

World's worst intersections

March 2, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[World's worst intersections](#) – darkroastedblend.com, March, 2008

Steam trains in Thailand 02

March 2, 2008

Categories: Thai Railroads

[Steam trains in Thailand 02](#) – *Thai Blogs*, March 2, 2008

Thailand prime minister references moving out of gambling dark ages

March 2, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thailand prime minister references moving out of gambling dark ages](#) – Casino Gambling Web, March 2, 2008

... "When gambling is legalized, there will be no longer the need for police to act on gambling dens," he said. There is no timetable for the legalization of gambling. Sundaravej did mention that Thailand would be following the models of Malaysia, Shanghai, Macau, and Singapore.

Conservation crusader

March 2, 2008

[Conservation crusader](#) – Bangkok Post, March 2, 2008

Sumet Jumsai's campaign to save historic Thailand started in the '60s, and continues to this day.

...The year 1970 saw another landmark in the history of the conservation movement. Sumet, together with more than 100 students from Chulalongkorn University, organised the first cultural protest march against the demolition of Bang Khun Phrom Palace, which was to be replaced by the Bank of Thailand headquarters. The demonstration was successful, and to this day, from Krung Thong Bridge, one can easily see the splendid baroque and rococo architecture of the palace...

Special army force formed to protect Thaksin as he returns from exile

March 2, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008, Thai Military

Armed forces come under attack in the news – on issues ranging from ‘Don Muang 51’ to disappearing guns – translated and summarized from *Komchadluek*; Column: Talui Kong Tap; Author: Security reporters, March 2, 2008

The following may all figure in an elaborate plot to use the media to discredit the armed forces: The establishment of the ‘Don Muang 51’ anti-terrorist group, its possible deployment to provide security for the return of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, and the recent disappearance of firearms from a military armory.

A special military force has been established by Supreme Command HQ for the purpose of countering international terrorist attacks. The group undertook its initial training session, under the codename of ‘Don Muang 51’, during the period February 19 – 22. Many observers are closely-monitoring this group, as its initial training session took place only a few days before the return of a former leader of the country from exile.

Some say that the ‘Don Muang 51’ group was set up to provide security for the return of deposed Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra on February 28. A total of 792 officers, from 40 organizations, were involved in the initial training session.

According to some sources, Supreme Commander Gen. Boonsang Niampradit has been forced to make a statement to the effect that the group’s initial training session was not in preparation for the return of Thaksin Shinawatra. It is believed that this lack of transparency in the group’s establishment could result in some discredit to the armed forces.

Some sources are also saying that they believe that the recent disappearance of three firearms, from the armory of a military unit, was part of a plot to ambush Thaksin Shinawatra on his return from exile.

It is noticeable that all current news emanating from the armed forces, both good and bad, is acting to their discredit.

If magical powers existed...

March 2, 2008

Categories: Editorial Cartoons



If magical powers existed... – *Matichon*, March 2, 2008

If magical powers existed,

Top, left to right: Chaiya Sasomsap would be turned into Chaiya Mitrchai.

The Chairman would make the red cards white.

The puppet would give itself life.

Bottom, left to right: The owner of this hotel would keep his “Chan Song La” home under repair for a longer period of time.

Meechai would turn his chair into NLA President so he did not have to blame the computer system.

Many people would make Thaksin Shinawatra and Sonthi Limthongkul forgetful.

Invisible hand

March 2, 2008



Invisible hand –*Thai Rath*, March 2, 2008

Invisible hand (or unseen hand)

Top left to right: An invisible hand drove a car and just parked it until it was covered in dust.

An invisible hand stole monk robes and things donated by Buddhists.

An invisible hand, please find my Persian cat wearing a diamond necklace and give him back to me.

Bottom left to right: An invisible hand hid a million baht in cash under the bed donated to a temple.

An invisible hand is trying to frustrate the premier for money.

An invisible hand called three ECT board members to make bomb threat.

Thai Senate Elections – 2008

March 3, 2008

Categories: Elections

[Rosana has uphill task ahead](#) – *The Nation*, March 3, 2008

...Starting out as a health and consumer-rights activist in the 1980s, Rosana emerged as one of the country's leading graft fighters when she led some 30 civic groups in the campaign against corruption at the Public Health Ministry between 1998 and 2003. For the first time in Thailand, a politician at the ministerial level was found guilty and jailed for corruption.

She and her consumer groups' victory in halting the privatisation of the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand two years ago, and a recent triumph in the Supreme Administrative Court against PTT propelled her further into the public limelight. Rosana become synonymous with accountability, transparency and checks and balances...



Right: Please vote for Rosana Tositrakul, No. 5.

Outstanding achievements include corruption investigation.

Please give me a chance to inspect government administration and balance its power
for transparent Thai politics.

(Photo:
2Bangkok.com)



Senate election sign in the north –
February 27, 2008

Left: In Mae Hong Son province there are only two persons with the necessary qualifications to run for senator.

Below: A poster for Anant Wanchaithanawong, candidate no. 2

(Photo: Sadortu for
2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: Sadortu for 2Bangkok.com)



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

Senate election in Yala –
March 2, 2008

Dr. Has notes: *The quiet atmosphere of the senatorial election in Amphur Muang Yala.*



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: On Sunday, March 2, 2008 please vote for
Manit Wittayatam –

Former Judge of the Constitutional Court to be a senator for Bangkok.

Please vote for No. 15.

Using powers and duties in a rightful way,
respecting people's rights and freedom, focusing on benefits of the Kingdom, and sincere to the public.

Senate election posters –
February 23, 2008



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Left: Please vote for Rosana Tositrakul, No. 5.

Outstanding achievements include corruption investigation.

Please give me a chance to inspect government administration and balance its power for transparent Thai politics.

Right: “I used to be branded as a communist.

People cannot choose their birth. My family has fought for democracy and justice.

Unlawful things cannot change my mind.”

Neutral and fair.

Please vote for Sakda Sriwiriypaiboon as a Bangkok senator.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Please give me a chance to examine the government’s operation and revise new laws.

Focusing on morality, holding on to ideals, making politics transparent, and building fair economy.

Please vote for

Dr. Anusorn Thamjai, No. 6.

as Bangkok senator.

Politically neutral, working for the people.

Senate election poster – February 29, 2008

It reads: Good thoughts will lead to good deeds.

No. 29 –

Nitipong “Dee” Hornak –

Bangkok Senate candidate No. 29



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Please vote for Thanachart Permlaptrakul, No. 30 to be Bangkok senator. Focusing on morality and peace for the sake of the people.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Another candidate on Silom Road



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Senate election – February 14, 2008

It reads: Bangkok Metropolitan Administration invites you to cast your vote in Senate Election on March 2, 2008 from 08:00 am to 03:00 pm.

Buying and selling votes is illegal.

Cast your vote to select a good senator.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Senate election billboard –
February 10, 2008

It reads: Senate election to be held on March 2, 2008 –
Choose only one senator.

Burmese friends of Thailand

March 3, 2008

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[Burmese friends of Thailand](#) – *The Irrawaddy*, March, 2008

...Thailand also has many friends in Burma, who would welcome an opportunity to enter into a normal relationship with their neighbor. But these friends are not the generals who made such a favorable impression on Samak during his one-day trip to Naypyidaw.

Thailand's real friends in Burma are the dissidents locked up in prisons, hiding in the jungle or fleeing the latest crackdown. These are the people who can foresee the day when Thailand and Burma will embrace each other as equals, as neighbors who can relate to each other as one democracy to another.

Thai monks told to behave on networking web sites

March 3, 2008

[Thai monks told to behave on networking web sites](#) – Reuters, March 3, 2008

Thai officials urged Buddhist monks on Tuesday to avoid using social networking Web sites to woo women after an advocacy group found some monks were doing just that...

Senate's most important duties are to restore faith and maintain freedom

March 3, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Senate's most important duties are to restore faith and maintain freedom – translated and summarized from *Krungthep Turakit*, March 3, 2008

The number of people who voted in the country's Senate election was less than expected. This probably indicates that the public neither understand nor realize the importance and duty of the Senate as set out by the widely-criticized 2007 Constitution.

This failure could be because the public currently have no faith in the abilities of their elected senators.

Indeed, this might even be because the public was dissatisfied with the work of previous senators. The public may lack understanding of the role of the Senate, and may also not realize the extent of its powers as laid down by the 2007 Constitution.

All 150 senators – both elected and selected under the provisions of the 2007 Constitution – should now demonstrate a unity of purpose, if they are to prove to the public that the Senate is fully capable of balancing and scrutinizing the work of both members of parliament and the cabinet.

All senators should be seen to work independently of parliament, and should not side with any one political party. In this way they may be able to restore public faith in their role, and strengthen and improve Thailand's democracy.

Burmese balk at immutable constitution

March 4, 2008

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[Burmese balk at immutable constitution](#) – *The Irrawaddy*, March, 2008

Thai court orders Bangkok night bazaar closed

March 4, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thai court orders Bangkok night bazaar closed](#) – Reuters, March 4, 2008

...Last year, the CPB signed a long-term lease on a large chunk of the site with mall developer Central Pattana, which may build Bangkok's tallest building as well a hotel and a shopping mall, according to Thai newspaper reports.

Other developments, including an embassy row, were being considered as well...

Fire

March 4, 2008



(Photo: Steve)

Fire – March 4, 2008

Steve reports: *Just over a year after the fire at the foot of the Mega Bridge there was a fire in another shanty area close to the slip road to the bridge. We heard the fire trucks scream down Rama III as they sped to fight the blaze – it took them just 15 minutes to bring the blaze under control...*



(Photo: Steve)

Company executives jailed 120,945 years each for public fraud

March 4, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Company executives jailed 120,945 years each for public fraud](#) – *The Nation*, March 4, 2008

...The court was told that the defendants had conspired to fraud 24,189 people thus initially sentenced the second, forth and fifth defendants to a 120,945-year imprisonment each and acquitted the first and third defendants due to lack of convincing evidence against them.

The court then lowered that punishment for the punished defendants to a 20-year jail term each...

666 km to Bangkok

March 4, 2008

666 km to Bangkok – March 4, 2008

Just a sign for the ["Numbers of the Beast"](#) collection...



(Photo: Graham)

How to put the kingdom in order in an appropriate manner

March 4, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

How to put the kingdom in order in an appropriate manner – translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, March 4, 2008

During the ‘Samak Talk’ program that was broadcast live on national radio and television channels last Sunday, Prime Minister Samak discussed audience feedback that favored people being allowed to gamble legally. The PM said that he agreed with such proposals, as government-sanctioned gambling was allowed in other countries.

The Thaksin Government also once proposed a plan to set up legal casinos, but the plan progressed no further. It did, however, manage to launch a government-sanctioned lottery – that it named ‘Huai Bon Din’. This populist measure was well-received by the public, but was terminated during the Surayud administration – with Prime Minister Gen. Surayud declaring it illegal.

The Surayud Government eventually attempted, unsuccessfully, to enact its own form of legal lottery. We suggest that this elected government should revive the legal lottery, as it will undoubtedly generate high revenues for the country. We believe that all gambling activities should be legalized, and placed on a sound legal footing.

Bangkok feast to go ahead despite chefs' moral protest

March 5, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Bangkok feast to go ahead despite chefs' moral protest](#) –

AFP, March, 2008

...Lebua hotels and resorts intends to fly 50 of its top-spending guests to an elephant camp in one of Thailand's poorest regions on April 5 to show them how the other half lives, before returning to Bangkok for a 300,000-dollar meal.

But the Michelin-starred chefs who were meant to prepare the feast — Jean-Michel Lorain, Michel Trama and Alain Soliveres — balked when they heard no money would be donated to charity, and pulled out...

US may apply trade sanctions to Thailand for intellectual piracy

March 5, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[US may apply trade sanctions to Thailand for intellectual piracy](#) – *Asia Pulse*, March 5, 2008

The United States might place Thailand on its “priority foreign country” (PFC) list for persistent intellectual property infringements and subject the kingdom to certain trade sanctions, Director-General of the Intellectual Property Department Puangrat Assawapisit said on Wednesday...

‘King and I’ version passes the Thai culture test; keeps lush music, great acting

March 6, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[‘King and I’ version passes the Thai culture test; keeps lush music, great acting](#) – *The Herald-Sun*, March 6, 2008

When she learned that the Tony award-winning “The King and I” is banned in Thailand because of its perceived racist and inaccurate portrayal of King Mongkut and Thai culture, theater instructor Hope Hynes had to rethink her choice for this year’s musical at East...

To restore as much accuracy as possible, given the script, Hynes brought in Songphan Choemprayong, a doctoral student at UNC, to serve as dramaturg and to work with students so that their physical actions, such as bowing, and their costuming would honor Thai culture...

‘Merchant of Death’ arrested in Bangkok

March 6, 2008

Categories: Crime

[‘Merchant of Death’ arrested in Bangkok](#) – *The Nation*, March 7, 2008

More on [Viktor Anatolyevich Bout](#)

One nation, two prime ministers

March 6, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

One nation, two prime ministers – translated and summarized from *Komchadluek*, March 6, 2008

Former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's return is clearly being perceived by many as having effectively created a country run by two prime ministers. High-ranking government officials, who might have an agenda contrary to that of the ousted prime minister, have already been transferred. The current Prime Minister – Samak Sundaravej – must realize that this has caused great public concern, with many demanding an explanation of the situation from the country's elected prime minister.

It should be remembered that the person who called on Samak Sundaravej to be the head of the People Power Party (PPP) was none other than Thaksin Shinawatra himself.

In principle, the Kingdom should have only one prime minister – and that premier's name should be Samak Sundaravej. Samak should have full power to administer the country without having to concern himself about outside influences.

As the elected leader of this country, Samak must be answerable on all issues concerning the country and its administration. People will continue to have a perception of 'one country – two prime ministers' as long as they continue to doubt that truth is being spoken by either of these two people.

Singapore terror scare cover-up claim

March 7, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Singapore terror scare cover-up claim](#) – SMH,

March 7, 2008

An Australian aboard a plane intercepted by fighter jets in Singapore says the dramatic incident was the result of lies told by someone in Thailand angry at being denied a bribe...

Pop art

March 7, 2008



Pop art – March 7, 2008

A basement gallery in the Jewelry Trade Center on Silom Road has an interesting selection of Thai pop art. Even more interesting are the websites of the artists displaying at the show: [CMPuck](#) – [chomartwork](#) – [Pekko](#) – [Creative Buffalo](#) – [Deeper than Words](#) – [LenArai](#) – [8e88](#) – [Nokhook Design](#)

(Source:
[chomartwork](#))

Thailand in Our Dumb World: The Onion's Atlas of The Planet Earth

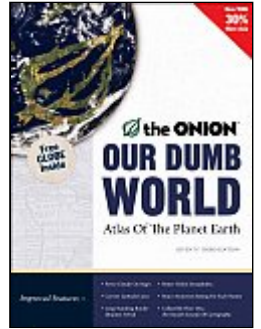
March 7, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Thailand in *Our Dumb World: The Onion's Atlas of The Planet Earth, 73rd Edition* –
March 7, 2008

From [Kxan](#): “In order to produce the most comprehensive book about the Earth ever created, The Onion fearlessly sent journalists to the darkest, most dangerous parts of the Internet,” Onion editor-in-chief Scott Dikkers said. “Only The Onion is brave enough to reveal that the Ukraine is the bridebasket of Europe, that Thailand is where a kid can be a kid-prostitute, and that Iran is a possible, likely threat to the free world, maybe.”

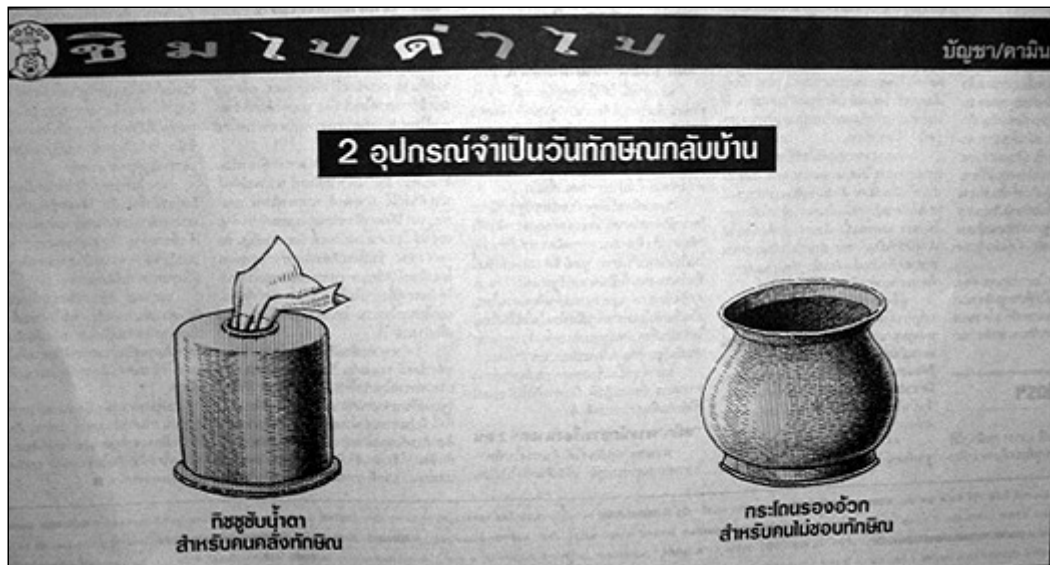
Also: Thailand – “1440-1939, The people of Thailand call their country by the wrong name for nearly 500 years”



Ready for Thaksin

March 8, 2008

Categories: Editorial Cartoons



Ready for Thaksin – by Buncha/Kamin, Manager, March, 2008

The name of the column is "Chim pai Da pai."

"Chim" means "taste" and "da" means "abuse." This is a play on the name of Samak's cooking program "Chim pai Bon pai."

At the top it reads:

2 necessary equipment for the day that Thaksin comes home

Left: Tissue to wipe tears for the one who is crazy about Thaksin

Right: Spittoon for vomit from the one who does not like Thaksin

In Laos, prized elephants are in decline

March 9, 2008

Categories: Wildlife and Nature

[In Laos, prized elephants are in decline](#) – AP, March, 2008

... "The situation will become very dramatic in about 10 years if nothing changes," says Sebastien Duffillot, co-founder of France-based ElefantAsia. At their current rate of decline, Laos' wild elephants could be extinct within 50 years, he warns.

Domesticated elephants number about 570, a 20 percent drop over the last decade. In all, the World Wide Fund for Nature estimates, as few as 25,000 wild and 15,000 captive Asian elephants may be left. A century ago, Thailand alone harbored some 100,000...

Overcrowding in Thai prisons

March 9, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Overcrowding in Thai prisons](#) – *Thai Blogs*, March 9, 2008

Siam War II Return of Thaksin

March 9, 2008

Categories: Thai Politics



Weekend news mags –
March, 2008

Left: *Matichon Weekly*: Siam War II Return of Thaksin

Right: *Nation Weekend*: Auspicious Rajah, the auspices of coming home



Compulsory licensing gets the go-ahead

March 10, 2008

Categories: Drugs

[Compulsory licensing gets the go-ahead](#) – TNA, March 10, 2008

In an about-turn on the controversial compulsory licensing (CL) issue, Thai Public Health Minister said the CL enforcement on four key cancer drugs would continue to allow poor patients access to the life-saving drugs...

Khun Prem orders newspapers to criticise me: Thaksin

March 10, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

[Khun Prem orders newspapers to criticise me: Thaksin](#) – *The Nation*, March 10, 2008

Unqualified ministers under consideration for dismissal?

March 10, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Unqualified ministers under consideration for dismissal? – translated and summarized from *Krungtep Turakit*, March 10, 2008

Concerning the current attempt to gather the names of 20,000 public health officials in order to put pressure on the government to remove the Public Health Minister Chaiya Sasomsub. I believe that this is an opportune moment to examine closely what is really going on in this ministry. Soon after Chaiya took over his ministerial post, he was subjected to a barrage of strong criticism over his widely-perceived poor decision-making in a number of important cases that come under the ministry's jurisdiction. These cases included his decision to scrap compulsory licensing of certain pharmaceuticals, and his transfer of the 'Food and Drug Administration' Secretary-General. The Public Health Minister has already demonstrated his imprudence on several occasions, and it now seems highly doubtful whether he possesses sufficient shrewdness of judgment to truly qualify for a ministerial post.

Thai McDonalds

March 11, 2008

Categories: Culture and Society, Food and Drink



McDonalds Shrimp Burger –
March 11, 2008



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

"Pork Prosperity"

– January 15, 2005

A Chinese New Year-themed placemat paper from McDonalds in Thailand
(above – also a [higher res version 188kb](#)).

It advertises "Lucky Prosperity Pals" that represent the 12 Chinese years (each being associated with a different creature). They also have two special meals—'Pork Prosperity' and 'Chicken Prosperity'
(below- also a [higher res version 205kb](#)).

as well as apricot sundaes, pink soda, and a new chocolate pie—all flavored to mimic traditional Chinese fare at the new year.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

McDonalds' 'I am Asian' promotion

– May 12, 2004

In the U.S. McDonalds has a silly promotion called "[I am Asian](#)" (they even trademarked the phrase) to attract Asian Americans to eat at the restaurants.

For some reason, they have cursory info on the holidays in various Southeast Asian nations. Here is the one for [Thailand](#) where they only list one holiday. Cambodia, which has several of the same or similar holidays as Thailand, gets a [longer write-up](#).



There is also a list of unsual menu items in different countries: *McDonald's restaurants in India are our only restaurants in the world where you cannot buy beef. You can purchase an all-lamb version of the Big Mac called the "Maharaja Mac."* McDonald's international restaurants occasionally develop other items which appeal to local tastes, such as a grilled salmon sandwich with dill sauce in Norway, rice dishes in Japan, a Samurai pork burger in Thailand, frankfurters and beer in Germany, a McHuevo (a hamburger with a poached egg on top) in Uruguay, and McSpaghetti in the Philippines.

They forgot the McSomtam (left). The Thai McDonalds website is [here](#).

The McDonalds 60-second pledge

– May-August, 2001



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Bangkok McDonalds are promising your order in 60 seconds or you get a coupon for a free drink (left). There's a electronic timer that the customer pushes to start the countdown. When the program first started the staff seemed to have fun trying to get the order done in time, but now they seem tired of the whole thing. Ordering a Big Mac usually guarantees they will not be done in time and you will get a free drink coupon.

Soldiers are exercising, no concern for their presence in Bangkok

March 11, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Soldiers are exercising, no concern for their presence in Bangkok](#) – *The Nation*, March 11, 2008

[Army to exercise in the capital](#) – *Bangkok Post*, March 11, 2008

Thailand: End official cover-up in lawyer's "disappearance"

March 11, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thailand: End official cover-up in lawyer's "disappearance"](#) – *Human Rights Watch*, March 11, 2008

Four Years On, Continued Impunity Fuels Cycle of Abuse and More 'Disappearances'

On the fourth anniversary of the enforced disappearance and presumed murder of prominent Muslim human rights lawyer Somchai Neelapaijit, the new Thai government should ensure that the police officers responsible for this crime are finally brought to justice, Human Rights Watch said today...

Goodbye to the butterflies

March 11, 2008

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[Goodbye to the butterflies](#) – *The Irrawaddy*, March, 2008

...A Burmese Forest Ministry report in 1982 listed around 100 species of butterfly on Mount Popa. This number had dropped to 60 when Mount Popa's Environment and Wild Animals Conservation Department conducted a survey in 2000. Seven years later, researchers found only 32—and no Shwe Hnget Taung...

Mae Hong Son forest fire signs

March 11, 2008



(Photo: Sadortu for 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Forest fire danger levels –
Low – Medium – High – Very High –
Mae Sariang's forest fire control unit

Mae Hong Son forest fire signs –
March 11, 2008

Sadortu reports: *Forest fire during the dry season is from late January to early May.*

Mae Hong Son is in a dry season. Leaves are falling off trees. Gardeners and farmers were cutting and trimming their plants. Some even burned their plantations, believing that is the way to grow new plants. This is why there is fog in the province.



(Photo: Sadortu for 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Forest devastated, the land turns sere, rivers run dry.
To report a forest fire, call 081-9524183, 089-2669247.



(Photo: Sadortu for 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Report a roadside fire, call 053-682193, 053-618110 –
Arson is a crime with jail punishment.
Mae Sariat highway unit in Mae Hong Son.



(Photo: Sadortu for 2Bangkok.com)

Above: To report illegal logging, hunting, wild animal trading, a forest fire, a stray elephant, a bird flu outbreak, or a natural disaster, call 1362 at any time.
Department of National Parks, Wildlife, and Plant Conservation

The singer Lidea

March 11, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008



News weeklies – March 11, 2008

Left: *Nation Weekend* – He's not my boyfriend. I cannot do this on his behalf.

Right: *Matichon Weekly* – One second too late



Trying to honor Asians who died building Burma-Thailand rail in WWII

March 12, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Trying to honor Asians who died building Burma-Thailand rail in WWII](#) – IHT, March 12, 2008

...In 1990, a Thai charitable organization, hearing from a Kanchanaburi resident about the possibility of a mass grave, partly dug up the area where the lime and banana trees stand today. Using a backhoe, a piece of equipment usually reserved for construction, not a historical excavation, the crew found more than 500 skeletons. After an inspection crew arrived from the Australian Embassy to ascertain that they were not former Allied soldiers, the charitable group brought the bones to a crematorium in Bangkok and incinerated them.

This angered Worawut, who persuaded the governor of Kanchanaburi to allow him to examine the excavated site. He unsuccessfully pleaded with officials that the mass grave be made into a museum and memorial to the Asian laborers.

“They never answered me,” Worawut said.

With no funding available he removed 33 skeletons he had unearthed and filled in the hole.

“I believe there are still more bodies there – a lot,” he said. “But nobody wants do anything about it.”

He handed over the skeletons to the historical department of Kanchanaburi Province for safekeeping. In February, Worawut, accompanied by a reporter, returned to the department to inquire about what had happened to the laborers’ skeletons.

He was greeted by Pichit Rongrithikrai, one of the managers of the department, who said the bones had been discarded three or four years before because workers and visitors complained of an odor.

“There was a stale smell,” Pichit said.

The bones, he said, were buried not far from the compost heap by a maintenance worker.

The anonymity of those discarded bones is in stark contrast to the neat rows of graves in the Allied war cemeteries in Kanchanaburi, described in a stone carving as the “perpetual resting place of the sailors, soldiers and airmen who are honoured here.”

Or as the mother of F. Buckland, a British soldier who died in June 1945, only two months before the end of the war, had inscribed on his headstone: “Sleep on, my beloved son, your memory will always remain.”

Threats to Resume Thaksin's War on Drugs

March 12, 2008

Categories: Drugs, Human Rights, Thaksin's War on Drugs, The Thaksin Years

[Thailand's 'war on drugs' – International Harm Reduction Association and Human Rights Watch briefing paper](#) – HRW, March, 2008

...In recent weeks, the government of Thailand has publicly threatened the resumption of killings. On 20 February, Interior Minister, Chalerm Yubamrung, told parliament that "For drug dealers if they do not want to die, they had better quit staying on that road... drugs suppression in my time as Interior Minister will follow the approach of Thaksin. If that will lead to 3,000-4,000 deaths of those who break the law, then so be it. That has to be done ... For those of you from the opposition party, I will say you care more about human rights than drug problems in Thailand."

Since this statement by the Interior Minister, Human Rights Watch is aware of at least four killings of alleged drug traffickers across Thailand — two in Chiang Mai, one in Kalasin, and one in Krabi...

Man's death in Thailand probed

March 12, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Man's death in Thailand probed](#) – *The Northern Echo*, March 12, 2008

Detectives in Thailand have launched a murder investigation after a man from the North-East was found dead.

Retired ICI worker Ivor Chandler, who is from the Skelton area of east Cleveland, died in the Phetchabun region of Thailand last Thursday.

It is believed Mr Chandler, who was in his 50s, was in the country on one of his regular trips to visit his girlfriend...

Muslim anti-Denmark demonstration In Bangkok Wednesday

March 12, 2008

Categories: Uncategorized

[Muslim anti-Denmark demonstration In Bangkok Wednesday](#) – *ScandAsia*, March 12, 2008

A group of Muslims, who call themselves Muslims for Peace, are preparing a demonstration in Bangkok on Wednesday the 12th of March...

Judicial authority

March 12, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

Judicial authority –

translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, March 12, 2008

Ministry of Justice Permanent Secretary Charan Pakdeethanakul has recently opined that the government should concentrate on the administration of the country, and not interfere with the powers of the law courts and other judicial organizations. I wish to comment that the current People Power Party (PPP) majority government and cabinet – as headed by Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej – should reconsider the manner in which they are running the country. This PPP-led government has already conducted a whole series of transfers of government officials since it was sworn into power. These included the transfers of the Department of Special Investigations (DSI) Chief, the National Police Chief and 30 others. It should be noted that the DSI is directly involved in the investigation of legal proceedings against deposed Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, and I believe that this government is likely to get itself into a great deal of trouble if these transfers compromise the judicial process.

Samyan revived

March 13, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Samyan revived](#) – Bangkok Post, March 13, 2008

...University's property redevelopment excises one of the last relics of the 1997 financial crash, writes Anchalee Kongrut

For almost a decade, an unfinished concrete structure at Samyan intersection has served as a bleak reminder of the economic malady of 1997 – the so-called "tom yam kung disease".

The structure, belonging to Chulalongkorn University, was one of the 508 incomplete buildings abandoned by over-extended developers as overwhelming bad debt in the real estate sector sparked an economic crisis which spread throughout the region...

Thai jasmine rice free of GMOS, says foreign trade chief

March 13, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thai jasmine rice free of GMOS, says foreign trade chief](#) – *Asia Pulse*, March 13, 2008

Foreign Trade Department Director-General Apiradee Tantraporn on Thursday denied a report that some of the country's trademark Thai jasmine rice is produced based on genetically modified organisms (GMOs), saying the report is totally groundless...

Thailand's head of disaster alert center quits, citing lack of government support

March 13, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thailand's head of disaster alert center quits, citing lack of government support](#) – *Bangkok Post*, March 13, 2008

...Smith Thammasaroj, chairman of the National Disaster Warning Center, said he stepped down because the government failed to make his ad-hoc agency more effective by granting it legal status as an independent body.

"We have no power to hire people, to give our employees any security, buy necessary equipment or make any decision at all," he said. "Disaster prevention work requires flexibility and efficiency..."

Petite Thai action star plans to take on the world

March 13, 2008

Categories: Film and TV

[Petite Thai action star plans to take on the world](#) –

AFP, March 13, 2008

She may be small and weigh not much more than a drink of water, but tiny Thai martial arts star Yanin “Jeeja” Vismitananda is proving that petite packages can still pack a punch...

People's rights and liberty

March 13, 2008

People's rights and liberty –

translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, March 13, 2008

Foreign Minister Noppadon Pattama said the movement of the People's Alliance for Democracy has negatively affected the nation's image among other countries. The columnist is surprised to hear such a comment from the lawyer-minister, which is against the principle of democracy and certain constitutional provisions regarding people's rights to express their views and gather in a public place. The columnist wonders which countries the foreign minister mentioned as democratic countries around the globe consider such a political movement an ordinary activity. On the contrary, countries worldwide have negative attitudes towards a state prohibiting its people to protest, gather, or view their opinions.

Signs from the north

March 14, 2008

Categories: Signs and Billboards



(Sadortu for 2Bangkok.com)

Signs from the north – March, 2008

It reads: Application for candidacy in local election of Mae Hong Son Provincial Administration Organization between March 17 and 21, 2008 from 8.30am to 4.30pm at Mae Hong Son Public Hall. For more information, please contact 0-5361-4508

The world's dirtiest cities

March 14, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[The world's dirtiest cities](#) – *Forbes*, March 14, 2008

To see which cities in the world were dirtiest, we turned to Mercer Human Resource Consulting's 2007 Health and Sanitation Rankings. As part of their 2007 Quality of Life Report, they ranked 215 cities worldwide based on levels of air pollution, waste management, water potability, hospital services, medical supplies and the presence of infectious disease...

Noppadon rejects sanctions, Burmese to 'vote no'

March 14, 2008

[Noppadon rejects sanctions, Burmese to 'vote no'](#) – *Bangkok Post*, March 14, 2008

Thailand opposes the western sanctions on neighbouring Burma and will help to prop the Burmese military junta's planned constitutional referendum in May, Foreign Minister Noppadon Pattama said on Friday.

"Thailand disagrees with sanctions," said Mr Noppadon before he took off with Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej for a quick, official visit to Burma.

Mr Noppadon's statement put the Thai government firmly against Burmese activists who announced a "Vote No" campaign for the referendum...

14 years in Thai jail, then whipped in Singapore

March 14, 2008

Categories: Crime

[14 years in Thai jail, then whipped in Singapore](#) –

Bangkok Post, March 14, 2008

A man who spent 14 years in a Thai prison on a murder conviction was sentenced by a Singapore court to another 30 months in jail and six...

Thai young people are Asia's biggest gamers

March 14, 2008

[Thai young people are Asia's biggest gamers](#) – *Bangkok Post*, March 14, 2008

Thai youths are the third most avid, spending three hours and 30 minutes a day on IM, according to the rankings in The Business Times...

UN expert slams India, Cambodia, Thailand over sex tourism

March 14, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[UN expert slams India, Cambodia, Thailand over sex tourism](#) –

AFP, March 14, 2008

India, Cambodia and Thailand are not doing enough to protect children against the risks associated with sex tourism for fear of damaging their economies, a UN human rights expert charged on Friday...

Thailand #2 in corruption

March 14, 2008



Thailand #2 in corruption – *Krungtepturakit*, March 14, 2008

At the bottom left it reads: Wonder that we can't get the first level!!

Samak says: Who is PERC? They just read the Thai newspapers and then assertively say that Thailand is number two in the corruption problem. How can it be?

This is a reference to a report last week ranking Thailand as behind the Philippines as the most corrupt country in Asia.

[RP, Thailand among most corrupt Asian economies — survey](#) – AFP, March 10, 2008

...As in the 2007 survey, Thailand remained the second most corrupt economy after the Philippines with a score of 8.0 after the military, which seized power in a coup in 2006, was seen to have failed to tackle the problem.

“The kingdom’s economy has been marking time for two years while it sorts out political problems in which allegations of corruption figure prominently,” said PERC...

Rock throwing

March 14, 2008



Rock throwing – Arun, *Krungtepturakit*, March 14, 2008

At the bottom it reads: New danger

At the far right, the car driver is saying: Wear a helmet also

Thailand's telegram service will close in May

March 15, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thailand's telegram service will close in May](#) – *Bangkok Post*, March 15, 2008

Chiang Mai on MapJack

March 15, 2008

[Chiang Mai on MapJack](#) – March 15, 2008
Select "Chiang Mai" from the drop down on the left.

Foreign backpackers deny they're bed bug spreaders

March 15, 2008

[Foreign backpackers deny they're bed bug spreaders](#) – *Bangkok Post*, March 15, 2008

...Sawittee Malaipan, an entomologist at Kasetsart University, said some foreigners, including refugees and tourists, did not like to take baths and so they attracted the insects.

The people who really destroy the country's image

March 15, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

The people who really destroy the country's image—
translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, March 15, 2008

According to a survey conducted by the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy, the Philippines is the most corrupt Asian economy while Thailand has been ranked second for two consecutive years. Meanwhile, Singapore retained its ranking as the cleanest economy in Asia. The survey covers 13 economies in Asia and was conducted among 1,400 expatriate businessmen. The columnist believes the ranking also reflects the degrees of democracy as the administrations of countries which strictly follow democratic practices will run the countries transparently. On Thailand, a certain minister recently stated that political movements by a people's organization have negatively affected the country's image and driven foreign investors away. The question is: what really does affect the kingdom's image between such political movements and the survey by a foreign institution?

Signs from the north

March 16, 2008

Categories: Signs and Billboards



(Sadortu for 2Bangkok.com)

Signs from the north – March, 2008

It reads: Umlohtai Village, Moo 5, Mae Suad Sub-District, Sobmei District, Mae Hong Son Province.

Everybody is welcome. Rules of the Village

1. Improper use of electricity for fishing is prohibited
2. Improper use of explosives for fishing is prohibited
3. Improper use of poison for fishing is prohibited

Those who violate the rules will face a maximum fine of 10,000 baht.

The Plain of Jars: bombs and mystery in Laos

March 16, 2008

Categories: Laos

[The Plain of Jars: bombs and mystery in Laos](#) – darkroastedblend.com, March, 2008

Samak praises Myanmar as peaceful and orderly

March 16, 2008

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[Samak praises Myanmar as peaceful and orderly](#) – DPA, March 16, 2008

Thai Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej yesterday praised Myanmar – deemed a pariah state by most western democracies – as a peaceful and orderly country with a military leader who is a good Buddhist who prays every morning...

A stain on the senate

March 17, 2008

For the honor of the Senate – translated and summarized from *Thai Rath* editorial, March 17, 2008

It could be said that both elected senators and nominated senators have successfully passed the first real test of their new positions – as Prasopsuk Boondet has just been voted the Speaker of Thailand's Senate.

Before the vote took place, it was widely rumored that some senators had been bribed to vote for a certain candidate for the Speaker position.

One elected senator has recently admitted that he received a call from a former member of parliament – and that the ex-MP promised to do him some favors if he would vote for a certain candidate.

It is highly suspicious that so few in the Senate have shown much interest in this case. Furthermore, few senators seem particularly eager to find out if there is any truth in the matter.

The rumor appears not to be entirely groundless, as at least one other senator has claimed that someone tried to bribe him over the selection of the Speaker.

If this rumor is confirmed to be true, it should be treated as a criminal act. Will our new senators – who have just vowed to uphold the honor of the senate – be prepared to let this criminality go without taking any further action?

[A stain on the senate](#) – *The Nation*, March 20, 2008

...At the meeting to elect the Speaker, some senators spoke out about what they claimed to be an attempt to buy their support for a particular candidate.

There were allegations of Bt1- million for each vote by a senator, in addition to a Mercedes-Benz car, and a monthly payment for the rest of their term...

Sanctions on Myanmar may take sparkle out of Thai jewellery

March 17, 2008

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[Sanctions on Myanmar may take sparkle out of Thai jewellery](#) –

AFP, March 17, 2008

Officials tried to force arms dealer Bout to US: lawyer

March 17, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Officials tried to force arms dealer Bout to US: lawyer](#) – AFP, March 17, 2008

...Yan Dasgupta, one of three Russian lawyers representing Bout, said that after Bout's arrest on March 6 at a five-star Bangkok hotel, US and Thai officials tried to verbally and physically force him onto a plane.

"Some governmental officials at the moment of his detention tried to actually send him to United States without following proper extradition procedure prescribed by the law," Dasgupta said.

"He was doing everything in his power including physical resistance not to fly to the US," he told reporters in Bangkok...

Guidelines for the government's next war on drugs

March 17, 2008

Categories: Drugs, High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008, Thaksin's War on Drugs

[Guidelines for the government's next 'war on drugs' campaign](#) – *The Nation*, March 17, 2008

...First, policy-makers should not get involved in incitement to murder. When announcing the policy to governors and police chiefs in 2003, Thaksin referred to the results already achieved in two trial provinces: "Sometimes people were shot dead and had their assets seized as well. I think we have to be equally ruthless. If drug traders don't stop, there is a chance they will be dealt with in every way, both life and limb." He continued, "With the traders, you must use hammer and fist, that is, act decisively and without mercy. If some drug traders die, it will be a common thing."

Seven weeks later, when over a thousand had already died, Thaksin repeated that drug dealers had only two choices – to go to jail or their own funerals...

Guidelines for the government's next 'war on drugs' campaign

By Chang Noi

The interior minister has announced he will revive the "war on drugs" of 2003. The prime minister has endorsed this proposal. The 2003 campaign resulted in around 3,000 deaths (2,921 according to the Kanit panel). There are some uncertainties about this figure, but that is the number which the government itself claimed. The current government has promised to be more careful in the execution of the policy, so perhaps it would help to establish some principles.

First, policy makers should not get involved in incitement to murder. When announcing the policy to governors and police chiefs in 2003, Thaksin referred to the results already achieved in two trial provinces: "Sometimes people were shot dead and had their assets seized as well. I think we have to be equally ruthless. If drug traders don't stop, there is a chance they will be dealt with in every way, both life and limb." He continued, "With the traders, you must use hammer and fist, that is, act decisively and without mercy. If some drug traders die, it will be a common thing."

Seven weeks later, when over a thousand had already died, Thaksin repeated that drug dealers had only two choices—to go to jail or their own funerals.

It makes no difference whether the three thousand were killed by the police, by other drug dealers, or by the tooth fairy. Some people were being incited to kill other people. This should not be repeated this time round. Unfortunately the interior minister has already said it would be "natural" if even more died this time, so maybe it's already too late.

Second, this same murderous intent should not be passed down the administrative chain. On 21 February 2003, the National Centre for Drug Suppression in the Ministry of Interior issued a document headed, "Policy and operational directives to overcome drug crimes." This document ordered provincial governors and police chiefs to "suppress" 25 per cent of the names which had already been entered onto black lists. It specified, "Cases which may be set against the target are suppression of traders and manufacturers in three ways, namely arrest, extraordinary killing, or loss of life (death for various reasons)."

The Thai translated here as "extraordinary killing" is wisaman katakam, which means killing by officials in the course of duty, such as self-defence. However, the term is commonly applied to cases where the police take the law into their own hands (and, for that reason, is often mistranslated as "extrajudicial killing"). For good measure, the document adds the very vague idea of "loss of life" without apparent cause. Within the culture of the Thai police, it would be hard to avoid the obvious implications of an instruction worded in this fashion. This time around, the authorities should be more precise.

Third, the authorities should avoid the terrible simplicity of black lists. The local police were encouraged to draw up black lists as long as possible, and then incentivised (with money rewards) to eliminate as many of

them as possible. While some of the names may have been suspected drug dealers, others probably qualified by being enemies of those drawing up the lists, or just simply defenceless. As the English journalist Andrew Marshall found, those at greatest risk were the innocents on these lists. If police pulled them in for questioning, they might prove their innocence and thus reduce the chance of the police reaching their numerical targets. The logical solution, as some police admitted to Marshall, was to kill such innocents without questioning.

Such lists reduce people to anonymous figures, stripped of their humanity. The dead bodies displayed in news reports during the 2003 campaign were anonymous entries on a list rather than real warm people. Only when a young girl was killed by a stray bullet, and a courageous TV cameraman seized the opportunity to plead for his father's life, was this terrible anonymity breached. Maybe the prime minister and interior minister should ask around the Cabinet if any among the ministers had experience of being on those black lists.

Fourth, some effort is needed to prevent the emotions surrounding the subject of drugs overriding the principles of justice. Of the three thousand killed in 2003, around one half seem to have been totally innocent. That is the conclusion of Kanit na Nakhon's investigation. These killings were patently unjust. Among the other half, none were major traders. Most seem to have been petty dealers at the lowest level of the distribution chain. They may have been guilty, but did not warrant a sentence anywhere near the death penalty. The simple principle behind the campaign was to kill lots of little people in the hope of discouraging some of the big people behind the trade. In short, a deliberate blood sacrifice.

Many people supported the 2003 campaign. They seem to have accepted that this method was justified. But why is this method acceptable in the case of drugs, but not for other crimes?

Suppose for example that the prime minister had applied the same logic to the "war on corruption" which was announced in parallel with the "war on drugs." Suppose he had said, "If some corrupt people die, it will be a common thing." Suppose the authorities had drawn up black lists, and the Interior Ministry sent down an order for 25 per cent of the names to be eliminated by "arrest, extraordinary killing, or loss of life (death for various reasons)." People who then or since then have been accused of major corruption (land deals, hidden assets, fire truck purchases, airport scandals, wholesale vote-buying, etc., etc.) would have appeared on those black lists. And then....

Of course, that would be horrifying. But somehow the swirl of emotions created around the issue of drug-dealing allowed the police, provincial authorities, and ordinary observers to override basic justice and basic human empathy.

It's hard to be optimistic this time round. If the prime minister can imagine away the deaths in 1976...

Censorship 'Syndromes' and silence

March 17, 2008

Categories: Film and TV

[Censorship 'Syndromes' and silence](#) – *The Nation*, March 17, 2008

Acclaimed but banned, Apichatpong Weerasethakul's 'Sang Sattawat' will screen in Thailand with black frames to replace the parts the censors cut

...With the election of a new government and a new film law on the books, Apichatpong said he submitted his film to the censors again, hoping they would view it differently. The censors asked that two more scenes be excised.

"I was wrong. It's worse than the first time, but it was still worth the effort. I learned that the problem with the new film law is not the law itself, but the people who will be enforcing it," he says...

Signs from the north

March 18, 2008

Categories: Signs and Billboards



(Sadortu for 2Bangkok.com)

Signs from the north – March, 2008

It reads: Catching of all kinds of aquatic and land animals is prohibited. Violators will face a maximum fine of 5,000 baht.

Hollywood production relocates from China to Thailand

March 18, 2008

Categories: Film and TV

[Hollywood production relocates from China to Thailand](#) – AP, March 18, 2008

U.S. movie mogul Harvey Weinstein is moving the filming of his new movie “Shanghai” to Thailand and England after being blocked from shooting in China, a Hollywood trade publication reported Wednesday...

Thai visitors to get whistles in case of emergencies

March 18, 2008

Categories: Crime

[Thai visitors to get whistles in case of emergencies](#) – *Kitchener/Waterloo Record*, March 18, 2008

Two days after a Swedish woman was stabbed to death while taking a daytime walk on the Thai island of Phuket, the country's tourism department said it will hand out whistles to female tourists. The whistles, to be sounded in case of an emergency, are part of a campaign to increase security at the popular tourist destination...

The government must work harder to achieve its targets

March 18, 2008

Categories: Uncategorized

Fear management – translated and summarized from *Krungtep Turakit* editorial, March 18, 2008

The government must work harder to achieve its targets. This is especially true when it comes to dealing with the fears of people living in the southern border provinces, and when trying to regain their confidence. Insurgents have created great fear in the hearts of the people of the region, and have coerced them into both being distant to the state and not cooperating with its local officials.

There are two major problems that the state has in its dealings with southerners: Locals distrust the state, and are not prepared to cooperate with it in any significant way. Many residents of the region fear that the government will not provide them with security in times of peril. Indeed, they often believe that they are actually imperiling their own lives by cooperating too much with the state. The car bomb at the CS Pattani Hotel – in Pattani Province on March 15 – furthered increased such local fears.

All these factors have reduced the confidence of many southerners in the state. Such factors also appear to have dashed any hopes for the establishment of a sustainable peace in the region.

A network of southern citizens – who have come together to oppose the actions of the insurgents – held a press conference recently, to express their feelings and opinions about the conflict that has engulfed their region.

Grace in the Gospel: Thai Christian Dance

March 19, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Grace in the Gospel: Thai Christian Dance](#) – *Lausanne World Pulse*, March, 2008

*...Thai dance is particularly suitable for worship because of the graceful, non-suggestive movements...
To use Thai dance, drama and music, it was necessary to redeem this art in order to convey the gospel...
As Christians, the students and faculty wanted to worship and be protected by the Holy Spirit. Before every performance they lifted their hands in a prayerful wai as they had been trained; however, the prayer was changed to thank God for their teachers and the art...*

Bangkok Tailors dump the dollar for the Euro

March 19, 2008

[Bangkok Tailors dump the dollar for the Euro](#) –
iTravelnet, March 19, 2008

AFC gives Thailand a warning

March 19, 2008

Categories: Sports

[AFC gives Thailand a warning](#) – Bangkok Post, March 19, 2008

...The AFC officials were not satisfied with four points—the number of spectators was too low and the clubs did not have enough income from tickets, the clubs did not have good organisation and had financial problems, the marketing did not meet AFC's standards, and no clubs were registered as professional teams...

Canadian gets 3-1/2 yrs in Thai jail for cult murder

March 20, 2008

Categories: Crime

[Canadian gets 3-1/2 yrs in Thai jail for cult murder](#) – Reuters, March 20, 2008

A Canadian woman was sentenced to 3-1/2 years in a Thai jail on Thursday for killing her American partner, who claimed be the reincarnation of Jesus Christ and faced a spate of fraud charges in Hawaii...

Reshuffle spares coup officers– or maybe not

March 20, 2008

Categories: A Tale of Two Newspapers

A tale of two newspapers

[Officers close to junta on way out and allies of Thaksin back in](#) – *The Nation*, March 20, 2008

...Many officers seen as close to the junta were kicked upstairs to fill ceremonial positions while those seen as close to former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra returned to key assignments...

[Reshuffle spares coup officers – PM tries to win over military against Thaksin](#) – *Bangkok Post*, March 21, 2008

...Thaksin and officers from Class 10 of the pre-cadet school loyal to him, who wanted Gen Pornchai Karnlert to be reinstated to the army. The general was moved to the defence permanent secretary's office after the coup...

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

[archives](#) – compares how news sources report the same stories

Luxury Bangkok hotel combines lavish meal with ‘poverty tour’

March 20, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Luxury Bangkok hotel combines lavish meal with ‘poverty tour’](#) – *IHT*, March 20, 2008

...There is one twist. Before dinner, guests will be jetted to a poor village in northern Thailand to spend the afternoon soaking up the sights of poverty. The dinner and full-day excursion will cost the hotel \$300,000...

Pepper Spray ads from Lowe Bangkok, Thailand

March 20, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Pepper Spray ads from Lowe Bangkok, Thailand](#) – *AdLand*, March 20, 2008

New species photo roundup

March 20, 2008

[Orchid species now extinct in Burma](#) – *The Irrawaddy*, March 20, 2008

...*The Rainbow Orchid (Paphiopedilum wardii) and the Hirsute Paphiopedilum (Paphiopedilum villosum) were first discovered in the valleys of Putao and Nagmung in northern Kachin State some 20 years ago...*

[New species photo roundup](#) – *Cryptomundo*, March 20, 2008

Porntip: Any delay and I'll quit

March 20, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

FORENSICS INSTITUTE – Porntip: Any delay and I'll quit – *Bangkok Post*, March 20, 2008

...In an interview with the Bangkok Post, she said some people might try to block her from taking the position just as they did previously.

"Actually, I did not want the job. But I had to wait for a long time because I wanted to prove that I am innocent and all the charges against me were a fabrication," she said.

...The absence of a full-time head at the CIFS has significantly affected the institute's work and the morale of staff, who missed the chance of getting a 30% share of the director's bonus.

Plan to end slums on state land

March 20, 2008

Categories: Communities

[Plan to end slums on state land](#) – *Bangkok Post*, March 20, 2008

Army says southern insurgents incapable of becoming international terrorists

March 20, 2008

Categories: The Thai Deep South

Army says southern insurgents incapable of becoming international terrorists – translated and summarized from *Phujatkan*, March 20, 2008

General Akara Thiprot – the Spokesman of the Royal Thai Army – yesterday granted a media interview on the subject of the recent issuance of a US Government travel advisory. The travel advisory warned US citizens not to visit Thailand's three southernmost border provinces (Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat). Gen. Akara said it was normal for the US Government to issue such an advisory, as the Thai Government would do the same for its citizens if faced with a similar situation.

Concerning the Prime Minister's recent statement that southern insurgents might attempt to raise the profile of their criminal activities on the international stage, Gen. Akara commented that the insurgents had never really expressed any long-term goals. He reminded the media that the insurgents were loath to provide any advance warning on the likely times, locations and methods of their attacks. He accused the insurgents of only wishing to demonstrate that they were capable of carrying out criminal attacks, and added that this made it impossible for them to be perceived as 'international' terrorists.

Gen. Akara also commented that the Prime Minister's recent visit to the South would be insufficient, per se, to bring any immediate relief to the region's conflict – but added that the PM was already being well-appraised of the situation in the region on a daily basis.

China section of Kunming-Bangkok highway completed

March 21, 2008

Categories: Highways and Roads

[China section of Kunming-Bangkok highway completed](#) – *Xinhua*, March 21, 2008

The opening of the Chinese section will reduce the travel time from Kunming to Bangkok by half, to about 20 hours...

‘Mu Ham’ in trouble again on the roads

March 21, 2008

[‘Mu Ham’ in trouble again on the roads](#) – Bangkok Post, March 21, 2008

...He told traffic police who responded that he knew high-ranking police officers.

The man is a nephew of retired assistant police chief Pol Lt-Gen Ukrit Patchimsawat.

Later, his father, Mr Kan-anek, arrived and agreed to pay the bus driver 2,000 baht for repairs.

Mr Kanpithak is free on bail of a million baht after driving his Mercedes into a crowd at a bus stop in July last year, killing one and injuring several others...

Friday wreck

March 21, 2008




(Photo: Rose)

Friday wreck –
March 21, 2008

“Rain will fall throughout Thailand”

March 21, 2008

Announcement

 **Energy for Healthcare and Environment Research Center**

The Third Experiment to Produce Natural Rainfall
using three theories and one law of physics

1. Einstein's theory $E=mc^2$
2. Maxwell's quantum theory
3. Newton's law of gravitation
4. The research center's $E=LmV^{-n}$
(new innovation)

**From March 15-31, 2008
rain will fall throughout Thailand**

(Phase 1: from 15-31 March 2007)
(Phase 2: from 20 December 2007 onwards)

Rainfall will cause a cooling effect in the area.
Groups can gain further information.
If the experiment will not be successful,
we offer our apologies.

Thank you very much
Tel. 0-2985-9886, 08-1100-3268

"Rain will fall throughout Thailand" –

April 8, 2008

Left: Tim sends this odd ad in from *The Nation* on March 21, 2008.

“Int’l community supports China’s handling of Lhasa riots”

March 22, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

["Int’l community supports China’s handling of Lhasa riots"](#) – *Xinhua*, March 22, 2008

More countries around the world have thrown their support behind the Chinese government in its handling of the recent riots in Lhasa, capital city of China’s Tibet Autonomous Region...

Let the Constitutional Court provide judgment!

March 22, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Let the Constitutional Court provide judgment! – translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, March 22, 2008

Compared to the previous Electoral Commission (EC) line-up, it can clearly be seen that the current EC lacks unity. EC members now always express their individual opinions on each case – especially on the interpretation of the law. Individual members clearly also have widely-divergent political views. In the previous EC, several members announced that the decision to hand a red or yellow card to a candidate or to disband a political party depended entirely on interpretation of the law – without any regard to the political impact that might follow. A few days ago, however, one EC member said that he did not favor the disbanding of any political party – saying that it could result in the country falling into turmoil, and that this would mean allocating budget for a new election. This EC member added that the term ‘nominee’ did not exist in current electoral law.

This opinion is obviously contrary to previous EC pronouncements.

Another case, which shows the current disunity of the EC, is that of the People Power Party (PPP). One EC sub-committee has stated its disapproval of any move to disband the PPP and the Matchima Thipataya Party. This is contrary to the opinion of another EC member, Sumet Upanisakorn. Sumet has said that, in strict accordance with the law, he believes the EC has no other option than to disband the two parties.

It remains to be seen which of these two stances the EC will prioritize: Accordance with the strict letter of the law or a concern for possible political fallout. One important fact is certain, however. The EC will always be forced to pick up the pieces in the aftermath of unceasing political trickery.

Military involvement in industrial development approved – to revive economy in 5 southern provinces

March 22, 2008

Categories: The Thai Deep South

Military involvement in industrial development approved – to revive economy in 5 southern provinces

– Chalerm says he may go to Denmark to talk to leading insurgents – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, March 22, 2008

At yesterday's meeting of a government special committee – chaired by Prime Minister & Defense Minister Samak Sundaravej – to consider the development of the southern provinces, committee members approved a policy to allow the military to cooperate with industry in the setting up of new industrial enterprises in the region. It is believed that this move could help to develop the flagging economies of five southern provinces: Yala, Narathiwat, Pattani, Songkhla and Satun. The Southern Border Provinces Administration Center (SBPAC) has proposed a ratio of 9:3:3:5 for the proportion of investment that the military will make in Yala, Narathiwat, Pattani and Songkhla Provinces respectively.

The approved plan for military and industrial cooperation envisages that the military will hold a 51% share in any new company start-up, with the remaining 49% held by private investors. The plan will be entitled '3+4', which indicates that it will cover 3 southern provinces (Yala, Narathiwat and Pattani) and 4 districts of Songkhla Province.

Police Captain Chalerm Yoobamrung – the Interior Minister – also talked about the possibility of negotiations with southern insurgent organizations. Chalerm said the overtures towards such a meeting were proceeding well. He also urged exiled insurgents to return to Thailand to fight lawsuits filed against them, and guaranteed that provisions would be made for their personal security. He added that exiled insurgents in Sweden had told him that they favored holding any future talks with the Thai Government in Denmark.

Shock over tourist murders

March 23, 2008

Categories: Crime

[Shock over tourist murders](#) – Bangkok Post, March 23, 2008

...Mr Weerasak was in Phuket earlier this week to hand out whistles tourists could blow to get people's attention if they are being attacked.

Before the month is out, the Tourist Police Division hopes to be able to distribute the whistles along with some 100,000 copies of a revised version of its safety pamphlets targetting foreign female holidaymakers. An important piece of advice will be added to the pamphlets, warning bikini-clad female sunbathers to be mindful of where they are going on the beaches.

Women tourists are urged to wear a whistle when they stroll along a beach and not to wear a swimsuit which reveals too much.

New police motorcycles

March 23, 2008



New police motorcycles –
March 23, 2008

Left: The new "Boxer" police motorcycles... in 2007 there was an unprecedented spending on new vehicles for the police including motorcycles, van and [paddy wagons](#) for every district in the country.

Thai Olympic torchbearer withdraws in protest

March 23, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thai Olympic torchbearer withdraws in protest](#) – *USA Today*, March 23, 2008

...Narisa Chakrabongse, one of the country's six torchbearers, all of whom are environmental activists — said in an open letter she decided against taking part in the relay to “send a strong message to China that the world community could not accept its actions...”

Marilyn and Madonna billboard

March 24, 2008

Categories: Signs and Billboards



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Marilyn and Madonna billboard – March 24, 2008

It reads: Hair sparks life.

The product is Sunilk shampoo. On the left is Thai movie star Patchara or Um.

Enormous cost of railway overhaul just not worth it

March 24, 2008

Categories: Thai Railroads

[Enormous cost of railway overhaul just not worth it](#) – *The Nation*, March 24, 2008

What countries get media coverage

March 24, 2008

[What countries get media coverage](#) – observatoiredesmedias.com, March 24, 2008

Big island resident fatally shot In Thailand

March 24, 2008

[Big island resident fatally shot In Thailand](#) –
KITV.com, March 24, 2008

Thailand's misuse of 'compulsory licensing' allowed corrupt officials to steal millions

March 24, 2008

Categories: Drugs

[Thailand's misuse of 'compulsory licensing' allowed corrupt officials to steal millions](#) – *Belleville News Democrat*, March 24, 2008

When it comes to public health, Thailand's former government leaders would like the world to think that they're a collection of 21st-century Robin Hoods.

...The literally billions of dollars in free medicines and development projects pouring into sub-Saharan Africa don't come for free. Those must be funded by sales from the developed world and, at least in part, from countries like Thailand that can afford to pay some small part of the cost of innovation – even if not at the same scale countries in the U.S. and Europe can afford...

Ang Thong province spooked by mass cat deaths

March 24, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Ang Thong province spooked by mass cat deaths](#) – PRD, March 24, 2008

“Jirapat T.”

March 24, 2008

Categories: Art



"Jirapat T." –

March 24, 2008

Interesting [Keith Haring](#)-inspired shop sign at the Jewelry Trade Center.

Revising the Constitution for political advantage is inappropriate and unjust

March 24, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Revising the Constitution for political advantage is inappropriate and unjust

– translated and summarized from *Krungtep Turakit*, March 24, 2008

Three coalition parties – the People Power Party (PPP), the Chart Thai Party and the Matchima Thipataya Party – are currently applying pressure for the revision of several sections of the 2007 Constitution. The three parties claim that several sections of the publicly-endorsed Constitution are not democratic, and were included under the duress of the dictatorial power of the time. These three parties, however, have yet to directly mention an intention to revise Section 237 – which details the disbandment of any political party whose leadership breaks electoral law.

It is quite clear that this move is driven by the fact that each of the executive committees of these three parties has received a ‘red’ card for electoral misconduct. Indeed, the Constitutional Court is now considering whether to disband these parties. Although there are some sections of the 2007 Constitution that are clearly not democratic in spirit, it possesses – in its entirety – many advantages when compared to its predecessor.

Constitutional revisions could lead to a loss of good governance in the long term. They could also have an impact on the ability of this administration to deliver reliable governance to those by whom it was elected.

Thais suffering severe social tensions

March 25, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Thais suffering severe social tensions – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, March 25, 2008

A 23 year-old female lecturer at Assumption University – an honors graduate of a reputed university – has sent shockwaves running through both her immediate family and Thai society in general by committing suicide as the result of a broken heart. I believe our society needs to reconsider how it allows its citizens to deal with modern tensions. This case has led to numerous people asking why it is that such a highly-educated person is unable to survive such a personal mental crisis. This story has brought the whole issue of suicide amongst our young people to the attention of the government and its various relevant agencies. The media and educational institutes are now also wondering how they can promote certain social values – in accordance with both Buddhist practice and the speeches of Their Majesties the King and Queen – that will better guide troubled Thais through their personal travails and onto greater happiness.

Congress, watchdog probe passport security

March 26, 2008

[New US RFID passports manufactured offshore at a huge profit, transported by unsecured couriers](#) –

BoingBoing, October 23, 2008

...After the computer chips are inserted into the back cover of the passports in Europe, the blank covers are shipped to a factory in Ayutthaya, Thailand, north of Bangkok, to be fitted with a wire Radio Frequency Identification, or RFID, antenna. The blank passports eventually are transported to Washington for final binding, according to the documents and interviews.

The stop in Thailand raises its own security concerns. The Southeast Asian country has battled social instability and terror threats. Anti-government groups backed by Islamists, including al Qaeda, have carried out attacks in southern Thailand and the Thai military took over in a coup in September 2006.

The Netherlands-based company that assembles the U.S. e-passport covers in Thailand, Smartrac Technology Ltd., warned in its latest annual report that, in a worst-case scenario, social unrest in Thailand could lead to a halt in production.

Smartrac divulged in an October 2007 court filing in The Hague that China had stolen its patented technology for e-passport chips, raising additional questions about the security of America's e-passports...

[Outsourced passports netting govt. profits, risking national security](#) – *Washington Times*,

March 26, 2008

...After the computer chips are inserted into the back cover of the passports in Europe, the blank covers are shipped to a factory in Ayutthaya, Thailand, north of Bangkok, to be fitted with a wire Radio Frequency Identification, or RFID, antenna. The blank passports eventually are transported to Washington for final binding, according to the documents and interviews.

The stop in Thailand raises its own security concerns. The Southeast Asian country has battled social instability and terror threats. Anti-government groups backed by Islamists, including al Qaeda, have carried out attacks in southern Thailand and the Thai military took over in a coup in September 2006...

[Congress, watchdog probe passport security](#) – *Washington Times*,

March 27, 2008

...The Times reported yesterday that the GPO chose two European computer chip makers over U.S. manufacturers to make tens of millions of electronic passports. The passports are being assembled in Thailand by one company that was a victim of Chinese economic espionage.

"If true, these allegations raised in today's press reports are extremely serious not only to the integrity of our e-Passport program, but also to our national security," said Mr. Dingell, chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

...One of the companies involved in passport production in Thailand, Smartrac, charged in a court filing in the Netherlands last year that its technology was stolen by China...

The Thai company that makes US passports: [Smartrac](#)

They also have this domain–www.smartrac.co.th–but it seems only to be used for email.

[Smartrac, issuing inlays, opening fourth factory in Thailand](#) – *Contactless News*, November 29, 2006

Smartrac, a provider of inlays for electronic passports, has obtained a major order to supply several million ePassport inlays for the new U.S. passports, Security Document World reports.

Since 2004, Smartrac has been a certified supplier for the U.S. ePassport program, and produces one million inlays a month.

In order to meet the increasing worldwide demand for high security inlays Smartrac is planning to open a fourth factory at the company's location in Thailand as early as January 2007.

Human Rights Watch wants Thai Govt to prosecute soldiers for mistreatment

March 26, 2008

Categories: Human Rights, The Thai Deep South

[Human Rights Watch wants Thai Govt to prosecute soldiers for mistreatment](#) – *Bernama*, March 26, 2008

Prosecuting soldiers for mistreatment of people in the restive southern Thai can actually help calm the situation and rebuild trust with the Muslim community, the Human Rights Watch (HRW) said today...

A trip on a steam train in Thailand

March 26, 2008

[A trip on a steam train in Thailand](#) – March 26, 2008

Today marked the anniversary of the opening of the first public railway in Thailand on 26th March 1896 that went from Bangkok to Ayutthaya. The State Railway of Thailand organized their annual trip for steam train enthusiasts today. Loco engine number 824 led the way this morning as it departed Hua Lamphong Station. Loco engine number 953 took the lead for the return trip in the evening. Total train journey was just over two hours with stops at six stations along the way...

Chance for farmers?

March 26, 2008

Chance for farmers? – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, March 26, 2008

Deputy Minister of Commerce Wirut Techapaiboon has stated that the price of rice is likely to reach a new high this year, and thereafter remain high for at least a further two years. The Rice Exporters' Association has also said that the price of FOB 100% White Rice could hit 1,000 USD per tonne, from the current level of 556 USD. The export price of Jasmine Rice is also expected go beyond 1,000 USD per tonne, from the current level of 790 USD.

The cruelly-high current oil prices have led to a global decrease in the storage of rice, with stored grains dropping from 130 million tonnes to 70 million tonnes. Farmers are now also turning to the growing of other agricultural crops. The production of rice is currently in decline, while the demand for it is rising.

Some commodity experts see these developments as a good opportunity for rice growers to improve their income. The government needs to ensure that it is farmers that receive the benefits of these higher prices – and not just commodity speculators.

“ADVICES FOR TOURISTS”

March 27, 2008

["ADVICES FOR TOURISTS"](#) – March 27, 2008

An anguished English classic—and in the form of a 2.15MB graphic!

*Please noted that Thailand has beautiful cultures such as Sawasdee (Thai greeting) and Respect elderly act.
and Wear safety chute while boarding the ship.*

Thai activists, parents urge end to underage castrations

March 27, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thai activists, parents urge end to underage castrations](#) – AFP,

March 27, 2008

...Many clinics require parental approval before performing castrations on minors, but Nathee said some parents have agreed to the procedure only after their children threatened to commit suicide...

Rabies stats

March 27, 2008

[Rabies stats](#) – Bangkok Post, March 27, 2008

...20 people died of rabies in the whole country in 2007, compared with 22 and 20 in 2006 and 2005, respectively. In 1995, 74 Thais died of rabies.

Each year, about one million Thais are bitten by dogs, and the government spends more than one billion baht each year to give them medical treatment. The number of people who receive treatment for rabies is increasing every year, he added...

Prem denies his involvement in the 2006 coup

March 27, 2008

[Prem denies his involvement in the 2006 coup](#) – *The Nation*, March 27, 2008

Village Barefoot MBA program

March 27, 2008

[Village Barefoot MBA program](#) – March 27, 2008

The public press is not the government's press

March 27, 2008

The public press is not the government's press

– translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, March 27, 2008

Prime Minister's Office Minister Jakrapob Penkair has recently stated that Thai TV Channel 11 is to become a national broadcasting channel with an increased role as an official media outlet of the state – in addition to airing its more traditional programming to the public. Five radio stations will also be reorganized to better serve the government's dissemination of information to the media. I would like to inform readers that the Constitution stipulates that the role of 'state media' is primarily to serve the public need – and not to serve the sitting government. If the public is to continue receiving unbiased news, it will be necessary to keep a vigilant look out for government interference in the media – to ensure that it does not overstep the mark laid down by the Constitution.

The Politics of Practical Nostalgia

March 29, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008, Thailand in the International Media



[The Politics of Practical Nostalgia](#) – Newsweek,
March 29, 2008

...In neighboring Thailand, voters have broken a cycle of coups that goes back to the 1960s. In the past, junta leaders held on to power as long as they could and then installed civilian allies. But 14 months after generals ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, they were forced by public pressure to hold the Dec. 23 elections that Thaksin backers won. As a result, Thaksin has changed “the way things are done in Thailand,” says Thitinan Pongsudhirak, director of the Institute of Security and International Studies at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. “Today the forces at home and abroad are in his favor.”

A successful economic answer to the pressures of globalization was central to Thaksin’s rise and helps explain his return. During his five-year term the economy boomed, rural growth spiked and Thailand became the only country in Asia to narrow its rich-poor gap. His Thai Rak Thai party gained popularity by spending heavily on infrastructure and the poor, including village-level development programs and nearly free health care, yet keeping Thailand open to foreign investors and aggressively promoting trade. Then came the junta, which managed in a few short months to scare off foreign investors and alienate rural Thais by advocating quasi-Buddhist “efficiency economics” that emphasized stability over growth. Under the generals, Thailand grew by just 4.8 percent last year. ...

Bangkok's Lebua Hotel and Rasri Bualert: Another Day, Another Controversy

March 29, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Bangkok's Lebua Hotel and Rasri Bualert: Another Day, Another Controversy](#) – *FriskoDude*, March 29, 2008

Panic grips Asian rice trade after India's move

March 29, 2008

Categories: Food and Drink

[Panic grips Asian rice trade after India's move](#) – *The Statesman*, March 29, 2008

...Faced with rising rice prices in the international market and unprecedented price volatility, Asia's rice exporters, with the sole exception of Thailand, have responded by imposing export bans while importers are seeking ways to increase stocks and reduce consumption...

Samak retaliates against Thai Post

March 29, 2008

Categories: Thai Politics

[Samak retaliates against Thai Post](#) – *The Nation*, March 29, 2008

Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej Sunday hit back at Thai Post for criticising his market visit in Singapore. Samak said he had three free hours during his recent visit to Singapore so he decided to visit a market there...

Thai Media Project – March 2008

March 30, 2008

Categories: Thai Media Project



Thailand #2 in corruption – *Krungtepturakit*, March 14, 2008

At the bottom left it reads: Wonder that we can't get the first level!!

Samak says: Who is PERC? They just read the Thai newspapers and then assertively say that Thailand is number two in the corruption problem. How can it be?

This is a reference to a report last week ranking Thailand as behind the Philippines as the most corrupt country in Asia.

[RP, Thailand among most corrupt Asian economies — survey](#) – AFP, March 10, 2008

...As in the 2007 survey, Thailand remained the second most corrupt economy after the Philippines with a score of 8.0 after the military, which seized power in a coup in 2006, was seen to have failed to tackle the problem.

“The kingdom’s economy has been marking time for two years while it sorts out political problems in which allegations of corruption figure prominently,” said PERC...

Judicial authority –

translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, March 12, 2008

Ministry of Justice Permanent Secretary Charan Pakdeethanakul has recently opined that the government should concentrate on the administration of the country, and not interfere with the powers of the law courts and other judicial organizations. I wish to comment that the current People Power Party (PPP) majority government and cabinet – as headed by Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej – should reconsider the manner in which they are running the country. This PPP-led government has already conducted a whole series of transfers of government officials since it was sworn into power. These included the transfers of the Department of Special Investigations (DSI) Chief, the National Police Chief and 30 others. It should be noted that the DSI is directly involved in the investigation of legal proceedings against deposed Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, and I believe that this government is likely to get itself into a great deal of trouble if these transfers compromise the judicial process.

People’s rights and liberty –

translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, March 13, 2008

Foreign Minister Noppadon Pattama said the movement of the People’s Alliance for Democracy has negatively affected the nation’s image among other countries. The columnist is surprised to hear such a

comment from the lawyer-minister, which is against the principle of democracy and certain constitutional provisions regarding people's rights to express their views and gather in a public place. The columnist wonders which countries the foreign minister mentioned as democratic countries around the globe consider such a political movement an ordinary activity. On the contrary, countries worldwide have negative attitudes towards a state prohibiting its people to protest, gather, or view their opinions.

The people who really destroy the country's image –

translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, March 15, 2008

According to a survey conducted by the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy, the Philippines is the most corrupt Asian economy while Thailand has been ranked second for two consecutive years. Meanwhile, Singapore retained its ranking as the cleanest economy in Asia. The survey covers 13 economies in Asia and was conducted among 1,400 expatriate businessmen. The columnist believes the ranking also reflects the degrees of democracy as the administrations of countries which strictly follow democratic practices will run the countries transparently. On Thailand, a certain minister recently stated that political movements by a people's organization have negatively affected the country's image and driven foreign investors away. The question is: what really does affect the kingdom's image between such political movements and the survey by a foreign institution?

Fear management – translated and summarized from *Krungtep Turakit* editorial, March 18, 2008

The government must work harder to achieve its targets. This is especially true when it comes to dealing with the fears of people living in the southern border provinces, and when trying to regain their confidence. Insurgents have created great fear in the hearts of the people of the region, and have coerced them into both being distant to the state and not cooperating with its local officials.

There are two major problems that the state has in its dealings with southerners: Locals distrust the state, and are not prepared to cooperate with it in any significant way. Many residents of the region fear that the government will not provide them with security in times of peril. Indeed, they often believe that they are actually imperiling their own lives by cooperating too much with the state. The car bomb at the CS Pattani Hotel – in Pattani Province on March 15 – furthered increased such local fears.

All these factors have reduced the confidence of many southerners in the state. Such factors also appear to have dashed any hopes for the establishment of a sustainable peace in the region.

A network of southern citizens – who have come together to oppose the actions of the insurgents – held a press conference recently, to express their feelings and opinions about the conflict that has engulfed their region.

Chance for farmers? – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, March 26, 2008

Deputy Minister of Commerce Wirut Techapaiboon has stated that the price of rice is likely to reach a new high this year, and thereafter remain high for at least a further two years. The Rice Exporters' Association has also said that the price of FOB 100% White Rice could hit 1,000 USD per tonne, from the current level of 556 USD. The export price of Jasmine Rice is also expected go beyond 1,000 USD per tonne, from the current level of 790 USD.

The cruelly-high current oil prices have led to a global decrease in the storage of rice, with stored grains dropping from 130 million tonnes to 70 million tonnes. Farmers are now also turning to the growing of other agricultural crops. The production of rice is currently in decline, while the demand for it is rising.

Some commodity experts see these developments as a good opportunity for rice growers to improve their income. The government needs to ensure that it is farmers that receive the benefits of these higher prices – and not just commodity speculators.

Thais suffering severe social tensions – translated and summarized from

Matichon, March 25, 2008

A 23 year-old female lecturer at Assumption University – an honors graduate of a reputed university – has sent shockwaves running through both her immediate family and Thai society in general by committing suicide as the result of a broken heart. I believe our society needs to reconsider how it allows its citizens to deal with modern tensions. This case has led to numerous people asking why it is that such a highly-educated person is unable to survive such a personal mental crisis. This story has brought the whole issue of suicide amongst our young people to the attention of the government and its various relevant agencies. The media

and educational institutes are now also wondering how they can promote certain social values – in accordance with both Buddhist practice and the speeches of Their Majesties the King and Queen – that will better guide troubled Thais through their personal travails and onto greater happiness.

The public press is not the government's press

– translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, March 27, 2008

Prime Minister's Office Minister Jakrapob Penkair has recently stated that Thai TV Channel 11 is to become a national broadcasting channel with an increased role as an official media outlet of the state – in addition to airing its more traditional programming to the public. Five radio stations will also be reorganized to better serve the government's dissemination of information to the media. I would like to inform readers that the Constitution stipulates that the role of 'state media' is primarily to serve the public need – and not to serve the sitting government. If the public is to continue receiving unbiased news, it will be necessary to keep a vigilant look out for government interference in the media – to ensure that it does not overstep the mark laid down by the Constitution.

Let the Constitutional Court provide judgment! – translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, March 22, 2008

Compared to the previous Electoral Commission (EC) line-up, it can clearly be seen that the current EC lacks unity. EC members now always express their individual opinions on each case – especially on the interpretation of the law. Individual members clearly also have widely-divergent political views.

In the previous EC, several members announced that the decision to hand a red or yellow card to a candidate or to disband a political party depended entirely on interpretation of the law – without any regard to the political impact that might follow. A few days ago, however, one EC member said that he did not favor the disbanding of any political party – saying that it could result in the country falling into turmoil, and that this would mean allocating budget for a new election. This EC member added that the term 'nominee' did not exist in current electoral law.

This opinion is obviously contrary to previous EC pronouncements.

Another case, which shows the current disunity of the EC, is that of the People Power Party (PPP). One EC sub-committee has stated its disapproval of any move to disband the PPP and the Matchima Thipataya Party. This is contrary to the opinion of another EC member, Sumet Upanisakorn. Sumet has said that, in strict accordance with the law, he believes the EC has no other option than to disband the two parties.

It remains to be seen which of these two stances the EC will prioritize: Accordance with the strict letter of the law or a concern for possible political fallout. One important fact is certain, however. The EC will always be forced to pick up the pieces in the aftermath of unceasing political trickery.

Revising the Constitution for political advantage is inappropriate and unjust

– translated and summarized from *Krungtep Turakit*, March 24, 2008

Three coalition parties – the People Power Party (PPP), the Chart Thai Party and the Matchima Thipataya Party – are currently applying pressure for the revision of several sections of the 2007 Constitution. The three parties claim that several sections of the publicly-endorsed Constitution are not democratic, and were included under the duress of the dictatorial power of the time. These three parties, however, have yet to directly mention an intention to revise Section 237 – which details the disbandment of any political party whose leadership breaks electoral law.

It is quite clear that this move is driven by the fact that each of the executive committees of these three parties has received a 'red' card for electoral misconduct. Indeed, the Constitutional Court is now considering whether to disband these parties. Although there are some sections of the 2007 Constitution that are clearly not democratic in spirit, it possesses – in its entirety – many advantages when compared to its predecessor.

Constitutional revisions could lead to a loss of good governance in the long term. They could also have an impact on the ability of this administration to deliver reliable governance to those by whom it was elected.

Military involvement in industrial development approved – to revive economy in 5 southern provinces

– Chalerm says he may go to Denmark to talk to leading insurgents – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, March 22, 2008

At yesterday's meeting of a government special committee – chaired by Prime Minister & Defense Minister Samak Sundaravej – to consider the development of the southern provinces, committee members approved a policy to allow the military to cooperate with industry in the setting up of new industrial enterprises in the region. It is believed that this move could help to develop the flagging economies of five southern provinces: Yala, Narathiwat, Pattani, Songkhla and Satun. The Southern Border Provinces Administration Center (SBPAC) has proposed a ratio of 9:3:3:5 for the proportion of investment that the military will make in Yala, Narathiwat, Pattani and Songkhla Provinces respectively.

The approved plan for military and industrial cooperation envisages that the military will hold a 51% share in any new company start-up, with the remaining 49% held by private investors. The plan will be entitled '3+4', which indicates that it will cover 3 southern provinces (Yala, Narathiwat and Pattani) and 4 districts of Songkhla Province.

Police Captain Chalerm Yoobamrung – the Interior Minister – also talked about the possibility of negotiations with southern insurgent organizations. Chalerm said the overtures towards such a meeting were proceeding well. He also urged exiled insurgents to return to Thailand to fight lawsuits filed against them, and guaranteed that provisions would be made for their personal security. He added that exiled insurgents in Sweden had told him that they favored holding any future talks with the Thai Government in Denmark.

Army says southern insurgents incapable of becoming 'international' terrorists – translated and summarized from *Phujatkan*, March 20, 2008

General Akara Thiprot – the Spokesman of the Royal Thai Army – yesterday granted a media interview on the subject of the recent issuance of a US Government travel advisory. The travel advisory warned US citizens not to visit Thailand's three southernmost border provinces (Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat). Gen. Akara said it was normal for the US Government to issue such an advisory, as the Thai Government would do the same for its citizens if faced with a similar situation.

Concerning the Prime Minister's recent statement that southern insurgents might attempt to raise the profile of their criminal activities on the international stage, Gen. Akara commented that the insurgents had never really expressed any long-term goals. He reminded the media that the insurgents were loath to provide any advance warning on the likely times, locations and methods of their attacks. He accused the insurgents of only wishing to demonstrate that they were capable of carrying out criminal attacks, and added that this made it impossible for them to be perceived as 'international' terrorists.

Gen. Akara also commented that the Prime Minister's recent visit to the South would be insufficient, per se, to bring any immediate relief to the region's conflict – but added that the PM was already being well-appraised of the situation in the region on a daily basis.



Rock throwing – Arun, *Krungtepturakit*, March 14, 2008
At the bottom it reads: New danger
At the far right, the car driver is saying: Wear a helmet also



News weeklies – March 11, 2008

Left: *Nation Weekend* – He's not my boyfriend. I cannot do this on his behalf.

Right: *Matichon Weekly* – One second too late



Senate's most important duties are to restore faith and maintain freedom – translated and summarized from *Krungthep Turakit*, March 3, 2008

The number of people who voted in the country's Senate election was less than expected. This probably indicates that the public neither understand nor realize the importance and duty of the Senate as set out by the widely-criticized 2007 Constitution.

This failure could be because the public currently have no faith in the abilities of their elected senators. Indeed, this might even be because the public was dissatisfied with the work of previous senators. The public may lack understanding of the role of the Senate, and may also not realize the extent of its powers as laid down by the 2007 Constitution.

All 150 senators – both elected and selected under the provisions of the 2007 Constitution – should now demonstrate a unity of purpose, if they are to prove to the public that the Senate is fully capable of balancing and scrutinizing the work of both members of parliament and the cabinet.

All senators should be seen to work independently of parliament, and should not side with any one political party. In this way they may be able to restore public faith in their role, and strengthen and improve Thailand's democracy.

Unqualified ministers under consideration for dismissal? – translated and summarized from *Krungtep Turakit*, March 10, 2008

Concerning the current attempt to gather the names of 20,000 public health officials in order to put pressure on the government to remove the Public Health Minister Chaiya Sasomsab. I believe that this is an opportune moment to examine closely what is really going on in this ministry. Soon after Chaiya took over his ministerial post, he was subjected to a barrage of strong criticism over his widely-perceived poor decision-making in a number of important cases that come under the ministry's jurisdiction. These cases included his decision to scrap compulsory licensing of certain pharmaceuticals, and his transfer of the 'Food and Drug Administration' Secretary-General. The Public Health Minister has already demonstrated his imprudence on several occasions, and it now seems highly doubtful whether he possesses sufficient shrewdness of judgment to truly qualify for a ministerial post.

One nation, two prime ministers – translated and summarized from *Komchadluek*, March 6, 2008

Former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's return is clearly being perceived by many as having effectively created a country run by two prime ministers. High-ranking government officials, who might have an agenda contrary to that of the ousted prime minister, have already been transferred. The current Prime Minister – Samak Sundaravej – must realize that this has caused great public concern, with many demanding an explanation of the situation from the country's elected prime minister.

It should be remembered that the person who called on Samak Sundaravej to be the head of the People Power Party (PPP) was none other than Thaksin Shinawatra himself.

In principle, the Kingdom should have only one prime minister – and that premier's name should be Samak Sundaravej. Samak should have full power to administer the country without having to concern himself about outside influences.

As the elected leader of this country, Samak must be answerable on all issues concerning the country and its administration. People will continue to have a perception of ‘one country – two prime ministers’ as long as they continue to doubt that truth is being spoken by either of these two people.

Armed forces come under attack in the news – on issues ranging from ‘Don Muang 51’ to disappearing guns – translated and summarized from *Komchadluek*; Column: Talui Kong Tap; Author: Security reporters, March 2, 2008

The following may all figure in an elaborate plot to use the media to discredit the armed forces: The establishment of the ‘Don Muang 51’ anti-terrorist group, its possible deployment to provide security for the return of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, and the recent disappearance of firearms from a military armory.

A special military force has been established by Supreme Command HQ for the purpose of countering international terrorist attacks. The group undertook its initial training session, under the codename of ‘Don Muang 51’, during the period February 19 – 22. Many observers are closely-monitoring this group, as its initial training session took place only a few days before the return of a former leader of the country from exile.

Some say that the ‘Don Muang 51’ group was set up to provide security for the return of deposed Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra on February 28. A total of 792 officers, from 40 organizations, were involved in the initial training session.

According to some sources, Supreme Commander Gen. Boonsang Niampradit has been forced to make a statement to the effect that the group’s initial training session was not in preparation for the return of Thaksin Shinawatra. It is believed that this lack of transparency in the group’s establishment could result in some discredit to the armed forces.

Some sources are also saying that they believe that the recent disappearance of three firearms, from the armory of a military unit, was part of a plot to ambush Thaksin Shinawatra on his return from exile.

It is noticeable that all current news emanating from the armed forces, both good and bad, is acting to their discredit.



If magical powers existed... – Matichon, March 2, 2008

If magical powers existed,

Top, left to right: Chaiya Sasomsap would be turned into Chaiya Mittrchai.

The Chairman would make the red cards white.

The puppet would give itself life.

Bottom, left to right: The owner of this hotel would keep his “Chan Song La” home under repair for a longer period of time.

Meechai would turn his chair into NLA President so he did not have to blame the computer system.

Many people would make Thaksin Shinawatra and Sonthi Limthongkul forgetful.



Invisible hand –*Thai Rath*, March 2, 2008

Invisible hand (or unseen hand)

Top left to right: An invisible hand drove a car and just parked it until it was covered in dust.

An invisible hand stole monk robes and things donated by Buddhists.

An invisible hand, please find my Persian cat wearing a diamond necklace and give him back to me.

Bottom left to right: An invisible hand hid a million baht in cash under the bed donated to a temple.

An invisible hand is trying to frustrate the premier for money.

An invisible hand called three ECT board members to make bomb threat.

How to put the kingdom in order in an appropriate manner – translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, March 4, 2008

During the ‘Samak Talk’ program that was broadcast live on national radio and television channels last Sunday, Prime Minister Samak discussed audience feedback that favored people being allowed to gamble legally. The PM said that he agreed with such proposals, as government-sanctioned gambling was allowed in other countries.

The Thaksin Government also once proposed a plan to set up legal casinos, but the plan progressed no further. It did, however, manage to launch a government-sanctioned lottery – that it named ‘Huai Bon Din’. This populist measure was well-received by the public, but was terminated during the Surayud administration – with Prime Minister Gen. Surayud declaring it illegal.

The Surayud Government eventually attempted, unsuccessfully, to enact its own form of legal lottery.

We suggest that this elected government should revive the legal lottery, as it will undoubtedly generate high revenues for the country. We believe that all gambling activities should be legalized, and placed on a sound legal footing.



Ready for Thaksin – by Buncha/Kamin, Manager, March, 2008

The name of the column is "Chim pai Da pai."

"Chim" means "taste" and "da" means "abuse." This is a play on the name of Samak's cooking program "Chim pai Bon pai."

At the top it reads:

2 necessary equipment for the day that Thaksin comes home

Left: Tissue to wipe tears for the one who is crazy about Thaksin

Right: Spittoon for vomit from the one who does not like Thaksin



Weekend news mags –
March, 2008

Left: *Matichon Weekly*: Siam War II
Return of Thaksin

Right: *Nation Weekend*: Auspicious Rajah, the
auspices of coming home



Plodprasop flames NDWC's effectiveness

March 31, 2008

Categories: Wildlife and Nature

[Plodprasop flames NDWC's effectiveness](#) – *Phuket Gazette*, May, 2008

Dr Plodprasop Surasawadee, assistant minister of the Prime Minister's Office, today likened the status of Thailand's National Disaster Warning Center (NDWC) to that of an "abandoned toilet"...

Foreign husbands fuel Isan economy

April 1, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Foreign husbands fuel Isan economy](#) – *Bangkok Post*, April 1, 2008

...Unlike in the past when the villagers lived in Thai-style wooden houses or in small shacks, the village of 720 households today is congested with luxurious houses, some worth as much as 30 million baht...

Not an April Fool's Day joke apparently: Girl band to front Culture Ministry campaign to dress modestly

April 1, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Not an April Fool's Day joke apparently: [Girl band to front Culture Ministry campaign to dress modestly – for Thai new year](#) – *Sin Chew Jit Poh*, April 1, 2008

Satellite photos of Bangkok in 1997 and 2007

April 2, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Satellite photos of Bangkok in 1997 and 2007](#) – *EORC*, April, 2008

Karun jump-kicks at Somkiart in parliament

April 2, 2008

Categories: Thai Politics

[Karun jump-kicks at Somkiart in parliament](#)

– *The Nation*, April 2, 2008

Also: [Fit of fury](#)

More: [Another Colorful Politician: Karun Hosakul](#)

More: [Colorful politician Karun Hosakul red carded for outrageous claims](#)

Komchadluek: The country is at risk!

April 2, 2008

Categories: Thai Politics

The country is at risk! – translated and summarized from *Komchadluek*, April 2, 2008

Politicians – who were elected as representatives of the public – should put their collective intelligence to work to solve the existing problems of the Kingdom, and to prevent any new problems that might arise. They should also work more closely to provide the people – they represent – with greater security for their livelihoods, personnel assets and well-being.

Some politicians currently seem intent on taking shameless advantage of the government's assets, however. Indeed, they seem to be mainly engaged in doing things for their own sake.

Such behavior is hardly new, and is actually known to be an enduring problem in Thai politics. If this country continues to be ruled by immoral and selfish politicians, it will be increasingly at risk of failure.

Such politicians will almost certainly persist in favoring their associates, regardless of the eventual cost to the nation.

The Thai public is now facing many problems. These problems include expensive fuel costs, a high cost-of-living, numerous environmental problems and a soaring crime rate.

Additionally, several ministerial post-holders – within the current administration – are widely considered to be ill-qualified for their positions. These individuals not only act in a politically aggressive manner, but also seem intent on doing things that will not benefit the majority of the population.

If ministerial post-holders continue to show no great eagerness to solve the country's problem, our country's citizens will be left with no one to turn to. The situation will almost certainly worsen if these individuals are allowed to continue taking advantage of their positions.

Prime Minister Samak should consider reshuffling the members of his Cabinet. Inefficient ministerial post-holders should be sacked before they damage the country any further.

Gem scam report – The Oscar

April 3, 2008

Categories: Gem Scam

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

A reader reports: I have been a victim of this scam and it was not until I did a search on Thai Gems that my heart exploded (after reading your detailed and informative website). Thankfully, that was 2 weeks ago and I since had it resolved incident-free together with a 100% refund.

[Please go to this link to read what I have posted, under the username of “Ben”.](#)

Thankfully after I was scammed, 3 things worked in my favour:

- 1. I had my laptop with me and my room had free 24/7 internet access that allowed me to do more research.*
- 2. I had the gems with me (2 rings with the value of 100,000 bahts)*
- 3. I am to depart the following day for a 5pm flight.*

My wife and I planned to let our credit card deal with it but was told that the transaction has already been approved (too late to reverse) and it will be hard to claim it as fraud as I authorised the transaction. Not happy with their response, I decided to deal with it myself as much as I could while I still have time in Bangkok.

I have read that the Tourist Police are not very helpful (and their superiors are possibly part of this scam) and it would be unwise to return to the place of purchase (The Oscar) due to time and language problems. Furthermore, there are reports that victims who chose this route have been abused and beaten up by the mafia.

As I surfed the internet for solutions till 6am, I came across this report that a person by the name of Mr Suchat from the Ministry of Internal Trade has assisted a victim in obtaining a refund. Sensing that this is my only chance to salvage what I lost, I sent him an email and called him at 8.30am.

As I spoke to one of his employee, his employee is already aware that I have sent Mr Suchat an email. He proceed to ask me to go to his office ASAP as time is against us (as we had to depart in the afternoon). I was quite hesitant but with nothing to lose, we checked out of our hotel and took a cab to his office. It was an hour ride from Sukhumvit.

Upon reaching there, it was a huge Government Building and we managed to speak to Mr. Suchat. He is a

powerful man and is the Attorney-Director for the Internal Trade division. We explained our situation and he acted on it straight away.

He called The Oscar and told the receptionist to get the manager to return his call. True enough, the phone rang and he spoke to the manager in Thai. After the conversation (sounded aggressive and persuasive at the same time), he informed me that the manager will call back to speak with me. Mr Suchat told me what to say — that I want a full 100% refund and I have appointed Mr Suchat to negotiate on my behalf. I did that and finally, a last phone call came in. It was the owner/director/mafia and Mr Suchat spoke for us. It was intense yet Mr. Suchat made us feel safe at the same time in his office.

After the call, he said don't be afraid as he has the power and the authority given by the Thai Government, and that no one dared go against him — even the corrupted mafias and gangs. Whew!! Just the words we wanted to hear!!! He then told us to file a report and to leave everything (all documents, paperwork, gems) with him. We trust him so we did just that. We were then told to go to the airport to catch our flight. Mr Suchat and his team will correspond via email to us.

True enough, we were update throughout the 2 days on what was happening and on the 3rd day, we got an email that we will be getting a 100% refund. It took a while for the refund to go through (as last weekend was Good Friday and Easter Monday so banks were closed) but alas, the refund came through today!!!!

Everyone at Dit (Dept of Internal Trade) were helpful and it made us feel good about the Thai people and Thailand again. We vowed never to return to Thailand after what happened to us, but because of Mr Suchat, we realised that we shouldn't make the 1% of bad apples ruin the good name of Thailand for everyone. As for Mr Suchat, he is a fantastic man and I am so glad to have met him in person. He is extremely helpful for a powerful man like him and Thailand is extremely fortunate to have someone like him. He says he assists on average 2 tourists a week and his success rate has been flawless.

So, I urge all fellow victims to contact Mr Suchat if you need help. I would strongly urge you to contact him first even before making a report to the Tourist Police. He can be contacted on compro@dit.go.th

Hope this helps and good luck with your refund.

As for us, we have learnt a valuable lesson in trusting strangers and on greed too. Thankfully, this invaluable lesson did not come at a high price for us.

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

Plus forced to scrap top floors11 buildings violate height restrictions

April 3, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Plus forced to scrap top floors – 11 buildings violate height restrictions](#) – Bangkok Post, April 3, 2008

...Plus Property Co, a subsidiary of Sansiri Plc, will remove the top floors at 11 of its Condo One low-rise condominiums to comply with city building limits. Chief executive Mayta Chanchamcharat said the company would also refund down payments to any unsatisfied buyers. The renovation and redesign could cost the company up to 400 million baht.

As a result, Plus had no choice but to remove a floor. It has already sent letters to the affected customers. On the ninth floors, the company will remove walls and roofs and create closed-dock floors. It will then revise the exterior decoration and apply insulation and waterproofing to prevent heat and water from leaking into the units on the eighth floors.

...Two buildings at The Plus Sathon-Narathiwat site will be able to keep their top floors but at other sites the developer will have to give up a total of 171 units.

"The ninth floors are not allowed for anything, even a garden. We have to close the stairs to the ninth floors as well," Mr Mayta said.

By law, a building's height is measured from the ground level of the ground floor to the ceiling of the top floor. Anything higher cannot be used for any purpose...

1950: The Return of the King

April 3, 2008

Categories: The Monarchy

[The return of the King](#) – *Time*, April 3, 1950

...Siam's virtues and defects were still largely its own, not a bastard product of two civilizations.

Phumiphon's never-never land was a land of what-might-have-been, a jewel of (almost) unblemished Easternism shining on the junk heap of the wrecked empires. Like a jewel, Siam was temptingly easy to pick up. The Communist imperialists who had taken China might turn Siam's way any time.

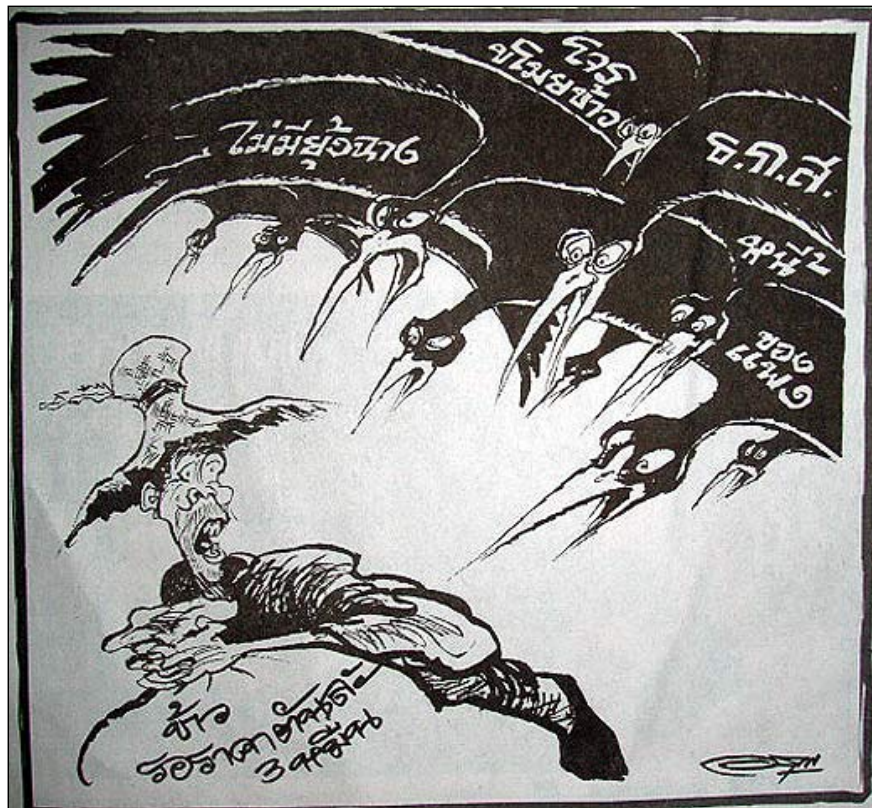
...Signs of the new Westernization are everywhere. The front platforms of the streetcars are adorned with Coca-Cola signs, beneath which yellow-robed monks ride lest they be contaminated by the presence of women inside the cars. Every tenth shop on New Street (one of the oldest thoroughfares) seems to be an X-ray shop. The Siamese are the most X-raying people in the world. They go to a doctor, then rush to have an X-ray to see if the doctor guessed right.

...Then the King of Siam will rise and give his first royal command: "Trust me and be at ease."

Farmers under siege

April 3, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News



Farmers under siege – Arun, *Krungratpetchurakit*, April 3, 2008

On the bag it reads: Rice waiting for 30,000 baht per ton. One the birds it reads:

No barns, high prices, debt, Bank of Agriculture and cooperatives, thieves steal rice



Cat lover? – Arun, *Krungtepturakit*, April 4, 2008

Loves the cat or does not want the cat to get the fish – The tag on the cage reads "Commander-in-Chief" meaning C-in-C Anupong.

Samak: The Prime Minister's Problems

April 3, 2008

Categories: Thai Politics

The Prime Minister's problems – translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, April 3, 2008

During the 'Samak Talk' television program that was aired on March 30, Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej displayed a highly aggressive attitude towards the press. Among the things that the PM claimed, during the program, was that media reporters had deliberately prodded him to talk about the possibility of a coup d'état against his government – to the point where the issue had become the 'talk of the town'.

The Prime Minister has been facing many problems since he placed himself once again in the public domain. He has been greatly criticized, and has had many complaints made against him. Furthermore, he has lost a great deal of his personal freedom and privacy – and cannot go out alone without bodyguards to guarantee his security.

There is one issue on which the PM has lately taken to speaking somewhat ambiguously. He claims that another country is paying attention to his every action, and is trying to influence him into not expressing any sympathy for a third country – that he also refuses to name.

Although the PM is not inclined to name these two countries, it is rather obvious to us that the second country is a 'superpower' and the third country is Myanmar.

“A transvestite reports for a military conscription”

April 4, 2008

Categories: Local Beliefs

[“A transvestite reports for a military conscription”](#) – *The Nation*, April 4, 2008

Don't miss this great [photo](#): *A transvestite reports for a military conscription in Songkhla's Sabayoi district Monday. Usually, conscription officials disqualified transvestites for military conscription.*

Mr “Happy Toilet” Wan

April 4, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Mr “Happy Toilet” Wan](#) – *The Nation*, April 4, 2008

The Public Health Ministry Friday appointed Wan Yoobamrung “Mr Happy Toilet” to promote a campaign for clean public toilets.

“I dreamt when I was a child that if I ever worked here at the Public Health Ministry I would make all the toilets in the country flush toilets,” Wan says.

New site for parliament proposedjoin the queue

April 4, 2008

[New site for parliament proposed – join the queue](#) – *Bangkok Post*, April 4, 2008

Thailand's ill see benefits from 'compulsory licensing'

April 4, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[ROBERT WEISSMAN: Thailand's ill see benefits from 'compulsory licensing'](#) -BND, April 4, 2008

...Untruthfully, Pipes says Thai patients have not seen benefits as a result. In fact, the Thai compulsory licenses have lowered the price of an important HIV/AIDS drug (brand name: Kaletra) by about three-quarters, enabling the government to triple the number of people receiving this life-saving treatment. More will go on the treatment as need grows and generic competition continues to reduce prices. The generic version of a heart-disease drug (brand-name: Plavix) is one-seventieth the cost of the brand-name product, which will enable the government to offer the drug in the public health system. Previously, it has been unavailable...

Diarrhea caused by the unseen hand?

April 4, 2008

Categories: Editorial Cartoons



Diarrhea caused by the unseen hand? – *Krungtepturakit*, April 4, 2008

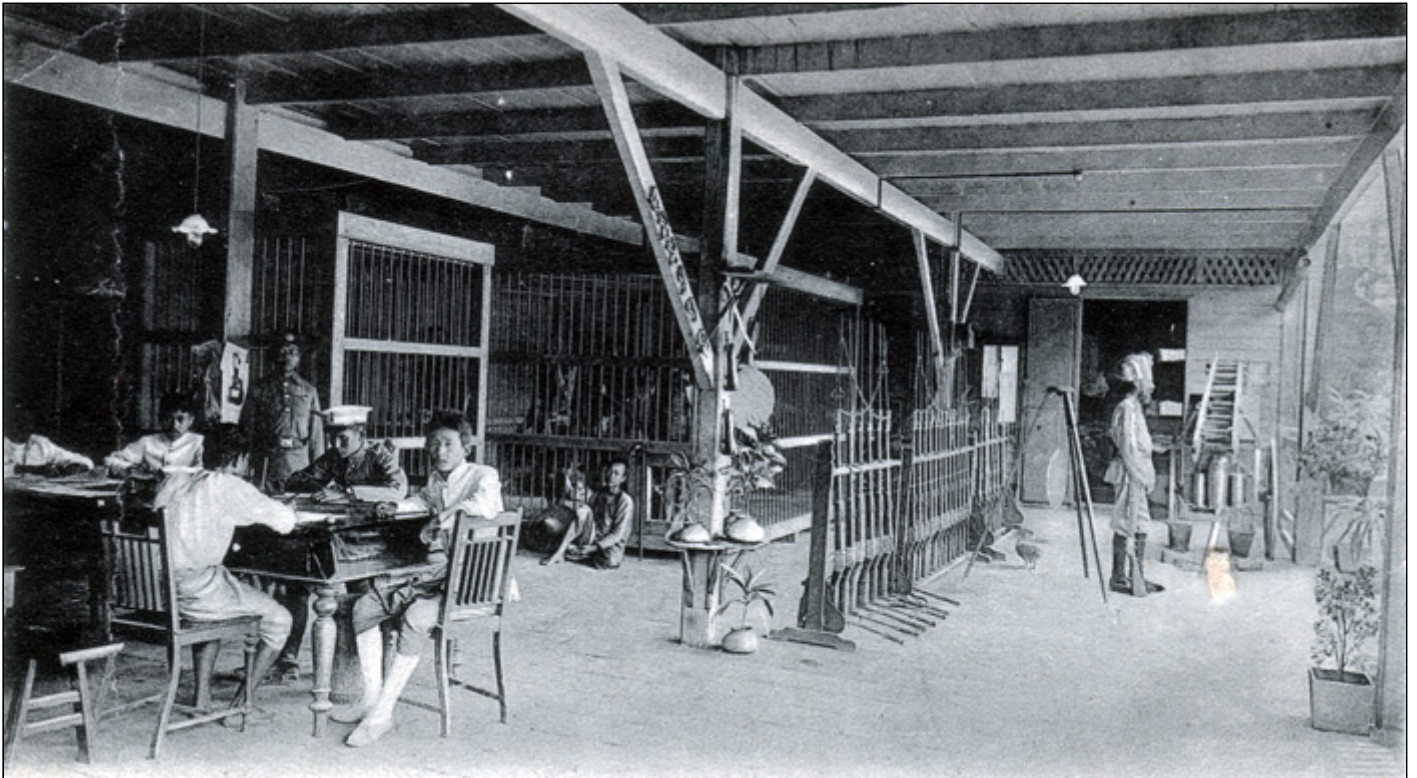
The cat says: Master, don't let anyone know that you are admitted to the hospital because of diarrhea. This is not good. Just tell what happened to you because of the unseen hand.

The sign on the end of the bed reads: No food.

On the right it reads: Assassination plan

Old police station

April 5, 2008



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

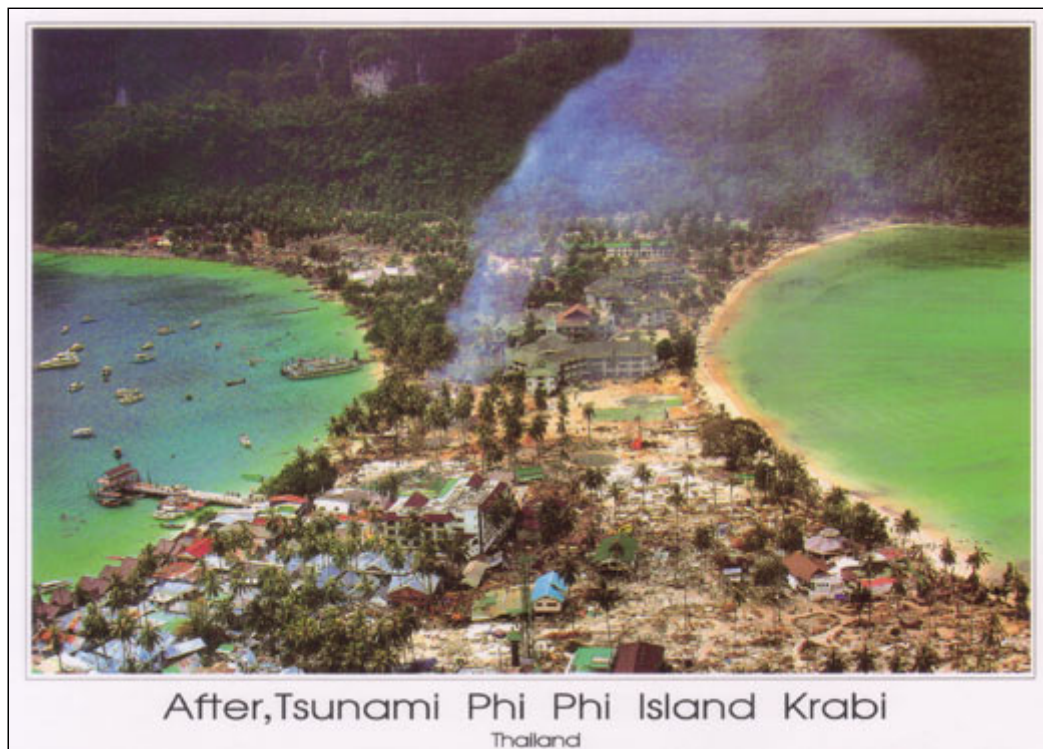
Old police station – April 5, 2008

On the occasion of the resumption of the [war on drugs](#), here is a very rare postcard showing a Thai police station (date unknown). There are many fascinating details including the uniforms, a two-tiered desk, and various implements throughout the station. Here is a [hi-res version](#) (1.1 MB)

Tsunami postcard

April 5, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News



Tsunami postcard – April, 2008

Far from glossing over the tsunami tragedy on Phi Phi Island, here is a Phi Phi tsunami postcard...

Black screen speaks volumes about Thai censorship

April 5, 2008

Categories: Film and TV

[Black screen speaks volumes about Thai censorship](#) – *The Nation*, April 5, 2008

...To the cultural authorities, the removal of the six scenes means they have done their job and that the morality of Thai filmgoers is still intact.

...This time round he hopes the audience when seeing the silent, scratched and black frames – the longest censored scene running for seven minutes – will learn a great deal.

...The absence of picture and sound may be the best part of “Sang Sattawat” and when you really watch the silent black screen, ask yourself: “Do I deserve this version?”

Whatever your answer, the cultural authorities believe you do.

Disgraceful MP

April 5, 2008

Categories: Thai Politics

Disgraceful MP – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, April 5, 2008

Concerning the verbal spat and physical confrontation – in Parliament on April 2 – that occurred between the People Power Party MP for Bangkok's Don Muang constituency, Karun Hosakun, and the Democrat Party's party-list MP Somkiat Pongpaiboon. A special parliamentary committee has been set up to investigate the case. I believe this issue reflects negatively on the image of Parliament. If Parliament is to continue to be a respected and prestigious institution, it is essential that the public perceives its MPs as upright and ethical. I would add that if this case is not investigated in a transparent manner, the image of Parliament will be further eroded.

Karun's kick

April 5, 2008



Karun's kick – Poojadkuan, April 5, 2008

It reads: Poojadkuan is the only media that can get the picture of kick clearly.



Poojadkuan, April 5, 2008 – It reads: The effect of global warming – Chai Chidchop with his arm around Karun says: Take it easy, young boy. Are you dizzy and it makes you kick at people. That man was not a bicycle.

Nation Weekend

April 5, 2008

Nation Weekend –
April 5, 2008

Right: Hot hundred million baht involved conflict



Left: Spicy godfather



“Authentic Bangkok Diet Pills from Thailand! BUY IT NOW!”

April 6, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[“Authentic Bangkok Diet Pills from Thailand! BUY IT NOW!”](#) – eBay, April, 2008

“Still life in moving vehicle”

April 6, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

["Still life in moving vehicle"](#) –

April, 2008

Great photography from inside taxis...

Thai farmers guard rice harvests

April 6, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thai farmers guard rice harvests](#) – *AlJazeeraEnglish*, April 6, 2008

Tragic death fuels acrimony

April 6, 2008

Categories: The Thai Deep South

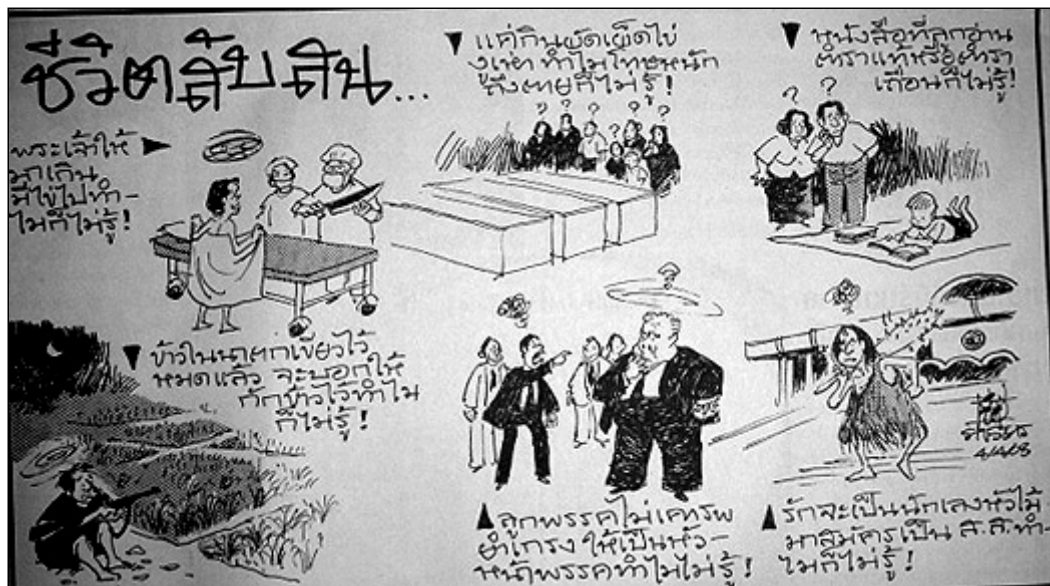
[Tragic death fuels acrimony](#) – Bangkok Post, April 6, 2008

More than 200 women, half walking and half running, shouting “Allah Akbar” – God is Great – all the way, made the journey from Kotor village in Narathiwat province’s Rueso district to Rueso hospital, a distance of about two kilometres, to receive the lifeless body of their revered religious leader, Yapa Kaseng. Imam Kaseng had been arrested on March 19 and detained at the 39th Special Taskforce Unit at Wat Suan Tham in Reuso. He was found dead on March 21...

At the imam’s home, they did not bathe the body before burial. In Islamic belief, not bathing the body signifies that the deceased died in the service of Allah. Those preparing the body saw bruises that reached from his face to his toes. Though it is not the common practice, many took photos because of the highly suspicious circumstances, to use as evidence to back up their claims that the imam was beaten and tortured before his death...

“Confusing life”

April 6, 2008



"Confusing life" – *Thai Rath*, April 6, 2008

Top, left to right: God gives me too many balls. They are no use!

Why do they receive death penalty eating stir fried cobra's eggs with chilies?

It is not known whether books our son is reading are licensed or pirated ones.

Bottom, left to right: Rice in the farm is all reserved. Why does the government tell us to stockpile it?

Party members do not respect me. Why have I been chosen to be the party leader?

Why do they become candidates for Member of the Parliament position if they want to be a gangster?

Theme Park Review: A trip to Dream World

April 7, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[A trip to Dream World](#) – *Theme Park Review*, April, 2008

Thailand's wealthy untouchables

April 7, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thailand's wealthy untouchables](#) – BBC, April 7, 2008

...Thailand has one of the most unequal distributions of wealth anywhere on the planet, despite some recent improvements.

And that yawning gap between rich and poor is most openly on view in Bangkok, where ostentatious displays of wealth are commonplace alongside the grinding poverty experienced by millions of migrant workers who have come from the countryside.

... She has yet to receive any compensation from the Pachimsawas family – she has asked for 7m baht (\$222,000; £111,000) but is likely to get less, perhaps even less than the list price of the Mercedes-Benz that crushed her mother.

“The damage is done,” she told me. “I forgive him. I don’t want to destroy his future, I don’t want him to be jailed. I don’t want bad karma.”

Signs of impending chaos

April 7, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

Signs of impending chaos – translated and summarized from *Krungtep Turakit*, April 7, 2008

I wish to examine the violent and impolite confrontation that occurred in Parliament between an MP of the People Power Party, Karun Hosakun, and the Democrat Party MP Somkiat Pongpaiboon – that Somkiat has accused Karun of starting.

It is not yet known whether Karun or Somkiat is to be believed in this case. This incident highlights, however, the abnormal political conflict that continues to be waged between the ‘old power’ of Thaksin supporters and those who hate him.

Shortly before the confrontation occurred, Thaksin supporters had gathered in front of Thammasat University. The group shouted out impolite slogans in protest against a seminar that was being held by the People’s Alliance for Democracy (PAD) inside the university at the time. They also vented their aggressive feelings against PAD by throwing rocks into the university compound. Karun later expressed his dissatisfaction and exasperation to Somkiat (a PAD leader) over his anti-Thaksin sentiments, when they subsequently met in the main hall of the university. Somkiat has long been a staunch critic of former PM Thaksin Shinawatra.

Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej has recently decided to revise Article 237 of the Constitution, which concerns the disbanding of political parties. He also wishes to revise Article 309, which affords a degree of immunity to those who have perpetrated a coup d’etat against the Government. Samak has recently aired some rather aggressive criticisms against those who are opposed to these revisions.

All groups in Thai society should realize the dangers that are inherent in such conflicts, and begin to realize that it is necessary for us all to use our mental capacities to override our own naturally selfish political tendencies.

Samak should begin to demonstrate some maturity over this issue, by allowing the public to fully participate in the revision of the Constitution.

Lost: 200,000 tonnes of rice

April 8, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Lost: 200,000 tonnes of rice](#) – Bangkok Post, April, 2008

...Ms Benjamas said a total of 200,000 tonnes of rice is missing from warehouses nationwide. Damages were estimated at approximately 3.2 billion baht, about US\$101.1 million...

Landfill fire now in fifth day

April 8, 2008

[Landfill fire now in fifth day](#) – *Bangkok Post*, April 8, 2008

Missing foreigners in Thailand

April 8, 2008

[Missing foreigners in Thailand](#) – *Khao San Road*, April 8, 2008

My Thai Girl and I

April 9, 2008

Categories: Books

My Thai Girl and I – April, 2008

New book by Andrew Hicks: [*My Thai Girl and I*](#)

Thailand's creaking health system

April 9, 2008

Categories: Health

[Thailand's creaking health system](#) –

American.com, April 9, 2008

The government's lack of spending on healthcare is a scandal—but abusing intellectual property rights won't help...

Lady-boys report for duty at Sattahip Navel Base

April 9, 2008

[Lady-boys report for duty at Sattahip Navel Base](#) – *Pattaya Mail*, April 9, 2008

Thai police drop arms dealer charge

April 9, 2008

Categories: Crime, Thai Police

[Thai police drop arms dealer charge](#) – MWC

News, April 9, 2008

Police in Thailand have dropped charges against a Russian man, accused of being one of the world's biggest black market arms dealers...

Thai-ing the mortality knot

April 10, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thai-ing the mortality knot](#) – *Weekend America*, April 10, 2008

...I called my dad a few hours before he left for Thailand, to see what was compelling him to do what, in my mind, looked like a modern twist on the mail-order bride. Last fall, my father turned 60 just days after his own father died. I knew that was tough for him — maybe it had something to do with this trip.

“Yes, absolutely. It was a tough birthday,” says my dad over the phone...

Thailand drops Bout charges

April 10, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thailand drops Bout charges](#) – *The Moscow Times*, April 10, 2008

Thai police dropped charges Wednesday against Russian citizen Viktor Bout, who is accused of being one of the world's most prolific black market arms dealers, saying they would proceed with hearings to extradite him to the United States...

Effect of the Bangkok bust

April 10, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Effect of the Bangkok bust](#) –
NST, April, 2008

...Despite the severity of the offence in the Bangkok bust, the traders who pleaded guilty were let off with a mere 10,000 baht (RM1,000) fine.

This was a mere slap in the wrist considering that some RM320,000 worth of shahtoosh shawls seized and over one thousand endangered antelopes were slaughtered. “It’s not good, but at least the offenders had to go on trial and all the shahtoosh shawls were seized,” says Galster, who was speaking at the network’s second workshop in Kuala Lumpur early this year...

Hot air in Bangkok

April 10, 2008

Categories: Uncategorized

[Hot air in Bangkok](#) – *Wall Street Journal*, April 10, 2008

After five days of contentious discussions in Bangkok, governments from nearly 200 countries last week agreed to an agenda for further talks to forge a new United Nations global warming agreement. One sticking point has been developing nations' insistence that industrialized countries should take the first steps in reducing emissions and should help finance reductions in developing countries. But this represents a serious misreading of the underlying economic situation...

Samak's tit-for-tat strategy

April 10, 2008

Samak's tit-for-tat strategy – translated and summarized from *Komchadluek*, April 10, 2008

The 'Samak's Style of Talk' television program – which is aired on Sundays by the Department of Public Relations – is not only a piece of pro-government propaganda, but also a channel through which Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej can aggressively attack those journalists or people who have recently annoyed him.

Some may like the PM's aggressive and tough style of televised delivery, but there is a big question as to whether such a confrontational approach really benefits us – the ordinary citizens of Thailand.

A recent opinion poll by Bangkok University interviewed 1,036 respondents who said they had heard of or watched the PM's first broadcast of the weekly program. Many respondents expressed a strong liking for the PM's uncompromising attitude during the program – but many also expressed a strong disapproval of his sarcasm, roughness of manner and aggressive language.

People Power Party Spokesman Kuthep Saikrachang has recently commented that he thought that PM Samak tended to talk nonsense in public – but also that he was largely able to cover up the nonsense of his words by delivering them in a highly-aggressive manner.

Samak Sundaravej might well be the only elected PM in Thai history with no real political base. He really must begin to indicate his core political values to those he governs. He must also make it plain that he is not under the thumb of another more powerful politician. He will also have to act decisively and quickly against his enemies, as there is really some doubt as to whether he will remain PM for very long.

Ko Tao waterspout

April 11, 2008

Categories: Wildlife and Nature



(Photo: Natthida “Taow” Klangmontri)

Ko Tao waterspout –

April, 2008

Mark writes: *I took these photos off Ko Tao Saturday morning...*

Police billboard

April 11, 2008



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Police billboard –

April 11, 2008

It reads: Complaint reception center, the Royal Thai Police – Being threatened, do not get justice?

Inform drugs tips,

vice, influences,

crimes at PO Box 1234,

Rongmuang, Bangkok 10000,

E-mail: jaray@police.go.th,

call center: 1194

Kayan ‘Giraffe Women’ trapped in Thailand by tourist trade

April 11, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Kayan ‘Giraffe Women’ trapped in Thailand by tourist trade](#) – *Times Online*, April, 2008

New energy drink: Thaksin... fight!

April 11, 2008

Categories: Thaksin Lobbying



New energy drink: Thaksin... fight! – *Matichon*,
April 11, 2008

Ad for the new Thaksin-themed
drink from Sunspark Company.

It reads: Give moral support – Give.. Thaksin Soo

At the bottom: Don't give moral support more than two bottles per day.

Austrian incest dad vacationed in Thailand

April 12, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Austrian incest dad vacationed in Thailand](#) – CNN, April, 2008

Elephant paints self portrait

April 12, 2008

Categories: Wildlife and Nature

[Elephant paints self portrait](#) – April, 2008

Eddy writes: *Regarding your article about elephant painting it's portrait, It was real I was there 2 years ago. It's an elephant show located in Chiang Mai, Thailand up on Doi Sutap mountain. You can google "Chiang Mai elephant camp"*

Thai Rice Poster from the 1930s

April 12, 2008

Categories: Food and Drink



(from Anake Nawigamune's *A Century of Thai Graphic Design*)

Rice – April 12, 2008

1930s-era poster – It reads: Fate of millions of starving people worldwide is in the hands of Thai farmers. – Thailand – Thais are Buddhist. We will never let people in the world die from starvation and hunger. The more rice you grow – the higher sales you get.

From *NottheNation*: [Cheap farangs suffer as rice prices climb](#)

...John is not alone. Cheap farangs all over Bangkok are erupting in anger at the price increases, claiming that food vendors are simply trying to pull a fast one on old whitey.

...“Not every farang is sipping cocktails at Vertigo, and I think that Thais need to hear that as well,” said Stevenson. “Sure we might make double, triple or quadruple what Thai make for the same amount of work, but our traveling and living costs are much higher. Thais don’t need serviced apartments, laundry service, pools, fitness rooms and UBC. We do. And those things cost money.”

Songkran cartoons in the Thai-language press 2008

April 13, 2008

Categories: Songkran



Songkran cartoons in the Thai-language press

Earlier: [Songkran cartoons 2007](#)

Left: *Kom Chad Luek* header from April 13, 2008

Editorial cartoons featuring political figures are featured every Songkran on the front page of major newspapers. Here are a selection from 2008...



Happy Songkran Festival 2008

May the Buddha drive away all diseases

May the Dharma keep me from all vicious things

May the Sangka protect my mind and myself from meanness

May the Triple Gems protect my family from all misfortune

From *Matichon*, April 13, 2008



From *Khao Sod*, April 13, 2008 – Happy Songkran Festival –
Revise the Constitution or not



From *Daily News*, April 13, 2008 – Refreshing Songkran Festival – Happy Year of the Rat 2008



From *Kom Chad Luek*, April 13, 2008 – Happy Songkran Day April 13, 2008 from all of us at *Kom Chad Luek*



From *Kom Chad Luek*, April 13, 2008 – Interesting headline of the day. It reads: The Election Committee decided by 4-1 to disband the Chart Thai Party and the Matchima Thipataya Party. Sanan is dusting off the Mahachon Party



From *Kom Chad Luek*, April 13, 2008 – More Songkran water splashing activities in the B section of the newspapers.

It reads: Nat, Tol, and Puifai in a *Kom Chad Luek* activity for fans

Earlier: [Songkran cartoons 2007](#)

Is the temple of Buddha's footprints the temple of doom?

April 13, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Is the temple of Buddha's footprints the temple of doom?](#) – Times Online, April 13, 2008

It's a Buddhist temple that cares for dying Aids patients. It's also a hugely successful money-making operation, attracting thousands of tourists with its displays of mummified corpses. So where does all that money go? ...

Myanmar enjoys rare freedom

April 13, 2008

[Myanmar enjoys rare freedom](#) – Dawn Sun, April 13, 2008

Young women in miniskirts walked down the street, catching the eye of punks with red and blue hair, as Myanmar let loose for an annual festival on Sunday when the military allowed a tiny breath of freedom. The Thingyan water festival — marking the Buddhist new year also being celebrated this week across Thailand, Cambodia and Laos — is the only time of year when the ruling junta allows people to assemble freely...

Poll: Adultery main cause of family break-ups in Thai society; politicians poor role models

April 13, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Poll: Adultery main cause of family break-ups in Thai society; politicians poor role models](#) – TNA, April 13, 2008

Adultery is the major cause for family break-ups and divorce in Thai society, according to a new survey conducted by Assumption University's ABAC Poll...

Monkey on a mini motorcycle

April 13, 2008

Categories: Wildlife and Nature

[Monkey on a mini motorcycle](#) – April, 2008

On the forum: Lonely Planet controversy

April 14, 2008

On the forum: [Lonely Planet controversy](#)

[Lonely Planet rejects fabrication claim](#) – AP, April 14, 2008

Thailand must ratify the international criminal court now

April 14, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thailand must ratify the international criminal court now](#) – *The Nation*, April 14, 2008

Thailand must ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) without delay.

...All the past unsound arguments surrounding the monarchy related to the ICC have been proven false.

Countries with similar institutions have ratified the ICC including Britain (2001), Japan (2007) and Cambodia (2002). Their consciences were clear and they realised that their monarchies would never engage in crimes against humanity, or issue a command for others to do so. It is that simple...

Boys will be girls – If they're from Bangkok

April 14, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Boys will be girls – If they're from Bangkok](#) – *Derby Evening Telegraph*, April, 2008

*...Organisers insist it is sexy not sexual,
exotic not erotic – and is inspired by the bright lights of Las Vegas
rather than the back streets of Bangkok.*

*“The Lady Boys are reviving an ancient tradition which existed for
centuries in Thailand,” says the show’s PR manager Tony Wilkie-Millar...*

Human rights infringed – terrible events on our southern borders

April 14, 2008

Categories: The Thai Deep South

Human rights infringed – terrible events on our southern borders – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, April 14, 2008

The issue of human rights is an important one. And it is especially important when we consider the ongoing violence in our southern border provinces. It should be of serious concern to us all that the policemen and army personnel operating in the restive region have so often been accused of infringing human rights.

Two cases that were hugely antagonistic, in the ongoing conflict between the region's locals and the state security forces, were the mysterious death – in 1954 – of the leading human rights activist Haji Sulong Tohmeena and the more recent disappearance of the famous Muslim lawyer Somchai Neelaphaijit. A 2007 report by the Human Rights Watch organization said that there had been numerous 'disappearances' in the region, with no apparent reason for the majority of them.

Such reports impact very directly on the public image of our government officials – some of whom are under suspicion of involvement in the heinous crimes that undoubtedly lie behind these disappearances. Such events impact very negatively on Thailand's image abroad, as our country has already signed many treaties with international organizations to protect human rights.

I believe that the government urgently needs to create a better awareness, among government officials, of the negative impacts that can accrue from the cruel treatment of suspects. As the Sook Kaew Kaewdaeng Foundation says, the region's unrest can only be resolved if both its residents and its state officials have a shared vision of the need to protect human rights. The foundation hope that their project to promote a better respect for human rights will eventually lead to long-term peace in the restive region.

Rare turtle found in Vietnam

April 15, 2008

[Three new species of snouted beetle found in Thailand](#) – *Bernama*, April 15, 2008

[Rare turtle found in Vietnam](#) – *AP*, April 16, 2008

[Cambodia protects endangered bird](#) – *AP*, April 17, 2008

...The Bengal Florican, known in Cambodia as “the whispering bird,” is remarkable for a male mating display that amounts to a dance competition to attract a mate.

Since 2005, a rush to turn grasslands into large-scale rice farms has gobbled up one-third of the Bengal Florican’s habitat in Cambodia, threatening the critically endangered bird with extinction...

Fading Smiles: One third of Thailand's gays now threatened by HIV

April 15, 2008

Categories: HIV-AIDS

[Fading Smiles: One third of Thailand's gays now threatened by HIV](#) – Emediawire (press release), April 15, 2008

The Thai Ministry of Public Health has just released figures detailing the dramatic rise of HIV infection among MSM (men who have sex with men). Estimated at 28% in 2005, that number has increased to an all-time high of just under 31% in 2007...

Keeping coup rumors alive

April 15, 2008

Categories: Thai Politics



Keeping coup rumors alive – *The Nation Weekend*, April, 2008

C-in-C Anupong is on the cover of the *Nation Weekend* magazine. The cover reads "Lab luang loe will discuss the pla ra revolution."

Corruption Charges Widen at Siemens

April 15, 2008

Categories: Crime

[Corruption Charges Widen at Siemens](#) – *Business Week*, April 15, 2008

...The Germans had fallen behind in terms of technical innovation and, as a bookkeeper in one division put it, many were convinced bribes were the only way the company could score big contracts abroad. In some divisions, executives became convinced that without bribes it would be impossible to get contracts in many countries, including Vietnam, Thailand, the Arab world and large swaths of Africa, Iran and other states...

Sanctions undercut opportunity in Myanmar

April 16, 2008

[Sanctions undercut opportunity in Myanmar](#) – *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, April 16, 2008

...Some of my CEO colleagues and I believe sanctions are a policy gone bust. The people of Myanmar love America. Little groups like ours lift their hopes.

Mackay's Moral: Unwise sanctions can undercut a forest of opportunity.

Police ask for Thai ID volunteers

April 16, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Police ask for Thai ID volunteers](#) – BBC News, April 16, 2008

The Thai community in the South West is being asked to volunteer for police ID video parades...

Military not progressive – politics, as always, regressive

April 16, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Military not progressive – politics, as always, regressive – translated and summarized from *Deep South Watch*; Author: Muhamad-ayup Patan, April 16, 2008

The situation in the South still remains largely unchanged. Violent attacks still occur on a daily basis. The locals of the region still largely live in fear, while Thais in the rest of the country are largely indifferent to the fate of the region's people.

By continually perpetrating violent attacks, the insurgent movement hopes to create a fear in the hearts of local people – with which they can be more easily coerced.

No matter how hard the government tries to solve this problem, it is still highly unlikely that they can ever bring an end to this unrest.

In the wake of the recent major spate of arrests of suspected insurgents, it might be claimed that the government – and especially its military – has destroyed the political structure of the insurgent movement. But the fact of the matter is that the military has yet to destroy the insurgents' armed forces – so the unrest is thus bound to continue.

Military operations always increase the likelihood of human rights violations occurring. Thus, the unbelievable escalation of the unrest in the South is bound to involve widespread disregard for human rights. Some recent events have had an extremely negative impact on the public image of the current government, as they have clearly demonstrated that it has no policies to resolve the region's problems.

But if we examine all of the above from a converse viewpoint, the current situation could actually be construed as to the benefit of this government – affording it a brand-new opportunity to instigate a major initiative to resolve the region's problems once-and-for-all.

Festival of Unregretted Deaths

April 16, 2008

Categories: Songkran

Festival of unregretted deaths – translated and summarized from *Komchadluek*, April 16, 2008

The Thai New Year Festival (AKA Songkran) is a time of year when the high death toll on our roads is always highlighted in the media on a daily basis. We really need to be far more concerned about this carnage. The high number of car accidents – during each Thai New Year celebration – cause a massive loss of life, do a great deal of damage to property and incur huge medical costs for the injured. These all place a heavy burden on both our economy and our society.

I believe that the Songkran road-safety campaign should be conducted in a more serious and somber manner. I also believe that our traffic laws need to be far more punitive and far more strictly enforced than they are at present. The annual campaign also needs to focus on the heavy social consequences of irresponsible driving, by promoting the idea that it is socially unacceptable to flaunt the traffic laws.

Rule of Lords: Thailand's army not better than Burma's

April 17, 2008

Categories: Uncategorized

[Rule of Lords: Thailand's army not better than Burma's](#) – April 17, 2008

... “When Thailand held its election, their government distributed the constitution free of charge to every household and let Thai citizens and the media discuss it freely,” U Thein Nyunt, a spokesperson for the National League for Democracy, said in a radio interview.

Thein Nyunt evidently knows nothing about how the draft charter in Thailand was disseminated as part of a Yes vote agenda under strict military control, how the outcome was rigged by the threat of “anything goes” if a No vote succeeded, or how opponents to the draft were denied public space. Yet his willingness to make ill-informed comments about government in Thailand is a regrettably common feature of talk among Burma's political activists...

Girly Berry band too sexy for Anusorn

April 17, 2008

[Girly Berry band too sexy for Anusorn](#) – *Bangkok Post*, April 17, 2008

...Culture Minister Anusorn Wongwan expressed disappointment with the teenage girl band yesterday and threatened to "blacklist" them.

...The ministry considers tank tops and miniskirts too sexually arousing when soaked in water...

Not facing famine!

April 17, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Not facing famine! – translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, April 17, 2008

Many countries – worldwide – have been facing the prospect of future famine, since the prices of food staples – and rice in particular – began to rise so rapidly a few months back. At the same time as these dramatic price increases, most people's incomes have remained largely unchanged. The various causes of this global food crisis include higher fuel prices, global warming, lower agricultural production, a higher demand for food staples and the massive hoarding of some agricultural commodities. Rice prices have reached their highest levels in 20 years – while rice output is at its lowest level over the same period. Past Thai governments have tried hard to increase rice prices to sensible levels – but now the current government has to face the consequences of extremely high prices for the commodity. It is important that the government now deals fairly and even-handedly with this country's farmers, traders and exporters of rice. We Thais are unlikely to face the problem of famine, as we have always had enough rice for our own consumption and for export. The problem, for us all now, is how to manage the profits of our country's agricultural production in a fair and efficient manner – for the benefit of all our citizens.

Olympic Torch Run in Thailand

April 19, 2008

Categories: Sports



(Photo: Alexander)

Photos of the Bangkok torch run –
April 19, 2008



(Photo: Alexander)

[Thai security keeps torch protests in check](#) –
CNN, April 19, 2008



A reader mentions: *Not mentioned in the story is that pro-Chinese demonstrators vastly outnumbered pro-Tibet ones and that when someone tried to unfurl Tibetan flags, Chinese officials ripped them out of the protester's hands; that was reported on BBC Television.*

(Photo:
Alexander)

[Police threaten to arrest Olympic protesters](#) – *The Nation*, April 17, 2008

Those who disrupt the Olympic torch run in Bangkok Saturday will be unconditionally arrested and charged with causing public disturbance, police spokesman Pol Lt General Watcharaphol Prasarnratchakij said Thursday.

Foreign protestors will have their rights for immediate residence and their future entry in Thailand revoked, and those with also Thai nationality will have it revoked permanently.

...Free Tibet Network member Pokpong Lawansiri disagrees with the stance against pro-Tibet protests.

“Under the Constitution, an individual – local or foreigner – has the right to rally for a cause,” he says. “Peaceful rally should be allowed” ...



(Photo: Greg)

Above and below: Greg sends these photos from Wong Wian Odeon and notes: *Strange feeling – it's the first time in my life that any government has stopped me from doing something that's supposed to be a guarantee under a 'democracy' ... another nail in the coffin for democracy in Thailand, I guess.*



(Photo: Greg)

[Cruise of Thailand's cultural heritage — Olympic torch relay route in Bangkok](#) – *Xinhua*, April 17, 2008

The designed route of the April 19 Olympic torch relay in Bangkok embodies Thailand's traditional culture and history...

[Thailand sets flexible route to ensure security for Olympic torch run](#) – AP, April 17, 2008

...They also said they were prepared to shorten or change the torch relay route if protesters threaten to cause chaos, as they have in other cities...



[Thai CSOs organise Tibet torch protest to highlight China's human rights abuses](#) – *ForumAsia*, April 12, 2008

...The Free Tibet Network and a coalition of Thai civil-society organisations are urging people to join a “No Torch in Tibet” march in Bangkok on April 19 in protest against the Chinese government's refusal to stop the Olympic torch relay through Tibet in June, a land still awash in the blood spilled in China's recent crackdown.

And a map of the route is [here](#).

From NoTorch: Preparatory meeting to prepare for the protest of the Olympic torch relay
Free Tibet Network, together with Thai Labour Campaign, Social Critic Group – Chulalongkorn University, Workers Democracy Group, Social Democracy Study Group – Thammasat University, Young People for Democracy – Thailand, would like to invite all student activists, NGO activists, and peace-lovers to join the

preparatory meeting to prepare for the protest of the Olympic torch relay (which is set to be held on Saturday 19 April).

The meeting will be held at the Students Christian Center (SCC) near Rajathewi BTS Station at Thursday 17 April 2008, at 7.00 pm.

For more information, please contact 086 603 8844, 081 176 3110 and <http://notorch.blogspot.com/>

[Thailand assures smooth passages for olympic torch relay](#) – Bernama, April 11, 2008

The Thai government, which will conduct the Olympic torch relay next week, believes there will be no violent protests over China's crackdown in Tibet as had happened in some other cities, Thailand's news agency TNA reported...



(Billboard for the [San Francisco protest](#))

Will there be protest in Bangkok? – April 9, 2008

The torch comes to Bangkok on April 19...



[The Official Website of the Torch Relay](#)
[Torch in Bangkok section of the Official Olympics site](#)
[Thailand pledges to ensure smooth torch run in capital](#)
[Submit your best wishes for the torch relay](#)
[Reporters without Borders Olympic campaign](#)

Left: Official logo

Right: One of several protest logos for the games



And on [this page](#), a photo of Thailand's "Grand Palace?"

Suthinee notes: *Actually the wat in that picture is in [Phrae Province Amphur Denchai](#).*

Thaksin's secret plan to win back the reins of power from Samak

April 19, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

Thaksin's secret plan to win back the reins of power from Samak – Thaksin hopes to 'uproot the grass before it grows' under his feet – translated and summarized from *Phujatkan*, April 19, 2008

Former Prime Minister – Thaksin Shinawatra – made a public appearance at the Sheraton Grand Hotel on April 9, to deliver a special lecture at a seminar organized by the Thai Com Foundation. The lecture was well-received by some elements of the business community. Among those who counted themselves impressed by Thaksin's lecture were former leaders of his disbanded Thai Ruk Thai (TRT) party, and MPs of the current People Power Party (PPP).

Looking back on PM Samak's lecture on government policies to revive the Thai economy, it was very noticeable that many of those in attendance were not really that interested in what the PM had to say on economic matters.

People seem to be openly pondering whether the 'real' prime minister is Thaksin Shinawatra or Samak Sundaravej.

Samak 1 Government ministers have had to await the decision of former PM Thaksin several times in recent weeks, over the shaping of their administration's policies. The issue of the '30% reserve' being a particular case-in-point – a matter that could easily have been decided by the Finance Minister, Dr. Surawong Suebwonglee, alone.

It is widely-believed that Thaksin will soon begin a major maneuver to regain his former popularity and return as prime minister.

Fury as drug smuggler freed from Thai jail is caught with heroin

April 20, 2008

Categories: Crime

[Fury as drug smuggler freed from Thai jail is caught with heroin](#) – *Sunday Mail*, April 20, 2008

A prisoner freed from a 100-year jail sentence for drug trafficking in Thailand after a massive campaign has been caught with heroin...

Historian tells how anthem custom began

April 21, 2008

Categories: Local Beliefs

[Historian tells how anthem custom began](#) – *Bangkok Post*, April 23, 2008

Plea over man missing in Thailand

April 21, 2008

[Plea over man missing in Thailand](#) – *BBC*, April 21, 2008

Chiang Mai authorities to demolish non-Thai village within 30 days

April 21, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Chiang Mai authorities to demolish non-Thai village within 30 days](#) – *Prachatai*, April 21, 2008

Christopher gets his torch back

April 21, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Stolen torch of Christopher Benjakul is returned](#) – *The Nation*, April 21, 2008

An Olympic torch that was snatched from a runner on Saturday is found left in front of the National Olympic Office on Monday.

Somebody grabbed the torch from the hand of Christopher Benjakul, a runner, after he passed the flames to next runner during the torch relay run on Saturday.

The torch was found on Monday in front of the National Olympic Office on Monday.

[Christopher gets his torch back](#) – *The Nation*, April 22, 2008

... "Khun Christopher assumed that his torch was snatched because he did not know that it was our officials who took the torch and kept it for him," Jaruk said.

The torch has been returned to Christopher.

However, it is still unclear as to why it took the committee three days to set the record straight...

Merit-Making: A New Gimmick and Game-Plan

April 22, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

[Merit-Making: A New Gimmick and Game-Plan](#) – *The Nation*, April 22, 2008

...There is one short cut – equally dangerous but tempting and less time-consuming: the same method that ousted him. Thaksin can do it with his unmatched war chest and power structure. It can be done because the stakes are high enough – freedom from legal troubles and possible imprisonment, not to mention the return of his Bt62 billion.

Financing a putsch, greasing the hands of potential military commanders, offers a high degree of hope for success despite the great risks involved. The country would be like Burma for several months, but soon enough it should be restored to normal. This is just a confirmation of the rumours of a coup several weeks ago. It is just a question of who will do it...

Over the Edge

April 22, 2008

Categories: Editorial Cartoons



Thailand – by Arun, *Krungtepturakit*, April 22, 2008

The left tire reads: Politics

The right tire reads: Economy

PM Samak on the possible dissolution of Parliament

April 22, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

PM Samak

on the possible dissolution of Parliament –

translated and summarized from *Komchadluek*, April 22, 2008

Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej stated during last Sunday's broadcast of the weekly "Samak's Style of Talk" television program, that he might consider dissolving parliament after completing his proposed revisions to the 2007 Constitution. The implications of this statement need to be closely examined. His government's proposed revision of the current constitution has drawn strong criticism from those members of the public who perceive that such a revision might mainly benefit his own People Power Party (PPP) and the 'old power' group of Thaksin Shinawatra. The charter revision is likely to include a proposal to shorten the allocated life span of each new Electoral Commission (EC) and National Counter Corruption Commission (NCCC). These two organizations have both recently taken measures that have acted as a brake on the power of the current government. The EC launched an inquiry into alleged vote buying by the PPP after the December 23 General Election that could eventually lead to the its dissolution. Meanwhile, the NCCC has launched an inquiry into alleged corruption by ousted PM Thaksin Shinawatra.

I am of the firm belief that the PM needs to thoroughly reconsider any attempt by his government to revise the current constitution. Any perception that the revision is mainly of benefit to the PPP could lead to serious political conflict. Such conflict would jeopardize the peace of this nation, and result in a loss of public confidence in the Samak Government. And this might, in turn, cause another coup d'état to occur.

Down but not out in Thailand

April 23, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Down but not out in Thailand](#) – *Manila Standard Today*, April 23, 2008

The mother of a Briton who was forced to flee to Thailand from the Philippines with his Filipina girlfriend and child is pleading with the British...

Long bed

April 24, 2008

Categories: Signs and Billboards



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Long bed –

April 24, 2008

An advertising sign for a Hyper K2900 pick-up: New pickup! with a long g g g g g g bed, powerful engine and high loading campaign. It's awesome, bro!

PM hints at an early poll after charter rewrite

April 24, 2008

Categories: Thai Politics

[PM hints at an early poll after charter rewrite](#) – *The Nation*, April 24, 2008

[Spokesman: Samak misquoted on House dissolution](#) – *Bangkok Post*, April 24, 2008

Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej did not say that he will dissolve parliament after the constitution is amended, deputy spokesman of Prime Minister's Office Nuttawut Saikua said Thursday...

Shrimp industry blasted for “modern-day slavery”

April 24, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Shrimp](#)

[industry blasted for “modern-day slavery”](#) – Reuters, April 24, 2008

...In Thailand, workers in shrimp-processing factories earned about \$4.60 a day for a six-day work week. Child labour and forced labour were often the norm, the Solidarity Centre said.

The Thai shrimp industry saw abuse by brokers and smugglers of migrant workers, mostly those fleeing repression and economic ruin in military-run Myanmar but also workers from Thailand's poorer neighbours Laos and Cambodia, it said...

The full report is [here](#).

People Power Party does what CNS did before

April 24, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

People Power Party does what CNS did before – translated and summarized from *Matichon*; Column: Think Station No. 12; Author: Tawee Mee-ngern, April 24, 2008

Many people are questioning why the People Power Party (PPP) has dared to make overtures to revise the 2007 Constitution; in spite there being a common perception – nationwide – that such moves are being made for the party's sake alone. PPP wish to amend Article 237 of the Charter, as a means to prevent their party from being disbanded. They also wish to amend Article 309, which could help former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to escape corruption charges.

Although the 2007 Constitution is not as clearly written as its 1997 predecessor, it is a fact that fourteen million Thai citizens – throughout this land – voted for its promulgation. If any party truly wishes to revise the current constitution, it should first remind itself of the large number of people who voted for that charter to be enacted.

It appears that the proposed amendments to the 2007 Constitution are not intended to improve the country's democratic standing or create greater confidence among foreign investors – as some politicians have claimed. Foreign investors are usually concerned that elections take place, but do not generally wish to get involved in a country's internal affairs. It is, perhaps, much more the case that investors desire that our Kingdom remains a stable environment – in which their investments will thrive.

Before we consider amending the 2007 Constitution, we need to figure out some sound reasons why such a step is really necessary. We also need to know exactly whom the planned revisions will benefit. Thais should demand that their politicians only act with a completely clear conscience, when it comes to such a major issue.

Right now, the Government and the People Power Party are setting out to do almost exactly the same thing that the Council for National Security (CNS) did during its tenure in power. This government – and this party – want to amend the law-of-the-land for their own benefit, and ensure that the revisions are retroactive.

The citizens of this country want the Government to alleviate their economic burden – but the Government only seems intent on amending the 2007 Constitution to avoid legal action from being taken against it.

Job for Duang

April 24, 2008

Categories: Editorial Cartoons



Job for Duang – Kajorn Ngorngae by Mor, *Krungrtepturakit*, April 24, 2008

Left: Chalerm says: Don't worry, if my son, Duang, is back in the military, I will tell him to polish the [big guns in front of the Defense Ministry](#).

Middle: The reporter says: Do you think that job is suitable for your son? It is like beneath his knowledge and capabilities.

Chalerm says: So what is the suitable job for him?

Right: The reporter says: Quelling the southern unrest.

PAD rally

April 25, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008



(Photo: Asiper)

Above: Cartoon ridiculing proxies Chalerm and Samak – Chalerm is depicted as greedy, Samak as enraged

New PAD rally – April 25, 2008
More on [High tension in Thailand](#)



(Photo: Asiper)

Above: Anti-PAD group shouts in front of Thammasat University...



(Photo: Asiper)

Above: ...so the police drive a big truck to obstruct the anti-PAD protesters



(Photo: Asiper)

Above: Books revealing that PM Samak has been "impolite" to Privy Councilor Prem



(Photo: Asiper)

Above: Map of Thailand made of candles



(Photo: Asiper)

Above: People sign a petition against embattled Public Health Minister Chiya Sasomsap

More on [High tension in Thailand](#)

Red hot political strategy of the “Invisible hand”

April 25, 2008

Categories: Thai Politics

Red hot political strategy of the “Invisible hand” – translated and summarized from *Matichon*; Column: Vipak Haeng Vipak, April 25, 2008

It seems that the People Power Party (PPP) is trying very hard to instigate amendments to the 2007 Constitution. Article 291 of the Constitution is considered to be one of the main targets of this amendment plan – in spite of there being considerable public opposition. The Chief Government Whip also seems to support the idea of constitutional amendment. We should not forget, however, that the Chief Whip is none other than Chai Chidchob. And also that his Assistant Whip is Samart Kaewwichai. Chai continues to receive the covert backing of his son Newin Chidchob – while Samart enjoys the secretive support of House Speaker Yongyuth Tiypairat.

So who is behind Newin and Yongyuth? The ‘Invisible Hand’ is the answer! It is frequently said that present-day Thai politics is greatly influenced by the so-called ‘Invisible Hand’. This “Invisible hand” was said to be behind both the September 2006 coup d’etat and the dissolution of the Thai Rak Thai Party. It was also said to be involved in the political alliance between the Democrat Party, the Chart Thai Party and the Puea Pandin Party. It was also rumored to have brought about the appointment of Samak Sundaravej as the PPP Leader – and eventually as the Prime Minister. It is even said to have led to the return of Chalerm Yoobamrung to a ministerial post.

Thailand’s current political conflict is actually a war, in which one political camp’s ‘Invisible Hand’ is pitted against its counterpart in the opposing camp. Regardless of which political faction eventually appears to win this war, it is – thus – absolutely inevitable that the true winner can only be the ‘Invisible Hand.’

The final struggle is yet to come

April 25, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

The final struggle is yet

to come – translated and summarized from *Krungthep Turakit*; Column: ‘Kluehwei’ article;

Author: Pracha Burapawithee, April 25, 2008

A new round has just begun in the long-running fight between the People’s Alliance for Democracy (PAD) and the current government as led by the People Power Party. This fight reminds me of the sentiments expressed in the patriotic anthem called ‘L’Internationale’, which was sung by the French proletariat during its fight for the Commune of Paris in 1871.

A recent column in *Krungthep Turakit* stated,

“Tomorrow will mark the beginning of the final struggle to fend off the ascendancy of the ‘internationale’ in our country”. The columnist was discussing the PAD’s recent moves to begin a new round of mass protests – in its attempt to encourage some sectors of Thai society to oppose the PPP-led government’s proposed constitutional revisions. PAD is also attempting to thwart the possible return of ‘Thaksinism’ to the political arena – a movement that it believes runs contrary to this country’s development of a democratic system. The ‘Special Thailand Watch’ seminar, recently organized by the PAD, marks the beginning of another round of mass action in its stubborn fight to resist the increasing power of the current government.

The PPP-led government is now pushing ahead with its agenda to rewrite the entire 2007 Constitution, in the hope that it will assist former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra – and his wife Potjaman – to counter lawsuits that have been filed against them with allegations of corruption.

Thaksin is currently busy with his merit-making activities, with a PR campaign that includes a personal pilgrimage to a large number of Buddhist temples in Northern Thailand. He has also established the House No. 111 Foundation, in addition to the ‘good deeds’ he continues to perform for his long-established Thai Com Foundation. The House No. 111 Foundation is likely to become a new home for some banned politicians of the disbanded Thai Rak Thai (TRT) Party – including Sudarat Keyurapan, Pongthep Thepkanjana and Pongsak Raktapongpaisarn.

Meanwhile, there are other pro-Thaksin groups beginning to stir. Among the most prominent of these groups is the movement that was formerly known as the Democratic Alliance against Dictatorship (DAAD). Another significant group contains a number of former TRT Party members under the leadership of Thaksin’s close aide Newin Chidchob. Both groups are already well-prepared to demonstrate their support for the deposed PM, if any major political showdown comes to pass. The pro-Thaksin group led by Pracha Sobdee seems unlikely to play such a strong role as the DAAD and the ‘Newin’ groups.

As for the possibility of another coup, I wish to comment that the real power is still very much in the hands of the Royal Thai Army (RTA) – which will play the final card in any major dispute that arises between the two current political factions. A confidential source has recently provided information that suggests that another coup might possibly occur – but that the decision to run such a coup would depend on the

sentiments of two powerful cliques in the Royal Thai Police and the RTA. One of these cliques supports former PM Thaksin, and is in favor of destroying the 2007 Constitution. The other clique has fallen into disfavor as a result of a widespread public sentiment that the September 19 Coup (of 2006) failed in its objectives. The latter group might possibly wish to stage another coup along the same lines as the abortive 1951 Manhattan Coup (staged by some elements of the Royal Thai Navy), the (aforementioned) September 19 Coup, or the Kabot Senathikarn Rebellion (as attempted by certain elements in the RTA's General Staff). Some political pundits are warning the public to keep a very close eye on the current political situation. They see possible connections between recent attempts to disgrace the Privy Council President (and Statesman) Gen. Prem Tinasulanonda and last week's initiation of a 'lèse majesté' case against a young man alleged to have refused to stand to attention – as a sign of respect to HM the King – during the playing of the Royal Anthem at a movie theater. Nobody would seriously doubt Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej's loyalty to the Thai monarchy. Indeed, it is said that PM Samak has already issued orders that this case should be handled discreetly. I would say, however, that a Democrat Party-led government would have undoubtedly handled this case in a much more sensible manner.

Still more cannon polishing

April 25, 2008

Categories: Editorial Cartoons - Manager



Still more cannon
polishing – *Manager*, April 25,
2008

It reads: I was lucky that Ai Pused only had a small gun.

Red-light cameras

April 26, 2008

Categories: Crime

Red-light cameras – April 26, 2008



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Here are some shots of the elaborate new red-light camera system at the Sathorn-Surasak intersection. It appears to be equipment by [LaserCraft](#).

Top: Cameras covering the eastbound lanes from behind the traffic

Above: The front of the computer cabinet open showing components for recording images.

Left: Another set of cameras on the other side of the intersection facing into the oncoming traffic—apparently to record the driver of the vehicle.

Right: The back of the computer cabinet—the cameras are at the top right

Below: Screenshot of the recording software from the [LaserCraft](#) site.

Other red-light camera links:

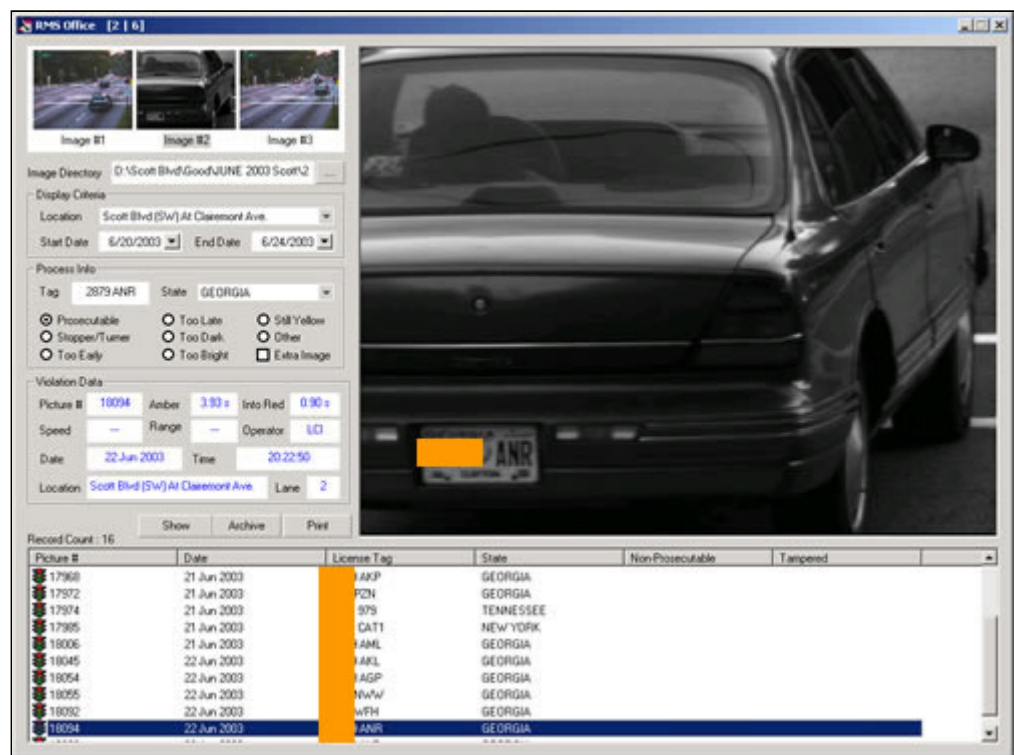
[How red-light cameras work](#)

[Anti-red light camera site](#)

[6 cities that were caught shortening yellow light times for profit](#)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Source: LaserCraft)

Thailand wants OPEC-like cartel for rice

April 26, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thailand wants OPEC-like cartel for rice](#) – Bernama, April 26, 2008

...CP Group chairman, Dhanin Chearavanont, said

Thailand, the world's biggest rice exporter, should approach three major rice-producing countries, namely China, Vietnam and India, to form the alliance similar to the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec)...

Anti-PAD Attacks – April 2008

April 27, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008



Above: *Daily News*, April 27, 2008 – Fight almost occurs – Police caught Mr. Sarawut Sripiromnit (top left) who threw stones at the opponents in Thammasat University. Cameraman of Channel 7 News (bottom left) was hit by a stone on the head while the members of the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) (top right) were making a speech in the conference hall. In front of the university (bottom right), the anti-PAD group was making a loud noise and trying to break in to stop the meeting. Police gathered to control the violence.

Weekend front pages

Also: From Friday: [PAD rally photos](#) – April 24, 2008



Above: *Daily News*, April 27, 2008 – Bomb defusal officials are defusing an explosive which was hidden in a post box. They put the post box on the stairs of the hall of the Wat San Phang temple, along the Ta Pae Road in Tambon Chang Moi, Amphoe Muang, Chiang Mai province. They destroyed the bomb by firing a water-powered gun at it. The police

focus on two factors — the internal conflict among people in the temple who are arguing for car parking spaces and gangsters.



Above: *KhaoSod*, April 27, 2008 – Challenging mob – Members of the Democratic Alliance against Dictatorship are gathering in front of the Thammasat University to oppose a discussion attacking the government by the People Alliance for Democracy. The gathering situation is quite furious. Some people also showed their penis.



Above: *Matichon*, April 27, 2008 – Top headline: The Prime Minister and ministers will not be dismissed, helped by the amendments. The Constitution will be amended for their sake again.
Subheadline in black: Samak is upset with the news report. He says he never once said that he will dissolve the parliament after the Constitutional amendments are completed. He said Suwit has made a promise, but he changed his mind. The premier wonders if Mr. Suwit is not helping with the amendments, what he is in now. The Puea Paendin Party is doubted which standard is applied for the amendments. It says the 1997 Constitution has been promoted, while the Section 237 and Section 309 in the current Constitution have been deleted. The move

also helps Samak and ministers from being dismissed from the positions of Members of the Parliament.
At bottom: More photos from the anti-PAD protest.



Above: KhaoSod, April 27, 2008 –

The blue headline:

VCD evidence sent to police to file charge of lese majeste against Seri

The black/white headline:

Three juveniles follow a porno website from the internet cafe to rape a girl

The red headline:

Crap and sex organs shown and used to oppose the PAD gathering

Top left is a public information campaign featuring HRH Prince Teepangkorn Rasmichoti.

The caption reads:

Drink mom's milk –

The Ministry of Commerce has printed the poster aimed at campaigning for drinking mom's milk rather than powdered milk. HRH Prince Teepangkorn Rasmichoti, who has been nurtured by mom's milk, is the presenter of the campaign. The Ministry is preparing to give out 500,000 posters nationwide.

The graphic itself reads: Mother's milk is the first drop of love in family relationships – Mother's milk is the best

BMA hopes to construct world's tallest viewpoint tower

April 27, 2008

Categories: Buildings

[BMA hopes to construct world's tallest viewpoint tower](#) – *Bangkok Post*, April 27, 2008

Thai snowfall?

April 27, 2008

Categories: Weather



Thai snowfall? – April 27, 2008

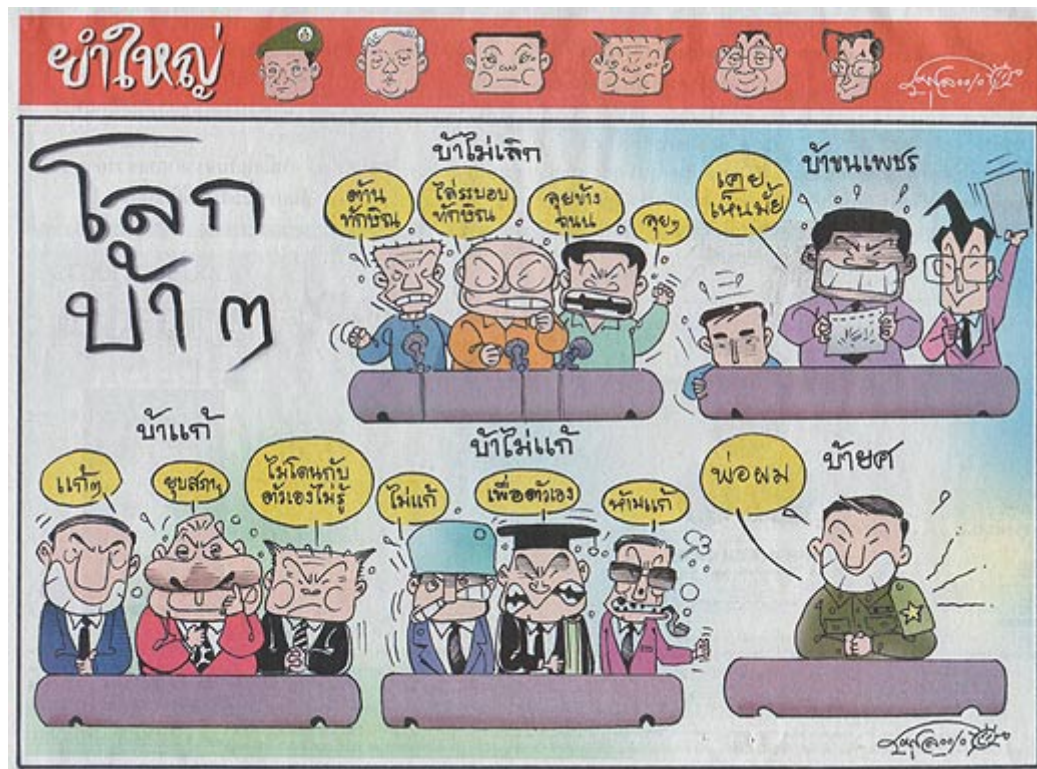
From [Matichon](#): *Doi Chang at Chaing Rai was whitened with small hail that looked like snow. The Metrological Department specified this is a natural phenomenal that occurs when hot weather meets with cold weather* (photo from *Prachachatturakit* newspaper on April 26).

Earlier: [The day it snowed in Thailand in 1955](#)

Crazy World

April 27, 2008

Categories: Editorial Cartoons



Crazy

World – *Khao Sod*, April 27, 2008

Top, left to right:

Keep being crazy

Left to right: Chalerm, Sondhi, ? (perhaps Somkiat or Suriyasai from the PAD)

Chalerm says: Opposing Thaksin

Sondhi says: Beating off Thaksin regime

Not sure, perhaps Somkiat or Suriyasai from the PAD: Marching on the street

Crazy about public hair

Left to right: Democrats Apisit, Tepthai, and Chuan

Tepthai says: Have you ever seen them?

Bottom, left to right:

Crazy about amendments

Left to right: ?, PM Samak, Banharn

First figure: Constitution must be revised

Samak: Parliament must be dissolved

Banharn: They don't know if they never face the situation themselves.

Against amendment moves

Left to right: ?, ?, Prasong

First figure: It must not be revised

Second figure: For the sake of themselves

Prasong: Must not be amended

Crazy about honor
Duang says: That's my father

Famous astrologer – former policeman – predicts career fate of National Police Chief

April 28, 2008

Categories: Local Beliefs, Thai Police

Famous astrologer – former

policeman – predicts career fate of National Police Chief – translated and summarized from *Phujatkan*;

Author: Crime News Reporters' Pool, April 28, 2008

Former policeman and well-known astrologer – Pol. Col. Atthawirot

Sritula has recently predicted the career fate of the incumbent

National Police Chief Gen. Patcharawat Wongsuwan. He has also examined

the possible fate of Pol. Gen. Priewpan Damapong (Khunying Potjaman

Shinawatra's brother), in his current bid to become the National Police

Chief.

Col. Atthawirot has been keeping a close watch on National Police Chief

incumbents in recent years, and he has noted that it is rare for those

appointed to the post to serve out a full term. Atthawirot's

astrological prognostications, on the careers of recent police chiefs,

have now found their way into the media. Atthawirot says Gen.

Patcharawat will face some hardships in carrying out his post's

responsibilities. He also believes that Gen. Patcharawat will need to

display great patience, if he is to complete his full term.

Gen. Priewpan Damapong (the brother-in-law of former Prime Minister

Thaksin Shinawatra) has recently returned to work in the National

Police Bureau. Atthawirot has examined the astrological omens for Gen.

Priewpan being chosen as National Police Chief. The famous astrologer

told the media that he believes that Priewpan's career future will be

entirely dependent on the fortunes of former PM Thaksin and the current

People Power Party-led government, as the 'two' continue to engage in a

combined power struggle with their many detractors.

General Patcharawat was appointed as the National Police Chief after

the transfer of the former incumbent – Gen. Seripisut Temiyavet – to an

inactive post. This transfer came after many lawsuits were filed

against Seripisut, with allegations of corruption and indiscipline.

A dream of the People Power Party

April 28, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

A dream? – translated and summarized from *Krungtep Turakit*; Reporter No. 10, April 28, 2008

It appears that the People Power Party (PPP) is now almost certain to succeed in its aggressive campaign to amend the 2007 Constitution. The problem for PPP will now be how exactly they intend to make this amendment happen. It is widely-believed that the PPP will press ahead with its proposed plans to reinstate the entire 1997 Constitution – with total disregard for any public objections. If this plan – as secretly conceived by the ‘Boss’ himself – is successful, the merger of three political parties seems inevitable. The ‘merging’ parties would be the PPP, the Chart Thai Party and the Neutral Democratic Party . Their merger would mean that around 300 MPs would come under the control of a single party in the House of Representatives. But before the constitutional amendments and the party merger can take place, it may actually be necessary to dissolve parliament – in the hope that a new election will soften the electorate’s resistance to such drastic actions.

Rumors currently have it that either Pol. Gen. Chidchai Wannasathit or Dr. Prommin Lertsuridet could soon be selected as the new leader of the PPP – with the further possibility of Newin Chidchob becoming the party’s Secretary-General, and Pongthep Thepkanchana being appointed as the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Through such moves – the rumor mill says – the way will be cleared for ‘Thaksin Fever’ to once again grip the nation.

It seems, however, that former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra is becoming rather sick of the antics of his ‘nominee’ Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej – whose popularity and influence is seemingly on the wane. This increasing animosity between Thaksin and Samak will surely have some impact on the former PM’s long-held dream of a return to power.

Manchester City news

April 29, 2008

Categories: The Thaksin Years

Manchester City news

[Eriksson:](#)

[I'm getting the boot](#)

[Eriksson](#)

[to be sacked by Man City](#)

[Gallagher](#)

[slams 'ludicrous' Sven decision](#)

[Save](#)

[Sven Goran Eriksson from the sack Petition](#)

["Power-Crazy](#)

[Thaksin" – Man City, Didn't We Tell You So?](#)

Giant river stingrays found near Thai city

April 29, 2008

Categories: Wildlife and Nature

[Giant river stingrays found near Thai city](#) – *National Geographic*, April 29, 2008

Fourteen-foot-long (4.3-meter-long) rays are thriving not far from Bangkok. But overfishing in Cambodia may still threaten the giants...

From the Finland Declaration to the Nepal Strategy

April 29, 2008

Categories: Thai Politics

More: [Unlocking the Thai world: Thai-language newspaper headlines](#)

From the Finland Declaration to the Nepal Strategy – Regime change through constitutional amendment and ballot – translated and summarized from *Phujatkan*, Author: Chiewchawana, April 29, 2008

Below, I have described the background history of Thaksin Shinawatra's rise to power.

Thaksin Shinawatra did not begin his business career in the usual manner. His financial success in business owed more to his manipulation of influential contacts, rather than to his managerial acumen alone. Our (now) former Prime Minister struggled hard in his early career, in his efforts to take his telecommunications business to the country as a whole. Thaksin was ably assisted in this process by both his father and his politician cousin. Thaksin was eventually able to obtain a license, from the Thai state, to engage in the telecommunications industry at the national level. The success of that business eventually brought him great wealth. Thaksin went on to enter politics, and he established his Thai Rak Thai Party (TRT) in 1998 – on the same day on which the French monarchy had been deposed, 209 years earlier. Thaksin was to spend a great deal of his own money building an effective campaign team for TRT. Many members of his 'team' were former members of the (Maoist) Communist Party of Thailand. The Thaksin 'team' also contained individuals who had previously supported the 'October 14' democratic reform movement. The formation of TRT was a great success, as certain groups of conservatives – in the TRT camp – appeared willing to eschew their former political philosophy for the benefits of Thaksin's money. Thus Thai society was able to witness a growing political rift between the political aspirations of its disenchanted former Maoists and its old guard of bureaucrats – who continued to doggedly serve the notion of an 'absolute monarchy'. These two political poles are now locked in mortal combat, with the former committed to serving the needs of modern-day capitalism, and the latter committed to preventing the rise of TRT's capitalist supporters to the main seat of power.

Once TRT had succeeded in winning its first general election, Thaksin stepped up to lead the country in a thoroughly authoritarian and capitalist manner. He began to abuse his new-found power by paying little regard to the letter of the law. Indeed, it is because of Thaksin's authoritarian parliamentary manner, and his promotion of single-minded notions of capitalism, that I now wish to express my defiance of his rule. It is obvious to me that our nation's system of democracy, under a constitutional monarchy, faces grave risks from Thaksin's continual craving for power. Thaksin is now able to largely dictate the course of Thai politics, in addition to being able to control the fate of those politicians who either favor or oppose him. During Thaksin's tenure in government, a great deal of corruption is alleged to have taken place. It is also noteworthy that, after Thaksin's initial rise to power, many websites sprang up to portray our monarchy in a negative light. The Thai Royalty commands the highest

respect of the vast majority of Thais, but those wrongdoers who seek to discredit HM the King – many of whom receive Thaksin's tacit support – have yet to receive the ultimate penalty for their crimes.

The Thaksin governments abused many of the powers they were granted through the ballot box. Not only did the Thaksin administration initiate a policy that promoted the extra-judicial killing of drug-dealers, but it also used those same powers to victimize and silence its critics in non-governmental organizations.

The September 19 coup in 2006 took place under the leadership of the Council for National Security (CNS). That coup was an attempt to oppose Thaksin's attempt to rise to absolute power over all aspects of Thai society.

From the September 19 Coup in 2006, through the CNS Government (2006-2007), up until the present day – In the aftermath of the 2006 coup, the CNS set up an interim government under the Prime Ministership of Gen. Surayud Chulanont. This government remained in power until December 2007. PM Surayud's administration tried to pursue policies that promoted greater political peace and harmony in Thai society, but it proved to be incapable of ridding the country of Thaksin's 'absolutist' undercurrents. The pro-Thaksin (AKA 'old power') group has now returned to run this country. I believe that this return places our constitutional monarchy in great jeopardy. It should be noted that many websites are once again openly engaged in denouncing the institutions of our monarchy – including the President of the Privy Council. This difference is that, this time around, these anti-monarchy groups are even more aggressive in their condemnations of our august institutions.

Thai Media Project – April 2008

April 30, 2008

Categories: Thai Media Project

More: [Unlocking the Thai world: Thai-language newspaper headlines](#)

From the Finland Declaration

to the Nepal Strategy – Regime change through constitutional amendment

and ballot – translated and summarized from *Phujatkan*, Author: Chiewchawana, April 29, 2008

Below, I have described the background history of Thaksin Shinawatra's rise to power.

Thaksin Shinawatra did not begin his business career in the usual manner. His financial success in business owed more to his manipulation of influential contacts, rather than to his managerial acumen alone.

Our (now) former Prime Minister struggled hard in his early career, in his efforts to take his telecommunications business to the country as a whole. Thaksin was ably assisted in this process by both his father and his politician cousin. Thaksin was eventually able to obtain a license, from the Thai state, to engage in the telecommunications industry at the national level. The success of that business eventually brought him great wealth. Thaksin went on to enter politics, and he established his Thai Rak Thai Party (TRT) in 1998 – on the same day on which the French monarchy had been deposed, 209 years earlier. Thaksin was to spend a great deal of his own money building an effective campaign team for TRT. Many members of his 'team' were former members of the (Maoist) Communist Party of Thailand. The Thaksin 'team' also contained individuals who had previously supported the 'October 14' democratic reform movement. The formation of TRT was a great success, as certain groups of conservatives – in the TRT camp – appeared willing to eschew their former political philosophy for the benefits of Thaksin's money. Thus Thai society was able to witness a growing political rift between the political aspirations of its disenchanted former Maoists and its old guard of bureaucrats – who continued to doggedly serve the notion of an 'absolute monarchy'. These two political poles are now locked in mortal combat, with the former committed to serving the needs of modern-day capitalism, and the latter committed to preventing the rise of TRT's capitalist supporters to the main seat of power.

Once TRT had succeeded in winning its first general election, Thaksin stepped up to lead the country in a thoroughly authoritarian and capitalist manner. He began to abuse his new-found power by paying little regard to the letter of the law. Indeed, it is because of Thaksin's authoritarian parliamentary manner, and his promotion of single-minded notions of capitalism, that I now wish to express my defiance of his rule. It is obvious to me that our nation's system of democracy, under a constitutional monarchy, faces grave risks from Thaksin's continual craving for power. Thaksin is now able to largely dictate the course of Thai politics, in addition to being able to control the fate of those politicians who either favor or oppose him. During Thaksin's tenure in government, a great deal of corruption is alleged to have taken place. It is also noteworthy that, after Thaksin's initial rise to power, many websites sprang up to portray our monarchy in a negative light. The Thai Royalty commands the highest

respect of the vast majority of Thais, but those wrongdoers who seek to discredit HM the King – many of whom receive Thaksin's tacit support – have yet to receive the ultimate penalty for their crimes.

The Thaksin governments abused many of the powers they were granted through the ballot box. Not only did the Thaksin administration initiate a policy that promoted the extra-judicial killing of drug-dealers, but it also used those same powers to victimize and silence its critics in non-governmental organizations.

The September 19 coup in 2006 took place under the leadership of the Council for National Security (CNS). That coup was an attempt to oppose Thaksin's attempt to rise to absolute power over all aspects of Thai society.

From the September 19 Coup in 2006, through the CNS Government (2006-2007), up until the present day – In the aftermath of the 2006 coup, the CNS set up an interim government under the Prime Ministership of Gen. Surayud Chulanont. This government remained in power until December 2007. PM Surayud's administration tried to pursue policies that promoted greater political peace and harmony in Thai society, but it proved to be incapable of ridding the country of Thaksin's 'absolutist' undercurrents. The pro-Thaksin (AKA 'old power') group has now returned to run this country. I believe that this return places our constitutional monarchy in great jeopardy. It should be noted that many websites are once again openly engaged in denouncing the institutions of our monarchy – including the President of the Privy Council. This difference is that, this time around, these anti-monarchy groups are even more aggressive in their condemnations of our august institutions.

Worrisome situation – translated and summarized from *Krungtep Turakit*, Column: Political Developments, April 30, 2008

This government is currently facing not only political problems, but also economic problems. Indeed, these economic problems actually appear to be steadily worsening. It seems that this government is paying far too much attention to its plans to amend the 2007 Constitution, while the more worrisome issue of steeply-rising prices is being largely ignored. Since both oil and rice prices are also on the rise, this government will soon have to decide whether to increase fares for Bangkok's Skytrain and MRT systems. Similar decisions will also be necessary over the annual National Minimum Wage adjustments, the annual salary adjustments for civil servants and the current factory prices of sugar. To add to this government's woes, many ordinary people are now keeping a very close eye on the performance of Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej – who is considered by some to be the political nominee of former PM Thaksin Shinawatra. If this government fails to solve these economic problems, unexpected challenges might soon arise to its power. These challenges could take the form of either the dissolution of Parliament or another coup d'état.

Red hot political strategy of the 'Invisible hand' – translated and

summarized from *Matichon*; Column: Vipak Haeng Vipak, April 25, 2008

It seems that the People Power Party (PPP) is trying very hard to instigate amendments to the 2007 Constitution. Article 291 of the Constitution is considered to be one of the main targets of this amendment plan – in spite of there being considerable public

opposition. The Chief Government Whip also seems to support the idea of constitutional amendment. We should not forget, however, that the Chief Whip is none other than Chai Chidchob. And also that his Assistant Whip is Samart Kaewwichai. Chai continues to receive the covert backing of his son Newin Chidchob – while Samart enjoys the secretive support of House Speaker Yongyuth Tiypairat.

So who is behind Newin and Yongyuth? The ‘Invisible Hand’ is the answer! It is frequently said that present-day Thai politics is greatly influenced by the so-called ‘Invisible Hand’. This ‘Invisible Hand’ was said to be behind both the September 2006 coup d’etat and the dissolution of the Thai Rak Thai Party. It was also said to be involved in the political alliance between the Democrat Party, the Chart Thai Party and the Puea Pandin Party. It was also rumored to have brought about the appointment of Samak Sundaravej as the PPP Leader – and eventually as the Prime Minister. It is even said to have led to the return of Chalerm Yoobamrung to a ministerial post.

Thailand’s current political conflict is actually a war, in which one political camp’s ‘Invisible Hand’ is pitted against its counterpart in the opposing camp. Regardless of which political faction eventually appears to win this war, it is – thus – absolutely inevitable that the true winner can only be the ‘Invisible Hand.’

People Power Party does

what CNS did before – translated and

summarized from *Matichon*; Column: Think Station No. 12; Author:

Tawee Mee-ngern, April 24, 2008

Many people are questioning why the People Power Party (PPP) has dared to make overtures to revise the 2007 Constitution; in spite there being a common perception – nationwide – that such moves are being made for the party’s sake alone. PPP wish to amend Article 237 of the Charter, as a means to prevent their party from being disbanded. They also wish to amend Article 309, which could help former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to escape corruption charges.

Although the 2007 Constitution is not as clearly written as its 1997 predecessor, it is a fact that fourteen million Thai citizens – throughout this land – voted for its promulgation. If any party truly wishes to revise the current constitution, it should first remind itself of the large number of people who voted for that charter to be enacted.

It appears that the proposed amendments to the 2007 Constitution are not intended to improve the country’s democratic standing or create greater confidence among foreign investors – as some politicians have claimed. Foreign investors are usually concerned that elections take place, but do not generally wish to get involved in a country’s internal affairs. It is, perhaps, much more the case that investors desire that our Kingdom remains a stable environment – in which their investments will thrive.

Before we consider amending the 2007 Constitution, we need to figure out some sound reasons why such a step is really necessary. We also need to know exactly whom the planned revisions will benefit. Thais should demand that their politicians only act with a completely clear conscience, when it comes to such a major issue.

Right now, the Government and the People Power Party are setting out to do almost exactly the same thing that the Council for National Security (CNS) did during its tenure in power. This government – and this party – want to amend the law-of-the-land for their own benefit, and ensure that the revisions are retroactive.

The citizens of this country want the Government to alleviate their economic burden – but the Government only seems intent on amending the 2007 Constitution to avoid legal action from being taken against it.

The final struggle is yet to come – translated and summarized from *Krungthep Turakit*; Column: ‘Kluenwai’ article; Author: Pracha Burapawithee, April 25, 2008

A new round has just begun in the long-running fight between the People’s Alliance for Democracy (PAD) and the current government as led by the People Power Party. This fight reminds me of the sentiments expressed in the patriotic anthem called ‘L’Internationale’, which was sung by the French proletariat during its fight for the Commune of Paris in 1871.

A recent column in *Krungthep Turakit* stated, “Tomorrow will mark the beginning of the final struggle to fend off the ascendancy of the ‘internationale’ in our country”. The columnist was discussing the PAD’s recent moves to begin a new round of mass protests – in its attempt to encourage some sectors of Thai society to oppose the PPP-led government’s proposed constitutional revisions. PAD is also attempting to thwart the possible return of ‘Thaksinism’ to the political arena – a movement that it believes runs contrary to this country’s development of a democratic system. The ‘Special Thailand Watch’ seminar, recently organized by the PAD, marks the beginning of another round of mass action in its stubborn fight to resist the increasing power of the current government.

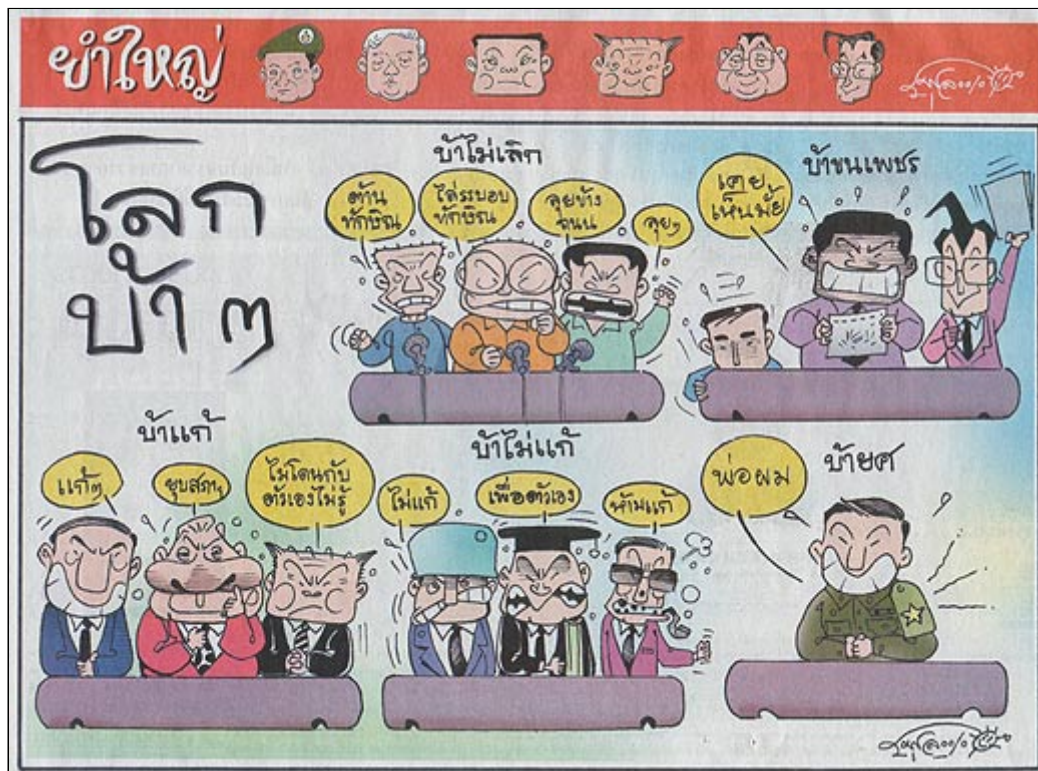
The PPP-led government is now pushing ahead with its agenda to rewrite the entire 2007 Constitution, in the hope that it will assist former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra – and his wife Potjaman – to counter lawsuits that have been filed against them with allegations of corruption.

Thaksin is currently busy with his merit-making activities, with a PR campaign that includes a personal pilgrimage to a large number of Buddhist temples in Northern Thailand. He has also established the House No. 111 Foundation, in addition to the ‘good deeds’ he continues to perform for his long-established Thai Com Foundation. The House No. 111 Foundation is likely to become a new home for some banned politicians of the disbanded Thai Rak Thai (TRT) Party – including Sudarat Keyurapan, Pongthep Thepkanjana and Pongsak Raktapongpaisarn.

Meanwhile, there are other pro-Thaksin groups beginning to stir. Among the most prominent of these groups is the movement that was formerly known as the Democratic Alliance against Dictatorship (DAAD). Another significant group contains a number of former TRT Party members under the leadership of Thaksin’s close aide Newin Chidchob. Both groups are already well-prepared to demonstrate their support for the deposed PM, if any major political showdown comes to pass. The pro-Thaksin group led by Pracha Sobdee seems unlikely to play such a strong role as the DAAD and the ‘Newin’ groups.

As for the possibility of another coup, I wish to comment that the real power is still very much in the hands of the Royal Thai Army (RTA) – which will play the final card in any major dispute that arises between the two current political factions. A confidential source has recently provided information that suggests that another coup might possibly occur – but that the decision to run such a coup would depend on the sentiments of two powerful cliques in the Royal Thai Police and the RTA. One of these cliques supports former PM Thaksin, and is in favor of destroying the 2007 Constitution. The other clique has fallen into

disfavor as a result of a widespread public sentiment that the September 19 Coup (of 2006) failed in its objectives. The latter group might possibly wish to stage another coup along the same lines as the abortive 1951 Manhattan Coup (staged by some elements of the Royal Thai Navy), the (aforementioned) September 19 Coup, or the Kabot Senathikarn Rebellion (as attempted by certain elements in the RTA's General Staff). Some political pundits are warning the public to keep a very close eye on the current political situation. They see possible connections between recent attempts to disgrace the Privy Council President (and Statesman) Gen. Prem Tinasulanonda and last week's initiation of a 'lèse majesté' case against a young man alleged to have refused to stand to attention – as a sign of respect to HM the King – during the playing of the Royal Anthem at a movie theater. Nobody would seriously doubt Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej's loyalty to the Thai monarchy. Indeed, it is said that PM Samak has already issued orders that this case should be handled discreetly. I would say, however, that a Democrat Party-led government would have undoubtedly handled this case in a much more sensible manner.



Crazy
World – *Khao Sod*, April 27, 2008

Top, left to right:

Keep being crazy
Left to right: Chalerm, Sondhi, ? (perhaps Somkiat or Suriyasai from the PAD)
Chalerm says: Opposing Thaksin
Sondhi says: Beating off Thaksin regime
Not sure, perhaps Somkiat or Suriyasai from the PAD: Marching on the street

Crazy about pubic hair
Left to right: Democrats Apisit, Tepthai, and Chuan

Bottom, left to right:

Crazy about amendments
Left to right: ?, PM Samak, Banharn
First figure: Constitution must be revised
Samak: Parliament must be dissolved
Banharn: They don't know if they never face the situation themselves.

Against amendment moves
Left to right: ?, ?, Prasong
First figure: It must not be revised
Second figure: For the sake of themselves
Prasong: Must not be amended

Crazy about honor
Duang says: That's my father

Tepthai says: Have you ever seen them?

Famous astrologer – former

policeman – predicts career fate of National Police Chief – translated and summarized from *Phujatkan*;

Author: Crime News Reporters' Pool, April 28, 2008

Former policeman and well-known astrologer – Pol. Col. Atthawirot

Sritula has recently predicted the career fate of the incumbent

National Police Chief Gen. Patcharawat Wongsuwan. He has also examined the possible fate of Pol. Gen. Priewpan Damapong (Khunying Potjaman Shinawatra's brother), in his current bid to become the National Police Chief.

Col. Atthawirot has been keeping a close watch on National Police Chief incumbents in recent years, and he has noted that it is rare for those appointed to the post to serve out a full term. Atthawirot's astrological prognostications, on the careers of recent police chiefs, have now found their way into the media. Atthawirot says Gen. Patcharawat will face some hardships in carrying out his post's responsibilities. He also believes that Gen. Patcharawat will need to display great patience, if he is to complete his full term.

Gen. Priewpan Damapong (the brother-in-law of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra) has recently returned to work in the National Police Bureau. Atthawirot has examined the astrological omens for Gen. Priewpan being chosen as National Police Chief. The famous astrologer told the media that he believes that Priewpan's career future will be entirely dependent on the fortunes of former PM Thaksin and the current People Power Party-led government, as the 'two' continue to engage in a combined power struggle with their many detractors.

General Patcharawat was appointed as the National Police Chief after the transfer of the former incumbent – Gen. Seripisut Temiyavet – to an inactive post. This transfer came after many lawsuits were filed against Seripisut, with allegations of corruption and indiscipline.

A dream? – translated and summarized from *Krungtep Turakit*; Reporter No. 10, April 28, 2008

It appears that the People Power Party (PPP) is now almost certain to succeed in its aggressive campaign to amend the 2007 Constitution. The problem for PPP will now be how exactly they intend to make this amendment happen. It is widely-believed that the PPP will press ahead with its proposed plans to reinstate the entire 1997 Constitution – with total disregard for any public objections. If this plan – as secretly conceived by the 'Boss' himself – is successful, the merger of three political parties seems inevitable. The 'merging' parties would be the PPP, the Chart Thai Party and the Neutral Democratic Party. Their merger would mean that around 300 MPs would

come under the control of a single party in the House of Representatives. But before the constitutional amendments and the party merger can take place, it may actually be necessary to dissolve parliament – in the hope that a new election will soften the electorate's resistance to such drastic actions.

Rumors currently have it that either Pol. Gen. Chidchai Wannasathit or Dr. Prommin Lertsuridet could soon be selected as the new leader of the PPP – with the further possibility of Newin Chidchob becoming the party's Secretary-General, and Pongthep Thepkanchana being appointed as the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Through such moves – the rumor mill says – the way will be cleared for 'Thaksin Fever' to once again grip the nation.

It seems, however, that former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra is becoming rather sick of the antics of his ‘nominee’ Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej – whose popularity and influence is seemingly on the wane. This increasing animosity between Thaksin and Samak will surely have some impact on the former PM’s long-held dream of a return to power.



Still yet more cannon
polishing – *Manager*, April 25,
2008
It reads: I was lucky that Ai Pueed only had a small gun.



Job for Duang – Kajor Ngorngae by Mor, *Krungtepturakit*,
April 24, 2008

Left: Chalerm says: Don’t worry, if my son, Duang, is back in the military, I will tell him to polish the [big guns in front of the Defense Ministry](#).

Middle: The reporter says: Do you think that job is suitable for your son? It is like beneath his knowledge and capabilities.

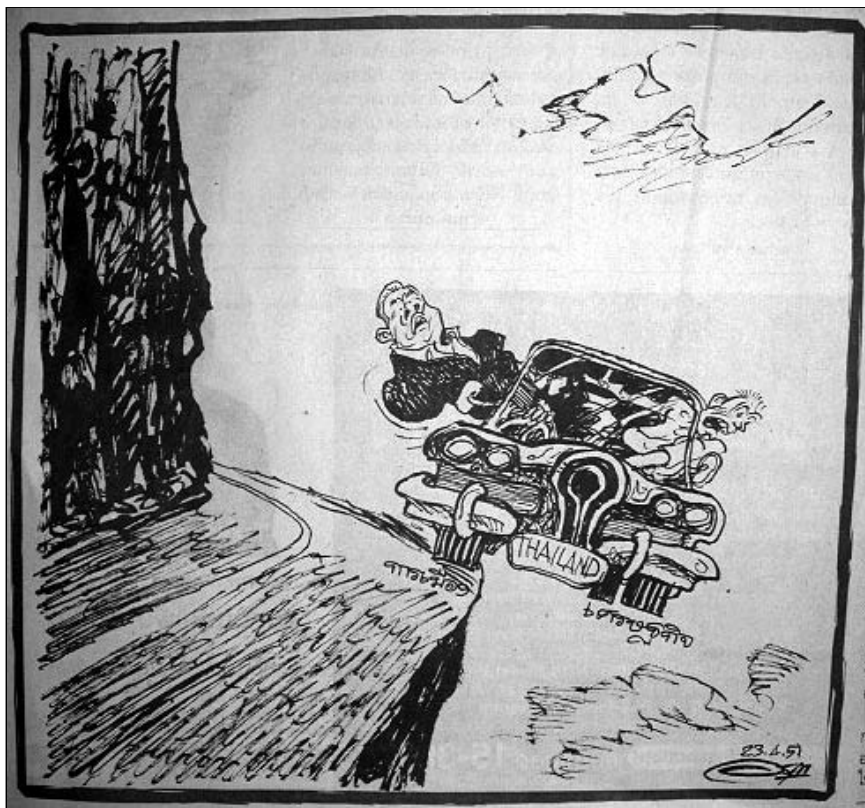
Chalerm says: So what is the suitable job for him?

Right: The reporter says: Quelling the southern unrest.

NBT news reports on impending

reform of Nepal's monarchy – translated and summarized from *Phujatkan*, column: Rieng Na Ha Kradan, author: Kamnoon Sittisaman, April 21, 2008

The NBT television channel has recently broadcast news reports about proposed reforms to the Nepalese monarchy. The reports suggest that the recent electoral success of the Nepalese Maoist Party which leads to the abolition of the country's monarchy. NBT's presentation of the story strongly highlights the issue of a monarchy yielding to Maoism. I wish to criticize the PM Office Minister Jakkrapob Penkair, who seems intent on presenting some underlying significance that can link the anti-monarchy Nepalese stories to the conflict between the pro-Thaksin group (who propose to reform the Constitution) and the anti-Thaksin supporters of the Privy Council President Prem Tinsulanonda.



Thailand – by Arun, *Krungtepturakit*, April 22, 2008

The left tire reads: Politics

The right tire reads: Economy

PM Samak

on the possible dissolution of Parliament –

translated and summarized from *Komchadluek*, April 22, 2008

Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej stated during last Sunday's broadcast of the weekly 'Samak's Style of Talk' television program, that he might consider dissolving parliament after completing his proposed revisions to the 2007 Constitution. The implications of this statement need to be closely examined. His government's proposed revision of the current constitution has drawn strong criticism from those members of the public who perceive that such a revision might mainly benefit his own

People Power Party (PPP) and the ‘old power’ group of Thaksin Shinawatra. The charter revision is likely to include a proposal to shorten the allocated life span of each new Electoral Commission (EC) and National Counter Corruption Commission (NCCC). These two organizations have both recently taken measures that have acted as a brake on the power of the current government. The EC launched an inquiry into alleged vote buying by the PPP after the December 23 General Election that could eventually lead to the its dissolution. Meanwhile, the NCCC has launched an inquiry into alleged corruption by ousted PM Thaksin Shinawatra.

I am of the firm belief that the PM needs to thoroughly reconsider any attempt by his government to revise the current constitution. Any perception that the revision is mainly of benefit to the PPP could lead to serious political conflict. Such conflict would jeopardize the peace of this nation, and result in a loss of public confidence in the Samak Government. And this might, in turn, cause another coup d’etat to occur.

Thaksin’s secret plan to win back the reins of power from Samak – Thaksin hopes to ‘uproot the grass before it grows’ under his feet – translated and summarized from *Phujatkan*, April 19, 2008

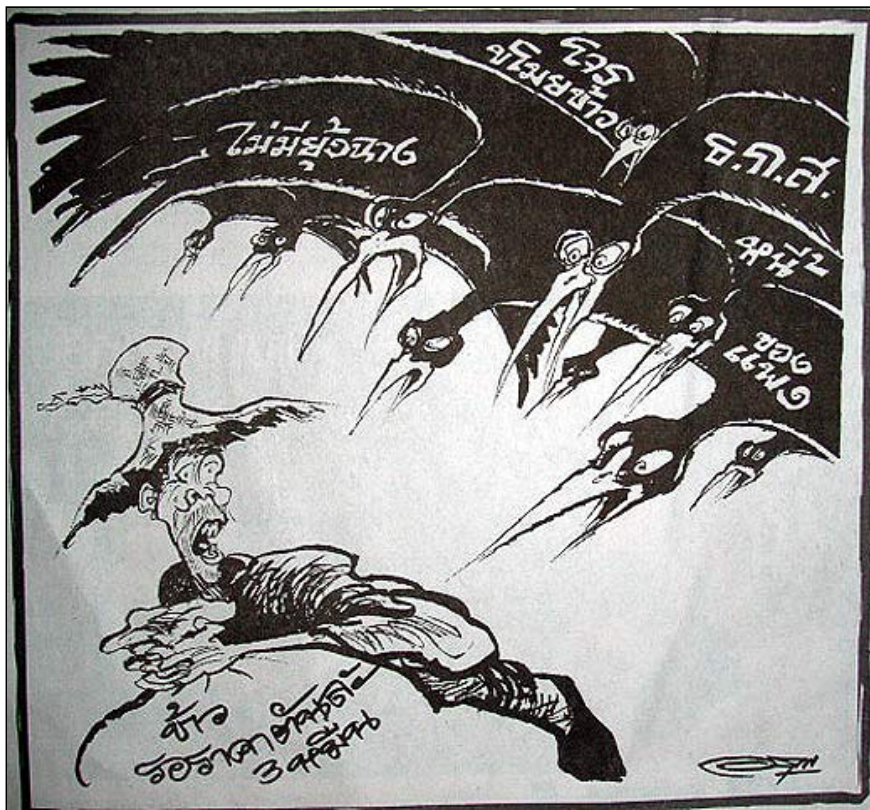
Former Prime Minister – Thaksin Shinawatra – made a public appearance at the Sheraton Grand Hotel on April 9, to deliver a special lecture at a seminar organized by the Thai Com Foundation. The lecture was well-received by some elements of the business community. Among those who counted themselves impressed by Thaksin’s lecture were former leaders of his disbanded Thai Ruk Thai (TRT) party, and MPs of the current People Power Party (PPP).

Looking back on PM Samak’s lecture on government policies to revive the Thai economy, it was very noticeable that many of those in attendance were not really that interested in what the PM had to say on economic matters.

People seem to be openly pondering whether the ‘real’ prime minister is Thaksin Shinawatra or Samak Sundaravej.

Samak 1 Government ministers have had to await the decision of former PM Thaksin several times in recent weeks, over the shaping of their administration’s policies. The issue of the ‘30% reserve’ being a particular case-in-point – a matter that could easily have been decided by the Finance Minister, Dr. Surawong Suebwonglee, alone.

It is widely-believed that Thaksin will soon begin a major maneuver to regain his former popularity and return as prime minister.



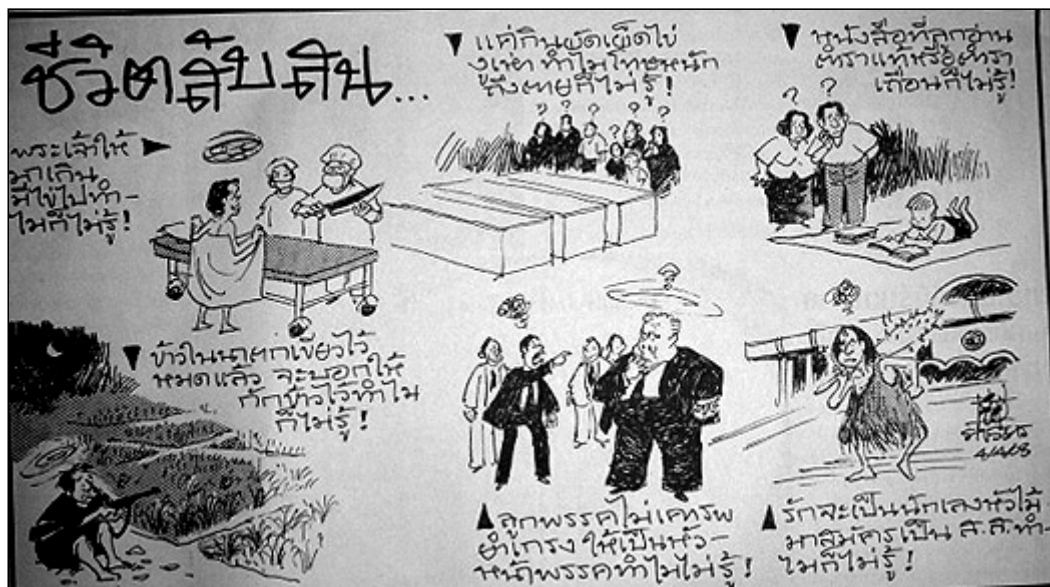
Farmers under siege – Arun, *Krungtepturakit*, April 3, 2008

On the bag it reads: Rice waiting for 30,000 baht per ton. One the birds it reads:
No barns, high prices, debt, Bank of Agriculture and cooperatives, thieves steal rice



Cat lover? – Arun, *Krungtepturakit*, April 4, 2008

Loves the cat or does not want the cat to get the fish – The tag on the cage reads "Commander-in-Chief" meaning C-in-C Anupong.



"Confusing life" – *Thai Rath*, April 6, 2008

Top, left to right: God gives me too many balls. They are no use!

Why do they receive death penalty eating stir fried cobra's eggs with chilies?

It is not known whether books our son is reading are licensed or pirated ones.

Bottom, left to right: Rice in the farm is all reserved. Why does the government tell us to stockpile it?

Party members do not respect me. Why have I been chosen to be the party leader?

Why do they become candidates for Member of the Parliament position if they want to be a gangster?

Samak's tit-for-tat strategy – translated and summarized from *Komchadluek*, April 10, 2008

The ‘Samak’s Style of Talk’ television program – which is aired on Sundays by the Department of Public Relations – is not only a piece of pro-government propaganda, but also a channel through which Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej can aggressively attack those journalists or people who have recently annoyed him.

Some may like the PM's aggressive and tough style of televised delivery, but there is a big question as to whether such a confrontational approach really benefits us – the ordinary citizens of Thailand.

A recent opinion poll by Bangkok University interviewed 1,036 respondents who said they had heard of or watched the PM's first broadcast of the weekly program. Many respondents expressed a strong liking for the PM's uncompromising attitude during the program – but many also expressed a strong disapproval of his sarcasm, roughness of manner and aggressive language.

People Power Party Spokesman Kuthep Saikrachang has recently commented that he thought that PM Samak tended to talk nonsense in public – but also that he was largely able to cover up the nonsense of his words by delivering them in a highly-aggressive manner.

Samak Sundaravej might well be the only elected PM in Thai history with no real political base. He really must begin to indicate his core political values to those he governs. He must also make it plain that he is not under the thumb of another more powerful politician. He will also have to act decisively and quickly against his enemies, as there is really some doubt as to whether he will remain PM for very long.

Keeping coup rumors alive – *The Nation Weekend*, April, 2008

C-in-C Anupong is on the cover of the *Nation Weekend* magazine. The cover reads "Lab luang loe will discuss the pla ra revolution."



Human rights infringed – terrible events on our southern borders – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, April 14, 2008

The issue of human rights is an important one. And it is especially important when we consider the ongoing violence in our southern border provinces. It should be of serious concern to us all that the policemen and army personnel operating in the restive region have so often been accused of infringing human rights. Two cases that were hugely antagonistic, in the ongoing conflict between the region's locals and the state security forces, were the mysterious death – in 1954 – of the leading human rights activist Haji Sulong Tohmeena and the more recent disappearance of the famous Muslim lawyer Somchai Neelaphaijit. A 2007 report by the Human Rights Watch organization said that there had been numerous 'disappearances' in the region, with no apparent reason for the majority of them.

Such reports impact very directly on the public image of our government officials – some of whom are under suspicion of involvement in the heinous crimes that undoubtedly lie behind these disappearances. Such events impact very negatively on Thailand's image abroad, as our country has already signed many treaties with international organizations to protect human rights.

I believe that the government urgently needs to create a better awareness, among government officials, of the negative impacts that can accrue from the cruel treatment of suspects. As the Sook Kaew Kaewdaeng Foundation says, the region's unrest can only be resolved if both its residents and its state officials have a shared vision of the need to protect human rights. The foundation hope that their project to promote a better respect for human rights will eventually lead to long-term peace in the restive region.

Military not progressive – politics, as always, regressive – translated and summarized from *Deep South Watch*; Author: Muhamad-ayup Patan, April 16, 2008

The situation in the South still remains largely unchanged. Violent attacks still occur on a daily basis. The locals of the region still largely live in fear, while Thais in the rest of the country are largely indifferent to the fate of the region's people.

By continually perpetrating violent attacks, the insurgent movement hopes to create a fear in the hearts of local people – with which they can be more easily coerced.

No matter how hard the government tries to solve this problem, it is still highly unlikely that they can ever bring an end to this unrest.

In the wake of the recent major spate of arrests of suspected insurgents, it might be claimed that the government – and especially its military – has destroyed the political structure of the insurgent movement. But the fact of the matter is that the military has yet to destroy the insurgents' armed forces – so the unrest is thus bound to continue.

Military operations always increase the likelihood of human rights violations occurring. Thus, the unbelievable escalation of the unrest in the South is bound to involve widespread disregard for human rights. Some recent events have had an extremely negative impact on the public image of the current government, as they have clearly demonstrated that it has no policies to resolve the region's problems.

But if we examine all of the above from a converse viewpoint, the current situation could actually be construed as to the benefit of this government – affording it a brand-new opportunity to instigate a major initiative to resolve the region's problems once-and-for-all.

Festival of unregretted deaths – translated and summarized from *Komchadluek*, April 16, 2008

The Thai New Year Festival (AKA Songkran) is a time of year when the high death toll on our roads is

always highlighted in the media on a daily basis. We really need to be far more concerned about this carnage. The high number of car accidents – during each Thai New Year celebration – cause a massive loss of life, do a great deal of damage to property and incur huge medical costs for the injured. These all place a heavy burden on both our economy and our society.

I believe that the Songkran road-safety campaign should be conducted in a more serious and somber manner. I also believe that our traffic laws need to be far more punitive and far more strictly enforced than they are at present. The annual campaign also needs to focus on the heavy social consequences of irresponsible driving, by promoting the idea that it is socially unacceptable to flaunt the traffic laws.

Not facing famine! – translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, April 17, 2008

Many countries – worldwide – have been facing the prospect of future famine, since the prices of food staples – and rice in particular – began to rise so rapidly a few months back. At the same time as these dramatic price increases, most people's incomes have remained largely unchanged. The various causes of this global food crisis include higher fuel prices, global warming, lower agricultural production, a higher demand for food staples and the massive hoarding of some agricultural commodities. Rice prices have reached their highest levels in 20 years – while rice output is at its lowest level over the same period. Past Thai governments have tried hard to increase rice prices to sensible levels – but now the current government has to face the consequences of extremely high prices for the commodity. It is important that the government now deals fairly and even-handedly with this country's farmers, traders and exporters of rice. We Thais are unlikely to face the problem of famine, as we have always had enough rice for our own consumption and for export. The problem, for us all now, is how to manage the profits of our country's agricultural production in a fair and efficient manner – for the benefit of all our citizens.

Disgraceful MP – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, April 5, 2008

Concerning the verbal spat and physical confrontation – in Parliament on April 2 – that occurred between the People Power Party MP for Bangkok's Don Muang constituency, Karun Hosakun, and the Democrat Party's party-list MP Somkiat Pongpaiboon. A special parliamentary committee has been set up to investigate the case. I believe this issue reflects negatively on the image of Parliament. If Parliament is to continue to be a respected and prestigious institution, it is essential that the public perceives its MPs as upright and ethical. I would add that if this case is not investigated in a transparent manner, the image of Parliament will be further eroded.

Signs of impending chaos – translated and summarized from *Krungtep Turakit*, April 7, 2008

I wish to examine the violent and impolite confrontation that occurred in Parliament between an MP of the People Power Party, Karun Hosakun, and the Democrat Party MP Somkiat Pongpaiboon – that Somkiat has accused Karun of starting.

It is not yet known whether Karun or Somkiat is to be believed in this case. This incident highlights, however, the abnormal political conflict that continues to be waged between the 'old power' of Thaksin supporters and those who hate him.

Shortly before the confrontation occurred, Thaksin supporters had gathered in front of Thammasat University. The group shouted out impolite slogans in protest against a seminar that was being held by the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) inside the university at the time. They also vented their aggressive feelings against PAD by throwing rocks into the university compound. Karun later expressed his dissatisfaction and exasperation to Somkiat (a PAD leader) over his anti-Thaksin sentiments, when they subsequently met in the main hall of the university. Somkiat has long been a staunch critic of former PM Thaksin Shinawatra.

Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej has recently decided to revise Article 237 of the Constitution, which concerns the disbanding of political parties. He also wishes to revise Article 309, which affords a degree of immunity to those who have perpetrated a coup d'état against the Government. Samak has recently aired some rather aggressive criticisms against those who are opposed to these revisions.

All groups in Thai society should realize the dangers that are inherent in such conflicts, and begin to realize that it is necessary for us all to use our mental capacities to override our own naturally selfish political tendencies.

Samak should begin to demonstrate some maturity over this issue, by allowing the public to fully participate in the revision of the Constitution.



Poojadkuan, April 5, 2008 – It reads: The effect of global warming – Chai Chidchop with his arm around Karun says: Take it easy, young boy. Are you dizzy and it makes you kick at people. That man was not a bicycle.

The country is at risk! – translated and summarized from *Komchadluek*, April 2, 2008

Politicians – who were elected as representatives of the public – should put their collective intelligence to work to solve the existing problems of the Kingdom, and to prevent any new problems that might arise. They should also work more closely to provide the people – they represent – with greater security for their livelihoods, personnel assets and well-being.

Some politicians currently seem intent on taking shameless advantage of the government's assets, however. Indeed, they seem to be mainly engaged in doing things for their own sake.

Such behavior is hardly new, and is actually known to be an enduring problem in Thai politics. If this country continues to be ruled by immoral and selfish politicians, it will be increasingly at risk of failure.

Such politicians will almost certainly persist in favoring their associates, regardless of the eventual cost to the nation.

The Thai public is now facing many problems. These problems include expensive fuel costs, a high cost-of-living, numerous environmental problems and a soaring crime rate.

Additionally, several ministerial post-holders – within the current administration – are widely considered to be ill-qualified for their positions. These individuals not only act in a politically aggressive manner, but also seem intent on doing things that will not benefit the majority of the population.

If ministerial post-holders continue to show no great eagerness to solve the country's problem, our country's citizens will be left with no one to turn to. The situation will almost certainly worsen if these individuals are allowed to continue taking advantage of their positions.

Prime Minister Samak should consider reshuffling the members of his Cabinet. Inefficient ministerial post-holders should be sacked before they damage the country any further.

The Prime Minister's problems – translated and summarized from *Thai Rath*, April 3, 2008

During the 'Samak Talk' television program that was aired on March 30, Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej displayed a highly aggressive attitude towards the press. Among the things that the PM claimed, during the program, was that media reporters had deliberately prodded him to talk about the possibility of a coup d'etat against his government – to the point where the issue had become the 'talk of the town'.

The Prime Minister has been facing many problems since he placed himself once again in the public domain. He has been greatly criticized, and has had many complaints made against him. Furthermore, he has lost a great deal of his personal freedom and privacy – and cannot go out alone without bodyguards to guarantee his security.

There is one issue on which the PM has lately taken to speaking somewhat ambiguously. He claims that another country is paying attention to his every action, and is trying to influence him into not expressing any sympathy for a third country – that he also refuses to name.

Although the PM is not inclined to name these two countries, it is rather obvious to us that the second country is a ‘superpower’ and the third country is Myanmar.

Nation Weekend –
April 5, 2008

Right: Hot hundred million baht involved conflict



Left: Spicy godfather

More: [Unlocking the Thai world: Thai-language newspaper headlines](#)

UPP seizes diesel in Thai-registered vehicle with five extra fuel tanks

April 30, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[UPP seizes diesel in Thai-registered vehicle with five extra fuel tanks](#) – Bernama,

April 30, 2008

A team from Perlis Anti-Smuggling Unit (UPP)

thwarted an attempt to smuggle diesel out of the country when they seized 1,000 litres diesel, worth RM1,580, from a Thai-registered vehicle which had been modified with five extra fuel tanks at Titi Tinggi here yesterday...

My Bangkok taxi drink-drive shame, by Stephen Hendr

April 30, 2008

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[My Bangkok taxi drink-drive shame, by Stephen Hendry](#) – *Daily Record*, April 30, 2008

Snooker star Stephen Hendry drunkenly drove a taxi along one of the most dangerous city roads in the world. The Scot admitted he bribed a cabbie in Bangkok to let him get behind the wheel...

Lonely Planet founder defends Myanmar guidebook amid criticism that tourism aids junta

April 30, 2008

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[Lonely](#)

[Planet founder defends Myanmar guidebook amid criticism that tourism](#)
[aids junta](#) – *Sin Chew Jit Poh*,

April 30, 2008

Worrisome Situation

April 30, 2008

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008

Worrisome situation – translated and summarized from *Krungtep Turakit*, Column: Political Developments, April 30, 2008

This government is currently facing not only political problems, but also economic problems. Indeed, these economic problems actually appear to be steadily worsening. It seems that this government is paying far too much attention to its plans to amend the 2007 Constitution, while the more worrisome issue of steeply-rising prices is being largely ignored. Since both oil and rice prices are also on the rise, this government will soon have to decide whether to increase fares for Bangkok's Skytrain and MRT systems. Similar decisions will also be necessary over the annual National Minimum Wage adjustments, the annual salary adjustments for civil servants and the current factory prices of sugar. To add to this government's woes, many ordinary people are now keeping a very close eye on the performance of Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej – who is considered by some to be the political nominee of former PM Thaksin Shinawatra. If this government fails to solve these economic problems, unexpected challenges might soon arise to its power. These challenges could take the form of either the dissolution of Parliament or another coup d'état.