

## 7:14pm, July 3, 2004 – The subway is open!

July 3, 2004

Categories: Subway

At 7:14pm, the gate went up at the Rama 9 subway station (right). Crowds rushed into the station and lined up to buy tickets.

Passengers who bought the 10 baht token received a BCML frame with a subway postcard. Those who purchased the 300 baht Smart Card received a BCML billfold.

A northbound subway car that arrived at the station at 7:36pm was already so packed with people that no further passengers could board.

**Right:** Rama 9 Station opens at 7:14pm.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

**Above:** (clockwise from top right) BCML frame, BCML billfold, box the billfold came in, and a subway smart card. Underneath is the new subway brochure showing all the subway stations and exits.

**Below:** A subway car packed with passengers.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

**Above:**  
Less than a half-hour after opening, the subway cars are jam-packed.

# Bangkok: 'coolest city on the planet'

July 3, 2004

Categories: Thailand in the International Media

[Bangkok:](#)  
['coolest city on the planet'](#)

– *The Telegraph*,

July 3, 2004

*The Thai capital has transformed itself from Asia's bargain basement into the coolest city on the planet...*

*...Not far away, in the Bed Supper Club, Bangkok's beautiful people sprawled on white beds sipping banana daiquiris served by waitresses in pink ra-ra skirts. Over in Sirocco, lights that doubled as wind chimes led diners to tables from which they gazed down on the sinuous Chao Phraya river.*

*Since my previous visit a few years back, Bangkok has transformed itself from Asia's bargain basement into the coolest city on the planet. Fortunately it hasn't stopped offering unbeatable value along with the improved quality...*

*Thankfully, the city has not lost touch with tradition in its rush to modernity. One marbled dawn I hopped on a ferry across the river from the Peninsula.*

*In the backstreets life was already humming. Monks in saffron robes sought offerings from hawkers slicing pine-apples, wrapping sticky rice in coconut leaves, or assembling piles of green durian ("tastes like heaven, smells like hell").*

*Over in Lumpini Park, people were starting their day with foot massages (£4 for an hour), fan-dancing or working out at the outdoor gym.*

*...If there's another capital that gets as many things right, I'd like to hear about it.*

# No room for 'losers' in new Thailand

July 3, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

## [No room for 'losers' in new Thailand](#)

– The Age,

July 3, 2004

*...There is no room for losers in the Thailand of Thaksin Shinawatra, who, while deriding the national soccer team, was busy planning a public lottery to finance his personal fancy of buying a stake in Liverpool Football Club in England. Those who challenge the writ of the new strongman of Asian politics often find themselves sidelined or unemployed. Since he was swept to power in a landslide 3 years ago, Thaksin has transformed and energised Thai politics with his aggressive "can-do" leadership style, turning a flagging economy into one of the success stories of the region, infusing a moribund bureaucracy with his modern management credo and putting Thailand firmly back on the regional and global map.*

*Along the way, the 54-year-old leader has also ridden roughshod over the country's nascent democracy, independent media and legal institutions, crushing rivals and hounding critics. His high-profile campaigns against drug traffickers and organised criminals have left thousands dead, while hundreds more have been killed in an Islamic insurgency in southern Thailand inflamed by heavy-handed security forces...*

*"This is an ego that wants to control everything between the Earth and the Sun."*

*Two of the men Thaksin admires most have similar obsessions – Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi (owner of soccer club AC Milan) and Harrods department store chief Mohamed al-Fayed (owner of Fulham Football Club),*

*with whom Thaksin often stays in London, taking sight-seeing tours in his vintage Rolls-Royce. ...But Thaksin's energy and enthusiasm mostly enable him to weather such self-inflicted accidents. "He remains irrepressibly optimistic and confident. He is also engaging, quick-witted and amusing," says a senior regional official. "He is able to reach out to the people and they like him."*

*Thaksin plotted his political success with the same precision that he built his business empire. A minister in the revolving-door governments that mismanaged Thailand through the 1990s, he saw a window of opportunity and leapt through it.*

*...The Thaksin family now controls more than 10 per cent of stocks on the Thai exchange, and that does not include the vast amount of property and other assets held in unlisted companies. Last year, the value of the family holding company, Shin Corp, almost quadrupled.*



# Heroin in hotels

July 4, 2004

Categories: Drugs

[Heroin in hotels](#) –  
NME, July 4, 2004

*...Doherty was asked to leave The Libertines after walking out of a controversial rehab programme at Thailand's Thamkrabok Monastery. Today he described the experience: "I'd only come out of the Priory a couple of days earlier so I'd been through all the shakes, vomiting and (sleepless) nights with cold turkey. Foolishly I didn't*

*do any research about Thailand before I went, and it was hardcore.*

*"On the third day I left and went to Bangkok. I booked into a hotel where they offered room service of heroin with my bacon and eggs. I told*

*them I didn't have any money but they said I could have it on tab. I notched up a £280 bill in three days. If I'd done the same amount of brown in England it would have cost me thousands."*

A longer version of this story in [the](#)

[Mirror](#).

# Bangkok Subway News – June-July 2004

July 6, 2004

Categories: Subway

Subway ridership figures & various notes – July 6, 2004

Wisarat reports: *The statistics of the first 3 days of subway service are*

*July 3 – 45,000 passengers*

*July 4 – 200,000 passengers*

*July 5 – 150,000 passengers*

*Those who have joyrided and hung around the subway without going out for several hours will find that they have already inflicted suffering on other people who are waiting in long lines to get their turns including children who collapsed due to dehydration while they are waiting to buy a ticket and grumpy old men who have waited and ranted for generations to get a subway ride.*

*Passengers have hoarded many tokens for use in the future but are not supposed to do since there are 200,000 smart cards available.*

*Clumsy old men also complained that the turnstiles close too fast so they have to rely on the emergency gate to go in and go out.*

*MRTA also found that they have to adjust signs because confusing signs cause many people, especially the elderly, to puzzle about the gate they should go since some sections have very few sign while the other sections have too many signs.*

*SRT and MRTA better construct and finish Bangsue Park and Ride very soon since I have seen lots of cars at Bangsue Station blocking BMTA buses from picking up passengers directly from the gates. The measure to prevent abuses of the Park and Ride service will have to be imposed.*

*The installation of touchscreen TVMs which can accept banknotes will have to become a reality very soon to replace human exchanges. Additional handles inside the subway cars will help the passengers from slipping when the subway starts or stops.*

*The smart cards imported from Japan have 1 kbyte of memory—ready to carry data about the fare and ticket cost (from *Thaipost* – July 2, 2004). However, MRTA better consider the 30-day pass option as well as 1-day pass and 3-day pass for tourists in addition to the construction of new gates and connection via duct to the business buildings very soon.*

*Without direct viaduct to connect with the department stores and commercial buildings, MRTA won't be able to attract those business people and office ladies.*

*Without a 30-day pass, MRTA will not be able to fulfill those regular customers who act like a bunch of crybabies by asking MRTA to freeze the 10-bath flat rate ticket fee.*

Handicapped people delighted with the subway system – translated and summarized from *Thaipost*, June 12, 2004

The handicapped and the senior citizens feel very delighted after using the Subway system.

The Ministry of Society and Human Resource Development invited 130 handicapped and the senior citizens from Social Welfare Houses to try using Subway ([photos](#)).

Major Sirichai Subsiri (the head of Thai Handicapped People Association) said there is no problem using the Subway system. The restrooms, the fire escape routes, the arrows pointing to the entrances and the exits as well as the security guards to assist the handicapped are adequate. It is a very good beginning compared to the inadequate elevators for the handicapped at the BTSC Skytrain stations and the red tape involved in using their elevators.

However, Mr Monthian Buntan (head of Thai Blind Peoples' Association) tells MRTA that MRTA has not installed the speaking TVMs to help the blind buying the tickets. The deaf would like to see running messages on LED monitors so that they could come to use Subway without asking their relatives and other passengers to help them. It should be a law to install facilities inside the bus, Skytrain and Subway stations for 5 types of people: the blind, the deaf, the handicapped, the retarded, and pregnant women, senior citizens, children and foreigners who can speak neither Thai nor English (Japanese and Korean expats are a few good examples).

Furthermore MRTA has not implemented reserved seats for the handicapped yet, thus they have to stand for about an hour at the platforms and wait to ride the subway. Those who have no wheelchairs and the senior



people will have very hard time waiting for the subway.

**Commentary by Wisarut:** This should alert BTSC to install the elevators for the handicapped and senior people in all Skytrain Stations and dispense with the hassle of having to ask officers to turn on the elevators. Furthermore, the TVMs should be upgraded so that the TVMs can speak to the customers and accept 20, 50 and 100 baht banknotes.

KL STAR LRT (Malaysia) has smart card readers installed only in some stations while KL Putra has the smart card system in all stations. This has created lots of problems when the passengers try to exit stations on KL Star which have no smart card system. Therefore, BTSC may have to invest more on smart card system installation in all stations, not just the interchange stations.

KL Kommuter stations has station names written in English, Bahasa Melayu (only Rumi scripts –not Jawi scripts used in Pattani circle and Kelantan) and Japanese. Seoul Subway systems have the station names written in Korean, English and Japanese.

Therefore, it is logical to add station names in Japanese and Chinese, but the companies have to install additional signs to carry Japanese and Chinese characters.

Updated list of subway feeder busses and vans – translated and summarized from *Thairath*, July 2, 2004 & *Dailynews*, July 2, 2004

BMTA have rerouted the following lines (without changing the terminals) to serve the following stations

### **1) Bangsue Station**

BMTA No. 9 – Phaseecharoen Pier – Sam Sen Railway Station

BMTA No. 50 – Rama 7 Pier – Chula Hospital

BMTA No. 52 – Pakkret – Bangsue Junction

BMTA No. 70 – Prachanivet 3 – Sanam Luang

BMTA No. 97 – Ministry of Public Health – Sangha Priest Hospital

BMTA No. 125 – Samsen Railway Station – Rattanakosin Somphoj School

BMTA No 134 – Bang Buathong – Bangsue Station

Furthermore, BMTA will set up the new bus lines to terminate at Bangsue Station:

BMTA No. 9 Phaseecharoen Pier -Bangsue Station

BMTA No. 50 Rama 7 Pier – Bangsue Station

BMTA No. 70 Prachanivet 3 – Bangsue Station

BMTA No. 97 Ministry of Public Health – Bangsue Station

BMTA No. 125 – Bangsue Station – Rattanakosin Somphoj School

BMTA No 134 – Bang Buathong – Bangsue Station

### **2) Kamphaengphet Station**

BMTA No 77 – Sadhupradit Depot – Kamphaengphet Station

BMTA No 536 – Chatuchak Bus terminal – Expressway – Paknam (Aircon)

### **3) Lad Phrao Station**

BMTA No 26 – Lad Phrao Station – Minburi

BMTA No 96 – Lad Phrao Station – Suan Siam (Siam Park)

BMTA No 185 – Lad Phrao Station – Phaholyothin – Rangsit

BMTA No 503 – Lad Phrao Station – Phaholyothin – Rangsit

BMTA No 504 – Lad Phrao Station – Vibhavadee Rangsit – Rangsit

### **4) Ratchadaphisek**

BMTA Van 43 – Ram Khamhaeng U. – The Mall Ngam Wongwan

BMTA Van 43 – Thai Chamber of Commerce U. – Welco Ram Khamhaeng

BMTA Van 81 – Saphan Mai – MCOT

BMTA Van 110 – Chatuchak – Pravet

### **5) Huai Kwang Station**

BMTA No 12 – Huai Kwang – Setthakarn (Ministry of Commerce)

### **6) Thailand Cultural center Station**

BMTA 137 (Circle line) – Ram Khamhaeng U. – Thailand Cultural Center

BMTA 517 (Aircon) – Thailand Cultural Center – Lad Krabang

### **7) Phetburi Station Station**

BMTA 93 – Seap Game Village – Phetburi Station

### **8) Queen Sirikit National Convention Center Station**

BMTA 2 – Samrong – Queen Sirikit National Convention Center Station

BMTA 25 – Sai Luad Depot – Queen Sirikit National Convention Center Station

## 9) Samyan Station

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Drinking, spitting and photography in the subway prohibited – translated and summarized from *Thairath*, July 3, 2004

MOTC has come up with Ministry Regulations for the security and cleanliness within MRTA areas. The regulations were declared in Royal Gazette on June 29, 2004:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Prohibited   | 2. Activities which need permission   |
| 1.1) Noisy and annoying acts                            | 2.1) Leaving subway cars and walking along the tracks when the subway cars break down |
| 1.2) Firearms and replica of firearms                   | 2.2) Entering prohibited areas  |
| 1.3) Stinking materials                                 | 2.3) Taking a pets into the subway stations (except guide dogs for the blind)         |
| 1.4) Heavy Luggage beyond the individual carrying items | 2.4) Hawking or selling materials or services inside the subway                       |
| 1.5) Dangerous material                                 | 2.5) Using materials that cause noise (e.g. mobile phones, soundabout)                |
| 1.6) Spitting, smoking, drinking                        | 2.6) Advertising or making announcements  |
| 1.7) Pinking plants and flowers around subway gates     | 2.7) Photographing or using video cameras   |
| 1.8) Panhandling and asking for donations               | 2.8) Taking bicycles or 2-wheeled vehicles inside the subway                          |
| 1.9) Sexual harassment and other obscene acts           |   |
| 1.10) Standing or putting feet on the seats             |   |
| 1.11) Leaning on screen doors or subway doors           |   |

Violators of this regulation can face 1 month in jail or a 1000 baht fine or both.

Security inside subway will be provided by the police, security guards, and other officers who have been empowered by Penal Codes according to MRTA governor, Ministry Regulations, and Article 62 of MRTA Act of BE 2543 to arrest violators before delivering them to the police and other officers.

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Further subway notes – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, June 24, 2004

### Parking

...New parking lots at Samyan, Phetburi, Sukhumvit, Ratchadaphisek, Huai Kwang and Thailand Cultural Center will also opened in addition to a 2000-car Park and ride at Lad Phrao and 200-car park and ride at Thailand Cultural Center. The parking rate for Subway passengers is 2.5 baht/hour, 50 baht for the whole day form 5 am to midnight (no overnight stay allowed) as the way to cut down car usage by 30%. 10-30 baht/hour for those who are not subway passengers.

### Mobile phones in the subway

BMCL insists that all mobile phone systems will be usable inside subway stations by the end of August 2004 despite of the complaints from DTAC. Furthermore, the new technology to allow the installation of the system to allow the mobile phones from all companies to use a single telecom line.

### Passengers

The estimated daily passengers is 250,000.

### Buying the subway

The price to pay for BMCL stock is nearly settled. However MRTA refuses to honor the debts owed by BMCL. Therefore the price for high section will be 4 baht/share instead of 3 baht/share. After merging BMCL with BTSC, there will be nationalization and then an IPO followed by bus improvement as feeders.

The allocation of stocks are:

- 1) Ch Karnchang PCL – 30%
- 2) Natural Park PCL – 24.7%
- 3) Domestic creditors – 17.5 km
- 4) BECL PCL – 15%

Registered capital – 7 billion baht

Debts – 12 billion baht

**Note:** Comment on the [Subway Opening](#) (in Thai)

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18 Feeder buses for 7 subway stations running from 5am to midnight – translated and summarized from *Khao Sod*, June 23, 2004 and [Manager Daily](#), June 23, 2004

### **1. Kamphaengphet Station**

Line 77 – Terminal at Sadhupradit Depot via Silom and Pratoonam

Line 136 – Terminal at Sadhupradit Depot via Ratchadaphisek and Rama 3 Road.

Line 536 – (Aircon – Expressway) Terminal at Paknam

### **2. Lad Phrao Station**

Line 96 – Terminal at Siam Park via Lad Phrao road and Serithai Road.

Line 179 – Terminal at Rama 7 Pier – via Ratchadaphisek and Wongsawang Road.

Line 185 – Terminal at Rangsit via Phaholyothin and Saphan Mai

Line 503 – Terminal at Rangsit via Phaholyothin and Saphan Mai

Line 504 – Terminal at Rangsit via Vibhavadi Highway and SCB Park

Line 518 – Terminal at Rangsit via Phaholyothin and Saphan Mai

### **3. Huai Kwang Station**

Line 12 – Terminal at Setthakarn (Ministry of Commerce at Tha Tian) via Ban Moh

### **4. Thailand Cultural Center**

Line 11 – Terminal at Praveh via Hua Mark and Patthanakarn Road

Line 137 – Ram Khamhaeng Circle Route

Line 206 – Terminal at Sri Nakharin Depot via Seacon Square

Line 517 (Aircon) to King Monkut's Institute of Technology, Lad Krabang via Rama 9 Road, Phatthanakarn and Onnut.

### **5. Phetburi Station**

Line 93 – Terminal at Seap Game Village – via Phatthanakarn and Hua Mark

### **6. Queen Sirikit National Convention Center Station**

Line 2 – Terminal at Samrong Depot via Sukhumvit

Line 25 – Terminal at Sai Luad Depot via Paknam and Sukhumvit

### **7. Samyan Station**

Line 45 – Terminal at Paknam via Sukhumvit, Phra Khanong and Rama 4

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### **Cell phone signals in the subway – Bangkok Post, June 24, 2004**

... cellphone users would be able to receive signals only on the ground level and ticketing floors until a mobile phone network covering subway platforms and tunnels is completed, probably in early August.

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Buying the subway – translated and summarized from *Khao Sod*, June 23, 2004 and [Manager Daily](#), June 23, 2004

The settlement on subway purchasing will be as follows:

25% sold at par (1 baht/share)

75% sold at premium (3 baht/share)

The government has to honor all the debts from BMCL. However, the BMCL Board of Directors and shareholders have to approve this plan first. MOTC is going to apply the same rule, after successfully asking KfW to make 40% cuts of BTSC debts.

This is part of the 500 billion baht investment on mass transit systems (91 km MRTA subway expansion, airport Link) and nationalization.

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Fortune Town waiting for the benefits from the Subway – translated and summarized from *Khao Sod*, June 23, 2004

Mr Thaweesak Phoonthanet (the senior manager of CP Plaza Co.Ltd., the director for Fortune Town) said Fortune Town and IT City will receive the benefits from Subway since there will be 350,000 daily passengers going to Fortune Town via Rama 9 Station. This will boost the number of customers by 10-20% and IT Mall is the main target since it is the first time a subway has passed by an IT center in Thailand.

So far the weekdays customers of Fortune Town is 25,000 customers a day while the weekends customers are 30,000 customers a day.

# Thai expats mob Thaksin

July 7, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Thai expats mob Thaksin](#) –

*The Age*, July 7,

2004

*...Suddenly all restraint  
was gone as cameras flashed  
and the crowd surged towards  
the man they had come to  
see.*

*There was little the hefty  
security guards could do  
to keep a protective ring  
around the figure in their  
charge.*

*He was clearly enjoying  
meeting his fans, posing  
for photographs and shaking  
the hands of his admirers.*

*But this was no spunky movie  
star or muscled sports hero.*

*The Prime Minister of Thailand,  
Thaksin Shinawatra, had  
arrived.*

# Secret repatriations

July 7, 2004

Secret  
repatriations—  
July 7, 2004

## Thailand

sends alleged raiders for  
trail in Laos – Radio

*Free Asia*, July 6, 2004

*Thai authorities have  
repatriated 16 Lao nationals  
to face trial at home for  
allegedly robbing a Lao  
border post in 2000, Radio  
Free Asia (RFA) reports.*

*The move comes six months  
after a Thai appeal court  
threw out a Lao extradition  
request and ordered the  
men freed within 48 hours...*

*All 16 men were removed  
from the Immigration Detention  
Center in Bangkok on Sunday,  
July 4, and taken under  
guard to Oubol in southern  
Thailand, Thai and Lao...*

## Laos

Dissidents Secretly Repatriated  
from Thailand, Rule of Law  
Undermined; Black List Agreement  
May Target Hmong, Says CPPA

– U.S. Newswire,  
July 6, 2004

*Sixteen surviving Lao  
and Thai dissident and rebel  
leaders who participated  
in the Ban Vang Tao cross-border  
raid that occurred at a  
Thai-Lao border crossing  
on July 3, 2000, were secretly,  
and forcibly repatriated  
from Bangkok, Thailand to  
the communist regime in  
Laos at 6 a.m. (Bangkok  
Local Time), Sunday morning,  
July 4, 2004.*



# Bangkok Subway Symbols

July 9, 2004

Categories: Subway

No further symbols for the rest of the stations – July 9, 2004

2Bangkok.com contacted MRTA to ask about the lack of subway symbols north of the Thai Cultural Station. Their Public Relations department said it was because from Hua Lamphong to Thai Cultural Center there were "special or important places" to base the symbols on, but there are "no special or important places from Huay Kwang to Bang Sue."



We asked if the reason really was that two different contractors worked on the line and the one that worked on the northern section did not participate in the symbol project. MRTA's reply: "something like that." We finally asked if there were any plans to create further symbols for the rest of the stations. The answer: "No. Construction is finished."

It is not surprising no further emphasis is being put on the symbols. The existing symbols were poorly received and are not being used at all in signage or maps.

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Subway Station symbols revealed – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from the MRTA website, June, 2003

**Wisarut reports:** MRTA has designated 9 symbols as logos for the subway stations.



1) Hua Lamphong – Red Hua Lamphong Railway Station (Bangkok Central Station) used red symbol due to the fact that it is a commercial section in city area.



2) Sam Yan – Pink roof modeled from Chulalongkorn University Auditorium. Pink is a color for Chulalongkorn university – the color of Tuesday which is the day King Chulalongkorn was born (on Tuesday September 20, 1853). However, due to the high density nearby, red will be substituted for pink color.



3) Silom – a blue statue of King Vajiravut in front of Lumpinee Park – Blue signaling an interchange with the Skytrain station at Saladaeng



4) Lumpinee – Green lotus since this station is close to Lumpinee Park



5) Klong Toei – Orange Thai-style roof from Tamnak Plai Noen. Orange sign is for the area with moderate population density.

6) Queen Sirikit – a yellow symbol of Queen Sirikit National Convention Center – Yellow is a symbol of Thai Royalty.



7) Sukhumvit – a blue Lanna-style roof from Ruen Khamthiang at the Siam Society not far from the station. Blue is for an interchange with the Skytrain



8) Phetburi – Cyan (or azure) canal with waves – a symbol of Saen Saeb canal which is not far from the station



9) Rama IX – a red Thai number "9" since this is a commercial area.

The other 9 logos (for Thai Cultural Center to Bang Sue) will be revealed at a later date.

It can be assumed that:

- 1) Blue is for interchange (Chatuchak Park)
- 2) Red is for commercial areas (Kamphaengphet, Phaholyothin)
- 3) Green for parks (Thai cultural center)
- 4) Orange for areas of moderate density (Suthisarn, Ratchada, Lad Phrao, and probably Bangsue)
- 5) Yellow for the Royal family (Thai cultural center)
- 6) Cyan (or azure) is for waterways (probably Bangsue)

It would be nice if BTSC came up with symbols for the [Skytrain](#) stations (e.g. Victory Monument with the obelisk-shape monument with orange color, National Stadium with a blue Stadium, Saladaeng with violet Dusit Thane Hotel green tree with symbol of Queen Sirikit for Phrom Phong station, and red Sra Pathum Palace or so).

Already there is grumbling that the nine symbols for subway stations are not well designed or compelling.

# Thaksin sites

July 9, 2004

Thaksin  
sites

– July 9,  
2004

Both [siamsociety.com](http://siamsociety.com)  
and [thaksinland.com](http://thaksinland.com)

point [to](#)  
[this small](#)  
[anti-Thaksin](#)  
[site](#).

In 2000 there  
was the [nothaksin.com](http://nothaksin.com)  
[site](#).

Also: [Note](#)  
[the inept](#)  
[flash intro](#)

on Thaksin's  
official site.

# Bike lanes

July 10, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Bike lanes

– July 10, 2004

[Another reason for bike lanes](#)

– Bangkok Post, July 10, 2004

*...What the experts have failed to note is the fact that past and present transport plans have catered mainly to the car-owning middle*

*and upper classes, giving the needs of lower income groups secondary attention.*

*Building road networks and expressways is obviously for the benefit of those who can afford cars, while the commuter rail system has been priced beyond the reach of most workers.*

*...But this city probably has one of the worst footpath networks in the world. Footpaths have been taken over mostly by vendors and shophouses, and are often raided by motorcycles, making walking both inconvenient and hazardous.*

*Even without the vendors, most of them are more like obstacle courses than ways for people to walk, what with electricity and telephone poles and booths and the uneven surface and sewer holes. As for biking, the existing bike lanes are nearly not worth mentioning.*

*Few of them are of real use either because they are way out of community areas or are so fragmented that they lead nowhere.*

*Biking on main roads can be life-threatening...*

[New roads in suburbs to have](#)

[bicycle lanes to cut congestion](#)

– Bangkok Post, July 10, 2004

*The city administration plans to build bicycle lanes along most of 28 new roads in Bangkok's suburbs to promote cycling as a means to help ease traffic congestion and air pollution.*

*...Under the city's plan, 25 out of 28 new roads will have bike lanes on both sides. They will feed the skytrain and subway networks*

*expected to be completed in about six years.*

*One route, for example, will be built on Phahon Yothin road from Saphan Mai to Vacharapol road and ends at Nimit Mai road in Min Buri.*

*...Mr Somsak blamed the failure of the city's existing bike-lane projects on substandard construction and lack of facilities to serve cyclists.*

*For example, cyclists have to share the bike lane along Prachachuen road with pedestrians.*

*"We used to provide a bike lane, with bicycles on loan for residents on Navamin road. It went well until the bikes were stolen," Mr Somsak said...*

# Sapa Joke on Silom

July 10, 2004

Categories: Film and TV

On Monday, July 5, a small procession made its way down Silom promoting Ing Funds. Thanks to Nudchira for explaining: *This guy is a comedian who plays Gen. Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, Deputy Prime Minister in "Sapa Joke." Beside him is another comedian, who plays Mrs. Sudarat Keyuraphan, Public Health Minister, in the same show.*



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

*Sapa Joke, or the House of Jokes, is a popular show with jokes about politicians. Many people like this program because the comedians tell a lot of sarcastic jokes. Also they look like those real politicians a lot, especially Gen. Chavalit.*

*I think it is quite similar to a part of Conan O'Brien's show on CNBC, when they are teasing Donald Trump or Donald Rumsfeld.*

# Training on positive attitude on 'sex' for Thai journalists

July 14, 2004

Categories: Local Beliefs

[Training](#)

[on positive attitude on 'sex' for Thai journalists](#)

– TNA, July 14, 2004

Some funny typing errors in this article...

*'Save sex' was also discussed at the seminar, entitled "Journalists and save sex in Southeast Asia", according to local media reports.*



# Nation-building and the Pursuit of Nationalism under Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram

July 15, 2004

Categories: History



## Nation-building and the Pursuit of Nationalism under Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram

(This article is from the website [Thailand and the Second World War 1941-45](#))



**Field Marshal Phibunsongkhram, the durable premier whose endeavour to civilise Thailand became a national obsession.**

Luang Phibunsongkhram's assumption of the premiership in December 1938 ushered in a new era in the history of Siam. It was a five-year period characterised by accelerated modernisation and an upsurge in extremist pan-Thai nationalism, typified by the Field Marshal's nation-building – “*sang chart*” policies.

Among Phibun's chief concerns was the need to consolidate his – and the military's – domination in the running of the country. In order to gain public acceptance of such a move, Phibun sought to stimulate pride in the nation, its military might, and its leader. A favourable public response would also prove helpful in legitimising the increase in political arrests – including that of Prince Rangsit, one of Chulalongkorn's few surviving sons and a favourite uncle of King Ananda – and the continued sidelining of the royal family.

The new premier's intention to transform himself into something of a father-figure soon became visible through a number of moves. The practice of celebrating the King's birthday as the

National Day was quietly dropped. The new National Day was June 24, the anniversary of the end of the absolute monarchy.

The first celebration of the new national day was nothing short of a grand affair. In April 1939 the government had property owners along Rajdamnoen, the avenue leading to the royal palace compound, vacate their premises to make way for a prestigious state construction project; for it was Phibun's intention that Bangkok was to have a processional avenue comparable to the Champs Elysees in Paris.

On the evening of June 23, the date usage of the name Siam was officially abrogated, Phibun and his wife held a lavish ball at their residence that was attended by all of the Bangkok elite. The next morning, units of the army and navy paraded through the streets of Bangkok, as did the Yuwachon movement. Overhead, the air force staged an impressive fly-past. The day's central event was Phibun's laying of the first foundation stone of the Democracy Monument, designed to commemorate the promoters' feat in establishing constitutional government.



**A scene from the 1943 Cultural Fair. Young women, dressed correctly according to the mandate on dress codes issued by Phibun, line up at one of the fair's many stalls. The sign informs potential buyers that the stall is unsupervised; goods "bought" were to be paid by dropping money into the collection boxes. Honesty was one of the many virtues stressed by the Ratthaniyom policies.**

A major theme covered in his speech that evening was the need to resurrect the spirit of patriotism first conceived by King Vajiravhud. Phibun announced his government's plan to introduce *Ratthaniyom*, a newly-coined word explained as a concept "similar to the proper etiquette observed by all civilised people." Translated into English as "State Convention" by Luang Wichit, the regime's ideological spokesman, this new doctrine was further described as an expression of patriotic public opinion.

The code, issued in the name of Phibun and never debated in the Assembly, struck a responsive chord from the public. Among the first degrees, or "cultural mandates", issued under the concept of Ratthaniyom was a patriotic code of behaviour for the Thai people to "prevent danger and discredit failing on their nation". All Thais were urged to do their duty by "suppressing" anybody responsible for carrying out any action deemed treacherous or dishonourable to their own race. The other six mandates stipulated paying respect to the national flag and the anthem, advocated the use of locally made consumer goods, and dealt with the name of the country, which in mid-1939 was changed to Thailand.

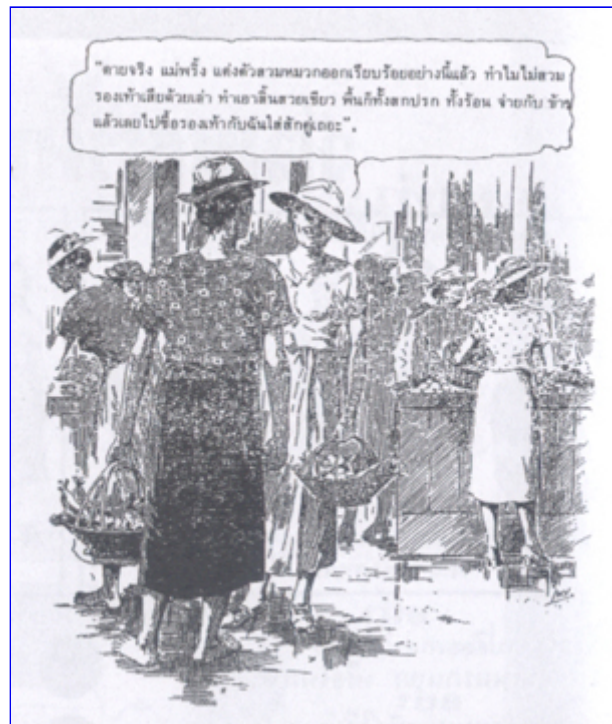


**An illustration showing one of the many aspects of Phibun's Ratthaniyom policies. Note the picture the father is removing (a European landscape) and the one the son is holding (a battle scene typical of the military engagements of the Ayutthaya period). The father is saying, "it's about time we had this picture removed. Thailand is now able to produce decorations for the home that are as good as those produced overseas. Any house guest should always be reminded to buy only Thai goods. As for the Leader's portrait... any home that lacks one should be ashamed."**

A programme to create a new, civilised Thailand thus began. As the Prime Minister himself put it, "we must be as cultured as other nations otherwise no country will come to contact us. Or if they come, they come as superiors. Thailand would be helpless and soon become colonised. But if we were highly cultured, we would be able to uphold our integrity, independence, and keep everything to ourselves."

Another six cultural mandates followed between March 1940 and January 1942. Two stressed the importance of working hard and the need to assist aged-people or invalids, while one banned all men from appearing in public bare-chested or with loose shirt-tails. They must wear either uniforms or western-style suits. Women were also encouraged to adopt a more westernised appearance by wearing not only skirts and hats but also gloves with matching handbags and shoes. On September 8, 1940, a cultural mandate emphasising the need to use time efficiently was issued. Thais were instructed to organise their lives by dividing the day into three: between six and eight hours had to be allocated for sleep, the daylight hours to work, and the rest of the time to physical exercise, gardening, cultural pursuits and listening to the radio. It was also decreed that no more than four meals should be eaten per day, and the chewing of betel nut – which blackened teeth – was banned altogether, with provincial governors being instructed to destroy all betel trees unless some industrial use could be found for them.

In October 1940 the National Cultural Development Act was promulgated, and all Thais were required to comply with the aspirations of the national culture and to "foster and promote national progress". By 1941 it was unlawful to make unnecessary noise and use improper language, while disorderly behaviour such as pushing on to buses or sitting on the street was punishable by way of fines. Even people who ridiculed those who promoted the mandates were liable to be fined. In the same year a campaign to promote the compulsory wearing of hats in public was launched, to the consternation of many.



**The dress code for women: “Goodness me! Phrim, how well and proper you look with that hat on! But why are you barefoot? You’d look beautiful with some shoes on. And the ground is so dirty and scorching! Come, I’ll accompany you to buy a pair of shoes!**

Phibun’s idiosyncratic degrees increased in number throughout the war years. The Prime Minister had another obsession: he wanted the population increased. Group weddings were introduced, punitive taxes were imposed on bachelors, and all babies born on January 1, 1943 were designated “Greater Asia Children” with a right to free education. It was decreed that husbands should treat their wives with respect, and those who beat them were to be severely punished. Men were instructed to kiss their wives upon leaving for work and returning home.

In trying to popularise these measures, Phibun turned to Luang Wichit’s Bureau of Propaganda. Its most popular and effective programme was a series of dialogues between two characters, one acting the simple peasant and the other the informed official, *Nai Man* and *Nai Khong* – Mr Steady and Mr Strong.

Naturally, the mandates attracted much criticism. Some thought the Prime Minister had gone mad in concentrating on such trivialities when Asia was on the brink of war. Many resented Phibun’s simplification of the Thai script, and many more the hat edict. One princely scholar pointedly put hats on his four Great Danes to take for their morning walk, while going bare-headed himself. At the same time the Queen Grandmother was reported to have retorted she would sooner have her head cut off than pose for a photograph of herself wearing a hat to promote the Field Marshal’s campaign. Others questioned how the poor could find the money to buy hats and shoes at a time of constantly increasing prices. In a soon-censored column penned jointly with his wife, Prince Prem Purachatra made barbed comments on the regime’s cultural innovations, while an Assemblyman allegedly remarked that all the emphasis being placed on civilising the nation was more likely to make foreigners think of the Thais as being very backward.



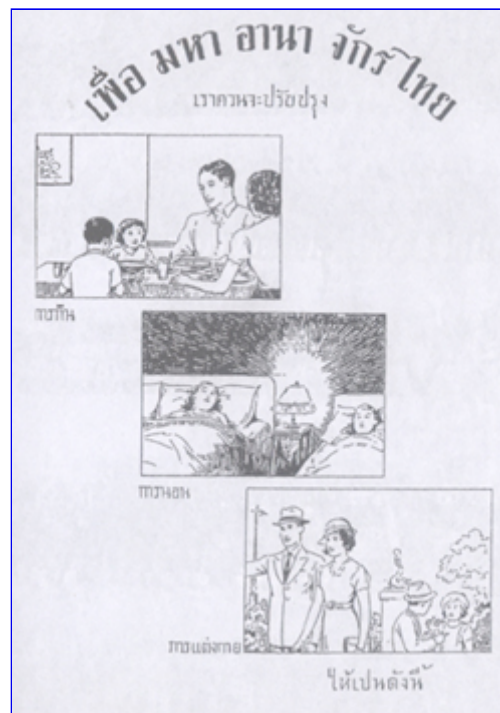


**The discouragement of impolite behaviour: “Use the ashtray, Wacharinth! Look how you’ve dirtied my floor. Use the ashtray and you’ll become a polite, cultured man!”**

Phibun’s attention was not only limited to etiquette and dress codes though. By 1940 Thailand had the trappings of a fascist state, an image reinforced by the presence of the Yuwachon Movement. Founded in 1934 and headed by the Berlin-born Major General Prayoon Pramornmontri, this “Youth Movement” was modelled on the Hitler Youth. Its male members – the Yuwachon Thaharn, schoolboys between twelve and twenty years of age – were given basic military training, while the girls – the Yuwanari – had courses on nursing. King Ananda was the official patron of the movement; he and his brother Prince Bhumibol having been invested with the uniform personally by Phibun on their visit in 1938.

Another peculiar move was the banning of certain traditional musical instruments which were deemed un-Thai, a reason used also for the prohibition of staging *likays*, centuries-old comedic plays that were very popular in rural areas. In contrast the *ramwong* was popularised to the extent that officials were ordered to spend every midweek afternoon practising the folk dance.

A personality cult of the leader was also gradually built, with Phibun becoming increasingly referred to as “*phu nam*” – the Leader. In 1942 Phibun’s birthday on July 14 was marked a national holiday, with Luang Wichit composing a special play to mark the occasion. The display of ex-King Prajadhipok’s portrait was prohibited by the government, and cinemas were ordered to show a picture of Phibun at the end of every performance. The audience in turn were required to rise and bow. Similarly Phibun’s birth colour, green, was used in official decorations.



**The ideal family: how to eat, sleep, and dress. The title reads “For the Great Thai Nation”.** The rise of Thai militarism went hand in hand with nationalism – *chartniyom* – of which Luang Wichitwatakarn was its main proponent. The changing of the country’s name itself was a nationalistic gesture – Luang Wichit claimed that *Siam* was a name invented by the Khmers, from whom the Chinese and later the Europeans had adopted its use. A name of such alien provenance could hardly be used any longer, since the Thais were “one of the greatest nations on earth” comprising not only the thirteen million in the country, but all the Tai-speaking people scattered throughout southern China, French Indochina, and the Shan States of British Burma. In order to “unite them all and focus their loyalty” the adoption of Thailand was thus necessary. Indeed, the regime’s slogan was “Thailand for the Thai”.



### How Thais should and should not dress.

Such demagogic nationalism became apparent with the introduction of various restrictions on the country’s minority ethnic groups. The Chinese, who had often been described as the Jews of the east for their dominant role on the Thai economic stage, were targeted especially. For instance, the Ministry of Economic Affairs issued in 1939 an act which established a government monopoly over the slaughter of all livestock, a task which had always been carried out primarily by the Chinese. In early 1942 the government issued a degree reserving twenty-seven professions exclusively for Thais. These ranged from the legal profession to the makers of Buddha images. A ban on alien food vendors, again many of them Chinese, peddling their wares in the grounds of public establishments, including schools, deprived many Thais of the snacks and soft drinks they enjoyed taking at all times of the day. Another measure to “reclaim” the economy was the creation of the Thai Rice Company, a state enterprise set up with the intention



to bypass Chinese middlemen and millers in the trade. Its business faced a sudden boost when government agencies were instructed to procure rice solely from state enterprises.

Racial discrimination increased with the creation of the cultural mandates. Silk Chinese pyjama-style trousers, popularly worn for the sake of comfort in the hot season, were banned, while Indian women wearing saris were barred from entering buses and public buildings. Chinese schools were closed and the Malay language and customs of the deep south forbidden. Non-Buddhists were soon prohibited from serving in the government or military, and many were forced to convert. Further resentment was caused when Phibun banned aliens from living within the vicinity of positions deemed strategically important, causing many Chinese and Indians to abandon their homes and businesses at great financial costs.



**One of the most enduring pictures of the Great Flood of 1942: a policeman and schoolboy, standing in knee-high waters, saluting the National Anthem.**

The pan-Thai nationalism espoused by Luang Wichit soon took an irredentist turn in 1940. Inspired by the German occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1938 and encouraged by the Fall of France earlier in the year, Phibun turned his eyes to the Mekong frontier. To him and many Thais, the collapse of the metropolitan government in Paris provided a golden opportunity for the territories lost in Chulalongkorn's reign to be regained. An anti-French campaign quickly gained momentum after the French rejection of Thai demands in September. In that same month Luang Wichit toured the north-eastern frontier provinces, where he had no difficulties in getting his thesis that the Thai and Lao people were brethren accepted. In Bangkok, a group calling itself Thai Blood staged rallies calling for the revenge of a Thai trader shot dead in Vientiane. The press made popular the irredentist view by picturing Thailand as having its territory snatched away just as a poor man might lose a beautiful wife, and sensational reports of Buddhist temples in Indochina being desecrated were accepted without questioning.

Already the Yuwachon had become very useful in gaining support for the regime. At its annual parade on October 5, Prayoon justified the Thai demands in a speech addressed to the 10,000 people present. He also echoed Wichit's racial theory and urged the people to join the struggle. His audience responded enthusiastically by chanting patriotic songs, many of which were composed by Wichit.



**A march led by the Yuwanari demanding the return of the lost territories, 1940.**

Irredentist agitation spread like wildfire throughout the schools and colleges of Bangkok. Marches suddenly became a feature of daily life in the capital as an unprecedented wave of popular enthusiasm gripped everyone from schoolchildren to transport workers. Cyclo drivers and stevedores soon followed the example of the Yuwachon, joining the demonstrations to demand the return of the territories. Even Thammasat University students participated in a determined attempt to outshine their rivals at Chulalongkorn, to the dismay of Pridi, who viewed the prevalent attitude as nothing but short-sighted opportunism. All these marches led to one final destination: the Ministry of Defence, where Phibun appeared personally to greet them and express his gratitude for the support his government and policies have been receiving.

The demonstrations were not restricted to Bangkok, however. Officials travelled upcountry and convoked mass meetings in rural areas. When the French-Thai War began, Thai Blood organised a rally to voice wholehearted support for the armed forces. A boycott of all French nationals and merchandise was proclaimed, and groups of self-styled patriots similar to Thai Blood vowed to knife anyone violating the ban.

The Roman Catholic Church bore the brunt of the anti-French campaign, and the bishop of the diocese of Thailand, who was French, was repeatedly subjected to personal attacks by Bangkok newspapers despite his public appeals for Vichy to accede to the Thai demands. A church was forced to close down, while the Annamese living in Bangkok were suspected of being fifth columnists.

While dreams of a Greater Siam were quickly shattered by the worsening war situation following the signing of the Thai-Japanese Alliance, it was only after the fall of Phibun in 1944 that the twelve cultural mandates were finally abolished. Nevertheless, the many social trends dictated by him remain in use today, most notably the compulsory act of saluting the national anthem twice a day.

### **Sources**

**From Siam To Thailand** Charnvit Kasetsiri

**Siam Becomes Thailand** Judith A. Stowe

**Thailand's Political History** Barend Jan Terwiel

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# Sirocco Restaurant

July 17, 2004

Categories: Food and Drink

Sirocco Restaurant

Also: The second-highest rooftop restaurant is [Vertigo Restaurant on the roof of Thai Wah II Tower](#).

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(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Making Sirocco more exclusive

– September 7, 2005

A reader informs us that these days when the elevators open at Sirocco Restaurant, a group of six attendants seem to be screening out potential customers. A new rule poster is nearby with many conditions that prohibit people from entering the restaurant, such as wearing sandals or short-sleeved t-shirts. Also no bare midriffs allowed and no backpacks or rucksacks allowed ("for security reasons"). No children under five ("for safety reasons"). It seems that many customers are turned away for vague reasons in apparent attempt to keep the restaurant's clientele upscale and prevent the restaurant from becoming an overcrowded tourist attraction.

The restaurant has become so popularized recently that backpackers and many others show up for a drink at the overcrowded bar area just to see the view. It also appears that the [Sirocco website](#) has been taken off-line.

[Where is State Tower?](#)

– July 17, 2004

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Almost like being there: Sirocco Restaurant on top of State Tower



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Restaurant-goers enter from the dome and walk down the stairs to the outdoor restaurant on the 63rd floor.





(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

The bar jutting out towards Sathorn Road.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Thai Farmers Bank headquarters is in the background.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

The top of the Jewelry Trade Center to the left



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

A waiter descending the stairs. Note the glass railing.





(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

The State Tower looms over the Shangri-La Hotel.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Sirocco Restaurant



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Jazz band on the level above the restaurant



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Another shot of the vertigo-inducing stairs



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

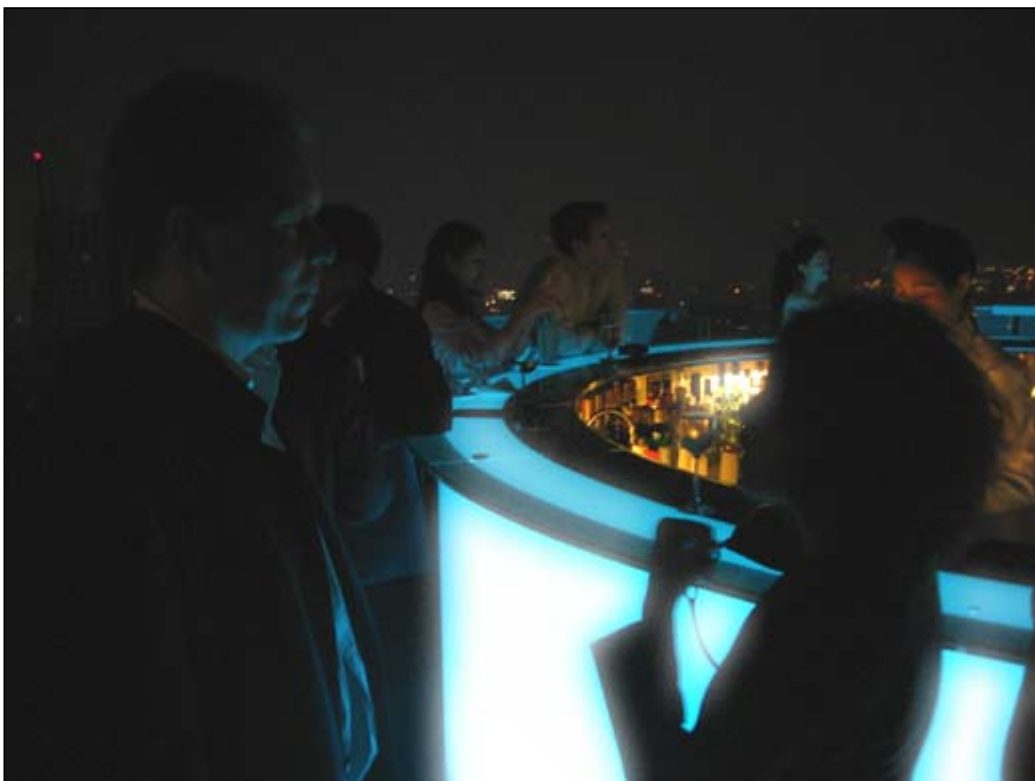
Chartered Square and the expressway





(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Centre Point on Chaeron Krung Road with  
the Chaophraya River in the background



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

At the bar



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

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# Where is State Tower?

July 17, 2004

Categories: Buildings, Food and Drink



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Where is State Tower?

– July 17, 2004

For years this photo (above left) has hung in the lobby of State Tower (formerly Royal Chaeron Krung Tower). However, the location in the photo is not the location of State Tower, but is a nearby site which still houses a derelict highrise (below left). Apparently the State Tower building was Photoshopped into the more picturesque location. State Tower is actually about 500 meters further up the river (below) and about twice as high as the derelict building.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

More on [State Tower](#)

# First look at a Subway TVM screen

July 19, 2004

Categories: Subway

Sample TVM – July 15, 2004

Bo sent in this photo (below) of a ticketing machine installed at the Petchaburi Station.



(Photo: Bo)



(Photo: Andrew)

Above: Andrew snapped this shot of a subway ticket vending machine screen.





(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Close-up of the ticket vending machine (TVM).

#### About the TVMs

– August 16, 2004

Wisarat reports: *I just dropped by Phaholyothin Station... There are two ticket vending machines (TVMs) in each station. Most have instruction stickers posted to cover the steel body.*

*The TVMs can accept the banknotes which is a big plus and may eventually force BTS to set up permanent coin exchange machines very soon if they have too little money to buy new TVMs from Germany which can accept banknotes.*

*The big minus are that there are too few TVMs for the subway since it is a special TVM imported from France which are very expensive. Better ask French and Japanese investors to set up TVM assembly in Thailand to replace human ticket payment at the railway station or intercity bus stations. Or they can get a cheaper deal if they set up a TVM assembly line in China.*

*I did use the TVM at Phaholyothin station once and it worked just fine. However, software glitches with the TVMs and Sukhumvit Station forced BMCL to turn off all TVMs in Sukhumvit station to fix all the things up and compelled passengers to go into the long line (according to a security guard). Only those who have Smart cards do not have to wait.*

*The MTA Map is now published in English. It is better for tourists and expats, but still not very good compared with the BTS Map published by Groovy Map since the BTS Map has Thai, English and Japanese on the same map.*

# Accident on Sathorn

July 21, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Accident on Sathorn – July 21, 2004

Monday morning a motorcyclist was killed on Sathorn Road. A group of photographers from the Thai dailies waited two hours for the coroner to arrive and uncover the body so they could get a photograph. They all had digital cameras attached to laptops (no doubt wirelessly connected to HQ). However, this accident did not make it into any of the papers—there was a more poignant (or ghoulish) accident photo that ran the next day of a woman stroking her dead boyfriend's face (*ThaiRath* had the best version of this).

# The Bangkok Governor Campaign 2004

July 26, 2004

Categories: Elections

Also: [The Bangkok Governor candidates](#)

Also: [Bangkok Governor polls](#)

Also: [Thai Photoshoppers parody the campaign posters](#)

Where do you get your news? – August 31, 2004

2Bangkok.com was pleased to have the [only English-language results](#) from the election on the web (from 03:18 Monday morning) until about 24 hours after the polls closed. Both *The Nation* and *Bangkok Post*'s website results were based on results at the time the newspapers went to print (probably around 19:00 Sunday night). Late Monday afternoon *The Nation* finally posted the final results. The *Post* did not have the final results until their Tuesday edition.

[Election of new Bangkok governor is an anti-government protest vote](#) – TNA, August 31, 2004

*...Many eye-brows were raised when Mr. Chuwit joined the race for governor.*

*Although Mr. Chuwit received substantial media coverage when he exposed police corruption in his massage parlours last year, he was not someone the public was really familiar with.*

*"I think quite a good number of Bangkok voters were attracted to Chuwit because they are fed up with politicians. When unknown volunteers offer to serve them, Bangkok voters don't care who he is and where he is from, as long as he is frank and honest with them," said the academic.*

*Pol Capt. Chalerm Yubamrung failed to win many votes even though he is known as an accomplished parliamentary debater.*

*"Time changes and people want someone with good policies, not just a sharp tongue," Professor Somchai said.*

*Another leading political critic from Thammasat, Somkid Lertpaithoon, believes the Democrat's candidate was elected because the people of Bangkok want some freshness injected into Thai politics.*

*"Apirak is a new face and a young qualified man. He was chosen because Bangkok voters have had doubts about some of the ruling party's policies. The government has been criticised because of conflicts of interest and for its open ambition to win 400 seats in next general elections, which will give it absolute power in the house of the representatives. I don't think Bangkok people would like that," he said.*



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

After the election – August 25, 2004

**ANALYSIS: PM needs to take stock as voters back underdog** – *The Nation*, August 30, 2004

*...The city poll has traditionally reflected middle-class sentiment toward national politics. Chamlong won gubernatorial landslides twice by portraying himself as an underdog who needed "you folks' help", as the powers-that-be were getting too powerful for him to fight alone. And when Chamlong became a victim of his own success, acquiring the "mainstream" label, Bhichit Rattakul beat him in the 1996 city poll by using the same underdog tactic.*

*...And while it is fair to say that not all votes cast for Apirak were meant to be a snub to the prime minister, one factor that should definitely not be overlooked is the massive support for that highly controversial candidate, "massage king" Chuwit Kamolvisit.*

*Each vote for the tycoon – who everyone knew ran houses of prostitution, bribed police and was accused of hiring men in uniform to raze a strip of Sukhumvit beer bars that obstructed his grand scheme – was bad news for both the Democrats and Thaksin...*

**The Chuwit 'phenomenon': gone tomorrow?** – *The Nation*, August 31, 2004

*...Isn't our Parliament full of such "brave" men already – ones who will exercise their "conscience" selectively and be motivated not by principles, but rather by vengeance or vested interests? What difference will Chuwit make? His clash with the police made him a hero in many people's eyes. But didn't Chalerm Yoobamrung do similar things when his sons got into trouble with the police? Chuwit may have guts, but I wouldn't call it "courage". While he may not try to "hide" from his past, which seems inescapable anyway, he may try to seek refuge in politics like many others before him...*

**EDITORIAL: Apirak is the city's man of the hour** – *The Nation*, August 31, 2004

Good exploration of many possible factors in Apirak's win. It is just the presence of this kind of analysis that separates *The Nation* from the *Bangkok Post*.

Update on votes – August 30, 2004

03:18 – The latest update on the [official site](#) shows:

Apriak (#1) – 911,441 votes  
Pavenna (#7) – 619,039 votes  
Chuwit (#15) – 334,168 votes  
Chalerm (#3) – 165,761 votes  
Nitipoom (#21) – 135,369 votes



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

And the winner is... **Apirak** – August 30, 2004

00:44 – It appears that Democrat candidate Apirak Kosayothin (#1 – [website](#)) has won the Bangkok Governor election. Official results are [here](#).

Results at this hour show:

Apriak (#1) – 828,866 votes  
Pavenna (#7) – 552,947 votes  
Chuwit (#15) – 301,811 votes  
Chalerm (#3) – 150,205 votes  
Nitipoom (#21) – 122,113 votes

Also: [Bangkok Governor candidates](#)

**Chuwit sees victory in 3rd place finish** – *The Nation*, August 30, 2004

*"These voters chose me for a feeling, not a reason. They knew that they had voted for reasons and were let down all along," he said.*

*"Those candidates were backed by political parties. In fact, I think that I, an ordinary man with no political backing, beat them," he claimed.*

Also: [On their losses](#) – *The Nation*, August 30, 2004

Also: [Thaksin catches Pojaman with hand in her purse](#) – *The Nation*, August 30, 2004



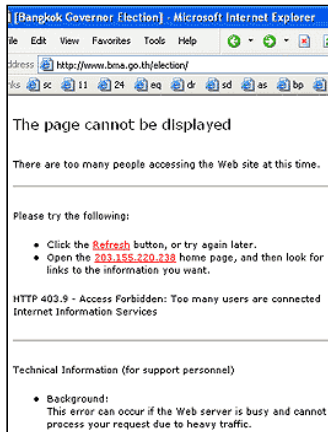
*A small act of charity almost brought Khunying Pojaman Shinawatra in violation of election law yesterday when she began to give deaf children some money in front of the ballot box...*  
*"Are you looking for money?" Thaksin asked his wife. She was speechless for a moment, as was the premier. With a pensive appearance, he bent his head down to whisper into his wife's ear: "It's breaking the law to give money today ... it's an election day."...*

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Front-runners close websites – August 29, 2004

Looks like both front runners–Apirak and Pavenna–are taking no chances of being disqualified by the unpredictable Election Commission. Both of their websites ([here](#) and [here](#)) were taken off-line today.

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[Apirak tipped to win race for Bangkok governor](#) – *The Nation*, August 29, 2004

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[Apirak leading while Pavina trailing in \*The Nation's\* survey](#) – *The Nation*, August 29, 2004

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Election results coming on line – August 29, 2004

15:28 – If you can access the [BMA election page](#), the charts for the election results are being loaded now.

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BMA site – August 29, 2004

14:45 – [BMA's election coverage site](#) is already crippled by overwhelming traffic (left). TNA later mentioned this at [18:29](#).

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(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Election day photos and late news – Sunday, August 29, 2004
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**Above:** Polling station on Thahan Road, 9:45am



**Left:** Ballot box

**Below:** Suthisarn-area polling station, 9:10am

**Also:** We added **Waranchai Chokchan**, Bangkok Governor candidate #2, to our page of [candidate posters](#).

(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)





(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

**Above:** 9:32am – There are polling stations outside the gates of each military base along Thahan Road. Soldiers were also walking in formation to polling stations in the Ratchadamnoen Nok Road area.

Last minute decision: No exit polls/Voters barred from telling anyone who they voted for – August 29, 2004

[EC slaps ban on exit- polls for Bangkok votes](#) – *The Nation*, August 29, 2004

*In an eleventh-hour decision, the Election Commission (EC) yesterday banned exit polls for today's balloting for Bangkok governor on the grounds that it might influence the electoral outcome...*

*Suan Dusit pollster Sukhum Chaloeysap said he had already cancelled his plans to dispatch 5,000 students to conduct exit polls.*

*"My plans were ruined. I believe pollsters have been made a sacrificial lamb to share the blame for the EC's incompetence," he said.*

*Sukhum said the EC had been criticised for inept supervision of gubernatorial campaigns and it was trying to salvage its image by banning exit polls.*

*He said exit polls were deemed useful in the fight against vote-fixing.*

*"The survey can indicate the likely outcome and raises the alarm if there is any suspicious deviation in voting results," he said.*

*Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University academic Theerapat Serirangsan said he agreed with the ban.*

*"Exit polls could influence the decision of voters who are about to cast their ballots," he said...*

[EC bans exit poll on Bangkok governor election](#) – *TNA*, August 29, 2004

*...As the election day draws near, a ban on voters is also enforced barring them from disclosing their choices to fellow voters or candidates until a final result, according to Pol. Maj. Gen. Ekachai.*

*"If voters do otherwise, they will face a jail term ranging from 1 to 10 years, and a heavy fine from 20,000 to 200,000 baht. And under the Thai election laws, culprits will be stripped of their voting right for 10 years," he said.*

*...The popular Dusit Poll, a public poll conductor in Bangkok, has also been told not to carry out its activity on the election day, while Thai newspapers and other media have been advised against publishing any opinion polls...*

Last-minute ads – August 29, 2005

Bangkok governor ads in the *Bangkok Post*: Front runner Apirak's newspaper ads all mention a [BRT system](#) as the centerpiece of his campaign. Kobsak's ad shows his plan for fountains along the Skytrain lines.

(Thanks to Conor and Suchada for pointing these out.)

[New Bangkok governor known by Sunday midnight](#) – *TNA*, August 28, 2004

*The Bangkok municipal authorities expect the unofficial result of the election for governor to be announced by midnight on Sunday...*

*The combined count – although it would only be an unofficial election result – will be announced on a massive electronic board in front of the City Hall by midnight, according to the BMA's Permanent Secretary, Khun Ying Nathanon Thavisin...*

*The first results are expected to come from the inner districts like Phra Nakhon, Samphanthawong and Pomprab Satrupai.*

*In the past, the outer districts, like Talingchan in the western outskirts of Bangkok, have been the last results to come in because of transport and communication problems...*

#### Outgoing Bangkok governor Samak Sundaravej – The Nation, August 29, 2005

*... "For instance, I intended to extend the Skytrain from Sathorn to the Thon Buri side of Bangkok shortly after I took office. Initially, it seemed that the Thaksin government, which came to power in early 2001, would support the project. However, things changed later on when the government was fully in power and enjoyed a high degree of popularity in 2002-2003.*

*"Afterwards, it seemed that they wanted the Transport Ministry to consolidate all mass transit schemes. As a result, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration could not proceed with the Skytrain extension because we needed a budget contribution from the central government. For over three years, we could not invite bids for construction," he says.*

*Beyond public transportation, the outgoing governor says that another big disappointment during his tenure was his inability to build a large-scale underground car-parking facility at Sanam Luang due to relentless opposition from environmentalists, who have argued that the scheme would negatively affect the protected Rattanakosin Island. However, Samak did manage to preside over the construction of a similar facility in front of Bangkok City Hall, which he claims as a success because it provides much-needed additional space for parking in the area surrounding the building.*

*... "Don't forget that I had worked with eight administrations and prime ministers before I ran for the Bangkok governor post – from premier Thanin Kraivixien and General Prem Tinasulanonda to premier Banharn Silpa-archa and premier Chavalit Yongchaiyudh. During those years, I was a minister five times and a deputy premier three times. So I think my experience will still be useful if I run for the Senate," he says.*

#### Close race expected for Bangkok governor – AP, August 28, 6:41 PM

*A candidate for the opposition Democrat Party is favored to become governor of Thailand's capital Sunday in an election seen as a referendum on Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and his administration...*

*The governor's post is just a few notches above ceremonial, since the central government controls the pursestrings for most essential services in this city of 10 million people...*

*Election regulations make it illegal for pre-election polls to give the position of candidates, but local media have skirted the rules and have suggested that Democrat Apirak Kosayodhin holds a slight lead over independent Paveena Hongsakul.*

*Apirak, 43, resigned as CEO of a mobile phone service provider to enter the race. He has positioned himself as the candidate for those wishing to register a protest against Thaksin, whose autocratic ways have cost him popularity among the capital's relatively sophisticated electorate...*

*Paveena had been lawmaker from the Chat Pattana party, which recently agreed to merge itself into Thaksin's party, and is regarded as a proxy candidate for Thai Rak Thai, though both sides deny it...*

*Also expected to make a strong showing is Chuwit Kamolvisit, who owns half a dozen massage parlors in the capital which he willingly acknowledges are fronts for prostitution. He is running as a candidate for the First Thai Nation Party, which he founded.*



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Polling station – August 28, 2004

**Above:** Polling station notice board covered in plastic to protect it from the elements. All the candidates' photos are posted.

**Left:** Notice covering photo of disqualified candidate Leena Jang.

More *Nation* coverage of the election – August 26, 2004

*The Nation* continues their blanket, somewhat opinionated, coverage of the Bangkok Governor race while the *Bangkok Post* does not have much to report other than letting readers know there is an election...

[ELECTION FOR GOVERNOR : PM launches final assault](#) – *The Nation*, August 26, 2004

[Pundits downplay weight of City Hall](#) – *The Nation*, August 26, 2004

*Hopes that City Hall can counterbalance Government House are misplaced because each has its own set of laws and duties, political pundits said yesterday...*

[THAI TALK: A calculated verdict for Bangkok on Sunday](#) – *The Nation*, August 26, 2004

*...You would be well-advised not to try to explain why Bangkok voters can never present a discernible pattern with their ballot-casting. Just when you think most of them will be casting their votes against those allied with the establishment, the voters of Bangkok will startle you by throwing their full support behind the candidates they love to hate.*

*That's called "going with the currents, right or wrong". Some observers are convinced that this is one of our unthinking cosmopolitan citizenry's unshakeable weaknesses.*

*But before you come to the conclusion that Bangkokians are hopelessly subservient to the powers that be, you would do well to remember that it wasn't too long ago that the so-called "mobile phone mob" materialised out of nowhere on Silom Road to demand the ouster of the Chavalit government.*



*You may accuse them of being restless or hopelessly romantic, but Bangkokians do know when and where they should draw the line, especially when they know that their famous Thai patience is being exploited by opportunistic politicians whose only consistent behaviour is expediency...*

AFP: Bangkok "arguably the world's sleaziest capital" – August 26, 2004

From the 'anything ironic is news' department—anti-prostitute candidate vs. the pimp candidate/Chuwit running against government that cracked down on sleaze.

[Sex workers back former massage parlour boss in race for Bangkok hot seat](#) – AFP, August 25, 2004

*...Sex and politics have often proved close bedfellows but rarely so overtly as in Sunday's election for control of arguably the world's sleaziest capital, which features a former massage parlour tycoon and a prominent activist against child prostitution as two of the key candidates...*

*While they are just two of 22 candidates in the field, they are among the most colourful and have a history of conflict.*

*Complaints by Paveena, who champions women's rights, led to Chuwit being charged with employing underage girls as prostitutes in some of his massage parlours that once employed nearly 2,000 young women...*

*The governor, who has 89,000 employees in his charge, has relatively little power, particularly under the almighty executive-style administration of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.*

*His government led a morality campaign that has seen entertainment venues raided by police and a crackdown on operating hours for Bangkok nightspots.*

[Leena disqualified/Paveena's education](#) – The Nation, August 25, 2004

*...She came under the commission spotlight last Wednesday when she led her cabaret dancing team outside Centre Point in Siam Square.*

*They danced and sang on the back of a pickup truck to gain the attention of voters...*

*After Leena defended the allegation, the five commissioners watched TV news footage of the incident and ruled unanimously against her.*

*...Leena will be banned from contesting all political posts for one year, he said, and she and her dancers would have criminal charges brought against them, which carry a maximum of 10 years in prison.*

*Jaral said the Bangkok election commission would tell the public not to cast their votes for Leena, candidate 6, and advise them that such a ballot would be invalid.*

*Meanwhile, governor candidate Paveena Hongsakul denied allegations that she lied about her educational background while studying in the United States. She said she could prove that she attained a Bachelor of Commerce at Bliss College in Ohio.*

*A group of university students claimed Paveena had failed to complete the course.*

[Poll results of August 14-15](#) – August 22, 2004

['Undecided' takes the lead in city race](#) – The Nation, August 21, 2004

*...As the governor's race drags on, voters are growing increasingly undecided over who should pilot the City of Angels for the next four years, according to the latest Thammasat-Nation poll.*

*The figure for undecided voters reached 52 per cent in the last poll. Researchers said most undecided voters said they probably would check the "no-choice" box because none of the candidates or their policies seemed palatable to them.*

*Voters on the fence said this election had no outstanding candidates and no attractive policies. Most of these voters are educated, middle-class and – surprisingly – Thai Rak Thai supporters. They are unhappy with every candidate, including the ruling party's pet runner, Paveena Hongsakul...*

[TRT seeks to end Chalerm bid](#) – The Nation, August 19, 2004

*Party hopes to halt Paveena's poll slide by convincing veteran politician to back her.*

*The Bangkok governor election took a bizarre turn yesterday when the Thai Rak Thai Party began hatching plans to convince candidate Chalerm Yoobamrung to withdraw from the race and back Paveena Hongsakul, whose popularity is steadily sliding, a party source said...*

Dr Bhijit's plan for the Phaseecharoen Canal tram – August 18, 2004

Wisarat reports: *I've been to Victory Monument Station and seen the election campaign ads from Dr Bhijit*

who has rented the ad space from BTS. One of his ads is the tram along Phaseecharoen Canal:

**Vote DR Bhijit No. 19**  
**Finishing the tram along Phaseecharoen Canal**

Station: Saphan Taksin

Chaophraya River

Station: Charoen Nakhon

The part is done, ready for rails and stations

<- (Green Solid Line) constructed and serviced open immediately up to Ratchada of Thonburi

Station: Taksin/Wongwianyai

Station: Ratchada/Tha Phra

:  
: < (yellow line) Definitely to be constructed up to Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road/S Wutthakart  
:  
:

Station: Phetkasem/Wat  
Nuan Noradit

....

Station: Wat  
Ang Kaeo

....

Station: Wat  
Rang Bua

<- This line runs along  
Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road

*Wat Nuan Noradit is along Bangkok Noy Canal, not Phaseecharoen Canal though this temple also is close to Phetkasem Road (Highway 4). I guess that Dr Bhijit is going to redirect the interchange with MRTA Subway (the Southern extension) from Bang Wah Station to Bang Phai Station since Bang Phai Station is the station near Bangkok Noy Canal and Wat Nuan Noradit. However, another likely option for Dr Bhijit is to keep the interchange with MRTA Subway at Bang Wah and then move the tram terminal to Wat Nuan Noradit which will interchange with the Subway at Bang Phai and change Phetkasem into an interchange station. This can be shown as follows:*

Station: Saphan Taksin

Chaophraya River

Station: Charoen Nakhon

The part is done, ready for rails and stations

<- (Green Solid Line) constructed and serviced open immediately up to Ratchada of Thonburi

Station: Taksin (Krung Thonburi)

Station: Wongwianyai

Station: Ratchada Tha Phra

:  
: < (yellow line) Definitely to be constructed up to Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road/S Wutthakart  
:  
: .....

Station: Wat  
Nuan Noradit

.....

Station:  
Phetkasem

.....

Station:  
Wat Ang  
Kaeo

.....

Station:  
Wat Rang  
Bua

<- This line runs along  
Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring  
Road

*The section from Saphan Taksin to Phetkasem must be strong enough to accept the heavy load of Skytrain rolling stock (axle load of at least 15 tons) for smooth service. The section from Wat Nuan Noradit (or Phetkasem to Kanchanaphisek) may be LRT which has a much lighter load (probably 10 tons axle load). I expect the section from Saphan Taksin to Phetkasem to be approved since it follows the masterplan. However, the section from Wat Nuan Noradit to Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road is unlikely to get approval since that section is parallel with Phetkasem Road which Subway is heading to even though there are several people living along Phaseecharoen Canal and there is a long-tail boat service (running only from morning to evening).*

*It would be more economical to set up a permanent pier at either Phetkasem or Wutthakart to allow long tail boats along Bangkok Noy Canal and Phaseecharoen Canal to park and function as feeders.*

**Earlier:** [Dr. Bhijit proposes tram along Phaseecharoen Canal](#) – Matichon, August 1, 2004

**Earlier:** [The story of the Elevated Phaseecharoen elevated way and the stalled Skytrain extension](#)

Who backs Pavena and who backs Chalerm – August 18, 2004

(from [TRT to punish Pavena nonsupporters](#), *The Nation*, August 18, 2004) ... *The ruling Thai Rak Thai party is threatening to blacklist any city councillor that fails to jump on the Pavena Hongsakul Bangkok governor bandwagon, according to Apichart Halamjeuk, a TRT Bangkok councillor.*

*Apichart said all 17 TRT city councillors had been warned to campaign for Pavena or risk losing the nomination for their posts in the next election. Brushing aside the threats all but one of the councillors planned to continue endorsing Muanchon Party leader Chalerm Yoobamrung for the capital's top job...*

[Results from the poll of August 7-8](#) – August 17, 2004

[Bangkok electors urged to vote and prevent vote-buying](#) – TNA, August 15, 2004

*...Vote-buying is expected to be rampant in the electoral districts of Bangsue, Yanawa, Saphan Soong and Chatujak, Somchai Srisuthiyakorn, the Director of the Human Resources Institute told TNA. And the best way to combat this, he says, is for as many electors as possible to cast their ballots in the election.*



*In the last election for Bangkok governor, less than sixty percent of Bangkok's registered electors went to the polling booths. If over 70 percent of Bangkok residents turn up to cast their votes, the winner is more likely to be a true representative of the people, according to Mr. Somchai.*

*Four recent public opinions polls conducted by Thammasat University and The Nation newspaper show there is less than two percent separating the top four candidates*

*As the race for Bangkok governor is expected to be very close, vote-buying could play a significant role in determining the outcome. As much as 200 million baht (or 500 baht per head) is expected to be spent on votes-buying.*

[Hunting for promising talent on the campaign trail](#) – The Nation, August 14, 2004

*Several polls predict that the Bangkok governor election campaign will be a three-horse race, but it would be a pity if voters were eyeing only a small group of candidates when there is a pack of interesting personalities to cast a ballot for on August 29. Here is an assessment of each candidate's possibilities...*

Monthly salaries for top Bangkok city officials – translated from the BMA website, August 8, 2004

	Salary	Allowance/expenses	Total
Governor	61,000	41,500	102,500
Deputy Governor	58,890	20,750	79,640
Secretary	33,600	4,400	38,000
Assistant Secretary	30,260	2,200	32,460
Head Advisor	36,800	8,800	45,600
Advisor	33,600	4,400	38,000

Candidate Apirak promises Bus Rapid Transit – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Dailynews*, August 3, 2004

Democrat Bangkok Governor candidate Apirak has asked Dr Samart Rajpolasit about the plan to come up with a 9-line [BRT](#) with a budget of 280 billion. It would have a 3-car formation with 270 passengers and a ticket price of 8-16 baht and stops every 500-800 meters. The hourly trip will carry 18,000 passengers a hour and it is dirt cheap (50 million baht/km vs 800 million baht/km of Skytrain).

The first 2 lines would be:

- 1) Talingchan – Rajdamnoen – Rathewee Station
- 2) Kaset Nawamnin to feed Subway/Skytrain stations

Furthermore, BMA is going deal with bicycle routes around Bangkok, installing smart traffic signs and Smart Parking lots with smart cards to boost number of cars parked without adding more space and minimize the download.

**More on [Bangkok Busways \(Bus Rapid Transit – BRT\) & buses](#)**

Dr. Bhijit proposes tram along Phaseecharoen Canal – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from *Matichon*, August 1, 2004

Bangkok Governor candidate Dr Bhijit said he would revive the tram along Phaseecharoen Canal which has been frozen since he retired from his first term as Governor. There would be three sections for this tram/Skytrain link:

- 1) Saphan Taksin – Ratchadaphisek (Tha Phra, near Talad Ploo). The structure for this was built during the time of Governor Samak
- 2) Ratchadaphisek – Wat Ang Kaeo – Main built during the tenure of Governor Bhijit
- 3) Wat Ang Kaeo – Phaseecharoen Canal – Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road

After completing this project, the number of passengers for the Skytrain from the Thonburi side of Bangkok would be increased from 35,000 to 100,000 a day.

Dr Jo also disagrees with the government's plan to delay the bidding process since those who live in Thonburi Bangna and Samrong have waited for Skytrain extensions for too long. The government should grant more funds to BMA to complete the projects instead of delaying them. After that, the government will pay back to the owners later.

**Commentary by Wisarut:** The 3rd section is parallel with the Southern Extension of the Blue Line Subway Ring and is unlikely to get approval. Therefore, Dr Jo (Dr. Bhijit) better concentrate on the construction of the section from Saphan Taksin to Phetkasem (Wat Ang Kaeo) instead.

Since section 1-2 has become the Taksin-Phetkasem extension of the Skytrain, it does not make any sense at all to run a tram since BTSC is planning to run the Skytrain rolling stock instead. Those who live along Narathiwat Ratchanakharin and Rama 3 inner ring road are already fed up with broken promises for the Rama 3 extension which never materialized. Many Thai netters no longer trust Dr Jo as the forum [response to the news](#) implies.

[Governor election: The Bangkok dilemma](#) – *The Nation*, July 26, 2004

*...It used to be so simple. Over the past two decades, Bangkok governor elections have been generally been showdowns between one "giant" and a charismatic underdog. Other candidates were there almost just for fun.*

*But when the dust settles down this Friday, at the end of a five-day candidate registration period beginning this morning, Bangkokians could feel like many do when selecting a shampoo from the shelves of a mega-store. There could be up to 30 or more candidates with different qualities and controversies to "mess up" a voter's head...*

*The "I-will-try-Chuwit, what's-there-to-lose?" bandwagon is growing. Although it remains to be seen how much of this sentiment – expressed with increasing frequency at parties, office talks, and dinner tables – will translate into real votes that snub mainstream politics. But many of Thaksin and Pavena's detractors and those doubtful about the Democrats are known to share both views – and they exist in big numbers in Bangkok.*

*Candidates to watch*

*Chuwit – Fearful of Thai Rak Thai's growing domination yet having little faith in the Democrats, many Bangkok voters appear ready to cast "sarcastic" votes by choosing Chuwit. They consider his showdown with the police an act of courage, and disregard the fact that he has been an integral part of the notorious sex industry as well as a badly corrupt law enforcement system.*

*Apirak – Apirak could suffer as disenchanted voters turn to Chuwit, which will damage his chances challenging Pavena. He will have to count on whether voters' discontent with the Thai Rak Thai party is widespread enough to have an effect and whether it will reach boiling point just before the election.*

*Pavena – Insisting that she is running as an independent, but having the Thai Rak Thai brand embossed all over her campaign, Pavena, as the frontrunner for the job, will benefit from the Chuwit factor. Her own support base plus Thai Rak Thai votes makes her a formidable – but not unbeatable – candidate.*

*Chalerm – His long-standing support base guarantees a number of votes, enough to make one of Thailand's most controversial politicians avoid a major embarrassment. His popularity among voters appears to be around the same level as Chuwit's. But many voters will visit polling booths with the Twenty Pub murder trial, in which his son was acquitted, weighing heavily on their minds.*

Also: [The Bangkok Governor candidates](#)

Also: [Bangkok Governor polls](#)

Also: [Thai Photoshoppers parody the campaign posters](#)

# Master Plan News 2004

July 26, 2004

Categories: Master Plans

## MASTER PLAN NEWS 2004 March-July

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

### [Mass Transit News main page](#)

What are the real costs of taking over the Skytrain-Subway? – translated and summarized from *Thaipost*, July 19, 2004

Minister Suriya told the press that "KfW is going to cut 45% of debt in exchange for 22 billion baht debt payment as well as the fine for BTSC due to the debt delinquencies paid by the government. After that, we are going to ask the committee to convince the shareholders that it is the government's good intention to help the company out of debts—thus selling more stock to the government is a good exchange for this bailout."

Even if BTSC agrees to allow such a takeover, we are not so sure how much it actually costs. The purchase of BMCL debts and stocks is another headache even though BMCL has only 11.15 billion baht debt and 1 billion baht in commercial debts. The average price of stock sold to the government is 2.5 baht/share even though the government would like to spend only 2 baht/share.

Even if the government could settle the deals, we have no idea where the government will find the money for paying the private sector. We have no clue if the revenue will cover the expense. We still doubt whether the services will be improved or if tickets prices will fall down or otherwise.

So far the Traffic Policy Office want to integrate the system into a single operator first. Now, we have a strong government so such integration is possible and it will save upcoming costs if they still keep the system into separated operators. Even with the single operator, the government might allow BTSC and BMCL to be partners in the operators.

Furthermore, they have to separate the cost center and profit center out so that the government could minimize the cost center while allowing profit center to invest in the stock markets. The fuel funds along with the management of ST land will help fund the project. The preliminary report has been sent to the Ministry of Finance. Furthermore MOTC and MoF have to understand each other so as to allocate and manage the budget to maximize the benefits.

The government also is running out of patience on the Thanayong debt settlement which is not settled at all. If Thanayong could actually settle the debts, that would be great.

So far, even the Traffic Policy Office is puzzled about Premier Thaksin's and Suriya's Plan to set up Utility Funds. Nevertheless, the Traffic Policy Offices hope that all will be done by the end of 2004.

The committee that is going to take over BTSC and BMCL feel that it is much harder to convince BTSC than BMCL to allow the government takeover. Even the committee would like to see how BTSC is going negotiate with the creditors. The committee still have no clue about the budgets for this takeover.

Suriya sets up negotiation committee to deal with the nationalization of Subway-Skytrain – translated and summarized from [Manager Daily](#), July 1, 2004

MOTC is appointing the Deputy Permanent Secretary (MOF) to handle the nationalization and allocation of 4% more of the National Budget to invest in a massive expansion of the mass transit system.

MOTC has appointed the Deputy Permanent Secretary (MOF) and representatives from the Supreme Attorney Agency to negotiate with BTSC and BMCL about the nationalization plan. The settlement on BTSC in come in the next two months and BMCL in the next year—with the results reporting directly to MOTC.

So far, KfW agrees to cut down 40% of BTSC debt and the plans to purchase BTSC stocks.

For the capitalization plan for massive expansion of the mass transit system, MOTC will discuss with MOF about this issue. So far, MOTC is going to ask the Budget Bureau to allocate 10% of the trillion baht national budget to MOTC which can be done immediately since MOTC has been restricted from asking for more than 6% of the national budget since 1998. Now, the economic is back on its feet, thus a 10% budget for transportation can be resumed.

Experts warning Skytrain-Subway expansion alone will not work despite strong support from the public and private sectors – translated and summarized from [\*Manager Daily\*](#), July 3, 2004

Even though Premier Thaksin is going to fulfill the wish of His Majesty by making a massive expansion of the Skytrain-subway system—with both public and private support as well as through nationalization of BMCL and BTSC, experts warned that unless Premier Thaksin has come up with the policy to discourage the use of private cars, Bangkokians will find that they can walk faster than drive in the next 10 years.

Experts also point out that the percentage of roads in Bangkok is 10%, comparable with 11% in Paris and 13% in Tokyo or Munich – thus the complaints about the lack of roads are big lies (unless such complaints come from those who live in blindspots).

Even worse, experts found that Bangkokians have use private car for 55% of trips while public transport covers 45%. The ratio between private cars to public transport would be 66:34 in 2021. On the other hand those pinoy in Manila ride private cars only 12% while the other 88% is public transport. Therefore the speed will be cut down from 5-6 kph in 2001 to 3 kph in 2011 and 2 kph in 2021.

Poor public transport service is definitely one of the big sources of traffic jams in Bangkok—50 minutes in private car cover the same distance as 70 minutes in public transport.

Even worse, transportation has gobbled 98% of gasoline consumption and 77% of diesel consumption and is a big source of noise and air pollution.

The bureaucraticism between related agencies also complicates traffic problems. Even though the government pledged to add 100 km of subway, they will not be able to solve the problems since they encourage more car usage by adding 1000 km of new roads—a sign of hypocrisy indeed!

The government should have more courage to impose taxes on those who go into the CBD (Central Business District) area, hike auto taxes, and levy a tax on car parks and speed up the bus services.

Traffic Policy Office coming up with three formulas to finance the 400 billion baht mass transit projects – translated and summarized by from *Bangkok Biznews*, June 22, 2004

The Traffic Policy Office is coming up with three formulas to finance the 440 billion baht mass transit projects to be delivered to Minister Suriya on June 25 and the office is pushing hard for MRTA to be the major holding company to run the system. Three plans are:

1. Levy more excise tax on fuel to finance Transportation Funds.
2. Raise the automobile license tax
3. New transportation bonds

However, this 440 billion baht does not include financial costs yet. Therefore, the Traffic Policy Office is going to discuss with the Budget Bureau and Ministry of Finance about the investment plan which can be separated into 2 parts:

- 1) Basic Infrastructure – 67-70% (about 280-300 billion baht) from the annual budget, domestic loan and foreign loans such as JBIC and ADB along with fuel funds. This will pay for the design and construction as well as land expropriation.
- 2) Rolling stock – 30-33%- Needs a joint venture company to run the systems with MRTA as the main company and then offer an IPO to raise the capital to 50 billion baht. MRTA can hire the private sector to deal with services but MRTA will monitor the private sector so that they will keep services up to standard with the revenue belonging to MRTA.

There are six ways to get the public financial resources under consideration:

1. Annual budget
2. Mass Transit Development Fund from oil taxes, the license plate tax, and other taxes and fees relating to transportation
3. Government bonds
4. Domestic loans
5. International loans with low costs (e.g. JBIC, ADB)
6. New mutual funds (investment funds) like Wayuphak 1

So far, the government can allocate up to 20-40 billion baht within 6 years from the national budget since the government has financial constraints to control the public debts within 60% of GDP.

The new mutual fund like Wayuphak Funds is a new alternative since the funds are a separate legal entity, thus not becoming a burden to the government and no direct consequence on public debts. However, Wayuphak funds are not very popular. The 70 billion baht Wayuphak fund has been purchased only up to 18 billion baht. The other 52 billion has to be purchased by financial institutes. Wayuphak 2 for transportation has more risk because of lack of diversity while the rates are just 1% higher than Wayuphak 1.

However, team consultants are asking the government to raise fuel taxes for the gas stations and raise more levies on automobile licenses and plates within Bangkok and vicinity to finance the transportation funds to



cut down the risk of unsuccessful Wayuphak funds 2 for transportation.

Commentary by Wisarut: I hope that the vested interests will not ruin the plan. Better add heavy industries relating to mass transit system as well as telecom business into Wayuphak 2 to diversify the fund.

Latest on the Lad Phrao elevated way controversy – June 29, 2004

**Traffic Policy Office's response to the protest against Lad Phrao Elevated Way** – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, June 18, 2004

After the meeting to discuss the Rama 6 Expressway project with the connection to Lad Phrao Elevated Way, Director Kumroblux told the press that there are three issues to tackle on Lad Phrao Elevated Way as the protest against the project is looming larger.

- 1) The section from Ratchada-Ladphrao Intersection to Lad Phrao Intersection ceases to be a part of the project to prevent interfering with the subway tunnel and cutting down protests from students and teachers from St. John's School and St. John's University as well as the protest from Union Mall and Central Pattana.
- 2) Modification of Lad Phrao Elevated Way Project to reduce detrimental effects on local people.
- 3) Rerouting so as to connect Lad Phrao Elevated way with Donmuang Tollway or ceasing the construction of the entrance and exit ramps at Ratchada – Lad Phrao Intersection.

The design of the section from Bangsue-Talingchan is not done yet since it requires a very complicated structure in addition to the new bridge parallel with Rama 6 Bridge. The minimum axle load of 20 tons is a must. 25 tons is preferred.

**Rama 6 Elevated Way is a good solution for the traffic** – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, June 22, 2004

After getting strong protests from local Lad Phrao people – especially from Ratchada-Lad Phrao intersection to Lad Phrao intersection, Traffic policy Office has come up with three solutions to be decided in July 2004.

1. Quit the construction of the section from Lad Phrao 1 to Lad Phrao 21 and the set the final route from Rama 6 Expressway to Donmuang Tollway.
2. Keep the old proposal to string the route along Lad Phrao Road to Lad Phrao Intersection but with only four lanes for the section from Lad Phrao 1 to Lad Phrao 21 so that there will be some space left for BRT without cutting down the old area. This option has been touted by the Traffic Policy Office as the solution for traffic jams even though most Bangkokians (especially those who live along Lad Phrao road feel very cynical about this option. They even mock this option as the option to please the vested interests within the cabinet.
3. Cut down Lad Phrao elevated into two lanes and construct the LRT or BRT but no LRT section on Lad Phrao 1 to Lad Phrao 21 since the Subway has performs this job very well.

**Commentary by Wisarut:** This LRT option must function as a feeder line to Blue Ring to boost passengers. Therefore, MRTA/BMCL would be the best candidate for this feeder LRT.

This Lad Phrao LRT system must have an option to be upgraded into a heavy rail system like the Skytrain. This option will be very good since MRTA could use the existing Subway rolling stock to run the system. Initially, LRT is touted as cheaper alternative to a Heavy Rail System investment, but it seems to me that they will have a very hard time to be upgraded to be able to carry more passengers when demand surges. Those who ride Manila LRT1 and Manila LRT 3 wish that their systems would be a heavy rail system like Manila LRT2 to be able to carry more passengers in much more comfortable ride.

Even those who use Skytrain during rush hours (6am-9am, 5pm-8pm) have complained that BTSC better purchase a 6-car system like Shanghai metro to carry more passengers with more comfort during rush hour.

### Links from MThai

Growing opposition to Lad Phrao Elevated Way is shown [here](#)—alleging that Governor Samak is not immune from corruption as he claims.

The [selfishness of the Courts along Ratchadaphisek](#) has pushed the expressway to Lad Phrao Road Instead of Ratchadaphisek.

Vested interest have tried to [sabotage those who go against the Lad Phrao Elevated way](#).

What things cost – June 27, 2004

[Insufficient public transportation creates corruption](#) (*The Nation*, June 27, 2004): ...According to the 2003 research, each motorbike taxi driver earns Bt300-Bt600 per day. Altogether, the 200,000-or-so drivers generate an annual income of Bt20 billion-Bt40 billion. After petrol and other expenses are deducted, motorbike taxi drivers are estimated to have Bt15 billion-Bt20 billion left over each year, with 65 per cent of

*this combined amount generated in Bangkok and its peripherals. However, these figures do not represent the drivers' net income, because they have to pay an estimated Bt4.1 billion in bribes to routing supervisors and police for the "right" to operate on their respective routes. The bribes, known as "kha win" or routing fees, include an estimated Bt1.5 billion per year paid to the routing supervisors in Bangkok; another Bt750 million for supervisors in provincial cities and another Bt1.8 billion for police...*

Opposition to Lad Phrao Elevated Way – June 18, 2004

Wisarat reports: *The sense of alienation toward those who came up with the Lad Phrao Elevated Way is growing fast. Local people are revolting against those who benefit from such a project. Below are the telephone numbers of local people who are leaders of the movement to stop the Lad Phrao Elevated Way project:*

*Mr. Boonkrai Jittawanit 02-9384873 (Chairman of Lad Phrao People Group)*

*Mr. Ruengwit Praditwitthaya 02-5114508 (Deputy Chairman of Lad Phrao People Group)*

*Mr. Prasod Piyakulchaidej 01-9202608*

*Mr. Saeng Sahamitr 02-5113108*

*Dr. Anusorn MD 01-4056177*

*Look at these 2 threads ([1](#) [2](#)) websites and you'll see (in Thai).*

Bangkok Governor candidate makes mass transit promises – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, June 24, 2004

Mr Karun Jantharasu (candidate of BMA Governor) said he will complete both sections of Taksin extension (Saphan Taksin – Taksin Road – Phetkasem) and Samrong extension before coming up with a 12-km Phaholyothin extension from Mochit to Saphan Mai.

Furthermore, he will come up with an SOV lane after transferring BMTA to BMA. This SOV lane will enable busses to run at 30 kph instead of 12 kph. The Decentralization Act has a provision that BMTA and even MRTA should be transferred to BMA by 2006.

Outer Ring Road – approved in 1978, but not finished until 2006 – translated and summarized from *Siamturakij*, June 13-19, 2004

The story of the Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road:

**November 28, 1978** – Cabinet approval (when the late Gen Kriensak Chamanan was PM)

There would be 3 section (Western – Bang Khuntian – Bang Pa In, Eastern – Bang pa In – Bang Plee and Southern – Bang Plee – Bang Khuntian)

**1979** – The construction of the western section (Bang Khuntian – Ban Pa In) was started as 2-lane highway. Expanded later to cope with increasing traffic until it becomes a 12-lane highway finished in 1995 with total distance of 70 km.

**1989** – Cabinet approval of Eastern section of Outer Ring road as tollway, but the private sector declines to invest

**1990** – Loan from OECF (now JBIC) to cover 50% of the project cost and the other 50% to come from the annual budget.

**1994** – Construction starts with 16 sections and the other 8 sections for interchanges with a total distance of 64 km.

**1995** – Western Kanchanaphisek completed

**December 1, 1998** – Eastern Section of Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring road completed for Bangkok Asian Games

**April 19, 2000** – Turnkey proposal for Southern Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring road rejected

**June 4, 2004** – Expressway Authority is handling the Southern section of Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road. Contract with Ch. Karnchang PCL signed with a price tag of 15.548619 billion baht for a six lane expressway with total distance of 22 km

**December 5, 2006** – Southern Kanchanaphisek to be completed.

Furious response to Lad Phrao Elevated Way – May 29, 2004

Wisarat reports: *The Lad Phrao Elevated Way Project has ignited furious responses on Thai webboards ([1](#) [2](#)) from those who live along Lad Phrao Road. This project has so many irregularities that local people ask for either a new Skytrain line or a scrapping of the project. Those who came up with this project made a secret plan along with a clandestine design without consent from local people. There was no public hearing or environmental assessment. This project also pleases automobile vested interests while causing suffering to local people...*



Saensaeab Canal Boat to be extinct in five years? – translated and summarized from [Manager Daily](#), May 31, 2004

Krobkrua Khonsong said they can run the Saensaeab boat service for only five more years since fuel prices are rising very fast and ticket prices have been frozen even though they are supposed to be doubled as the baht has been depreciated.

Even though many have complained about their rushing services and poor safety measures, many still have to rely on this Saensaeab boat so that they can go to and from downtown without problems.

Those who live along Saensaeab canal definitely use it for going outside their communities. The daily passengers for Saensaeab boat service are:

Weekdays: 77,987 passengers a day

Weekends: 31,569 passengers a day

However nowadays there are 20,000 daily customers for Saensaeab boat service. Even Chaophraya Express Boat has about 40,000-50,000 passengers a day.

Many feel afraid that the Orange Line and Purple Line Subway will put an end to Saensaeab boat services but there are regular customers who are going to use Saensaeab boat service anyway even though sometimes they have to wait until the tide recedes after raining. High canal tides will prevent the long tail boat from going through the low spaces under Wat Phraya Yang bridge and Klongtan Bridge.

**Commentary by Wisarut:** Those who run Saensaeab Boat service better prepare to become feeder boats for Subway-Skytrain systems as a way to survive. However BMA may have to correct Wat Phraya Yang and Klongtan Bridge as well as other bridge across Saensaeab canal to accommodate Saensaeab boats. If it is necessary to open the watergate at Thewet to allow the access to Chao Phraya, please do it now. It is the only way for Saensaeab boat to expand more services. However, Krobkrua Konsong better improve and modernize their boats and piers so as to attract more passengers.

**See also:** The defunct [klong tramway project](#) & [station list](#)

Priorities for mass transit extensions – translated and summarized from *Thai Setthakij*, May 13-15, 2004

The consultants for the Traffic Policy Office reported that:

1) BTSC Skytrain, Red Line Commuter, Pink Airport Link, and MRTA Blue Ring have the first priority to be constructed.

2) Purple Line and Orange line should be postponed to get the first priority routes done first.

**Commentary by Wisarut:** This kind of consultant will eventually lead to a series of conflicts between MRTA (the subway) vs. the Traffic Policy office and BTSC (the Skytrain) vs. the Government since the consultant and Traffic Policy Office are going to curry favor from Premier Thaksin in such a way that it messes up all the priorities. The blue right section which passes Premier's House has been given first priority over other lines that already have been through extensive studies.

Furthermore, the delay of the Skytrain Extensions will only fuel the mutual hatred between BMA and the central government since the 6 year goal for the consultant's plan assumes BMA and BTSC agrees to sell the Skytrain system to the government. This is an assumption really out of touch with reality...

The choice for Lad Phrao Elevated Way – translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, April 25-28, 2004

After a study, the consultants told the Traffic Policy Office that "the first choice is the best option" despite engineering difficulties since other options require significant land expropriation which causes lots of trouble. The straight route is the best deal.

The first choice starts from Ratchada-Lad Phrao Intersection and then goes along Lad Phrao Road to pass Lad Phrao Intersection, Vibhavadee Rangsit Highway, Donmuang Tollway, Chatuchak Park, Nikom Rotfai 2 Road before meeting with Sri Rat Expressway with a total distance of 2.3 km.

However, the company will ask opinions from area people in early June 2004 before coming up with the detailed design.

**Earlier:** [More details on the Lad Phrao Elevated Way](#) – translated and summarized from *Prachachart Thurakij*, August 11-13, 2003 (with map)

**Earlier:** [Traffic Office approves BMA to construct the Lad Phrao Elevated Way with conditions attached](#) – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, July 11, 2003

Megaprojects would create heavy debts–1.18 trillion baht loan needed – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, May 17, 2004

The investment in megaprojects in the next five years needs a 1.18 trillion baht investment–higher than the threshold for a sustainable investment. SRT needs a 530 billion baht investment for the Airport Link, nationwide double tracking, etc. MOF is now getting into serious trouble coming up with a financial scheme

to fund such massive megaprojects without hurting financial reserves and the current account balance. The cabinet has approved the 1.9 trillion baht investment in State Enterprises for the next five years (2005-2009) and MOF is collecting data from State Enterprises and government agencies before coming up with a financial analysis for funding the schemes without putting the country into financial instability on both financial sustainability and the Forex.

SRT is asking for a 530.1 billion baht Investment which can be allocated as follows:

- 1) Hopewell revival as Red Line Commuter and Pink Airport Link -> 130.1 billion baht
- 2) Nationwide double tracking and electrification -> 400 billion baht

The National Housing Authority is asking for 282 billion baht for Ban Uea Athorn (Housing for the poor).

MRTA is also asking for 267.7 billion baht to support massive MRTA subway expansions.

MOF found that state enterprises are asking for an annual budget of 453.132 billion baht—25% of the 1.738515 trillion baht limitation on investment according to the annual budget.

State enterprises are also asking for a 1.185628 trillion baht loan -> 776.988 billion baht from foreign sources (JBIC) and 408.640 billion baht from local resources and SRT is asking for a 500 billion baht loan.

MOF has stated that they have limited public debt not to exceed 55% of GDP—which is now 6 trillion baht. Therefore, those state enterprises can only get a 600 billion baht loan—not enough to cover a 1.18 trillion baht loan.

MOF found that they need to import rolling stock, raw material and parts with a total price tag of 591.833 billion baht (US\$ 14.795 billion) -> about US\$ 2.9 billion a year. This could create very serious current account deficits along with ballooning public debts and the depletion of financial reserves.

**Commentary by Wisarut:** MOF better ask BOI to invite foreign investors to make a joint venture as well as invest in the megaproject as well as the supporting projects to cut down the importation bills. Megaproject mutual funds will have to become a reality immediately so as to have the resources to support such projects. Furthermore, the government should not nationalize BTSC ([the Skytrain](#)) and BMCL ([the subway](#)) but encourage both companies to merge and offer a new IPO. SRT may have to be partially privatized through the invitation of both local and foreign investors who can support the megaprojects.

Masterplan for mass transit system to be done in 2005 – translated and summarized from *Daily News*, May 5, 2004

So far, MOTC has allocated 700 million baht for the 2004-5 budget to study and handle the extensions. After finishing the design, the Royal Decree for the land expropriation will be called and the construction can be started at late 2005. When construction is done in 2021, the system will cut down the annual economic loss of 220 billion baht each year.

For the funding scheme, the government can fund this project at 30-50% of GDP—about 120-275 billion baht by setting up mass transit system development funds. The government has to impose the following new taxes to finance the mass transit system developing funds:

- 1) 1 baht tax on each litre of gasoline
- 2) 0.75 baht tax on each litre of diesel fuel
- 3) 10,000 baht new license plate tax
- 4) 50% increase in annual automobile license fee

This will give revenue of 22.571 billion baht to fund the mass transit project.

The new 20-billion baht transportation mutual funds with the same form as Wayuphak funds and 241 billion baht domestic loan will be applied to ensure continuing funds. In six years, the construction funds will reach 521 billion baht.

The merging of BTSC and BMCL before offering an IPOs by the government is necessary to cut the expense on purchasing stocks. The separation of the service sector and the infrastructure construction/maintenance is a must to ensure profitable (or even lucrative) investment.

However, many people feel afraid that the nationalization of BMCL-BTSC will result in heavy loss in the same way SRT and BMTA have and still suffered. The capitalization after nationalization of mass transit system may not attract enough private investors and Bangkokians and those who live in suburbs will suffer from traffic jams during the construction.

Therefore, the consultant will gather data before coming up with the summary to be submitted to the Traffic Policy Office by the end of May 2004.

**Commentary by Wisarut:** It is up to the government's willingness to fund the project by imposing the fuel tax and automobile license tax. If they still clings to the powerful auto and oil interests, they would refuse to raise the taxes which hurt these influential businesses.

More on the Bangkok Southern Transportation Center – April 10, 2004

Wisarat reports: Than Setthakij (March 18-21, 2004) reports that the Bangkok Southern Transportation Center will have a new station at Wutthakart Road at the place where Maeklong Railway and Phetkasem Extension of Skytrain Intersect. This station will be next to Talad Ploo Station which is near Ratchada-Tha Phra Road.

Two schools will be expropriated (Jindamanee School Primary School and Rachamontri School) and one temple is close enough to be nearly expropriated. A new road to form the southern boundary of Bangkok Southern Transportation Center will be cut to link Dao Khanong with Wutthakart and Phetkasem.

The Traffic Policy Office try to ensure that there will as little expropriated land as possible, but a Royal Decree is needed to secure the land plot.

Meklong Railway from Wongwian Yai to Wutthakart will have 3 tracks and there will be double tracks after Wutthakart station to Mahachai.

Three Bangkok Transportation Centers becoming a reality in six years? – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, March 22, 2004

After the 248 km mass transit integration project was approved on February 23, three transportation centers must be constructed as a part of the package.

1) Phaholyothin Center (Northern Bangkok) – for those who live in Northern Bangkok suburbs to go downtown as well as those who want to go to North and Northeastern regions by intercity buses and trains.

2) Makkasan Center (Eastern Bangkok) for those who want to go from downtown to NBIA as well as those who want to go to Eastern region by intercity buses and trains.

3) Taksin Center (Southern Bangkok) for those who want to go down South as well as to help those who live in Thonburi and Southwest Bangkok suburbs or even to go down to Malaysia and Singapore.

Phaholyothin Center will on the 600 rai of SRT land from Bangsue Junction. Bangsue canal will form the southern Border while Phaholyothin Road will be the eastern border. Klong Premprachakron will form the western border while Ratchadaphisek will form the northern border.

It will have a passenger terminal, interchange station with Blue line subway at Bangsue and Red Line commuter. Bangsue will become the terminal of Northern and Northeastern trains intercity bus terminal and BMTA bus terminal at Mochit 2 will be merged with Phaholyothin Center.

The Traffic Policy office is hiring a consultant to draft the detailed designs so as to start the bidding process and start the construction in July 2005 to be done in July 2008 with the investment of 17.5 billion baht.

Makkasan Center will be on 55-Rai of SRT land. The Expressway will form the northern border at Asok 1 gate. Ratchadaphisek ring road will form the eastern border while Ratprarob and Asok-Dindaeng will form the western border. Makkasan Center will be within CBD and become the International terminal to NBIA with interchange between Blue line subway at Phetburi station and Pink Airport Link (Phyathai – Makkasan – NBIA). It will an immigration center within Air terminal to check visas and passports.

Makkasan center will become a railway terminal for the trains to the new city at Banna and Chachongsao and Intercity bus to Eastern region (via motorway) with park and ride facility, BMTA bus stop, and road system.

The Traffic Policy office is hiring a consultant to draft the detailed designs so as to start the bidding process and start the construction in July 2005 to be done in August 2008 with an investment fund of 10.5 billion baht – with contribution from the central government.

Taksin center will be the center for the southern and western bus terminal with total area of 175 rai. Taksin – Phetkasem and Wutthakart Road will form the northern border. It requires a royal decree for land expropriation and now BMA is surveying a 6 sq km of area as the way to link BTSC Skytrain, MRTA Subway and SRT Red Line commuter to Mahachai. The Maeklong railway will be upgraded to integrate with Southern Railway with the link from Mae Klong to Pak Tho and the northern railway with the link from Hua Lamphong to Wongwian Yai. The new southern bus terminal will be at Taksin Center.

The Traffic Policy Office has asked 0.140 billion baht for the land ownership transfer and another 3 billion baht for land expropriation at 40000 baht/sq wah. After the land expropriation is done by the end of 2005, construction can be started in 2006 and done in 2009.

The new three Bangkok transportation centers are too vital to be neglected. Phaholyothin and Makkasan center are no problem at all since it is SRT land while Taksin center requires 200 rai of land expropriation and the eviction of 8000 Bangkokians. We need to find new places for them as compensations.

**Commentary by Wisarat:** We need to find new places and new jobs for 8000 Bangkokians on the Thonburi side of Bangkok, 10,000 SRT workers at Bangsue and Makkasan, thousands of slum dwellers along SRT tracks who have to be evicted for this massive projects. Moving them to Ban Phachee and Lopburi is too far away... even moving those people to Chaing Rak still too far away.

Moving them to Rangsit and Lad Krabang would be fine, but SRT and government have to handle the conflicts between the those new people and the local people in Rangsit and Lad Krabang. Otherwise, it can become another explosive issue.

Korail expresses interests to cooperate on Thai high-speed rail – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, April 2, 2004

Deputy MOTC Minister Wichet Kasemthongsri told correspondents that after visiting South Korea to observe the Inauguration of the KTX High Speed Rail (Seoul-Busan) that he has seen Korail (Privatized South Korean Railway Network Authority) setting up the high speed rail system for both passenger transportation as well as cargo.

After riding the KTX, Minister Wichet praised the system and says it runs much faster than automobiles and has precise schedules. If SRT is going to conceive their own version for Bangkok (Map Taphut-Rayong – 205 km), it will cut down much of the soaring energy bills and save time from traffic jams and shipping cargo from one place to another in a very short period of time.

After the South Korean Government knows that SRT would like to set up a high speed rail network, the South Korean Railway Authority (Korail) would like to share their own experience with SRT as a way to make stronger ties with SRT. Furthermore, Korail said they are going to make a joint venture with the Thai government for this High Speed Rail Network.

**Earlier:** [South Korea's KTX high speed rail opens today](#) – *Manager Daily*, March 30, 2004

**Commentary by Wisarut:** The first trip of KTX High Speed Rail System from Seoul to Busan started at 5:30am on April 1, 2004. It cut travel time from Seoul to Busan (400 km) by 90 minutes.

South Korean Railway Networks have used the Standard Gauge Rail System for both KTX and regular Korail Network since it has connections with China when it was founded in 1899, a few years before the bitter Japanese colonial occupation .

Ko Lak Chamber of Commerce opposing the high speed rail system – translated and summarized from *Matichon Daily*, April 2, 2004 & *Thai News Agency*, April 1, 2004

Niphon Suwannawa (adviser of Ko Lak Chamber of Commerce) said that the 36 billion baht high speed railway track along Phetkasem Road is hard to conceive since such a project requires long term commitment from the Central Authority (SRT). Furthermore, there will be construction problems even though the company claimed that it will cost less by constructing elevated tracks along Phetkasem Road. Therefore, it would save money by asking and making a joint venture on double tracking from Nakhon Pathom to Prachuab Khirikhan with SRT.

Furthermore, the Ko Lak Chamber of Commerce flatly said "no" to the cable car since it ruins Ao Prachuab at irreversible levels due to the pillars in the sea. Even escalators on Khaop Chong Krachok would ruin the environment. Khao Chong Krachok is not very high. The construction of the escalator as well as the funicular tracks would harm thousands of monkeys around Khao Chongkrajok (monkeys of Khao Chongkrajok creates the charm of the place just like in Khao Wang and Lopburi).

The company should also come up with public hearings before starting the project for better management since local people have suffered from mismanagement of development in such levels that they feel very opposed to any further development and consider new development as an anathema to their communities.

**Commentary by Wisarut:** Look at Thai netters' [responses](#).

Details of the high-speed train and cable car projects for Prachuab Khirikhan – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, March 21, 2004 & *Matichon Daily*, March 23, 2004

Suphon Siwilai (CEO of Thoeddamri Co.Ltd) told the press at a conference at RTAF Wing 53 Conference Hall, Prachuab Khirikhan, that Thoeddamri Co.Ltd is going to come up with a high speed rail from Bangkok to Prachuab Khirikhan via Phetkasem Road with the targeted passengers of 1 million people a year from the current 10 million annual tourists in Thailand.

Suphon also said he will reveal the whole plan to the public in front of Prachuab Khirikhan provincial Hall on March 30, 2004 and then come up with the main plan by the end of June 2004 to be submitted to the cabinet in July 2004. If everything goes as expected, the plan can be started in late July 2004.

The first phase of this high speed rail will follow Phetkasem Road (Highway 4) from Bangkok to Prachuab Khirikhan in the middle of Highway 4 so no land expropriation is needed. If this project becomes a money maker, he would extend to Padan Besar and then Singapore (with the cooperation from KTMB).

This high speed railway will be 8-m elevated double tracks with a total distance of 300 km and use



locomotives with a maximum speed of 400 km/hr.

There are 4 proposed terminals in Bangkok: 1. Phaecharone, 2. Bang Khun Thian, 3. Talingchan, 4. Bang Yai (Nonthaburi)

The construction of the 1st phase will take five years with a budget of 36 billion baht.

Damri Co.Ltd is also going to invest on Ocean World and Cable Car at Khao Chong Krachok (Prachuab Khirikhan). The first section will be the construction of a funicular train from ground level to Khao Chong Krachok. The second section will be a tram from Kha Chongkrachok to Khao Lom Muak (within Wing 53 area) and then the 3rd section will be a cable car from Khao Lam Muak to Raed (Rhino) Islands to be done in two years with the budget of 2.5 billion baht.

Mr. Suphon has already submitted the plans to Governor Prasong Phithunkijja.

However, Wing Commander Loedrit Sesathasanone (Commander of RTAF Wing 53, the 4th RTAF Division) has commented that this cable car will have a detrimental effect on flight training for RTAF personnel.

Therefore, this project must be modified according to the consent of landlords (RTAF and Treasury Dept.)

Furthermore, Wing 53 is planning to make a joint venture with the private sector to construct a 5-star hotel at Khao Klong Wan to cater those high-class group tourists invited by RTAF. Therefore, this project must be modified to serve those high-class tourist as well.

**Commentary by Wisarut:** Even though there are positive responses to this high speed rail project and they want the system to be expanded nationwide, many still doubt the project can be conceived at all. Look at the [local responses](#). Furthermore, government promotion of Ecocar to cater to vested interests in automobile and oil industries, as well as the [Laem Phak Bai project](#) without consent from local people in three provinces also raises serious doubts if the popular railed mass transit projects like Bangkok Mass Transit system integration, the commuter rail network to the [New City at Ban Na](#) and any high speed rail projects. Acting like this shows the government's hypocrisy is at new high levels.

High-speed train, cable car project for Prachuab Khirikhan – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, March 29, 2004

Mr Silachai-Surai (director of Tourist Authority of Thailand ) said Toed Damri has to be careful about the highspeed project and the company has to explain the project in detail during the monthly meeting at Prachuabkhirikhan Provincial Hall. The reasons for this concern is that the project requires massive investment and goes goes along Phetkasem Road which create noise pollution and ruin the tourist sites along Phetkasem Road.

Nevertheless, the passengers will have convenience due to a very high speed rail system and it will boost the economy of Prachuab Khirikhan as well as other provinces along the tracks.

Toed Damri Co.Ltd. also have to take the environment as well as the opinion from local people into account for the cable cars from Khao Lommuak to Koh Raed (Wing 53). If the project causes more harm to the environment and the local people do not like the project very much, it has to be scrapped.

Nevertheless, the escalator or the funicular tram to go to the peak of Khao Chong Krajok can be approved without problem, but they have to think if the project is worthy to investment.

Mr. Aphichart Hongsakul (Head Tourist Development and Environment section, Huahin-Cha Am Tourist Business Association) said the private sector has to introduce the principle of the the high speed rail project, the structure of the project, and the project details such as the ticket prices, stations, security and the connection with other mass transit systems since the line goes through several province. The cable car project needs to take environmental aspects into account since the construction through the sea is very delicate issue which could ruin both the environment around the beach and the coastal fishery businesses nearby.

The Governor of Phachuab Khirikhan said the company must listen to the voices from the people as well as the concerns from the related agencies since the project requires at least 40 billion baht. Thus the company has to show project in details to explain those agencies by the end of this month.

Companies explaining the High-speed train to Prachuab Khirikhan – translated and summarized from *Matichon Daily*, March 31, 2004

The Board of Directors of Ocean World told the Governor of Prachuab Khirikhan as well as representatives from other related agencies and associations about the the 36-billion baht high speed rail project. The company has made a seven-year study and found that Prachuab Khirikah is suitable to have a new high speed rail project. Furthermore, the company expects that the project will be done in five years after the project is been approved.

Suphon Silwilai (CEO of Toed Damri CoLtd.) and the Board of Directors along with the Board of Advisers



of the company from mainland China, Vietnam, and local advisers have come to Prachuab Khirikhan Provincial Hall to explain the details of the high speed rail project from Bangkok to Prachuab Khirikhan as well as the cable car project to the Prachuab Khirikhan governor as well as 175 representatives from other agencies on March 30.

Suphon said the company is a local Thai company which has made successful joint ventures in other countries such as the mainland China, Vietnam, and Laos. The company has made a 7-year survey about the route of a high speed rail project and found that Prachuab Khirikhan is a suitable place for the first phase of the project due to the fact that this province has natural beauty with 3 bays (Ao Noy, AO Prachuab AO Manao) which are the best bays in Asia. Therefore the companies would like to invest 36 billion baht for this project to boost tourist potential.

Furthermore, the new roads to Prachuab Khirikhan, the redevelopment of Khao Chong Krachok, a 7-star hotel, a 21-hole golf course for World class golf tournaments, and a new cable car from Khao Lom Muak to Koh Raed along with a Marine Museum are planned.

The air field of Wing 53 will become a tourist airport like Bo Fai airport in Hua Hin and there will be a new ferry line across the Gulf of Thailand from Prachuab Khirikhan to Chonburi (Bangsaen, Sri Racha or Pattaya). They hope that everything will be done in 2009 so as to allow tourists around the world to travel there easily.

South Korea's KTX high speed rail opens today – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, March 30, 2004

South Korea is going to introduce the first Korean High Speed Rail System on April 1, 2004 after taking 12 years to construct it. The name of this system is "KTX" (Korean Transit Express) which uses silver-color high speed EMUs with TGV technology imported from France and local technologies to customize the system. Some of EMU sets are even assembled locally.

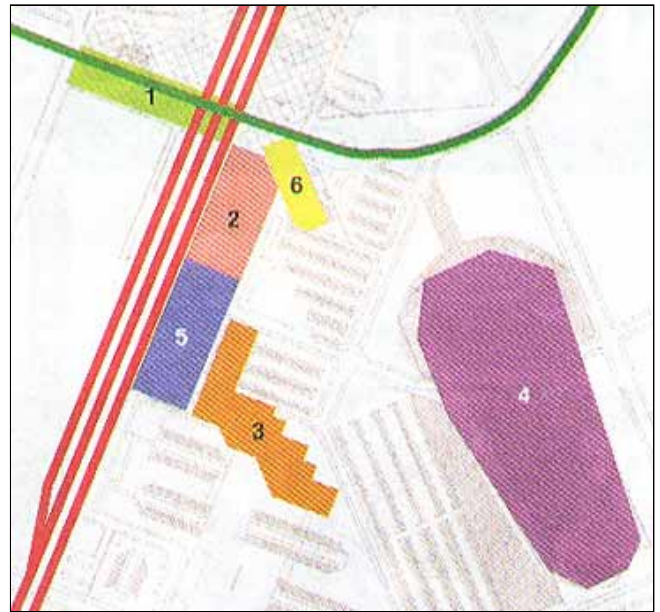
The system will run from Seoul to Busan (Pusan – the main port in the southeastern part of the Korean peninsula) and from Seoul to Mokpo (a major industrial hub in Southwestern part of the Korean peninsula). This project will help to solve traffic jams in South Korea.

Kim Sae Ho (Director of Korean National Railway) said South Korea also wants to extend the High Speed Rail system to Pyongyang (the capital of North Korea) as a "Unification Line" and then connect with the mainland China Railway Networks since mainland China is the number one trading partner of South Korea. The ultimate goal is to construct a new line to connect with the Trans Siberia Railway (with regauging to fit into 5-foot Russian broad gauge) before ending up in Europe since South Korean business and industry have received massive boosts and prospered from Russian know-how.

The first phase of this high speed rail system took 12 years from conception to reality due to financial constraints from 1997 Asian financial crisis. This project also needed a massive investment of 14 trillion won (480 billion baht) to become a reality.

**Commentary by Wisarut:** Mr. Suphon (CEO of Toed Damri Co. Ltd. which is planning a high speed rail from Bangkok to Prachuab Khirikhan) as well as the Board of Directors and the Board of Advisors of Thoe Damri Co.Ltd. should read the articles on the Korean Mass Transit System as a way to deal with unexpected troubles in the future. Even though the Ministry of Railways in mainland China is going to implement a High Speed Rail System from Beijing to Shanghai (double track Emus), I would like to know if they are going to import the system to Thailand. I also wonder if they will have a Bangkok station of the high speed rail system connecting with the SRT railway system as well as an extension of the subway or Skytrain.

1. Green – Phetkasem extension of Skytrain (Wutthakart Station)
2. Red – Maeklong Railway (Taksin-Phetkasem Station)
3. Orange – New Southern Bus Terminal
4. Purple – New Convention Center
5. Blue – BMA Thonburi Office and office areas
6. Yellow – New Railway Hotel



(Graphic: Than Setthakij)

BMA Surveying Taksin Center—at least 500 houses to be expropriated – translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, March 21-24, 2004

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After receiving a study fund of 36.75 million baht, BMA is going to survey Taksin Center which has a price tag of 18.002 billion baht and covers 3 districts (Thonburi, Chomthong, and Phasee Charoen – 6 sq-km). At least 500 houses will be expropriated.

The Bangkok Southern Transportation Center (Taksin Center) will consist of

1. New 75-rai interchange station between BTSC Skytrain and Mae Klong Railway along with a Park and Ride facility at Wutthakart Road/Taksin-Phetkasem Road (5.89 billion baht construction budget)
2. New 450-rai major road to Southern Boundary and minor roads (4.64 billion baht)
3. New 100-rai of schools and hospitals as compensation (2.4 billion baht)
4. New 50-rai Southern Bus Terminal (2.0475 billion baht)
5. New 80-rai Taksin Convention Center (1.47 billion baht)
6. New 20-rai Bangkok Administration Center – Thonburi Branch (0.528 billion baht)
7. New 100-rai of Public park – 0.074 billion baht

The new Railway Hotel will be close to the interchange station. If everything goes according to the plan, the construction of Taksin Center can be started in 2007.

The plan for Taksin Center will have to be approved by the City Planning Board (Ministry of Interior) and the resolution from the board in May 2004. First, BMA will have to come up with a Royal Decree to designate the area under study and then they will have to come up with the Expropriation Act so that they can expropriate the land. At the same time, BMA has to draft the TOR to define the study areas and hire the consultant for the project.

BMA may not have to expropriate all the land—some area can be just exchanged or manage the land ownership, or redevelop and the return to the land owners. However, BMA and consultant companies have to discuss with local people first before doing anything. BMA has to pay those landowners the compensation at market prices.

According to the preliminary information, it is said that:

- 1) there are a few people who are impacted by this project.
- 2) Talad Ploo (Chinatown of Thonburi) is the main community close to BTSC which deserves land ownership management since Talad Ploo is the the area for conservation and rehabilitation.
- 3) Chomthong district is an orchard area.
- 4) There are several communities with commercial activities along Phaseecharoen canal due to the fact that canal was dug to function as a transportation route from Thonburi to Nakhon Pathom in the time of King Mongkut. It would be a serious problem if BMA is going to evict those people.

**150 viable stations from the 181 planned** – translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, March 4-6, 2004

There will be 150 viable stations from the 181 station for the 7 mass transit lines.

Viable stations for Dark Green Line:

Phrannok, Pinklao, Tatchadamnoen Avenue, Bumrungrummaung (Yotse), Samrong, etc.

Viable stations for Light Green Line: Bang Wah, Wongwian Yai, Krung Thonburi, Lad Phrao, Ratchayothin, Kaset, Saphan Mai, etc.

Viable Stations for Blue Ring: Bangsue, Tao Poon, Pracharat, Charansanitwongse, New road (Wat Mugnkorn), Hua Lamphong, Sam Yan, and Tha Phra

Viable Stations for Orange Line: Bang Kapi, Ram Khanhaeng, Thai Cultural Center, Samsen (Sang Hee), and Sirindhorn Road, etc.

Viable Stations for Red Line Commuter: Rangsit, Lak Hok, Don Muang, Lak Si, Bang Khen, Lad Ya, Talad Ploo

Viable stations for Airport Link: Lad Krabang, Hua Mark, Yommaraj, Kasem Bundit, etc.

On March 14-17, 2004, *Than Setthakij* had another list of 'viable stations.'

- 1) the 27 stations of original Orange line
- 2) the first 18 stations of blue line Subway
- 3) the 7 stations of the original Northern extension of Blue line
- 4) the 10 stations of original Southern extension of Blue line
- 5) the 23 stations of Skytrains.

They have not included the six stations from Phra Nanklao to Bang Yai yet.

More on the Phaholyothin Transportation Center – translated and summarized from *Siamturakij*, March 7-13, 2004

The Phaholyothin Transportation Center has been proposed by SRT which will integrate Mochit 2 Bus terminal with Bangsue Junction. However, the price tag of 30 billion baht has discouraged them from starting the project and investors feel reluctant to invest in such a project unless the Red line commuter becomes a reality which would compel SRT to built a giant terminal which could dwarf Hua Lamphong.

[Complaints delay new city plan](#) – *Bangkok Post*, March 11, 2004

*The city has put the new Bangkok town plan on hold until July 5 next year while it weighs up hundreds of complaints.*

This is not the same as the [New City at Ban Nah](#)

It's not settled yet! – March 10, 200

**700 billion baht mass transit systems submitted to the cabinet next week** – translated and summarized from *Thairath*, March 9, 2004

The Traffic Policy Office said that after the cabinet has approved in principle the 700 billion baht mass transit system, the office is going to ask officers to collect resolutions from the Traffic Policy Office to be concluded before submitting results to the cabinet next week since the resolutions have so many details that it takes times to conclude the

plan so as to prevent foreseeable problems during implementation.

The Traffic Policy Office has approved the following plans for the rail mass transit system.

1. MRTA Subway, BTSC Skytrain, and SRT Red Line Commuter (Donmuang – Southern Bangkok Transportation Center)
2. Hopewell Revival as Electrified Commuter Lines
3. Electrified Commuter lines at grade to reach Nakhon Pathom, Ayutthaya, Chachoengsao from Bangsue and Makkasan as well as Pink Airport Link (Donmuang – Bangsue – Makkasan – NBIA) -> modification after extending the western section of the Pink Airport Link from Talingchan to Nakhon Pathom.
4. City Development around Makkasan, Bangsue and Taksin Transportation Center.
5. Financial scheme for the projects and time frame of the project – with the priority about which lines to be constructed first.

**Rama 6-Bang Sue Elevated Way** – translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, February 29-March 3, 2004

There are three proposed routes for the Rama 6 Elevated way to replace Phyathai – Phutthamonthon Elevated Way -> ready for public hearing by the end of March 2004. The detail design for this project will be cut down from 16 months to 9 months.

The first route will go from Park and Ride to Lad Phrao Intersection via Lad Phrao Road and then pass though Railway Park and Kamphaeng Phet Road. This route will be 3.2 km with construction costs of 700

million baht.

The second route will go along Lad Phrao Road, Phaholyothin Road and the road between Hor Wang and then the Km11 Railway Housing and Kampheng Phet Road. This route will be 3.8 km with construction costs of 900 million baht.

The third option will go from Park and Ride and go behind Union Mall and then pass Phaholyothin Road at Lotus and then go behind Hor Wang School before heading to the Waterworks Office and Kamphaeng Phet Road. This route will be 3.5 km with construction costs of 800 million baht.

All three routes must pass [Prapa Elevated Way](#), with a bridge height about 11m from the ground. After that, they will follow Southern Railway Track until it reaches Rama 6 Bridge.

The New Bridge Parallel with Rama 6 Bridge is a must since Rama 6 Bridge can carry 15 tons of load—inadequate for the load for both a highway and Pink Airport Link. The new bridge will be steel since it has less strain than a cement bridge.

The bridge across Chao Phraya will be an iron bridge to it has less impact than concrete bridges. If the elevated way reaches Taling Chan, it will be 20 km long. However, the Traffic Policy Office needs public hearings in this March to finalize the plan.

**New buildings near new mass transit routes free from providing parking** – translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, March 4-6

Now buildings along the Skytrain-Subway—within a 200-m radius—do not have to construct a parking lot which save more space for residents. In previous regulation of 1979, the residential and office buildings for more than 2000 sq-meters need to allocate space for parking lot at 60 sq-m/car for office and 120 sq-metre/car for resident buildings. This forced contractors to build 10-floors of parking lots, gobbling 50% of construction costs and 20% of space. This new regulation has cut down the cost by 300,000 baht/unit. However, most of those residential building are within the Central Business District (CBD), and the main customers of those office and residents in CBD are those well-to-do people who can afford to drive the cars with chauffeurs or drive themselves—dimming the value of those building without parking.

**Bangkok University poll says 89% of Bangkokians want mass transit system expansion** – translated and summarized from *Bangkok Biznews*, February 26, 2004

Bangkok University Research Center has conducted the poll from Bangkokians about the following things: 753 Bangkokians were surveyed on February 25, 2004 about the government's policy.

89% agree with the policy to expand the Skytrain-Subway

7% oppose the plan

For those who agree with the plan, they think that:

46.3% will be done in 6 years

45.9% will not be done in 6 years

For the case of 700 billion public investment, they said:

58.7% Worthy to do

27.8% Not worthy yet

For the upcoming subway (opening on April 13), they said:

55.9% will moderately solve traffic jams (especially those who live along Ratchadaphisek Road)

20.1% will solve the traffic jams very well

18.6% will have little effect on traffic jams

**Advertising agencies scared by the nationalization plan to integrate the Skytrain-Subway** – translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, Vo. 24 No. 1,885 March 7-10, 2004

The nationalization plan for Subway-Skytrain integration has scared both investors and the advertising agencies since they felt that the government will cancel advertising deals signed by BMCL and BTSC – compelling two customers of VGI Global and Traid to cancel advertising deal – according to the source from Initiative Media Co.Ltd. and Star Com (Thailand) Co.Ltd.

Nevertheless, VGI Global (Advertising Agency Hired by BTSC) and Traid Network (Advertising Agency Hired by BMCL) said it is just a change in the ownership, and the new owner has to keep the advertising contracts. However, customers who use VGI Global and Traid have felt worried about the change of ownership.

Furthermore, those advertising agencies felt that a 10% down payment set up Traid Network Co.Ltd. is an unprecedented rule which they feel very hard to accept. If there is any delay in the opening of the subway system, Traid Networks may not be able to pay the compensation to the agencies.

MRTA Governor said VGI Global could keep their business with BTSC alive and well since VGI Global has

done nothing wrong at all. However the contract between Triad and BMCL may have to be canceled since MRTA is involved with the advertising deal. However, both companies have to deal with debt and profit sharing first before system integration. Further negotiation is pending.

**Eight sections to be expropriated for the ramps of Lad Phrao Elevated Way** – translated and summarized from *Siam Turakij*, February 29-March 6, 2004

There will be eight sections to be expropriated for the ramps of the 16-km Lad Phrao Elevated Way with the 8.4 billion baht budget to be done in 2005 and bidding will be started in April 2004.

1) Ratchada-Lad Phrao	6) Bangkapi intersection
2) Chokchai 4	7) Nida intersection
3) Ram Indra – At Narong	8) the 3rd stage expressway (still uncertain)
4) Lad Phrao 101	9) Panasonic intersection (Kanchanaphisek)
5) Happyland intersection	

A [bus rapid transit system](#) will run on the elevated way. This BRT system from Minburi to Rama 5 via Lad Phrao Road will cut down the traveling time by 40 minutes while the Lad Phrao Elevated Way will boost the number of lanes to 10–6 ground lanes and 4 elevated lanes.

The Traffic Policy Office said they are testing the BRT by running air-conditioned bus services in the center of Lad Phrao road and it works just fine. There have been no accidents on BMTA Bus No. 96 (Suan Siam – Mochit 2), BMTA Bus No 502 (Minburi – Victory Monument), and BMTA Bus 514 (Minburi – Silom)—only misunderstanding from the automobile drivers who drove in the BRT lanes.

**Also:** (translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, February 29-March 3, 2004) The Lad Phrao Elevated Way connecting Rama 6 -Bangsue elevated way will consist of 8 gates, 2 gates at Chokchai 4, 1 Gate at Lad Phrao, 1 Gate at Lad Phrao 101, 1 Gate at Happy Land, 1 Gate at Nawamin Road, 2 gate at Ram Khamhaeng Road and 1 gate at Serithai Road. Now, it is under the detail design.

**Commentary by Wisarut:** It seems to me that the plan is really out of touch with the local people around Lad Phrao area. Many have use BMTA Bus 145 as well as other buses to go to Sri Nakharin and Ram Khamhaeng via lad Phrao Road, but the Traffic Policy Office has turned a deaf ear by not including those buses in the testing plan at all—a very big manipulation and distortion to reality to gain favor for their plans. The following articles in Thai weboards ([here](#) and [here](#)) will show what local people really want, but the government neglects them since there are no politicians who live along with the people and an LRT line would hurt the automobile vested interests (especially Thai Summit Autoparts owned by Minister Suriya’s family which supplies auto parts to Toyota,Thailand).

Eventually, they may find that the BRT may be working for the section from Minburi to Bang Kapi where the traffic is not so dense, but hot spots like Ratchada-Lad Phrao-Chokchai 4 and Bang Kapi may be different.

**Funding the mass transit projects** – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, March 1, 2004

The government is planing to come up with mutual funds to be offered through the stock market to finance the 446.677 billion baht mass transit projects. The funds will have 4% benefits in 6 years and the government will make another 10-100 billion baht contribution. Initially, an oil tax and automobile tax hike will be imposed. However Minister Suriya suggests that the government should exempt those who use second hand cars while putting a tax hike on new cars. There will be no new oil and fuel tax to fund the project. This automobile tax and fuel tax are considered a long term burden and a new tax on the new cars is more reasonable.

**Commentary by Wisarut:** I think Minister Suriya must have his own hidden agenda. The second hand cars need new spare parts thus boosting the fortunes of Thai Summit Auto Parts (the core business of Minister Suriya). New fuel tax also hurts those with oil interests. Sounds like the plan is made by those who hate mass transit systems, but pretend to love it.

Traffic experts criticize 700 billion baht mass transit plan – translated and summarized from *Transport Journal*, March 8-14

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Traffic experts have made an assessment on the plan proposed by the Traffic Policy Office and approved by



Premier Thaksin saying it is a very poorly managed and ill-handled plan.

Dr Suwat Waneekul said even though the government has allocated an adequate budget for the 6-year mass transit project, the Airport Link will be done 1-2 years after the Suvannabhumi Airport is open for service. The current traffic jam problems are due to poorly constructed roads, ill-designed roads, narrow and meandering roads and intersections.

Even the master plan for mass transit system is a very poor design due to inept officers from the Traffic Policy Office and very inexperienced consultants hired by the Traffic Policy Office who know only about construction.

Therefore, the government should allocate more of the budget to widen roads, strengthen the highway network, and correct the intersections. Too much construction will do no good at all. It is better improve the BMTA buses which carry 4 million passengers a day compared to the Skytrain which carries 300,000 passengers a day.

Dr. Samart Ratchapolasit said the government should beware the lobbyists and vested interests and said constructing the new expressways and mass transit systems to be done in 6-years is just short of a miracle since there is no sign at all that the government has made a full commitment to finance the projects and accomplish them on time. Only fast and well designed plans handled with care would work. However, those lobbyists who want to promote Ecocars before the mass transit systems are done. If they do, that would cut the potential passengers by half and render the project wasteful.

Deputy Prof. Anukul Itsarasena Na Ayudhaya (Director of Traffic Institute, Chulalongkorn U.) said Paknam Railway should be revived as a branch line of the Blue Ring connecting with the Port Authority branches to reach Makkasan.

**Commentary by Wisarut:** That Dr. knows nothing about how much suffer we Bangkokians have suffered from the BMTA buses—suffered in such a way that we want the Skytrain extended close to home and so we can say goodbye to BMTA buses for good!

Paknam railway is a single track – too small to carry the double track and most people live along Sukhumvit-Sri Nakharin road. There is no way to change things back to the old days in the way that old professor hopes. Nevertheless, the connection with Makkasan could boost the value of that line since it would be a feeder line connecting Subway and Skytrain to keep Makkasan as a busy station like Siam and Victory Monument.

**446.677 billion baht for mass transit system might be wasteful – 4% interest rate for the mutual fund too much for the government to pay back** – translated and summarized from *Prachachat Thurakij*, Vol. 27 No. 3561 (2761), February 26- 29, 2004

Even though Premier Thaksin has approved 700 billion baht for dealing with transportation, he said 446.677 billion baht for the Mass Transit System is too much and 4% annual interest rate for the Mass Transit Funds is also too heavy a burden to the government. Wayuphak funds and Public Transportation Funds would help to cut down costs. This statement is opposite that of the Traffic Policy Office result which said funds would return a 17.92% annual payment.

After the 30th year, the estimated debts are still at 185.349 billion baht since new EMUs are needed to replace the old DMUS, etc. Nevertheless, the new mass transit system will cut energy bills by 11.1 billion baht, boost the higher quality of life by 13.1 billion baht, boost time saving by 14.8 billion baht, and save the environmental by 4.2 billion baht. Thus 43.2 billion baht in indirect benefits by 2010. After 2021, the project will save energy bills and cut losses by 4.94 trillion baht.

This will create an economic benefit of 17.92% and the benefit/unit cost will be 1.39 which is more than 1.0 and thus worthwhile to invest in. If Premier Thaksin only sees the financial benefit, he will see the benefit is not more than 5%. Therefore, he should see more benefits if he takes into account the current domestic interest rates for loans which are now 5-6%.

**In just 4 hours, Thaksin approves 700 billion baht project and comes up with Sri Nakharin-Samrong Expressway as substitute for both Yellow Line mass transit system and S3 3rd stage expressway** –

translated and summarized from *Prachachat Thurakij*, Vol. 27 No. 3561 (2761), February 26-29, 2004

After the meeting on February 23 at Thai Cultural Center Station, seven mass transit lines with a total distance of 247.5 km is approved in principle—446.677 billion baht total—299,676 billion baht for construction and 147.001 for systems. This will be funded by the new Wayuphak fund of 300 billion baht with a 4% annual interest rate guaranteed and the other 100 billion baht will be covered by government budget. This budget also includes the plan to nationalize BMCL and BTSC. The investment plan is flexible. BMA also has received a budget of 52.834 billion baht to deal with 31 road projects. 19.615 billion from BMA including Lad Phrao Elevated Way of 8.4 billion baht and 15 new flyovers with a price of 4.371 billion baht.

The double tracking of Chancheongsao-Sri Racha-Laem Chabang Deep Sea Port has been approved with a price tag of 5.2 billion baht. Also the 50 billion baht Laem Phak Bia project with the detailed design to be done in 2007.

The Expressway Authority has the budget approved for Ram Indra-Kanchanaphisek (Lam Lookka) with a price tag of 13.709 billion baht, the under-design Sri Rat-Dao Khanong expressway, under-study Ratchada-Kanchanaphisek expressway and the northern section of the 3rd stage expressway (Ngam Wongwan-Nawamin). However the S2 section of the 3rd stage expressway with a price tag of 21.525 billion baht has been suspended.

**Earlier:** [The Yellow Line—conceived and aborted within two hours after the press notes it goes by property holdings of ministers](#) – translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, Volume 24, No. 1879, February 15-18, 2004

### **More descriptions of the approved mass transit plans**

**Seven lines of new mass transit system and extensions with 181 stations** – translated and summarized from *Prachachat Thurakij*, Vol. 27 No. 3561 (2761), February 26- 29, 2004

**Five new mass transit system under study** – translated and summarized from *Matichon Daily*, February 25, 2004

The government has the clear policy to come up with a 292 km mass transit system with a price tag of 500 billion baht after they saw the good response from BTSC Skytrain and the upcoming MRTA Subway. Now, the investors and local folks around Bangkok would like to see if the new lines will pass very close to their land.

The Traffic Policy Office has announced that the 7 lines will have 181 stations – at grade, elevated and underground. The designated stations will be placed upon the distance and speed of the rolling stock. For example, BTSC stations are 1 km apart while the subway stations are 1-2.5 km apart and SRT commuter trains are 3-5 km apart.

The seven lines are:

1) **Light Green Line** (Onnut – Paknam, National Stadium-Samyaek Faichai) – 33 km

This section will start from Charansanitwongse Road as an elevated section to meet the Blue Ring and then become an underground tunnel at Thonburi station (the former Bangkok Noy Station) to go across Bangkok Noy canal and Chao Phraya River at Pinklao Bridge and then go along Ratchadamnoen Avenue to Phan Fah and then go along Phadung Krungkasem Moat from Saphan Khao to Yotse via Bobae market and then elevated to meet National Stadium station. After reaching Onnut, the line will go along Sukhumvit Road to Samut Prakarn—underground 5 stations and elevated 25 stations—total 30 stations

2) **Dark Green**

F from Mochit to Petkasem, from Bangway to Saphan Taksin via Taksin -Phetkasem and Krung Thonburi road. After that, the line will go from Mochit to Saphan Mai via Phaholyothin Road—31 km 27 stations -> all elevated.

3) **Blue ring**

Hua Lamphong – Bangsue – Thaphra -> 39.6 km and a branch Tha Phra Bang Khae -> 7.59 km

22 subway stations, 18 elevated stations, 6+ elevated stations inside the ring, elevated station for Phet Kasem Branch (Tha Phra Bang Khae)

13.1 km Charansanitwongse Elevated Section, 9.7 km Phetkasem Elevated Section, and 4.1 km Rattanakosin Tunnel

90 million baht for studying Bangsue – Bang Pho – Charansanitwongse – Tha Phra, and Interchange at Tha Phra

4) **Purple Line**

39.54 km – 11 underground stations and 19 elevated stations

Elevated: Bangyai – Phra Nanklao – Kae Rai – Tao Poon

Central tunnel from Bang Pho to Bang Pa Kaeo

Elevated: Bang Pa Kaeo – Rat Boorana

180 million baht for the section from Phra Nanaklao – Bang Yai and interchange at Sam Sen (Sang Hee)

5) **Orange Line**

Bang Kapi – Bang Bumru – 23.83 km

Underground tunnel from Lum Salee to MRTA Depot and Thai Cultural center to Bang Plad Intersection – at grade inside MRTA area. With 15 underground station and 2 elevated stations and 1 station at grade (MRTA)

21 km – double track – double tunnel from Lum Salee to Bang Plan (with underwater tunnel)

3 km – elevated tracks from Bang Plat to Bang Bumru and Lum Salee to Bang Kapi

30 million baht for Orange Line (for Samsen – Bang Bumru Section)

## 6) Red Line Commuter

Rangsit – Mahachai – 65.02 km

This line start from Mahachai at grade to Talad Ploo (the end of Bangkok Southern Terminal Center) and then the line will be elevated from Talad Ploo to go across Taksin Road at Wongwian Yai and then follow Charoenrat Road and then go to Lad Ya road to go across Chao Phraya to Rivercity (Si Phraya) and then go along Maha Phruttharam to Hua Lamphong before going at grade from Hua Lamphong to Yommaraj. Then elevated again to from Yommaraj to Donmuang parallel with the Northern Railway to Donmaung before going at grade from Donmaung to Rangsit. 10 stations at grade and 14 elevated Stations.

The Red Commuter line tracks will consist of

- 1) Single track at grade from Mahachai to Talad Ploo -> 14-15 m space
- 2) Elevated single track from Talad Ploo to Hua Lamphong -> 14-15 m space
- 3) Triple track at grade from Hua Lamphong to Yommaraj -> 40-80 m space
- 4) Elevated double track from Yommaraj to Donmuang -> 40-80 m space
- 5) Double track at grade from Donmuang to Rangsit -> 40-80 m space

The study budget for this route is 179 million baht -> 40-80 m space

## 7) Pink Airport Link

Taling Chan – NBIA -> 49.73 km

The line start at Kanchanaphisek Road to Talingchan and then elevated to go across Chaphraya via the new Bangsue – Rama 6 Elevated Way and then follow both Northern and Eastern Railway to Hua Mark via Makkasan. After that the line will be at grade up to Lad Krabang and then elevated across Onnut Road to end up at an underground station inside NBIA. 1 underground station, 6 elevated stations and 10 at grade stations.

This Pink Airport Line will have the tracks as follows:

- 1) Double track at grade from Kanchanaphisek to Talingchan -> 40-80 m space
- 2) Elevated double track from Talingchan to Bangsue -> 40-80 m space
- 3) Single elevated track from Bangsue to Hua Mark -> 40-80 m space
- 4) Triple track at grade from Hua Mark to Lad Krabang -> 40 m wide
- 5) Elevated double track from Land Krabanag to NBIA and then going underground at the Main Terminal

The Study budget for this route is 156 million baht.

**Earlier:** [Green light for seven mass transit lines](#) – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, February 24, 2004

**Earlier:** [Traffic Policy Office reveals 900 billion baht package](#) – translated and summarized from *Prachachart Thurakij*, February 12-14, 2004

**Traffic Policy Office attempts to take over transit planning from Bangkok city hall** – translated and summarized from *Matichon* and *Dailynews*, February 19, 2004

The Traffic Policy Office is creating its own plan for Bangkok transport, effectively taking away responsibility from the BMA (Bangkok city hall). Governor Samak is furious about the plan since the Traffic Policy Office never invited BMA to oversee the overhaul process. He will make an inquiry about this meddling by the Traffic Policy Office at the next meeting on February 23.

The consultants hired by the Traffic Policy Office (Ultimate Corporation Co.Ltd, Tesco Co.Ltd., Plan Pro Corp Co.Ltd.) have submitted the plan to overhaul the BMTA bus route though the BMTA Route Planning and Scheduling Project on February 18.

After the news reached BMA, Governor Samak was furious that the Traffic Policy Office came up with their own plan without consulting BMA. He will ask Premier Thaksin about this issue at the next meeting on February 23 to oppose the plan at all costs.

Governor Samak said the Traffic Policy Office has totally cut BMA responsibilities for the transportation system. He thought that some groups of people in the Traffic Policy Office have conspired against BMA and they claimed that Premier Thaksin has asked MOTC to come up with such a plan. Destroying decentralization would ruin Premier Thaksin's reputation since it violated the Constitution which stresses decentralization.

BMA City Clerk (Ms. Thananon Thaweessin) said if the cabinet has approved such a plan, BMA will be stripped of responsibility for transportation—not even the BTSC Skytrain (the favorite son) will be spared. BMA has no clue how the Traffic Policy Office has come up with such a plan through the consultants. By principle, the local authority has to come up with such a plan to meet local demands.

The BMA Deputy City Clerk (Transportation) said Traffic Policy Office is aiming to reduce the BMA role in transportation. However, the single organization to handle the traffic problem will facilitate a solution.

Currently, there are about 20 organizations to handle traffic which causes lots of chaos and slows down a solution.

The Traffic Policy office Director said this is just a proposal from the consultant companies which will take time to be accepted by everybody. If the Traffic Committee and cabinet disapproves the plan, there will be no effect on the current plan.

During the first meeting at Royal River Hotel on January 28, the consultants said there are two ways to handle traffic. Both proposals shows that the government will have to set up BMTA to handle Skytrain-Subway, buses, Chaophraya Express boats, ferry across Chao Phraya, Saensab boat, taxi, tuktuk, minibuses, and the engineering structures. This will effectively cut out the roll of BMA in handling traffic. BMTA would not be transferred to BMA.

This kind of restructure is due to the transfer of the Traffic Policy Office from the OM office to MOTC which cuts the role of Traffic Policy Office. Therefore, it is necessary to restructure to empower the Office without inviting BMA to oversee the process.

**Commentary by Wisarut:** The Traffic Policy Office should come up a compromise that allow the local authorities to be shareholders of the new companies to calm them down. Since BMTA refuses to be transferred to the authority of BMA at all, BMA should leave this issue to MOTC and then BMA should act as shareholders to send their opinion about the route readjustment.

Many people complain about the shoddy service of Saensab canal boats which seem to be out of touch with the people. As long it is still in BMA hands there will be no change.

Green light for seven mass transit lines – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, February 24, 2004

The Traffic Committee just approved seven lines of mass transit with a total budget of 446.677 billion baht.

100 billion baht from government coffers while the other 346.677 billion baht comes from mutual funds.

Premier Thaksin would like to see the stations every 500 meters. Premier Thaksin also pushed Suriya very hard to conclude the deal with BTSC and BMCL to buy the stock of both companies.

Before the meeting with the Traffic Policy Office, Premier Thaksin drove the subway from Hua Lamphong to the Thai Cultural center by himself. He told the press that: "I haven't driven all by myself – but the computer system in the subway helped a lot. If I could drive the subway by myself, I would become a subway driver. When I was sitting down, there is a slight slip during the cruise along the curve. This was due to too little land expropriation which caused a very small radius for the curve. This subway was going very fast since it just went nonstop (not stopping at stations). When the subway service is opened, I would like to be a passenger instead..."

Premier Thaksin also asked to suspend the S2 section of the 3rd stage Expressway Project (7.8 km – 21.525 billion baht) and ask the Expressway Authority to come up with either an expressway or skytrain along Sri Nakharin Road since the S2 section requires 14.889 billion baht for land expropriation

On the other hand, Ram Indra-Eastern Kanchanaphisek Outer ring Road Expressway (13.709 billion baht) and 70 million baht budget for the study on Sri Rat-Dao Khgangong Expressway have been approved.

For the double tracking plan, Chachongsao-Sri Racha-Laem Chabang Port section with total distance of 78 km and budget of 5.235 billion baht has been approved to accommodate the increasing container traffic.

However, the 2nd phase ICD at Lad Krabang with the budget of 6 billion baht has been frozen.

The controversial [Lam Phakbai Elevated Way](#) also has been approved with total distance of 92 km and 56.816 billion baht. The land section (the first 8 km and the last 37 km) will be 'detailed design' while the 47 km section across the sea will require 'definitive design.'

For complete info on the various Bangkok mass transit plans, see the index along the left-hand side of this page.

**Traffic Policy Office reveals 900 billion baht package** – translated and summarized from *Prachachart Thurakij*, February 12-14, 2004

After the meeting with Traffic Policy Office hosted by *Prachachart Thurakij* at Merchant Court on Ratchadaphisek Road on February 9, Traffic Policy Office reveal the 900 billion baht package to be done in 6 years which consists of

1) Nationwide double tracking of SRT – 400 billion baht

2) Expressways – 100 billion baht

3) Mass Transit Systems – 400 billion baht

The **Mass Transit System** would consist of

1. **BTSC Green networks** (the Skytrain) which consists of

1.1) Onnut – Samrong – 8.9 km with a price tag of 14.131 billion baht – still in bidding process

1.2) Samrong – Samutprakarn – 7.9 km with a price tag of 12.405 billion baht – still under study – bidding would start in 2006

1.3) Rama I – Pinklao – Charansanitwongse – 6.8 km, 19.771 billion baht – bidding will be started in 2006

1.4) Mochit – Saphan Mai – 12 km, 18.515 billion baht – bidding will be held in 2005

1.5) Saphan Taksin – Taksin Road – 2.2 km, 3.476 billion baht – starting construction in mid 2004

1.6) Taksin Road – Phetkasem – 4.5 km, 6.086 billion baht – starting construction early 2005

2. **MRTA Charansanitgonse Ring** (27 km) – under design study for Bangsue – Thaphra section – to be done in 14 months – to be started in April 2005. This ring consists of

2.1) Hua Lamphong – Tha Phra – 6.5 km, 17.665 billion baht (the section through Rattanakosin Island)

2.2) Bagsue – Bang Pho – Tha Phra – 13.1 km, 18.295 billion baht

2.3) Tha Phra – Bang Khae, 7.6 km, 10.236 billion baht

3. **MRTA Purple Line** (Bang Yai – Ratboorana) 40 km – to be constructed in 2005

3.1) Bangsue – Phra Nanaklao – 11.6 km, 14.562 billion baht

3.2) Phra Nanaklao – Bang Yai – 8.1 km, 11.237 billion baht

3.3) Bangsue – Sam Sen – 4.9 km, 13.041 billion baht

3.4) Samsen – Ratboorana – 14.8 km, 36.055 billion baht

4. **MRTA Orange Line** – Bang Kapi-Bang Bumru to be constructed in 2005

4.1) Bang Kapi – Samsen – 20 km, 53.213 billion baht

4.2) Samsen – Bang Bumru – 4 km, 9.301 billion baht

5. **SRT Red line commuter networks** (Rangsit – Mahachai, Talingchan – NBIA) will consist of

5.1) Bangsue – Rangsit – 22.7 km, 22.063 billion baht – construction to start in 2005

5.2) Bagsue – Hua Lamphong – 7.5 km, 9.054 billion baht – construction to start in 2005

5.3) Hua Lamphong – Taksin center – 6.5 km, 8.479 billion baht – starting in 2006

5.4) Taksin Center – Mahachai – 28.2 km, 20.124 billion baht – starting in 2006

5.5) Phyathai – NBIA – 28.5 km, 27.874 billion baht – constructed in 2005

5.6) Bangsue – Phyathai – 6 km, 6.529 billion baht – constructed in 2005

5.7) Bagsue – Talingchan – 15 km, 11.899 billion baht – constructed in 2005

6. **Yellow line** from Bang kapi to Samrong via Sri Nakhari, connecting both BTSC Skytrain and Red Line Airport Link – 35 km, 22 billion baht – to be constructed in 2007

The investment plan and the public investment on structure be separated. No more concessions, but the government will hire the private sector to run the system to enable the government to control ticket prices – with revenue sharing in the same way as these projects are conducted overseas. Even though the population within Bangkok is still 6.5 million people (the other 1 million are in Nonthaburi and 1.5 million are in Samut Prakarn), the actual number should be about 11 million or more.

Within the Ratchadaphisek Ring Road there will be stations in every 1 km. The ticket price will start from 10 baht and rise 1.8-2 baht/km up to 30 baht. Travel through Ratchaphisek will take 35 minutes. The government will allow buses only in areas not covered by the mass transit systems. Only feeder buses can go in Ratchadaphisek Ring area. This is to boost the usage of mass transit from 3% to 70% for the section within Ratchadaphisek. The fare for the feeders will be 5 baht. Euro 2 type buses will be the main feeders for the areas outside the line.

**Expressways** must have gates every 2.5 km. There will be a new expressway from Talingchan to Bangsue and then connecting with Lad Phrao elevated way to connect to Kanchanapisek Outer Ring Road at Panasonic Intersection.

Eleven centers around Bangkok must become a reality with **feeder bus connections**:

1 Bang Pa In (Industrial estate and travel to Royal Palace in Bang Pa In)

2 Bang Sai (Royal Project at Bang Sai and industrial estate)

3 Lad Lumkaeo (Shinnawatra University, rice fields)

4 Bang Bauthong (suburb villages)

5 Talingchan (suburb villages along with vegetable and fruit orchards)

6 Bang Khun Tian (suburb villages, fisheries, industrial estates, travelling through mangrove areas)

7 Lad Krabang (Engineering, aviation businesses, industrial estate and suburb villages)

8 Bang Plee (fisheries, industrial estate, suburb villages)

9 Minburi (fisheries, rice fields, cattle, suburb villages)

10 Lum Lookka (rice fields and suburb villages)

11 Thunyaburi (suburb villages, Rangsit community, Rangsit University, and Thammasart University)



For **nationwide double tracking**, the additional package will include:

- 1) Makkasan Station must be rebuilt to accommodate passengers to NBIA and Chachoengsao
- 2) Bangsue Station must be rebuilt to accommodate more passengers
- 3) Taksin (Talat Plooi Station) must be rebuilt to accommodate passengers from Talingchan and Rangsit
- 4) The new dedicated lines must be standard gauge to allow travel from Nakhon Pathom to Bangkok in 40 minutes (at 160 km/hr) and keep the meter gauge line for cargo which is another money maker service for SRT.

[Mass Transit News main page](#)

# MPs present themselves to Thaksin as a gift

July 26, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Bangkok Governor registration starts today/MPs present themselves to Thaksin as a gift](#) – Bangkok Post, July 26, 2004

*Two interesting political events are scheduled to take place today, and they will be covered extensively by the local media.*

*The first is the registration of candidates for the Aug 29 Bangkok governor's election. Registration is open till Friday. In the other, unorthodox, event, a group of 21 MPs who defected en masse on Friday from the Chart Thai party to the ruling Thai Rak Thai party are to present themselves as a special birthday "gift" to Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who turns 55...*

*At least 10 people have announced their formal intention to contest the governor's election. Among them are Pavena Hongsakula, Apirak Kosayothin, Chuwit Kamolvisit, Chalerm Yubamrung, Mana Mahasuveerachai, Thawatchai Sajjakul, Karoon Chandrangsu, Peerapong Thanompongphan and Wuthipong Priabjareeyawat. Those yet to announce their candidacies include former governor Bhichit Rattakul, who reportedly has the backing of Thai Rak Thai, and Kobsak Chutikul, a Chart Thai party list MP...*

*For the time being, and in the foreseeable future, it seems all roads lead to Thai Rak Thai. It looks to be only a matter of time before Mr Thaksin realises his ambition, which is a single party government with complete control over the parliament.*

# China covets Burmese forests

July 27, 2004

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[China covets Burmese forests](#) – *The Irrawaddy*, July 27, 2004

*Forests in a critical watershed for the Salween and Irrawaddy rivers, along the China-Burma border, are in danger of disappearing because of corrupt deals brokered between wealthy Chinese businessmen, Burma's ruling military junta and cash-strapped armed Burmese insurgent groups...*

# Samak legacy: an ideal boss or TV chef? Leaves office with unfinished business

July 27, 2004

Categories: Thai Politics

[Samak legacy: an ideal boss or TV chef? Leaves office with unfinished business](#) – Bangkok Post, July 27, 2004

*... His absence during difficult times—such as floods, fires and other crises—disillusioned many people, including his supporters.*

*Mr Samak's old-fashioned style of management set him against civic groups and activists who advocate public participation, from the very start.*

*But he was praised by many city officials as an ideal boss who treated them with respect.*

*As governor he received full cooperation from city officials when he launched city hall's one-stop service at all district offices. The service was billed as his major achievement...*

*These incomplete initiatives include a plan to extend the mass transit network to cover Samut Prakan, Thon Buri and Don Muang, a planned underground parking lot at Sanam Luang and a housing project for low-income people in Klong Toey.*

*His plan to tear down old buildings in Tha Tian area to open visual space hit a snag when it failed to get the approval of the landlord, the Crown Property Bureau.*

*His corn-cob apartment scheme, aimed at middle-income people, is pretty much a flop with only one project implemented, in Ramkhamhaeng area...*

*The real power is in the hands of the central government, the lecturer said. "To be fair, I guess other governors may not be able to do any better than Mr Samak under the present circumstances," she said...*

# Which new President: Does it matter?

July 28, 2004

Categories: Thai Politics

[Which new President: Does it matter?](#) – *Jakarta Post*, July 28, 2004

*... In this matter, the experience of Thailand's prime minister, Thaksin, is instructive. Replacing prime ministers who closely followed IMF reform prescriptions, Thaksin has not only instituted a more nationalist economic policy but has directly confronted the power of regional political and business interests in the parliament.*

*He built a national political party to bypass regional power brokers and put in place a new social contract at the grass roots level that linked centralized, national power with the sources of votes through grants to villages, new health policies and other populist policies. Money politics was re-centralized...*

*But there are important differences with the Thai case. Most important, Thaksin's agenda is directly to establish the political ascendance of national business through the Thai Rat Thai party. It is backed by a powerful and wealthy set of interests.*

*By contrast, neither Golkar nor PDI in Indonesia constitute a cohesive set of interests. Nor do they represent the center against the regions. Rather, they represent long strands of political alliance that extend down into the regions and provinces and include complex business and political elites. Business today in Indonesia may fund politics but is entirely incapable of organizing a party in their interests to capture power...*



# **Paradise postponed as terror stalks a peace-loving nation**

July 29, 2004

Categories: The Thai Deep South

[Paradise postponed as terror stalks a peace-loving nation](#) – *The Australian*, July 29, 2004

An Australian view of what is going on in the South...

# More on Thirayuth's criticism of the government

July 29, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

More on Thirayuth's criticism of the government – July 29, 2004

[THAI TALK: When Thirayuth \(frog\) does a Thaksin \(frogleap\)](#) – *The Nation*, July 29, 2004

*...Convince us, sir, that you aren't a "Monstrous Baby" that kills its own father. Tell us how you won't do away with the checks and balances incorporated in the 1997 "reform" Constitution. Prove, sir, that the TRT-style of electoral democracy isn't just aimed at institutionalising an authoritarian political culture...*

[THIRAYUTH REPORT: Have a look who's being rude now](#) – *The Nation*, July 29, 2004

*The "monster" has reacted, and, surprisingly, very nicely. "Take it easy. Take it easy," Thaksin Shinawatra said as he beamed in front of reporters who had braced for another noholdsbarred tirade from the "ultrasensitive" prime minister.*

*"Nobody in this world is perfect. Nobody is flawless. And nobody is so perfectly bad that there's no goodness left in him," he added.*

*... "He's cute. The other 'regulars' come out many times a year, but he does it only once a year," said the man Thirayuth described as Thai democracy's worst nightmare. The prime minister calls his leading critics his "regular clients"...*

*"The only little complaint I have is he's a bit mean to me as he doesn't see any good in my government. It's easy to talk like that, but let's wait until the people speak out. Let the election results do the talking."*

*...A Thaksin outburst had been widely expected. Last year, when Thirayuth issued his traditional annual "report", the prime minister blew his top...*

[Thaksin calm as critic rages – PM lauds Thirayuth for rarely lashing out](#) – *Bangkok Post*, July 29, 2004

*... Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra controlled his anger and responded gently to scathing criticisms of his Thai Rak Thai party by academic Thirayuth Boonmi.*

*Instead of heatedly lashing out as he usually does when criticised, Mr Thaksin, who earlier this week said he has "learned to let go", said the public will be the one to judge him...*

**Earlier:** Bashing TRT – July 28, 2004

Whether his prediction of a slide of TRT is premature or not, a new report by Thirayuth has certainly caught the imagination of the Thai press (both in English and Thai). The *Post* reports about the report while *The Nation* runs a translation of the report.

[THIRAYUTH STRIKES AGAIN: 'Monster' jibe rocks PM & 'Save democracy, vote against Thai Rak Thai'](#) – *The Nation*, July 28, 2004

Thais love coining new words and word play in general. *The Nation* also has a glossary of the words coined by Thirayuth in his report: *Monstrous baby*, *GMO politics*, *Thaksinocrony*, *Synergy*, *synmoney*, *synsavoury*, *Benja* (five) *corruption*, *SML & T*, *Popu-marketing*.

# Thailand in the 9/11 Commission Report

July 30, 2004

Categories: Terrorism

Thailand figures prominently in the recently released 9/11 Commission Report—principally as a meeting point for the terrorists because of lax visa rules and the ability of watched persons to "disappear into the streets of Bangkok." Thai officials have already responded to the report noting that the days of cursory or nonexistent visa rules are long over. Below are all the passages with references to Thailand:

**p. 58** – Bin Ladin now had a vision of himself as head of an international jihad confederation. In Sudan, he established an "Islamic Army Shura" that was to serve as the coordinating body for the consortium of terrorist groups with which he was forging alliances. It was composed of his own al Qaeda Shura together with leaders or representatives of terrorist organizations that were still independent. In building this Islamic army, he enlisted groups from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Oman, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, Somalia, and Eritrea. Al Qaeda also established cooperative but less formal relationships with other extremist groups from these same countries; from the African states of Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Uganda; and from the Southeast Asian states of Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Bin Ladin maintained connections in the Bosnian conflict as well. The groundwork for a true global terrorist network was being laid.

**p. 150** – At this point, late 1998 to early 1999, planning for the 9/11 operation began in earnest. Yet while the 9/11 project occupied the bulk of KSM's attention, he continued to consider other possibilities for terrorist attacks. For example, he sent al Qaeda operative Issa al Britani to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to learn about the jihad in Southeast Asia from Hambali.

Thereafter, KSM claims, at Bin Ladin's direction in early 2001, he sent Britani to the United States to case potential economic and "Jewish" targets in New York City. Furthermore, during the summer of 2001, KSM approached Bin Ladin with the idea of recruiting a Saudi Arabian air force pilot to commandeer a Saudi fighter jet and attack the Israeli city of Eilat. Bin Ladin reportedly liked this proposal, but he instructed KSM to concentrate on the 9/11 operation first. Similarly, KSM's proposals to Atef around this same time for attacks in Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, and the Maldives were never executed, although Hambali's Jemaah Islamiyah operatives did some casing of possible targets.

**p. 156** – This part of the operation has been confirmed by Khallad, who said that they contemplated hijacking several planes, probably originating in Thailand, South Korea, Hong Kong, or Malaysia, and using Yemenis who would not need pilot training because they would simply down the planes. All the planes hijacked in the United States and East Asia were to be crashed or exploded at about the same time to maximize the attack's psychological impact.

**p. 158** – On December 31, Khallad flew from Kuala Lumpur to Bangkok; the next day, he flew to Hong Kong aboard a U.S. airliner. He flew in first class, which he realized was a mistake because this seating assignment on that flight did not afford him a view of the cockpit. He claims to have done what he could to case the flight, testing security by carrying a box cutter in his toiletries kit onto the flight to Hong Kong. Khallad returned to Bangkok the following day. At the airport, the security officials searched his carry-on bag and even opened the toiletries kit, but just glanced at the contents and let him pass. On this flight, Khallad waited until most of the first-class passengers were dozing, then got up and removed the kit from his carry-on. None of the flight attendants took notice.

**p. 159** – While in Kuala Lumpur, Khallad wanted to go to Singapore to meet Nibras and Fahd al Quso, two of the operatives in Nashiri's ship-bombing operation. An attempt to execute that plan by attacking the USS The Sullivans had failed just a few days earlier. Nibras and Quso were bringing Khallad money from Yemen, but were stopped in Bangkok because they lacked visas to continue on to Singapore. Also unable to enter Singapore, Khallad moved the meeting to Bangkok. Hazmi and Mihdhar decided to go there as well, reportedly because they thought it would enhance their cover as tourists to have passport stamps from a popular tourist destination such as Thailand. With Hambali's help, the three obtained tickets for a flight to

Bangkok and left Kuala Lumpur together. Abu Bara did not have a visa permitting him to return to Pakistan, so he traveled to Yemen instead.

**p. 181** – On January 8, the surveillance teams reported that three of the Arabs had suddenly left Kuala Lumpur on a short flight to Bangkok. They identified one as Mihdhar. They later learned that one of his companions was named Alhazmi, although it was not yet known that he was “Nawaf.” The only identifier available for the third person was part of a name—Salahsae. In Bangkok, CIA officers received the information too late to track the three men as they came in, and the travelers disappeared into the streets of Bangkok. The Counterterrorist Center (CTC) had briefed the CIA leadership on the gathering in Kuala Lumpur, and the information had been passed on to Berger and the NSC staff and to Director Freeh and others at the FBI (though the FBI noted that the CIA had the lead and would let the FBI know if a domestic angle arose). The head of the Bin Ladin unit kept providing updates, unaware at first even that the Arabs had left Kuala Lumpur, let alone that their trail had been lost in Bangkok. When this bad news arrived, the names were put on a Thai watchlist so that Thai authorities could inform the United States if any of them departed from Thailand.

Several weeks later, CIA officers in Kuala Lumpur prodded colleagues in Bangkok for additional information regarding the three travelers. In early March 2000, Bangkok reported that Nawaf al Hazmi, now identified for the first time with his full name, had departed on January 15 on a United Airlines flight to Los Angeles. As for Khalid al Mihdhar, there was no report of his departure even though he had accompanied Hazmi on the United flight to Los Angeles. No one outside of the Counterterrorist Center was told any of this. The CIA did not try to register Mihdhar or Hazmi with the State Department’s TIPOFF watchlist—either in January, when word arrived of Mihdhar’s visa, or in March, when word came that Hazmi, too, had had a U.S. visa and a ticket to Los Angeles.

**p. 190** – THE ATTACK ON THE USS COLE... The plot, we now know, was a full-fledged al Qaeda operation, supervised directly by Bin Ladin. He chose the target and location of the attack, selected the suicide operatives, and provided the money needed to purchase explosives and equipment. Nashiri was the field commander and managed the operation in Yemen. Khallad helped in Yemen until he was arrested in a case of mistaken identity and freed with Bin Ladin’s help, as we also mentioned earlier. Local al Qaeda coordinators included Jamal al Badawi and Fahd al Quso, who was supposed to film the attack from a nearby apartment. The two suicide operatives chosen were Hassan al Khamri and Ibrahim al Thawar, also known as Nibras. Nibras and Quso delivered money to Khallad in Bangkok during Khallad’s January 2000 trip to Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok.

**p. 215** – In chapter 5 we described the Southeast Asia travels of Nawaf al Hazmi, Khalid al Mihdhar, and others in January 2000 on the first part of the “planes operation.” In that chapter we also described how Mihdhar was spotted in Kuala Lumpur early in January 2000, along with associates who were not identified, and then was lost to sight when the group passed through Bangkok.

**p. 244** – Binalshibh contacted Atta upon arriving in Malaysia and found a change in plan. Atta could not travel because he was too busy helping the new arrivals settle in the United States. After remaining in Malaysia for approximately three weeks, Binalshibh went to Bangkok for a few days before returning to Germany. He and Atta agreed to meet later at a location to be determined.

**p. 245** – Before Binalshibh left Spain, he gave Atta eight necklaces and eight bracelets that Atta had asked him to buy when he was recently in Bangkok, believing that if the hijackers were clean shaven and well dressed, others would think them wealthy Saudis and give them less notice.

**p. 266** – Almost one year after the original trail had been lost in Bangkok, the FBI and the CIA were working on the investigation of the Cole bombing. They learned of the link between a captured conspirator and a person called “Khallad.” They also learned that Khallad was a senior security official for Bin Ladin who had helped direct the bombing (we introduced Khallad in chapter 5, and returned to his role in the Cole bombing in chapter 6).

**p. 268** – “John’s” review of the Kuala Lumpur meeting did set off some more sharing of information, getting the attention of an FBI analyst whom we will call “Jane.” “Jane” was assigned to the FBI’s Cole

investigation. She knew that another terrorist involved in that operation, Fahd al Quso, had traveled to Bangkok in January 2000 to give money to Khallad.

**p. 353** – When the travelers left Kuala Lumpur for Bangkok, local officials were able to identify one of the travelers as Khalid al Mihdhar. After the flight left, they learned that one of his companions had the name Alhazmi. But the officials did not know what that name meant.

The information arrived at Bangkok too late to track these travelers as they came in. Had the authorities there already been keeping an eye out for Khalid al Mihdhar as part of a general regional or worldwide alert, they might have tracked him coming in. Had they been alerted to look for a possible companion named Nawaf al Hazmi, they might have noticed him too. Instead, they were notified only after Kuala Lumpur sounded the alarm. By that time, the travelers had already disappeared into the streets of Bangkok.

On January 12, the head of the CIA's al Qaeda unit told his bosses that surveillance in Kuala Lumpur was continuing. He may not have known that in fact Mihdhar and his companions had dispersed and the tracking was falling apart. U.S. officials in Bangkok regretfully reported the bad news on January 13. The names they had were put on a watchlist in Bangkok, so that Thai authorities might notice if the men left the country. On January 14, the head of the CIA's al Qaeda unit again updated his bosses, telling them that officials were continuing to track the suspicious individuals who had now dispersed to various countries.

Unfortunately, there is no evidence of any tracking efforts actually being undertaken by anyone after the Arabs disappeared into Bangkok. No other effort was made to create other opportunities to spot these Arab travelers in case the screen in Bangkok failed. Just from the evidence in Mihdhar's passport, one of the logical possible destinations and interdiction points would have been the United States. Yet no one alerted the INS or the FBI to look for these individuals. They arrived, unnoticed, in Los Angeles on January 15.

In early March 2000, Bangkok reported that Nawaf al Hazmi, now identified for the first time with his full name, had departed on January 15 on a United Airlines flight to Los Angeles. Since the CIA did not appreciate the significance of that name or notice the cable, we have found no evidence that this information was sent to the FBI.

**p. 355** – Operational Opportunities... 2. January 2000: the CIA does not develop a transnational plan for tracking Mihdhar and his associates so that they could be followed to Bangkok and onward, including the United States.

**p.356** – The director of the Counterterrorist Center at the time, Cofer Black, recalled to us that this operation was one among many and that, at the time, it was "considered interesting, but not heavy water yet." He recalled the failure to get the word to Bangkok fast enough, but has no evident recollection of why the case then dissolved, unnoticed.

The next level down, the director of the al Qaeda unit in CIA at the time recalled that he did not think it was his job to direct what should or should not be done. He did not pay attention when the individuals dispersed and things fell apart. There was no conscious decision to stop the operation after the trail was temporarily lost in Bangkok. He acknowledged, however, that perhaps there had been a letdown for his overworked staff after the extreme tension and long hours in the period of the millennium alert.

**p. 366** – In talking with American and foreign government officials and military officers on the front lines fighting terrorists today, we asked them: If you were a terrorist leader today, where would you locate your base? Some of the same places come up again and again on their lists:

- western Pakistan and the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region
- southern or western Afghanistan
- the Arabian Peninsula, especially Saudi Arabia and Yemen, and the nearby Horn of Africa, including Somalia and extending southwest into Kenya
- Southeast Asia, from Thailand to the southern Philippines to Indonesia
- West Africa, including Nigeria and Mali
- European cities with expatriate Muslim communities, especially cities in central and eastern Europe where security forces and border controls are less effective

**p. 404** – Consider this hypothetical case. The NSA discovers that a suspected terrorist is traveling to Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur. The NCTC should draw on joint intelligence resources, including its own NSA counterterrorism experts, to analyze the identities and possible destinations of these individuals. Informed by this analysis, the NCTC would then organize and plan the management of the case, drawing on the talents and differing kinds of experience among the several agency representatives assigned to it—assigning tasks to



the CIA overseas, to Homeland Security watching entry points into the United States, and to the FBI. If military assistance might be needed, the Special Operations Command could be asked to develop an appropriate concept for such an operation. The NCTC would be accountable for tracking the progress of the case, ensuring that the plan evolved with it, and integrating the information into a warning. The NCTC would be responsible for being sure that intelligence gathered from the activities in the field became part of the government's institutional memory about Islamist terrorist personalities, organizations, and possible means of attack.

In each case the involved agency would make its own senior managers aware of what it was being asked to do. If those agency heads objected, and the issue could not easily be resolved, then the disagreement about roles and missions could be brought before the National Security Council and the president.

**p. 493** – According to Khallad, Thailand, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Malaysia were likely origins of the flights because Yemenis did not need visas to enter them.

# **Bad traffic today**

July 30, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Bad traffic today – July 30, 2004

Expect heavy traffic today as this is a ‘triple witching hour’ day for traffic: a Friday, the last working day of the month (thus a payday), and the last day before a long weekend (Monday is a holiday).

# Thailand far from overheating, says California consulting firm

August 1, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thailand far from overheating, says Calif. consulting firm](#) – PR Web, August 1, 2004

*Thailand faces little risk of economic overheating, according to a California-based independent investment research firm. Contrary to consensus opinion, rapidly growing credit card debt and strong expansion of private sector investment do not threaten economic stability, says Jeph Gundzik, president of [Condor Advisers](#), an eight-year-old investment consulting company based in Mammoth Lakes, Calif.*

*... According to Gundzik, who predicted Thailand's economic collapse in 1997, rapid economic growth should continue in Thailand at least through 2006. "Credit card debt represents less than two percent of total bank credit outstanding and private sector investment has only just begun to recover," Gundzik says.*

*... Gundzik stresses that rapid credit and investment growth did not trigger Thailand's economic crisis in 1997. The blame for the for the crisis lies with international banks, which ignored deteriorating economic fundamentals in Thailand and continued to expand their lending to the country's commercial banks...*

# Orangutan boxing banned at animal park – Seizure order for Safari World's apes

August 4, 2004

Categories: Wildlife and Nature

[Orangutan boxing banned at animal park – Seizure order for Safari World's apes](#) – Bangkok Post, August 4, 2004

*...The unusually high number of 110 orangutans at the park have raised suspicions many may have been smuggled from Malaysia or Indonesia, the last two places where these endangered animals still live in the wild. The zoo was accused of smuggling early this year and last week Taiwanese wildlife experts called for a boycott by Taiwanese tourists...*

**Earlier:** [Boycott demanded as orangutans put in the ring for boxing bouts](#) – AFP, July 29, 2004

*...The operators of the Safari World animal park say the fights — which start with the Rocky movie theme and include chimpanzees wearing bikinis carrying cards with the bout number — are choreographed and that no animal is harmed.*

*But animal rights groups said the apes were being exploited for easy profits and they were destined for a short and miserable existence after their days in the ring were over.*

*...The demands are growing for an end to the animal brawling, with Taiwanese animal activists also calling on tourists to boycott the safari park...*

# Commemorative Thai bank notes available

August 6, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Commemorative](#)

[Thai bank notes available](#) – TNA, August

6, 2004

*The new commemorative “vertical” bank notes, issued in honour of the forthcoming 6th cycle birthday of Her Majesty the Queen, are now on sale everywhere, according to the Bank of Thailand (BOT)...*

*There has been high public demand for the “vertical” bill because it is the first of its kind in Thailand.*



# Rail pier: Maeklong

August 7, 2004

Categories: Thai Railroads



Rail pier: Maeklong –

August 7, 2004

[Maeklong railway news](#)

[Main Thai Railways/SRT page](#)

Robert of RMB Rail Asia: *For the continuing story about the Maeklong lines here is a small feature about the infrastructure—the rail pier at Ban Laem.*

*As you can see at the first picture (left) the construction is still there and ready for use although I never saw any rolling stock on it. The date: March 29, 1986.*

*Two years later (below), April 1, 1988, and for sure, no joke, decay takes its toll.*

(Photo: Robert/RMB Rail Asia)



(Photo: Robert/RMB Rail Asia)

*Twelve years later, March 13, 2000, a ship passes by (right) as the remains of the pier are only visible during low tide.*



(Photo: Robert/RMB Rail Asia)

[Macklong railway](#)  
[news](#)

[Main Thai Railways/SRT page](#)

# Songkhla Rail Wharf

August 9, 2004

Categories: Thai Railroads

Songkhla rail wharf –

August 9, 2004

Also: [Rail pier: Maeklong](#)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Spur of the Songkhla rail line passes through the old market area.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Rails heading out to a pier on Thale Sap Songkhla.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Below right: Looking back from the pier into town.  
The site is presently occupied by Thai Tank Installation Co. Ltd.  
(Songkhla)

[Back to the main  
Thai Railways/SRT page](#)



# Bangkok Governor Candidates 2004

August 10, 2004

Categories: Elections



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

**Above:** Candidate posters at the Pracha Songkhro intersection.

The 2004 Bangkok Governor candidates

Also: [Articles on the 2004 Bangkok Governor campaign](#)

Also: [Bangkok Governor polls](#)

Also: [Thai Photoshoppers parody the campaign posters](#)

Those of you not in Bangkok may be interested to see some of the political posters for the Bangkok Governor race in the Suthisarn area. These are mostly the approximately 2 x 1 meter posters designed to be wired around cement power poles. They are often criticized for blocking the view of cars pulling out of sois.

We think this is the only list we have seen in English of every candidate.

A prevalent theme is development—with candidates standing in front of construction or highways and wearing hard-hats.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Left: **Apirak Kosayothin** (#1 – [website](#)) – As a ‘respected businessman’ and the Democrat party candidate, Apirak is very much the traditional candidate—the sedate, young, well-educated, serious businessman who thus should be competent. His success or failure will likely influence if this kind of candidate still has a place in the increasingly aggressive Thai political climate.

Right: **Waranchai Chokchana** (#2)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Right: **Chalerm Yubamrung** (#3 – [website](#)) – Veteran political well-known for his unThai-like accusations and speaking style in Parliament and the rambunctious





(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

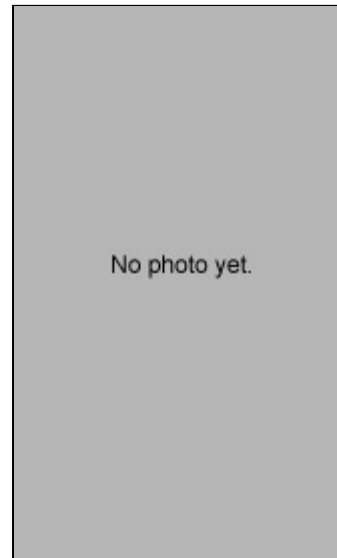
antics of his sons. Much has been made of how he has softened his image in his campaign posters.

Left: A Chalerm poster put up before the numbers for candidates were assigned (notice the empty box for the number).



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Right: **Kittisak Thiravisit** (#4)



Left: Mana Mahasuverachai makes the most of his endorsement by [Chumlong Srimuang](#), a former MP and Bangkok Governor widely considered to be a man of honesty and integrity.

Right: **Mana Mahasuverachai** (#5 – [website](#))



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

August 10, 2004: We wrote all the Bangkok Governor candidates to point out this page and Dr. Mana responded: *First of all, thank you very much for being interested in my web site. It is my honor to have a space on your page. If you have any further questions, regarding to my policies or others, please do not hesitate to ask. I would try to answer the best I can, as time allows.*

Regards,

Mana Mahasuverachai



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



Left: **Lena Jangjanja** (#6 – [website](#) – an interesting site with photos of Lena in her swimsuit, with the Miss Elephant contestants, in a garbage dump, and at the dog pound)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above & right: **Paveena Hongsakul** (#7 – [website](#)) – Women and children’s rights advocate and the ruling Thai Rak Thai party’s candidate (as of August 16 she is denying this). *The Nation* beat us in pointing out how Paveena in heavy makeup (above) looks very much like candidate Leena (#6)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



Left: **Peerapong Thanompongphan** (#8 – [website](#)) – Former deputy transport minister

(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



Right: Metta Temchamnan (#9)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Left: Wirasak Uppatham (#10)



Right: Karoon Chandrangsru (#11 – [website](#))

(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Left: Wuthipong Priabjareeyawat (#12 – [website](#)) – Wuthipong is an academic and usually only mentioned in the press as saying the press is not covering his candidacy enough. One of the rarer poster to find with only 20-30,000 to be posted according to *The Nation*.

Right: Udom Thepachat (#13)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Left: Kobsak Chutikul on a billboard (#14 – [website](#)) – Should be the hardest poster to find



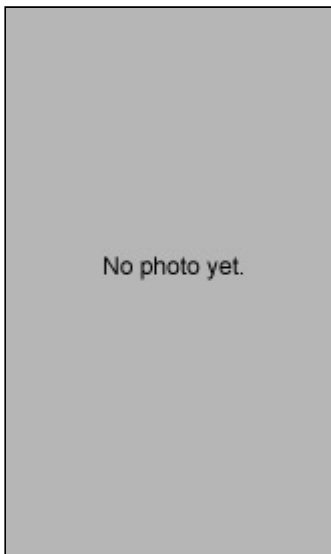
(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

with only 2000-3000 to be printed. Kobsak is trying to capitalize on the 'gay-vote' by promising to make Bangkok a gay-friendly city.

Right: **Chuwit Kamolvisit** (#15 – [website](#) – great flash animation and downloads of his funny campaign ads). Chuwit, formerly know as the "king of commercial sex" for his ownership of many prominent massage parlors, has gained a surprising following among cynical voters no longer impressed by the usual businessmen and government bureaucrats offered by the traditional parties. Past 2Bangkok.com info on Chuwit: [Chuwit's campaign HQ](#), Chuwit [riding the Skytrain](#), [massage parlor scandal](#) & [background on Chuwit](#)

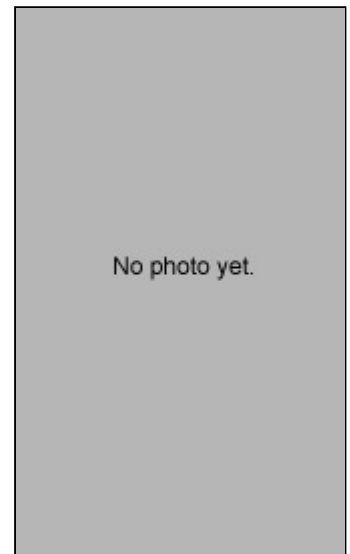


(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



Left: **Sumet Tanthanasirikul** (#16)

Right: **Withaya Jungkobwattana** (#17)



Left: **Somsak Kongmak** (#18)

Right: **Bhichit Rattakul** (#19 – [website](#)) His first group of posters did not feature his photo. Bhichit was Bangkok

No photo yet.

Governor from 1996-2000 and remembered for his crackdown on polluting vehicles.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

No photo yet.

Left: **Thawatchai Sajjakul** (#20) – Former Bangkok MP who quit the race almost immediately and will now be part of Pavena’s (#6) team of advisors if she is elected.

Right: **Nitipoom Naowarat** (#21 – [website](#)) – A *Thai Rath* newspaper columnist



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

No photo yet.

Left: **Vara Buntunat** (#22) ([website](#))

Also: [Articles on the 2004 Bangkok Governor campaign](#)

Also: [Bangkok Governor polls](#)

Also: [Thai Photoshoppers parody the campaign posters](#)



# Walking the Songkhla Rail Line

August 10, 2004

Categories: Thai Railroads

**Also:** [The Songkhla to Hat Rai Rail line](#) (from the edge of town to Hat Yai)

**Also:** [The Songkhla Station](#)

**More links:** Phil Abbey has a webpage about riding trains in the south in the early 1970's which includes the [Songkhla Bullet](#) to Songkhla, the [Smuggler's Express](#) to the border, and going from [Nakorn Sri Thammarat to Hat Yai](#)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

After crossing Saiburi Road (407), the rails crisscross a small local road.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Railroad ties stick out from the old tracks.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

The tracks pass through the grounds of the  
GW Hotel.





(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

As along many SRT lines, slums are clustered around the tracks.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

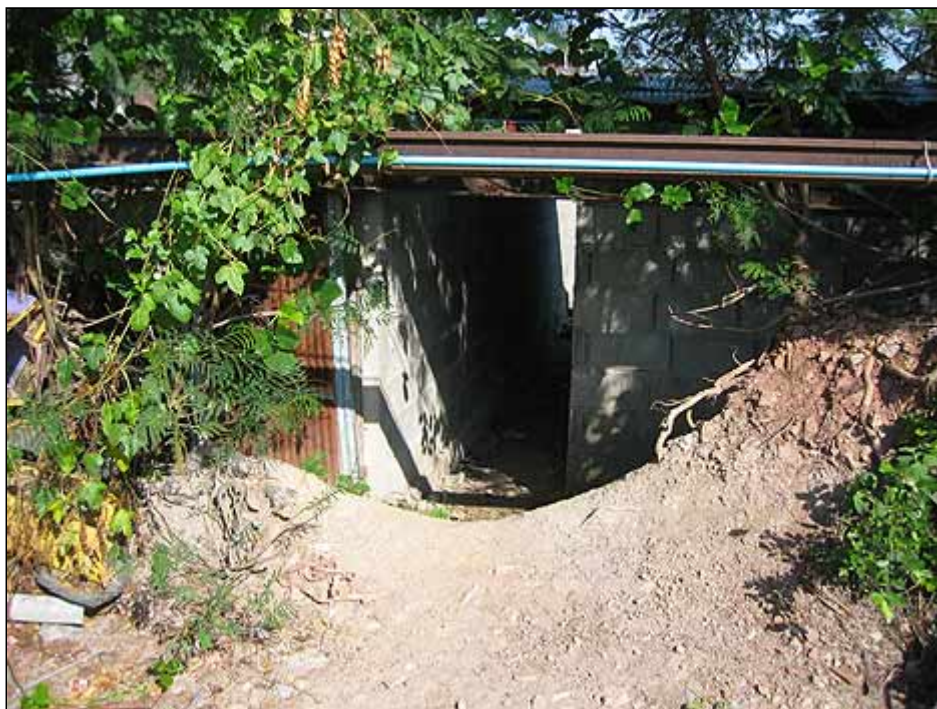
A road has been cut into the earth alongside the tracks.





(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Buildings constructed up to the edge of the tracks.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Here, residents have burrowed under the still intact tracks to provide access to an alleyway.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

"Close the door after you open it." – The gate leading to the trestle.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Trestle over a klong choked with water hyacinth.





(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Rails leading up to the trestle.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

On the other side of the trestle,  
more buildings straddle the tracks. Beyond this the tracks cross Road  
407 again.

[Back to the main  
Thai Railways/SRT page](#)

# Does Microsoft need China?

August 10, 2004

Categories: China

[Does Microsoft need China?](#) – CFO.com, August 10, 2004

In depth article about MS pricing in Asia:

*...Any clampdown would lead to an advantage to Microsoft. "They own the desktop in China, in terms of sheer market saturation," says Wiggins. "The problem is the conversion from non-paying to paying customers." The company is not without solutions. Among the most radical but intriguing would be a one-time amnesty for pirate Windows and Office users, allowing current offenders a one-shot deal at a license...*

# Bangkok's first art-film theater

August 10, 2004

Bangkok's first art-film theater

– August 10, 2004

Don Entz reports on Bangkok's new art-film theater, [House](#):

*It's in the UMG Building of RCA. We took the subway to Rama IX Station (I think Phetchburi Station is just as close), then a taxi the rest of the way.*

*Just tell the driver to go to RCA Tops, as Tops Supermarket is prominently inside the same building. Tickets were 100 baht, but we were there in the afternoon; don't know if it goes up in the evening... We will definitely go back.*

*Of what's showing now, I strongly recommend "The Barbarian Invasions," which won this years Oscar for Best Foreign-Language Film; "The Ladykillers," alas, is as I feared, a vastly substandard remake of the classic Alec Guinness movie. This new version of "The Ladykillers" now easily replaces "The Hudsucker Proxy" as my least favorite Coen Brothers film.*

# Tesco security guards in China execute shoplifters

August 11, 2004

Categories: China

[Tesco](#)

[security guards in China execute shoplifters](#) –

NamNews, August, 2004

*Tesco bosses have launched an urgent inquiry after security guards at its new stores in China executed two suspected shoplifters. One of the alleged thieves was drowned in a canal and the other was beaten to death. The killings were carried out at stores in northern China before Tesco clinched a £140m deal to take over the outlets owned by Hymall. A Tesco source said, "We had just finished celebrating the deal when news filtered through about a body in a canal. "Then we found out another man died at a different store, but we have been assured this is not normal practice." A Tesco spokesman added: "They've had one or two incidents with security staff there." The supermarket giant takes full control of 25 Hymall stores at the end of the month and 10 new stores are due to open next year.*



# Weird Thai insects

August 11, 2004

Weird Thai insects –

August 11, 2004

The Insect Company sells insect specimens from around the world. Their [oddities page](#) is fascinating. Here is a [seven-legged beetle](#) from Thailand. A listing of all the Thai specimens is [here](#).

# 25 major river basins of Thailand

August 11, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[25 major river basins of Thailand](#) –

August 11, 2004

# Bangkok Poetry meet

August 11, 2004

Bangkok Poetry meet

– August 11, 2004

*...The event is 9pm (not 10pm), Friday, September 17.*

*...For our inaugural poetry event we have decided to use the Goethe's atrium, an outdoor courtyard with plants and surprisingly decent acoustics. A map to the Goethe will be posted shortly at [www.bangkokpoetry.com](http://www.bangkokpoetry.com)*

*...Scheduled to perform are Jim Brewer, Tish Valles, Bevan Powrie, Wes Hsu, and special guest Jim Nave, an established performance poet from the US. We're sure that others will read, as everyone has had, like, nine months to write something....*

# Tour de Thailand 2004 Charity Bicycle Ride

August 11, 2004

Tour de Thailand 2004 Charity Bicycle Ride

– August 11, 2004

*This year's [Tour de Thailand](#)*

*[2004 Charity Bicycle Ride](#) will be November 20, 2004 to December 18th, 2004 from Chiang Mai, Thailand to Phuket, Thailand. The event will be to raise money for The Max Foundation who help people suffering from Leukemia and other Blood Related Cancers ([www.themaxfoundation.org](http://www.themaxfoundation.org)). Tour de Thailand is an annual charity bicycle ride the length of Thailand organized by Christopher Byrd and the Tour de Asia Bicycle Touring Company, Ltd.. Last year was the inaugural year in which Christopher Byrd road over 1,400 miles (2,240 KM) solo, with people joining him on a daily basis to support his ride and the charity....*

# Thailand photos

August 13, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Thailand photos

– August 13, 2004

Stephen Cysewski writes: *I just got back from a trip, with my family, to Thailand. Our second trip.*

*Here is the [photo](#)*

*[web site](#) that I have created.*

Each page is about 16MB! However the photos are truly great. The Bangkok page especially gives a real visual sense of street-level Bangkok.



# Low-priced XP for Thai, Indonesian and Malay markets

August 14, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News



(Photo: Microsoft)

Low-priced XP for Thai, Indonesian  
and Malay markets – August  
14, 2004

In this [thread](#)

on the 2B forum, ttaaee points out the pre-press images  
of the low-priced XP for the Thai market (left). There  
are also Malay and Indonesian versions [here](#).

# Remembering Kai Tak Airport

August 14, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Remembering Kai Tak Airport](#) – August 14, 2004

Seasoned travelers will recall the wild approach to Kai Tak Airport in Hong Kong. Winterson.com has an amazing video of a plane trying to land at Kai Tak and a link to a page about the crash of Flight CI642 from Bangkok at Kai Tak.

# Bangkok's canals losing to urban sprawl

August 15, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Bangkok's  
canals losing to urban sprawl](#)

– AP, August 15, 2004

# **‘Sex’ and the city state**

August 16, 2004

Categories: Singapore

[‘Sex’  
and the city state](#) –

*The Nation*, August 16, 2004

*Did you know that the segment of "Sex and the City" being aired tomorrow in Thailand has been censored by the ban-it-all Singaporean government? ...*

*The sanitation process starts with HBO Asia sending the original tape to all countries it services, according to a source at the cable TV operator United Broadcasting Corporation (UBC), the monopoly distributor of HBO Asia in Thailand. Each country red flags the scenes it wants deleted and returns the tape. HBO Asia reviews the tapes and makes a one-tape-fit-all version, says the source, who requested anonymity.*

*...If you were to put this situation in the series, the main character, sex columnist Carrie Bradshaw, would likely muse in her own think-and-type style, "I couldn't help but wonder, shouldn't censorship be left to each country's judgement? Do people in Thailand really want the Singaporean government to say what's proper for them?" ...*

# Thai WindowsXP a joke?

August 16, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thai WindowsXP a joke?](#) – August 16, 2004

On the [forum](#):

*It will also limit users to running three programs concurrently  
– a far cry from the full version of XP, where the only  
practical limit comes from the speed of the computer and  
the size of its memory...*



# Light Rail in Alexandria, Egypt

August 16, 2004

Light Rail in Alexandria, Egypt

– August 16, 2004

P. Abbey write on the forum: *For those of you interested*

*I've also put together a small website representing the*

[Alexandria](#)

[Egypt trams.](#)

# Panoramas

August 17, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok

## Panoramas



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

[Mega-bridge](#)  
[panorama](#) – November 22, 2004

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(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

[Panoramas](#)  
[from inside the new airport](#) – November  
14, 2004

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(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Ban Bang Yeekhan –  
September 20, 2004

Mike pointed out this amazing mansion he spotted on a recent trip to Bangkok. 2Bangkok.com photographers tracked down the building and took these two panoramas (above – large size [278kb](#) and below – large size [244kb](#)).

The water level in the front yard is the same as the water level in the river. Note the Rama 8 Bridge in the background.

Wisarut researched the history: "*Ban Bang Yeekhan*" built around 1910 by Ammart Ek Phraya Chulaphoomphanit (Kai Tak) and his wife, Khunying Suan who used to work as servant in the Palace of Queen Saowabhapongsri. Therefore, it has Chinese and Colonial styles which were in fashion at the time.

Later on, his son, Mr Panjit Anekkawanit (the former governor of Bangkok and Thonburi) sold the house to the cartakers of Unsorizzunna Mosque (the mosque opposite the site across Bangkok Noy Canal

*near Thonburi station) in the 1950s to use it as the new Raj Karun Muslim School. The original school was razed by Allied bombing during WWII in an attempt to destroy Thonburi Station (AKA Bangkok Noy Station) in 1945. The final assault on Thonburi Station was on March 5, 1945.*

*Raj Karun Muslim School  
went out of business in 1978 so the building is abandoned and  
now this Ban Bang Yeekhan (Bang Yeekhan House) is under the trusteeship  
of Krungthep Witthayatharn Muslim Foundation. However Krungthep  
Witthayatharn seems to be short of funds to renovate it.*



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: Gigabyte)

Panoramas from Thai Wah II  
– September 4, 2004  
Gigabyte sent in these great panoramas from the top of Thai  
Wah II. Fullsized-versions: back ([270kb](#))  
and front ([241kb](#)).



(Photo: Gigabyte)





(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

**Golden Mount/Ratchadamnoen Road/Rama 8 Bridge**  
panorama ([347kb](#))

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(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

First look at the **Mahakan Fort park** ([589kb](#))

---

Panorama ([333kb](#))  
of the **new airport**

---

Nils sent in a **nighttime**  
**views from Italthai Tower** ([134kb](#)):

*Pictures 1-5 add up to a panorama from the West (Pratunam, Baiyoke II can be seen) to the East (Bangkapi/Ramkamhaeng/Khlong Tan, with Charn Issara II).*

---

Mikael from Sweden has created  
these wonderful panoramic images **based on photos that recently**  
**ran on 2Bangkok:** New airport construction ([245kb](#))  
and Benny's State Tower view ([653kb](#)).

Mikael has many panoramas of [Koh Samui](#) and [Stockholm](#)  
on his own site, *Thailand Resor* ('Thailand Travel' in Swedish).  
All these panoramas run in [Quicktime](#).  
Once the image appears, you swivel back and forth by pulling your  
cursor across the image.

---

Benny sent in this  
breathtaking panoramic view ([2.86MB](#))  
from the **45th floor of State Tower**.

---

Anand sent in this panorama that shows a typical  
Bangkok skyline: **Bangkok haze** ([95.6kb](#)).

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(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

**Songkhla panoramas** – August 17,  
2004

Views from the north (above – [full  
size 225kb](#)) and south (below – [full  
size 215kb](#)) from Tang Kuan Mountain in Songkhla.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

BMA makeover almost finished – November  
17, 2002

For the last couple of years, the area in front of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (Bangkok's City Hall—opposite Sao Ching Cha) has been excavated to create an underground parking structure. On top is a large plaza and a large black marble monument with the Thai name for Bangkok (the longest place name in the world). Here is a large sized photo ([176kb](#)) of the nearly completed plaza (if you want to see it, it's a lot easier than driving downtown!).

Here is an [earlier  
photo](#) of the construction.



# Story of Soi Lak Khet

August 17, 2004

Story of Soi Lak  
Khet – August 17, 2004

Wisarat reports:

*Sukhumvit 29 has the name as "Soi Lak Khet"  
which implies that there used to be a border pole  
between Bangkok and Nakhon Khuenkhan (Phra Padaeng)  
erected in 1936 (the founding date for Bangkok Municipality).  
That old border pole is no more. The name of the  
soi is the only reminder that the border pole was  
there.*

# Upcoming development in the Pratunam area

August 17, 2004

Upcoming development  
in the Pratunam area –

August 17, 2004

Pas made a map of Bangkok's

Crucible of Construction: green buildings are those  
under construction, the ones in red are on-hold

([here](#)  
and [here](#)).

# Mor Chit development

August 17, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Mor](#)

[Chit development](#) – Bangkok

Post, August 17, 2004

*...The site, a 63-rai plot on Phahon Yothin Road, had been envisioned as a full-blown commercial complex and transport hub linking the BTS skytrain with bus services running to the northern provinces.*

*But a 30-year contract awarded in 1996 to Nam Mahitirat, the chairman of Sun Estate, by then director-general Nibhat Bhukkanasut was shrouded in corruption allegations, and development on the site was halted later during the economic crisis.*

*...The Council of State had previously ruled that the original contract with Sun Estate was void due to the failure of the Treasury Department to comply with screening procedures under a 1992 law governing state contracts with the private sector.*

*Even so, the Treasury Department has yet to formally cancel the contract, due to fears of legal action by Sun Estate, leading to its continued delay.*

**Earlier:** [Sun Estate's](#)

[Mor Chit development](#)

# Copyright controversy dogs Fahrenheit 9/11 in Asia

August 17, 2004

Categories: Film and TV

[Copyright controversy dogs Fahrenheit 9/11 in Asia](#)

– AP, August 17, 2004

*...The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Bangkok announced Monday it wouldn't show the controversial movie as planned on Aug. 18 after a lawyer for the film's local distributor accused the club of having an illegal copy and threatened legal action.*

*Club official Daniel Lovering, who is also a reporter for The Associated Press, said a representative for Thai distributor Nontanund Entertainment had warned that the showing would constitute a criminal offense, with a penalty of 50,000-100,000 baht (US\$1,203-2,406)...*

# The Batman building

August 17, 2004

[The  
Batman building](#) – August  
17, 2004

An interesting building  
in Nashville, Tennessee...



# Fine for no passports

August 17, 2004

Fine for no passports

– August 17, 2004

[Thaivisa.com](http://thaivisa.com)

points out [this](#)

[article](#) on police fining foreigners for not carrying their passports. We would love to post a scan of the fine receipt...

# News from Myanmar

August 17, 2004

News from Myanmar

– August 17, 2004

Three fascinating articles from *The Irrawaddy*:

[Don't](#)

[Compare Burma with China & The](#)  
[Chinese Conundrum & Deserting](#)  
[from the Rape Commanders](#)

# Violence mars Thai Olympic celebration

August 18, 2004

Categories: Sports

[Violence mars Thai Olympic celebration](#) – AP, August 18, 2004

*...The violence rattled Udomporn's mother Sasithorn, who on Wednesday ordered the local distributors of Coca Cola and Pepsi to dismantle stands they had set up in the street in front of their house.*

*Both companies claimed a special right to be there but complied with her wishes.*

*... "The house owner did not talk about sponsorship or anything. She just said that there was trouble last night and one person died in a shooting at the party, so they don't want more trouble."*

*Tai Wongsanga, the regional manager for Coca Cola distributor Thai Namthip, said the company had the right to set up a stand in front of the house "because Coke is the main sponsor for the Olympics."*

*His counterpart at Pepsi, Suthiwong Arbhathorn, countered that his firm had an equal right to be there as a proud local company keen to show its appreciation of Udomporn...*

# How many 7-11s?

August 18, 2004

How many 7-11s?

– August 18, 2004

(from [CP7-11](#)

[speeds up expansion](#), Bangkok Post, August

18, 2004) ...*Under the new plan, the total number of 7-Eleven stores in Thailand will reach 2,847 by the end of the year.*

*This aggressive strategy is aimed to take on increased competition from Family Mart, a direct competitor, which is aiming to double the number of its outlets to 500 by the end of this year and Ek-Chai Distribution System Co, the operator of Tesco-Lotus Express supermarket chain which plans to expand its outlet location to shophouses after previously operating only at petrol stations.*

*Furthermore, an alliance between the Allied Retail Trade Co and co-operative grocery stores under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperative will result in a new modern look for the 6,000 cooperative grocery stores nationwide within the next three years.*

*...He said the convenience store business in Thailand was not saturated at the moment noting that in Japan and Taiwan, there were one 7-Eleven outlet for every 3,000 customers while in Thailand the ratio is one to 10,000, presenting the opportunity to triple the amount of convenience stores...*

# Instant noodles in short supply as oil prices pinch

August 18, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Instant  
noodles in short supply as oil prices pinch](#)

– TNA, August 18, 2004

*...A quick survey today by our reporters in markets in Warin Chamrab and Muang districts found that sardines and instant noodles were now as difficult to come by as gold dust.*

*According to market traders, manufacturers of sardines and instant noodles are preparing to put up their prices to reflect the higher fuel costs, and have not delivered any of their products since the beginning of the month...*



# Klong Prapa Elevated Road

August 19, 2004

Categories: Mass Transit

[Khlong Prapa – road, transit route to go on top of canal](#) – Bangkok Post, August 19, 2004

This is being mentioned like it is a new project, but it has been around for quite awhile (see further down this page).

*The Highways Department will develop a road and mass transit route on top of Khlong Prapa, the canal used for supplying raw water to a plant making Bangkok's tap water.*

*The 25-billion-baht project would fill the natural canal for a 25.5km road from Khlong Bang Luang in Pathum Thani to Bang Sue subway station in Bangkok, according to a feasibility study...*

*In the last seven years, four vehicles have fallen into the canal.*

*The canal was dug in 1899 during the reign of King Rama V, and served as a raw water distribution channel from the reservoir in Sarm Lair in Pathum Thai district to the tap water production plant in Bangkok on Rama VI in Sam Sen...*

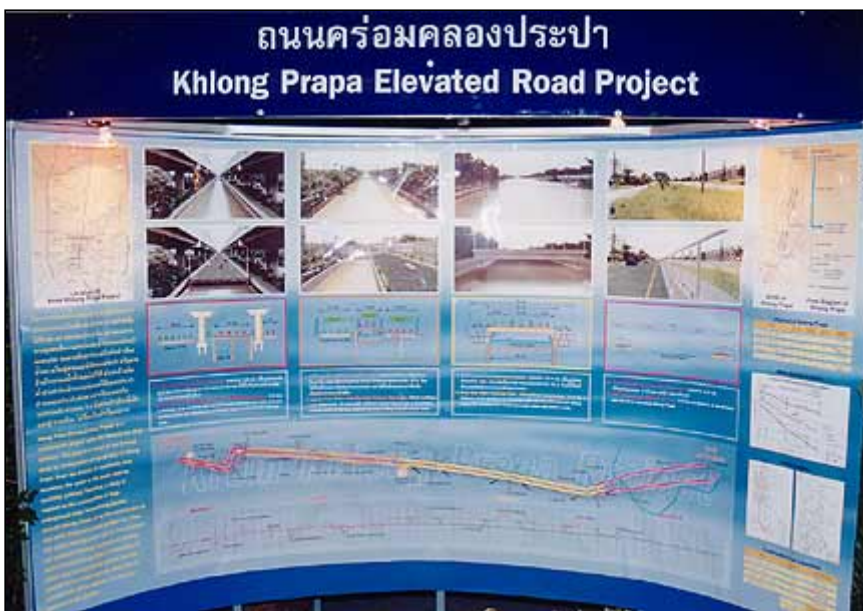
*Work could start in 2006 for a 2010 finish.*

*Mr Chanchai ruled out eviction of communities living along the canal. "His Majesty the King said the project must not cause problems to the community. Our concern is mass protests. Some people may get upset if the natural canal goes and is replaced by a road and mass transit route..."*

[Prapa canal road plan to be ready next year](#) – Bangkok Post, December 3, 2003

*...The department hired the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in 1999 to design the project. In August, it hired five consultant firms to assess environmental impacts and finalise the detailed design in 15 months. It has yet to organise public hearings. The road was royally initiated, aimed at facilitating traffic and, importantly, covering the 30-kilometre-long Prapa canal to assure a supply of clean water. The project's cost is estimated at 20 billion baht.*

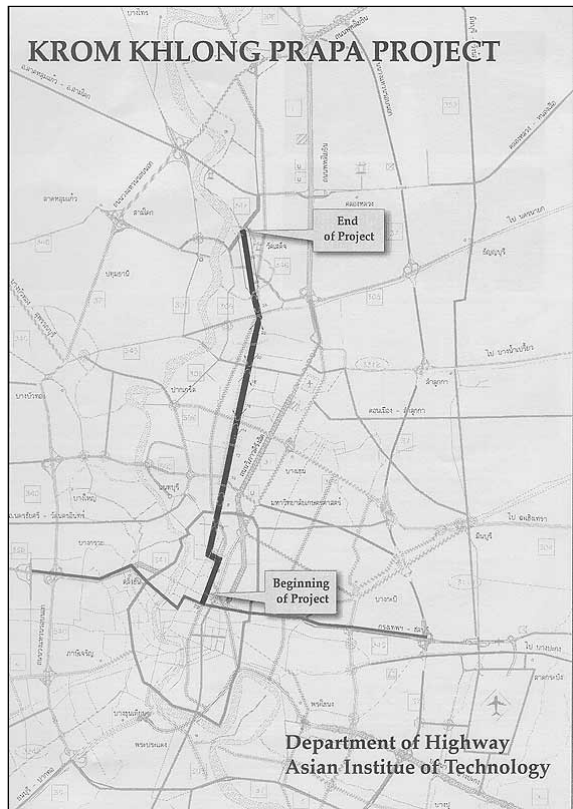
June 30, 2002 – This is a proposal to cover Klong Prapa with an elevated roadway. The road would also have dedicated bus lanes (see the elevations below). This is just a study and there is no word on when this project might be put in the budget.



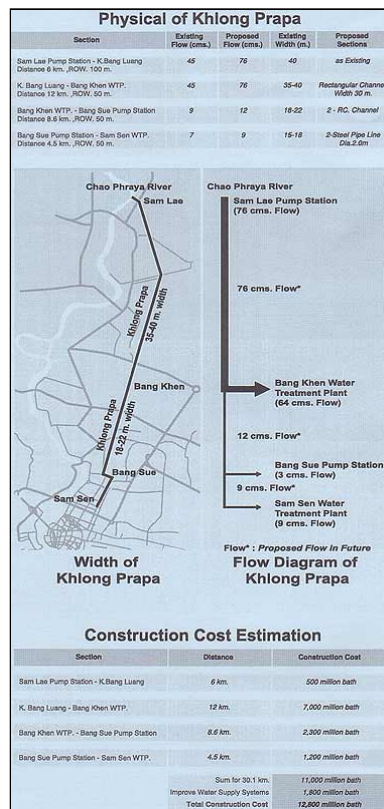
Klong Prapa exhibit at the Intertraffic Asia Convention (June 12-14, 2002) at BITEC in Bangkok.



Cutaway drawing of the road—the road on the right exists already.

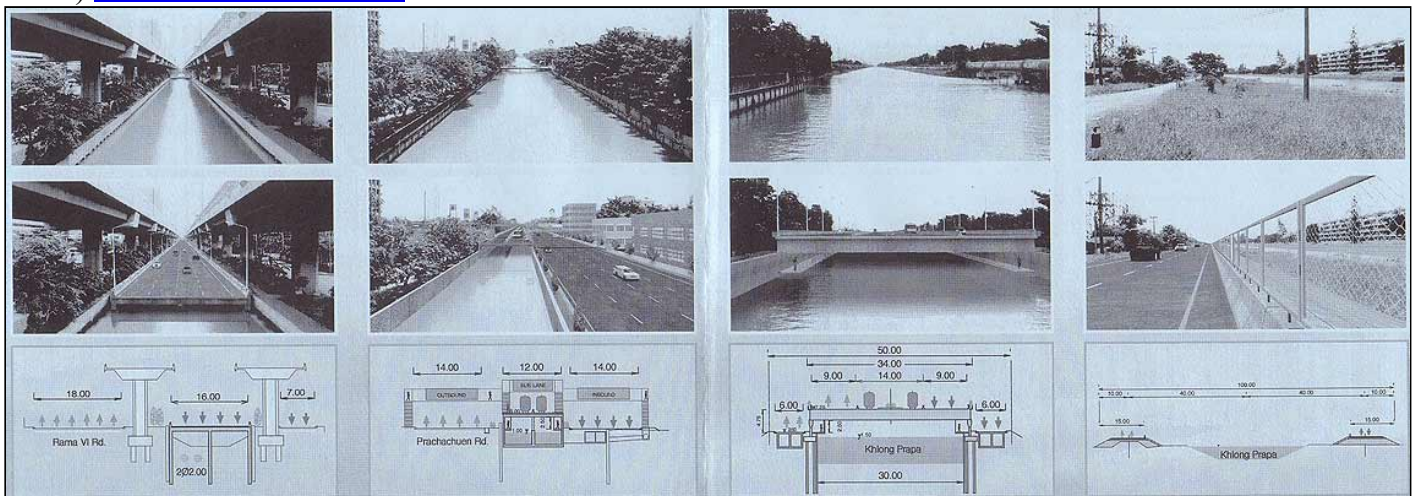


Front page of the project brochure showing the route. It starts in the inner city under the expressway and extends out past Muang Thong Thani.



Back of the project brochure explaining the cost breakdown of the various segments of the project.

Below: Before and after cutaways with elevations. The entire the inner part of the brochure (kkp-map3.jpg – 161K) [can be downloaded here](#).



# Textbook from 1979

August 19, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Textbook](#)

[from 1979](#) – August 19, 2004

Thanks to Khittana for pointing out the [post of some pages](#) from a Thai textbook from 1979 on pantip.com.



# Thaksin scraps plan to start road pricing in Bangkok

August 19, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Thaksin](#)

[scraps plan to start road pricing in Bangkok](#) –

*The Straits Times*, August 19, 2004

*A plan to make motorists pay to use Bangkok's main streets was scrapped yesterday as Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said the city simply could not make the idea work.*

*'I don't think the plan is practical since we don't have a computer system to check vehicles,' Mr Thaksin told reporters ahead of a meeting on conservation measures as oil prices soared. 'We haven't provided other options for people yet.'*

*The road-pricing plan, one of several oil conservation schemes considered by Thailand, would have been similar to those used in Singapore, London and Jakarta...*

*Thaksin scraps plan to start road pricing in Bangkok*

*But to save energy amid rising oil costs, service stations and stores will be asked to close earlier*

*BANGKOK: — A plan to make motorists pay to use Bangkok's main streets was scrapped yesterday as Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said the city simply could not make the idea work.*

*'I don't think the plan is practical since we don't have a computer system to check vehicles,' Mr Thaksin told reporters ahead of a meeting on conservation measures as oil prices soared. 'We haven't provided other options for people yet.'*

*The road-pricing plan, one of several oil conservation schemes considered by Thailand, would have been similar to those used in Singapore, London and Jakarta.*

*Energy Ministry officials floated the idea last week, but motorists opposed it.*

*To save energy, Mr Thaksin said the government will order service stations to close by midnight. It will also ask shopping centres and superstores to close by 8pm and 10pm respectively.*

*'Large stores such as Tesco or Carrefour would be asked for cooperation, but we won't get involved with those small shops which open 24 hours,' he said.*

*Department stores in Bangkok usually close by 10pm, but British and French superstores Tesco and Carrefour, as well as convenience stores such as 7-Eleven, are open round the clock.*

*The government will also scrap petrol subsidies amounting to 0.55 baht to 0.63 baht (2.3 to 2.6 Singapore cents) per litre from next week. There have been seven petrol increases this year, most recently on Tuesday.*

*However, the government promised to keep diesel subsidies until year-end to help farmers in a country where more than 60 per cent of the 63 million population lives off the land.*

*A general election is due by March.*

*Bangkok did not say how much it expected the measures to save, but an Energy Ministry official said: 'Motorists will drive less and consume less oil, and electricity consumption will come down.'*

*The government also ordered the army to help finish two carparks near Bangkok's mass transit stations quickly to encourage motorists to use the Skytrain elevated railway and Metro underground rail service, a spokesman said.*



*Other measures approved at yesterday's meeting included waiving import duties on engines and parts for vehicles powered by natural gas and a campaign to persuade people to switch to alternative fuels such as ethanol and bio-diesel, he said.*

*More measures are expected to emerge from another meeting on Sunday, the spokesman said.*

*Energy accounts for about 10 per cent of Thailand's imports.*

*In a separate development, the government has urged a fare cut for the new Metro to ease Bangkok's traffic woes, according to reports. Passengers had drifted away after a cut-price ticket deal ended.*

*Transport Minister Suriya Jungrungreangkit said users had almost halved after the flat-rate ticket offer of 10 baht ended last Thursday.*

*Fares now range from 12 baht to 31 baht, which are too expensive for many Thai workers.*

*Bangkok Metro 'should review the fares and launch additional promotional activities to draw more passengers', Mr Suriya was quoted as saying in The Nation.*

*'Meanwhile, the government will try to find money to compensate for some of the lost revenue,' he said.*

*— Reuters, AFP 2004-08-19*

# SS Richard Montgomery

August 19, 2004

Categories: Nothing to do with Thailand, but Interesting

## [Timebomb](#)

[ready to blow](#) – Evening

Standard, August 19, 2004

Nothing to do with Thailand, but interesting: *For 60 years the rotting masts of the SS Richard Montgomery have poked eerily from the sea at low tide, surrounded by buoys.*

*...If the Second World War American cargo ship was to blow up, a report warns, it would be one of the biggest non-nuclear explosions ever and could devastate Sheerness (population 11,000). Experts estimate the force of the blast would be 700 times that of the 1995 Oklahoma City bomb in the US...*

# Central World Plaza Hotel design

August 19, 2004

Central World Plaza Hotel design

– August 19, 2004

In Pas' map of Bangkok's Crucible of Construction

([here](#)

and [here](#)),

is the new circular Central World Plaza Hotel. Another diagram of it is [here](#).

# Thaksin: Singapore is successful and doesn't need a strong opposition

August 19, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

PM Thaksin mentioned recently that Singapore is a good example of a government that is successful and does not have a strong opposition ([One Party Rule: Opposition does not need to be strong, says PM](#), *The Nation*, August 19, 2004).

From travel writer Carl Parkes is a look at what happens to the opposition in Singapore: [Joining an opposition party or running in elections against the PAP can be a risky career move...](#)

# Beach Road utilities go underground

August 20, 2004

Categories: Pattaya

[Beach](#)

[Road utilities go underground – ‘Spaghetti’  
cables and wires will disappear](#)

– *Pattaya Mail*, August 20-26, 2004



# Overdrive: Don't blame Suwat, he just wanted to be a winner

August 20, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

Overdrive:

Don't blame Suwat, he just wanted to be a winner

– *The Nation*, August 20,

2004

This is perhaps the most sarcastic article you are ever likely to read in a newspaper.

*...Although her body is made of iron and her hands of steel, her heart is as soft as wax. She could not refuse Suwat's request because she felt kreng jai (self-effacing) towards him. When a phu yai (big shot) requests something, we as a phu noi (small fries) have to submit. Only then is balance achieved in Thai society, for the phu yai can feel happy and get face. The phu noi are later rewarded for his or her subjugation...*

# Thaksin – The Business of Politics in Thailand

August 21, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Book review of Thaksin – The Business of Politics in Thailand](#) – Asia Times, August 21, 2004

*It is becoming an act of courage in Thailand to fire a volley of criticism at Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, or the wealthy empire over which his family presides.*

*...The victims who have fallen by the roadside because of the belief they were doing their bit as citizens of a democracy are an eclectic mix. They included academics, bureaucrats, journalists and grass-roots activists. Some were fired from their jobs; some were bullied into silence; some were quietened by other means, such as money.*

*...Their research brings to the fore aspects of Thaksin's past that explain the reasons behind some of his strong views – development is more important than democracy, for instance – and why the language he speak resonates with a large portion of Thais.*

*...That he went about building himself up as a businessman while still working as a police officer was of little worry to him. During this time, he opened a silk shop, distributed films and built an apartment block, all ventures that ended in failure and left him in debt.*

*By the time he turned his attention to telecommunications, Thaksin had acquired skills that helped him on the road to wealth. He had learned how government officials and the business community struck deals for mutual benefit and discovered the key to success in Thailand: knowing "a lot of people".*

*...Moreover, the language Thaksin was speaking appeared a perfect antidote to a business community that had taken a heavy beating during the 1997 financial crisis.*

*The "new politics" he was advocating also made inroads into a sector that had largely been ignored or marginalized by the Thai political establishment up to that point – the rural poor.*

*Pasuk and Baker do credit Thaksin for breaking new ground here by not only offering policies to alleviate the suffering of the poor, but by delivering on his promises soon after his party won the largest parliamentary majority in Thailand's history.*

*...Sadly, what the book lacks is a chapter explaining why the majority of Thais appear to be happy with their leader, despite what his critics say...*

# Thaksin is not Thailand, says Nation Group editor

August 22, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

## [Thaksin](#)

### [is not Thailand, says Nation Group editor](#)

– *The Nation*, August 22, 2004

*Nation Group editor Thepchai Yong said yesterday Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, in claiming that journalists critical of him "do not love the country", was seriously misguided about patriotism, leadership and what constitutes a nation.*

*"Prime Minister Thaksin is not Thailand,"*

*Thepchai said in response to Thaksin's harsh radio attack on Nation Multimedia Group (NMG) yesterday morning...*

*Thaksin claimed NMG "hates" him and that the hatred was harming the country. "I don't care that I'm hated, but please love the country.*

*This kind of report damages the country."*

*Thepchai questioned Thaksin's motivation in using the media's professional criticism of him to induce nationalism...*

*Thaksin also criticised Krungthep Turakij in connection with the Krue Sae Mosque "knife" picture, saying NMG had "quality problems".*

*"I do not understand why," Thaksin said.*

*"Does it personally detest the government or does it have quality problems like when it edited the picture of."*

*Thepchai said Krungthep Turakij had published immediate apologies following the unintended production error and that the issue was completely irrelevant to the village-fund scheme.*

*"We admitted our mistake, and we apologised immediately and wholeheartedly. But that issue has absolutely nothing to do with the research by the University of Chicago," Thepchai said.*

# Drivers hate Lam Salee intersection

August 23, 2004

## [Drivers](#)

### [hate Lam Salee intersection](#) –

*Bangkok Post*, August 23, 2004

*...FM91 traffic radio station conducted a phone-in survey of 52,598 motorists from Aug 1-13 and found that 51.3% considered Lam Salee traffic the worst...*

*The Surasak-Sathorn intersection received the votes of 17.6% of the drivers, followed by the intersection at Ram Inthra's 8km mark (6%), Bang Na intersection (4.8%) and the Rama IX intersection (3.8%)...*

# King Prajadhipok Museum

August 24, 2004



King Prajadhipok Museum  
– August 24, 2004

Left: King Prajadhipok and  
Queen Rambai Barni

The King Prajadhipok Museum houses the fascinating life story of King Prajadhipok. The tale is told chronologically in exhibits that detail both his royal achievements and personal life. It is an attempt to position King Prajadhipok as a dynamic and vital leader who undertook public works and spearheaded the move to a constitution. It is also a poignant human portrait of the last absolute monarch. King Prajadhipok's desk, office equipment, collection of novelty cigarette lighters, hand-crank tennis ball shooter, and personal photo albums are all on display. The visitor can imagine what it was like for the last Siamese absolute monarch and be exiled to a drafty English mansion. This is not like the National Museum. It is a fully professional and modern museum with security cameras, modern fire extinguishing equipment, and lighting. The temporary exhibit on the ground floor is only in Thai, but the story of his life is presented in both Thai and English. No photography is allowed and unfortunately there is no museum catalog.

However, the collection of personal effects and official documents is stunning and illuminating. The wonderful memorabilia includes Milkmaid plates celebrating the first constitution day, elevation design drawings of Phra Buddha Yodfa Bridge, Sukothai Palace, and Krung Thai Theater, and printed menus from the King and Queen's housewarming party.

The museum website is [here](#) (in English [here](#)).

The history of the museum building itself is [here](#). There is a strong dose of twentieth-century Thais history in the museum.



# Police box

August 24, 2004

Police

box – August  
24, 2004

Beautifully designed police boxes are being built all around Ratanakosin Island. They replace the nondescript, cheap boxes that had no relationship to the surrounding architecture. Hopefully this design can be used all around town and not just in the historic downtown area.

# Thaksin's Senators and Lawsuits: Bangkok Post chooses its words carefully

August 25, 2004

Categories: Thai Newspapers and Magazines, Thai Politics

*Bangkok Post* chooses its words carefully – August 25, 2004

The *Bangkok Post* now apparently will not directly mention companies related to the Prime Minister, instead using code words such as "a certain telecommunications giant."

While Shin Corp is mentioned tangentially later in the article, it is conspicuous that both the newspaper and the Senator being quoted feel the need to tiptoe around the company name.

This tact by the *Post* is likely a reaction to a massive Shin Corp lawsuit against a social critic who merely said it appeared that Shin Corp benefited from government policies. Interestingly, the *Post* has not covered the Shin Corp lawsuit story since early July while *The Nation* has covered it twice this week.

From [Senators finally agree on NTC – Chirmsak amazed by uniformity of vote](#), *Bangkok Post*, August 25, 2004

*The Senate finally picked the seven members of the long-delayed National Telecommunications Commission yesterday, amidst allegations of organised block votes and favouritism for candidates attached to a certain telecommunications giant... Senator Chirmsak Pinthong, a firm critic of the government, said he found it amazing that as many as 83 of his colleagues had cast their votes "all for the very same people"—candidates numbered 1,2,4,7,8,9 and 10 in this exact order on the list of the 14 candidates.*

*"It was quite shocking and unbelievable to see 83 senators become so exactly likeminded," he said.*

*"The prices of stocks of a few telecom firms will likely go up tomorrow (today) following the victory of some of those people associated with the industry..."*

From [Outrage over Shin Corp's Supinya suit](#), *The Nation*, August 25, 2004

*... "If society allows powerful political and business groups to take legal action against social watchdogs over acts in the interest of the public, no one else will dare to express his opinion, speak the truth or criticise anything," the CPMR said... "The amount being sought by Shin Corp is outrageous and staggering," said Roby Alampay, executive director of the Southeast Asian Press Alliance. "It is a clear message to the Thai press that questioning corporations and the government on conflict of interest matters would have dire consequences*

*for the press as a whole," he said.*

*The suit stems from a Thai Post story on July 16 last year. Supinya was quoted as saying that from figures she had gathered it appeared the corporation was a major beneficiary of the premier's policies, noting a sharp rise in Shin's profits since Thaksin Shinawatra became PM in February 2001.*

# Police keep wary eye on terrorism buffs

August 26, 2004

Categories: Security

[Police](#)

[keep wary eye on terrorism buffs](#) – Bangkok

Post, August 26, 2004

*Pongpat Chayapan, a Crime Suppression Division superintendent, said experts from the behavioural science analytical unit have infiltrated crowds at major department stores, business districts and residential sections of foreign expatriates to check on foreigners showing too much interest about terrorism...*

# Bangkok from the sky

August 26, 2004



(Photo: DigitalGlobe)

**Above:** Sukhumvit-Asoke  
intersection

Bangkok from  
the sky – August 26,  
2004

Nils writes: *Back to the already mentioned QuickBird, the highest resolution commercial earth-observation satellite (multispectral bands: 2.4 m, panchromatic band (b/w): 0.6 m) courtesy of [DigitalGlobe](#). These are samples of an image of Bangkok acquired in November 2002. The original is pansharpened data, i.e. colour and 61 cm resolution.*

*They show (scales approximate):*

*BKK\_7x10 ([170kb](#))*

*– Overview of eastern central Bangkok (extent 7×10 km), 1:50,000*

*BKK\_Ratchada ([371kb](#))*

*– Ratchadaphisek/Rama 9/Fortune Town (center), the MRTA subway depot, Don Muang Tollway (left), Makkasan and the expressway interchange, RCA (bottom), interchange between Artnarong-Ram Inthra expressway and Chonburi Motorway (right), 1:18,000*

*BKK\_Suk ([390kb](#)) –*

*Lumphini Park/Rama 4 (left), expressway to the port, Lake Ratchada/Tobacco Monopoly, New Phetburi Rd/Khlong Saen Saep (top), Sukhumvit + Skytrain tracks (traversing from top left to bottom right), 1:18,000*

*BKK\_port ([320kb](#))*

*– Khlong Toey Port, Phra Pradaeng (bottom), the mouth of Khlong Phrakhanong into the Chao Phraya*



*River (notice the colours!) (right), 1:15,000*

*BKK\_subway ([327kb](#))*

*– Subway depot in Huay Khwang (before completion),  
with curved access tracks clearly visible, 1:9,000*

*BKK\_Nana ([310kb](#))*

*– Sukhumvit with Ploenchit, Nana and Asoke BTS  
stations, and All Seasons Place to the left of  
the expressway (reminds me of Angkor Wat!), 1:4,000*

*BKK\_Asoke ([259kb](#))*

*– Asoke Intersection and Station, with Westin  
Grande Hotel (top left), Pornphet Center (bottom  
right), Las Collinas Condominium, Subway Station  
entrance (bright rectangle) visible at the top,  
1:2,000 = full resolution*

*All these are just JPG screengrabs, not comparable  
with the real data!*

*Please note this imagery is copyright [DigitalGlobe](#),  
Longmont, CO... And of course you can order from  
the company where I work: [www.scitek.co.th](http://www.scitek.co.th).*

# Praising Thaksin for his GMO stance

August 26, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Praising](#)

[Thaksin for his GMO stance](#) –

August 26, 2004

(from Thailand May Overtake Philippines In Biotech

Race, *Manila Standard*, Source: [AgBioView](#)

[Newsletter](#))

*... Thailand is set to join other Asian leaders in the modern agricultural biotechnology following the lifting of a three-year ban on the planting of GMOs in that country, a move which may place the Philippines in the "laggard" category.*

*...Peczon said the government "must now examine its own position on the use of modern agricultural technology, particularly biotechnology." It must aggressively push for greater domestic use of the technology if the country intends to develop the capability to feed its exploding population, he said.*

*He said agriculture officials "must adopt the Shinawatra approach in dealing with anti-GMO groups." The implementation of food security policies must not depend on the intensity of the propaganda by these groups, but on the realities hounding the food production sector, he added.*

*He lauded the move by the Thai government, saying this will "send positive signals across Asia, and encourage other governments to adopt a more solid stand in the battle against hunger and poverty with use of modern technologies."*

# Energy cuts damage royal records

August 26, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Energy cuts damage royal records](#)

– *The Nation*, August 26, 2004

*The government's energy-saving policy has caused damage to records dating back to the reigns of Kings Rama IV, V and VI stored at the National Archive, officials said.*

*Written records made in the late 1800s and early 1900s kept in a 20 degrees Celsius room were damaged by fungi and humidity due to the government's mandate that the archive turn off the power when it closes at 4pm, said an official who asked not to be named...*

*The National Archive is also suffering from a shortage of personnel to copy written records onto microfilm and it has no money in its budget to buy the expensive materials needed to mend the ancient papers. There are only 14 people working at the National Archive fixing and making microfilm records, said the official, and as people have retired they have not been replaced. To get by, the archive has even asked maids to help work on the ancient papers, a task meant for experts.*

*There is just one expert able to copy records onto microfilm. The office has the capacity to handle 12,000 pieces per month, which means it would take more than 138 years at the current pace to clear up the 20 million papers the archive still has to copy to microfilm. Arak said the department would ask the Culture Ministry to give back the retired positions.*

# Microsoft's Longhorn now selling illegally in Bangkok

August 26, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Microsoft's](#)

[Longhorn now selling illegally in Bangkok](#) –

*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, August 26, 2004

*...The neatly packaged "pirated" version of Longhorn is being sold with other operating systems and software at Patnip Plaza, located just across the Pratunam district, a haven for bargain shoppers. Browsing through the collection of pirated software being sold at an average of 100 baht a piece, one could also find Microsoft's Windows XP with SP2 package all in one CD. A Sun Microsystems Solaris 9.0 version was also available for the same price. Software piracy thrives at Patnip Plaza, which ironically also sells legitimate software. One may even be surprised to see a store selling legitimate software beside another store hawking pirated software.*

# Bangkok Governor Polls – 2004

August 27, 2004

Categories: Elections

Also: [The Bangkok Governor candidates](#)

Also: [Articles on the 2004 Bangkok Governor campaign](#)

Also: [Thai Photoshoppers parody the campaign posters](#)

Bangkok Governor poll of August 21-22: Apirak extends lead over Paveena – August 27, 2004

From *The Nation*: Dear reader,

*Thank you for your interest in our Thammasat-Nation poll. Here's the information we know you are looking for regarding the survey on leading candidates for the Bangkok governor election. (Latest release as of Aug 27, 2004)*

1. Apirak Kosayodhin, no 1
2. Paveena Hongsakul, no 7
3. Chuwit Kamolvisit, no 15 and Chalerm Yoobumrung, no 3
4. Bhichit Rattakul, no 19
5. Mana Mahasuweerachai, no 5
6. Nitipoom Naowarat, no 21

Best Regards,

Nation Internet Department

**'Pretty face' extends lead over 'activist'** – *The Nation*, Aug 27, 2004

*The front-running candidate in the two previous Thammasat-Nation polls continued to extend the lead in the latest survey on August 21-22, one week before Sunday's Bangkok governor election.*

*Meanwhile, the fourth-ranked candidate in the previous poll conducted on August 14-15 got more support from Bangkok's eligible voters and is now in joint-third place with the third-ranked candidate in the last survey...*

*They were followed by the "knows the office" with 2.8 per cent support, "the protege" (2.3 per cent) and the "globetrotter" (1.9 per cent), the new entry with more than 1 per cent of the "votes". All other candidates got less than 1 per cent...*

Results from the poll of August 14-15 – August 22, 2004

*The Nation* releases the names that go with their poll results to readers who write to them. The 'code-name' *The Nation* uses to refer to the candidates has been added in brackets [].

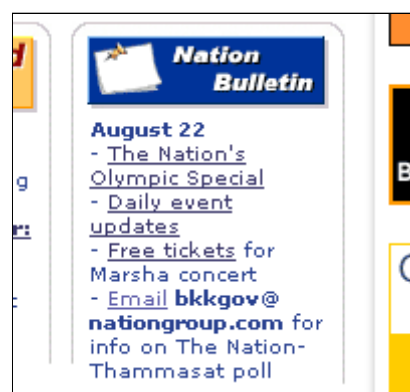
From *The Nation* email: *Thank you for your interest in our Thammasat-Nation poll. Here's the information we know you are looking for regarding the survey on leading candidates for the Bangkok governor election. (Latest release as of Aug 22, 2004):*

1. Apirak Kosayodhin, no 1
2. Paveena Hongsakul, no 7
3. Chuwit Kamolvisit, no 15
4. Chalerm Yoobumrung, no 3
5. Bhichit Rattakul, no 19
6. Mana Mahasuweerachai, no 5

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Earlier: *The results as of August 7-8:*

1. Apirak Kosayodhin, no 1
2. Paveena Hongsakul, no 7
3. Chuwit Kamolvisit, no 15
4. Bhichit Rattakul, no 19
5. Chalerm Yoobumrung, no 3



Above: *The Nation* releases actual poll results to readers who write to them.



The Nation article that goes with the August 14 poll results is here: [BANGKOK GOVERNOR POLL: Race for top job still wide open](#) (The Nation, August 22, 2004) and an analysis is here: [ANALYSIS: Thai Rak Thai may burn its fingers over Apirak](#) (The Nation, August 22, 2004). More: [OPINION SURVEY: Majority of voters in outlying districts remain undecided](#) (The Nation, August 23, 2004).

[‘Undecided’ takes the lead in city race](#) – The Nation, August 21, 2004

*...As the governor's race drags on, voters are growing increasingly undecided over who should pilot the City of Angels for the next four years, according to the latest Thammasat-Nation poll.*

*The figure for undecided voters reached 52 per cent in the last poll. Researchers said most undecided voters said they probably would check the "no-choice" box because none of the candidates or their policies seemed palatable to them.*

*Voters on the fence said this election had no outstanding candidates and no attractive policies. Most of these voters are educated, middle-class and – surprisingly – Thai Rak Thai supporters. They are unhappy with every candidate, including the ruling party's pet runner, Pavena Hongsakul...*

[Results from the poll of August 7-8](#) – August 17, 2004

*...The second-place candidate in past ThammasatNation polls has shot up to take the lead for the first time in the latest survey, while undecided votes surged drastically to nearly 50 per cent...*

*Highprofile latecomer and former fifthplace candidate moved into fourth place, receiving a nod from 4.5 per cent of respondents. The former fourthplaced candidate – now in fifth – received 4.4 per cent.*

*The poll suggests the latecomer, now fourthplaced, gained votes at the expense of the former front runner. Both candidates have reportedly received backing from some factions of Thai Rak Thai...*

The Nation invites their website readers to email them "for info on [the Nation-Thammasat poll](#)." Here is what you get if you email them:

\*\*\*\*\*

*Thank you for sending us your email. Here's the information we know you are looking for regarding our NationThammasat poll on leading candidates for the Bangkok governor election.*

- 1. Apirak Kosayodhin, no 1*
- 2. Pavena Hongsakul, no 7*
- 3. Chuwit Kamolvisit, no 15*
- 4. Bhichit Rattakul, no 19*
- 5. Chalerm Yoobumrung, no 3*

*Thank you,*

\*\*\*\*\*

Also: [The Bangkok Governor candidates](#)

Also: [Articles on the 2004 Bangkok Governor campaign](#)

Also: [Thai Photoshoppers parody the campaign posters](#)

# Master Plan News 2004 August-September

August 28, 2004

Categories: Master Plans

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

## [Mass Transit News main page](#)

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[MEGA PROJECTS: But where's the funding?](#) – *The Nation*, September 27, 2004

*Exactly the same as before the economic crash of 1997, Thailand's public and private sectors are both announcing plans for grandiose mega-projects, starting within the next five years and carrying a combined price tag of approximately Bt1.92 trillion...*

Two Phuket LRT lines – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, September 20, 2004

Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (Phuket PAO) is planning to borrow foreign funds for Phuket LRT lines – (Airport – Pa Tong – Karon – Kata and Ring line). LRT will be run by Phuket Joint Venture Development. Now, Phuket PAO is hiring Prince Songkla U. to deal with route feasibility, investment and the payoff before using this project as collateral for a foreign loan.

Ms Anchalee Wanitthepphabut (Head of Phuket PAO) said they are going to come up with a public organization to handle the development of Phuket. It will be called "Phuket Joint Venture Co.Ltd." The first project is Phuket LRT network to solve traffic jams in Phuket.

Phuket PAO said they will invest in only 2 of 4 lines proposed by PSU since the cost to implement all 4 lines will be 10 billion baht. PSU has studied the feasibility of all four Phuket LRT routes since 200.

The four Phuket LRT lines are

- 1) Phuket Airport – Pa Tong Beach, Karon Beach – Kata Beach
- 2) Patong Beach – Provincial Hall
- 3) Airport – Ratsada – Phuket Provincial Hall
- 4) Phuket Ring Line

Phuket PAO has chosen the following two routes since there will be lots of local people as well as the tourists and foreigners who are going to ride the LRT:

- 1) Airport – Patong Beach – Karon Beach – Kata Beach
- 2) Phuket Ring Line

Phuket PAO will hire PSU to make a deeper study on the feasibility and alternatives, rolling stock, investment, park and ride, stations, number of passengers, and benefits. After that, Phuket PAO will ask for foreign loans with virtually no interest (JBIC is the first choice though) with more than 30 year payback.

They will use the project as collateral while they are negotiating for the foreign funds.

This kind of foreign investment can come from the local government without asking for cabinet approval—only OTP approval is fine. They cannot afford to wait for central government funds. Phuket PAO just asks for the approvals from the local council and then they will hire PSU to handle the detailed studies before using the results to ask for foreign loans.

**Note:** Praises and criticisms can be seen [here](#).

**Ed.:** Taxi, bus, and rental car companies will not like the Karon-Kata Line.

[247 km of new rail lines approved](#) – *The Nation*, September 8, 2004

*As The Nation points out, this is more a political move rather than a practical one: ...After watching its pet candidate lose the Bangkok governor election last week, the government yesterday announced plans to inject Bt500 billion into solving Bangkok's notorious traffic problems.*

*Transport Minister Suriya Jungrungreangkit said the Cabinet had given the nod to fund the extension of the capital's mass transit systems across seven routes over the next five years.*

*Critics said the project has long been on the drawing boards, but the government timed the announcement of the project to shore up the Thai Rak Thai's waning popularity in Bangkok...*

*"The new mass transit extensions will be convenient with a station every 500 metres and the route will link*

*the inner city and suburban provinces in Nonthaburi, Pathum Thani making it possible for 4.5 million people to leave their cars and hop on public mass transit," he said...*

[‘Venice of the East’ being planned](#) – Bangkok Post, September 8, 2004

*This does not sound likely: A new "Venice of the East" will be created around the new Suvarnabhumi international airport at Samut Prakan on Bangkok's outskirts.*

*A network of canals and Thai traditional houses beside waterways will be protected from urbanisation, a public hearing was told yesterday...*

*Agricultural land close to the airport would also be protected to retain the area's natural beauty, so that passengers waiting for connecting flights could kill time by taking tours of the canal-based communities.*

*Traditional Thai-style and raft houses would be given the same treatment under the plan...*

*His team of city planners even dream of storing rainwater in giant plastic bags and floating them in the sea off Samut Prakan. They hope to use the stored water together with raw water from the Prachin Buri dam, 99 km away, and treated water from facilities in Klong Dan to feed the growing communities...*

Mass transit stories from *The Nation*

[REAL ESTATE : Mass transit networks fuel boom](#) – The Nation, September 2, 2004

*Nils writes: The printed version had an interesting map with small renderings of future train stations/transportation centers (e.g. Hualamphong with the new line to Wongwian Yai passing to the West of the old station building). Don't know if that was just fantasy or based on a real design plan.*

Premier Thaksin selling the dream for the new smart card–15 baht for boat/Subway/Skytrain/bus – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, August 28, 2004

Premier Thaksin promised a smart card system for the mass transit system to cut down spending to 15 baht /trip and he promised to deliver the initial phase in two years...

After reaching Wat Sri Boonrueang pier, officers from OTP, Director of Marine Transport, and Krobkura Transport Co.Ltd. came to report about Saensaeb boat service. Marine Dept is asking for 15 million baht budget to modernize 26 pier and another 5 million for two new bridges. BMA City Clerk also told the press that BMA is working on pothole footpaths and dilapidated pathways with a budget of 200 million baht. Furthermore, BMA is working with the Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment to clean up Saensaeb canal.

After reaching Asok Pier, the group rode the Subway at Phetburi to Silom and then changed to the Skytrain at Saladaeng before ending up at Saphan Taksin to see the [extension](#) under construction along with Sathon Pier...

Subway was so crowded that Premier Thaksin and cabinet had to stand until some passengers stood to make space for the cabinet. Even Saensaeb boat has so many passengers that it needs help from the government to handle security, the facilities, and lower ticket prices. If possible, the smart card system will cut down the travel price to 15 baht//trip (populist prices). The passengers can even use Smart cards for motorcycle taxis (!) or boats (Saensaeb and Chophraya Express boat). The clearance system will help to give each company a share of ticket prices.

Even though the government has paid 4-5 billion baht to BMA for bus subsidies, it does not work very effectively. Therefore, the government has to take control of all of the system with some more direct subsidies to the passengers instead of the operators. For the stinking Saensaeb canal, MOTC will come up with the plan for pier modernization which will take environment, cleanness, water quality, and the dams along Saensaeb canal into account.

The government claimed that the plan to nationalize BTSC is going very well and eventually the system will be extended to Phetkasem via Tha Phra for people in Thonburi side of Bangkok (still pending – executed after Bangyai line) while MRTA Subway will be expanded as a Skytrain (elevated heavy rail) to Bang Yai to serve the suburban communities in Nonthaburi Province (Tiwanon, Rewadee, Kae Rai, Sanambin Nam, Wat Sai Mah, Bang Buathong, and Bang Yai).

After inspection at Saphan Taksin-Sathon Pier, Premier Thaksin complained about annoying and messy advertising billboards on skyscrapers and asks BMA to invite those who install and purchase the advertising space to come to the Government House for a lunch and then be asked to remove those billboards immediately...

Readers opinions can be seen [here](#).

Premier Thaksin's inspection of Saensaeb Canal boat

## **Premier Thaksin planning to Inspect Saensaeab Canal and the connection with the Subway and Skytrain** – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, August 27, 2004

Minister Suriya told the press that Premier Thaksin is going to inspect Saensaeab canal boat and the connection with the mass transit system. So far there are already 80,000 daily passengers of Saensaeab canal boat, but many complain about the inconvenience. This kind of inconvenience is due to the fact that Krobkrua Transport Co. Ltd. has a monopoly on the route. After the inspection and assessment, MOTC will submit a plan to modernize Saensaeab boat services with new aircon boats, modernized piers and officers who handle the safety of the services.

If Krobkrua Transport Co. Ltd. provides good service, they will stay in business. Otherwise, the concession will be either terminated with a new concession holders or it will be nationalized. To get such support from central government, Saensaeab canal boat service must have ticket prices reduced or they have to come up with joint tickets with the Skytrain and Subway. For the initial estimation, the existing 70 boats carry a price tag of about 100,000 baht each, so the estimated budget for modernization is not more than 100 million baht, a lot cheaper than BMTA subsidies which is now shooting up to 5 billion baht.

Previously, the government has spent billions of baht for BTA subsidies for BMTA buses which are in perennially in the red without any significant improvement of bus services. On the other hand, the boat services (both Saensaeab and Chaophraya) received virtually no subsidies despite much faster service. For the case of new BMTA bus modernization, the new joint ticket with Skytrain and Subway must be installed and the fare box system must be revived.

## **Premier Thaksin's inspection of Saensaeab Canal and the connection with Subway and Skytrain** – translated and summarized from *Manager*, August 28, 2004

Premier Thaksin and the cabinet as well as TRT members of BMA City Hall and members of District Offices have come to inspect the connections between boats and mass transit system. Initially, Premier Thaksin and company rode the Saensaeab boat from Wat Sri Boonruean pier to Asok pier and then rode the Subway from Phetburi Station to Silom to change to the Skytrain and end up at Taksin Pier (Bangkok side).

People along Saensaeab canal were greeting Premier Thaksin. When Premier Thaksin and company reached Phetburi station, he talked with the Speaker of Royal Thai Police and BMCL officers along with the Subway passengers.

Mr Khumroblux is asking for the budget to modernize Saensaeab boat with air-conditioned boats with a price of 3 million baht for each boat so as to serve 43,000 daily passengers and encourage more passengers to ride boats. This joint ticket for mass transit system as well as the BMTA buses, Saensaeab canal boat and Chophraya express must be a smart card system. This can be done (for the initial phase) in the next 2 years.

After the Saensaeab canal inspection, Premier Thaksin granted the initial 15 million baht budget for the pier and boat modernization which includes two new bridges across Saensaeab canal of 5 million baht.

During the inspection, there are lots people following Premier Thaksin such as Minister Suriya, Deputy PM Suwat, Minister Sudarat, Minister Sonthaya, BMA City Clerk, the Board of Direction from OTP. Mr Khumroblux told the cabinet that Saensaeab boat service is very fast, but it needs a modernization of 26 piers with a budget of 15 million baht along with two new bridges across the canal with a budget of 15 million baht. The new airconboats are also necessary. The security must be installed on both sides of Saensaeab canal and the piers.

## **MEGA-PROJECTS : Slowdown hits infrastructure plans** – *The Nation*, August 26, 2004

*...High oil prices, rising interest rates and large debt burdens could crimp the government's plans to finance Bt1.2 trillion in projects to modernise the country's infrastructure, experts warned yesterday...*

*As a result, the government will be forced to seek new sources of financing, probably from private sources, said Nibhat Phukkansut, an adviser to Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra...*

*Nibhat said the government is hampered by a "mistake" it made when it agreed to share the debt of the Financial Institutions Development Fund, which spent Bt1.4 trillion taking over bankrupt finance companies after the 1997-98 crisis.*

*As a result of the crisis, the government took on Bt1.4 trillion in private debts and made these public, leaving the government with a 15-year burden. The best way for the government to proceed is private sector assistance, Nibhat said...*

## **Opinions on the Bangkok Southern Transportation hub plan** – August 16, 2004

Wisarat reports: *For the case of the Bangkok Southern Transportation hub plan, this project has stirred fury against the project since local people around Thoed Thai Road said their area is too small to accommodate*



*those buses along with the Skytrain-Subway. The construction will force local people to be separated from the temples around that area. Some temples are very old (about 150-160 years old or even older and deserving to be conserved a national treasure). The local people are asking the government to construct a new transportation hub at Nong Khaem (near Channel 3) or Phutthamonthon Sai 4 (near Mahidol Salaya) instead.*

Team Consultant advising BTSC-BMCL merge – translated and summarized from *Bangkok Biznew*, August 9, 2004

To cut down the burden on the government's plan to nationalize BTSC ([Skytrain](#)) and BMCL ([Subway](#)), BTSC and BMCL must be merged into a single operator even before the nationalization and then offer an IPO along with a new concession for single operator to run the 292 km planned mass transit system.

Furthermore, the government should create new transportation funds and impose automobile taxes to finance the basic infrastructure of 520 billion baht. So far, OTP ([Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning](#)) is asking the cabinet for 5 billion baht for the first batch of mass transit system investment.

Team Consultant has asked OTP and the government to set up a government company to handle the service of subway extensions and new lines. This company must purchase or merge BMCL and BTSC before repackaging the company to a new concession holder. The service section and the maintenance section must be separated to allow the service section to make money.

The government could fund the extension via the budget (30-50% of GDP or 120-275 billion baht). Another source of funds will come from a gasoline tax of 1 baht/litre, diesel tax of 0.75 baht/litre, and a new car registration fee of 10,000 baht/car and used car fee 50% higher than the current rate. This will allow revenue of 22 billion baht. Another 20 billion baht will come from the new Wayuphak funds and the other 240 billion baht from loans. This will create construction funds of about 520 billion baht

OTP will submit a plan for the construction of extensions by the end of August or early September to the Board of Land Traffic Management to get approval and clarify the amount of investment and financial resources along with details of implementation. The investment funds needed has shot up from 447 billion baht to 470 billion baht since the initial proposal did not include funds for relocating people and reservation for emergency. 65% (310 billion baht) of the funds will be for civil works and the other 35% (160 billion baht) for rolling stock.

Initially, LPT is asking for 5 billion baht for land expropriation (3 billion baht) and the design (2 billion baht). After that, construction can be started.

The first section to be started is [Suvannabhum Airport Link](#) (SRT) with total distance of 28.5 km and price tag of 30 billion baht. SRT is selling the bid form for 1.5 million baht for the form along with the TOR. After getting the winner, the construction can start by the end of 2004 or early 2005. After that, Samrong and Taksin extension of BTS will follow soon.

#### [Road construction: Traffic will hit the brakes](#) – *The Nation*, August 7, 2004

*The intersections to face construction snarls*

– Starting this month

*Rama III and Sathupradit*

*Rama III and Ratchadaphisek*

*Rama III and Narathiwatratchanakarin*

*Rama III and the new Sathupradit and Industrial Ring Road*

*Rama III and Charoenrat*

*Bang Khunthien and Rama II*

*Charoenkrung and Suwinthawong*

– Starting next month

*Rama IV and Sukhumvit Soi 42*

– Starting in December

*Sri Ayutthaya and Rama VI*

– Starting next year

*Suksawad and Rama II*

*Rama IV and Soi Kasemrat and Sukhumvit Soi 26*

*Sri Ayutthaya and Phya Thai*

*Din Daeng and Prachasongkhroa*

*Rajvithee and Rama VI*

*Ekachai and Bang Bon and Bang Khunthien*

Details on **Christiani & Nielsen** and CITIC – translated and summarized from *Prachachat Thurakij*, August 5-7, 2004

Dr Boon Wanasin MD is persuading Christiani & Nielsen (Thai) PCL to join with CITIC to deal with the Airport Link, MRTA Subway expansion, nationwide double tracking and high speed train.

#### **Christiani & Nielsen (Thai) PCL**

Christiani & Nielsen (Thai) PCL ([webpage](#)) is the oldest Thai contractor – founded by Danish Businessmen (Rudolf Christiani & Aki Nielsen) in 1904. It has established the branch in Thailand since 1930.



CN-Thai has participated in the reconstruction of Rama 6 bridge (1949-53), Krungthep Bridge, Krungthong Bridge, Nonthaburi Bridge, Klongtoei Port, Rajadamnoen Boxing stadium, Democracy Monument, Namphung Dam, Sarasin Bridge, Rajadamnoen Avenue expansion, SCB Park and Sport Complex in Thammasart Rangsit. It bought the mother company in Denmark in 1992. One of the owners of CN-Thai is the Crown Property bureau (financial manager of Royal family).

Economic hard times in 1997 has caused CN-Thai trouble. The CITIC revitalization will help CN-Thai a lot.

### **CITIC Group**

CITIC Group (the contractor giant of mainland China – state enterprise) has 60 companies in the group with a turnover of 5 trillion baht. CITIC Trust and Investment and CITIC industrial Bank will finance the megaprojects for the Thai government. CITIC will hire Siemens (China) to produce rolling stocks for the subway. CITIC expect to get 30% of the subway expansion project. This will enable CITIC to set the base in Thailand after the successful deals in Malaysia and Iran.

Rajadhani Group and CN-Thai will handle 15% of stock while the other 85% will be handled by CITIC Group. 30% of investment will be the rolling stocks and signals along with services while the other 70% will be the infrastructure.

CITIC Group from China keen to invest hundreds of billion of dollars in Thailand – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, August 4, 2004

CITIC Group from mainland China is lobbying Transport Minister Suriya so they can freely invest in the [Suvannabhum Airport Link](#), [MRTA Subway](#) expansion, nationwide double tracking, and the controversial [Laem Pakbia Project](#) with a total investment of 500 billion baht. Furthermore, CITIC Group is going to grant long-term credit lines to finance the projects which can be paid in agricultural products (crops and livestock) to feed 1.2 billion mainland Chinese.

This kind of generous Chinese investment in Thailand is to help the government of China cool down from economic overheating.

Dr Boon Wanasin MD (Board of Director Chief, Rajadhani group) had a press conference on the cooperation between Rajadhani Group and CITIC International Contracting (subsidiary of CITIC Group – the investment arm of mainland China). CITIC International is going to invest on the megaprojects with 1 trillion baht.

Within 5 years, 500 billion baht in major infrastructure would be invested. They expect to win at least 30% of government contracts (200-250 billion baht).

Furthermore, DR Boon Wanasin MD has invited Mr Ma Dum Hong Bo (Board of Director Chief, CITIC International) to have a dinner and discussion with Minister Suriya, Mr Khumroblux, and MRTA Governor about the plan for major construction such as:

(1) Major expansion of MRTA Subway, (2) Suvannabhum Airport Link, (3) Nationwide Double Tracking, (4) the controversial Laem Pak Bia Project, (5) MWA Underground Waterworks Tunnel, (6) Highway expansions

The total IRR at 14% of these 4 project is considered lucrative for CITIC since it is a worthy project even at an IRR of 12%.

CITIC Group is indeed strong and this Chinese conglomerate has very deep pockets since it is the government financial funds of mainland China with CITIC Industrial Bank and CITIC Trust and Investment as the main creditors which has enormous amounts of cash ready for investment.

CITIC has already invested in the following international projects:

1) USD \$500 million investment in railways and Tehran subway expansion in Iran through the loan paid in crude oil as well as other products from Iran.

2) Giant bridge connecting Butterworth and Penang Island together in exchange for palm oil and rubber.

CITIC told the Thai government that they are going to invest in Thailand which can be paid in form of the following commodities–without making any intervention in the business in Thailand:

1) Rice, 2) Rubber, 3) Logan and other agricultural products

CITIC will pick up the local Thai contractors like STECON or KPV to create a connection with local partners. They do not want to have a major headache dealing with Ch Karnchang PCL (Japanese connections) and Italian Thai Development PCL (European connections) while they are working on those projects. The Rajadhani Group will work as the consultant for CITIC with 10-15% shares in some projects. Even though the Thai government will have lost money (500-600 billion baht) to run the projects, the public investment will create "Cloud Out Problems" on private investments since both public and private sectors are going to scramble after the same funds in the next 5-6 years.

Ma Dum Hong Bo told correspondents that CITIC will talk with the Ambassador of China in Thailand first before telling more about the project details since CITIC is a State Enterprise which has to report about the investment plan to the Chinese government before getting the approvals to go on.

**Commentary by Wisarut:** [Thai netters said](#) this Chinese investment is a good alternative to the Japanese investment since Japanese investment has become more like a loan shark deal with strings attached like a big noose despite the cheap credit from JBIC.

However, Thai railway workers and many Thai railfans still have strong distrusts of railway products imported from China since they have very bad experiences with Chinese railway products such as :

- 1) cargo trains which usually slip off the tracks
- 2) broken LPG seals forcing SRT to close down the Northern and Eastern routes for 4 hours to get rid of the LPG leaking out of the LPG trains with broken seals
- 3) cargo trains with cracks in the main structure, forcing SRT to decommission them after a few years of service
- 4) defective bogies which have speed limit set to 55 kph instead of 80 kph

Even China railway has come up with a high-speed rail with local know how (Zhong Yuan Xian Shing).

These will have to pass the test on a Beijing-Shanghai route first before planning to sell the system to other countries.

ITD appeals to the government after CITIC's interest in Thai rail projects – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, August 4, 2004 & *Thaipost*, August 5, 2004

ITD is appealing to the government that Thai contractors could not match giant contractors like CITIC which are 20 times bigger than ITD. Furthermore CITIC group has massive construction and financial resources which enables them to work on contracts without even picking up the local partners.

Therefore CITIC must pick local Thai partners at a significant level before competing for the MRTA expansions, Suvannabhum Airport Link and nationwide double tracking—if they did not come as major creditors alone. ITD does not want CITIC to corner contractor markets in Thailand even though the cost for Chinese engineers is only about 50,000 baht/month/engineer while the Japanese Engineer costs the company 1,000,000 baht/month/engineer.

MRTA Governor said CITIC along with local partners must compete with other contractors consortiums around the world before winning the project even though CITIC has already make a joint venture with Siemens to produce rolling stocks for the Shanghai Metro. Furthermore, CITIC has already worked on the Tehran Subway as well as other rail projects in the Middle East along with a Beijing Subway Expansion for the 2008 Olympics. MRTA will only supply necessary project details for CITIC to compete with other consortiums.

Traffic Policy Office said even though the deal from mainland China is appealing, the investment cost (interest rates) attached to the loan is higher than JBIC loans (3-4% annual rate in US dollar vs. 0.75% annual rate in Yen). Therefore CITIC will be able to compete with JBIC only when they have much better grace period for debts as well as the principles and a stable forex.

Even though CITIC has met with SRT Governor, CITIC has not shown explicit interests in the Suvannabhum Airport Link and nationwide double tracking yet. Turnkey bidding for Airport Link will be in August and companies must have very deep pockets to win the bidding.

[Mass Transit News main page](#)

# Global recession on the horizon?

August 28, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Global recession on the horizon? – August 28, 2004

Several international analysis services

2Bangkok.com subscribes to have been mentioning

Thailand as a country to watch in relation

to an expected global recession. As Thailand

imports almost all of its oil, depends

on exports and is an open, transparent

economy, it is thought to be one of the

first Asian nations impacted.

# Thai boxer gets call from King after win

August 29, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Thai boxer gets call from King after win](#) –

AP, August 29, 2004

*The moment was almost too much for Thai boxer Manus Boonjumnong. He had just won a gold medal, and now his country's king was on the phone to congratulate him. Boonjumnong sobbed as he held the cell phone in one hand and a picture of King Bhumibol Adulyadej in the other. He listened for a few minutes, so emotional that he was able to only give one-word answers to his king...*

# Construction of the Suvarnabhumi Airport

August 31, 2004

Categories: Airports and Airlines

August 31, 2004 – CONSTRUCTION AT THE SUVANABHUMI AIRPORT

*Also: [August 3, 2003 construction photos](#)*

**Also: [June 7, 2004 construction photos](#)**

**Also: [February 9, 2004 construction photos](#)**



(Photo: Olli)

Latest construction photos  
– August 31, 2004

It is nearly one year to the opening of the new airport. Olli took some photos that show the progress of the construction.





(Photo: Olli)



(Photo: Olli)



(Photo: Olli)



(Photo: Olli)

**More airport info  
on 2Bangkok.com**

**[June 8, 2004 construction  
photos](#)**

**[February 9, 2004 construction photos](#)**

**[August 4, 2003 construction photos](#)**

**[Airport  
Rail Link news](#)**

**[Bangkok  
Airport Watch – When will it be completed?](#)**

**[Airport Quick Facts  
Background/History of the Project](#)**

**[Latest News  
Diagram and model photos  
Links](#)**



# Kurusapa Printing House/Wat Sangwech Typing School

August 31, 2004



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

**Above:** Kurusapa  
Printing House (right) – Should it  
be torn down?

Kurusapa  
Printing House/Wat Sangwech Typing  
School –  
September 10, 2004

## [Plan to raze printing school site sparks](#)

[row](#) – *The Nation*, September  
6, 2004

*...The project has been unable to  
proceed because the Fine Arts Department  
listed the printing house as an historical  
building in 2000. The Rattanakosin Committee  
needs a cabinet resolution to de-list  
the building.*

*“Historical buildings should be  
older than 100 years, have an important  
historical background or meet the fine  
art standard,” said Adul Wichiencharoen,  
a member of the committee.*

*“But the building is only an old  
wooden edifice that was built in 1932.  
Its unpleasant appearance just improved  
recently when the Treasury Department,  
which is responsible for the plot, repainted*

*it,” he said, adding that demolishing the building would improve the scenery around Phra Sumane Fort.*

*The two-storey wooden building was first used as Wat Sungwej’s printing school, Thailand’s first school of printing, before being changed into the Kurusapa printing house in 1950 and being used as a Kurusapa warehouse from 1973 to 1995.*

*“The building has a very significant history. It was the first printing school. It is an example of the old wooden architecture. I don’t understand why the committee cannot see that,” said Orasri Silpi, an area resident and president of Bang Lamphu Civic Net. She said the building contained too much historical value to be demolished just for an open public park...*

### **Chaturon**

#### **not in favour of demolition –**

*Bangkok Post, August 31, 2004*

*Deputy Prime Minister Chaturon Chaisaeng has opposed a proposal of the Ratanakosin and Old City committee to demolish the old Kurusapa printing house in Ta Pra Arthit area.*

*As chairman of the committee, Mr Chaturon said that he disagreed with the plan to tear down the 72-year-old historical building and turn the plot into a small public park...*

*The Rattanakosin committee has wanted to knock down the old printing house since 1999, claiming its architecture and structure was inconsistent with those of the nearby historical Phra Sumane Fort and the city wall...*

# North Korea recalls its ambassador

August 31, 2004

Categories: Uncategorized

[North](#)

[Korea recalls its ambassador](#)

– Associated Press, August 31, 2004

*...South Korean government officials have declined to reveal the nation that acted as a conduit for the defectors, but North Korea's Foreign Ministry spokesman early this month lashed at Vietnam for helping with the defection. The spokesman said North Korea has sufficient evidence that Vietnam took part in what it called the "kidnapping" act.*

*...In its latest protest, North Korea has recalled its ambassador to the unnamed country for helping the defectors enter South Korea, South Korea's mass-circulation Chosun Ilbo reported Tuesday.*

*The newspaper, citing a diplomatic source in Beijing, said North Korea has threatened to pull out the rest of its diplomatic officials if the country doesn't apologize for the defection and take measures to prevent such things from happening again...*



# Olympic heroes parade

August 31, 2004



(Photo: Pas)

Olympic heroes  
parade  
Pas (of [Bangkok  
Highrises](#)) took photos of the Olympic homecoming  
parade on the afternoon of August 31, 2004.

**Above:** Silver  
medalist Worapoj Petchkoom

**Right:** Bronze  
medalist Suriya Prasathinpimai

**Below:** Crowd at  
Rajadamri intersection



(Photo: Pas)



(Photo: Pas)



(Photo: Pas)

**Above:** Gold medalist  
Manus Boonjumnong