers have shown their willingness to engage in productive work. To be successful in their endeavors, and to build public trust, they would be wise to mull over the thoughts contained in his HM the King’s recent speech – as spoken to them on the occasion of their being sworn in.

Thailand's tallest tower gets go-ahead

February 12, 2008

Categories: Buildings

[Thailand's tallest tower gets go-ahead](#) – *EARTHtimes*, February 12, 2008

...The beach-front residential condominium, is to be 91 storeys and 327 metres high, making it taller than Thailand's current tallest building, Bangkok's Baiyoke Tower II, which stands at 304 metres...

Conservation group says its survey finds tiger skins, bones sold openly in Indonesia

February 12, 2008

Categories: Wildlife and Nature

[Conservation group says its survey finds tiger skins, bones sold openly in Indonesia](#) – *Sin Chew Jit Poh*, February 12, 2008

From the family of Leo Del Pinto – gunned down by police in Thailand

February 12, 2008

Categories: Uncategorized

[From the family of Leo Del Pinto – gunned down by police in Thailand](#) –
andrew-drummond.com, February 12, 2008

13 mile long dragon

February 12, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[13 mile long dragon](#) –

Wired Blog, February, 2008

Faceless bank robber in Bangkok

February 12, 2008

Categories: Crime

[Faceless bank robber in Bangkok](#) – *Pink Tentacle*, February, 2008

As a commenter wrote: "Daft Punk?"

Government TV

February 12, 2008

Categories: Editorial Cartoons



Government TV – Arun, *Krungtepturakit*, February 12, 2008

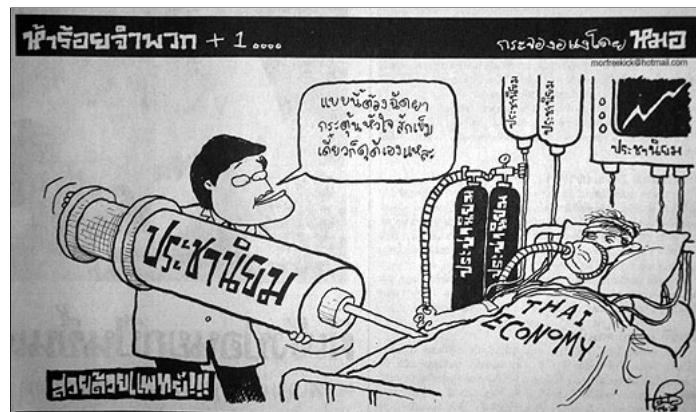
It reads: War of seizing a remote control. On the TV screen are letters symbolizing government media

A related editorial from *The Nation*: [Govt-backed 'independent' TV: get real!](#)

Populism

February 12, 2008

Categories: Editorial Cartoons



Populism – *Krungtepturakit*, February 12, 2008

Minister of Finance Surapong Suebwonglee holds a giant syringe and says: Must give one injection to stimulate the heart... and it will be look good.
On syringe and other items it reads: Populism

Bottom left reads: Beautiful by doctor

The closest man in Mahatma Gandhi's life arrives in Bangkok

February 13, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[The closest man in Mahatma Gandhi's life arrives in Bangkok](#) – *Thai Indian*,
February 13, 2008

Family angry with consulate for not hiring guards for slain man's Thai funeral

February 13, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Family angry with consulate for not hiring guards for slain man's Thai funeral](#) – *Canwest News Service*, February 13, 2008

No sex on Valentine's, Thai police warn teens

February 13, 2008

Categories: Local Beliefs

[No sex on Valentine's, Thai police warn teens](#) – Reuters, February 13, 2008

...Thailand's moral guardians are taking action after an Assumption University poll showed 27 percent of 2,400 Bangkok teenagers surveyed said they might have sex on Wednesday.

Despite Bangkok's reputation as one of the world's sex industry centres, predominately Buddhist Thailand is generally a conservative country...

“Chalerm’s Angles”

February 13, 2008

Categories: Chalerm Yubamrung, Thai Politics



"Chalerm's Angles" – *Krungtepturakit*, February 13, 2008

Chalerm's Angles: Special Edition "The birth of Ongkuleemarn"

Left: We are back.

Middle: Returning bigger than the past.

Right: Do you know who my father is?

Earlier: [Putting pub brawls behind to become a ministerial aide](#) – *The Nation*, February 9, 2008

Public Health Minister Chaiya Sasomsap Chaovaratt Chanweerakul on Monday defended a decision to appoint a bully son of the Interior Minister as an aide in his ministry.

... "In the past, society saw this boy in a scary way but I see him as a well-mannered and polite boy," Chaiya said...

Earlier: [Cabinet puts on hold controversial candidates for ministerial job](#) – *The Nation*, February 11, 2008

... "About half of candidates nominated by the People Power Party are deemed inappropriate for the job," he said, though evading to comment on the qualifications of Wan Yoobamrung, son of Interior Minister Chalerm...

Force

February 13, 2008

Categories: Editorial Cartoons



Force -Arun, Arun, *Krungtepturakit*, February 13, 2008

On the boat it reads: Economic team

The caption reads: Two forces of rowing and one force of wind

Covers of weekly news mags

February 13, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008



Covers of weekly news mags – February 13, 2008

Left: *Nation Weekend* – Overlook "Ugly"
Peddle to ask the favor of "God"



Right: *Matichon Weekly* – Who R U? Santi Prompat

Santi Prompat, new head of one of the most "valuable" Thai ministries–Transport–apparently has no other qualification that he has managed a construction company. His real qualification is that he was an advisor to the transport minister in the last Thai Rak Thai government, Pongsak Raktapongpaisal. This likely indicates that Pongsak is really running the transport ministry policy. It is thought that the Santi appointment was one of the "ugly" nominations initially opposed by PM Samak who wanted one of his own allies in the post.

Government must assign jobs to the right people

February 13, 2008

Government must assign jobs to the right people – translated and summarized from *Krungtep Turakit*, February 13, 2008

The Samak 1 administration has put together its policies, and is preparing to announce them to Parliament. The new government says that these policies will help the general public, stimulate the economy and ease the unrest in the three southernmost provinces. It also says it will proceed with a number of transportation and waterworks mega-projects, in the belief that such policies will help to expand the economy. A large budget will also be allocated to boost the country's 'grassroots' economy.

These policies should be closely monitored, as their success is all-important to the country's future. Some will agree with these policies, and some will not. The most interesting aspect of these policies is, however, their populist element – which some believe could spell trouble for the future of this country.

For the time being, however, we must let the government carry out these policies, in order to see whether they lead to good or bad results. Nonetheless, it will be essential that this government listens to the opinions of the opposition.

Marine major dismissed from service

February 14, 2008

[Marine major dismissed from service](#) – *Stars and Stripes*, February 14, 2008

...According to testimony Tuesday, Davis, a 26-year veteran who rose through the enlisted ranks, accepted a loan of 100,000 Thai baht (about \$2,324) in May 2002 from a contractor who was also a family friend.

The money was to help pay for Davis' wedding to a Thai woman in June 2002, and a deal was made to repay the loan by looking the other way when the contractor delivered less bottled water than ordered, according to court testimony...

A mirror for Thai national politics: The curious case of Pom Mahakan

February 14, 2008

Categories: The Mahakan Fort Community

[A mirror for Thai national politics: The curious case of Pom Mahakan](#) –

UCLA, February, 2008

The so-called “[Rattanakosin Island Project](#)” is an attempt to recreate the old dynastic city of Bangkok as a national monument and enhanced tourist attraction. It has become the site of protracted arguments about the role of the West in the formation of modern Thai culture and politics. Within this area, the [tiny Pom Mahakan community](#) — target for one of the first collective evictions of the project under a philosophy that prefers broad vistas and monumental spaces to the messiness of social life — has become a surprisingly important focus for some of the principal strains of current Thai politics. Its struggle to survive reveals many of the paradoxes, most notably the tension between egalitarianism and hierarchy and between a powerful assertion of community rights and the persistent emphasis on national unity, that infuse the present-day search for a collective Thai identity in the face of rapid global change...

No warnings against travel in Thailand

February 14, 2008

Categories: Uncategorized

[No warnings against travel in Thailand](#) – *Canada.com*, February 14, 2008

No warnings have been issued against travelling to Thailand, even though a fourth Canadian has been shot there so far this year...

Who wrote “Gastronomy in Asia I”?

February 14, 2008

Categories: Signs and Billboards

Who wrote "Gastronomy in Asia I"? – February 14, 2008

An odd blue banner is draped on a rooftop and is visible just north of where the expressway crosses Sukhumvit Road. It reads: "Who wrote gastronomy in Asia I?"

Does anyone know what this refers to?



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Top Myanmar rebel leader assassinated in Thailand: police

February 14, 2008

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[Top Myanmar rebel leader assassinated in Thailand: police](#) –

AFP, February 14, 2008

Irrawaddy, a Thailand-based news outlet run by exiled dissidents, [said Pado Manh Sha was shot dead by two gunmen...](#)

Thailand nabs “ponytail bandit,” US police say

February 14, 2008

[Thailand nabs "ponytail bandit," US police say](#) – *The Nation*, February 14, 2008

Jakrapob denies ordering withdrawal of Chirmsak's radio talk show

February 15, 2008

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Jakrapob denies ordering withdrawal of Chirmsak's radio talk show](#) – *The Nation*, February 15, 2008

PM's office minister Jakrapob Penkair Thursday denied he was behind the withdrawal of Chirmsak Pinthong from a radio talk show.

Jakrapob said neither he nor anyone in the Cabinet ordered the production house Fatima to remove Chirmsak from the host programme. He said it was not government policy.

"I can't leave this. I want to know who is behind the scene. I will tell the Public Relations Department chief to call the company to hold a press briefing to explain the case in order to prevent other matters that might be happen in the future," he said.

He said there are 'invisible hands' who want to slander the government.

Yesterday: [Chirmsak stops hosting radio talk following threat](#) – *The Nation*, February 14, 2008

Squeezed in subway ad angers passengers

February 15, 2008

Categories: China

[Squeezed in subway ad angers passengers](#) – Reuters, February 15, 2008

An advertisement on Beijing's subway proclaiming "Squeezed in?! Go and buy a car then!" has angered passengers who said it only encourages traffic jams, a state newspaper said Friday...

Samak's atonement

February 15, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008, October, 1976

[COMMENTARY Samak's atonement](#) – *Bangkok Post*, February 15, 2008

...The official death toll for that day when heavily-armed Border Patrol Police and ideology-crazed paramilitary groups and militants brutally cracked down on protesting students holed up in Thammasat University is 46 killed. The award-winning photograph showing a man driving a stake into a dead body also shows that there were many more – at least four – blood-splattered corpses lying around in the vicinity.

...Prime Minister Samak has chosen not to consider any of the evidence, however.

... "No. For me, no deaths; one unlucky guy being beaten and being burned in Sanam Luang. Only one guy died that day," he told CNN correspondent Dan Rivers last weekend...

[What was Samak thinking?](#) – *Asia Sentinel*, February, 2008

...All in all, as Dan Rivers pointed out, officials acknowledged that 46 people died in the attack. Witnesses claim that hundreds died, although it's unclear if the truth will ever be known...

Also: [Thanom Kittikachorn on Wikipedia](#)

Also: [Samak lectures reporters on how to do their job](#) – *The Nation*, February 15, 2008

Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej on Friday got through his first formal press conference at Government House by rattling on for half an hour about questions posed by the local press...

Also: *Manager* piles on as well showing photos of [Samak sitting on a platform higher than a group of monks](#) allegedly showing disrespect or pretension (in the same way these types of charges were leveled at Thaksin).

Simpsons-themed Bangkok bar

February 15, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News



Simpsons-themed Bangkok bar – February 15, 2008

From an email received: For any of you wondering how a seedy dive like [Flaming Moe's](#) has managed to stay open lo these many years despite the obvious shortcomings of its owner, I have your answer...and her name is Sar. This Sunday, February 17th is the lovely and talented Sar's birthday. If you're in town, we'd love to have you drop in and help us celebrate...

Also: [Censoring smoking on *The Simpsons* in Thailand](#)

Carey spotted in Thai hideaway

February 16, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Carey spotted in Thai hideaway](#) – ABC, February 16, 2008

Disgraced former footballer Wayne Carey has been spotted in Thailand just a day after being blasted for not appearing in a US court on assault charges...

‘Red flag’ Thailand, upset dad says

February 16, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[‘Red flag’ Thailand, upset dad says](#) – *Kitchener/Waterloo Record*, February 16, 2008

The father of a Canadian killed in Thailand last month wants stronger warnings issued about the Southeast Asian country in the wake of another violent attack this week...

Thailand seeks to conclude Saudi blue diamond case

February 16, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thailand seeks to conclude Saudi blue diamond case](#) – *EARTHtimes*, February 16, 2008

Thailand hopes to normalize diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia by concluding the Blue Diamond case, involving at least four unsolved murders of Saudi diplomats and millions of dollars'-worth of missing royal jewelry, state media said...

For Whiter Skin

February 16, 2008

Categories: Signs and Billboards



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

For whiter skin – February 16, 2008

It reads: Wish saying farewell to dull skin and brown spots was as easy as changing clothes?

With the Vichy Bi-White Advanced collection, you will have glowing skin with less brown spots.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

It reads: You let me know "true love."

Pond's Flawless Light knows "true love."

Earlier: [TV commercials: Getting your skin its whitest](#)

Sunday morning at Chatuchak Park

February 17, 2008

Categories: Wildlife and Nature



Sunday morning at Chatuchak Park – February 17, 2008

Left and below: Police with a court order take away caged birds from a vendor's stall. These appeared to be the black crested birds often kept in the Deep South.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

More criticism for the new government

February 17, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Clowns, cronies, dimwits crowd centre stage](#)

...Hearing these Cabinet members' fancy ideas, such as planting eucalyptus trees in rice fields, selling unsalted fermented fish for better nutrition, setting aside traffic lanes for brats to enjoy motorbike races and, most recently, a plan to build a copy of the London Eye, one cannot help but be resigned to the fact that one has to suffer fools gladly at times...

[Samak swears he was not related to student massacre in 1976](#)

[Chalerm denies having conflicts with other PPP leaders](#)

[Samak blows his top after questioned about press censorship following Oct 6 1976 event](#)

[Student Massacre:](#)

[Historians reject PM's 'distortions'](#)

[From the city, via the jungle, to defeat:: the 6th Oct 1976 bloodbath and the CPT](#)

Thai antiquities, resting uneasily

February 17, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thai antiquities, resting uneasily](#) – *New York Times*, February 17, 2008

...He also cited a precedent established by a 2003 federal appellate court decision against the antiquities Frederick Schultz, which puts a burden on the foreign government to show that it enforces its own property statute.

Imagine “you have this vast body of archaeological material over which another government has waved its wand and said it’s ours,” Mr. Urice said, “but they have not done anything more than that to protect it. Under those circumstances, there is an open question as to whether the U.S. would treat it as stolen.”

As for the next steps in the federal investigation, Mr. Urice is not placing any bets.

“The whole thing could be dropped altogether because of insufficient evidence or because they are feeling weak about their legal theories,” he said, “or this could move forward into an important, precedent-setting case.”

A great smacking sound

February 18, 2008

Categories: Airports and Airlines

[A great smacking sound](#) – Chang Noi, February 18, 2008

...The inability to catch big businesses for profiting through conflict of interest is perhaps not so surprising. But the total failure to prosecute anyone for the massive mining of Suvarnabhumi Airport is gob-smacking. The case over the CTX scanners has dissolved into thin air, even though it was reported months ago that the US Department of Justice had provided the names of those involved. Khunying Jaruvarn estimated that contracts were padded by 40 percent on average, but not one case has been launched. It is well established that King Power occupied far more retail space than its contract allowed, blocked safety exits, built a whole building without permission and without rental, and prejudiced airport security. Yet all attempts to bring the company to justice have been sandbagged. If these massive bits of plundering are safe from the law, then more modest piracy should be fine...

Memoirs of a boyhood among monsters

February 18, 2008

Categories: Cambodia

[Memoirs of a boyhood among monsters](#) – *The Record*, February 18, 2008

Stories told in the pages Rattana Pok's book chronicling his boyhood in Cambodia may be hard for most people to imagine...

Oxfam urges Thailand to keep generic drugs programme

February 19, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Oxfam urges Thailand to keep generic drugs programme](#) – AFP, February 19, 2008

...*"We urge the government to listen to the poor people in Thailand," she said.*

Under the scheme, Thailand's previous military government issued so-called compulsory licences, which temporarily suspend patent protections for pricey medicines and allow production of cheaper and copycat versions.

The move has angered Western drug giants, which called it an infringement on their intellectual property rights, but activists have hailed it, saying it was a "beacon" for other developing nations seeking cheaper medicines for the poor...

Wikileaks.org shut down by California judge

February 19, 2008

Categories: Wikileaks

Wikileaks.org shut down by California judge – February 19, 2008

Wikileaks' version of the story: [Wikileaks Under Attack: California Court Wipes Wikileaks.org Out of Existence](#)

When the transparency group Wikileaks was censored in China last year, no-one was too surprised. After all, the Chinese government also censors the Paris based Reporters Sans Frontiers and New York Based Human Rights Watch. And when Wikileaks published the secret censorship lists of Thailand's military Junta, no-one was too surprised when people in that country had to go to extra lengths to read the site. But on Friday the 15th, February 2008, in the home of the free and the land of the brave, and a constitution which states "Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press", the Wikileaks.org press was shutdown...

This is the article that did it: [Clouds on the Cayman tax heaven](#)

...Wikileaks would like to encourage everyone out there to have a look at the information. We encourage anyone dealing with tax fraud and evasion and offshore/Swiss banking to review the material posted with us. This will make sure we can verify the relevance and validity of the material presented. Bank Julius Baer has decided to go for the next round in trying to silence Wikileaks. This will not happen and only proves that at least parts of the material hold valid information.

The site is still available [here](#) and [here](#) and a [list of domains that the site is still available under](#).

YouTube: 6 Oct 1976

February 19, 2008

Categories: October, 1976

[YouTube: 6 Oct 1976](#) –

February 19, 2008

Thanks to [Steve](#) for pointing this out. And on [Wikipedia](#).

Broken hearted in a Thai retreat

February 19, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Broken hearted in a Thai retreat](#) – *Times Online*, February, 2008

Thailand attracts fugitives from U.S.

February 20, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thailand attracts fugitives from U.S.](#) – *Detroit News*, February 20, 2008

...In downtown Bangkok, street vendors offer forged American driver's licenses for about \$35. Medical clinics provide plastic surgery for a fraction of U.S. prices. The combination of lax law enforcement, easy hospitality and thousands of backwater towns has attracted a wide roster of fugitives to Thailand and other nations in Southeast Asia...

Another Canadian dies in Thailand

February 21, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Another Canadian dies in Thailand](#) –
Canada.com, February 21, 2008

A 20-year-old Victoria-area woman has died during a holiday in Thailand, the fifth incident of Canadians being injured or killed this year...

Pirate movie burner lab raided in Bangkok

February 21, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Pirate movie burner lab raided in Bangkok](#) – *Business of cinema*, February 21, 2008

Will Sutham call Samak over Oct 6 truth?

February 21, 2008

Categories: October, 1976

[Will Sutham call Samak over Oct 6 truth?](#) – *The Nation*, February 21, 2008

...But Sutham Saengprathum remembers the incident as a black hole in Thai political history. He wrote in one of his personal journals:

“Just before I went to see the prime minister (MR Seni Pramoj) I was in Thammasat campus. The stage set up for public speeches was shot through with bullet holes. We had to evacuate ourselves to continue our activities under that stage. I was hugging my friends to say goodbye. But the scene I saw right then didn’t allow me to make the decision to leave. What I saw was a male student in a pool of blood after being shot at right in the middle of the (football) field. A female student, probably a volunteer nurse, ran up to him to help carry him to the Accountancy faculty building. While she was struggling to walk him out of the firing zone, she was shot and killed right in front of where I was standing. A third friend who rushed up to them in the hope of helping them was also cut down by bullets.

“The three of them laid dead right in the middle of the football field of Thammasat University. It’s a picture that has stayed in my memory until today...”

Anybody seriously interested in Thai political history would naturally be curious to know what Sutham today thinks of Prime Minister Samak’s statement – repeated in his rebuttal against opposition leader Abhisit Vejjajiva’s comment in Parliament on Monday – that only one person died in the October 6, 1976 crackdown.

Would Sutham give PM Samak a call to clear things up, now that they belong to the same camp?

Don't twist the history of the 1976 October 6 Massacre!

February 21, 2008

Categories: October, 1976

Don't twist the history of the 1976 October 6 Massacre! – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, February 21, 2008

There has been no retraction by Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej of his claim in a recent CNN interview that only one person was killed in the October 6 Massacre of 1976. On February 18, the Prime Minister spoke to Parliament in an attempt to clarify his position, but he still continues to insist to the media that he took no part in the massacre.

The Leader of the Democrat Party – Abhisit Vejjajiva – and the Chairman of the Democrat Party's Advisory Council – Chuan Leekpai – have both expressed their disapproval of Samak's comments. A debate between the two opposing sides of the issue was also broadcast on TV Channel 11 recently.

Our history should not be revised for political purposes. There is clear evidence from both photographic and moving images that a large number of people were tortured and murdered in the Massacre.

Samak becomes pale when shown his picture taken with Prapass

February 22, 2008

Categories: October, 1976

[Samak becomes pale when shown his picture taken with Prapass](#) – *The Nation*, February 22, 2008



(Photo: *Manager*)

‘Actors’ in the House don’t come cheap

February 22, 2008

Categories: Thai Politics

[‘Actors’ in the House don’t come cheap](#) – Bangkok Post, February 22, 2008

...Besides the monthly stipend of 62,000 baht per head, these men and women are also to enjoy an additional allowance of 42,330 baht, starting from the day they take the vow to fulfill their stomachs, oops, missions as our rightful representatives. Next, each MP can hire up to five assistants, each of whom will be paid 10,000 baht, as well as appoint a "personal expert"—this one comes with a 20,000 baht-a-month price tag. In effect, we taxpayers have to foot basic monthly bills worth 174,330 baht for each MP. In a country where the daily minimum wage is still under 200 baht, the MPs' salary budget comes down to 83,678,400 baht for the whole assembly in one month, or 1,004,140,800 baht a year.

That is not all. Our MPs can also enjoy free plane rides, or if they choose to travel by train or car, an extra per diem for a person who will chaperone them. There is also a health insurance package—that's another 20,000 baht per head per year.

...The hilarious point in the report came during the question and answer period. A few MPs apparently believed they deserved more. Led by the People Power party, they called for more money to hire more assistants and personal experts than the designated quota. And sir, we also want a personal chauffeur, too. And how about reimbursing other charges—say, for when we drive to an airport in another province? One in particular asked specifically for a refund for the petrol he had paid for on the first day he came to report at Parliament...

Naked in jail

February 22, 2008

Categories: Thai Newspapers and Magazines



Naked in jail – *Matichon Weekly*, February 22-28, 2008

The headline reads:

Revealing life, naked in jail –
Jakrapob Penkhae

The article features Jakrapob's interview about his life in jail last year. According to the story, Jakrapob says he was not upset during his eleven days in jail as it was what he chose. If he could turn back time, he would do the same thing which brought him to jail.

1% change

February 22, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

1% change – translated and summarized from *Komchadluek*, February 22, 2008

The Cabinet – led by the People Power Party (PPP) under Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej – has completed its heavily-criticized appointment of a cabinet-support team, comprised of ministerial secretaries and cabinet advisors. Prime Minister Samak (also the PPP Leader) had earlier voiced his own strong doubts about the suitability and qualifications of those nominated for positions in the cabinet-support team. His comments could be interpreted as merely an effort to keep his own image clean, however. Indeed, his own criticisms do seem to have been largely fruitless. Only 1% of the proposed appointments were changed after the PM made his remarks. I would like to comment that this PPP-led Cabinet has now demonstrated that it is prepared to completely ignore public sentiment.

Interesting roof

February 23, 2008

Categories: Buildings



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Interesting roof –

February 23, 2008

Interesting roof in the Chatuchak area...

Thailand threat to shoot 4000 in drug war

February 23, 2008

Categories: Drugs, Thaksin's War on Drugs

[Thailand threat to shoot 4000 in drug war](#) – *Telegraph*, February 23, 2008

...The interior minister Chalerm Yubamrung, said: “When we implement a policy that may bring 3,000 to 4,000 bodies, we will do it,”...

Thailand's gay past

February 23, 2008

Categories: Local Beliefs

[Thailand's gay past](#) – Bangkok Post, February 23, 2008

Mention homosexuality and many Thais will blame it on recent Western influences. Ask Varaporn Vichayarath what she thinks, however, and she would simply smile before providing a list of old temples with murals depicting same-sex courtship...

Caveman

February 23, 2008

Categories: Editorial Cartoons

Caveman – February 23, 2008

New cartoon from [Thaihippy](#).



Don't always use a majority viewpoint to judge things!

February 23, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

Don't always use a majority viewpoint to judge things! – translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, February 23, 2008

Several Members of Parliament from the Democrat Party have expressed disapproval after Chalerm Yoobamrung – the Minister of the Interior – recently answered media questions about his policy to eliminate drug abuse. Chalerm announced that he would reapply the strict measures that were formerly used during the Thaksin administration, even if it leads to the deaths of 4,000 people.

These strict measures that Chalerm is proposing to employ again, were not carried out with regard to normal legal procedures during the Thaksin era. Statistics released by the Royal Thai Police show that in the case of 2,596 people who died during the previous implementation of these measures, only 1,164 were known to have been involved in the illegal drugs trade – while another 1,432 had no known connection to the trade.

A policy to eliminate illegal drug use is a good thing, and deserves admiration. The measures must be strictly implemented according to the letter of the law, however.

1991 Coup Headlines

February 24, 2008

Categories: 1991 Coup



Above: *Bangkok Post*, February 24, 1991

1991 coup headlines and clippings

[Junta says why coup necessary](#) – *The Nation*, February 24, 1991

[Taped confession aired to justify the takeover](#) – *The Nation*, February 24, 1991

[Newswatch one of the victims of clampdown](#) – *The Nation*, February 24, 1991

Front page – [Power belongs to the people, nobody else – Coup ousts Chatichai](#) – *The Nation*, February 24, 1991

[Rift over assassination probe was the catalyst – Radio staff told it's just an exercise](#) – *Bangkok Post*, February 24, 1991

A white Thai wedding

February 24, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[A white Thai wedding](#) – *Vietnam Net*, February 24, 2008

Le Anh Dung reports on a wedding of white Thai ethnic people in Nam Giai commune, Que Phong district, the central province of Nghe An in photos...

Bangkok motorists annoyed by mobile ads

February 26, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Bangkok motorists annoyed by mobile ads](#) – Bangkok Post, February 26, 2008

...The company has received numerous complaints from people who claimed the ads interfere with visibility and cause traffic jams, especially when they are parked illegally.

"Our mobile units stopped parking the trucks in improper areas such as on pavements and roadsides. We have already rented some parking spaces for our vehicles after paying fines for a month," said Kitichai Srijumroen, the CEO of Hello Bangkok.

He claimed the vehicles had been parked illegally because the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) had not co-operated...

Thai companies shun charities, outreach

February 26, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thai companies shun charities, outreach](#) – Bangkok Post, February 26, 2008

Only 11% of Thai companies donate to charities, well under the global average of 65%, according to a new survey on corporate social responsibility by the consultancy Grant Thornton...

Fossil remains of new primate species found

February 26, 2008

Categories: Wildlife and Nature

[Fossil remains of new primate species found](#) – Bangkok Post, February 26, 2008

...The newly discovered species is considered the smallest ancient primate, with a length of only 15 centimetres and weighing an estimated 500 grammes, team leader Yaowalak Chaimanee said.

"We have found four lower teeth, which helped us identify it as belonging to the family Sivaladapidae, which was found only in Asia _ mainly in China, Burma, India and Thailand _ from the mid-Eocene period until the lower Miocene," she said.

"With its small size, it would have probably have eaten insects and fruit." She said Siamoadapis maemohensis was a kind of Strepsirrhine. Lemurs and slow loris are believed to have developed from the species...

Baby

February 26, 2008

Categories: Editorial Cartoons



Baby – Arun, *Krungtepturakit*, February 26, 2008

Left top (the very small letters): Get better soon

Right top: Grow up, grow up

On the blanket it says: Goods prices

Bangkok Critical Mass

February 27, 2008

Bangkok Critical Mass – February 27, 2008

Graeme notes: *Thanks for the news. I check on it daily. I came across this from the Bangkok Hash House Bikers email group. Thought you would be interested. This Friday it seems the first Critical Mass will take place in Siam Square. Link [here](#) and [here](#).*

DPB General Thai website

February 27, 2008

[DPB General Thai website](#) – February 27, 2008
Odd animation on their Flash intro!

Thailand: New fear of illegal killings coincides with Thaksin's return

February 27, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008, Human Rights

[Thailand: New fear of illegal killings coincides with Thaksin's return](#) – *Amnesty International*, February 27, 2008

More signs from Chiang Mai: “No highrises”

February 27, 2008

Categories: Signs and Billboards

More signs from Chiang Mai: "No highrises" – February 27, 2008

Sadortu reports: There is the proposed construction of a tall building that hides the view of Doi Sutep and many temples that are located at slope of the hill. This is the reason that we do not want to announce that we do not want the high building in Soi Umong, Chaing Mai.

Right: Permit high building in the narrow street?



(Photo: Sadortu for 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: Sadortu for 2Bangkok.com)

Left: Area of Mu 1, 8, 10, 14 is the controlled area for high buildings.

So at present there is the announcement the area that prohibits high buildings is announced by the municipality.

Below: Narrow street, seizing the car park, seizing the water, so how to survive together. We don't want the high building in Soi Wat Umong again.



(Photo: Sadortu for 2Bangkok.com)

Suspect in 1994 California murder returned from Thailand

February 27, 2008

Categories: Crime

[Suspect in 1994 California murder returned from Thailand](#) – *San Jose Mercury News*, February 27, 2008

...Saner Wonggoun left his two children and fled to Thailand before he could be questioned in the death of his wife...

In Thailand, all that glitters is probably not gold

February 27, 2008

Categories: Economy

[In Thailand, all that glitters is probably not gold](#) – Reuters, February 27, 2008

Thailand's sluggish economy and record gold prices have prompted many elderly Thais to cash in family heirlooms as they struggle to make ends meet...

Scenes from Thaksin's return

February 28, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Motorcycle taxis arrive at the airport.

Scenes from Thaksin's return – February 28, 2008



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Motorcycle taxi driver being interviewed by the local press.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Motorcycle taxi drivers lining up to march over to the VIP terminal.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Manchester City fans



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Foreign reporter preparing equipment



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: The senate candidate #1 again. Previously we [photographed here on Silom](#).



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Motorcycle taxi drivers cheering for Thaksin.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: The crowd waiting for Thaksin's return



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Loudspeaker truck and a young man with an Osama Bin Laden mask on



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Policemen form a cordon surrounding the area.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Sudden billboard: Welcome home, Thaksin – February 28, 2008

Above: This billboard suddenly appeared during the day of February 27. It reads: Welcome home, former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. From Bangkokians.

[Thailand's Thaksin to be greeted at airport by officials and people who 'love' him](#) – AP, February 26, 2008

Deposed Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra will be greeted at the airport by senior officials in Thailand's new government and other "people who love him" when he returns Thursday from 17 months in exile, officials said...

Instead of posting Thaksin's return time on the [TrueThaksin](#) site as promised, the website was taken off the net entirely since Tuesday afternoon, February 26, Bangkok time. **Update:** TrueThaksin was back online by February 28 at noon.

Below: February 27 – Channel 11 broadcast an interview with Thaksin from Hong Kong. The former PM is surrounded by many People Power Party members in Hong Kong.



(Photo: Hi-Thaksin.net)

Thaksin's return – February 26, 2008

The [Hi-Thaksin website](http://Hi-Thaksin.net) has a Flash animation announcing Thaksin will return at 9:00am on February 28.



(Photo: Hi-Thaksin.net)

Above: "Welcome home" graphic from the Hi-Thaksin.net website

Earlier: [Thaksin to come home this week](http://TheNation.com) – *The Nation*, 23:20, February 25, 2008

Earlier: Thaksin's return imminent? – 22:50, February 25, 2008

The Nation Channel is reporting that there is a rumor that Thaksin will return on February 28 as this is an auspicious date.

Thai Media Project – February 2008

February 28, 2008

Categories: Thai Media Project



Baby – Arun, *Krungtepturakit*, February 26, 2008

Left top (the very small letters): Get better soon

Right top: Grow up, grow up

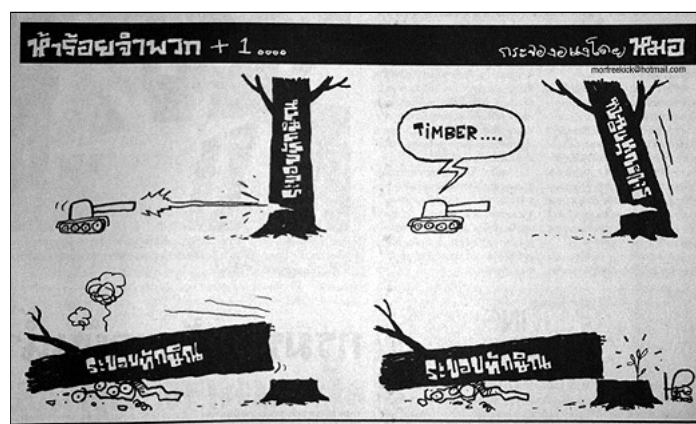
On the blanket it says: Goods prices



Touchdown – Arun, *Krungtepturakit*, February 29, 2008

Left: Just the first step

In the water it reads: Current



Thaksin regime – *Krungtepturakit*, February 29, 2008

The letters on the tree read: Thaksin regime



"Chalerm's Angles" – *Krungtepturakit*, February 13, 2008
Chalerm's Angles: Special Edition "The birth of Ongkuleemarn"

Left: We are back.

Middle: Returning bigger than the past.

Right: Do you know who my father is?

Earlier: [Putting pub brawls behind to become a ministerial aide](#) – *The Nation*, February 9, 2008

Public Health Minister Chaiya Sasomsap Chaovarut Chanweerakul on Monday defended a decision to appoint a bully son of the Interior Minister as an aide in his ministry.

... "In the past, society saw this boy in a scary way but I see him as a well-mannered and polite boy," Chaiya said...

Earlier: [Cabinet puts on hold controversial candidates for ministerial job](#) – *The Nation*, February 11, 2008

... "About half of candidates nominated by the People Power Party are deemed inappropriate for the job," he said, though evading to comment on the qualifications of Wan Yoobamrung, son of Interior Minister Chalerm...

Don't always use a majority viewpoint to judge things! – translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, February 23, 2008

Several Members of Parliament from the Democrat Party have expressed disapproval after Chalerm Yoobamrung – the Minister of the Interior – recently answered media questions about his policy to eliminate drug abuse. Chalerm announced that he would reapply the strict measures that were formerly used during the Thaksin administration, even if it leads to the deaths of 4,000 people.

These strict measures that Chalerm is proposing to employ again, were not carried out with regard to normal legal procedures during the Thaksin era. Statistics released by the Royal Thai Police show that in the case of 2,596 people who died during the previous implementation of these measures, only 1,164 were known to have been involved in the illegal drugs trade – while another 1,432 had no known connection to the trade.

A policy to eliminate illegal drug use is a good thing, and deserves admiration. The measures must be strictly implemented according to the letter of the law, however.

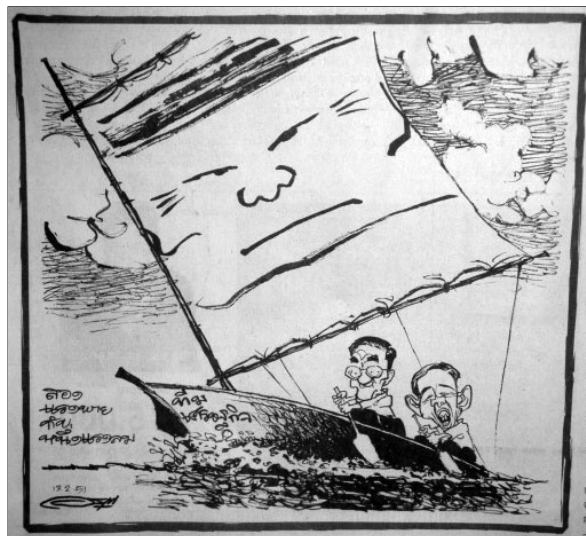


Naked in jail – *Matichon Weekly*, February 22-28, 2008

The headline reads:

Revealing life, naked in jail –
Jakrapob Penkhae

The article features Jakrapob's interview about his life in jail last year. According to the story, Jakrapob says he was not upset during his eleven days in jail as it was what he chose. If he could turn back time, he would do the same thing which brought him to jail.



Force -Arun, Arun, *Krungtepturakit*, February 13, 2008

On the boat it reads: Economic team

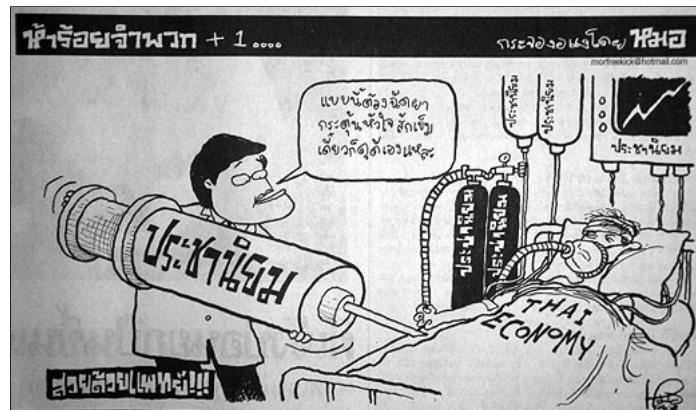
The caption reads: Two forces of rowing and one force of wind



Government TV – Arun, *Krungtepturakit*, February 12, 2008

It reads: War of seizing a remote control. On the TV screen are letters symbolizing government media

A related editorial from *The Nation*: [Govt-backed 'independent' TV: get real!](#)



Populism – *Krungtepturakit*, February 12, 2008

Minister of Finance Surapong Suebwonglee holds a giant syringe and says: Must give one injection to stimulate the heart... and it will be look good.
On syringe and other items it reads: Populism

Bottom left reads: Beautiful by doctor



Small children – Arun, *Kurngtepturakit*, February 5, 2008

On the backpack: Dek Chai Apisit On the hat: Head of the room.

On the bus: Small children vehicle

The person leaning out the window is Prachai. He holds a bag that reads: Dek chai Prachai He says: Stop, stop. Pick up one more of my friends.

We are not sure of the meaning here, other than to link youthful Apisit, who lost out in the last election, with former Machimathipathai leader Prachai Liewpairat who also ended up out of the government and who has been called the [baby politician](#).



Covers of weekly news mags – February 13, 2008

Left: Nation Weekend – Overlook "Ugly"
Peddle to ask the favor of "God"



Right: Matichon Weekly – Who R U? Santi Prompat

Santi Prompat, new head of one of the most "valuable" Thai ministries–Transport–apparently has no other qualification that he has managed a construction company. His real qualification is that he was an advisor to the transport minister in the last Thai Rak Thai government, Pongsak Raktapongpaisal. This likely indicates that Pongsak is really running the transport ministry policy. It is thought that the Santi appointment was one of the "ugly" nominations initially opposed by PM Samak who wanted one of his own allies in the post.

Lust in the library –
February 4, 2008

Interesting example of sensational "moral" front page news exposing the wantonness of modern youth.

Thai Rath (right): **A clear shot** –

Two university students are seen making out on the second floor of Nakhon Si Thammarat public library. Previously, a lot of couples are seen making out there.

Daily News (below): **Making out** –

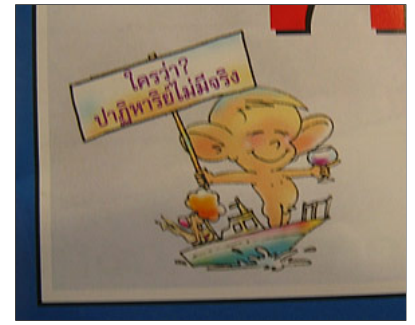
A news reporter snapped a shot of two university students making out at Nakhon Si Thammarat public library. However, the head librarian said she has seen some couples hugging each other there, but never seen them making out as reported.



Rose Apple guy – *Matichon Weekly*,
February 2, 2008

The headline reads: Amazing Samak

On the bottom left of the cover, a cartoon character holds a sign that reads (right): Who says miracles do not happen?



Don't overestimate yourself! – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, February 1, 2008

The recent meeting of military leaders, during a time when politicians were busily trying to form a new government, can only be interpreted as indicating that the Council for National Security is still essentially against the incoming Samak administration. Some people, however, are trying to project this issue in a more optimistic light. There is a groundswell of opinion that military leaders are only human in their desire to let the new Samak Government know their concerns over a power-shift away from them.

The military and the government have different roles in this nation, and it will require a person who possesses considerable skill to manage the shifting relationship between the two. Both sides must be aware of their mortal status in Thai society, and learn to exercise their powers in a careful and responsible manner. It should be borne in mind, however, that the downturn in the fortunes of ousted premier Thaksin Shinawatra began at a time when he became interested in removing some of the powers of Gen. Sonthi Boonyaratglin and other leading military generals.

The new government will need to make a clear decision over who will assume the post of Defense Minister, if it wishes to promote a more positive relationship between itself and the military. This new government needs to act quickly to demonstrate its own moral integrity, and to show that it does not intend to take advantage of those who have opposed it in the past.

Say goodbye to the 'Old Ginger' government – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, February 2, 2008

The Surayud Chulanont Government has already passed over the reins of power to a new administration. The newly-appointed Prime Minister is Samak Sundaravej, the leader of the People Power Party. Some members of the Surayud Government, however, may not be relishing the relinquishment of their posts – while others will feel relieved at the removal of a burden from their shoulders.

If we were to review the military-appointed Surayud administration in an entirely positive and rather uncritical light, we would mention that his sixteen-month government worked hard to explain the reasons for the military coup to the rest of the world. We would also say that his administration tried hard to ease such major problems as the downturn in the economy, the southern unrest and the increasing disunity among Thais.

Considered in a more critical light, however, the Surayud Government failed to pass the exam. During its sixteen-month tenure, it was hardly able to initiate any truly proactive approaches in managing the country's affairs. Indeed, several ministers were driven to resign their posts through their perception of the inefficiency of the 'Old Ginger' administration.



"23+2 Prime Minister" – *Nation Weekly*, February, 2008

The headline reads "The 23+2 Prime Minister"

The figure, holding a cooking implement to represent PM Samak, wears a Chinese-style Thaksin mask.

Thaksin was the 23rd Prime Minister and Samak is the 25th Prime Minister. Since Thaksin is thought to be the real power behind the new government and the new PM, the headline dubs the new PM to be the 23 + 2 PM.

Baby politician –
February 7, 2008

This cartoon from *Nation Weekly* shows former Machimathipathai leader Prachai Liewpairat, who was labeled "juvenile" by Sanoh Thienthong and suffered through a series of emotional scandals in 2007.





Nurse as Deputy Finance Minister –
Na Ban Bangkhae by Buncha/ Kamin, *Manager*, February 5, 2008

Left: Samak says: I can't stand how we have a nurse to be the Deputy Finance Minister.

Right: Why? How about a cooking teacher being the PM?

This cartoon pokes fun at the nominee nature of the government with unsuitable figures holding positions only because they are standing in for banned TRT politicians.

In the left panel, Samak complains about Ranongrak Suwanchawee, whose experience is in the nursing profession, being appointed as Deputy Finance Minister. Suwanchawee was no doubt appointed because she is the wife of banned Thai Rak Thai executive Pairrote Suwanchawee.

In the right panel it is pointed out that Samak, who has his own cooking show, is now PM.

Samak mightn't have an easy path, possibly lose power during May-September – translated and summarized from *Thai Insider*, January 29, 2008

According to Bunlert Pairin, a well-known fortune teller, the new prime minister Samak Sundaravej is expected to have ill fortune during May 7-September 16, 2008. He might lose his post during the period. The premier recently visited Phrakrun Palad Sopit Chotikul, a senior monk of Wat Arun Rajavararam. The monk wished him good luck with a blow on the new premier's head. The monk said Samak is sincere and is kind to people, no matter they are rich or poor.

When Defense is under Samak's control, peace will be kept safe and sound in drawer – translated and summarized from *Komchadluek*, February 1, 2008

It is very likely that the new Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej will be appointed Defense Minister. A peaceful relationship between the old power clique and the armed forces is expected to stumble if the premier takes the helm of the Ministry of Defense. His harsh personality will do no good to the relationship. The columnist is confident that the appointment follows an order of a certain person staying abroad. Defense Minister General Boonrawd Samatas worries that the new defense minister will not understand the military forces and intervene in the forces. Rumor has it that General Sonthi Boonyaratglin will be named Defense Minister in the next three months.

"Frightening!" – *Matichon* by Son, February 4, 2008
Government leaders race off a cliff in a pickup truck (the truck makes the sounds "bruen!"). Above it reads "Frightening!"



Early work of new government will soon establish its longer-term popularity – translated and summarized from *Krungtep Turakit*, January 31, 2008

The price of cooking oil has now reached the price of one hundred baht for two 1-liter bottles – a price hike that has brought about a significant increase in the cost-of-living for the average citizen. The Commerce Ministry recently approved a four baht price rise for soya bean oil to 49.50 baht per 1-liter bottle, with this hike adding to the discomfort already caused by previous recent increases in the price of palm oil.

The price of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) will also soon increase, by three to four baht for a 15 Kg. gas bottle.

These skyrocketing cost-of-living increases are not balanced by any commensurate increases in people's basic incomes. Such increases should be an indicator to the new government – led by Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej – that it urgently needs to solve the nation's current economic problems. This will be an early challenge to the new administration – through which it will have an opportunity to demonstrate its mettle. The private sector is waiting to see what this new government intends to do to stimulate the economy, boost consumer spending and restore investor confidence.

Thailand and Laos working on cross border service –
translated and summarized by Wisarut from *Post Today*, February 2, 2008

Governor of Nong Khai and SRT are making a discussion with Lao Railways Authority about the cross border railway services between Nong Khai and Tha Nalaeng (3.5 km). Now, SRT has sent the equipment for railway traffic as well as the level crossing equipment. They hope that cross border traffic will be open by May 1, 2008.

The cross border service will be the extension of Express 69 which reaches Nong Khai at about 9:00 AM and it will depart from Nong Khai at 9:10 AM and it will

reach Tha Nalaeng at 10:10. It will depart as Express 70 from Tha Nalaeng back to Nong Khai at 11:10 AM and may wait for 7 hours to depart from Nong Khai to Bangkok.
Immigration Process will be done within 20 minutes.

The draft of the cross border treaty will be done in the next two weeks using the cross border treaty between SRT and KTMB as a model for the cross border treaty between SRT and LRA (Lao Railways Authority).

PM Samak has two choices: to be a good leader or a mere puppet – translated and summarized from *Krungtep Turakit*, January 28, 2008

Samak Sundaravej is expected to win a parliamentary voting session on January 28 to select the country's new prime minister. Samak's political career has spanned more than three decades. He was a Democrat MP of Bangkok, an interior minister, a party leader, a prime minister, and a Bangkok governor. Samak missed the chance to be Senate chief in 2006 as the military junta staged a coup in September that year. He was later persuaded to lead the People Power Party by the previous prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra. The columnist said it is a good opportunity for Samak to be an incorruptible prime minister and devote himself for the Kingdom. Otherwise, he would be a mere puppet for the previous premier. Actually, Samak himself once said that he was a "nominee" for Thaksin. If he chooses to be just a "nominee" and focus on personal benefits, he will surely be cursed by the whole country.

Government must assign jobs to the right people – translated and summarized from *Krungtep Turakit*, February 13, 2008

The Samak 1 administration has put together its policies, and is preparing to announce them to Parliament. The new government says that these policies will help the general public, stimulate the economy and ease the unrest in the three southernmost provinces. It also says it will proceed with a number of transportation and waterworks mega-projects, in the belief that such policies will help to expand the economy. A large budget will also be allocated to boost the country's 'grassroots' economy.

These policies should be closely monitored, as their success is all-important to the country's future. Some will agree with these policies, and some will not. The most interesting aspect of these policies is, however, their populist element – which some believe could spell trouble for the future of this country.

For the time being, however, we must let the government carry out these policies, in order to see whether they lead to good or bad results. Nonetheless, it will be essential that this government listens to the opinions of the opposition.

Giveaways and discounts offered again – translated and summarized from *Komchadluek*, February 10, 2008

The new Cabinet has indicated that it intends to work for the benefit of the country as a whole, with all of its ministers having put together policies that aim to please both government officials and the general public.

The Public Health Minister has announced a raise in the basic salary of the government officials it employs, but has not expressed any intention to improve his ministry or to stem the spread of bird flu.

The Finance Ministry has also revived the populist policies of the past, by allocating thousands of billions of baht to projects that will increase its popularity with the poor – and help to revive their hopes.

The new government plans to boost the economy by spending money in a way that will increase consumer purchasing power; but such policies could have a negative impact, and waste the expenditure of a government that is already working on a tight budget.

This administration has no ministers who are particularly experienced in economic management, so it will be forced to heed the advice of outside economic experts and gurus.

Colors of the new cabinet – translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, February 11, 2008

When compared to the former 'Old Ginger' government, the new administration seems to be more highly-motivated – with its revival of populist policies such as the Ua Arthorn low-cost housing project

The new Minister of Foreign Affairs began his term with a speech that touched on his initial diplomatic engagements and the return of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. He might well have forgotten that he is supposed to be a representative of all Thai people, rather than just a Thaksin spokesman. Meanwhile, the Public Health Minister commenced the first day of his term with the announcement that compulsory licensing was to be reviewed.

The Finance Minister has already hinted that the 30% Reserve Policy will be scrapped, while the Education Minister has indicated that he will revive the Student Loan Program.

The Interior Minister has vowed he will eliminate the widespread availability of illegal drugs. He might wish to remind himself, however, that his position no longer possesses quite the same power it once had.

In conclusion: Many new ministers have shown their willingness to engage in productive work. To be successful in their endeavors, and to build public trust, they would be wise to mull over the thoughts contained in his HM the King's recent speech – as spoken to them on the occasion of their being sworn in.

1% change – translated and summarized from *Komchadluek*, February 22, 2008

The Cabinet – led by the People Power Party (PPP) under Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej – has completed its heavily-criticized appointment of a cabinet-support team, comprised of ministerial secretaries and cabinet advisors. Prime Minister Samak (also the PPP Leader) had earlier voiced his own strong doubts about the suitability and qualifications of those nominated for positions in the cabinet-support team. His comments could be interpreted as merely an effort to keep his own image clean, however. Indeed, his own criticisms do seem to have been largely fruitless. Only 1% of the proposed appointments were changed after the PM made his remarks. I would like to comment that this PPP-led Cabinet has now demonstrated that it is prepared to completely ignore public sentiment.

Don't twist the history of the 1976 October 6 Massacre! – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, February 21, 2008

There has been no retraction by Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej of his claim in a recent CNN interview that only one person was killed in the October 6 Massacre of 1976. On February 18, the Prime Minister spoke to Parliament in an attempt to clarify his position, but he still continues to insist to the media that he took no part in the massacre.

The Leader of the Democrat Party – Abhisit Vejjajiva – and the Chairman of the Democrat Party's Advisory Council – Chuan Leekpai – have both expressed their disapproval of Samak's comments. A debate between the two opposing sides of the issue was also broadcast on TV Channel 11 recently.

Our history should not be revised for political purposes. There is clear evidence from both photographic and moving images that a large number of people were tortured and murdered in the Massacre.

Info on banks in Thailand

February 28, 2008

[Info on banks in Thailand](#) –

February 28, 2008

We included this link only to point out the following immortal quote: *Banking in Thailand is a relatively stress free practice...*

Senior govertment officials must stop using private e-mail

February 28, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Senior govertment officials must stop using private e-mail](#) – TNA, Februsary 24, 2008

...Sue Lo-utai, permanent secretary for ICT, said senior government officials with the rank of C-8 level and above must stop using privately-owned e-mail services, especially those operated by foreigners such as 'Yahoo' and 'Hotmail', as required by a resolution issued by the previous government December 18.

...Lower ranking government officials must also stop using private e-mail services within a year after the cabinet resolution, said Mr. Sue...

Palang Thai

February 29, 2008

[Palang Thai](#) –

February 29, 2008

Making clean, democratic, reliable, affordable energy happen in the Mekong Region and beyond...

Construction

February 29, 2008
Categories: Buildings



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Construction –
February 29, 2008
Unusual construction on the old MacKenna Theater site. Anyone know details of this development?

Touchdown

February 29, 2008

Categories: Editorial Cartoons



Touchdown – Arun, *Krungtepturakit*, February 29, 2008

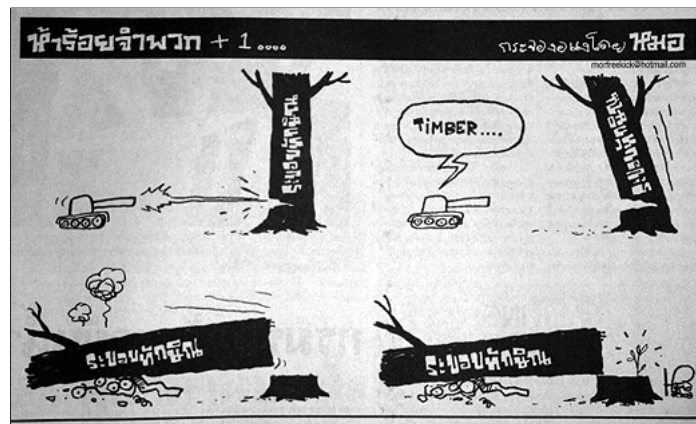
Left: Just the first step

In the water it reads: Current

Thaksin regime

February 29, 2008

Categories: Editorial Cartoons



Thaksin regime – *Krungtepturakit*, February 29, 2008

The letters on the tree read: Thaksin regime