

Thai-language newspapers – November 2, 2004

November 2, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – November 2, 2004</p> <p>* The vice spokesman of TRT believes that the black magic flags buried with the names of TRT MPs (Noi – Sudarat, Minister of Public health and Brook – movie star and MP) in the soil at an abandoned gasoline storehouse may have been placed there by the opposition. This is black magic and mind games at the opening of the election campaign.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>The former General Director of Religion, Preecha Kuntiya, asked for information from Meechai Kitboonchoo, a cardinal. He is worried about the advertising of the book, “The Power of Life” that is promoting Christianity by using famous people such as movie stars and singers.</p> <p>* Thaksin opened the government house to discuss with NGOs and villagers to set up a “National Congress of Community Leaders” in order to get them to join the Prime Minister to solve the problems and the poor and problems of land.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – November 2, 2004</p> <p>* Bloody news – The dead body of Ms. Pattama Juysiangpro, 18-years-old, first year vocational student of Technique Sirvattana, Prakanong, Bangkok, was found in a drainage ditch at the back of the Miyazava School building. The doctor did not find any wound, but assumed that her head was pressed in the water and she drowned.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>The Law Society sent a team of lawyers to investigate the truth in Tak Bai as well as listen to claims of detainees. Under martial law, militants can only be detained for seven days. After that they have to be sent to an investigating officer.</p>

How to float diesel fuel?

November 2, 2004

How
to float diesel fuel?
– November 2, 2004

Wisarut reports:

Most people agree with the professors at the Thai Chamber of Commerce University that the Fuel Funds and the excise tax on fuel, license plates, and automobiles should be used to subsidize Skytrain-Subway tickets.

Subsidizing cheap diesel is not working at all. The government still is about 100 billion in debt from fuel subsidies. This will compel the floating of the price of gasoline, but what about diesel? They will eventually have to float the price of other fuels as well, but how can they gradually increase the diesel price without hurting their election prospects?

More automobiles (imported and assembled locally) have been registered and fuel importation has hit a high—a sure sign of the failure of campaigns for the reduction of fuel consumption since the government is unwilling to offend vested interests and they want to please voters too much. The opinion on the subway subsidies by fuel tax can be seen [here](#).

The Death of the Far Eastern Economic Review

November 2, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Interesting look at the [death of the *Far Eastern Economic Review*](#) as Asia's last weekly magazine following its editorial gutting.

Earlier: 2001: [The death of *AsiaWeek*](#) and [Epitaph for a magazine](#).

Halloween horror for TRT members

November 2, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Halloween horror for TRT members](#)

– *The Nation*, November 2, 2004

Black magic has apparently found its way into the run-up to next year's general election, with several Thai Rak Thai candidate hopefuls having curses laid on them in what appears to be a case of voodoo politics.

Black-and-white flags bearing the names of several Thai Rak Thai candidates were found in holes last week at a deserted oil depot in Bangkok's Klong Toei district...

Black magic has apparently found its way into the run-up to next year's general election, with several Thai Rak Thai candidate hopefuls having curses laid on them in what appears to be a case of voodoo politics.

Black-and-white flags bearing the names of several Thai Rak Thai candidates were found in holes last week at a deserted oil depot in Bangkok's Klong Toei district. The names of Public Health Minister Sudarat Keyuraphan, actor-turned politician Danuporn Punnakan, television host Nitipoom Nawarat and several Thai Rak Thai candidates who have applied to contest the Sathorn-Yannawa constituency appeared on the macabre pieces of cloth.

Sudarat was responsible for handpicking candidates to run in Bangkok constituencies, while Danuporn has just been selected to contest the Sathorn-Yannawa constituency.

"I believe a member of our party did it," said TRT's Pairat Pannarai yesterday, adding that she and several others spotted one party member digging several holes one afternoon while they were visiting constituents.

Pairat said the party member told her the holes were for burying dead puppies in. Pairat did not identify the sex of the party member, who she said was "acting weird".

Pairat inspected the holes and found that they contained three flags inscribed with politicians' names.

All the prospective candidates for the Sathorn-Yannawa constituency were included in the list, except for one name, said Pairat, implicating that person in the black magic activity.

"It just spices up the election situation," said deputy spokesperson Supamat Isarapakdee.

Thai-language newspapers – November 3, 2004

November 3, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – November 3, 2004</p> <p>* Maew complained at the cabinet meeting that he is very exhausted. The ministers let him work alone and do not help his burden. The Bangkok TRT MPs feel lifeless because their counterparts in the provinces received money for reelection and they did not.</p> <p>* Rakkiet, the former Minister of Public Health, was arrested in the case of getting bribes for drugs and medical supplies said that staying and sleeping in the “jail” (Ladyao) is ok and he has enough food and lots of friends. The director of penitentiary hospital will take care of his diabetes.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>After the cabinet meeting, Mr. Jakkrapob Penkae, the government spokesman, announced that the Prime Minister assigned “Jiw” , the deputy PM to arrest “Bung Ron,” Mr. Surachai Ngoenthongfoo, a big drug dealer who is still at large.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – November 3, 2004</p> <p>* Three sex-mad students–two vocational students and and one grade 12–surrendered and admitted that they killed the vocational female student. They wanted to rape her, but the victim tried to run away so they pressed her head in the ditch until she drown.</p> <p>* Democrat Party has a video of TRT Party members giving money to people for the election campaign . It also has 20 witnesses who received the money.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>The father of the 13-year-old student reported at the police station that a 27-year-old female teacher at Bangplama School in Suphanburi Province punished his son by knocking his head. She also ordered 49 classmates to also knock his head. This made his son get a bad headache and vomit so he had to go to the hospital.</p>

Thai-language newspapers – November 4, 2004

November 4, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – November 4, 2004</p> <p>* Sanam Luang will be open on November 9 for Maew to sing and the government will have a festival to promote itself under the motto “look back and look forward, from the grassroots to the taproots.” Students and youth from all over the country will have dinner with PM and he will sing a song with the singers of Academy Fantasia in concert.</p> <p>* Pinehurst caddies informed the polices that they were threatened by two men after the dispute with their employers in the case of the "fat, old, and short caddies."</p>	<p>*</p> <p>At Centruy Park Hotel on November 3, the new female M.P. applicants took a seminar organized by the Thai Women’s Parliament Club to learn the technique of running an election campaign.</p> <p>* Luang Por Koon’s condition worsens. Doctors found that his liver is not working right. Followers reveal that they won the lottery with number 966 which is from Luang Por Koon’s car. Also, the vice abbot and his followers made a ceremony to suspend Luang Por Koon’s age.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – November 4, 2004</p> <p>Editorial: Participation-Non-violence</p> <p>It is very kind that His Majesty The King gave the order to Thaksin and asked the government to work gently for solving problem in the South and to let people participate. Also the government should try not to use violence. We hope that the government and all officers will be concerned and seriously try to bring peace back to the South soon. This was also the demand from many groups and the government accepted this, but sometimes the government acts in a different way in practice.</p> <p>A peaceful solution and giving people participation is harmonious with the Buddhism way and with democratic principles. This is not only for solution for the southern problems, but also the way to solve the drugs, corruption, and problems of the poor. The violent way is the way of a dictator.</p>	
<p>* Strong bad smell around the world! During a Senate meeting, Pratin Suntiprapob, Bangkok senator, punched Adul Wanchaitanawong, Maehongson senator, after arguing about the Tak Bai report from Jernsak Pintong.</p>	<p>* 39 students from grade 4 and 6 of Watnongyaisap School in Suphanburi almost died from eating the fruit called Saboo Khao that grows in a herbal tree garden. They vomited, had diarrhea and fainted before being sent to the hospital.</p>

Old Photos of Victory Monument and Silom Road

November 5, 2004

Categories: Old photos and films



This photo was taken circa 1951, the year Rajwitee Hospital in the southwest corner of the circle was built (it is still there today). The photo has been reproduced in many books about Bangkok, including ones by historian Anake Nawigamune. Anyone familiar with today's Victory Monument has to marvel at the open green areas all around the circle..



The photo above was taken in 1946 by Peter Williams Hunt, a British pilot who took aerial photographs of Bangkok and vicinity around 1946 for the Allied Forces to determine if Thailand could produce enough rice for war indemnity. North is in the direction of the upper road on the right (Phahonyothin Road). This photo was reprinted in the limited-edition book, *Bangkok 1946-1996*, published by the Siam Cement Foundation in cooperation with the Fine Arts Department in 1996. The book has the same basic premise as [Bangkok Then and Now](#), but on a much larger scale with 73 sets of large "then and now" photos. We have no idea where you can find a copy—perhaps at the used book section of Chatuchak Market.



Victory Monument area in days gone by
— November 5, 2004

Above is an undated photo of the Victory Monument area.



Silom Road 85 years on...

Above: Silom Road, circa 1920s. Undated photo from Katlee Sampatisiri. "Silom Road in those days was not paved and was very dusty. This is picture of a wooden bridge taken by my father. This is only one I have."

Right: Silom Road, 2006 at Saladaeng Skytrain Station



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Sao Ching Cha – The Giant Swing
This section has been moved [here](#).

Thai-language newspapers – November 5, 2004

November 5, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – November 5, 2004</p> <p>* Mr. Thossaporn Sirisumphan, a secretary of Bureaucratic System Development Commission at the Tourism and Sports Ministry said that after using the CEO governor strategies that tourism is booming with revenue of 300,000 million. Only 22 provinces will be hot targets for potential tourism development such as Ayuthaya, Chonburi, Trad, Rayong, Kanchanaburi, Prachaubkirkhun, Petchburi, Chiangrai, Chiangmai, Maehongson, Pisanulik, Sukhotai, Nakornratchasima, Khonkaen, Ubonrachathani, Udonthani, Krabi, Trang, Pang-nga, Phuket, Songkhla and Suratthani.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>It is revealed that the budget of 200 million baht for the “From Grassroots to Taproots” celebration is compsed 10 million baht taken from 20 different ministries. Thaksin specified that is an urgent budget for government to show what they have done for people at Muang Thong Thani on November 6-10.</p> <p>* The police caught Mr. Pipat Wiwatananon, a man who called 191 and threatened to bomb the government house. After investigation, it is found that he is stressed because he is jobless so he got drunk and did not remember what he had done.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – November 5, 2004</p> <p>* “Vake Malaengsab” showed how to eat live cockroaches on Modern Nine T.V. channel on the ‘Queer Eating’ program . He has eaten 25 cockroach per day for 40 years and is still in good health.</p>	<p>* In</p> <p>Nakorn Pathom Province, a robber tried to steal gold from a gold shop in Buathong Market. He was arrested because the owner could hear the noise from the thief trying to bore into the wall where the safe was. Gold worth almost five million baht was in the safe. The other three who were waiting in a car escaped.</p>

Paper models!

November 5, 2004

Paper models! –

November 5, 2004

Take a look at the desks in offices around town—they are covered with tiny paper models. The latest fad is this [Taiwanese site](#) featuring links to downloadable paper models (on the left side of the page).

2B under attack

November 5, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok

2B under attack

– November 5, 2004

This morning 2Bangkok.com began receiving reports from other webmasters about unusual volumes of page requests being directed though their servers attempting to download the entire 2B site. We do not know who is doing this, but are confident that our hosting can survive this kind of assault.

Recent interesting stories: The only news in English about how the [mass](#)

[transit nationalization plan was canceled](#) and the

[Skytrain company will be punished by being denied extensions](#).

2B also helped foil [S.S.S.](#)

[Jewelry](#).

Premier Thaksin stuns Suriya by revoking the plan for Skytrain-Subway nationalization

November 6, 2004

Categories: Mass Transit, Skytrain, Subway, The Thaksin Years

Mass Transit Nationalization Cancelled

Premier Thaksin stuns Suriya by revoking the plan for Skytrain-Subway nationalization – translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, November 4-6, 2004

Premier Thaksin has made Minister Suriya lose face by revoking the nationalization plan on the [Skytrain-Subway](#).

Premier Thaksin tells OTP and MOTC that they should never apply the coercive measures to force the private sector to sell their stocks to the government. Otherwise, the government will have very a bad image with investors. The government will consider the nationalization only when both BMCL and BTSC have come up a consensus to sell their stock to the government—such as when they are in trouble.

This nationalization plan is just a proposal by MOTC, but not the central government. The government should never meddle with BTSC unless the company has committed a serious crime that hurts public interests.

Same can be said about BMCL. The government should only exercise their rights to purchase 25% of BMCL stock instead. Other measures are the negotiation as well as the purchase of stocks from minor shareholders until the government becomes a major shareholder. Premier Thaksin has pointed out that the system can be expanded and a joint ticket can be implemented without the nationalization process. Even legal experts said the nationalization process has no law to back it up.

OTP also said that they have never applied coercive measures on the private sector to sell stock. They are trying to negotiate with both companies though.

The system interaction can be the purchase of basic structure and keep the old concession holder or the new private concession holders. Another option is a joint venture between the public and private sectors to form a single operator without applying a nationalization process. OTP and MOTC will have to review the plan if the government is not opting for nationalization. Same can be said about the joint ticket system.

It would violate the constitution if the government have come up with the law to apply only to a particular group of people or legal entity. Furthermore, it would be very unfair to use the money from nationwide taxpayers to nationalize both systems that please Bangkokians and Bangkok suburbians

The nationalization board also gets no clear sign from MOTC about the nationalization plan, dragging the project down further. The Board got more information from the media than from MOTC about the right price to purchase from both companies.

Minister Suriya felt so upset after getting the response from Premier Thaksin on Nationalization Plan that he refused to speak to the press.

Super K also said that BTSC is not ready to negotiate with MOTC and they prefer to wait and see what the government is going to do next.

Police use new camera to stop speeding

November 6, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Police](#)

[use new camera to stop speeding](#) – TNA, November 6, 2004

...The camera records images of vehicles that exceed the speed limit, including their licence number.

...The police have placed the new camera at a checkpoint outside Hua Hin Hospital on Phetchakasem Road in Thailand's southern province of Prachuap Khiri Khan.

...The images will then be sent to the provincial offices of the Department of Land Transport before the drivers are notified of the offence and fine.

Indonesian scientists dispute discovery of new human species

November 6, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Indonesian
scientists dispute discovery of new human species](#)

— Kyodo, November 6, 2004

A group of Indonesian scientists is challenging a claim by their Australian counterparts to have discovered a new and tiny human species in an eastern Indonesian island, accusing them of committing a "scientific terrorism," reports said Saturday.

Prominent palaeoanthropologist Teuku Jacob reportedly said a dwarf-sized skeleton recently found in a limestone cave at Liang Bua on remote Flores Island does not represent a new species, Homo floresiensis, as claimed by Australian scientists Mike Morwood and Peter Brown.

"The skeleton is...simply a fossil of a modern human, Homo sapiens, that lived about 13,000 to 18,000 years ago," local newspapers quoted Jacob as saying.

...Jacob criticized the announcement of the discovery without the consent of the Indonesian archeologists who participated in the find and accused the Australian scientists of committing "scientific terrorism."...

Shanghai: Where Blade Runner meets Las Vegas

November 8, 2004

[Shanghai:
Where Blade Runner meets Las Vegas](#) –

The Guardian, November 8, 2004

Thanks to Nils for pointing out this article: ...*China currently consumes 40% of the world's concrete and 90% of its steel. Much of that is suspended above the heads of Shanghai's pedestrians. At one point in the mid-90s, one quarter of the world's construction cranes were at work there...*

A tale of two newspapers: The government fair

November 8, 2004

Categories: A Tale of Two Newspapers

Typically in "A tale of two newspapers" 2Bangkok.com shows the differences in the English-language dailies, but today we are highlighting an unusual and nearly identical run of facts, quotes and details.

Major parts of both articles in the *Post* and *Nation* are translated from [this Thai-language article in Matichon](#) or this article in [ThaiPost](#) (both have the same interview with a 'Mrs. Nakorn Saetang'). The *Post* translation turns out a bit more negative. *The Nation* saves its negative comments for a separate thesaurus-emptying [editorial](#) (see below).

[Buses throng to TRT fair from all over – People get money, food and transport to attend](#) – *Bangkok Post*, November 6, 2004

...About 500 buses were lined up in the car park at Impact Arena, one of the country's leading trade exhibition and concert venues.

One visitor, Nakhon sae Tang who travelled from Khon Kaen, said that she was told to get on the bus by an MP.

"I don't know the details of the fair. I'll check it out once I'm in. All I know is that there are lots of free stuff," she said.

Mrs Nakhon did not know if she would come back. "It depends on if the MP provides transportation. And I'll have to see if I'm free to come again," she said.

A visitor from Buri Ram said that people from every district there were invited to come to the fair.

He said those from Muang district received 1,000 baht each while those from other districts received about 300-400 baht each to come to the fair.

He said two buses brought people from each district, but six buses were used in Muang district.

"We left at 10pm on Friday and stopped at gas stations and waited for each other. We had plenty of food and drinks all the way to Bangkok. We sang karaoke too."

A group of housewives from nearby Ayutthaya said that they were approached by a village head to visit the fair. "He invited me to get on a bus to Muang Thong Thani, and said that the prime minister would be giving away facial cream. If he really does, I'd like to have some," said one member of the group.

[GOVERNMENT EXHIBITION: TRT dishes out goodies to tempt voters](#) – *The Nation*, November 6, 2004

...About 500 buses had taken thousands of visitors from various provinces to the venue at Muang Thong Thani.

Nakhon Saetang of Khon Kaen said her local MP urged her to make the trip.

"I had no idea what the event would be like but was told there would be a lot of hand-outs. I've never seen this kind of event from any government. It's like a temple fair with a lot of gifts," she said.

A visitor from Buri Ram said residents were given Bt300-Bt1,000 each to travel to the event, all from the coffers of the Buri Ram provincial administrative organisation.

A housewife from Ayutthaya province said a community leader told her to visit the exhibition. "I don't mind having a face-lift cream as a gift," she said...

A visit to the government fair

November 8, 2004

Categories: Uncategorized

A visit to the government fair – November 8, 2004

Wisarut visited the “From Grassroots to Taproots” fair

and reports: *TRT members have recruited thousands of local folks and students from the rural areas to travel to Bangkok to see Premier Thaksin’s exhibit “From Grassroots to Taproots”–with free meals and transportation. This causes editors from ThaiPost, The Nation, Kom Chad Luek, Matichon, Naew Nah, etc. to write very satirical comments on this project.*

Premier Thaksin’s “From Grassroots to Taproots” (Hall 1-8) and Governor Aphirak’s “The Best of Bangkok” (Hall 9-10) are featured at the fair.

Governor Aphirak’s “The Best of Bangkok” shows a cutting edge by promising many green trees right from the orchards around Bangkok eastern suburbs and spas along with massages around Bangkok to help people relax. No security with metal doors will be needed.

However, PM Thaksin’s “From Grassroots to Taproots” has the cutting edge in that it speaks the same language as most rural folks well as the urban people can relate to. This creates a powerful psychological effect.

... the list of crisis in each year

from 2001-2004 that Premier Thaksin has faced. It was presented with a nationalistic tone which pleases rural folks as well as the silent majority in urban areas. When both the silent majority and rural folks talk the same language, NGOs and intellectuals become frightened that the masses will turn against them. However, the Southern insurgency is not in the list since it is not finished yet...

There is also a large model of seven mass transits lines around Bangkok to be implemented in six years.

Of interest to 2Bangkok.com readers are details of a river connection mentioned in an event brochure:

Traffic solutions for Bangkok and vicinity

Water Transportation:

1) New development enabling Sathorn Pier to connect with other transportation systems such as buses , Skytrain, and Subway

2) Improve services of the existing canal routes

– Saen Saeb route (Phan Fah Bridge – Pratoonam – Bang Kapi – Wat Sribunruen)

– Memorial Bridge – Phet Kasem 26 (via Phaseechoen Canal)

– Sathorn – Dao Khanong

– Sathorn – Klong Toei

3) New canal routes

– Wat Sribunruen – Minburi

– Dao Khanong – Wat Singh

– Lad Pho Canal – Klong Toei

– Sathorn – Lad Pho Canal – Phra Padaeng – Pak Nam

– Ying Charoen Market (Saphan Mai) – Ram Khamhaeng

Thai-language newspapers – November 8-9, 2004

November 9, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – November 9, 2004</p> <p>* On November 8 in Songkhla, 2000 students of Thaksin University protested the new management team. They do not agree with the unclear public hearing that resulted in the university using the ‘informal system’ because they say the university is not ready for this.</p> <p>* After checking the documents of TRT, the advisors of election laws have a consensus to allow TRT to use Sanam Luang for its press conference and speeches on November 12. Other political parties will be allowed if they follow the procedures.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>The Clean and Clear Thailand Foundation shakes hands with <i>Matichon</i> to combat corruption by setting up the hotline for complaints and to propagate a new model to strengthen and make Thailand clean and clear. The first two targets are the Election Commission work and municipality of Yasothorn Province.</p> <p>The number is 0-2547-1186 or fax 0-2547-1185 or mail to the editor’s desk of <i>Matichon</i>, 12 Tessabannaruman, Kwang Ladyao, Chatujak Bangkok 10900.</p>
<p><i>Matichon</i> – November 8, 2004</p> <p>* Mahachon Party asked that the Election Commission invest the TRT "Grassroots fair" saying that the government uses the budget to attract people from all over the country to join.</p>	<p>* Nakorn</p> <p>Sri Thammarat – Police hold a lunatic who is suspicious looking in front of the Tungsong District office. They find that he has photos of important persons, documents, and internal place maps of Nakorn Sri Thammarat Province.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – November 9, 2004</p> <p>* Bloody news – A jealous guy who was the boyfriend of a teacher in Wat Poethong School, Chinat Province, shot her as she was teaching 30 2 to 5-year-old pupils.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>After checking the government fair, the chairperson of the Election Commission, Police General, Vassana Permlap, said to the critics that the fair is not wrong and they should not complain. It is incorrect if the royal decree has declared an election date, but there is no decree yet. The law bans only the transfer people to vote, but not to travel to the fair.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – November 8, 2004</p> <p>* The forgotten victims who were put in the jail by the Police Major General at Lumpini police station are now afraid that they will be kidnapped and killed on their way they go back home to Sukhothai, so they ran away and hid in the “Kwan Pochana” restaurant.</p>	<p>* After being informed by the policeman that the old Thai Airway employee hanged himself, his brother from Yala province rented a van for 13,000 baht to get his dead body.</p> <p>Earlier: <i>Thairath</i>’s headline on Sunday: An old man who worked with Thai Airways hanged himself. He left 15 million baht, but has no relative to receive his inheritance.</p> <p>* In Nongkai province, two men tried to steal dog meat from each other and ended up having a sword fight with each other like in a Chinese film.</p>

India-Asean rally will put Asian Highway to the test

November 9, 2004

Categories: Highways and Roads

[India-Asean rally will put Asian Highway to the test](#) –

The Straits Times, November 9, 2004

...The 1,400km trilateral highway will link India with Thailand and Myanmar, and eventually with Singapore, Malaysia, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

The Asian Highway will eventually make it possible to drive a goods truck from Vientiane in landlocked Laos, or from Chiang Mai in Thailand, due west to India's north-east – with a link north to Kunming in China...

Telling it like it is

November 10, 2004

Categories: Signs and Billboards

Telling it like it is... –

November 10, 2004

Straight-talking sign outside the Silom Galleria, a shopping center that mainly caters to busloads of Japanese tourists.

Earlier: ["Sweet Teen" condom billboard](#)

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



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Thai-language newspapers – November 10, 2004

November 10, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – November 10, 2004</p> <p>* The cabinet meeting on November 9 at Muang Thong Thani is transparent. The secretary of the cabinet, Mr. Bavornsak Suwanno, said the government is insisting on an open meeting and it is the only one in the world to let people and media participate in listening in.</p>	<p>* The National Buddhist Office cooperates with the Consumer Protection Office and Public Relation Department to slow down the advertisement of “Power for Living.” They worry it will be fashionable to use money to buy faith. Past articles on Thai Christians on TV.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – November 10, 2004</p> <p>* The 23 police from two police stations in Ayuthaya Province used electric shock on Mr. Anuwat’s penis. The officers were transferred. Mr. Anuwat is a rescue volunteer of Ayuthayarumjai Foundation. He was arrested and accused of snatching a golden necklace. The police manhandled him and forced him to confess by using electric shock. A team of investigators will be set up to find the truth because Mr. Anuwat’s wound became infected and he is still in the hospital.</p> <p>* The Senate meeting on November 9 passed a law that women can use their maiden name after they get married.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>A 21-year-old recently graduated engineering student of Technology Prajomklao Thonburi University got a little bit drunk. He volunteered to climb up a building for female friend who forget her key. The building has a ledge with a width of only five inches and he fell. His head, leg and arm are broken and died.</p>

Thai-language newspapers – November 11, 2004

November 11, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – November 11, 2004</p> <p>* Four private organizations (The Chamber of Commerce of Thailand, the Bank Association, the Artists' Group and Corporate Alliance Organization) with raise funds to help the situation in the South by arranging concerts and selling souvenirs. The duration of this project is three months (December, 2004-February, 2005) and they hope to raise 200 million baht.</p> <p>* The mayor of Yasotorn Province explained that the loans the province is giving is helping people in communities to have a revolving fund. This project was begun in 1999 and arranges 50,000 baht for each community and is supervised by the community committees.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>The 50,000 children who have no nationality or no evidence as being registered are happy to be able to study free for 12 years according to the new regulation from the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security will arrest and purge the gangsters who hire Cambodian children to be beggars in Bangkok.</p>
<p><i>Kom Chad Luek</i> – November 11, 2004</p> <p>* Mr. Narong Kamklin, a 52-year-old lawyer, stressed because of having cancer, jumped from Prapinklao Bridge. Police found a letter written by him dated November 11 warning the Prime Minister not to be misguided in the power.</p> <p>* Bloody news – A rapist who had been released from jail three months ago was shot in the head and penis. His dead body was found on the flyover in front of Mahisara School, Nakornrachasima Province.</p>	<p>* The closing day of the government "Grassroots fair" was crowded with too many people. This is because the Public Health booth was selling and distributing revitalizing and brightening cream for the women.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – November 11, 2004</p> <p>Editorial: The manhandled and forgotten</p> <p>The editor praises the Department of Rights and Liberty Protection and The Thai Law Society that helps the victims who were maltreated by the police. Not only the forgotten victims in jail and the guy who was shocked by electricity, but even the recent case of the tourists kicked by police in Phuket. It is believed that there are many incidents like this never reported in the news and victims have no voice to complain against police who have guns and the law in hand.</p> <p>So <i>Thairath</i> is pleased that these two organizations may be a harbor for people. Recently they demanded to the government and the Nation Police office must improve the criminal investigation process to be in the line with the constitution and civilized countries. But it is not sure who will hear and take action.</p>	

‘Tiny Taiwan’

November 11, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

‘Tiny Taiwan’ – November
11, 2004

Conor writes: *CNN.com is featuring a [travel article](#) about Chinese food, especially breakfast food, in Taiwan: “One great place to sample Chinese breakfast food is Taiwan. The tiny leaf-shaped island off China’s southern coast is one of the world’s best places for fantastic Chinese food. And the cooking starts at sunrise on almost every block in residential areas in the island’s densely populated cities.” I guess it’s helpful to learn that good Chinese food can be found in China of all places. However I’m not sure if “tiny” is quite the best word to describe the 36,000 square kilometers which make up the world’s 28th largest island. Sure does look small on that world map when compared to the US of A.*

Maeklong Railroad Stock

November 12, 2004

Categories: Thai Railroads



(Photo: Robert M. Boer)



(Photo: Robert M. Boer)

Maeklong railway stock

– November 12, 2004

[Maeklong railway](#)

[news](#)

[Main Thai Railways/SRT page](#)

More photos from Robert M. Boer of Rail Asia of the Maeklong stock.

Above: Samut Sakhon, Mahachai depot on April 28th 1995. An old goods wagon waits for here final journey to the scrap yard. This is an original wagon from the TCR – Tachin Railway Company.

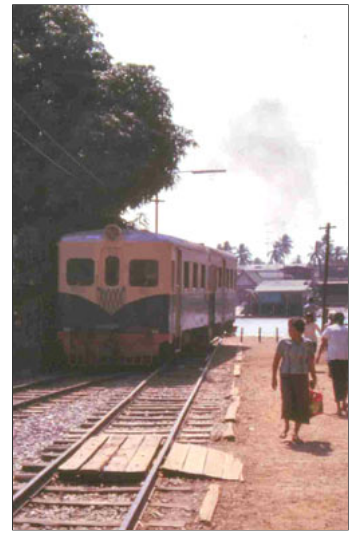
Left: In a corner of the Mahachai depot on March 23rd 1986 one still could find locomotive 651 Bo Bo (diesel electric) Sulzer / Oerlikon / Henschel 25936 – 1947. All four of them for filled their last duty on the Maeklong line.



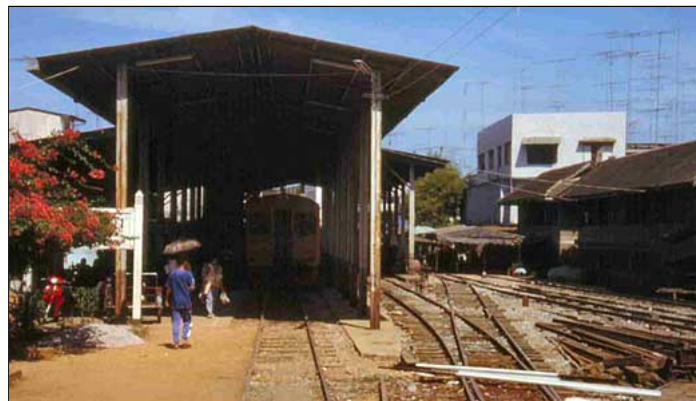
(Photo: Robert M. Boer)

Above: Mahachai, April 25th 1987. A mystery locomotive appeared on the scene. Ruston & Hornby CI VPHL 3511128, that's all I know, nor where it came from, why it was on the Mahachai yard and where it went afterwards.

Right: Samut Songkhram, Maeklong station on March 29th 1986. Diesel Motor Car D.8 is reversing on the outer end of the Maeklong line. On the same spot now is a small restaurant with the track in concrete under the tables.



(Photo: Robert M. Boer)



(Photo: Robert M. Boer)



(Photo: Robert M. Boer)

Above: Maeklong station and yard on March 25th 1995. No more reversing the tracks are laying idle in the sun. Under the roof APD 1030 + BTD 12 as train 85 / 86.

Left: Maeklong station and yard on February 11th 1999. The yard is fully overgrown. Under the roof this time Dmu 1210-1213 as train 85 / 86

[Maeklong railway news](#)
[Main Thai Railways/SRT page](#)

Thai-language newspapers – November 12, 2004

November 12, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – November 12, 2004</p> <p>* Maew orders a big merit-making ceremony at the government house. The best auspicious number is “4” so the ceremony will include 400 monks from all over the country. It is also the fourth anniversary of parliament and will be organized on November 24. Mr. Wissanu Kruengam, Deputy Prime Minister, denied this is not related to the victims killed in the south.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>Radon gas was found in Songkhla Lake. This raises the risk of people to lung cancer. The Office of Nuclear Power for Peace is cooperating with the National Research Committee to do research and they found that concentrations radon gas is higher than the standard.</p>
<p><i>Kom Chad Luek</i> – November 12, 2004</p> <p>* After being pointed out by their victim, two police officers (a police major and police sergeant major) who used electric shock on a prisoner’s penis were ordered to quit from their jobs.</p> <p>* Bloody news – Again a "bus victim." A girl, a student grade 8 from Satri Mahapruttraram School fell down from bus no. 169. Her head hit the road she died after being operated on in the hospital.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>Bloody news – A 4-year-old boy imitates a movie from TV. he supposes himself to be a hero and uses his father’s gun to shoot and kill his 9-year-old sister.</p>

The Korat Post

November 13, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[*The Korat Post*](#)

– November 13, 2004

Did you know the Northeast has an English-language news monthly?

Rattanakosin Island Waterfront Reclamation 2001-2004

November 14, 2004

Categories: Communities

Rattanakosin Island Waterfront Reclamation

Bangkok on the waterfront

Update: With the change in Bangkok Governors, the ambitious plans to redevelop the Bangkok waterfront has effectively been canceled: [BMA](#)

[set to save Ta Tien from Samak mall threat](#), *The Nation*,

November 14, 2004

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration is likely to scrap a plan by former governor Samak Sundaravej to demolish old buildings in the Ta Tien area and replace them with a shopping mall, a city executive said yesterday.

Trungjai Buranasomphob, an advisor to the governor, said after reconsidering the project on the orders of Bangkok Governor Apirak Kosayodhin, the BMA felt that the area's old buildings should remain...

The Nation has an [interesting article](#) (Note: The Nation often changes their directory structure and this link no longer works) on the upcoming 16-year, 15 billion baht plan to reclaim the Rattanakosin area for preservation and tourism. The plan is controversial because it will remove many structures erected after the Rama V period (post 1910), including the National Theatre, the Thai Dance School, and some buildings belonging to Thammasat University. This will create riverfront parks and line-of-sight views of the oldest temples and palaces. The present population of the area will be reduced from 200,000 to 90,000.

The Thammasat Factor

Probably the most vigorous protests will be over the relocation of undergraduate students from Thammasat University. The university has always been a hotbed of student activism and protests in the area have been central catalysts in Thailand's democratization over the years. Hopefully, there will be a way to free the waterfront and preserve active student life.

Necessary?

It is unusual to find national treasures and prime cultural tourist attractions hemmed in the way they are here. Bangkok's scenic waterfront (that's right, it's scenic) is obscured by nondescript buildings. While the character of the neighborhood will undoubtedly change, the ancient monuments deserve space and respect. We hope they press forward with the plan in some form.

Chao Phraya Waterfront Park Already Open

If anyone wants to see the beginning of what these parks will look like, go to Phra Sumen Fort (at the northwest corner of Rattanakosin Island). The fort has been restored and surrounded by a [fabulous waterfront area called Santichaiprakarn Park](#). A quick stroll through and one can start to realize that Bangkok can hope to one day have a riverfront promenade as impressive as the one in Kowloon, Hong Kong. One can also see the [Rama VIII Bridge](#) construction from the park—another spectacular addition to the waterfront.

Note: For some reason, a graphic that is included with the article in print—the snidely titled chart "Unwanted buildings and communities"—does not appear with the online version, so we have reproduced it below.

Unwanted buildings and communities

Tourism Information Centre of the Tourism Authority of Thailand the Office of the Council of State National Theatre Thai Dancing School	Relocate the school and demolish the buildings to open up the vista to the Front Palace (National Museum)
Thammasat University	Demolish some buildings to create an art-and-culture yard
Tha Prachan and Tha Chang community	Remove structures encroaching on the river and demolish some of the buildings
Navy Club	Remove and replace with a garden
Tha Tien community and Pak Klong Talad (fresh market)	Relocate and change the area into a garden
Rajini School	Relocate and replace with a garden and

Source: Project survey and planning conducted by Synchon Group Co. Ltd according to the Master Plan to conserve and develop Krung Rattanakosin Old Town

From *The Nation*, May 27, 2001

Updates

– on various projects around the Rattanakosin area

[Govt to revive city 'Champs Elysee' project](#) – *Bangkok Post*, April 26, 2008

Buildings and street furniture will be upgraded to be on a par with those of the Champs Elysee in Paris. The plan is to promote the avenue as a cultural route with upscale shops, including a high-end hotel.

The first phase, costing 1.6 billion baht, is to redevelop buildings and footpaths on the avenue. Important works include the 107-million-baht underground walkway and 487-million-baht renovation works on vintage buildings, and others.

... 'I do not reject business and tourism. But this area has multi-layer land use, cultural importance and old community settlements and all stakeholders should be given the right to have a say how they think this area should be developed,' he said.

Unfortunately, the work plan is handled by a consultant firm, he noted.

"Where are the people, community and stakeholders? This is a very big, crucial area and what the government will do is let a group of experts decide what the area should become," he said.

With regard to the original plan, the NESDB had commissioned a group of consultant firms to work out the master plan study in 2002. The group comprised Creative Development Co, SJA-3D Co and A-Seven Company.

Fears

[for giant swing](#) – *The Nation*, February 26, 2005

[Ratchadamnoen plan won't](#)

[spoil downtown](#) – *Bangkok Post*, February 24, 2005

...According to Utis Kaothien, senior NESDB adviser overseeing the project, it would be based on the principle of sustainable development to preserve the area's original character, the environment and promote tourism.

"The government will issue its final conclusion within the next two years whether or not it will allow the construction of a shopping complex in the area," he said...

The second phase, which is to include skytrain and subway routes and accommodations improvement, is expected to be completed by 2012.

The skytrain is to be extended from the National Stadium through to Mahanak, Lan Luang, Phan Fa Lilat, Phra Ahthit to Prannok, while the subway would run from Hua Lamphong station through Chinatown, Pak Khlong Talat, Bangkok Yai, Tha Phra to Bang Wa...

Dreams of the past

– February 3, 2005

An article from 1997 detailing the ambitious, but unrealized plans for downtown Bangkok:

Ambitious planner hopes to turn city into utopian wonder

– *The Nation*, December 30, 1997

Forget Venice. One ambitious city planner hopes to turn Bangkok, or at least the more historic districts of Rattanakosin and Thonburi, into a "Paris of the East".

"We have a very beautiful city," asserts Manop Bongsadadt, the chairman of the Housing Development at Chulalongkorn University. "Rattanakosin and Thonburi are nearly 250 years old. My dream is to turn these areas into an open museum, to make them as handsome as Paris." You can call him blind, but clearly Manop does not lack vision. Along with the older sections of Bangkok, he hopes to transform an entire swathe of the city stretching along the Chao Phraya River.

Nor does he lack influence, for Manop also serves as an adviser to Bhichit Rattakul, the governor of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA). He is part of a team of urban planners who see a window of opportunity to lay the groundwork that will make the city a more livable and attractive place.

"This is the best time to do it," noted Manop. "The economy is slow so land management is easier, the zoning rules are going to be changed, and the governor has a vision for the future." Still, his dreams seem impossible to realise, until you consider the fact that he is patient. "In London, it has taken 200 years to get a street along the Thames River, and along the Seine it has taken 250 years," he notes.

*The process is just beginning in Bangkok, or rather will begin with the adoption of the Water Frontage Setback Bill, Manop told *The Nation* in an interview earlier this year. The law is designed to open up*

space along the river by controlling the height and usage of waterfront buildings.

The three metres of land closest to the river will be reserved as a flooding embankment, buildings constructed from three to 15 metres of the riverbank will be restricted to a height of eight metres, while buildings 15 to 45 metres from the river will be allowed no taller than 16 metres.

"Once that law is in place, we can do a lot of things," said an enthusiastic Manop.

Another key step will be the adoption of a new City Plan, which is due to come out in July or August of 1998. BMA officials are currently drawing it up, after which it will be submitted to the Ministry of Interior, and then to a public hearing...

"We're planning light rail transit to serve the district, we're putting wires underground and His Majesty the King wants to build a new bridge connecting Bangkok to Samut Prakan," Manop said...

Downriver from Rama III is Klong Toey. "An interesting area, the question is how to make it a livable place," muses Manop. "Perhaps we can use the London Docklands as a model for development." A massive urban rehabilitation scheme crowned by Canary Wharf, the development of the London Docklands development was controversial because it forced out many of the working class labourers who had lived around the former port. Re-development of the Bangkok port area would almost certainly result in a similar conflict with the current residents of Klong Toey.

"The conflict is there," admits Manop. "We will have some problems." In between the new financial centre and Klong Toey is the old Maenam train station, now an oil storage depot. "It's so dangerous for the city to store oil there, the site should be moved," Manop asserted.

"The land is owned by the State Railways of Thailand, and we are talking to them about leasing 100 rai for a park." Across the river, meanwhile, is Bang Krachao, a huge swamp which is gradually being turned into a park. Development there has been severely restricted as the government slowly goes about buying up the land...

"We are all technocrats, the working atmosphere is so pleasant," sighed Manop. "But we also know we only have a short time in which to work. The next governor will be a pure politician."

[OLD](#)

[BANGKOK: Opponents vow to halt city revamp](#) –

The Nation, December 23, 2004

The government plans to build a huge underground car park under a new public park near Sanam Luang, which will be constructed to honour His Majesty the King...

...If the car park project were to be approved, it would be an about-face by the government. Earlier, its Rattanakosin Island Development Committee shot down the proposal of ex-Bangkok governor Samak Sundaravej to build an underground car park at Sanam Luang.

...The master plan also includes projects designed to build underground crossings along the avenue as well as spelling out how to set aside areas for the construction of an electric rail system, he added.

Earlier: [Samak's development plans being reversed](#) – November 15, 2004

[City](#)

[walking street plan gets new deadline](#) – Bangkok Post, November 6, 2004

...A traffic diversion plan, new mass transit system, and more parking spaces along both ends of the avenue were also planned. Hotels along the Ratchadamnoen Klang avenue including the famous Royal Hotel would be upgraded into five-star boutique hotels. The existing building opposite Mahakan Fort and the Golden Mountain would be upgraded into a three-star hotel.

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration had proposed around 3.2 billion baht for nine projects under the plan.

A source said the city proposed a 962-million-baht construction of three pedestrian underpasses, 305-million-baht renovation of an old city canal, 101-million-baht renovation of Klong Lod, 1.3-billion-baht construction of an underground car park and road repairs in front of the Thai mint museum, 68-million-baht restoration of areas around the Dramatic Arts College, 18-million-baht renovation of Bang Lam Phu and 42-million-baht renovation of the old Internal Trade Department building. The source said the committee had not yet approved the 3.2-billion-baht since it was much higher than that of the master plan, around 504 million baht. He said the BMA was asked to re-evaluate the budget although they generally agreed with the project proposals.

[City](#)

[set to halt car park plan](#) – TNA, October 26, 2004

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration appears set to drop plans to build an underground car park at Sanam Luang following objections from a government committee, a senior city official said yesterday... He said the department would propose an area under Rama VIII Bridge

as an alternative site for the underground carpark.

...The committee's view is that no mega-project can be built on Rattanakosin Island. Large developments would affect the balance of underground water and eventually cause the land to subside, Adul said...

[Community slams plans for Tha Tien](#) – Bangkok Post, May 10, 2004

This plan is back in the news after disappearing since 2002.

Residents of Tha Tien community, one of the city's oldest communities, have denounced a plan to develop the area drawn up by the Committee for Conservation and Development of Rattanakosin and Old Towns.

...Under the plan, most structures would be demolished to pave the way for tree-lined walkways and lawns. Only structures and houses registered as historic sites would stay.

...Buildings along the Chao Phraya river such as Tha Prachan community, Royal Navy Club and Pak Khlong Talad market – lifeline of the flower and vegetable trade – face the same fate.

...The director of Onrepp's natural and cultural environment conservation division, Prasertsuk Chamornmarn, said only structures belonging to the state such as Royal Navy Club would be affected. The plan would not touch residents.

[Work on old inner city starts in June](#) – Bangkok Post, April 27, 2004

... The BMA would be responsible for sewage system improvement, building six underground walkways under Ratchadamnoen avenue, refurbishing pavements at tourist spots such as Khao San road and Thanon Sib Sam Harn road in Bang Lamphu, and conserving historic buildings on Tanao road.

Utis Kaotien, senior policy adviser from the NESDB, said the first five years of the project would involve basic infrastructure development, pavement refurbishing, and canal restoration. In the second five-year phase the pedestrian walkways would be built.

...The Royal Hotel would be upgraded into a five-star hotel and Thevej Insurance building would become a three-star hotel...

[City council revives controversial Sanam Luang car park project](#) – Bangkok Post, October 2, 2003

"The project was in limbo for so long because of the stupidity of some members in the Rattanakosin City Plan Committee who had opposed it." ... The 30-rai underground car park was designed to for the northern half of the 63-rai Sanam Luang field. At an estimated cost of 900 million baht, it would have two floors with capacity for 300 coaches and 999 cars at a time. Buses would be charged 100 baht an hour and cars 30 baht. Mr Samak said he expected construction to take 18 months.

[Samak revives car park plan](#) – Bangkok Post, October 1, 2003

Bangkok governor Samak Sundaravej is again itching to revive the controversial underground parking project in Sanam Luang... The project has already been rejected by the Committee on Conservation of Rattanakosin and Old Towns on grounds that its construction might damage the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. The committee said a nearby area—the former location of Revenue Department—might be a more suitable site.

* [Email petition from those opposed to the Rattanakosin Island plan](#)

* Suthon Sukphisit has written a [good overview](#) of the conflicting opinions concerning the plan (apart from the Thammasart University issue, which usually dominates the debate).

* On June 17, 2001, *The Nation* printed [another article](#) with more criticism of the plan. It also mentions an idea to bring back the [old Bangkok trams](#).

* [Campus plan spurs march](#) Bangkok Post, June 20, 2001

* [Panel slammed for raping city's landscape](#) Bangkok Post, June 20, 2001

* [Old artifacts found at new car park site](#) Bangkok Post, June 20, 2001

See also [Santichaiprakarn Park](#)

Comment from a reader – November, 2002

From an email we received: *As a recent tourist to Bangkok and then Hong Kong/Kowloon I would like to put in my two cents worth on the planned clearing of riverfront properties to reduce the clutter and vendors and residents so that we tourists can enjoy a scenic view. For your information, the scenic views I relished seeing in Bangkok were the ones where local people actually lived on, worked on and*

used the river: Yes, gardens and parks are nice, but not at the expense of removal of the very vivid life that premeates now. And the raving about Kowloon's waterfront is over-rave. Whereas I'm happy I went to visit Hong Kong/ Kowloon, it is not on my list to return for a second visit because I found it to be too developed, too sterilized...almost as bad as American cities. Bangkok, on the other hand, wakes up the dead in one with it's throngs of people that enjoy their heritage. As a tourist they are what I want to see when I travel. Please don't kill the goose that is laying the golden eggs. Because I have Bangkok on my list as a must return I have fears that the goose may well be dead before I get back. – Atlanta, USA

Rajdamnoen revival? – October 5, 2002

Rajdamnoen Avenue (the street Democracy Monument is on) should be one of the grandest streets in Thailand, but it is lined by dingy old-time businesses housed in dank, leaking buildings. But that may change: *The government will turn Rajdamnoen Avenue into a new shopping street as grand as France's renowned Champs Elysees if Disnadda Diskul, a personal adviser to Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, has his way.... Disnadda said that the Crown Property Bureau (CPB), which owns many buildings along the city's landmark avenue, would not renew any of its expiring rental contracts. He said 137 of the contracts were due to end between now and 2004.... An underground road system, car park and monorail service around the area would also be incorporated into the Rattanakosin island project, Disnadda said. (from The Nation,*

[LOCAL](#)

[CHAMPS ELYSEES: Transforming Rajdamnoen](#))

[Secret](#)

[vote to decide Sanam Luang car park](#) – Bangkok Post, September 6, 2002

The Committee on the Conservation of Rattanakosin and Old Town would meet Governor Samak Sundaravej on Sept 16 to present its decision, which would be made by an unprecedented secret vote. And an earlier article:

[BKK governor denies plans to scupper car park scheme](#)

[Tearing](#)

[down Tha Tien Market](#) – Bangkok Post, August 18, 2002

Governor Samak Sundaravej's plan to have Tha Tien Market torn down to create a "visual space" and a new walkway for tourists, has hit a snag... Tha Tien dwellers were not happy, while the Crown Property Bureau, owner of the land, said it had registered the old quarters as conservation site with the Fine Arts Department and therefore demolition of the area was not possible.

About face on Rattanakosin Island

Excerpted from [Historical](#)

[buildings 'won't be torn down](#), 'The Nation, March 14, 2002

....None of the buildings at Thammasat University and Silpakorn University will be destroyed to develop the area into a cultural attraction for tourists, said Prasong Iemanan, a member of the Committee for Conservation and Development of Rattanakosin City. Every single historical building will remain, Prasong said.

....The committee agreed that the Rattanakosin City area would be turned into a cultural tourism area, and that the various government offices would stay intact. Only buildings without "architectural value" that are obstructing the area's view will be torn down, according to the plan.

Expansion of government offices or academic areas would depend on the people working there, the committee agreed. Silpakorn University, for example, will expand towards the Sanam Chan Royal Grounds, while Thammasat University has already expanded to Rangsit.

[The Nation](#)

reports on a peculiar Thai tradition—Cursing Rites

Students opposing a plan to relocate Thammasat University (TU) undergraduates from Tha Prachan Campus to Rangsit Centre will tomorrow stage a protest and organise a cursing ceremony to wish bad luck on those pushing for the project. The cursing ceremony would be the Si Sa Ket version, widely regarded as the most sacred of all, TU lecturer Charnwit Kasetsiri said yesterday. Chilli and salt would be burnt at the ceremony, Charnwit added.....TU administrators have long planned to relocate the TU undergraduates to Rangsit Campus but the plan has not been implemented due to strong opposition from students.... Charnwit also said that many Thai students and former lecturers abroad had voiced their opposition to the relocation plan, and expressed concerns that the symbol of democracy would be destroyed if the plan was allowed to go ahead.... (excerpted from "Cursing rite, rally at Thammasat," January 28, 2002)

December 13, 2001 – We were forwarded an email petition from those opposed to the Rattanakosin Island plan. You can [read it here](#).

World's largest sleeping Buddha

November 14, 2004

Categories: China

[World's](#)

[largest sleeping Buddha](#) – China Daily,

November 14, 2004

Sculptors work on world's largest sleeping Buddha statue Wednesday in Yiyang County of East China's Jiangxi Province. The gigantic rock work, whose construction started on May 1st, 2002, measures 68-meter-high and 416-meter-long...

Bangkok Subway News 2001-2004

November 15, 2004

Categories: Subway

[Complete details of](#)

[2 new subway lines and 2 new extensions](#) –

Thaipost, November 11, 2004 and *Prachachart Thurakij*,
November 15, 2004

Opening the connecting escalators between Subway
and Skytrain – translated and summarized
from *Manager Online*, October 28, 2004

MOTC Minister Suriya has come to open the connecting escalators
between Subway and Skytrain at Asok Station at 9am on October
28, 2004. This has been built by MRTA. This facility has to be
built since 95% of those who go out of Sukhumvit Subway station
are heading to ride the Skytrain.

Minister Suriya said MRTA should build more connecting viaducts.
MRTA Governor said they are going to open another connection at
Silom by the end of 2004.

Subway temporarily out of service due to fire
extinguisher leak – translated and summarized
from *Manager Online*, October 28, 2004

Many subway passengers including the newscasters from Channel
3 complained about the broken down subway—it went out of service
from 5am to 7:20am.

MRTA said this is due to a leak in fire extinguisher in the subway
tunnel so the power supply had to be shut down to repair the tube
while closing traffic from Hua Lamphong to Lumpinee and running
the system only one way.

Subway passengers short of target
– translated and summarized from *Dailynews*,
September 11, 2004

BMCL told the press that after introducing the first year rate,
the number of passenger is down to an average 150,000 passengers
a day from the target of 240,000 even though the revenue is slightly
down since the passengers generally go a long way (average about
20 baht/trip).

The reason for the lower number of passengers is that many still
have no clue at about about the subway route as well as the gate
to go out. More PR effort is in need. Furthermore, many passengers
turn to the 300 baht smart card (deposit 50 baht and actually
rides 250 baht). The ratio between smart card to token is 40:60
compared to 30:70 in the early days of the subway. Even so, BMCL
will make a PR effort to strongly encourage passengers to use
smart cards which can be used for more than five years without
replacement.

The new promotion will come out of BMCL to boost the number of
passengers, but it needs the approval from the Board of Directors.

Maintaining the subway/Why few handgrips?/How
many sets running? – translated and summarized
from *Manager*

Daily, August 21, 2004

BMCL said the maintenance center service has to be separated from
BMCL since the subway maintenance requires special skills from experts.

So far, BMCL has to pay Siemens (Thailand) 800,000 baht a day for
10 years to keep the subway rolling stock well-maintained—according
to the contract with Siemens. Siemens has to keep a close watch
on the spare part procurement to prevent fraud from poor quality
spare parts supplied by crooked suppliers.

The major overhaul of subway rolling stock will come on the 6th-7th
year of services.

Furthermore BMCL has made four seven-year contracts to keep the
system well-functioned:

- 1) Northern tunnels and stations: Wire & Wireless
- 2) Southern tunnels and stations: Taing Hong Silom
- 3) Escalators & elevators: Worachak International
- 4) Huay Kwang Depot: Ch. Karnchang PCL

If the subway system goes out of order, it must be fixed in 5 minutes
while the turnstile have to be repaired in 30 minutes. Spare instruments
must be ready to replace the broken one. The fine for any delay
is 10% of the contract price.

There are 18 subway sets running while one set is a spare (from
total 19 sets). Each day, the subway must run 9000 km (450 trips
– for the case of 3 minute 45 second headway).

BMCL has 50 maintenance officers while Siemens has supplied 180
maintenance officers and the rest (from 400 maintenance officer)
are dealing with the structure. Those maintenance center must stay
inside the stations and subway sets to be ready for any emergency.
All the screen doors (12 in each station) open a total 400,000 times
a day and they are allowed to go out of order only less than 40

times a day.

Broken aircon is a major complain from subway passengers. There is a reason why BMCL is asking Siemens not to install overhead handles near the doors of the subway cars. BTS has told BMCL that many Skytrain passengers have a bad habit to stand around the Skytrain doors instead of going inside—a bad habit they kept from riding BMTA buses. Therefore, BMCL is asking Siemens not to install any hand rails at the Subway doors.

Sukhumvit Station has the most passenger (40,000 passengers a day), followed by Silom, Phaholyothin, and Lad Phrao respectively.

Monday has the least passengers for the subway (180,000 passengers a day) and it will climb up on Tuesday (nearly 200,000 passengers a day) and Friday has the most passengers (240,000 passengers a day) during weekdays.

On weekends, Chatuchak Station will have the largest number of passengers followed by Lad Phrao, Kamphaengphet, and Queen Sirikit Center.

BTS (Skytrain) carries 300,000 passengers a day while BMCL carry 200,000 passengers a day and BTS has an additional 5-6000 passengers from the subway at Sukhumvit Station.

BTSC and BMCL will eventually have to come up with a joint Smart Card ticket which can be used for both systems, but both companies have to negotiate with their creditors first. This is very critical for BTS since it is required to change the ticket system from the magnetic version to Smart Card system.

Subway has already come up with 5 headway for each period of the day:

1. 6am-9am: 18 set with 3 minute 45 seconds headway (rush hour)
2. 9am-4:30pm: 14 sets with 5 minute headway (non rush hour)
3. 4:30pm-7:30pm: 18 set with 3 minute 45 seconds headway (rush hour)
4. 7:30pm-9:00pm: 14 sets with 5 minute headway (non rush hour)
5. 9pm-midnight: 10 sets with 7 minute headway (late night)

MRTA donating 89.5 million baht to Their Majesties

– MOTC talking with BMCL to come up with discounts

– translated and summarized from *Manager*

Daily, August 17, 2004

MRTA is going to donate 89.5 million baht gained during the special period of the subway opening (July 3 – August 12 which offered a 10 baht flat rate) to Their Majesties. The statistics during this period are:

Average number of daily passengers: 200,000 passengers (weekdays)/250,000 passengers (weekends)

Average revenue – 2 million baht a day

The maximum number of passengers: July 10, 2004 -> 262,794 passengers

The minimum number of passengers: July 3, 2004 (7:19am – 11pm) -> 45,112 passengers

Total Revenue -> 89,572,892 baht

The first year rate of 12-31 baht/trip and the regular rate of 14-36 baht/trip will result in a 50% decrease in the number of passengers.

Therefore, MOTC is going to ask BMCL to come up with a discount offered to frequent passengers to create an incentive to use the Subway since the price hike has a detrimental effect on the number of passengers. The 10 baht-flat rate has generated daily revenue of 2 million baht.

MRTA is also speeding up the bidding plan for massive expansion so as to start new construction by the end of July 2005.



Alternate

subway car design and stamps – August 14, 2004

Above is a rendering of a Mitsubishi-Alstom version of the subway (Siemens eventually ended up making the cars) in front of Wat Arun.

Right is a Malaysian stamp honoring the KL light rail trains.

We wonder when mass transit will appear on a Thai stamp.

UPDATE: There is a Thai subway stamp that was released on August 12 (below). They are being sold at the subway part and ride at the Lat Prae Station.



UPDATE: About the subway stamp [here](#).



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Passengers plummet turning busy Silom Station into a ghost station – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, August 13, 2004

After the subway fare hike to 12 to 31 baht, the number passengers plummeted. Even busy Silom Station has become virtually a ghost station.

MRTA Governor told the press that the actual impact after the fare hike will take a about a month to be seen due to the long weekend. However, MRTA has already predicted that the number of passenger will decrease by 20%

After the test run period (July 3-August 12), the average daily number of passengers is about 250,000 passengers a day – 200,000 passengers on the weekdays and 240,000-260000 passengers during the weekends.

Thai-language forums & the subway fare increase – August 14, 2004

Commentary on what's going on in Thai-language forums:

There is varied opinion about a subway fair hike. Some cry foul since they got benefits from the cheap subway fare while others say: "That's a good way to filter out those bumpkins and slum dwellers from messing around in the Subway system." Some said our BTS and Subway are really clean compared with the dirty NY subway and they even point out the narrow mentalities of those who give a baseless opinion that subways outside of Thailand must be better even though it is actually not always the case. Some also point out Seoul Subway (started in 1971 and expanded at a very impressive rate – nearly rivaled the Tokyo subway in a very short time) which has very fair ticket rates even though they did not recognize that both companies which run the Seoul subway are still deep in debt due to the decreasing numbers of those who live in Seoul and the vicinity.

Therefore, the new railway lines and LRT to feed the Seoul Subway systems are in demand along with a plan to merge both companies to cut down the redundancy. This is despite strong protests from the Subway Union which compels the government to ask the Armed Forces to run the subway during the strikes.

Some even trade their own venomous opinions with one another – a usually habit of Thai netters. Full opinions about Subway fair hike can be seen [here](#) and [here](#).

In my opinion, BMCL better learn from BTSC by issuing the 1-day pass, 3-day pass, 7-day pass and 30-day pass and coordinate with BTSC about smart card system installation to tap more passengers from BTSC who previously cannot go where the Subway goes (Bangsue, Lad Phrao, Chatuchak Weekend Market, Phra Ram 9, Bangsue Railway Station, Queen Sirikit center, Lumpinee etc etc). However, they have to wait until the full rate has been applied to come up with the new things.

[All quiet underground as subway prices go up](#) – TNA, August 13, 2004

Fears that the end of promotional pricing on Bangkok's new underground train line would see a sudden drop in passenger numbers were confirmed today, as passengers spurned the subway on the first day of the new pricing regime.

The message from the public could not have been clearer: flat fares of Bt10 were acceptable, while the new fare structure, with an initial price of Bt12 plus Bt2 for each additional station, were not...

Subway ticket price controversy – August 12, 2004

[Subway company](#)

[refuses to keep down ticket prices](#) – TNA, August 11, 2004

A bitter row has developed between the Mass Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand (MRTA) and the company responsible for running Bangkok's new underground train system, with the latter refusing to keep fares stable at Bt10 until the current oil crisis eases.

During talks yesterday with MRTA governor Praphas Chongsa-nguan, Bangkok Metro Company Limited (BMCL) CEO Sombat Kitchalak refused to accede to requests to maintain the promotional flat fare of Bt10, remaining adamant that fares would rise after 12 August. The fare increases will mean an initial fare of Bt12, with Bt2 for each additional stop.

Mr. Sombat noted that the fare increases were laid out in the contract between the MRTA and BMCL, and that the fares already represented a 15 percent cut on the fares that will be introduced after the first year of operation.

Stressing that the government was heavily subsidising the promotional fares, he said that BMCL already has operational costs of around Bt4 million per day.

However, his insistence was countered by Mr. Praphas's warning that the fare rise on 12 August would lead to a sharp drop in the 200,000 people currently using the service on an average day, with passenger numbers down by as much as 20 percent.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Air quality sampling unit

– July 31, 2004

Air quality sampling unit at Suthisarn Station (right). An [earlier photo](#) of one of the units at a Skytrain station.

Too few subway passengers

– translated and summarized from *Siam Turakij*,

August 1-7, 2004

MRTA is surveying areas around Bangkok, Thonburi

and Nonthaburi for new subway lines – translated

and summarized from *Manager Daily*, July

27, 2004

MRTA is surveying the areas for three new lines and extensions:

1) Blue Ring – Blue Line (Hua Lamphong – Bang Khae, Bangsue – Charansanitwongse – Tha Phra)

1.1) Blue Line – 14 km (5 km underground and 9 km elevated) – 10 stations passing Charoen Krung, Yaowaraj, Wang Boorapha, Wat Pho, Pakklong Talad, Bangkok Yai, Phetkasem and Bang Khae

1.2) Blue Ring – 13 km all elevated (Bangsue – Charansanitwongse – Tha Phra) 7 stations passing to Bangsue, Pracharat, Charansanitwongse, Tha Phra

2) Orange Line (Bang Kapi – Bang Bumru) -24 km – 21 km underground and 3 km elevated 17 stations passing Bang Kapi, Lum Salee, Ramkhamhaeng, Din Daeng, Victory Monument, Dusit Zoo, Sam Sen, Krungthon Bridge, and Bang Bumru

3) Purple Line (Bangyai – Ratboorana) – 40 km – 14 km underground and 26 km elevated – 30 stations passing Bang Yai, Rattathibet, Phra Nanaklao Bridge, Kae Rai, Wongsawang, Tao Poon, Kiakkai, Sri Yan, Samsen, National Library, Bang Lumphoo, Phan Fah, Wang Boorapha, Wongwian Yai, Maihaisawan, Ratboorana.

Bashing the subway –

July 21, 2004

Bloomberg has a pessimistic report on the Bangkok subway. It starts with a bit of lobbying from Paul Anderson, the COO of the Skytrain who hints that an extension of the mass transit system is necessary.

The writer of the article apparently does not realize this is all a part of the Skytrain people fighting to keep control of the company

as the government [prevents them from extending the system](#).

Bangkok goes nowhere, faster – New subway fails to ease traffic jams as car sales burgeon – [online](#) – [print](#).

Bloomberg News, July 20, 2004

Bangkok's new \$3.5 billion subway system will do little to ease traffic jams that increase fuel costs and create some of the world's worst air pollution, says Paul Anderson, who helps run the Thai capital's other mass-transit rail network.

"A 40-kilometer mass rapid transit system won't be of much help in a city that needs 300 kilometers," or about 186 miles, said Anderson, chief operating officer at Bangkok Mass Transit, which opened an elevated railway in 1999. "The number of car trips has been growing rapidly because of economic prosperity, so anything we remove is quickly replaced."...

Thai stories and web comments

– July 21, 2004

Wisarat reports on what's going on in Thai-language forums:

Subway glitches

Some complain about the subway glitches since they have very high expectations, but others comment that even the Paris Metro has glitches... so it is normal ([here](#),

[here](#), and [here](#)).

Details of the subway breakdown

– July 19, 2004

Wisarat reports: *BMCL-MRTA have fixed the broken signal and reopened Hua Lamphong and Sam Yan Stations at 6am on Saturday. I could see many passengers storming the subway stations as usual.*

Another glitch was the loosened screws for the steel handles for Train No 1015, but this was fixed quickly. Probably due to either the rush of production as well as the sardine-canned passengers pulling the steel handles so often due to the shortage of handles available.

The opinions about the subway glitches (in Thai) are [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

From the *Bangkok Post*: [Subway suffers breakdown – Electrical fault, passengers safe](#) – July 18, 2004

Bangkok's new subway system suffered its first breakdown on Friday when services between Hua Lamphong and Sam Yan stations were halted because of electrical failure...

"Three pieces of electric energy control equipment short-circuited, stopping the rail switching system from functioning," said Mr Prapas. "The train made an emergency stop at the nearest station as it was programmed to do so for the safety of the passengers." The search for the electrical fault took around three hours, proving that the train's control mechanism was not to blame. At no time was public safety compromised because of the electrical failure, he said...

Also: [Cute college students from Chulalongkorn U. on the subway](#) (in Thai)

BMTA can smile—more revenue from subway feeder bus lines compensate any losses – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, July 14, 2004

After an investigation, BMTA found that even though the Subway has cut daily revenue from BMTA Bus line 136 (passing 12 subway stations) by 55,483 baht a day and Line 185 (passing 9 subway stations) by 21,834 baht a day, BMTA actually got 193,785 baht from the 18 subway feeder bus lines to 7 subway stations and 18 BMTA bus lines which pass subway stations. This has prompted BMTA to add more feeder bus lines directly to subway stations and boost revenue to BMTA.

Commentary: That is a good sign that BMTA has readjusted itself to live with the Subway. However, they have never readjusted for the Skytrain. Probably they will readjust once BTSC and BMCL have been merged into a single operator.

Subway revenue in 10 days reaches 20 million baht – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, July 13, 2004
Revenue from the first 10 days of the subway is reaching 20 million baht, with the target revenue on August 12 of 70 million baht. The daily average number of passengers is about 200,000 while the first week has the average number of passengers at 250,000 a day. All the revenue will be donated to Her Majesty for Royal Projects for the 72-year anniversary of Her Majesty. However, MRTA expects that the daily revenue will be down by 10-20% after the first year rates have been applied.

MRTA is going to improve the directional signs to make them more clear to the public and six additional TVMs will be installed for those single fare riders at Hua Lamphong station so as to deal with the rush-hour periods without problems.

MRTA insisting that the automatic door problems are not a big deal – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, July 13, 2004
After 3 weeks of service, MRTA found some problems in the sensors in the automatic doors which have to open and close 70,000 times a day for each set, and thus sensors can break down causing 1-2 minute delays. MRTA has asked Siemens (Thailand) to repair the damaged sensors. This is considered a minor problem and no harm to safety. So far, the average daily passengers is 190,000 a day during weekdays while the number of daily passengers has shot up to more than 200,000 a day during weekends.

What's on the Thai-language forums
– July 8, 2004

Saigon vs Bangkok undergrounds

The [comment](#) about Saigon's underground LRT while criticizing heavy rail Bangkok Subway has drawn much criticism even though those cynics still thought that many people involved with the Bangkok Subway are very corrupt.

SRT criticized

Even though Railway gets more profit, they still under [heavy criticism for slow and poor services](#).

Subway investment

[Criticism](#)

of the government for not having full commitment to Subway expansion investment.

Thousands of subway posts

Thousands of Thai netters at travel page of Sanook.com have made comments and criticism on the new Bangkok Subway system:

http://travel.sanook.com/trip/trip_07661.php
http://travel.sanook.com/trip/trip_07662.php
http://travel.sanook.com/trip/trip_07663.php
http://travel.sanook.com/trip/trip_07664.php
http://travel.sanook.com/trip/trip_07665.php
http://travel.sanook.com/trip/trip_07666.php
http://travel.sanook.com/trip/trip_07667.php

[Bangkok](#)

[mass transit perspective](#) – UPI, July 6, 2004

A reader points out this article with some interesting perspective on setting up mass transit in a big city and the consequences:

...This time there is only one line, which runs for a total of 21 kilometers on a broadly north-south axis, intersects with its older colleague/competitor at three points along the way. (Don't, though, expect to get from one to the other during the rainy season without a good soaking. Co-ordination is not among Thailand's most obvious talents.)

...Ever since January this year the Thai government has been subsidizing gasoline and (especially) diesel prices, at rates below \$0.50/litre. The cumulative subsidy is now approaching \$500 million. The result is that fuel efficiency is not a high priority in the mind of the average Thai driver.

Even more damaging to the prospects of mass-transit systems, perhaps, is the fact that congestion costs are not always high. Economists stress that the costs of traffic jams are not mainly in the fuel being burned to no good effect, but in the valuable time being wasted. If a businessman can only schedule two meetings a day, because he can't be sure whether it will take 15 minutes or two hours to get between appointments, his eight hour day is effectively cut to two. His productivity has been slashed.

That is as true in Bangkok as anywhere else — but there is also a large floating population of workers who are paid at or near the legal minimum, whose time is (at least to their employers) dirt cheap. The least-skilled workers employed to dig the tunnels the new trains will use were paid just over \$3 per day. At that rate, saving an hour's travel is worth only 40 cents. Although the subway's first-year concessionary pricing will make it just about competitive on that basis, it certainly isn't a sure-fire economic winner...

The second is often overlooked by the fans of public transport. In Europe, especially, road-building plans are often opposed on the grounds that making more roads makes more traffic. Build more roads, and you make it easier to get around. Make it easier to get around, and you encourage the demand for, and use of, cars. Which leads to more congestion, more demand for more roads, and so on. True enough — but much the same thing applies to public transport. Make it easier to get around the big city, and the city becomes a more attractive place to live and work. Some modern cities, with London a prime example, owe their shape today to the railway-building of the 19th century. There is no reason to believe that Bangkok will be any exception to the simple rule...



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Madhouse at Hua Lamphong

– July 10, 2004

Excited crowds continue to pack Hua Lamphong Subway Station.

Above is a photo from early Saturday morning as perhaps 500

people are lined up to buy tickets. Subway staff are trying

to direct the crowds with bullhorns. Practically every elderly

person is getting caught in the ticketing gates going in and

out requiring assistance from the harried gate staff.

[How](#)

[do we know MRTA reads 2Bangkok.com?](#)

– July 10, 2004

Japanese-language Bangkok subway sites

– July 10, 2004

Wisrut mined the web and found these Japanese language sites

covering the Bangkok Subway:

[Made](#)

[in Thailand METRO page](#) – [New](#)

[Thailand](#)

[Diary](#)

[in Bangkok](#) – [Bangkok](#)

[rail projects](#)

[Bangkok](#)

[subway map](#) – [Eyewitness](#)

[account of the subway opening](#)

[Stunning success](#)

[for the subway – 7 million baht in 5 days](#)

– [Ban](#)

[Muang Daily](#), July 8, 2004

[BMTA has revenue](#)

[squeezed](#) – Public Relations Department

info posted on [MThai](#),

July 8, 2004

[Stunning success](#)

[for the Subway – 250,000 passengers in a single day](#)

– [Prachachart Thurakij](#), July 7,

2004

[Central](#)

[Pattana to dig 500-meter tunnel to the subway – SRT cooperating](#)

[with MRTA to modernize Bangsue Junction](#)

– [Prachachart Thurakij](#), July 7-10, 2004

[No further symbols](#)

[for the rest of the stations](#) – July

9, 2004

Questions on

the subway photo ban and Skytrain ridership

– July 9, 2004

Reiner writes: *What do we know about the alleged ban on photography?*

I am sure, many people are taking photos, and I intend to do so.

Are we all going to help increasing Bangkok's prison population?

One other thing that should raise concern is the effect on BTS of

the 10-Baht flat fare. How fast is the Skytrain losing passengers,

particularly between Asok and Mor Chit, and Asok/Silom-Saladaeng.

Do you have any estimate or data? Is BTS taking laying down what

surely must affect their economies?

Wisrut responds: *According to regulations published in Royal*

Gazette, photography in Subway stations is actually restricted for

security reasons. You have to get the permission from Subway officers

to take a photo.

However, the Embassy of Japan has submitted a request to make a

strict prohibition on taking photographs in the Phetburi Station because this station is too close to the Embassy of Japan. You see lots of police as well as subway security around the Embassy of Japan and in Phetburi Station and on Mitsamphan Bridge across Saen Saeb Canal.

After the Airport Link becomes a reality, the security at the new Makasan station (the main terminal for both Airport Express and Airport Link) may have to be tightened to the highest level possible. So far, passengers who go in and go out of Saladaeng Skytrain Station has decreased since those passengers have turned to the Subway and exit at Silom Station instead.

On the other hand more passenger have been going in and out of Asok Skytrain Station due to much more convenient interchanges with Sukhumvit Subway Station. The same scenario (Asok/Sukhumvit) can be applied to Mochit/Chatuchak station.

Now, the number of Skytrain passengers is around 350,000-400,000 a day, but on July 4 the number of passengers dropped to 230,000 while the Subway have got 250,000 passengers that day. Therefore it is urgent for the Skytrain to construct the Samrong Extension (along with the Paknam extension) and the [Taksin extension](#) (along with Phetkasem extension) to double the number of passengers—especially after MRTA-BMCL introduces the 30-day passes to compete with the BTSC Skytrain.

However, BTSC is going construct elevators and escalators to connect Asok Station with Sukhumvit Station while BMA/MRTA are working on a [viaduct to connect](#)

[Saladaeng with Silom Station](#). The viaduct to Central World, Major Ekkamai and other commercial buildings and shopping malls will also help them reach the target.

Central Patana is asking SRT (their landlord) to allow the construction of a Subway viaduct (a Gate number 6) to link Central Plaza with Phaholyothin Station. Other companies are also trying to connect their buildings with Subway stations.

[BMTA shocked!](#)

[Subway sucking away almost all passengers from Ratchadaphisek Road busses](#) – *Thaipost*, July 7, 2004

[Crimes](#)

[inside subway stations](#) – [Hoarding subway tokens](#) – [Sexual harassment](#)

– *Thairath*, July 7, 2004



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Supplementary signs describing where the numbered exits lead were put up in front of exit gates after passengers complained the existing signs were inadequate.

[Passengers](#)

[still storming the subway](#) – [Hoarding subway tokens](#) – [New passenger numbers](#) – *Khaosod*, *Thairath*, & *Dailynews*, July 6, 2004

[Connections](#)

[to the Subway and Skytrain](#) – July 7, 2004

[Storming](#)

[the Subway](#) – *Manager Daily*, July 5, 2004

[The Thai-language](#)

[forums and the subway](#) – July 7, 2004

Questions HM The King asked the PM at the subway ceremony – translated and summarized from *Khao Sod*, July 4, 2004

During the Royal Inspection, His Majesty asked Premier Thaksin and MRTA Governor a few questions:

1) Rails to the New City at Banna

HM: Is the new line to be extended to the New City at Banna?

PM: Yes, Your Majesty.

2) Mobile phones inside the subway

HM: Are mobile phones going to interrupt the subway system?

MRTA Governor: No Your Majesty, mobile phones won't interrupt this system even though they might have some effects on the starting system inside the subway rolling stock.

3) New systems done in 6 years

HM: Is the Subway-Skytrain system to be extended and done in 6 years?

PM: Yes, your majesty, we'll finish the jobs in 6 years.

After pressing the button to mark the official opening of the Bangkok subway system at 7:19pm, His Majesty said to Premier Thaksin, Minister Suriya and MRTA Governor Praphat that "You have to expand the subway system very quickly!"

A very concise yet powerful message indeed!

[Subway ridership figures & various notes](#)

– July 6, 2004

[Confusion, fun reign on subway](#) – *The Nation*, July 6, 2004

...Many others were stunned to learn that if they want to go shopping at Chatuchak market, they have to get off at Kamphaeng Phet station – not Chatuchak station, which is a long walk from the market.

Passengers emerging from Lat Phrao station were similarly surprised to find they were not near Central Lat Phrao shopping plaza, for which they would need to alight at Phaholyothin station.

...Prapat said the number of passengers over the weekend was about 300,000, with more than 100,000 using the service yesterday.

"But we are aware that this number won't reflect the actual number of commuters as we are still offering the promotional fare," he said.

[Signs leave commuters puzzled](#) – *Bangkok Post*, July 6, 2004

... Mr Prapat said the signs lacked detail as the subway's main objective was to move people from the platform as quickly as possible. Other countries also followed the same guidelines and passengers could check details of directions which were placed on the upper floor away from the train platform at each station, he said.

Somphe Sripnum, operations director of BMCL, said his firm would improve direction signs by adding details of exits and enlarging the letters.

"We have to accept that Thais are not accustomed to reading signs. Like subway systems in other countries, large signs will show only the exit and more details of the exit will be shown at other locations," he said.

[Subway chaos](#) – *Bangkok Post*, July 5, 2004

Huge crowds rush to try subway... Passengers jostle for space, trains delayed...

...Most flocked to Hua Lamphong and Bang Sue, the first and last stations, where enthusiastic travellers were forced to wait in the crowds for two or three trains to pass before they could squeeze aboard.

..."It's really crowded. Two trains have passed and I still can't get on," said one passenger at Hua Lamphong station... An officer at Hua Lamphong station said the 10-baht fee had attracted too many people. Instead of leaving the station after reaching their destination, many people continued riding, taking several trips back and forth.

Thread of the forum > [Eyewitness accounts of the subway opening](#)

[First-day subway ride](#) – July 3, 2004

"Thunderbolt" statement from His Majesty asking to expand the subway system quickly – translated and summarized from [Manager](#), July 4, 2004
After pressing the button ([photo](#)) to mark the official opening of the Bangkok Subway System, His Majesty

told Premier Thaksin, Minister Suriya and MRTA Governor Praphat, "You have to expand the Subway System very quickly!" A concise yet powerful message indeed!

[7:14pm, July 3, 2004 – The subway is OPEN!](#)

[Drinking, spitting and photography in the subway prohibited](#)
– *Thairath*, July 3, 2004

[Updated list of subway feeder busses and vans](#)
– *Thairath*, July 2, 2004 & *Dailynews*, July 2, 2004

MRTA-BMCL ready for official subway opening – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, July 1, 2004 & *Manager Daily*, July 1, 2004

MRTA and BMCL are preparing for the official subway opening by making a rehearsal of the Royal Visit on July 1—with representatives from the Royal Households, Royal Guard Units, and Royal Physicians to prepare the ceremony. MRTA will also have security from the Royal Thai Police and Royal Guard units.

There will be 900 invited guests including ambassadors from Germany, Austria, Japan, the Privy Council, the cabinet, the Director of JBIC, contractors, consultants, and officers from related agencies. However, Hua Lamphong Station can handle only 300 invited guests at a time. Therefore, MRTA has to relocate the other 600 guests to the Thailand Cultural Center Station which can carry 500 guests. There will be live broadcasting by the TV pool.

Subway tickets to be sold at 6pm on July 3
– translated and summarized from *Thairath*, July 1, 2004

MRTA and BMCL are going to open the stations for the people at 6pm on July 3. The first set of cars will come out of Huay Kwang Depot after the Royal Visit for the Official Ceremony at the Depot at 7pm. This will be the first sign that the government is serious about energy saving by encouraging rail usage.

To use tokens, you have to pay 10 baht and then touch the token to the reader. When you are going out, you have to deposit the token into the turnstiles. This rate will be in effect from July 3 to August 12. After that, the first year rate will be applied. Children younger than 12 (height 3-4 feet) and those older than 65 will get half price while children smaller than 3 feet will ride free. The estimated daily passengers will be 200,000 a day for the period from July 3 to August 12. The first year rate will last from August 13 to July 3, 2005.

After that, full rate will be applied.

To use Smart Cards, you have to pay 300 baht (50 baht for deposit and 250 baht for the ticket) and then you just touch the cards on the readers on turnstiles. When you run out of money, you can refill the card.

[On the forum: subway signage questions](#) – June 28, 2004

1. Why do the Thai Cultural Centre and QSN Convention Centre stations use English spelling for 'Centre' whilst the buildings they are located at use American (i.e. 'Center')?

2. How come Rama 9 station is Phra Ram 9 in English?

3. How come 'To Trains' signs in English read 'Way In (Tang Kar)' in Thai?

4. Why the gap in 'Si Lom'?



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

More Subway test rides – June 26, 2004

2Bangkok.com took another round of test rides on the subway. Nothing new to report. The system looks ready to go.

Above: Display screen at the exit gates.
Below: Escalators at the Lumpini Station



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

His Majesty opening the Subway on July 3
 – translated and summarized from *Khao Sod*,
 June 23, 2004 and [Manager Daily](#), June 23, 2004

The official opening of the subway system will be on Saturday, July 3, 2004. There will be 18 sets of subway rolling stock ready for the grand opening with 1 spare set, thus periodic maintenance must be applied stringently. His Majesty and the Royal Family will come to Hua Lamphong at 5:30 PM and ride subway all the way from Hua Lamphong to Bangsue. The people will have to ride the subway at Rama 9 Station to go to other stations only after the official opening ceremony is finished (for security reasons). The first 99,999 customers of Subway will receive the special commemorative gift from MRTA/BMCL.

The traffic will be expected to be 40,000 passengers an hour. BMCL is guaranteeing that the subway is really safe to ride after passing the assessment from Independent Certified Engineers in early June 2004. The first year target is 250,000 passengers a day. If the number of passenger is greater than 300,000 passengers a day, BMCL must purchase at least five new sets of rolling stock to meet the demand.

The first year rate of 12-31 baht with half price for children under 12 and old people over 65 will be applied on August 12, 2004. Before August 12, the rate will be 10 baht flat rate to encourage more subway riders.

The revenue from July 3 to August 12 will be donated to His Majesty and Her Majesty for Royal Projects.

The expense on the tunnel, stations and rolling stock is 2 million baht a day. The Subway system needs 15,000 spare parts/set since the station is 200 meter long (total 3.6 km) and 20 km of tunnels.

HM the King ready to open city's new subway
 on July 3 – *Bangkok Post*, June 23, 2004

...Sompho Sriphum, operations director of Bangkok Metro Co Ltd (BMCL), the subway concessionaire, said a team of independent engineers had approved the safety of the system after test runs in March and this month. The subway is now 100% ready for service, he said. The company is awaiting official approval from the Mass Rapid Transit Authority (MRTA).

When is the subway open on Saturday?
 – July 1, 2004

Anxious readers have been asking how long after HM The King opens the subway will the system be open for rides. Depending on which source you believe, the subway will be dedicated at 5:30 or 6:30pm on Saturday evening, with the Royal family riding from Hualamphong to Bangsue. After that the system should be open...

TAT (Tourism Authority of Thailand) reports: Bangkok's newest mass transit system, the subway, is to open on 3 July 2004, one month ahead of schedule. His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej will graciously preside at the formal opening ceremony at the main Bangkok railway station, Hua Lamphong, on July 3, 2004 at 17.30 hrs.

TNA (via MCOT) reports:

...His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej will preside over a ceremony to inaugurate the country's first underground train system at 06:30 p.m. on Saturday, according to the Mass Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand (MRTA).

The inauguration of the subway's first 'Chalerm Rajamongkol' route would be live broadcast nationwide by local TV stations, the MRTA said in its announcement yesterday...

The underground train system will be on service everyday from 06:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

A ride on the subway –
 June 16, 2004

Subway ride photos with captions at Yimsiam (in [Thai](#)) and at Skyscraper City (in [English](#)—down towards the bottom of the page).

Wisarut tells the story of his subway ride: *I went to Phaholyothin station for the June free ride with the aim to take a photo at Samyan. It took an hour to ride bus No 52 from my home to Phaholyothin Station due that traffic jam at Lad Phrao Intersection and I reached the station at 7:30am.*

After that, I passed the security guard who took my ticket. When I reached the platform, I felt stunned that it is virtually a ghost station since I missed the train to Hua Lamphong. Therefore, I decided to ride the subway

to Chatuchak and wait for the train to Hua Lamphong. The train to Bangsue is virtually empty—thus I could take a photo of empty train. I could see a few passengers in the Chatuchak station. They have used the yellow tape to make arrows on the floor in front of the screen doors for Chatuchak Station. Unfortunately, some stations such as Sam Yan have no directing yellow arrows on the floor yet. I took a photo every time the train reached a station. Sutthisarn has a red sign due to the density as well as the commercial area (the poor men's Patpong). Ratchadaphisek and Samyan get the pink sign due to the business area around there (Si Phraya-Surawongse for Samyan and Olympia Building at Ratchadaphisek). More passengers prop up along Ratchadaphisek Road until we passed Rama 9. After that, many passengers exited to offices in Sukhumvit and Silom. Before I reached Samyan to see those Chula gals, the train was virtually empty again.

The test run this time was much better than the [previous April test run](#). I could see only one delay (1-minute delay) at Sutthisarn station. However, Siemens must solve the vibration problem on subway cars when it accelerates to the maximum speed (70-80 km/hr) which I could notice when sitting.

Someone who does not know about the interval of the limited service posted very angry words toward MRTA and BMCL since he was asked to leave Subway at 7pm. However many people retorted to the poster that "This stupid officer from Siam Cement came to Bangsue station very late. He should come to the station at 6pm instead of 6:50pm so that he could ride the subway to have a meeting with his friend at Silom at 7:30pm." Look at the [stupid man's post](#) (in Thai).

Odd and ends from *Siam Turakij*

— translated and summarized from *Siam Turakij*,

May 30-June 5, 2004

* The columnists

of *Siam Turakij* said the plan for cutting down for 30-day passes for children from 12-16 baht/trim is to 5-8 baht/trip. The government will subsidize the rest. This is a big welcome since it will fill up the capacities to meet the goal of 600,000 passengers a day from the current 380,000 passengers a day.

* PCT Phones can be used in all 18 subway stations, thanks to True (Telecom Asia).

* The Ministry of Energy is going to fund the construction of a permanent Park and Ride at Mochit and Bangsue to support both Skytrain and subway.

* BMTA is going to donate 15 non-airconditioned buses to Viangchan (Laos) and Phnom Penn (Cambodia).

* All the restrooms inside subway stations will be closed for security reasons—open only for emergencies.

Subway looks to July 1 opening

— translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*,

June 8, 2004

Peter M Smith (General Manager of CSC1 Consortium — the consultant for the construction of Blue Line Subway) said the construction of tunnels in the Northern section (Hua Kwang — Bangsue) and the Southern section (Hua Lamphong — Hua Kwang) as well as escalators and elevator installation are done. Only civil works testing and subway running system which are under the responsibility of BMCL are not done yet. After BMCL's tests, the system will be checked if it is really safe to use which will be done by the end of June.

Independent certification engineers hired by BMCL and MRTA will make an assessment on subway safety systems by the end of June 2004. If there is no problem to meet the US NFPA 130 Standard, the subway could be opened on July 1, 2004. US NFPA 130 requires the simulation of emergency situations to see if BMCL and Siemens can solve the problems in time. If the tunnel and station structure has problems, CSC1 and the contractors will come to solve the problems to meet the NFPA 130 standard.

Irregularities in the subway causing full service only after July 1 — translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, May 27-29, 2004

The plan to speed up the full service may miss the July 1, 2004 deadline due to irregularities inside the basic structure which need to be fixed immediately before official transfer to BMCL. Even the power lines have confusing colors due to different systems by different contractors. The delays by MRTA will force MRTA to pay 7 million baht a day compensation to BMCL.

However, MRTA governor said those irregularities exist but are not that serious so long that MRTA can fix the problems on time. MRTA is fixing the power line problems by replacing the power lines which use specifications for internal parts of buildings with the better ones which have specifications for the external parts of buildings. The basic structure is almost done—only some decoration and maintenance (cleansing).

The ventilator chimneys have the gates fixed by replacing fireproof doors with steel doors so as to be able to resist the pressure from ventilators.

The fire alarms installed by Siemens have also been repaired since they are still in 2-year warranty period.

Furthermore, the rolling stock problems with stopping in the wrong place (causing the screen doors not to open) have been solved. The morning and

evening rush hours will have 18 sets of rolling stock in service while the afternoons will have only 14 rolling stock. The security service providers from England will come to MRTA in June and introduce their service deal. However, ITD (one of the contractors who installed the power line) said they have submitted the construction results to MRTA long ago since they found no problems in the installation at all and they thought they had met all the specifications.

[Subway chief rejects delay claim-Telecom dispute minor, says Prapat](#) – Bangkok Post, May 28, 2004

The Mass Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand (MRTA) insists that a legal spat between TOT Corp and True Corp over who has the right to provide communications services on Bangkok's new subway will not delay the service's opening in July...

"I myself am bewildered. Why has this legal dispute been cited as such a big deal that it might delay the subway's opening?" the governor asked. "As a matter of fact, the communication network in the underground train system is no different from the networks currently installed in the basement of any building. The work can be handled by any contractor, not necessarily the TOT alone."

According to Mr Prapat, the authority had signed a memorandum of understanding with the former Telephone Organisation of Thailand, not TOT Corporation Plc. "Many conditions were set under the MoU and the TOT failed to meet them," he said. "TOT was, for instance, too slow in acting to install the system as agreed."...

Earlier: [THAI](#)

[PRESS: Bangkok subway hits snag over TOT-TRUE tussle](#) – Yahoo News, May 26, 2004

...The report quotes Surapong Suebwonglee, the Information and Communications Technology minister, as saying the trains may not run in July, a month earlier than the initial schedule.

Surapong's comments come after TOT and TRUE, which both provide fixed-line telephone services in Bangkok, claimed the right to provide services from inside the subway tunnels to users outside the subway system.

The report quotes an unnamed source as saying said Bangkok Metro Co., the operator of the subway train, had previously granted TOT the right to construct telecom networks for the subway.

However, Bangkok Metro later canceled the agreement and awarded the contract to a consortium led by TRUE and Advanced Info Service PCL (ADVANC.TH). Advanced Info, owned by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's family, is Thailand's largest mobile phone operator...

[Public allowed for new free ride on subway](#) – May 20, 2004

Another confusing statement from MRTA about subways rides: The general public who hold unused tickets for free underground train ride issued in April can use the tickets again in June.

Mass Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand (MRTA) Governor Prapat Jongsang-nguan said Wednesday that those eligible to travel on the underground train between 13-18 April could enjoy the trial runs again on 12,16, and 27 June.

He added that a new lot of free-ride tickets would be delivered to recipients on 21 May. The tickets would also be valid for the free rides on the same three days in June, he disclosed.

National Safety Committee satisfied with security in subway stations – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, May 5, 2004
Gen Loedrat Rattabawanit (the head of PR Subcommittee, National Safety Committee) told the press after visiting the subway system that "he feels very satisfied with the security system inside the subway stations with conditions classified into three levels—normal situations, abnormal situations, and emergencies." Subway workers and officers are trained to handle the arson and first aid, and to rescue injured passengers. To counter terrorists' sabotage, CCTV systems are installed in all corners of subway station and all train officers are trained to handle terrorist attacks. Canine police will be used to sniff out bombs and poison gases and there will be more training every six months.

Further subway free rides postponed
– translated and summarized from *Komchadluke*, May 1, 2004

The second subway test runs have been postponed. The initial date will be moved from May 10 to June 7. However, MRTA said they will speed up the to mid July 2004.

MRTA Governor said MRTA and BMCL are working around the clock so that they can make an official opening in mid-July 2004—therefore, it is impossible to have a May test run.

However, MRTA and BMCL decided to postpone the May test run to June 2004 with new dates for the rides:

Old Date	New Date	Old Date	New Date
May 10, 2004	June 7, 2004	May 25, 2004	June 22, 2004
May 14, 2004	June 11, 2004	May 27, 2004	June 24, 2004
May 15, 2004	June 12, 2004	May 28, 2004	June 25, 2004
May 17, 2004	June 14, 2004	May 29, 2004	June 26, 2004

May 19, 2004	June 16, 2004	May 30, 2004	June 27, 2004
May 21, 2004	June 18, 2004	May 31, 2004	June 28, 2004
May 24, 2004	June 21, 2004		

Final four sets of subway rolling stock delivered

– translated and summarized from the MRTA website

Governor Praphat Jongsanguan has come to A5 Pier of Laem Chabang Deep Sea port to receive the final delivery of subways from Siemens AG which has been shipped by Japanese NYK Logistics & Megacarrier on April 20, 2004. The final four sets of subway rolling stocks are in Delphinus Leader cargo ship. These will be ready for the inauguration of the subway in August 2004.

The first set (No 1004) was been delivered by Antonov AN 124-100 on October 15, 2003. The next 14 sets were shipped to Laem Chabang in every 2 weeks for 7 times starting from December 19, 2003 while the last four sets were shipped by NYK on April 20, 2004.

Police

[want subway opening set back](#) – *The Nation*,

April 17, 2004

Police yesterday suggested that the official opening of Bangkok's new subway system be postponed to September because of safety and policing concerns...

...At the moment, police have yet to decide which district will be responsible for investigating subway crimes, he said.

Thani said test runs of the subway over the past few days showed that the system needed to be improved to make sure it was completely safe and could provide a smooth service.

However, Metropolitan Rapid Transit Authority governor Prapat Chongsanguan insisted that the official opening would be ahead of schedule, either in June or July.

Update on the subway 'fire'

– April 16, 2004

[Panic as brakes fail](#)

[on new subway train](#) (TNA, April 15, 2004)

Passengers testing Bangkok's new underground train system fled in panic today when they smelt burning and apparently saw smoke drift through the subway tunnels.

As the alarm was raised among the 200-plus passengers using the system on the third day of its test run, people began to make a hasty retreat for the nearest exit.

But the incident was quickly shrugged off by Mr. Prapat Chonsanguan, Governor of the Mass Rail Transit Authority (MRTA), who stressed that the trains were still being tested, and that blips in the system were 'normal'. He attributed the smell to low pressure in the air tank, which had made the brakes work automatically.

The smell, he said, was simply cause by the resulting friction. He also denied that any smoke had occurred.

Mr. Praphat said that engineers from Siemens had inspected the train in question, and were confident that there were no safety risks.

Subway

[riders evacuated after brake malfunction](#) (*The Nation*, April 16, 2004)

More than 200 frightened passengers were evacuated yesterday from Bangkok's new subway system after a train was halted by a malfunctioning brake...

It was the subway's second brake-related problem. Another train exhibited a similar glitch two weeks ago during a test ride, he said...

Subway

[evacuated as train brake fails – MRTA says problem 'normal' for trial run](#) (*Bangkok Post*, April 16, 2004)

The train with three carriages left Hua Lamphong station about noon yesterday when passengers started to smell smoke. When the train passed Silom station, the third station en route, staff of the Mass Rapid Transit Authority (MRTA), which supervises the train service, told passengers the smell of burning was not harmful and the problem was normal for a trial run.

The train eventually stopped at Klong Toey station, the fifth station, and passengers were evacuated...

"The problem was not serious. It's similar to driving a car when we forget to release the hand brake, causing the brakes to burn," he said...

Smoke inside Klongtoei Subway Station at noon

– translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*,

April 15, 2004

There was smoke inside Klongtoei Subway station at noon today. Passengers inside the subway station were evacuated. The smoke reportedly was due to a spark from the friction between the rails and wheels. Further details will be released later.

Latest stories on the subway opening from the Thai press

[Subway system inspection](#)

– *Manager Daily*, April 13, 2004

[Subway – Ride it now or wait four months for full service](#) – *Matichon Daily*, April 14, 2004
[MRTA governor explains subway ‘free rides’ to the public](#) – *Manager Daily*, April 14, 2004
[Diplomats, executives and press ride the subway–Lots of development planned around the stations](#) – *Manager Daily*, April 13, 2004 and *Thairath*, April 13, 2004
[How to be a subway driver](#) – *Manager Daily*, April 12, 2004
[Disappointment and praise for the subway](#) – *Manager Daily*, April 13, 2004
[A tale of two newspapers – Thaksin’s son and a subway contract](#) – April 12, 2004

Bangkok Subway begins passenger runs! – April 13, 2004
The Bangkok Subway starts demonstration runs with passengers on April 13, the first day of [Songkran](#).

Stories on the opening from the Thai press
[Subway test runs](#) – *Thairath*, April 12, 2004, *Dailynews*, April 12, 2004, and *Bangkok Biznew*, April 12, 2004
[MRTA Subway – Improving our mass transit](#) – by Dr. Samart Ratpolasit, April 12, 2004

Subway to open ahead of schedule? – April 13, 2004
jpatokal points out this article with the comment ‘Now how did this slip under 2Bangkok’s radar?’: *The official launch of the Bangkok subway system will be moved from August 12 to June because of increasing traffic congestion on Bangkok streets, the Metropolitan Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand (MRTA) said yesterday. MRTA governor Praphat Jongsanguan said the government decided to move the official launch to June, but the exact date had yet to be fixed. (Subway to open ahead of schedule – The Nation, April 3, 2004)*
This seems impossible, since the idea of having the official opening on August 12 is to open the system on an auspicious date (HM The Queen’s birthday). We do not think this has turned up in the Thai papers either. The subway will run in May, June and July, but the exact conditions are unclear (the plan for the opening of the subway on Songkran was only finalized a week before the deadline). Even at this point there are no ticketing machines in the stations.

MCOT does mention the possibly earlier start date: [84,000 people expected on subway test run](#) – MCOT, April 13, 2004
Bangkok Metro Co., Ltd. (BMCL) expects 84,000 passengers to use subway service during its test run from 13-18 April. The Mass Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand (MRTA) and the BMCL launched the service today after giving away 84,000 tickets to the public and other 60,000 to the government agencies. During the six-day test runs, BMCL opens 9-10 stations to offer the free ride to estimated 24,000 passengers each day, while the official opening is expected in July, or August to celebrate the 72nd birthday anniversary of Her Majesty the Queen. The BMCL will start roadshow at department stores, exhibition halls, and office buildings along the subway lines on 22 April. The tickets will also be given, free of charge, to interested people to use the underground train in May...

Tens of thousands of letters flooding MRTA for free tickets – translated and summarized from *Thairath*, April 7, 2004
After the 18 subway stations were opened for public visits, people asked BMCL officers for free tickets for the test run. They felt very disappointed after knowing that they have to write the letters to BMCL for free tickets since they were stunned because they never thought that MRTA and Thai engineers from ITD and Ch. Karnchang could come up such ultramodern subway stations. They definitely like them. You cannot choose the date you want for the free ride since the date will be selected at random.

More about first rides on the subway – March 31, 2004
From *Matichon Daily*, March 30, 2004
April 6-9, 2004 : Free visits of the subway station
April 13-18, 2004: Free rides from 10am to 2pm
May 1-9, 2004: Free rides during rush hour (morning and evening) as well as other arranged times
June 1, 2004: Ticket fees from 12-32 baht applied

If you want to get a ticket for free ride, you have to send a letter to MRTA along with an empty envelope with your mailing address to: MRTA, PO Box 434, Lad Phrao Post Office, Bangkok, 10310

The letter must be postmarked before April 10, 2004. Therefore, you must send the letters for a free ride now!

From Bangkok Biznews, March 30, 2004

April 6-9: Free visits to all 18 stations to see demonstrations how to use subway cards and tokens from 9am to 6pm

April 13-18: Free rides from 10am to 2pm

May 15, May 29-30: Free ride from 10am to 2pm

Furthermore, MRTA and BMCL will collect daily usage data during the rush hour periods in May 2004 for those who live within a 500-1000 meter radius along subway tracks on the following days: May 10, 14, 17, 19, 21, 24, 25, 27, 28, and May 31, 2004

Rush hour periods: morning 6am-8:30am, afternoon 11:30am-1:30pm, evening 4:30pm to 7pm

For those who are not within the radius of the subway tracks, they have to write a letter with an empty stamped envelope with their mailing addresses before April 10, 2004 to: Bangkok Metro Co.Ltd.,

PO Box 434, Lad Phrao Post Office, Bangkok, 10320. The test run costs BMCL 10 million baht since the subway is more expensive than the Skytrain – especially the electrical bills from the air-conditioning and ventilator systems.

BMCL and MRTA will receive all 19 sets of rolling stocks in April 2004 and the official opening ceremony can be held in July 2004 with the ticket price from 12-31 baht/person for the 1st year. In the 2nd year, the ticket price will be 14-36 baht.

Those public and private agencies who want their workers and officers to have a free ride will need to have special contact with MRTA so as to ride the Subway from May 1-9, 2004. MRTA expect that there will be 300000 passengers who ride the subway during the testing period.

State of the subway – translated and summarized from *Bangkok Biznews*, March 30, 2004

For the progress of the extensions, after the cabinet has approved the extension projects proposed by the Traffic Policy Office, the Traffic Policy Office and MRTA will be able to hire a consultant to handle the design in the next two months and it will take another 4 months to finish the definite design to call the new bid by the end of 2004.

The construction of the Bangsue-Bang Yai section will be started in early 2005 while the construction of Hua Lamphong-Bang Khae will be started in July 2005 and Bang Kapi-Ratboorana will be constructed by the end of 2005. All have to be done in 6 years.

Furthermore, MRTA is going to make a free park and ride promotion from April 1-30, 2004 where users can park their cars from 6am to 8pm. There will be two Park and Ride facilities and other 6 parking spaces for who who want to park their cars:

1. Lad Phrao Park and Ride – at Lad Phrao Station inside their 9-floor building – can hold 2000.
2. Thai Cultural Center Park and Ride – at Thai Cultural Center Station – inside 3-floor building between Ratchadaphisek Soi 6 and Ratchadaphisek Soi 8 – can hold 180 cars.
3. Rachdaphisek parking lot – at Ratchadaphisek near Olympia Thai building.
4. Huay Kwang parking lot – at Huay Kwang Station near Huay Kwang Intersection – can hold 30 cars.
5. Thai Cultural Center parking lot – opposite RS Tower – can hold 20 cars.
6. Phetburi parking lot – near Asok – Phetburi intersection – can hold 60 cars.
7. Sukhumvit parking lot – in front of Siam Society – can hold 40 cars.
8. Sam Yan parking lot – in front of Wat Hua Lamphong – can hold 40 cars.

Tens of thousands of letters flooding MRTA for free tickets – translated and summarized from *Thairath*, April 7, 2004

After the 18 subway stations were opened for public visits, people asked BMCL officers for free tickets for the test run. They felt very disappointed after knowing that they have to write the letters to BMCL for free tickets since they were stunned because they never thought that MRTA and Thai engineers from ITD and Ch. Karmchang could come up such ultramodern subway stations. They definitely like them. You cannot choose the date you want for the free ride since the date will be selected at random.

Latest on subway extensions: [MRTA planning for 91-km expansion of subway](#) – *Thairath*, April 5, 2004 and *Than Setthakij*, April 4-7, 2004

First rides on the subway – March 30, 2004

From ITV Midnight News

Wisarat writes: *According to ITV Midnight news (March 30, 2004): MRTA will open all the 18 stations for visits from April 6-9. MRTA will make test runs from April 13-18 and then a May test run for 10 days during rush hours before starting fee collection.*

If you want to get a ticket for a free ride, you have to send a letter to MRTA along with an empty envelope with your mailing address to: MRTA, PO Box 434, Lad Phrao Post Office, Bangkok, 10310. From June, you have

to pay for the ticket from 12 to 32 baht.

From ThaiRath:

First test run with passengers from April 13-18 – translated and summarized from *Thairath*, March 29, 2004

The MRTA Governor said that after the discussion with BMCL and Siemens (Thailand) about the test run on April 13, 2004, they have come up with the plan for test runs from April 13-18, 2004 which will run from April 13-18, 2004, 10am-2pm.

The future test runs from May to August 12, 2004 will be announced in detail later even though they have made a preliminary schedule as follows:
Weekdays: ONLY during the morning and evening rush hours.

Weekends: All day long (but not so sure for the night).

This test run will be used for data collecting to ensure maximum service quality for the actual services from August 12, 2004. During the test run period, BMCL will issue ticket cards which the passengers have to pick up from the MRTA Office and BMCL Office in person (either going to the officers by themselves or sending a representative for them).

The private sector is asking BMCL and MRTA to become representatives for issuing the tickets during the test run. However, BMCL and MRTA have not decided who will become a representative yet.

The press conference about the test run period will be announced at 1:30 PM of March 29 in MRTA Office at Rama 9 Road.

There will be two places for distributing free tickets during the test run, MRTA Office at Rama 9 and BMCL Office at Inthamara 37.

Songkran subway rides for politicians and invited guests only – March 19, 2004

Wisarut writes: *The PR department of BMCL says that the Songkran opening of the subway with free rides (April 13- May 1, 2004) is for politicians and their families. Leftover tickets will be allocated for invited guests. For those who want to be an invited guest, please send a postcards to the following address: Bangkok Metro Co. Ltd., 12th floor, Viriya Thavorn Building, Inthamara 37, Sutthisarn Winijchai Road, Dindaeng, Bangkok 10320*

The PR department said they have not allocated the leftover tickets for invited guess yet. Probably, BMCL will be able to do so on April 1. Therefore, common men must wait until May Day to be able to ride with discounted fares.

Want to ride on the subway this April? –
March 10, 2004

The official word (which has already been in the Thai papers for many months) is to send a postcard to MRTA, 175 Rama 9 Road, Huaykwang, Bangkok, 10320 with your address and phone number.

However in past months MRTA has told us they do not want to be send any more postcards since they do not know how the subway ‘demonstration period’ will be handled. Even now, it is not exactly clear of the nature of the free ride given to those who send in postcards.

No word on the nature of the subway opening in April
– February 28, 2004

Still no word on how MRTA will handle the ‘opening’ of the subway in April. At this time it is still being called a ‘demonstration period’ and is still ‘under planning.’

Subway project progress – as
of January 31, 2004

	Planned	Actual
Civil Work	98.59%	98.49%
Concession:	100%	99.995%
Overall:	93.45%	93.00%

Subway not sure how it will handle
free rides – January 29, 2004

Thai-language papers have been reporting that those who want to ride the subway for free ‘should send a postcard to MRTA.’ A source at the MRTA PR department has told 2Bangkok.com that April 13-May 1 is considered a period of "demonstration services" and at this time there is no need to send in more postcards for a free ride. This is because MRTA is not sure how to handle the rides since they have received a massive volume of postcards already. Exactly how they will handle giving the rides is "under meeting." So this subway opening will not be like the soft opening of the Skytrain where the entire system was operating but there was no ticketing.

‘Free’

rides by invitation only? – translated and summarized from *Siamturakij*, January 18-24, 2004

If you want to have a free ride from
April 13 to May 1, you should send a postcard to the PR Department of MRTA.

**Photos from the Royal visit to the
subway** – January 15, 2004

Royal Visit Subway photos on the [MRTA](#)

[site](#). It is neat to see Princess Sirindhorn taking the Skytrain to return home.

‘Test run’ rides limited to April

– translated and summarized from *Matichon*

Daily, December 20, 2003

The test run period with free rides will be limited from April 13 to April 30, 2004. The first year rate will be applied on May Day (May 1, 2004) so as to pay the electric bills for air-conditioning, 60 elevators and 260 escalators which have to be turned on for 24 hours. If the people want to have a free ride, they should send a postcard with a request and inquiry to MRTA and MRTA will send a free ride ticket to them.

Subway opening on schedule

– December 21, 2003

Radio Thailand quotes sources at MRTA confirming that the subway will open for test rides as planned during Songkran, 2004.

Over the last few months, officials have changed the wording from a ‘soft opening’ in April, 2004 to a ‘test run’ in April 2004. – October 3, 2003

Soft opening on Songkran 2004 (April 13, 2004) and the grand opening on HM The Queen’s birthday (August 12, 2004) – *Manager Daily* – June 3, 2002

[430](#)

[million to be paid to speed up subway car delivery](#) – *Business Day*, January 15, 2002

Bangkok Metro (Metro), the operator of Thailand’s soon to be first subway system, said yesterday it was ready to pay Siemens an additional 10 million euros or about 430 million baht to speed up the manufacture of the rolling stock to get the trains running if not on time then sooner than feared. The Metro announced a revised — earlier — date for the inauguration of its subway train services. They will now begin on April 13 next year, to mark the celebration of Songkran, the water-throwing festival, that marks the start of the Thai new year....The Metro postponed the proposed start after switching suppliers for its \$315 million trains and operating system to Siemens instead of France’s Alstom....The construction works of tunnel and the actual subway system is reported to be about 99 percent complete and it just has to wait for the actual trains to run test-operations.

[Want subway cars earlier? Pay an extra 400 million baht](#)

– *Bangkok Post*, December 28, 2002

First there was a long delay in choosing the vendor to make the cars. When Siemens was chosen, it was a shock choice as Japan loaned billions for the subway with the understanding that certain suppliers would be favored. Now the *Post* reports: *Siemens Co of Germany is demanding an additional 400 million baht for the earlier delivery of subway trains— in May 2004 instead of August that year.* This is a telling delay. The parties involved only recently admitted that the service would not start until August, 2004. This article seems to suggest that the trains might not be delivered until then. That would mean months of testing before the service would start, delaying the opening until late 2004 or early 2005.

[Subway](#)

[delayed one year](#) – *Business Day*, October 25, 2002

What 2b has reported for years is now official: *"The entire project is as much as 57.36 percent behind schedule and the BMCL has admitted the delay and said it would start operation on August 2004," he said after his inspection tour.*

[No](#)

[penalty for subway delay](#) – *Bangkok Post*, August 8, 2002

"To be fair to the concessionaire, we have to admit that the state was partly responsible," he said. The concession was supposed to be signed in August 1999, but wasn't actually signed until July 2000, mainly because the government was slow in signing the construction contract. The contract did not say exactly that the service had to start on July 14, 2003, only that the company would have to start it in 48 months. The new deadline for opening is August 2004.

Two from *The Bangkok Post*: *The Bangkok*

Metro Co Ltd (BMCL) has [requested](#) a 13-month delay for the subway opening, blaming the government for being slow in signing the construction contract. Earlier articles: [Developers may face B2bn fine for delay](#) & [Firm denies breaching terms of contract](#)

MRTA adjusts opening date

MRTA has [officially readjusted](#) the opening date from a partial opening at the end of 2002 to a partial opening date in August, 2003.

Probable subway opening

date: August 12, 2004

The probable opening ceremony for the subway will be on August 12, 2004 (the 6-cycle jubilee of Queen Sirikit). It's interesting to note that the local press is sticking to MRTA's official line that the subway will open on December 5, 2003.

Subway cars to be delivered in February, 2004?

An article in the *Bangkok Post* stated: *The delivery period for the subway cars and infrastructure is approximately 30 months, starting from this month (January 5, 2002). That appears to push the opening date into 2004. The same article also stated: The MRTA is scheduled to open the subway's northern line from Rama IX to Bang Sue in December this year, and to have the rest of the system operating by mid-2003. But Mr Prapat said the start of the service might now be put back to the end of 2003.*

[Siemens beats Alstom for the supply contract](#)

Contract glitch will further delay city subway opening

Bangkok Post, December 4, 2001

City commuters will have to wait another two years to ride on the country's first subway system. The underground railway will not begin operation until late 2003 thanks to delays in the signing of a contract to purchase carriages and operating systems.

Prapat Chongsanguan, governor of the Mass Rapid Transit Authority, said the partial opening of the subway, the Hua Lamphong-Huay Khwang route, scheduled for late next year would also be delayed until then. Mr Prapat attributed the delay in the launch to hurdles in the signing of a contract between the subway operator Bangkok Metro Co Ltd, creditors and the Alstom-led consortium, supplier of electric trains and operating systems. The carriages and the operating systems are worth 17-18 billion baht. Under the 25-year concession contract, BMCL was required to sign contracts with train suppliers by May this year with delivery to be made within 18 months.

Mr Prapat said he had arranged a meeting for the three parties to clear any problems this week and expected the contract to be signed this month. Damages and additional costs resulting from a construction delay would be absorbed by the contractor.

PM's Office Minister Somsak Thepsuthin said the 13km extension route would soon be tabled to the cabinet for consideration. The Hua Lamphong-Bang Khae route, estimated to cost 40 billion baht, has been approved by the National Economic and Social Development Board. A test run for the subway was expected in early 2003 and construction of the extended route was scheduled to start in late 2003.

October 31, 2001 – The contract has been signed!!

October 19, 2001 – *Dailynews* reports that the contract (trains and operating systems) may be signed [this morning](#).

October 17, 2001 – 2Bangkok.com has been reporting this for some months (since our tour of the subway in March, 2001), but now it is [certain](#): "Commercial service of Thailand's first subway, scheduled to begin in December 2002, is now expected to be delayed..." This is due to the abrupt cancellation of the contract signing to purchase the trains and operating systems from Mitsubishi Corp, Mitsubishi Electric of Japan, and Alstom of France.

August 3, 2001 – A *Matichon Daily* article dated August 2, 2001 quotes the MRTA Director as saying the subway will open in December, 2002. It also said that MRTA has bought a subway system produced by Alstom-Mitsubishi Co.Ltd. and the concession holder (BMCL Co.Ltd.) is preparing for the assembly of the rolling stock.

March 14, 2001 – The opening of the first leg of the subway project will probably be delayed at least six months because the concessionaire has not ordered the cars and equipment yet. Once the order is made it takes approximately 1.5 years for delivery. That means the July, 2002 delivery date will be pushed back as well as the subway opening from December 2002 to June 2003 or beyond. (The concessionaire is responsible for all of the equipment. The government is providing the concrete structures.)

* Digging is 100% complete and the tunnel boring machine (TBM) has been removed from the ground.

* When completed the project will have 346 escalators and 69 elevators.

* The massive [depot](#) is 100% done.

It sits on 270 *rai* of land.

(Source: March 14, 2001 2Bangkok.com interview with Ms Yuppadee Srinak, Director of Public Relations at MRTA)



Thai-language newspapers – November 15, 2004

November 15, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – November 15, 2004</p> <p>* Publishers are speeding up the printing of the cartoon version of the “Thongdaeng” book that was written by the King and illustrated by cartoonist Chai Ratchawat . 100,000 copies will be printed per week. There are lots of orders from many companies that want to buy big lots for donating for school in local areas.</p> <p>* 500 students of Boorapa University in Chonburi Province who resist to change of the university to the ‘informal system’ will submit a letter to the P.M. at the government house on November 16.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>On November 14, Mr. Pichai Chaloenkul, chairperson of the Environment Preservation of Kangkoy People, members, and 400 people from Kangkoy Saraburi Province drove motorcycles, bicycles, pick-ups and cars and wore green t-shirts, flew green flags and displayed signs saying “resist the construction of the “Gulph” Electric plant.”</p> <p>The plant is being moved from Prajuabkirikhan to Thambol Banpa, Kangkoy on 300 rai. Residents fear pollution from the plant.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – November 15, 2004</p> <p>* Bloody news –</p> <p>At Wat Donpracharam, Roi-et, a 39-year-old crazy monk was surrounded by 20 people after he stabbed the abbot and a driver for the temple. Both of them were sent to the hospital and the abbot later died.</p> <p>* The modern metropolitan office is using an Information Technology system for crime suppression investigation. People can visit the website 24 hours a day at thaispy.police.com.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>The police are perplexed when they were informed by 30-year-old cloth seller, Mr. Dusit Chantrasorn, that his 7 month old new Toyota Tiger D4 pickup was stolen. It was stolen although Dusit took off the steering wheel and locked the gear and brake. The robber gang stole it anyway along with 50,000 baht worth of cloth.</p>

Samak's development plans being reversed

November 15, 2004

Categories: Thai Politics

Samak's development plans being reversed – November 15, 2004

The new Bangkok administration is quickly reversing many controversial city development decisions made by former Governor Samak:

Bangkok's art museum – project revived – [Past articles](#)

Removal of the Ta Tien community – 'likely to be scrapped' – [Past articles](#)

Underground car park at Sanam Luang – canceled – [Past articles](#)

Turning Ratchadamnoen Avenue into the "Champs-Elysees of Thailand" – to be reviewed – [Past articles](#)

Removal of the Department of Internal Trade building and creation of a park – to be reviewed

Sensing this change of sentiment, Mahakan Fort residents are also repititioning the city to halt their eviction ([Past articles](#)). There is no word yet about the [Soi Leunrit community](#) or the [Pak Klong Market](#).

BMA set to save Ta Tien from Samak mall threat – *The Nation*, November 14, 2004

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration is likely to scrap a plan by former governor Samak Sundaravej to demolish old buildings in the TA Tien area and replace them with a shopping mall, a city executive said yesterday...

A source in the City Planning Department said the TA Tien land belonged to the Crown Property Bureau, which recently helped the BMA set up a committee to reconsider every project initiated during the controversial tenure of the former Bangkok governor...

New plea for Mahakan – City hall asked not to evict residents

– *Bangkok Post*, November 14, 2004

Housing activists will ask the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration to spare Mahakan Fort residents in Phra Nakhon district, allowing them to stay on under a land-sharing scheme.

Pratin Wekhakayanon, chairwoman of the Four Regions Slum Network, said the Mahakan Fort case was one of four pilot projects to be considered by a joint committee on housing problems set up recently by Governor Apirak Kosayodhin...

The wat of antique cars

November 15, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[The
wat of antique cars](#) – *Electric New Paper*,

November 15, 2004

*Temples are where Thai Buddhists go to in search of a new life.
But at one quirky temple in Bangkok, it is also a place where old,
discarded cars get a new lease of life...*

Also: [The wat's website](#)

The Burma-Thailand gas debacle

November 16, 2004

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[The Burma-Thailand gas debacle](#) – *The Irrawaddy*, November 2004

Thailand's state-controlled gas firm signed up for two expensive gas deals that it later realized it didn't want. Burma has used the revenue to finance an arms build-up...

The Yadana consortium hired the Burma Army to clear a path for the overland portion of its gas pipeline to Thailand through Tenasserim Division and provide security for the crews. The Burma Army operated as per normal—burning down villages, press-ganging labor, torturing and occasionally killing local inhabitants. The Yadana consortium became so alarmed at the army's conduct that it purchased bulldozers in the hope that the men-in-drab would stop using slave labor. Pretty soon, the pipeline fiasco hit the press...

Thai-language newspapers – November 16-17, 2004

November 17, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – November 17, 2004</p> <p>* The government set up the strategy to build up a peace society in Pattani, Yala and Narathivat so the Education Ministry will support <i>pohnors</i> to be social institutes for teaching Islam according to harmonious and appropriate ways.</p>	<p>* On November 16, Mr. Ponsak Hankittipongpaisarn, the man who carried the eagles with bird flu to Belgium came back to Thailand and confessed that he bought the two eagles from Jatuchak for 2400 baht in order to bring for his brother to sell in Belgium.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – November 17, 2004</p> <p>* On November 16, a Khon Kaen resident and owner of air-conditioning shop near Chokchaisi, Ladpraw area was very lucky to win 50 million baht from the government lottery. He said he will use the money for doing merit first and then close his soi to celebrate with his neighbors and the police. Then he will give some to his relatives.</p> <p>* A group of actors were arrested for stealing cars. Two of the arrested appeared in the films <i>Ongbak</i> and <i>Konlenkhong</i>. Another two were models who worked on TV. They falsified documents and bank statements to make a contract with a finance company. They then made down payments on new cars—a BMW 323, Honda CRV, Audi A6, and Volvo XC90. The financial backer then sells the cars in neighboring countries and the gang gets 200,000-300,000 per car.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>A female Thammasat University student who was standing on the escalator at the BTS station at the Emporium was shocked when she saw a guy standing behind her using a mobile phone to take a photo of her under her skirt. She shouted for help and grabbed his neck, but he turned and ran away making her fall and injuring her knees.</p>
<p><i>Matichon</i> – November 16, 2004</p> <p>Editorial: The Professional</p> <p>The failure in many sectors of country of the smallest institute, family, to other organizations and even though independent political organizations show that most Thai people in many sectors are not professional except people who are farmers. This is because people concentrate on everything and too many things. People who work in administration—especially in politics—are not professional. They only play at politics and work, but are serious when it comes to earning a large amount.</p> <p>The accumulated problems are the proof of the unprofessionalism. The southern tragedy worsens to be a crisis. Everybody in the government—right up to the leader—should have wider thought, moral principles, and be able to work with people or otherwise there is no future for the country.</p>	
<p><i>Thairath</i> – November 16, 2004</p> <p>* Bloody news – At the road from Sattaheep-Chachoengsao, the brakes of a 10 wheel bus go out and it crashes into a student bus. 45 female students are injured. The police arrest the driver.</p>	<p>* Danger in the classroom! At the Mattayom Dansumrong school, Samut Prakarn, a ceiling fan fell down and knocked a 17-year-old 12th grade student unconscious.</p>

About Thai women

November 17, 2004

About Thai women

[A female monk takes on Thailand's clergy](#) –

The Age, November 17, 2004

A lone female monk has riled the religious hierarchy by waging a fight for ordination of women...

[‘Miss](#)

[Spinster Thailand’ and proud of it](#) – *New*

York Times, November 20, 2004

...Unmarried by choice, Miss Saovapa, 38, and a growing number of successful professional women like her are challenging not only the traditional imperative of marriage and family but also what they see as the delicate egos of Thai men.

"Sometimes they like to tease me," she said. They say she is too choosy and too proud. But they keep their nervous distance. They are not sure how to behave around a woman who does not seem to need them...

Two weeks too late?

November 17, 2004

Two weeks too late? – *The Epoch Times*, November 17, 2004

Here is a peculiar [article](#) on Thai politics that was about two weeks out of date on the day it was posted.

Benjakitti Water Park – New green area in centre of Bangkok on old TTM land

November 18, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Benjakitti Water Park](#)

[– New green area in centre of Bangkok on old TTM land –](#)

Bangkok Post, November 18, 2004

All 430 rai of the Thailand Tobacco Monopoly (TTM) land between Sukhumvit and Rama IV roads, near Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre, will be turned into a public park...

Mr Varathep promised the entire scheme would be completed as planned, allaying concern the land could be leased out to the private sector.

"Don't worry. This government will turn another 300 rai into a forest park right after the TTM factories move out," he said.

All five TTM factories, warehouses and buildings will be demolished and replaced with trees. Only two buildings—the TTM hospital and the 46-year-old TTM office—will be spared.

A tale of two newspapers: HM The Queen's speech

November 19, 2004

Categories: Analysis, The Thai Deep South

A tale of two newspapers: HM The Queen's speech
– November 19, 2004

Yesterday the Thai-language world was abuzz with speculation on whether the Nation Group and other anti-government leaning press correctly reported the tone of HM The Queen's speech on November 16, 2004 about the Southern troubles.

The claim is that HM The Queen's speech was in no way a "tearful plea" as *The Nation* stated in their headline ([CALL FOR UNITY : Queen makes tearful plea](#), November 17, 2004). The *Bangkok Post* does a much better job explaining exactly what was said in the speech ([Queen urges unity, peace – Feels compelled to speak out on South](#), November 17, 2004).

To the non-Thai there is perhaps not a large difference in the articles, but the nuances many Thais found when comparing the actual speech to the way it was reported in the press are indicative of the range of opinions over the issues in the South. Many Thais—especially those who want to take a harder line against the 'troublemakers'—felt that the reporting of the speech in *The Nation* was intended to insinuate that the government must heed a call to moderation and that this shows *The Nation's* continuing anti-government stance. As most foreign reports on Thailand are based on the English-language dailies, *The Nation's* take on events influences news in international publications.

Contrary to the way it was reported in *The Nation*, the actual text of the speech in Thai is widely interpreted as encouragement to stand firm to defend that country along with a plea that soldiers, police and government must work together to halt the violence. HM The Queen also explained how troops had successfully taught village women how to shoot guns and this had enabled them to defend themselves. The speech ended with the Queen wondering, in jest, whether she herself should learn to shoot a gun without wearing glasses even though HM is 72 years old. The audience appreciated the joke and laughed ([full Thai-language text of the speech](#)).

The world over, pronouncements by royalty are closely scrutinized and the most successful of speeches appeal to the widest group of people while allowing individuals to feel that the speech is for them. Perhaps the local media being able to find slightly different shades of meaning in the speech is indicative of the Thai Royals' abiding appeal to all strata of Thai political life.

Whether or not any particular way of reporting a speech would be an effective way of shaping public opinion (as some claim), the interest in this issue shows the passionate feelings raised by nationhood and the threats posed in the South. As these problems persist and an election looms with historic ramifications for the Thai political scene, the image Thailand presents to the world will continue to be of critical interest to all sides of the political spectrum.

* The [full Thai-language text](#) of HM The Queen's speech is at the *Manager Daily* site.

* On November 17, HM The King made a speech to newly promoted generals and admirals about interservice cooperation to extinguish the Southern conflagration. Full-text is [here](#).

* TNA's reporting of the speech: [Queen urges all Thai to be grateful to motherland](#) – TNA, November 17, 2004

Her Majesty the Queen has called for all Thais with all religions to be loyal and grateful to their motherland, and has urged all parties concerned to brainstorm ideas for solutions to the current spate of violence and unrest in the country's deep South...

More on [Troubles in the South](#) Also:
[Nationalism & Right-wing Politics](#)

Thai-language newspapers – November 19, 2004

November 19, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – November 19, 2004</p> <p>* In Amphur Kienza, Surathani, an officer of the museum surveyed a limestone mountain and found ancient objects, pots, and skeletons at Huakalok Cave which looks like an ancient shelter and is 20 meters deep. It is believed the objects are 4,000 years old.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>On November 18, General Chaiyasuk Kedtat, the Prime Minister's advisor on security, was a chairperson to set up shooting grounds and testing for "Sig Sauer" from Germany company J.K. Defense Industrial. It will be the first gun weapon factory in Thailand. This factory will create war material and will be responsible to the Defense and Interior Ministries.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – November 19, 2004</p> <p>* People from all over Thailand country show their power by folding 60 million paper birds that are symbols of peace and concern from the King, Queen and all people. These will be dropped from the sky over the south on December 5. People can learn how to fold from this website.</p> <p>* Luang Por Koon is getting better. He was moved from I.C.U., but the doctor still forbids visits except for the closest followers who help him in physical therapy and talk to him to help recover his mind.</p>	<p>* After drinking milk produced from Nakorn Pathom cooperative, 16 students from Watwha and 22 students from Wat Prongmaduaen School get stomach aches and vomit. They were sent to the Nakornpathom Center Hospital. Milk production has stopped until the cause is found. If the milk is found not to be up to standard, the cooperative manager will accept to pay compensation.</p>

Guess where U.S. students are going?

November 19, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Guess where U.S. students are going?

– November 19, 2004

Cormac writes: Never mind India, notice that Thailand is number 3 in Asia: *A number of American students are going abroad for higher studies and India is the fifth most attractive country in Asia for them, a new report has found.*

Since 1991-92, the number of students studying abroad for credit has more than doubled from 71,154 to 174,629, according to the Open Doors 2004 report, an annual report on international academic mobility released by the Institute of International Education.

India with 703 pupils was the fifth country in Asia to attract American students in 2002-03 after Japan (3,457), China (2,493), Thailand (794) and Korea (739), it said... (Hindustan Times, November, 2004)

Old photos 1958-1961

November 20, 2004

Categories: Old photos and films



(Photo: Dick van der Spek)

1988: Makkasan area – April 5, 1988



(Photo: Wally Higgins)

1960: Mae Klong Railway area – June 8, 1960



(Photo: Wally Higgins)



(Photo: Wally Higgins)

Don Muang – February 26, 1959

Views of the area north of Don Muang Airport in 1959.



(Photo: Wally Higgins)



(Photo: Wally Higgins)



(Photo: Wally Higgins)

Boatman – February 2, 1961

Close-up of a Thai vendor selling food from a boat in 1961.

Thailand tourism campaign announced

November 20, 2004

Categories: Tourism

[Thailand](#)

[tourism campaign announced](#) – *The Washington*

Times, November 20, 2004

The Tourism Authority of Thailand has made "Happiness on Earth" its marketing campaign, with the theme "Every Hour in Thailand is Happy Hour."

...Jutamas Siriwan, TAT governor, told reporters. "This time we have been more careful in choosing the words for this campaign, unlike 'Amazing Thailand,' which can carry both positive and negative connotation, we're sure that 'happiness' can only have a positive effect."

Kim portraits still up, irate North Korea insists

November 20, 2004

Categories: North Korea

[Kim](#)

[portraits still up, irate North Korea insists](#) –

Agence France-Presse, November 20, 2004

... "It is nothing but a stupid and ridiculous act, just like trying to remove the sun from the sky. The adoration for the leader originated from people's life; it will never change."

...South Korea's Yonhap news agency said the order to remove the pictures was issued by Mr. Kim himself, who was concerned that he "has been lifted too high." ...

Earlier: [Removal](#)

[of Kim Jong Il's pictures from public places in North Korea](#)

– Donga, November 16, 2004

Is the lottery rigged?

November 20, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Is the lottery rigged?](#) – *The Nation*, November 20, 2004

...The government's "on-the-ground" lotto scheme has been controversial from the very beginning. Conservatives, including the prime minister's former mentor Chamlong Srimuang, have raised sharp moral questions, but the government has managed to scrape through by using funds generated by the project to, for example, support education. With Thai people firmly addicted to underground lotteries, which sucked hundreds of billions of baht into the illegal economy annually, the government's initiative initially did not sound that bad. But legalised gambling is one thing, and state-sanctioned rigging is quite another...

Thai Railway Tunnels

November 21, 2004

Categories: Thai Railroads

Thai Railway Tunnels (with ranking by length)

Last

updated November 21, 2004

Also: [Thai Railway/SRT main page](#)

Tunnel name	Length	Rail km	Location
Northern Line (from south to north)			
(7) Pang Tum Khop	120.09m	513.72-513.84	between Pang Ton Phueng and Huai Rai (Uttaradit/Phrae)
(3) Khao Phlueng	362.44m	516.41-516.77	between Pang Ton Phueng and Huai Rai (Uttaradit/Phrae)
(6) Huai Mae Lan	130.20m	574.04-574.17	between Ban Pin and Pha Khan (Phrae)
(1) Khun Tan	1352.10m	681.57-682.93	between Mae Tan Noi and Tha Chomphu (Lampang/Lamphun)
Northeastern Line (Kaeng Khoi-Bua Yai shortcut)			
(5) Khao Phang Hoei	230.60m	248.80-249.03	between Khok Khli and Chong Samran (Lopburi/Chaiyaphum)
Eastern Line (Khlung Sip Kao-Kaeng Khoi: cargo only)			
(2) Phra Phutthachai	1197.00m	147.10-148.30	between Wihan Daeng and Bu Yai (Saraburi)
Southern Line			
(4) Chong Khao	235.90m	769.82-770.05	between Thung Song Jn. and Ron Phibun (Nakhon Si Thammarat)

Combined length=3628.33m

Compiled by Nils Rennenberg from a post by Dr. Volker Wangemann on the forum and the extensive station lists on [rotfaithai.com](#).

Also:

[Thai Railway/SRT main page](#)

Thai-language newspapers – November 22, 2004

November 22, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – November 22, 2004</p> <p>* Meeting in the youth area–Mr. Anek Laothammatat, the leader of Mahachon Party and Ms. Chompoonutch Chayutpong, a candidate for Pathumwan district campaigned with youth at Milk Plus at Center Point, Siam Square on November 21.</p> <p>* Thai scholars and foreign conservationists resist the construction of the Laem Phak Bia Project. They criticize the Environmental Impact Report researched by Chulalongkorn University saying it did not tell the truth that this construction will have the environment impact since they have to dig 30 meters deep. There will be pollution from lead, arsenic and mercury that will spread in the water.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>Korat in crisis! A three-year drought. In Pichit, the wells have no water. The students have to bring drinking water from home to school to drink.</p> <p>* The police noticed two suspicious looking monks from Wat Prasimahathat, Pissanulok on the way to Maesai-Chairai road. The police dog examined them, but did not find anything in their cloth bag so they were sent to the hospital for an x-ray. Doctors found amphetamines in their rectums. The police arrested them and coordinate with their temple to have them disrobed.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – November 22, 2004</p> <p>* A hell man who is suspected of being an expert gunman used an M-16 to shoot a 14-year-old student and his aunt. The aunt died at his house in Angthong province. The police are seeking the cause.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>At Ulidpaiboonchanoo Pathum School, Chainat, a basketball backboard fell over on a boy from the fourth grade, killing him. The director of the school denied responsibility because the victim's friend climbed on it and made it fall. It did not fall by itself.</p>

Road deaths

November 22, 2004
Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Road deaths](#) – November 22, 2004

News of this report is in every news outlet today, but the neat thing about the internet is that one does not have to depend on the media to filter info anymore—it is easy to see and read the [actual report](#) (there is also a link to an [in-depth pdf](#) at the bottom of the page).

	Police Reported		Estimated		Annual Economic Losses	
	Deaths	Injuries	Deaths	Injuries	US\$ Million	% of
Thailand	13,116	69,313	13,116	1,529,034	3,000	2.10

Motorcycles (percentage of vehicle fleet, 2003)
– Thailand: 70.9%

On the forums

November 22, 2004

On the forums – November
22, 2004

Wisarut points out some interesting threads on the Thai-language forums.

* [Thai who live](#)

[abroad want to land at Suvannabhumi Airport](#)

* [The Muslim](#)

[Youth viewpoints on Southern Insurgency](#)

* [Debate](#)

[on whether Premier Thaksin could finish all 7 lines of Mass Transit system by the end of 2009](#)

* [Debate on whether](#)

[Premier Thaksin could finish NBIA on schedule](#)

* [Opposition](#)

[to UN Intervention on the Southern Insurgency](#) (and [here](#))

Thai-language newspapers – November 23, 2004

November 23, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – November 23, 2004</p> <p>* Plalai thinks optimistically that “Maew” is teasing them with his speech saying Mr. Banhan should campaign only in Supanburi. “Bam” one of the “beautiful party list M.P.s” will announce on November 30 another actress to be a new Chadthai candidate.</p> <p>* 13 districts in Esarn need warm woolen cloth because of the change in weather. The director of meteorology in the southeast coast reveal that the “Muifa” typhoon is coming to the Thai gulf bringing heavy downpours and floods.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning explains the Environmental Impact Report for the Lam Pak Bia Project specifies clearly that the Gulf of Thailand will accumulate heavy lead from the construction. So they propose two ways to reduce the spread of heavy metal and remove soil from the project to an area of deep sea 20 meters deep and 120 rai in size. They accept that it impacts the environment a bit, but it can be mitigated.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – November 23, 2004</p> <p>* The son of Payap Kumpun shoots a guard. Payap Kumpun is the chairperson of the small Buddha image club and a well-know composer. His son killed a guard of Chaiyapruk Village. From witness evidence it is believed that he was upset because the guards checked his car. They exchanged words and shot at each other and one of the guards was killed.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>A cleaner in Pathumwan district found a bomb in the garbage can at the Supachalasai, National Stadium yesterday (November 22). It is believed to belong to mechanical engineer students who are usually fighting. They may have left it because they feared being caught.</p>

'64 kilometers of tunnel sitting 50 meters beneath the surface'

November 23, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

['64 kilometers of tunnel sitting 50 meters beneath the surface'](#)

– November 23, 2004

Via BoingBoing: *The G-Cans Project is a massive project, begun 12 years ago, to build infrastructure for preventing overflow of the major rivers and waterways spidering the city (A serious problem for Tokyo during rainy-season and typhoon season). The underground waterway is the largest in the world and sports five 32m diameter, 65m deep concrete containment silos which are connected by 64 kilometers of tunnel sitting 50 meters beneath the surface... [Japanese-language site](#)*

On the forums

November 23, 2004

On the forums – November
23, 2004

Wisarut points out some interesting threads on the Thai-language forums.

* [Debate on origami](#)

[cranes for southern provinces](#)

* [MOD](#)

[cooperating with Datuk Nideh Waba for southern peace](#)

* [Criticism of](#)

[origami cranes to the South](#)

* [Activist condemning](#)

[the surge of nationalism as "Right kill Left" with reciprocal](#)

[responses to those activists as "the Old Communists"](#)

* [Farmers](#)

[from all region of Thailand are going to the South to help the Southerners farm](#)

* [Democrat](#)

[condemning TRT for 5 evils](#)

* [Those traitors](#)

[are going to ask the UN to destroy our Motherland](#)

* [Debate](#)

[on the new generation of Thai Muslims](#)

* [Warning](#)

[about another wave of violence from Satun senator](#)

* [Shiekul](#)

[Islam approving the origami cranes for the South](#)

* [Shiekul](#)

[Islam approving the origami cranes for the South \(2\)](#)

* [Luangpoo](#)

[Buddha Issara asking to extinguish the southern flame](#)

* [Senator](#)

[Jon Ungbhakorn's criticism of Right-leaning media](#)

* [The](#)

[reaction to police who shot two agitators in the South](#)

* [Supreme](#)

[Commander worrying about the new generation on the southern insurgency issue](#)

* [Bush](#)

[approving Premier Thaksin's measures for the southern insurgency](#)

60-metre-tall ferris wheel set to open near Bangkok

November 23, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[60-metre-tall](#)

[ferris wheel set to open near Bangkok](#) – *The*

Nation, November 23, 2004

...The 60-metre-high Ferris wheel with 42 air-conditioned cars – one of which is a karaoke box – is part of the UK-based company's mobile fun park that will open its doors to the public tomorrow until February 14, 2005.

Two million visitors are expected to enjoy the park's 42 rides and 46 games spread over a 40-rai area near Muang Thong Thani's vast lake...

Chaiyasit gives the wai a miss

November 23, 2004

Categories: Local Beliefs

[Chaiyasit gives the wai a miss](#) – *The Nation*, November 23, 2004

...Normally, right after receiving awards, recipients show their gratitude by waiing. But before they could put their hands together to perform the gesture, Chaiyasit extended his right hand. What could that mean, but that Chaiyasit wanted to shake hands? So they did. There are two possible reasons why they shook hands. Chaiyasit might have been trying to avoid offending those Muslims who greet and show gratitude in a different way. Or perhaps he simply thought that using one hand was more convenient than using two and that shaking hands is a more universal non-verbal greeting.

Who's who in Communist China: Daily lists new 'princelings'

November 24, 2004

Categories: China

[Who's](#)

[who in Communist China: Daily lists new 'princelings'](#) –

World Tribune, November 24, 2004

A Hong Kong newspaper has identified scores of "princelings" — the offspring of high-ranking officials in China — who benefit in business and government through their connections particularly in go-go Shanghai and the seat of power in Beijing.

...The report, however, omits the family of Chinese President Hu Jintao, his wife Liu Yongqing and their son and daughter. The connections of Hu and his family are considered state secrets.

However, the list includes nearly 200 people, including Vice President Zeng Qinghong, who is the son of senior party statesman and former Interior Minister Zeng Shan. Many of the junior Zeng's brothers and sisters currently hold important posts in the Chinese military.

They include Zeng Qingyang, director of the History Department of the Academy of Military Sciences; Zeng Qingyuan, deputy director of the Logistics Department of the PLA Air Force; and Zeng Haisheng, Zeng Qinghong's younger sister, deputy director of the General Office of the PLA General Staff Headquarters.

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao also has two children who are in business. Wen Jiabao's son, Wen Yunsong, is now chairman of Beijing Unihub Company. His daughter is Wen Ruchun; and Wen Jiabao's son-in-law, Xu Ming, is chairman of Dalian Baode Group.

Deng Xiaoping has two sons in important positions, including Deng Pufang, president of the Chinese Federation for the Deng Zhifang and president of the Sifang Group. The eldest daughter of the late Deng is Deng Lin, a member of the Chinese Artists' Association. Another daughter, Deng Nan, is vice minister of the Ministry of Science and Technology.

Thai-language newspapers – November 25, 2004

November 25, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – November 25, 2004</p> <p>* On November 24, the National Police Operation Center of Yala province distributed a four color poster of 46 people who are involved in the unrest in the South. The posters were put up at police stations, the border crossings and community areas in three provinces in the South so people can report tips.</p> <p>* Mr. Kongsak Wantana, an airforce commander, explains again to the media in Udon Thani that Singapore is not hiring the airport there, but is only asking to use it for training. If Singapore hires a place in Udon Thani for aircraft training, the province can also promote itself for tourism. If lots of people resist this idea it can make Singapore change its mind and not come.</p>	<p>* Mr. Waratep Rattankorn, deputy of the Finance Ministry reveals that the lottery online will be operational in March 2005. The Finance ministry expects to get up to 1400 million baht per lottery.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – November 25, 2004</p> <p>* Bloody news – Banglamung, Chonburi province, Ms. Pranee Likhitwattananon, who for 25 years was the manager's secretary at Jittawi factory was strangled with her sleeping clothes. The police suspect it is a love case and her boyfriend may be the murderer. He also stole her car.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>Mrs. Supatra Boonchoen, a worker in Ayuthaya province, bought glutinous rice baked in a bamboo cylinder which showed the name "Pa Kum Banrai Thongpapoom, Kanjanaburi," to eat after her night shift. While she was eating it she saw something unusual and thought that was black bean but it was a 5 cm long leech. She vomited what she ate and went to inform the police.</p>

British Embassy to sell land in Bangkok

November 25, 2004

British Embassy to sell land in Bangkok

– UPI, November 25, 2004

The British government is going ahead with a major redevelopment of its Bangkok embassy and will be selling a huge chunk of its prime land.

Ambassador David Fall said the plans to sell four acres of the present 12-acre site were "an open secret," even though there

has been no formal announcement and the deal is waiting for the go-ahead from London, Business Day reported Thursday.

The scheme could be delayed or even postponed by the softness in the Bangkok property market or by the firmness of sterling.

In the meantime, a London firm has been commissioned to design new housing to accommodate embassy staff who would be displaced by the sale.

The British Embassy, then a legation, moved to its present site in 1926, when it was a remote, rural spot. A statue of Queen Victoria moved from the old legation was the first structure on the new site.

During World War II, the statue of Queen Victoria was boarded up, but the Japanese occupiers provided a peephole so that the old queen would not be too upset. The British legation became an embassy in 1947.

Thai-language newspapers – November 26, 2004

November 26, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – November 26, 2004</p> <p>* The Prime Minister urges the Office of the Election Commission of Thailand to set the Election Day soon. He worried about an ‘underground’ movement to damage the government chances of reelection.</p> <p>* Office of the Narcotics Control Board keeps an eye on 10 movie stars and singers who conspire to distribute drugs. Joey Boy, a popular rap singer announced to the media that he will check whether it is his photo on the notorious VCD of a naked party. He does not know how his photo got on the cover of the VCD.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>On November 25, because of drought, the water level in Lamprapoeng Dam, Nakorn Rachasima province decreased and made 200 illicit logs bob up to the surface. The villagers found and informed the officer of the forest protection sector (Wangnamkiew). It is thought they belong to an ex-Minister’s concession and the logs are illegal because they are not stamped with a special seal.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – November 26, 2004</p> <p>* On November 25 at Lan Luang road, Mr. Sunchai Nanuangbua drove a taxi in front of the motorcade of “Big Tuy” making the motorcade motorcycle crash into the taxi. The military security guard got angry and swaggered up to slap the taxi driver’s face three times before continuing on with the motorcade.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>Ms. Pornphan or Joyce, the sexy female singer from Triumph’s Kingdom band was arrested with her boyfriend in the case of having 4000 amphetamines tablets. She said she just took the drugs and was not selling them.</p>

Special report: Labour conference

November 26, 2004

Special report: Labour conference

– by Asiper, November 26, 2004

A seminar on “New dimension of Thai Labour “ was held at at Miracle Grand Convention Hall on November 14, 2004. It was organized by the Labour Commission, House of Representatives, the Social Security office, the Chamber of Commerce of Thailand, the Industrial Congress of Thailand, the Bank Congress of Thailand and labour organizations.

All of them talked about Globalization, WTO and FTA–forces that cannot be resisted. Thailand has to concentrate on product quality for competition, but workers cannot be neglected. They must have good quality of life also. Workers will be happy if they have good security. Everybody have to learn from the news information. Employees and government must think and cooperate with employers. The government should have a policy to protect people moving from rural areas to the city and pay more attention to unemployment security.

Only one female worker representative, Wilaiwan Saetea, said the workers are still violated. For example, women workers who get pregnant will be laid off. Some factories do not pay workers the minimum wage. There is also sexual harassment at the workplace. Privatization should be stopped. Women should have the opportunity to participate in every sector of work and there should be a child care center in the factory. She asks that TRT fulfill these demands. Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra came to give a speech in the afternoon at the conference because he has a meeting in the morning at parliament to make merit. After his speech, some workers gave him folded origami papers for the southern people. The PM said now it will be more than 62 million birds to be dropped on December 5.

Wilaiwan Saetea, chairperson of the Women Worker Unity Group, asked him to fulfill the Thai Rak Thai party promise of child care centers for women worker in the workplace. Thaksin gave her the hope and told her to survey how many places they want , where to set it up, and if they should have a baby sitter or nursemaid. If they can give him the information, he said he will create it.

“Winds calm” at Ko Samui?

November 26, 2004
Categories: Weather

"Winds calm" at Ko Samui? – November 26, 2004

Cormac writes: *I've always suspected that most of the online weather reports for Thailand are never updated, and just have a vague summary of that season's weather. "Mostly sunny" in the dry season, "mostly cloudy with some showers" in the wet season.*

Ko Samui, Thailand
Local Time: 6:41 PM ICT [Set My Timezone](#)
Tropical Weather: Western Pacific: [Tropical](#)
Current Conditions
Updated: 1:00 PM ICT on November 25, 2004
Observed at Ko Samui, Thailand ([History](#))
Elevation: 16 ft / 5 m
78 °F / 26 °C
Light Rain
Humidity: 86%
Dew Point: 75 °F / 24 °C
Wind: Calm
Wind Gust: -
Pressure: 29.84 in / 1010 hPa

As Typhoon Muifa lashes the Gulf of Thailand on the afternoon of November 25, 2005, here are the online weather reports:

CNN's [forecast](#) for Ko Samui at 5:22 pm (below right): *Mostly Cloudy, Wind: SW at 6 mph (10 km/h)*

Weather Underground's widely syndicated [report](#) on Ko Samui at 6:41 pm (left): *Chance of T-Storms... Wind: Calm, Wind Gust*

[Yahoo/Intellicast](#) (below left): *Scattered showers and thunderstorms. High around 85F. Winds ENE at 10 to 15 mph. Chance of rain 60%.*

10-Day Forecast
SURAT THANI
Thursday Nov 25, 2004
Ten Day Forecast
Sunrise: 6:28 am UV Index: 9, Very High Sunset: 5:59 pm
Moonrise: 4:50 pm Phase: Waxing Gibbous Moonset: 4:50 am
Averages and Records for Nov 25
Thursday:
Variable clouds with scattered thunderstorms. High 86F. Winds NNE at 5 to 10 mph. Chance of rain 60%.
Thursday night:
Scattered thunderstorms and becoming windy. Low 72F. ESE winds at 5 to 10 mph, increasing to 20 to 30 mph. Chance of rain 60%.
Sunrise: 6:28 am UV Index: 7, High Sunset: 5:59 pm
Moonrise: 5:34 pm Phase: Full Moonset: 5:40 am
Averages and Records for Nov 26
Friday:
Windy with showers early then scattered thunderstorms developing later in the day. High 87F. Winds ENE at 20 to 30

WEATHER
Ko Samui, Thailand
CURRENT CONDITIONS
82°F
(28°C)
Mostly Cloudy
Rel. Humidity: 78%
Wind: ENE at 6 mph (10 km/h)
Sunrise: 6:19 AM
Sunset: 5:56 PM
Barometric Pressure: 29.74" Hg (F)

Thai Media urged to be sensitive when reporting on ‘AIDS’

November 26, 2004

Categories: HIV-AIDS

[Thai](#)

[Media urged to be sensitive when reporting on ‘AIDS’](#) –

TNA, November 26, 2004

A leading Thai senator has urged the local media not to refer to AIDS as ‘fatal’, or use other negative terms in their coverage of the problem.

The senator, Jon Ungpakorn, said this was necessary in order to improve the image of HIV/AIDS patients, and prevent the public being discouraged from associating with them.

Mr. Jon also called for the use of ‘neutral anti-AIDS campaigns’ and for the virus not to be always referred to as the syndrome, ‘doomed to death’.

He also urged the media not to label AIDS patients as ‘victims’ ...

Village Scouts gathering at Sanam Luang

November 28, 2004

Categories: High Tension in Thailand 2004-2008



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Village Scouts being led in shouts of "Chai Yo" as they pass Thammasat University.

Village Scouts gathering at Sanam Luang – 4:15pm, November 28, 2004

Also: [Thaksin and the Tak Bai Incident](#)

Also: [Nationalism and Right-wing Politics during the Thaksin years](#)

The Village Scouts are a patriotic group that was organized by the border patrol police to foster nationalism during the era of the communist insurgency. On Sunday afternoon at Sanam Luang, the largest gathering of Village Scouts took place since 1976 when the scouts assisted in a crackdown on protesters at Thammasat University. These days, however, most of the Scouts appear to be elderly men and women.

After spending time folding paper cranes to be dropped over provinces in the South, the scouts, grouped by province, marched around Sanam Luang, shouting "Chai Yo" as they passed Thammasat University. Then they returned to the center of the park to hear patriotic speeches.

The symbolism of this march would not be lost on those who are opposed to the Thai Rak Thai. The fear is that the premier is reviving the scouts as a threat to those who might oppose him. As the scouts helped put down student unrest in the 1970s, a march by Thammasat University is a symbolic act meant to show the muscle the prime minister can muster to support his position.

Update: There does not appear to be an article on this in Monday's *Bangkok Post* (they have a very early press deadline), but they did run a photo on the front page. *The Nation's* article on the gathering includes a history of the Scout movement:

[Scout leader vows to banish separatists](#) – *The Nation*, November 29, 2004

The 20,000 Village Scouts who rallied yesterday at Sanam Luang from throughout the Kingdom, brandishing national flags and belting out a Cold War-era patriotic song, were treated to a promise by one of their leaders that their "separatist" enemies in the South would soon be driven out of the country.

"They must be driven off Thai soil within 1,000 days!" intoned a clearly emotional octogenarian Pol Maj General Charoenrerk Charas-romrun, chairman of the advisory board of Thailand's largest rightwing mass organisation. "We shall fight to the death!" ...

In 1976 alone, about two million Thais became village scouts, before the movement fizzled out in 1981, only to re-emerge yesterday to protect the country from the threat of southern separatism...

Update: Thai-language papers had nothing to say about the Village Scouts being called up again on Sunday. Neither *Thairath*, *Matichon* or *Thaipost* (or the English-language *Bangkok Post*) had editorials or comments on it. This is likely due to the sensitive issues of nationalism that the Scouts embody and perhaps sympathy with the Scouts' latest mission—to somehow bring peace in the South. Only the English-language *Nation* featured a history and perspective of the Scout movement.

Earlier: [VILLAGE SCOUTS MEETING: Rally for peace raises concern](#) – *The Nation*, November 22, 2004

Despite good intentions, scouts' planned assembly sparks fears of a nationalist revival. Tens of thousands of village scouts are expected to converge on Bangkok's Sanam Luang on Sunday to promote peace efforts in the deep South, said the public relations chief for the Village Scout Operation Centre...

It will be the biggest political gathering of the group since they were deployed in 1976 to help suppress pro-democracy students...



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)
Marching band playing the National Anthem.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)
Making origami cranes for the Thai Deep South is an activity to somehow promote peace in the region.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)
Above and below: Groups from many provinces were represented.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Election day to be brought forward “for national benefit”

November 28, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Election day to be brought forward “for national benefit”](#) -TNA, November 28, 2004

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra announced yesterday that he had proposed bringing forward the date of the next general election in order to prevent ‘political games’ which were serving to bruise the nation...

Full text:

Election day to be brought forward ‘for national benefit’

NARATHIWAT, Nov 28, (TNA) – Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra announced yesterday that he had proposed bringing forward the date of the next general election in order to prevent ‘political games’ which were serving to bruise the nation.

The prime minister said that he had sent off clear signals that the earlier the election, the more that country would benefit. Warning that a drawn-out election campaign would lead to the nation slowing down, he dismissed suggestions that an early election date was designed to catch the Opposition by surprise, saying that the Opposition had already made plans for the upcoming poll.

“There are lots of underground political games going on, whether in documents or CDs. These are damaging the country. Politics are bruising the country. Having a short election campaign would be good”, he said.

However, he conceded that it was up to the Election Commission (EC) to decide whether or not to accept his request for an early election date. (TNA)-E006

Online cartoon: Thailand Sets the Tone in ASEAN Meeting

November 29, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Online
cartoon: Thailand Sets the Tone in ASEAN Meeting](#) –
The Irrawaddy, November 29, 2004

Beijing airport to be world's biggest

November 29, 2004

Categories: China

[Beijing](#)

[airport to be world's biggest](#) – *The Telegraph*,

November 29, 2004

A new airport being built by the Chinese government in time for the 2008 Beijing Olympics will be the world's biggest and be "truly awesome", according to its British architect,

Lord Foster.

In further evidence of the Chinese obsession with building bigger, faster and higher than any other country, the plans for Beijing Airport will outdo both the current biggest, Hong Kong's, and Heathrow, which is set to double in size when Terminal 5 is finished. It will also take less than three years to complete, Lord Foster said. That compares with Terminal 5, which was put before a public inquiry in 1995 and approved in 2001 but which is not expected to open until 2008...

Thai-language newspapers – November 29-30, 2004

November 30, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Matichon

November 29, 2004

* The Office of the Election Commission of Thailand says that if the PM wants to move election day earlier he must declare a house dissolution. The Chat Thai Party agrees that the election day should be on January 30, 2005.

* On November 28, actors from the film "Zakai United" from R.S. Promotion organized a "run to the North for Southern people." On the way, they will get donations to support the projects of "Ban Roranbatu" (sufficient economic village) in Naratiwat that assists southern families that are suffering in the three southern provinces.

November 30, 2004

* On November 29, at the Chulabhorn Research Institute Convention, privy councilor, Dr. Kasem Wattanachai, made a speech on "Globalization and the effect on sustainable Development: the solution of Thailand." The one way is to boost the economy and create a self-sufficient economy is by following the King's advice. If people have lots of knowledge, but bad habits, the nation will not survive. People must act.

* On November 29, Mr. Prayat Injun, a 32-year-old resident of Pattaya, Chonburi found a one-inch knot in a foreign whisky brand bottle that he bought from the convenient store. He said the whisky company should have more quality on their production control.

Thairath

November 29, 2004

* **Bloody news** – Early in the morning at 2:30am at Prapadaeng, Samutprakarn was a lesson in careless motorcycle driving. Mr. Yodmongkon Poosapa, a 20-year-old, was the only one of his motorcycle racing group who crashed in an electric pole very hard and died. His head broke and spurted blood to the other side of the road.

* CSD TOP 10 MOST WANTED – The Crime Suppression Division is using the way like the FBI's MOST WANTED to hunt for 10 thieves in the south on the website www.csd.go.th. This is for crime suppression and to prepare for the election next year.

November 30, 2004

* **Bloody news** – On November 29, at 2.00am the Bangkok Noi police station got information that a robber died. His body was skewered by the sharp iron on a security fence at Khwan Nipa Apartments. The police assumed that he was stealing, but became alarmed when the owner of the room returned. He jumped out of the room and fell down the building on to the fence.

* The Office of Election Commission of Thailand decides that February 13 is the suitable day for the general election.

Thai Flying Club

November 30, 2004

Categories: Film and TV

[Thai](#)

[Flying Club movie website](#) – November
30, 2004

Thai-language newspapers – December 1, 2004

December 1, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Kom Chad Luek</i> – December 1, 2004</p> <p>* Bloody news – A young monk who was crazy in love, but was spurned by the woman. He used a screwdriver to stab her as she was working as a clerk in a flower shop and then he stabbed himself. Both of them were seriously injured.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>Thai Rak Thai and Mahachon Party are furious with Bangkok Governor Apirak who is removing their campaign posters. They will complain to the National Counter Corruption Commission. Jae Noi is upset that the Democrats and Mahachon Party talk insinuatingly that the PM dotes in black magic.</p>
<p><i>Matichon</i> – December 1, 2004</p> <p>* Maew (Thaksin) and Solwin, Prime Minister of Burma, cooperate to hunt “Bungron-Zeakung”– drug sellers who escaped to the Burmese border are. The leader of Burma confirmed to follow the seven steps of Road Map to Democracy. He refused to say anything about extension of Aung San Suu Kyi’s detention.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>Destroy Klongthom-Banmoh! This is the place selling illegal, X-rated and Joey Boy VCDs and CDs. The border police and special officers found 1 million pirated items with the sellers. They also stormed a factory and seized the VCD producing equipment valued at about 200 million baht.</p>
<p><i>Matichon</i> punished for the sexual harassment news against Sanant – translated and summarized from Mangger Daily, December 1, 2004 The Press Council has deliver the verdict that <i>Matichon</i> has violated the Press ethics due to the news accusing Maj Gen Sanant Kajorn Prasart (now the advisor of Mahachon Party) of sexual harassment against a female journalist from Matichon. Commentary: Even though some have praised Press Council as a very fair judge (even though the head of the Council comes from Matichon Group), many feel that <i>Matichon</i> betrayed their own idealism by becoming a mouthpiece of propaganda for both Democrat and Mahachon parties. Initially, <i>Matichon</i> wrote very negatively against Maj Gen Sanant Khajornprasart on the front page until Maj Gen Sanant and the Democrats filed a libel suit against <i>Matichon</i>. Last week, the editors of <i>Matichon</i> came to Sanambinnam House to apologize Seh Nant (Maj Gen Sanant Khajornprasart) while kicking out the female journalist with very little compensation. After all, <i>Matichon</i> is now a mouthpiece of propaganda for Democrats which naturally extends to Mahachon. Same can be said about many news items in <i>Matichon</i>. Initially, they wrote very negative news until it is found that the culprits are allied with the Democrats or Mahachon. For example, the Klong Dan Scandal, Dhammakaya Scandal, etc. Also: Both the Nation Group and Matichon Group keep writing very negative news against Generation Y along with several attacks on the Japanese influence polluting Thai youth’s mentality. Many of the younger generation have lost faith in serious newspapers since they have become too biased.</p>	

Blue Dragon scam – December 2, 2004

December 2, 2004

Categories: Gem Scam

Blue Dragon scam – December 2, 2004

It looks like I just became the next victim of the gem scam. My story is very similar to the ones posted on 2Bangkok.com.

As my boyfriend and I approached Grand Palace, we walked by the side entrance where there was a very friendly and seemingly nice old man standing there who told us that the Palace was closed until 2pm because there was some special ceremony happening and only Thai people were allowed. So he suggested that we go tour the other temples around the area and then come back. He made arrangements to have a Tuk Tuk driver take us around for a great bargain price of 40 Baht. He also went on to say that we should stop by "Thai Export" because you can find great deals there. Because he seemed sincere, we believed him and went on our way with the Tuk Tuk driver. At first, we didn't think much about visiting the Thai Export. It wasn't until we visited the temple near the National Museum that we ran into another seemingly nice guy who claimed to be a journalist. As we were heading to our Tuk Tuk to go to our next stop, the driver told us that he needed to go to the bathroom and to go ahead and wait for him at the Tuk Tuk. Right by our Tuk Tuk sat this seemingly nice guy who we happened to strike up a conversation with. He asked where we were from and what we had planned for the day. We told him we were heading to see the green buddha next and pointed out on the map. When he saw that "Thai Export" was marked on our map, he immediately asked how we heard about it. We told him that the man by the Grand Palace had suggested that we go there. We were curious about why he was asking and what that was. So, he went on to explain that "Thai Export" is a gem/jewelry export center where normally only people with retail licenses are allowed in. He asked if we had heard about the promotion going on and we said "no." He seemed surprised that we had not heard about the promotion because he said it had been advertised all over Thailand and that many Thai students and tourists come to Thailand this week to attend this promotion. He said this promotion was sponsored by the government to help fund Thai students for studying abroad. This was what had helped pay for his education when he attended school in England. When he was a student, he would come back to buy jewelry from this place and re-sell in England for 100% profit. He said that this was the last year that the government and this company was offering this promotion because there are no more sapphires to mine in Thailand and this was a great time to get great deals on sapphires to save for the future. He went on to say that his friend flew in from New York this week just to attend this promotion. As a matter of fact, he and his mom were there this morning and had bought a ring and a necklace, which he could easily sell in the states for twice as much. He was so friendly and seemed very innocent that we believed him. We asked him for the exact name of the company, and he told us it was the Blue Dragon Export. He said that if we wanted to buy anything we had to be there by 2 pm and it was the last day of the promotion.

When our Tuk Tuk driver finally came back from the bathroom some 15-20 minutes later, we told him to hurry along and take us to the Blue Dragon Export. When we got there, everything seemed legitimate and seemed like a trustworthy place. So we proceeded to look around and found a sapphire necklace and bracelet that I liked. The lady at the shop said that these were a good deal and they do not normally sell to tourists, except for today. She said they guarantee all the gems to be of good quality and would provide all the appropriate documents with the purchase. I was excited and thought it was a great deal and so decided to pay about 320,000 baht for both. We left the shop feeling happy with our purchase. At the time, we had no idea about the elaborate scam. It was when I was waiting in Seoul, Korea for my flight back to Seattle, that I decided to go on the internet and looked into the Blue Dragon. When I did a search for the Blue Dragon, it directed me to 2Bangkok.com. This is where I saw all the other victims' stories and realized I am a victim as well. As I was reading these stories, my heart sunk and I became so distraught that my boyfriend was so concerned about me. I felt so helpless and embarrassed that I allowed myself to be in this situation. I tried to call my bank to stop the payment, but because of the time difference, they were not opened. There was basically nothing I could do at that point in time. The whole flight from Seoul to Seattle, I was restless and crying most of the time. When I arrived in Seattle, I contacted my bank, but it was too late.....payment was already processed. What I am having to do now is file a dispute for the charges. I still have the jewels and all the paperwork and will try hard to get my money back just to keep my sanity and to see if any justice can be done.

*I don't know if any of you can help me, but I'm begging
for any help I can get. This situation has taken a toll on me and
I don't know how I will overcome this. I am a wreck and haven't been
able to sleep the last couple of days because of this. It just makes
me so sick and angry that I do not ever want to come back to Thailand.
Nothing is what it seems in Thailand. My perception of Thai people
has been jaded and this is so unfortunate...*

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

Thai-language newspapers – December 2, 2004

December 2, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – December 2, 2004</p> <p>* On December 1, a seminar on “Forecasting the Economic Business of 2005” was held at the Montien Hotel. Mr. Thananurak Jarusakul, a counselor on astrology at C.P. Company said that the next government will be in power for only two years because it will have a crisis in October.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>A group of 40 Monks from Lopburi province went to Wat Banrai in Nakorn Rachasima on December 1 to do a ceremony for continuing Luang Por Koon’s fate.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – December 2, 2004</p> <p>* At Mooban Sintawee, Jomthong, Bangkok, an ex-nurse had a bitter love. After shooting and killing her girlfriend, a 42-year-old Tom killed herself as well. Witnesses said her 39-year-old Dee has another Tom and made her old Tom feel jealous.</p>	<p>* Wassana reveals that even on December 7 there still may not be a date for the General Election. This is because some of the committee members may not participate in the meeting so they cannot have a unanimous conclusion.</p>
<p>More from the local press – translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi, December 3, 2004</p> <p>* Siam Syntec has declined to purchase BMCL stocks to prevent further losses to National Park PCL (major shareholders of Siam Syntec).</p> <p>* The Sophnphanitch (the family that owns Bangkok Bank PCL) has taken over National Park PCL to prevent the company from being bankrupted.</p>	

Interesting vehicles

December 2, 2004

Interesting vehicles

– December 2, 2004

Nils writes: *Just stumbled about this [travel photo page](#) in German. Two things that I thought you would find interesting here.*

[Photo of a public bus in Sichuan Province, China](#). The black thing on the roof is the gas tank! The author writes that the gas is a byproduct of the 2000 year old salt mining activities in the area, thus they are using it to propel the public buses in the cities of Zigong and Yibin.

Vehicles in Cuba [1](#)

– [2](#) – [3](#)

I especially like [this picture](#). And he writes [these](#) are nicknamed "Two Camels": public buses in Havana.

Thai-language newspapers – December 3, 2004

December 3, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – December 3, 2004</p> <p>* At Jana, Songkhla, gas separation equipment left on the shore was taken. The leader of the protesters and a representative of Songkhla University students confirm they will continue to protest the gas pipeline project.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>Oke celebrated his birthday by ordering a mobile fun park from England and setting it at the Amazing Fun Park, Ratchadaphisek Road from December 2 to January 9. It was open free on his birthday (December 2) until 9 pm. He said this fun park focuses on the youth group and it is not competing with the fun park that is currently set up at Muang Thong Thani.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – December 3, 2004</p> <p>* Bloody news – At Banglamung, Chonburi, Mr. Worached Malungphan, an 18-year-old, died inside his room. His dead body was naked and his head was covered by a plastic bag tied with rope. The police assume that he played sex online and died after finishing his sexual desire.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>Thaksin sees through the Thammasat University academics. He counters that somebody organized the forum because they are doing a favor for Dr. Anek Laothammatad, the leader of Mahachon party. But the organizers are not concerned about the people or the country. Nowadays people must be the center—not political parties.</p>

Why the court acquitted Prasong of charges that he defamed eight “majority” Constitution Court judges

December 3, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Why the court acquitted Prasong of charges that he defamed eight “majority” Constitution Court judges](#) – *The Nation*, December 3, 2004

This is widely reported, but the *The Nation* has an insightful rundown (at the bottom of the page) of the reasoning for the ruling.

Desktop wallpaper of cellular transmission towers

December 3, 2004

Categories: Nothing to do with Thailand, but Interesting

[Desktop](#)

[wallpaper of cellular transmission towers](#)

– December 3, 2004

Nothing to do with Thailand, but interesting.

The ‘blog’ revolution sweeps across China

December 3, 2004

Categories: China

[The
‘blog’ revolution sweeps across China](#) –
New Scientist, December 3, 2004

HM The King's Birthday Address

December 4, 2004

Categories: HM The King's Birthday, The Monarchy



2004: HM The King's annual address to the nation
– 8:45pm, December 4, 2004

Also: [Outdoor celebrations on HM The King's birthday](#).

HM The King giving his annual birthday address (above) at 4pm. The speech was broadcast nationwide at 8pm. Photos are screen captures from government TV feed. The speech is a rare occasion when HM provides opinions and reflections on the state of the nation. It is broadcast on all channels and is carefully listened to throughout the country.



(Screen capture from government TV feed)

Above: Prime Minister Thaksin and his wife listen from the audience.

Wisarat reports on HM The King's address:

This year, HM warned about the perils of smoking which ruins the health of all people. His Majesty also told the people that He, the Princess Mother, and Kromluang Narathiwat (Princess Kalayaniwatthana) used to be chain smokers and now all of them have quit smoking. For the case of the Princess Mother, she quit when she was 80 (in 1980).

His Majesty quit smoking by putting the last carton of cigarettes at the bottom of a document heap. Emergency documents kept coming so frequently that he could not find the last carton of cigarettes. His Majesty told Premier Thaksin that when he listened to Premier Thaksin's Saturday morning radio talk one time he fell asleep. His Majesty also gave a bad rap to those Generation Y people who have their ability to listen ruined by loud music such as in discotheques. Once Generation Y lose the ability to listen, their ability to take the other people's ideas into consideration and think will be in a sorry state. They will have to wear hearing aids for the rest of their lives which requires frequent battery changing and hearing aids are expensive.

His Majesty did not mention the Southern insurgency, but the reference to listening might be interpreted as a reference to the increasing authoritarianism of the government.

The Thai-language text of the full speech

is here: [part](#)

[1](#) – [part](#)

[2](#)

The foreign press reports:

[Thai king tells prime minister to be wary of foreign experts, warns students to avoid loud music](#) – AP, December 4, 2004

Thailand's King Bhumibol Adulyadej, living up to his title of Father of the Nation, advised the country's prime minister on Saturday to be selective in taking up Western ideas and its youth to avoid smoking and loud music...

Update – December 5, 2004

It is interesting that only the AP noted HM The King's remark about the "person from South America," which the AP interpreted as a warning to be wary of foreign ways of doing things. The local English-language papers did not mention this aspect of the speech at all.

[ROYAL](#)

[SPEECH: King puts focus on youth](#) – *The Nation*

[Plea](#)

[for youngsters' hearing – Ear-shattering disco music, smoking, drugs](#)

[put young people at risk, King says in birthday speech](#) – *Bangkok*

Post

The Supreme Patriarch

– 7:20pm, December 4, 2004

Below: H.H. Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, the Supreme Patriarch, speaks on television giving birthday wishes to HM The King.





(Screen capture from government TV feed)



(Screen captures from government TV feed)

Religious leaders' birthday wishes

– 6:08pm, December 4, 2004

Right: Religious leaders are on television reading birthday greetings to HM The King. Clockwise from top left: Muslim, Christian, Sikh, and Brahmin.

Newspapers announcing HM The King's annual address

– December 4, 2004

Right: Photos in the upper left-hand corner of today's *ThaiRath*, *Daily News*, and *Matichon* announce The King's annual address tonight at 8pm.

Below: *Komchadleuk* has a wrap-around tribute to The King and a report on the best-selling cartoon book about The King's dog. Note the panorama of Ratchadamneorn Avenue at the top of the front page.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

[Thais invited to celebrate King's birthday](#) – TNA, December 4, 2004

More than 10,000 people from all walks of life are expected to take part in two processions organised by the Royal Thai Army in honour of His Majesty the King's birthday on Sunday.

The first procession will start at the Democracy Monument, and the second one will start at the Defence Ministry.

Civil servants, military officers, students, workers, village scouts and others will participate in the processions, scheduled to arrive at Sanam Luang at about 4 p.m.

At 7.19 p.m. Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra is scheduled to chair a candle-lighting ceremony, offering blessings to the beloved Thai monarch.

The participants gathering at Sanam Luang will then sing the Royal Anthem and the song, *Sadudi Maharaja* (Praising the Great King).

The whole event will be broadcasted live on TV and radio from 6 p.m. on Sunday.

Right: Billboard with the King's image at the end of Ratchadamneon Avenue



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

[There are alternatives to present woeful state](#) – Bangkok Post, December 2, 2004

The whole country is all ears to what His Majesty the King will be sharing with us in his birthday speech this coming Saturday.

The past year has been especially traumatic. The bird flu disaster and the southern mayhem have suddenly blown the sense of safety and trust out of our lives.

How to keep our boat afloat amid the storms of nature's fury and ethnic outrage?

How to live our lives when every day is fraught with fear and distrust?

How to bring back peace?

Our political leadership cannot answer these questions. Its bird flu policy shows our health comes after the interests of big business.

As for the southern unrest, the political top boss is too busy playing the nationalistic card in his effort to win the general election, even though such tactics widen ethnic discord.

We should thank the stars we still have His Majesty the King who we can turn to for a voice of reason and compassion...

Also: [Outdoor celebrations on HM The King's birthday](#)

Outdoor celebrations on HM The King's birthday

December 5, 2004

Categories: HM The King's Birthday, The Monarchy



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Outdoor celebrations on HM The King's birthday
– 9:46pm, December 5, 2004

[More
on HM The King's birthday.](#)

On the evening of December 5, tens of thousands of people stroll through the major avenues in the old city area, watching fireworks and the lights hung in all the trees.

Left: The plaza in front of the old parliament building. From left to right: The parliament building, the Rama V equestrian statue, acrobats (some Thais 'make merit' by sponsoring acting or acrobatic troops), and ornamental stands with rice that has been blessed. The rice will soon be given out to the people for good luck.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: A portrait of HM The King near the Rama V equestrian statue



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Left: [The King Prajadhipok Museum](#) and the Golden Mount in the background
Right: Looking down Ratchadamneorn Avenue from the Democracy Monument



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Above: Lights in the moat of Chitlada Palace
(the home HM The King)

Below: Portrait of the King and Queen



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

[More on HM The King's birthday.](#)

Thai-language newspapers – December 6-7, 2004

December 6, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i></p> <p>December 6, 2004</p> <p>* On December 5, 98 million peaceful paper birds flew in the sky. The southern people are delighted. Whoever get the bird with Thaksin's signature will be invited to eat rice with him at government house. Meanwhile the thief shot an ex-state attorney in Pattani who died and also shot at police in Narathiwat.</p> <p>* On December 7, Mr. Wattana Muangsuk, the Minister of Commerce will propose the cabinet to support a 1300 million bath budget to set up 'Thailand Plaza' by renting a building on Fifth Avenue, New York for 10 years for selling OTOP products.</p> <p>* A news report from the government house said Mr. Jaturon Chaisaeng, the deputy who in charge of Natural Resource and Environment will ask for 160 million baht from the central budget to solve the drought problem.</p>	<p>December 7, 2004</p> <p>* Dr. Hatai Chitanon, Chairperson of Thai Health Promotion Institute, takes to task the Minister of Public Health telling them that to arrest the shop owners selling cigarettes to under 18-year-olds is only publicity. She says that there are more than 500,000 shops selling and the officers cannot arrest them all.</p> <p>* Thaksin will visit Burma on December 9 to make a speech at the World Religious Leaders Meeting which is organized in Rangkung. He will also discuss with Senior General Tanchuoi, the Burmese leader. He said he has not set the agenda for the discussion yet. Moreover, he intends to support Burma to continue on national harmony and democracy.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i></p> <p>December 6, 2004</p> <p>* Bloody news – The 45-year-old Italian rented a plane from Flying Thai service company in Pattaya and jumped into the sea. The police assume that he wanted to kill himself.</p> <p>* The Anti-Money Laundering Office (AMLO) threatens to attach the asset of the gang making X-rated films—ones who are involved in trafficking women and children. People can give police tips at 0-2219-3600. People who make tips can get 10% of money from the assets.</p>	<p>December 7, 2004</p> <p>* Bloody news – At 12:30am on December 6 at Kajornkiat Apartment, the dead bodies of Mr. Kittu Chaobualum and Ms.Nonglak Budsai were found in their rooms. The police assume he was afraid that his girlfriend would leave him for another man and he was jobless so he bought benzene gasoline to burn in the room, but both of them died of fire smoke inhalation first.</p>

N. Korea’s Trade With Thailand Expands 22.6% In Jan-Oct

December 6, 2004
Categories: North Korea

[N. Korea’s Trade With Thailand Expands 22.6 PCT In Jan-Oct](#) – *Asia Pulse*, December 6, 2004

Blue Dragon lawsuit – December 7, 2004

December 7, 2004

Categories: Gem Scam

Last August, I was stolen 829 AUD by Blue Dragon by its well-organized gem scam. I reported my case to 2Bangkok, and my story is still posted on your web as the latest scam from Blue Dragon on September 30... Many thanks for your support to fight against this crime, which is embarrassing and damaging for Thai tourism.

In my case, I found out about the scam about 3 hours after I visited Blue Dragon. I called my bank, ANZ Bank, to report the scam and to unauthorize the transfer from my credit card. Recently, ANZ Bank yielded to Blue Dragon's bank in Thailand, and transfer the money to this scam shop.

I decided to bring both ANZ Bank and Blue Dragon to Australian court under Australia's Trade Practices Act 1974, which requires that Australian banks charge back the foreign scam shop to protect wronged consumers if the transaction is a scam. Also under Australian, and as far as I know, Thai contract law, the purchase contract between me and Blue Dragon is void because of misrepresentation...

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

Thai-language newspapers – December 8, 2004

December 8, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

<p><i>Matichon</i> – December 8, 2004</p> <p>Breaking news: Office of The Election Commission of Thailand has just declared that February 6, 2005 is the general election day.</p> <p>* Thaksin instructs authorities to strongly monitor media which have ads for sex services. He mention the case of 17-year-old young man who sold his belongings to buy sex which was advertised in a magazine.</p> <p>* Mr. Waratep Rattankorn, Deputy in the Finance Ministry, said the Tobacco authority will set a 120 million bath budget for an anti-smoking campaign.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>Mr. Jarupong Ruoengsuwan, the permanent undersecretary of the Labor Ministry, reveals that the government approves a budget of 228 million baht to create jobs in the three southern provinces. Hiring will be from December 16-23. At present there are 30,972 positions available. Applicants must use their I.D. card to apply, not just a photo.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – December 8, 2004</p> <p>* In Srakaew Province, police raid drug sellers in an OTOP shop named “Kamonwan.” A police dog found drugs hidden in a fertilizer bag at the back of the shop.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>The media reports that Nurita Malaiman is the girl who found the paper origami crane with Thaksin’s signature. However, after checked the phone number on the bird, it is for Mr. Sompong, a Kalasin resident. He is puzzled when lots of people called him about this and he never folded a bird for the crane drop.</p>

Thai-language newspapers – December 9, 2004

December 9, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Where

frost is front page news

– December 9, 2004

Today several Thai-language dailies had front page photos of leaves covered with frost at Doi Inthanon.

Even the English-language *Nation* does not seem to know the word "frost," instead reporting "thin ice sheets formed on wet surfaces surfaces and tourists enjoyed the sight of frozen dew in a tropical country" ([Ice sheets form at Doi Inthanon](#) – *The Nation*, December 10, 2004).

Also: [The day it snowed in Thailand](#)

Matichon

– December 9, 2004

* In Supunburi province, a fire burned Talad Banpoepraya which has row houses that are over 100 years old. The damage is estimated at more than 10 million baht. During the fire, some people shopping in the market ran from the fire and three old men jumped into the river. A police officer helped them by throwing a rope to them and pulling them to shore.

*

Mr. Kreu Wongboonsin, vice rector of Chulalongkorn University, disputes that the rent at Siam Square is expensive. In the past 10 years, the rental costs have been 30-50% lower than the market price. The brokers make it higher. Those who want to rent in this area should contact directly to the university. He and the Chulalongkorn rector will have a press conference on this issue on December 13.

Thairath

– December 9, 2004

* **Bloody news** –

December 7 at Phuket, Mrs. Janet Singer, a 61-year-old Swiss businesswoman who stayed at Horizon Hotel was hit by a blunt instrument and died inside her room. The robber took some of her belongings, but a golden necklace was still on her neck. The police assumed the robber may have cooperated with an ex-employee of the hotel and they noted that the woman stayed alone.

*

On December 8 at Pratumthani Province, Mr. Chanchai Ngammee, a 32-year-old, was arrested. He is a football coach accused of creating pornographic images of six students by order them to perform sex acts with him. He tricked the 12-15 year old students saying he would buy new sport shoes or sport suits for them.

Thai-language newspapers – December 10, 2004

December 10, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – December 10, 2004</p> <p>* The Office of National Religion reveals that temples will be non-smoking areas. Smokers cannot be ordained as monks and monks who are already addicts have to quit in the appropriate time. They ask people to cooperate and not present cigarettes to the monks. Meanwhile Bangkok Governor Apirak declares all the parks in Bangkok to be nonsmoking areas and those who violate must pay a 2000 baht fine.</p> <p>* ”The North“ is very cold and might be minus 5 temperature–the same as in 1999. People can see the frost which is called “Moei Khab” on the grass in Doi Intanon and Doi Angkhang, Chaingmai which excites foreigners and Thai tourism.</p>	<p>* It is strange that the Ban Wanghad School in Amphur Danlanhoi, Sukhothai province has only two teachers. In the past there were seven teachers for 200 students, but now there are only 87 students left so sometimes a janitor, monk, policeman or forest officer comes to help teach.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – December 10, 2004</p> <p>* The girl from grade 3 from a famous school in Prapradaeng, Samutprakarn province was slapped and kicked and injured in the bathroom by three friends because she did not give them a Saifon brand cigarette. Police called their parents to check the testimony and negotiate for the compensation.</p>	<p>* The polices hunt for the X-rated VCD broker, Mr. Lex at his house in Kunayao district. They found sexy VCDs, photos, sexy clothes for the x-model and an account book for the models. But Mr. Lek and his wife have been gone since Loy Kratong. The big investor is Mr. Ha of Ban Moh and police are seeking evidence to arrest him.</p>

Salad bar hacking

December 10, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Salad bar hacking](#) – December 10, 2004

Via Boing Boing: *This is a [photo from a Chinese PDF manual](#). The manual explains, via text and a lot of fun photos, how to cram as much food as possible on one of those tiny Pizza Hut bowls at the salad bar. They're only allowed one trip. My cousin lives in Beijing. When he goes to Pizza Hut, he says this is what most people are busy building.*

EDITORIAL: A bad omen for human rights

December 10, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[EDITORIAL:](#)

[A bad omen for human rights](#) – *The Nation*, December 10, 2004

...Extra-judicial killings are all right as long as the government says they are necessary, like they were in the "war against drugs". It is okay to violate the human rights of drug suspects because they are not part of mainstream society. Not surprisingly, this methodology spread fast to the southern provinces... The continuing crisis in the South inspired the government to try to introduce new decrees to increase state power, notably for the police to arrest, detain and question anyone suspected of involvement with terrorism. Given the government's dismal history of abuse of power, only the insane would continue to accept this kind of behaviour.

On the occasion of Constitution Day and Human Rights Day, it is important to recall the lawyer Somchai Neelaphaijit, who was kidnapped in March and is still unaccounted for. It is widely believed that he was killed shortly after being kidnapped by men in uniform. His case serves as a barometer of the sorrowful state of human rights and the rule of law in Thailand. Somchai was courageous and outspoken when it came to publicising allegations of police violations made by his clients, who had been arrested on charges of having links to the regional terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah...

[Corruption now](#)

['worst in century'](#) – *Bangkok Post*, December 10, 2004

Corruption is now the "most serious in a century" under the Thaksin Shinawatra administration, with complex policy-related graft and equal benefit sharing among business groups owned by 10 families, a local anti-corruption network alleged yesterday. The allegations were made at a seminar organised by the network yesterday at Thammasat University to mark International Anti-Corruption Day.

Network members claimed there were irregularities in the granting of a 270-billion-baht Laem Chabang port concession to a private firm, the Board of Investment's tax exemption for a satellite operator partially owned by the Shinawatra family's Shin Corp, and the Export-Import Bank's granting of a 600-million-baht soft loan to Burma's telephone and internet projects which later went to a supplier from Shin Corp...

It all began with the monopolisation of political, financial and state powers by the "Thaksin regime", which allowed business groups owned by 10 families to win all state bids and projects, he alleged...

[Cold](#)

[public response to India-ASEAN rallyists in Thailand](#) – PTI news, December 9, 2004

The exotic locations and a party atmosphere may have made Thailand the first choice of many Indian tourists, but the participants of the first India-ASEAN car rally were surely disappointed by the "cold" response given by the people here.

The rallyist, who received vociferous applause wherever they traveled in their endeavour to build people-to-people contact, could hardly find anyone acknowledging their second arrival in this fast-paced country...

[Thai](#)

[senators and exiles discuss Burma](#) – *The Irrawaddy*, December 9, 2004

Several Thai senators and Burmese dissidents in exile discussed political developments in Burma and the plight of detained opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi at a meeting in Bangkok on Wednesday. The meeting was intended to send a message to Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra on the eve of his visit to Rangoon on Thursday to attend the World Buddhist Summit...

Aerial photographs of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake

December 11, 2004

Categories: Nothing to do with Thailand, but Interesting

[Aerial
photographs of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake](#)

– December 11, 2004

Via Slashdot: *In 1906 San Francisco had a devastating earthquake – registering around 7.7 to 8.3 on the Richter scale. George Lawrence had devised ways to take aerial photographs and went to SF to showcase his technology. He used kites and custom built cameras that could take photos while up in the air:*

Thai leader calls Myanmar's reasons for detaining Suu Kyi 'reasonable'

December 11, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Thai](#)

[leader calls Myanmar's reasons for detaining Suu Kyi 'reasonable'](#)

— AP, December 11, 2004

Myanmar's military junta has reasonable and convincing reasons for continuing to keep pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest, Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said Saturday. Speaking on his weekly radio broadcast, Thaksin said he asked Myanmar's leaders about the Nobel Peace laureate's detention on a trip Thursday to the Southeast Asian nation. The response from the ruling generals was that political instability caused by Suu Kyi's release could lead the country to break up, he said.

More than 100 different ethnic groups exist in Myanmar; the junta told Thaksin, and unless stability was assured, all would want to have their own states.

"(Myanmar) will be torn apart into many different countries," Thaksin quoted the junta as saying. "(The) country will be a mess, nothing will be left..."

Sathorn Fire

December 11, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

Sathorn fire – 1:04pm,
December 11, 2004

Cormac reports on a fire in the Sathorn Road area: *I could see it from the 28th floor, so I can tell you that it is not Bangkok Christian College nor Wat Phra Khek as had been suggested, nor any embassy, nor any tall buildings. I can't say for sure what it was though, because it's still completely obscured by smoke. There's a lot of old houses around that area though, not slums, but not well-kept considering the value of the land.*

I did see one or two St. Louis ambulances among the later hordes of fire trucks, but really not many. I suspect they were a gesture rather than there being many casualties.

When a cloud of obviously steam started to drift towards my building, all the maids ran around closing the windows. Seems that memories of chemical spills are deeply ingrained.

[Fire tears through 15 houses](#) – The
Nation, December 12, 2004

About 15 houses were damaged in a blaze that took fire-fighters an hour to get under control yesterday.

At 11.50pm Lumpini police officers and fire-fighters rushed to Silom Soi 13 in Bangkok's Bang Rak district after news of the fire.

There were more than 60 wooden houses in the area where the fire broke out, allowing the blaze to spread rapidly from one to the next. Twenty fire engines were dispatched to the scene, and it took fire-fighters an hour to get the flames under control...

Do you know Roger Harpel?

December 11, 2004

Do you know Roger Harpel?

– December 11, 2004

Tom Harpel asks: *16 years ago, my father left Washington state for Thailand. For the first year, he sent letters back home but eventually stopped communicating.*

I wonder if in your travels you have met him? His name is Roger Harpel. He lived in Washington state and ran a software company called Cosmos until 1989. It may be a long shot but the world can be surprisingly small. I look forward to your reply.

Happy Lunar New Year – Today had an important place in ancient Thai calendars

December 12, 2004

Categories: Local Beliefs

[Happy.](#)

[Lunar New Year – Today had an important place in ancient Thai calendars](#)

– Bangkok Post, December 12, 2004

Today would be New Year's Day in Thailand, if we still held to the lunar calendar and ancient agrarian ways of the past.

According to a recent study by anthropologists at Silpakorn University's faculty of archaeology, Thailand once considered December the first month of a year or duen ai in Thai, a practice which probably dates back 1,000 years... Also [NEW](#)

[YEAR](#) (Bangkok Post, December 12, 2004)

Thaksin must win the upcoming general election

December 12, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Thaksin](#)

[must win the upcoming general election](#) – *The Nation*, December 12, 2004

...Thaksin needs to win at all costs because he stands to lose a lot if his party fails to take a simple majority in the House. During his election campaign, in addition to the lip service and promises of bread in the skies for the poor and the gullible, he has also poured contempt on the Chat Thai Party, a submissive and subservient coalition partner.

Chat Thai leader Banharn Silapa-archa has had to swallow blood and try hard to hide his anger and bitterness. But beyond the pain of being at the receiving end of all things done and undone is the desire to be in the government, which overrides all other considerations, including good sense, political dignity and the requirement by the Constitution to serve the public...

Thaksin's promises of a good life for all people and an end to poverty will be haunting him to produce quick results before the poor and the gullible realise that they have been taken for a free ride. If that happens they might come to realise that those in power have been amassing wealth beyond the ability of most people to understand...

Comparing Thai script with Kmer, Thai Lue, and Brahmi

December 12, 2004

Categories: Culture and Society

[Comparing Thai script with Kmer, Thai Lue, and Brahmi](#) –
OALIT, December 12, 2004

Origin of the Thai script

December 12, 2004

Categories: Culture and Society

[Origin of the Thai script](#) – *Orality and Literacy in Thailand*, December 12, 2004

Thai-language newspapers – December 13, 2004

December 13, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – December 13, 2004</p> <p>* Chantana smile happily. The Prime Minister promises to create child care centers in industrial areas. The Women Workers' Unity group said the PM tries to please textile worker with the first center at Prapradaeng. She reveals that the women workers have to work so they must send their children back to the rural provinces. Some employers force them to quit if they have children. Meanwhile the Labour Organization submits 18 proposals to political party in exchanges for their votes.</p>	<p>* On December 12, Mr. Ongart Klampaiboon, spokesman of Democrat party, accused Maew of visiting Burma for his family's businesses. Recently he discussed with Tan Chuoi that the Burmese government may revise the communication concession with a big company in Thailand .</p> <p>* Warn Yala! Narathiwat may get heavy rain. Six provinces (Nakornsrihammarat, Pattalung, Songkhla, Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat) are on in danger of having flash floods and forest water floods.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – December 13, 2004</p> <p>* On December 12 at 4.00 a.m. in Samut Prakarn Province, during looking in a trash can, a garbage picker found a baby's dead body covered by the piece of cloth. The police identify it is as a 5-6 month fetus that died 3-6 hours before. They are finding the mother to proceed with the case.</p>	<p>* The Deputy of Public health reveals that the youth of Thailand are champions of whisky drinking-number one in Asia and fifth in the world.</p>

Shenzhen Western Corridor

December 13, 2004

Categories: Uncategorized

A friend in Hong Kong sent in the following amazing photos: *Just a few shots of the Shenzhen Western Corridor from Hong Kong to China that we are working on. All of it is over water.*





Train station at the Royal Pavilion at Chitrlada

December 14, 2004

Categories: Thai Railroads

Train station at the Royal Pavilion at
Chitrlada – December 14, 2004

Rapee's exclusive photos of the Royal Train Station
near Chitlada Palace.



(Photo: Rapee)



(Photo: Rapee)



(Photo: Rapee)



(Photo: Rapee)



(Photo: Rapee)



(Photo: Rapee)



(Photo: Rapee)



(Photo: Rapee)

Thai-language newspapers – December 14-15, 2004

December 15, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p>A tale of two newspapers: Beer bar demolition – December 15, 2004 The Thai-language <i>Matichon</i> definitely has different details of the beer bar demolition yesterday, adding it was an impact from King's recent speech, that Soi Cowboy would now be strictly controlled, and that the bars were obscene and disgraceful.</p>	
<p><i>The Nation</i></p> <p>...Wattana district director Surakiat Limcharoen said he needed to take action because the bar owners were operating illegally. "I demanded these bar owners demolish their bars two months ago and 60 per cent of them complied, but 40 per cent remained stubborn so we filed complaints with police to take action against them," Surakiat said. He said that Srinakharinwirot University was not happy to have "illegal" bars open near its campus... (from More beer bars torn down – English-language)</p>	<p><i>Matichon</i></p> <p>* The police and other officers demolish beer bars at the intersection of Asok Road swiftly. They allege they are against the law, obscene and disgraceful. Soi Cowboy will be controlled strictly.</p> <p>Meanwhile the Deputy of Prasanmitr University said it is an impact from the King speech. Also that students believe that nightlife people will go to the others areas if the pubs in front of the universities will be closed.</p>
<p><i>Manager</i> – December 14, 2004</p> <p>* On December 14, before a cabinet meeting, Maew got up early to help his team campaign in Talad Huoiyod, Trang province. He made Chinese fried dough and chop the barbecued pork from them by himself.</p> <p>* Impact on <i>somtum boo</i> ! Mangrove forests are in crisis and there are no mangrove crabs for cooking. Thailand has to order 20-30 million crabs per year valued at 100 million baht from Burma.</p> <p>* Mr. Somkid Jatusripitak, Minister of Finance, will propose a cabinet meeting to ban to selling of alcohol and cigarettes in temples, schools and for the young under 18 years old. Lucky for the gas stations that they are not on the list.</p>	<p><i>Matichon</i> – December 15, 2004</p> <p>* The Prime Minister is confident to win a seat for a Thai Rak Thai M.P. in Trang and Satoon Provinces. Wattana, the administrator of TRT said it is better to buy cows or buffalos for people to feed them rather than buy Mr. Wirat from the Democrat Party. Because cows and buffalos have brain and can be sold at a good price.</p> <p>* Pattani residents resist the Seafood Bank which destroys community life!</p> <p>On December 14, the Thailand Research Fund organized a seminar on "The Sorrow of Pattani Residents." The speakers mentioned the seafood bank project of the government valued at 700 million baht which is not a Pattani resident project and they have not participated in. The benefit will support to investor capitalists. They wonder why Mr. Navin Chidchob, Deputy of Agriculture and Cooperatives, takes the Esarn way of life and traditions to the South although they are totally different from the local culture.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i></p> <p>December 14, 2004</p> <p>* The special police arrest Mr. Boonsri Suebsom who prepares to send illegal VCDs to customers in Ban Moh and Klongthom. He says that he is only the driver and watches over Mr. Koson's house in Bangbuathong, Nontaburi. The police find the 30,000 Thai, foreign, X , and swinging VCDs as well as a list of customers all around the country. This is quite a big production source because they could produce 8000 VCDs per day.</p> <p>* F club, founded by the popular model, Look Ked (Metini Kingpayom), made a new year's present by taking three sexy models to pose nude for the Lao Beer New Year Calendar. This is special for the one those who love drinking and beautiful ladies.</p> <p>* Ms. Pintongtarn Shinawatra becomes the richest person of 2004 holding shares worth 18,032.76 million baht and overthrows the old champ, Mr. Anan Asawaphokin</p>	<p>December 15, 2004</p> <p>* Bloody news – The victim of a cruel murder: The student and ex-student of Ayudtaya Technology School were shot on December 14. Police found their bodies at 3 am on the laterite road at Bangpra-In. Someone saw them drink beer with friends at an Esso gas station before they disappeared and were killed.</p> <p>* For this coming new year, the Government Lottery office will increase the lottery to 65 million tickets valued 2,000 million baht and also have another reward of 77 million baht. At present, there is an order from distribution agents all around the country valued 1,500 million baht.</p>

who is third. Second richest is Mr. Bunpot Damapong,
the brother-in-law of Thaksin Shinawatra .

Hong Kong's Peak Tower to undergo multi-million dollar renovation

December 15, 2004

Categories: China

[Hong](#)

[Kong's Peak Tower to undergo multi-million dollar renovation](#)

– Travel Tips, December 15, 2004

We are only posting this to mention that during the 1990s Victoria Peak went from a fabulous mountain-top vista to an overbuilt tourist trap that ranks with some of the worst in the world.

Thailand 2016 Olympic bid

December 15, 2004

Categories: Sports, The Thaksin Years

[Thailand](#)

[2016 Olympic bid](#) – *Sports Business*, December 15, 2004

Thailand's government has officially endorsed the country's proposal to bid for the 2016 Summer Olympic Games, reports TNA. A committee – established to look at the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) criteria for hosting the Games – ruled that Bangkok would be ready to host the 2016 Games...

Gina II run aground in Songkhla

December 16, 2004

Categories: The Thai Deep South



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Gina II – December 4, 2004

2Bangkok.com's webmaster standing next to the *Gina II* run aground in Songkhla in 1992. Anyone have any details about this incident?



(Photo: MJL)



(Photo: MJL)

More on the *Gina II*
– December 16, 2004

MJL writes: *Yes, poor Gina II. She had a somewhat unsavory history.*

I was in Songkhla in 1992 and the story we heard back then was this: She was registered in Panama, but where she was actually built no one seemed to know.

Her name had been changed at least once (when she was washed up on the beach you could clearly see that the old name had been painted over) and was used for smuggling (once it was cashews!) to and from various ports in the Philippines, Viet Nam, Singapore, etc. While she was anchored offshore awaiting an open berth in the Songkhla deep sea port, tropical storm Forrest blew through and because one of her anchors wasn't working very well, the strong currents pushed her nearly into shore. The authorities were worried that a sub sea fiber optic line would be torn up and so had her towed in. Because she had been involved in smuggling and the crew were all illegals—Burmese and Vietnamese—no one ever claimed ownership. Eventually the government hired a company to salvage her and that was the sad end of our lady Gina. Word around here is that the guy who owned the salvage company made so much money on that job that he closed shop and moved off to Krabi.

**Update – December 8,
2005**

Narrit writes: *At the time I lived in Songkhla and as far as i remember from what my dad told me this ship was from Panama and it had some kind of engine failure that could not be repaired. I guess it would cost them too much. So they abandoned the ship and just left Thailand somehow. Then a local company retrieved this ship for their own business. This is as much as I know.*

Thai-language newspapers – December 16, 2004

December 16, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – December 16, 2004</p> <p>* On December 15, on the website of Luangtabua (www.Luangta.com), Than Ajarn Maha Boowa Nanasampanno preached on the subject of “government, do not be puffed up” . He is worried that the situation of the nation is in a ‘black magic atmosphere’ and the government is pursued by bad luck and over ambition.</p>	<p>* The Uninet Poll conducted by Turakitbundit, Rajabhat Lampang, Chaingmai, Rajabhat Ubonrachatani and Hadyai Universities is a survey of the residents in five provinces asking if they are confident that the government promises can be kept or not. The result is all of them have less confidence that the government can fight drugs, influential people, corruption and poverty in five years—especially the Songkhla people who have very little confidence.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – December 16, 2004</p> <p>* Bloody news – The police arrest Mr. Somporn Songprasert , the owner of Grand Safety Guard and his team who got 150,000 baht to shoot Ms. Sirivipa Krajangsung, the ex-moviestar while she was driving new BMW on Soi Ramintra 5, Bangkhaen district. Afterward the police investigated that the minor wife of her Australian husband ordered the kill.</p>	<p>* The fourth son of Mr. Thong Kumla, the owner of ‘Chaisee Bamikiew’ company, a franchise noodle shop, was shot while he parked his car and was taking noodle equipment to the pushcart franchise. The thief stole the new car which was bought two week ago. There was 10,000 baht in the car.</p>

Blue Dragon scam foiled – December 17, 2004

December 17, 2004

Categories: Gem Scam

My husband and I just came back from Bangkok yesterday, 15 Dec 2004. I was curious about our strange encounter at this jewellery shop called 'Blue Dragon Export' so I just went to do a 'Google' search. To my great surprise, I realised that it indeed is a scam. What was surprising is that it's been going on for such a long time and that there were so many others before us.

Anyway, we're very glad that 2Bangkok.com has taken to trouble to publish the accounts of the victims so that others can be warned. Looking at all the stories, my husband and I thank our lucky stars that we were not conned. I think our experience is the latest, that's why we're sharing it with your website.

On the second day of our stay, i.e. 14 Dec, we went to Wat Pho late morning. At around 1pm, when we wanted to go into the Grand Palace, we were stopped by a smartly-dressed man who claimed that he was a staff working there. He told us that we couldn't go in because some prayers were going on and we should come back at 3pm.

In the meantime, that man suggested that he get a tuk-tuk to take us to 3 other places for sightseeing: Wat Thai, a Thai Export and Watin. He told the tuk-tuk to charge us 30 baht.

At Wat Thai, we saw a couple of temples but they were not as grand as the one at Wat Pho.

After a few minutes, we told the tuk-tuk driver that we were ready to move on. He told us to wait in the tuk-tuk while he goes the toilet for 10 min.

When he was away, there was another Thai who was sitting behind the tuk-tuk. He started to chat with us in English. He said that he was waiting for his brother who was a monk, to finish his prayers so that he could see him. He asked us where we were going.

When we told him someone recommended that we go to the Thai Export, he started telling us that we were very lucky as it was the last day the government was allowing tourists to buy sapphires and rubies that were tax free. He also said that we would be able to sell them at 130% back home. He even cited 2 reputable jewellery shops in Singapore whom he claimed to have sold jewellery to. Anyway, he sounded like he knew quite a few things about Singapore.

We chatted with that stranger for quite a long time. After waiting for almost half an hour for our tuk-tuk driver, we felt that things were quite fishy. Anyway, our driver did turn up eventually.

When we reached the 'Thai Export', we realised that it was only a small shop called 'Blue Dragon Export' (see photo below). There was a smartly-dressed man in black by the road, kind of like a body guard, who escorted us across the lane and into the shop. We thought that it was strange to have such an escort.

That road was also quite quiet. I think that was the only shop opened. The shop also had curtains that covered all the doors, which was also quite strange. Somehow everything seemed so secretive.

We were actually quite tired, so we decided to pay that tuk-tuk driver that 30 baht first and told him he didn't need to take us to the third stop, Watin, because we wanted to go back to the hotel after that. The tuk-tuk driver looked quite surprised that we cut short our trip, but he left without bothering us after we paid him. In fact, I even gave him a small tip.

In the shop, it looked very much like a normal jewellery shop. It wasn't crowded like what we expected. There was only a couple of Japanese ladies and another European couple. There were certificates on the wall to show the 'authenticity' of certain jewellery.

My husband and I decided to countercheck with your hotel staff first on the reputation of the shop before buying, so we left.

We called our hotel, Banyan Tree Bangkok, using the phone booth just a short distance outside the shop. The concierge was helpful. We related our story to him and he tried to check out the reputation of the shop within that short period of time. He told us that he wasn't sure if it was reputable and advised us not to buy from them.

Anyway, we took his advice and didn't buy anything from the shop. We went back to the hotel instead. We talked to the guest relations

officer and she also said that it was quite fishy that the tuk-tuk driver only charged 30 baht for the distance we travelled.

After coming back to Singapore, we searched for the name of the shop "Blue Dragon Export" on the internet just out of curiosity. To our horror, this gem scam has been going on for years and so many victims had fallen into its trap.

Some of the victims have lost a lot of money and we're lucky that we only lost 2 hours and the chance to visit the Grand Palace.

I've emailed this story and the link to your website to the hotel so that they can have more information on this. Hopefully, they'll remind other guests to be wary of such cheap tuk-tuk rides that offer to take tourists sightseeing.

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

Thai-language newspapers – December 17, 2004

December 17, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – December 17, 2004</p> <p>* Mr. Abdul Othaman, the religious adviser of Mr. Abdulla Amad Badawi, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, gave an interview that Muslims in the South should go to government schools to be familiar with Thai society rather than sending their kids to study at religious schools only.</p> <p>* Prasarnmitr University agrees with the government to demolish the beer bars which damage the image of students. Some foreigners thought that the students are masseuses or sell their body. Meanwhile the Bangkok governor sets the team to investigate five similar areas at Huaykwang, Dindang, Wattana, Thonburi, and Buengkum.</p>	<p>* For this new year Samui and Pangan Island grabs the golden opportunity for lots of foreigners coming to travel. At present, accommodation is 90% booked which is equal to more than 5000 rooms.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – December 17, 2004</p> <p>* According to Mr. Sutin Klangsaeng, the vice spokesman of TRT party asked the Anti-money Laundering office (AMLO) to investigate the politicians' assets. He accuses that the mafia and drug groups cooperate to resist Thaksin and TRT returning to the government. Mr. Chuvit Kamolwisit counters that AMLO should check the Donmuang TRT candidate's assets as well .</p>	<p>* Some part of research of Chulalongkorn University on "hi-so junior" found that the most of their behavior consists of using money to decorate cars to race and persuade women to take drugs, party and have swinging sex.</p> <p>* The lottery number for the lot of December 16 almost make the Government Lottery Office to be overrun because it is an auspicious number of the Queen's age (72) and many people want to buy this number.</p>

Tigers stalked by the dragon

December 17, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok News

[Tigers](#)

[stalked by the dragon](#) – *Financial Times*,

December 17, 2004

The south-east Asian 'tiger' economies Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia used to be regarded as some of the world's most dynamic investment opportunities. Now, according to some experts, their power is being eroded by the 'dragon' economy of China.

Two factors loom large in this assessment. One is possibly weakening demand from the US. The second is that, cheap manufacturers though the tiger economies are, China is cheaper...

One big plus for Thailand is its development of industrial infrastructure, according to Robert Stockfis, a consultant investment analyst and long-time resident in the country...

Controversial issues

December 17, 2004

Controversial issues

– December 17, 2004

Wisarut points out controversial threads on Thai-language forums.

1) [Changing](#)

[the name of the country back to Siam](#)

2) [Thai](#)

[National Anthem in Jawi \(Bahasa Melayu\)](#)

3) [Pornographic](#)

[online game](#)

4) [Nationalistic](#)

[wave: Even Thai rock music has to come up with nationalistic songs!](#)

Lizard Woman

December 17, 2004

Categories: Film and TV



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Lizard Woman

– December 17, 2004

Banner on Central Lat Phae advertising the latest Thai horror film. Its English title is *Lizard Woman*. In Thai the title is 'Tukkaepi' or *Ghost Gecko*. The website is [here](#).

The best of 2Bangkok in 2004

December 18, 2004

Categories: Best of 2Bangkok

What it was like to be there...

The feature that knocked 2B off the net

[Songkran on Khao Sarn Road](#) – 200,000 hits in the first 2 days



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

2B's story of Black May

[Black May](#) – Never-before seen photos of Black May 1992

Our most popular on-going feature: A tale of two newspapers

[Ghost structures](#) – March 26, 2004

[Censure debate](#) – May 20, 2004

[Death of Thanom](#) – June 19, 2004

[The heckling](#) – July 14, 2004

[The government fair](#) – November 8, 2004

[HM The Queen's speech](#) – November 19, 2004

[The Nation questions the government's legitimacy – Bangkok Post is silent](#) – June 21, 2004

New this year: Unlocking the Thai world – [Thai-language newspaper headlines](#)

The English-language newspapers have a circulation of about 100,000 total. Ever wonder what is in the Thai-language papers with individual circulations of 500,000 to 1,700,000?

Politics

[Bangkok Post chooses its words carefully](#) – August 25, 2004

[Thai Photoshoppers parody the campaign posters](#)

[Samak's development plans being reversed](#) – November 15, 2004

[Thaksin and the National Anthem](#)

[Thailand and the 9/11 Commission Report](#)

[Long twilight of the Bangkok Governor](#)

[Democrat Party campaign song](#)

[Blocked sites in Thailand](#)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

[The 2004 Bangkok Governor election](#)

Problems in the South

[2Bangkok.com reviews the Tak Bai VCDs](#) – December 11, 2004

[Troubles in the South](#) & [Nationalism & Right-wing Politics](#)

Thai railroads

[Makkasan Depot](#)

[Timeline of Thai railways](#)

[Thai railway tunnels](#)

[Obscure and defunct railways in Thailand](#)

[Fate of the ex-MaeKlong railroad stock](#) & [Riding the MaeKlong Railway](#)

[Walking the old Songkhla rail line](#)

The new airport

Bangkok Airport news > [BangkokAirport.info](#)

[The new airport: Inside looking out](#) – December 8, 2004

[Bids for the Airport link](#) – *Manager Daily*, December 8, 2004

Then and now

[Old structures disappearing](#) – March 8, 2004

[Ratchadamneon—then and now](#)

[Siam Square in 1992 and 2004](#)

[Phan Phiphop Lila Bridge over the years](#)



(Photo: Seri Court website)

[Suthisarn Road 1963/2004](#)

Buildings and areas

[Ban Bang Yeekhan](#) – September 20, 2004

[Mackenna Theater being torn down](#) – March 26, 2004



(Photo: Wesley Hsu)

[Slum fire](#) – April 23, 2004

[Challenges posed by 'ghost' buildings – Who is responsible in case of disaster?](#)

[More student proposals from Architect 2004](#) – December 12, 2004

[Old House being torn down](#)

[Bangkok's Crucible of Construction](#)

[Removing the Soi Leunrit community](#)

[Missing Mahakan Fort house](#) – May 3, 2004

[A walk through Pak Klong Talad](#)

[Kurusapa Printing House/Wat Sangwech Typing School](#)

[Bangkok's tallest buildings over the years](#)

[Removing the Silom cemeteries](#)

Other

[Bangkok from the sky](#) – August 26, 2004

[Olympic heroes parade](#) – August 31, 2004

["Winds calm" at Ko Samui?](#) – November 26, 2004

[The Skytrain is five years old](#) – December 5, 2004



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

[Wanted posters from Yala](#) – December 8, 2004
[Village Scouts at Sanam Luang](#) – November 28, 2004

Holiday events

[HM The King's birthday address](#) – December 4, 2004
[Outdoor celebrations on HM The King's birthday](#) – December 5, 2004
[Loy Krathong 2004](#) – November 26, 2004

History in the making

[Exclusive photos of the ancient Bo Bae barge](#)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

[The turning of the cannons](#)
[Final positioning of the cannons](#)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

The [Mega-bridge](#)
[The 2004 Pride Parade: "Thai gays come together folding origami birds" Telling it like it is...](#)

[The Gem Scam](#) & [maps to the scam stores](#) 2B also helped foil [S.S.S. Jewelry](#).

The only news in English about how the [mass transit nationalization plan was canceled](#) and the [Skytrain company will be punished by being denied extensions](#).

[Angkor Wat models at Wat Pra Keo in Bangkok and at the Grand Palace in Phnom Penh](#) (at Angkor.com)
[‘Shit Hits’ billboard](#)

[How to sue over copyright infringement on the net in Thailand](#) – January 28, 2004

[The amazing field of pipes](#) & [Pipe mystery solved?](#) – February 14, 2004
[Thai Panoramas](#)
[Bangkok Subway opens](#)

Also

[The best of 2Bangkok in 2009](#)
[The best of 2Bangkok in 2008](#)
[The best of 2Bangkok in 2007](#)
[The best of 2Bangkok in 2006](#)
[The best of 2Bangkok in 2005](#)
[The best of 2Bangkok in 2004](#)
[The best of 2Bangkok in 2003](#)

Lad Phrao Elevated Way

December 18, 2004

Categories: Mass Transit

Suriya pushing the Yellow Line monorail – translated and summarized from *Than Sethakij*, December 15-18, 2004

Minister Suriya has revived Yellow Line as the eighth mass transit line after delaying it for about a year. However, it is going to be revived as a monorail of 32 km long from Lad Phrao to Samrong via Lad Phrao Road, Sri Nakharin Road and Thepharak Road while asking MRTA to take care of this line.

However, the budget has been increased from 32.2 billion baht to 40.533 billion baht even though it is a monorail, not either LRT or heavy rail. Initially, the line is 22 km long from Lum Salee to Samrong via Sri Nakharin Road while letting Lad Phrao people suffer from the controversial Lad Phrao Elevated Way. However, the mounting public pressure has compelled Suriya to come up with the revival of Yellow Line with an extension to Lad Phrao Station.

The crux of this Yellow Line project is the proposed expressway along Sri Nakharin Road from Sri Nakharin Road to Samut Prakarn via Bang Na. So the section from Sri Nakharin to Sri Thepha is going to be mass transit mixed with expressway. This would create conflicts between ETA and MRTA eventually.

MRTA Governor said MRTA is going to make a calculation as to which form of the Yellow line would be the most optimal since monorails are notorious for a lack of capacity to expand to cope with explosive demand and strong vibration of rubber wheels—a serious shortcoming for the long Yellow Line. This line will take many passengers from Orange Line and Green Line.

Commentary by Wisarut: The Yellow Line has already been studied in year 2000, but it was done during the Democrat regime. TRT is just meddling to try to shorten the line to please their own self-interests (expressway along Sri Nakharin Road, Lad Phrao Elevated Way, real estate at Nawamin-Fashion Island) which aims to get more revenue from expressway tolls while destroying the economic lifeline of Democrats (the Mall at Bang Kapi, etc.).

Suriya reviving 40.5 billion baht mass transit along Lad Phrao-Sri Nakharin Road in a 6-year plan

– translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, December 2, 2004

Minister Suriya said he has to revive the Yellow line mass transit system (Lad Phrao – Bang Kapi – Sri Nakharin – Samrong – 32 km) with a price tag of 40.533 billion baht to be in the 6-year plan instead of the long term plan.

He will submit the proposal to the Traffic Committee Office in January 2005 so as to call a bid by the end of 2005. This will help solve the traffic jam problem on Lad Phrao-Sri Nakharin road. The growing traffic jams along Lad Phrao-Sri Nakharin road is the main reason to revive this route again.

This yellow route will create another circular route once it connects with the Samrong extension of the Skytrain. The 291-km network will be able to deal with 4.275 million passengers in Bangkok and the Yellow Line will add an additional 197,000 passengers.

Furthermore, the first section of Red Line commuter (Bangsue – Raingsit) will be revitalized and then extended from Rangsit to Ban Phachee Junction via Bang Pa In and Ayutthaya by the new double tracks parallel with the Northern Railway.

The PR effort on the Purple Line from December 1-31, 2004 will become the model for MRTA to be used in other routes. MRTA aims that the Purple line will be ready for service in December 2008.

OTP proposing mass transit system along Lad Phrao Road

– translated and summarized from *Thai Post*, November 9, 2004

OTP said they will come up with a mass transit system from Lad Phrao to Samut Prakarn via Lad Phrao road and the expressway from Sri Nakharin to Samut Prakarn which will be proposed to the cabinet on November 9.

Link to Minburi with CBD via Skytrain (or LRT)

– translated and summarized from *Khaosod*, October 14, 2004

TRT member Khun Sudarat Keyuraphan said TRT is going to push a Skytrain (or LRT-Monorail) to Minburi with a line to Rajadamri – Makkasan and the line along Ram Indra Road.

Commentary by Wisarut: We will wait and see how they are going to implement since they also want a new expressway as well. Those who live along Lad Phrao Road want a Skytrain from Lad Phrao to Minburi—not just NIDA—and prefer a Subway." They probably would also would like to see the new line from Minburi and Ram Indra to CBD area (Pajadamri-Pratoonam-Makkasan) as well since they know that the line from Lad Phrao to Minburi is not adequate. However, this is election year—promises can be broken to please vested interests once the government has been reelected—but the popular demand may force the government to come up with something better than

monorails.

Many people suspect that those who ask for a Monorail are just those anti-mass transit system people in disguise of monorail promoters.

Lat Phrao monorail – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, October 10, 2004

LRT (or monorail) proposed by OTP will have the price tag of 12 billion baht, compared with the estimated cost of the 30 billion baht subway line (actually Skytrain line since it is out of the city center and aboveground). This will have to be run by a joint venture between BMA and MRTA. This system will have to be able to carry 15,000-20,000 passengers/direction/hour (compared with 40,000 passengers/direction/hour for the subway). Furthermore, OTP is proposing a monorail along Ram Indra – At Narong to cover the area previously not covered by either Subway or Skytrain.

OTP has come up with a monorail to replace the Lad Phrao Elevated Way – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, October 7, 2004

OTP has come up with a monorail with a price tag of 12 billion baht and a construction time of 6 years to replace the controversial Lad Phrao Elevated Way. The line will go from NIDA to Lad Phrao Intersection with total distance of 12 km. This line will belong to both BTS and MRTA (50-50 sharing). OTP will submit this proposal to the cabinet by the end of October. For the BRT, it will cost about 2.483 billion baht. There will be 9 BRT lines with total distance of 228 km.

- 1) Talingchan – Phatthnakarn
- 2) Rangsit – Dindaeng
- 3) Minburi – Samit Prakarn
- 4) Pakkret – Bang Kapi
- 5) Rama 2- Wongwian Yai
- 6) Navamin – Kaset – Mochit
- 7) Bangkok Bridge – Chong Nonsee
- 8) Prapa canal – Phitsanulok
- 9) Phrasamut Chedi – Prachadhipok

However, most Lad Phrao people said: "We could not accept something less than a new line of Skytrain or Subway line along Lad Phrao Road." Those who live in Bangyai Suburb have a new line of the Subway –even though it is as elevated track. Why has government deliberately betrayed the voters by coming up with a cheap and shoddy solution as a quick fix? Are they going to punish us who vote for a Democrat Governor by coming up with shoddy solution?"

Furthermore, they ask: "You better extend such a line to Minburi. Stopping at NIDA will not solve traffic along Lad Phrao Road! We are fed up with poor bus and van service!"

Note:

Look at the opinions [here](#).

Also: [Bangkok monorail to solve city's traffic congestion](#) – TNA, October 7, 2004

...Plans to build an elevated road from the Lad Phrao intersection to the Phahonyothin Road have been scrapped by the Commission for the Management of Land Traffic (CMLT) because of local residents' objections, the OTTPP's Director-General, Kumropluk Suraswadi told journalists here today...

Lat Phrao monorail – *Dailynews*, October 10, 2004

LRT (or monorail) proposed by OTP will have the price tag of 12 billion baht, compared with the estimated cost of the 30 billion baht subway line (actually Skytrain line since it is out of the city center and aboveground). This will have to be run by a joint venture between BMA and MRTA. This system will have to be able to carry 15,000-20,000 passengers/direction/hour (compared with 40,000 passengers/direction/hour for the subway). Furthermore, OTP is proposing a monorail along Ram Indra – At Narong to cover the area previously not covered by either Subway or Skytrain.

Golden land turned into a nightmare for Lad Phrao people – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, August 17, 2004

The heart of businesses along Lad Phrao area are building blocks which are as old as Lad Phrao Road itself (about 40 years old). There is also a subway route along Lad Phrao Road which is going to be elevated to become golden land. However, the elevated way is suddenly going to be a big curse for the golden land.

There are now several protest banners against Lad Phrao Elevated Way along Lad Phrao Road from Ratchada-Lad Phrao intersection to Bang Kapi. Many buildings have been close and a big garage sale of buildings or looking for new renters after they get the message from BMA that they are going to bid for a contractor to handle the Lad Phrao Elevated Way project. After getting very a lame response from Mr Khamroblux (OTP), BMA Civil Work Bureau, and MP Phuvanida Khunaphalin (TRT MP from Lad Phrao area) at night of August 10, many Lad Phrao people turned angry towards BMA, OLTP, and the MP of Lad Phrao area since they did not offer any alternative to Lad Phrao Elevated Way.

Mr Pornchai (the leader of the protest against the Lad Phrao Elevated

Way) said he was one of the early pioneers for the land development along Lad Phrao road since 1974 when Lad Phrao area was just a paddy field. Mr Pornchai said Lad Phrao has traffic jam only during the morning and evening rush hour. Furthermore, those who live in Lad Phrao are actually those who got the detrimental effects from Ramkhamhaeng Elevated Way (constructed for the 1998 Asian Games), Saphan Kwai Elevated Way (demolished after the Skytrain construction). Therefore, it is not a surprise at all that they will fight against Lad Phrao Elevated Way at all costs—even if they have to brave a spray of machine gun bullets. Students at Thanomphit School (a private school founded in 1962) as well as those who live in Chokechai 4 area (both are along Lad Phrao Road) have joined with the protest. They are against the government who come up with the project without the consent from the local people. Even those who live along the subway line (Phaholyothin – Lad Phrao station) are against the connection between the Sri Rat Expressway and Lad Phrao since they have already sacrificed for public good and shared the benefit from the subway project. Mr Pornchai said this protest is coming from actual local people, not hired mobs as other people (especially those who get the benefit from the Lad Phrao Elevated Way) claimed. Notes by Wisarut: The growing protests against the Lad Phrao Elevated Way project as well as other expressway projects are [here](#) and [here](#).

New Skytrain or subway line may replace Lad Phrao Elevated Way – translated and summarized from *Thairath*, July 25, 2004
After receiving strong protests from local people against Lad Phrao Elevated Way, Minister Suriya will consider a new line of the Skytrain and Subway as a substitute. After receiving the responses from Suriya, Mr Khamroblux said if Minister Suriya asked him to cancel Lad Phrao Elevated Way, he will ask the Land Traffic Management committee about the change to get the approvals. **Commentary by Wisarut:** It seems to me that Suriya, TRT, and the Traffic Policy Office have learned the hard way not to go against the will of local people by coming up with a project to please vested interests. Now it is up to Premier Thaksin and Minister Suriya whether they will sacrifice their own interests for votes in the next election.

Thai stories and web comments
– July 21, 2004

Wisarut reports on what's going on in Thai-language forums:

Lad Phrao Elevated Way

The people of Lad Phrao have sent a letter to Premier Thaksin to replace Lad Phrao Elevated Way with a new Subway-Skytrain line along Lad Phrao Road. However, net mercenaries who have been hired to sabotage those who do not want the Lad Phrao elevated Way ([here](#)).

Lad Phrao Elevated Way–Better have a review

– By Dr Samart Rajpolasit, translated and summarized from *Matichon*, July 15, 2004

"Elevated Way Over Lad Phrao Road is a SHAMEFUL Tragedy!"

"VENOMOUS Lad Phrao Elevated Way Destroying the Life of People along Lad Phrao Road!"

"We Live in Peace and Happiness, Don't DUMP the Suffering on US!"

"Welcome for Subway to Lad Phrao – Down with Lad Phrao Elevated Way!"

These are a few samples of protesting banners against the Ladphrao Elevated Way which cause drivers along Lad Phrao Road to have sympathy toward Bangkokians in the Ladphrao area. However, we have no idea if BMA and the Traffic Policy Office would have any sympathy toward those people by canceling the project.

Lad Phrao Elevated way starts from Ratcha-lad Phrao intersection to end up at Kanchanaphisek Outer Ring Road at Panasonic Intersection with a 4-lane elevated way. This is not qualified as an expressway since the minimum qualification for expressway is 6-lane. After that, it will be extended to western Kanchaphisek Road via Bangsue and Southern Railway as the way to smooth east-west traffic flow.

Expressways belong to the Expressway Authority while the elevated way belongs to BMA. Smooth traffic flow is a question to be pondered.

This kind of east-west expressway link has been proposed in the Expressway Authority masterplan. Initially, it will connect Phayathai-Sri Nakharin Expressway with Western Kanchanaphisek to reach Phutthamonthon and Nakhon Pathom. However, strong protests from those who live in Dusit district as well as those who live in Thonburi have forced the Expressway Authority to come up with an alternative–Rama 6 Expressway via the Southern Railway. The new proposed line will cover Lad Phrao Road. They they have come up with some kind of solution to link Rama 6 Expressway with Lad Phrao Elevated Way. If Lad Phrao Road were as wide as Vibhavadee Rangsit Highway, Ladphrao Expressway could become an expressway. However, the limited space of Lad Phrao Road (6 lanes) does not allow construction of expressway entrance station for the new elevated way.

However, if Ladphrao Elevated Way is constructed over Lad Phrao Road, those who live in Lad Phrao area will suffer from air pollution after the elevated way becomes a reality.

It is not necessary to connect Rama 6 Expressway with Lad Phrao Elevated Way since the 3rd stage expressway will connect Rama 6 expressway at Wongasawang to Nawamin since the 3rd state expressway will become a reality soon. Another choice is to drive from Bangsue along the 2nd stage expressway to Phayathai and then turn left to Sri Nakharin—even though traffic jams

at Bangsue-Phyathai are daily events. Furthermore, the bottleneck from Bangsue (6 lanes) to Lad Phrao (4 lanes) will cause another traffic jam. Even Lad Phrao expressway is just a temporary band-aid—the traffic will build up and the traffic jam on the expressway will be on Lad Phrao Elevated Way. The 3rd stage expressway along Kaset-Nawamin road will be better substitute.

When we look back to the protesting banners, we are stunned that Lad Phrao people are really knowledgeable about traffic. They said "Welcome for Subway to Lad Phrao – Down with Lad Phrao Elevated Way!" Transporting more people is the sustainable solution.

The government is telling the public that they are supporting mass transit system—especially during the oil shock like today. Therefore, the government should postpone or even cancel expressway construction in unnecessary areas on the Bangkok side. Only the areas around Thonburi side should have more expressways built during the time being.

Therefore, BMA and the Central Government had better invest billions of baht in Subway-Skytrain extensions instead!

Commentary by Wisarut: We know very well that SC Asset (Premier Thaksin's real estate arm) has set up suburb villages in the areas between Bangchan (Sirithai Road), Nawamin (Nawamin Road) and Fashion Island (Ram Indra Road). This Lad Phrao Elevated Way will please SC Asset since it will help SC Asset to boost the sale of suburb villages. The protest against Lad Phrao elevated way continues—[here](#) and [here](#) (in Thai).

Earlier: Opposition to Lad Phrao Elevated Way and demands for a new subway – July 3, 2004
Wisarut points out these Thai-language threads ([here](#) and [here](#)) on the Lad Phrao controversy.

Earlier: [Opposition to Lad Phrao Elevated Way is growing](#) – July 1, 2004

Earlier: [Latest on the Lad Phrao elevated way controversy](#) – June 29, 2004

Earlier: [Opposition to Lad Phrao Elevated Way](#) – June 18, 2004

Earlier: [Furious response to Lad Phrao Elevated Way](#) – May 29, 2004

Earlier: [The choice for Lad Phrao Elevated Way](#) – *Than Setthakij*, April 25-28, 2004

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

Earlier: [Traffic Office approves Lad Phrao Elevated Way with conditions](#) – *Dailynews*, July 11, 2003

Earlier: [What happened to the Lat Phrao elevated road?](#) – *Thairath Daily & Dailynews*, June 16, 2003

What we are trying to do

December 18, 2004

Categories: 2Bangkok

What we are trying to do

– December 18, 2004

We rarely post letters, but were pleased to read this from a reader who appreciates what we are trying to do at 2Bangkok.com: *A friend recommended that I should visit your site because its contents is exactly what we (westernized Thais living in the States) would like to know about but have never been able to get from other sources. CNN is a completely western and impersonal, often inaccurate, view of the going-ons in Thailand. We can't get Thai news here really, and even if we did, they are oddly biased as well. So, thank you for sharing your views and taking the time to publish them online!...*

Thai-language newspapers – December 19, 2004

December 19, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – December 19, 2004</p> <p>* Thaksin reveals that he has invited four foreigner advisors to speak to senior government officers about ideas to develop the country. The advisors will suggest using the poor who work hard to drive the economy.</p>	<p>* The national football player of Tiger Cup was arrested for drunk driving. He confessed so he got only a deferred penalty and will be on probation for one year. Meanwhile the Ministry of Education urges a survey of internet cafes as to whether the students assemble for unlawful purposes. The results will be send to schools to analyze.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – December 19, 2004</p> <p>* Mrs. Napaporn Jitlert, a 41-year-old roast chicken seller at Wat Rangbua market, Phasichaloen district gave evidence to the police that she was punched by a monk, Pra Prathompong of Rangbua temple. He asked for payment of debt after lending her money. She did not have enough money to give him back and has to pay 20% interest per month. After she was punched, she kicked him in the groin.</p>	<p>* A giant crab weighing 3 kg. was caught by Mr. Chanvit Khaodee, a fisherman in Chuan Leekpai's hometown in Trang Province. He neither dares to eat nor sell it, so he gave it to the Education Center of Sea Nature to study and cultivate.</p>

Latest from Chang Noi: A national election that is really about nothing

December 20, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Latest](#)

[from Chang Noi: A national election that is really about nothing](#)

– *The Nation*, December 20, 2004

...By the time the opposition parties lumbered into action, the drama was over. Thai Rak Thai had commanded the stage, put on a great show and exhausted the audience's attention. The opposition parties have been going through the motions of election campaigning, but with all the sound and fury of a slow-motion pantomime performed in an empty theatre. This is not all their fault. The government's influence over the Thai-language media (especially the electronic segment) has meant that the opposition parties are marginalised in the public space. The opposition parties have crafted campaign platforms, but the Thai Rak Thai apparatchiks claim these platforms are simply replicas of the Thai Rak Thai version. This may be massively dishonest, but it is brilliant strategy.

This is why the opposition leaders, despite their campaign platforms and advertising efforts, seem like puppets or dummies.

A weightier answer to why this election is about nothing is that the kind of populism which Thai Rak Thai embraces is designed to make politics about little issues rather than big ones. Please don't think about the future of the country; just enjoy another Bt400,000 for your village fund. Don't pay attention to all those dead people, because we have this new SML scheme. Who cares about the rule of law since we really, really are going to eradicate poverty in six years. Keep quiet, and you may get rich. Don't worry about corruption, because we are waging a war against it, really...

A tale of two newspapers: The Democrats' rally

December 20, 2004

Categories: A Tale of Two Newspapers, The Thaksin Years

A tale of two newspapers: The
Democrats' rally – December 20, 2004

For once the *Post* has more details than *The Nation* in its report on the Democrats kickoff election campaign. It also stresses the structural details that prevented the opposition from monitoring the government.

[Pledge
to rein in govt power – Banyat: Time to end rule by 'dictatorship'](#)

– *Bangkok Post*, December 20, 2004

...He alleged the government, its close aides and relatives had vested interests in state projects. One cabinet member was dubbed "Mr 20%" for demanding commission fees for government projects, he said, while declining to reveal the person's name.

The Democrats had found irregularities in 25 projects involving more than 25 million baht, Mr Banyat said.

"I can guarantee that if we have sufficient votes, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra will be unmasked to show how he has a vested interest in government projects," he said...

[Democrats'
call 'Time to take back country': Banyat pleads to voters
to reclaim 'ruined' nation from 'dictatorship'](#)

– *The Nation*, December 20, 2004

... "It's time to bring down the dictatorship and restore the country, which has been badly ruined by the Thai Rak Thai government," party leader Banyat Bantadon said at a party convention at the Thai-Japan Youth Welfare Centre.

"There is no single period in our history in which the government leader has abused state authority to benefit his clan and has turned a blind eye to the violation of human rights as has been the case with this government," he said...

Thaksin says “Mr W” is his worst critic

December 20, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Thaksin](#)

[says “Mr W” is his worst critic](#)

– *The Nation*, December 20, 2004

...Who is Mr “W”? Government House reporters were asking this question among themselves after Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said that a journalist whose name begins with “W” is his most frequent attacker...

A tale of two newspapers: the beer bar demolition

December 20, 2004

Categories: A Tale of Two Newspapers

A tale of two newspapers: the beer bar demolition – December 20, 2004

A reader observes: *It looks like the Post did not even mention the Asoke Plaza beer bars being torn down at all, not a word, while The Nation put it on page 1.*

Thai-language newspapers – December 21, 2004

December 21, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i> – December 21, 2004</p> <p>* Khunying Or donated 50 million baht to the TRT party. Thaksin picks a quarrel with the Democrat Party by saying they are like an undertaker waiting for a cremation. Chuan counters that if TRT want to win in Trang province, don't cheat. Meanwhile the Chatthai Party hopes to get four seats for MPs in Donmuang , Saimai, Dindaneg and Pathumwan districts.</p> <p>* Mr. Chaowalit Noisri, the chairperson of the AIDS Protection network speaks at the seminar and says that Thai male students sell their bodies in Germany and get 200,000 baht per month. They show off to their friends by saying they studied abroad. Meanwhile, 200 female students ask for help with abortions.</p>	<p>* The National Human Rights Commission wonders if government organizations protect the Phadaeng Industry Mine company in the case of cadmium contamination at Maesod, Tak province. The representative of Basic Mine Industrial Department claims that the Prime Minister said, do not try to find the cause, but cooperate to solve the problem.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i> – December 21, 2004</p> <p>* On December 19, a 28-year-old Canadian who took her mom to travel at Samet Island, Rayong province, was raped by Mr. Werawat Kedbuakhao, waiter at Hadzai Kaew Restaurant. After examining witnesses on December 20, the court ordered the police get a warrant to arrest the accused. The victim is leaving Thailand in the evening.</p>	<p>* On December 20 at Klongluang, Phatuntani province, the police and Office of the Narcotics Control Board said that they arrested Mrs. Netnapha Tinamas, a member of a drug network, while she was sending the drugs at the Mall Ngamwongwan. She said she got an order from a prisoner named Manop Kiewpun, who is in Tak jail and one of the sellers is a vegetable seller in Taladthai, Phatumthani.</p>

Thai-language newspapers – December 22, 2004

December 22, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

Matichon

– December 22, 2004

* On December 21, 500 part-time rangers from all over the country gathered in front of the government house asking their rights to increase salary and compensation. The government accepts to increase their salaries by 1000 baht and the rest of the demands will be considered at a meeting on January 6, 2005

* Mr. Suchai Chaloenrattakul, the Deputy Minister of Public Health gave an interview at the government house on December 21 that WHO said people will face the new diseases more severe than Sars that could kill seven million people worldwide. Everybody can be certain because the Public Health Department is prepared educate people and produce and order vaccines from countries.

* On December 21, at the government house, Mr. Manom Nopporn, the chairperson of Control and Suppression of Intellectual Property Violation came to bless the new year and thank the government for helping solve problems of intellectual property and combat violation of copyright. Thaksin said he talked to Dream Works Company which told him that they are interested to invest and build a Hollywood studio in Thailand.

Thairath

– December 22, 2004

* **Bloody news** –

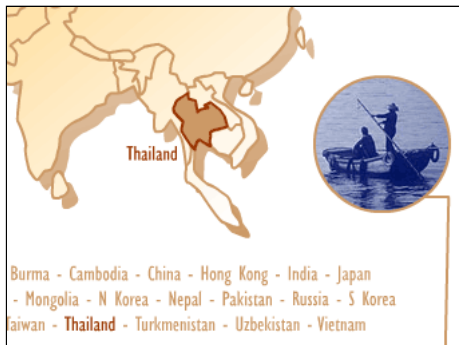
On December 21 in Jombueng Ratchaburi province, the police arrested Mr. Songkarn Kaoak, who raped and strangled a 7-year-old girl. He hid the dead body in the bracken. The police found that she was dead 3 days ago.

* Thaksin neglects ‘Toeng’ who complains that he feels oppressed being in the government. He warns TRT to keep goodwill with all of their partners. Meanwhile Thaksin denied there is a problem and says he did not hear Banham complain.

Thailand chopped

December 22, 2004

Thailand chopped – December 22, 2004



(thebestintheworld.com)

In this politically charged time, a slight like this will be taken seriously. Expect this to be on the front pages of Thai-language papers tomorrow. Wisarut reports: *Many [Thai netters](#) are angry at the [The best of the world website](#) which chops the whole Southern region of Thailand (and includes it in Malaysia).*



(thebestintheworld.com)

Ireland too!

Peter Leonard points out: *That silly site you featured on 2Bangkok.com as having made a bit of a mess of Thailand have also messed up Ireland. If you go to the [Europe section](#) and hover over Ireland it says "United Kingdom" and if you hover over Northern Ireland (which is part of the UK) it says "Ireland." I think the people at "The Best In The World" just don't have a clue about geography, and the least they could have done was checked these things out.*



(thebestintheworld.com)



(thebestintheworld.com)

More mistakes

Danny observes: *...the island of Tasmania has become an independent state from the Commonwealth of Australia. Mats points out: They also gave the French island of Corsica to Italy.*

Gem scam flourishing – Why the authorities won't crack down

December 23, 2004

Categories: Gem Scam

Gem scam flourishing

- Why the authorities won't crack down
- December 23, 2004

2Bangkok is receiving many scam reports from the 436/9-12 Loog-Luang Road location. Previous names of the shop operating from this location are Imperial, Ma Mere, Blue Sapphire and TGJ (gem scam shops periodically change their names so they will not have to make refunds to cheated tourists). The only new aspect in the scam being that Asian tourists are being targeted most of the time.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Many of the cheated ask why the authorities will not crack down—especially when the location of the shop is known and does not change. The answer is that stamping out the scam would require the reorganization and transfer of police in at least two districts—Dusit and Pranakorn, as well as around tourist sites where both gem scam touts and undercover police keep a close watch. The current police know who belongs where, what is out of place, and have contacts with many informants. If police were shuffled around and the status quo disrupted, this knowledge would be impaired. In this time of heightened awareness of terrorism, the last thing the authorities will do is lose their own ability to gain intelligence in sensitive areas of town.

Secondly is that criminal syndicates that prey on tourists are tightly controlled in Bangkok. Compare Bangkok to the insane hurly burly of other tourist areas in developing countries—like around the Taj Mahal in Agra, the airport in Manila, or the Pyramids in Egypt. Downtown Bangkok is orderly, and apart from the gem scam and some crooked tailors, very safe and welcoming to tourists. Add to this the long tradition of the gem scam (we have found mentions of it in books in the 1950s) and it is not surprising that the problem is not seen as urgent.

The next question that comes up is why the authorities have declared the problem solved when it is obvious that the scamming continues—possibly at all-time records levels. This is due to the Thai way of dealing with unsolvability. When a problem is not solvable or not understandable, it is considered acceptable to adamantly declare there is no problem or that the problem has been solved (take, for instance, the case of bird flu). This does not mean that everyone involved is not aware of the problem or are not working on it. It also does not mean that listeners are not aware of the truth. The typical man on the street would feel a blanket declaration like this is best for the country until a real solution can be found.

Older articles about Blue Dragon

[Blue](#)

[Dragon scam foiled](#) – December 17, 2004

[Blue Dragon lawsuit](#)

– December 7, 2004

[Blue Dragon scam](#) – December 2, 2004

[Blue Dragon strikes again](#) – November 13, 2004

[Latest scam from Blue Dragon](#)

– September 30, 2004

[Blue Dragon](#) – September 8, 2004

[Latest report from Blue Dragon](#) – May 17, 2004

[Another](#) – April 2, 2004

[Rotating staff at gem scam stores](#)

– April 1, 2004

[Gem scam report from the](#)

[Loog-Luang Road location](#) – December 8, 2003

[Jewelry scam shops a thing](#)

[of the past, says govt advisor](#) – August 15, 2003

[Gem scam shops try to protect themselves](#)

– April 20, 2003

[Map to the shop](#)

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

Controversial tower to be completed next year

December 23, 2004

Categories: Myanmar/Burma

[Controversial](#)

[tower to be completed next year](#) – *The*

Irrawaddy, December 23, 2004

News from our neighbors: ...*Eighty percent of the 200-foot-tall (60-meter-tall) tower has been built and it should be completed by February, the Burmese-language Myanma Ahlin reported, quoting Teza, head of the Htoo Trading company which is building the tower. Critics maintain the cylindrical steel tower will blemish the site...*

Interview with the the Curator of the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery

December 24, 2004

Categories: History, Thai Railroads

Interview with the the Curator of the
Kanchanaburi
War Cemetery – December 24, 2004

Andrew Mason writes: *I am a historian and have written a book titled, [A Different Brand Of English](#). Some of your readers may be interested in what the Curator of the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery has to say in my interview.*



(Photo: Andrew Mason)

An Interview with the Rod Beattie, Curator of the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery and Director of Research of the TBRC, conducted by Andrew Mason

Q. How did you first hear of the Thai/Burma Railway? In Australia or abroad?

A. Whilst in Australia I knew no more or less than anyone else. I got my first book about the railway as a school prize in 1966. My real knowledge started after moving to Kanchanaburi to work for a Thai company mining sapphires at Bo Phloi.

Q. Have you served in the military?

A. Yes, six years in the Army Reserve (1969-76).

Q. What is your profession? (OK Jack of All Trades – but what does your CV say?)

A. Jack of all Trades. Three tertiary qualifications. Two in Civil Engineering. One in Gemology. Trade qualifications as Heavy Plant Operator and Truck Driver. Master gem cutter. I am multi-qualified.

Q. Why your passion for the TBR?

A. I don't know other than a desire to learn more and to help other people.

Q. What year did you get to Kanchanaburi?

A. 1989.

Q. Was it the same year you started as Curator of Kanburi Cemetery?

A. No. It was not until 1994 that I got involved in the railway. 1995 appointed Manager of the War Cemeteries.

Q. How did you get the job?

A. The British Embassy contacted me to ask for help in finding a new Manager. I gave them local advice which they passed on to CWGC. CWGC came back and asked if I was interested in the job. I said 'Yes'.

Q. What is your relationship with OAWG like? Is it very bureaucratic?

A. Since my contract as Project Manager of the Hellfire Pass Museum Project finished in 1998 I have had no formal relationship with OAWG. Unofficially I work closely with the Manager of the Hellfire Pass Museum.

Q. Do you think political correctness is a thing that has little place in the TBRC or the HFP Museum etc?

A. Absolutely. The truth would be better and more appropriate.

Q. I know you cleared a lot of railway with your wife, how much did you clear and how long did it take?

A. A total of 8 kilometres. Two years. Only 4 and a bit kilometres are now maintained by OAWG as the walking trail.

Q. Were you ever concerned about the tropical diseases etc, that our predecessors suffered, occurring to you whilst working there?

A. Not at all. I was brought up in the Australian bush so felt completely at home in the jungle. The diseases are still here but in our present state of health we will not be affected provided we use normal health precautions. The son of one of my labourers had a tropical ulcer which was only cured after I put him in Kanchanaburi's best private hospital.

Q. How is your relationship with exPOWs that visit—there must have been many over the years—who sticks in your mind as the typical bloke you connected with most?

A. Excellent, with those who know me personally. I really can't pick out any one individual of the very large number. They are almost universally wonderful men. A tiny number use their status as former POWs to their

own advantage. The one who I owe the deepest debt is Tom Morris. He was the one person who had the courtesy to discuss with me what was going on in Kanchanaburi three years ago, when I and my plans for the TBRC were the subject of so much bad press. He believed in what I was doing and stood by me – unlike many others who have not met me and simply believed what they read or heard.

Q. What was [Weary Dunlop](#) like when he was in town?

A. I never met Weary.

Q. What about Japanese? Have you had many dealings with them visiting over the years?

A. Yes, many visit Kanchanaburi. Most know nothing of the true story.

As an historian I put aside my personal feelings in an attempt to get the Japanese side of the story. It is important that a balanced story be recorded for historical purposes. I have a close relationship with a senior Japanese Engineer and other Japanese interested in the story being told accurately.

Q. A little birdie tells me that you may have had an altercation with some ‘characters’ in the cemetery playing up and being disrespectful? What happened? Who were they and why did they make it out alive?

A. Only a minor one, two or three. I am very mindful of the position I hold and only extremely distasteful behaviour will provoke me. Like Koreans running around climbing trees. Like a bus load of Japanese using the hedge as a toilet. Like some ignorant Thais sitting on headstones.

Q. How long are you going to stay in Thailand? Will you ever leave?

A. Totally dependent on the future education of my three little girls. Secondary education in Kanchanaburi is not good so I may move back to Australia for this.

Q. The TBRC has been a long time coming. Has other museums like JEATH even Hellfire Pass (HFP) Museum been annoyed at this new one or have they been supportive.

A. Terrified would probably be a better description. I have a close relationship with the Manager of the HFP Museum so we actively promote each other. I offered a space in my TBRC to OWAG for a HFP display and this offer was accepted.

Q. What is your project at Chungkai doing? What have you unearthed?

A. A huge ‘dig’. Hundreds of items. Personal possessions, camp items, tools, numerous medicine bottles, the actual fireplaces etc.

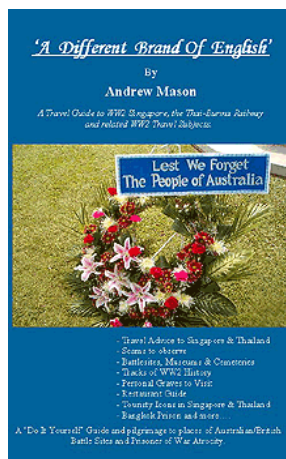
Q. What do you miss about Australia? (Rugby, AFL, Fish’n’Chips, Meat Pies?)

A. The ease of travelling and going on holidays. Packing up the car, trailer and boat and heading off in any direction. Camping by a western stream and fishing for yellow belly. Pulling into a caravan park anywhere on the coast and putting the tinnie in the water. Cleanliness and order of daily life. But there are also many things I don’t miss.

Q. Have royalty shown interest before in the Thai-Burma Railway and its history etc?

A. Very little interest shown by any Thais. Khun Kanit is an exception... We have just had a visit by the Queen of the Netherlands.

Kanchanaburi is about a two-three hour trip by bus from Bangkok’s Southern Bus Terminal, cost 79 baht one way. The Kanchanaburi War Cemetery is located on Sangchuto Road about 15 minutes walk from the bus terminal. The Thai-Burma Railway Centre is located in a street that overlooks the cemetery—a two storey building with the upper storey overlooking parts of the war cemetery, it costs 60 baht to enter.



A Different Brand Of English is a comprehensive travel guide and has an emphasis on WW2 Singapore and Thailand. It guides the traveler around Kranji, Chungkai and Kanchanaburi War Cemeteries and includes many graves of war time luminaries to visit with next of kin permission and in some cases includes photographs of the deceased all with information on how and where they died etc.

It guides the traveler to cuttings, Bridge Over the River Kwai, Hellfire Pass, POW Camps, Changi Prison etc. The travel guidebook also consists of Ex Prisoner of War (POW) interviews of men who toiled on the Thai-Burma Railway & includes an interview with the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery and Museum Director/Curator. Along with never published before prison camp reports marked SECRET and released before the end of the war for Australian Prison Camp Investigators. The Australian Prime Minister provided comments exclusively for the book about his travel in and around Hellfire Pass. Has over 150 photographs from many and varied luminaries including many of George Aspinall’s war time collection, exclusive pictures of the Queen of Holland in the Thai War Museum, contemporary shots of Singapore and Thailand’s memorials, plaques and places of interest, including Australian War Memorial photographs

and maps etc. The guidebook also discusses the main touristy attractions in both countries including Raffles Hotel, Singapore Cricket Club, Merlion, Bangkok Palace, Bangkok Prison, Patpong Market to Phuket etc. It has a recommended restaurant guide, a hotel stay guide and tips and travel advice down to scams to avoid with up to date foreign office warnings.

A Different Brand Of English is [available online](#) for AUD\$25.

Magicland

December 24, 2004
Categories: Buildings



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Almost the end for Magicland
– December 24, 2004

Above: A panorama from December 2004—all the rides and buildings except for the castle have been cleared away. Derelict condos can be seen on the far right. We have no information on what is planned for the prime site.

Below and right: Overgrown Magicland in June, 2003
More about [Magicland](#)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Big party accused of giving handouts in Isan

December 24, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Big party accused of giving handouts in Isan](#) – Bangkok Post, December 24, 2004

The party that must not be named—TRT: ...*The party also now controlled most provincial and grassroots level executives, councillors, government officials, health volunteers, kamnan and village headmen, teachers, monks and housewives groups, Mr Somkiat said...*

He said the party did not fear the Election Commission because it believed poll commissioners would not dare to punish cheats contesting elections for the House or the Senate.

Big party accused of giving handouts in Isan

PRASIT TANGPRASERT

Nakhon Ratchasima _A big political party has exploited the period before the Feb 6 general election is officially announced to buy votes in the Northeast, a political activist said yesterday.

The party has been handing out money, supplies, meals and sightseeing tours, Somkiat Pongpaiboon, a professor at Rajabhat University's Nakhon Ratchasima campus and adviser to the Assembly of the Poor, said.

The party, which he would not name, had intimidated poll rivals, trying to make them withdraw from the race in Nakhon Ratchasima, Buri Ram and Nong Khai by using the powers of provincial governors, deputy governors and police.

Mr Somkiat said studies by local leaders, non-governmental organisations and northeastern journalists between September and December found the party had openly breached campaign rules in disregard of the Election Commission.

The party left money at grocery stores to give customers surplus change, arranged free meals worth 500-1,000 baht for voters at local restaurants, gathered information about individual voters, used drought-relief funds to buy water pumps, and took people on tours and gave them sports gear. At campaign rallies, five to 10 representatives of each village were paid 1,000 baht to canvass for candidates.

The party also now controlled most provincial and grassroots level executives, councillors, government officials, health volunteers, kamnan and village headmen, teachers, monks and housewives groups, Mr Somkiat said.

Pledges made to voters included settling their debts, building concrete roads, giving the elderly a monthly income, increasing salaries for grassroots executives, giving them jobs and setting up loan funds, Mr Somkiat said.

He said the party did not fear the Election Commission because it believed poll commissioners would not dare to punish cheats contesting elections for the House or the Senate.

Channel 5 restores some ‘substance’

December 25, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Channel 5 restores some ‘substance’](#) – Bangkok Post, December 25, 2004

...Since October, the ratings and audience share of the station have plunged. In the last week of October, its audience share was only 7.3%. The market is led by Channel 7 with 49%, followed by Channel 3 at 23%, iTV at 14% and Channel 9 at 10%...

2B newsfeed: Tsunami in Thailand – December 26, 2004

December 26, 2004

Categories: 2004 Tsunami

2B newsfeed: [About the 2B newsfeed](#) – [January 3](#) – [January 2](#) – [January 1](#) – [December 31](#) – [December 30](#) – [December 29](#) – [December 28](#) – [December 27](#) – [December 26](#)

December 26

10:22pm, December 26 – [His Majesty's grandson among those missing](#), *The Nation*
As 2Bangkok.com was told at [9:57pm](#), Bhumi Jensen, son of HM The King's eldest daughter, is missing and feared dead.

10:19pm, December 26 – [Emergency phone numbers for information on tsunami victims and relief effort](#), *The Nation*

9:57pm, December 26 – Sources inform 2Bangkok.com that an announcement will soon be made about the death of a high-ranking individual in the disaster. Local media will not report the death until it is 'officially announced.'

9:50pm, December 26 – Sources inform 2Bangkok.com that Prime Minister Thaksin has arrived in Phuket to inspect the relief efforts.

9:42pm, December 26 – CNN International, citing "Thai officials," reports the death toll in Thailand is at least 400. (*The Nation* website still is reporting 198 dead. The *Bangkok Post* does not feature breaking news on its websites. Its readers will find a story on its website from this morning about heavy fog.)

9:27pm, December 26 – Thai TV is showing video from "Phuket and Koh Phi Phi" showing tourists carrying stretchers with injured people to a helicopter.

9:18pm, December 26 – [60 photos of the destruction in the Phuket area](#) – Don't miss these photos: [1](#) and [2](#)

8:36pm, December 26 – Although the post dates on these articles are 8:07pm, 7:26pm, and 7:21pm, they did not appear on the site until after 8:30pm.

[Earthquake death toll mounts](#) – TNA
[Nearly 4,000 tourists stranded on Koh Phi Phi](#) – TNA
[Fate of tourists in Emerald Cave still unknown](#) – TNA

More than 4,000 Thai and foreign tourists were left stranded on the southern resort island of Koh Phi Phi this morning after fierce tidal waves crashed into the southern coast, killing at least 55 and injuring hundreds more...

8:14pm, December 26 – CNN International reports the Phuket Airport has reopened after being flooded for most of the day. Over 100 scuba divers are missing and over 1000 still missing overall.

7:15pm, December 26 – Good photos from the Thai-language press: [Daily News](#) and [Manager](#) (amazing photos of a ruined fishing village and ships piled up). It appears the MCOT/TNA, *Siam Turakij*, and *Matichon* websites have been knocked off-line by high traffic.

7:02pm, December 26 – [158 deaths and 1,913 cases of injuries reported at hospitals](#), *The Nation*, December 26, 2004

5:02pm, December 26 – CNN International reports 200 dead on Phi Phi Island.

4:48pm, December 26 – (from [Casualty toll reaches 84 dead, 400 wounded so far after tsunamis hit southern](#)

[Thailand](#), *The Nation*) ...A maritime police officer who asked not to be named said the casualties in Phi Phi could be far higher as the huge tidal wave decimated much of the development on the small island.

"Everything was washed away except two large hotels on Phi Phi Don island," the officer said after speaking with a Phi Phi resident by telephone.

Reuters reports that more than 100 tourists on diving holidays are missing on islands off southern Thailand following Sunday's tsunamis, about 70 of them in the famed Emerald Cave, a tourist official said...

4:05pm, December 26 – CNN international is reporting that Thailand is facing a major disaster. They say that Krabi has 48 confirmed dead and 60 injured. Also that four tidal waves, one up to 10 meters high, have hit Phuket today and there is no word about the fate of Phi Phi Island at this time.

3:26pm, December 26 – AP: *The U.S. Geological Survey says the 8.9-magnitude earthquake in Indonesia is the largest in the world in 40 years.*

3:15pm, December 26 – [Photos of Phuket damage](#)

3:01pm, December 26 – Now it is [Magnitude 8.9](#)

2:59pm, December 26 – *The Nation* posts its first [on-line bulletin](#)

2:32pm, December 26 – [Many missing at sea off Thailand](#) – AP
...Watcharat Hospital in Phuket was full, with many foreigners coming from hotels on popular Kamala and Patong beaches, said a hospital official who declined to be named.
The tourists have told hospital officials that they were sitting on the beach when the tsunami suddenly appeared. They said a lot of people died, and at least 30 boats filled with tourists were lost at sea...

1:45pm, December 26 – [At least 10 people confirmed killed by tsunami in Thailand](#) – Kyodo

1:24pm, December 26 – [Foreign tourists missing as tidal waves slam Thailand's Phuket resort](#) – AFP
...Phuket's major beach town, Patong, was flooded and extensive damage had been reported from a series of two-metre (6.5-foot) high waves that slammed the tropical island's west coast at about 8:30 am (0130 GMT), a rescue worker said...
"Tourists were also on the (nearby) beaches of Karon, Kata and Kamala when a giant wave suddenly hit and swept everything up into the sea," he added.
He said all shops, kiosks and hotels along Patong beach were damaged by the tsunami, which were the likely result of a massive earthquake that struck west of the Indonesian island of Sumatra early Sunday, which the US Geological Survey said measured 8.5 on the Richter scale.
Several international hotels were completely evacuated on emergency police orders. Hotels on Patong were not answering their telephones...

1:09pm, December 26 – [Thai government: Four tourists dead after major earthquake hits northwest Indonesia](#) – AP
...The center also reported that people were swept off a Phuket beach by tidal waves surging as high as five meters (16 feet) after an 8.5-magnitude earthquake hit near the Indonesian island of Sumatra...

9:49am, December 26 – The earthquake is being reported as [magnitude 8.5](#). Note there are already [nine reports](#) of the quake being felt in Bangkok.

9:30am, December 26 – The earthquake is being reported for the first time on CNN International.

8:35am, December 26 – This must be the earthquake that caused it: [Magnitude 8.1 – Off the west coast of Northern Sumatra](#)

8:34am, December 26 – 2-3 second aftershock felt.

8:10am, December 26
– Earthquake felt in Bangkok. On the ninth-floor of a 13-floor building,

we could distinctly feel the building sway with a circular motion for about four seconds. Hanging telephone cables also swayed. We looked out the window and it seems that people at ground level were not aware of the shaking. Updates to come.

2B newsfeed: [About the 2B newsfeed](#) – [January 3](#) – [January 2](#) – [January 1](#) – [December 31](#) – [December 30](#) – [December 29](#) – [December 28](#) – [December 27](#) – [December 26](#)

Do we have another “indispensable man”?

December 26, 2004

Categories: Thai Newspapers and Magazines, The Thaksin Years

[Do we have another “indispensable man”?](#) – *The Nation*, December 26, 2004

...When the opposition party asked why he had waited to announce this benevolent package just before the election, he did not offer any explanation. When they asked why he hadn't considered a cut in mobile phone charges, his response was incoherent gibberish. ...With regained confidence and a resurgence in his popularity thanks to the origami bird PR stunt show and his whipping up of a nationalist frenzy, Thaksin is no longer satisfied with just two terms as the unchallenged and supreme national leader whose words must be obeyed without question. ...His haughty behaviour and imperious manners throughout the past four years – both in deed and in word – were geared towards creating a personality cult that would transform him into this indispensable man without whom the nation could not survive...

During a chummy round with news reporters at a hotel in Cha-am two weeks ago, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra floated a trial balloon in a not-so-subtle style. In what seemed like a casual remark he said that while he had accomplished many things during the past four years and that a lot more could be expected to be done for the people in the next four, there might be one mission out there that is impossible to complete.

That is to find a successor for the leadership of the Thai Rak Thai Party who would willingly take cues from him about how to guide the country towards continuing prosperity. He was implying that it would not be enough to serve the country for two terms only to retire to enjoy his massive wealth.

No, leading this country will become the burden he alone must bear – without much pleasure.

What a sacrifice from a national leader who has been struggling to come out on top in the upcoming election by offering up all sorts of populist, crowd-pleasing goodies and freebies, though always at the expense of other people's money.

He ordered that the tollway charge be slashed to Bt20, underground fares to Bt10 and, with gentle arm twisting and coercive bargaining, managed to coax the operator of the expressway to figure out lower rates for cars. This package is to please city people, from the grassroots in the concrete jungle to the well-heeled motorists on the roads.

When the opposition party asked why he had waited to announce this benevolent package just before the election, he did not offer any explanation. When they asked why he hadn't considered a cut in mobile phone charges, his response was incoherent gibberish.

That he feels he must win the election with massive and guileful outlays of government funds is well known. And his election victory is virtually guaranteed, barring unforeseen circumstances. How big the win will be and how long he will be around in the second term remain topics of conjecture.

With regained confidence and a resurgence in his popularity thanks to the origami bird PR stunt show and his whipping up of a nationalist frenzy, Thaksin is no longer satisfied with just two terms as the unchallenged and supreme national leader whose words must be obeyed without question.

Oh yes, he wants more after that. Whether he regrets having made the statement about his desire to take the top job for only two terms will become clear when he sees how many seats his MPs take in the election. We have already witnessed a couple of potential “Number Twos” reduced to roles just a bit better than errand boy.

What's wrong with Thaksin wanting to stay on as long as no financial mayhem or political crisis develops to ignite a groundswell of public discontent?

What we can expect in his second term are a higher degree of political arrogance, and even more corruption and cronyism.

Observers can probably also expect increasingly authoritarian tendencies on the part of the government and more nationalist campaigns.

The prime minister's comments to the reporters were designed to create the impression that there is indeed an “indispensable man” out there, and that it is him.

His haughty behaviour and imperious manners throughout the past four years – both in deed and in word – were geared towards creating a personality cult that would transform him into this indispensable man without whom the nation could not survive.

Alas! History has shown that in this fair land, national leaders are not only indispensable, but disposable as well. Only one or two, including General Prem Tinsulanonda, have enjoyed a graceful and quite honourable exit after announcing “I have had enough”. The others have all left unexpectedly, some also unceremoniously. It is not Thaksin who will decide how long he can stay on, but the people – that is, those who are not victims of gullibility or grateful recipients of populist freebies – when they go to the polls.

By the way, if he thinks being prime minister is too much of a burden or one that he does not enjoy carrying, he surely can leave whenever he wants.

Before that time comes, he should thank his stars for all the opportunities he has had to amass such great wealth while most of his fellow countrymen have been amassing debts driven by consumerism and growth-oriented economic stimulus packages.

A major problem for the people in this country is that it is already very difficult to find leaders who are competent, decent and honest, among other noble qualities. It is even harder to usher out corrupt and despotic leaders, all of them “indispensable”, whose self-serving megalomania always leads the country to structural decay, shame and possibly crises of survival.

SOPON ONKGARA

Early Thai Media Censorship

December 26, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[100 FIRSTS: The media lose freedom](#) – *The Nation*, December 26, 2004

...In the 1940s, it was common for editorial and printing-house staff to be kicked and punched by a squad of uniformed men invading their premises, and for their presses and other equipment to be destroyed...

In the years before the 1932 coup, the Thai news media enjoyed considerable freedom. Even King Rama VI contributed to the media, writing articles to engage citizens in lively debates about the merits of his decisions.

In 1920, he actually awarded a royal decoration to Phraya Winaisunthorn (Wim Polakul), who had publicly objected to one of his ideas for developing the country. Far from being irked by any “presumptuousness”, the king said he appreciated Wim’s help in planning Siam’s future.

A decade later, though, such tolerance of open criticism had vanished, and a newspaper was shut down for the first time. In mid-1932, when the editor of the Yeesibsee Mithuna (24th June) published a story in which the names were similar to those of the military leaders within the ruling People’s Party, he paid the price.

Various kinds of punishments were meted out by the government to any newspaper employee involved in writing or publishing articles deemed as undermining public respect or faith in the government.

Through July 1934, the government closed 17 newspapers. Among the journalists jailed were Lui Kiriwat and Chaokhun Saraphai, who were later banished to remote Tarutao Island in the South.

In the 1940s, it was common for editorial and printing-house staff to be kicked and punched by a squad of uniformed men invading their premises, and for their presses and other equipment to be destroyed. Their crime was a perceived or actual slight against the government. Journalist Aree Leevira was shot dead by an unknown assailant. Under the Sarit regime, many others were accused of being communists and arrested.

It was rare for such brutality to befall female journalists, though they had played a large role in the media since the reign of King Rama V.

The first newspaper aimed solely at women, Nareerom, was launched in November 1888 by Prince Chaiyanmongkol, the youngest son of King Rama IV. With the prince as editor, the newspaper carried articles of interest to educated women, as well as poetry, but with few women able to pursue higher education in those days it lasted only a year.

The first female Thai journalist was Kobkan Visitsri, who wrote under the pen-name Kularbkhao. Her interviews with the likes of Phraya Aprirakracharit were published in weekly movie magazines in the late 1920s.

The first women’s magazine appeared in 1930. Nareenat had women at the helm, with Sumol Kanchanakom as editor and Anongnat Wiriyasiri as owner. The magazine published a famous long story titled “Kwampid krang raek” (“The First Mistake”) by a woman who called herself “Dokmaisod”. The magazine closed following the 1932 coup.

But that same year saw the launch of the first daily newspaper for women, Ying Thai (Thai Women). Not only was it staffed entirely by women – from owner Sap Anginan to editor Nualchawee Thepwan to reporters like Anong Amatayakul – even the men who wrote for it had to use female pen-names!

Women’s publications had their heyday between 1932 and 1941, though it pales in comparison with the prevailing scene today.

The freedom that the Thai media seem to enjoy now – criticising the government and often taking liberties with citizens’ privacy – is perhaps an illusion. They are invariably weighed down by their dependence on advertising revenue.

Nithinand Yorsaengrat, The Nation

2B newsfeed: Tsunami in Thailand – December 27, 2004

December 27, 2004

Categories: 2004 Tsunami

Times are Bangkok time – GMT+7. A thread about the situation is on the [forum](#).

Newer news is at the top of the page. The oldest news is at the bottom.

2B newsfeed: [About the 2B newsfeed](#) – [January 3](#) – [January 2](#) – [January 1](#) – [December 31](#) – [December 30](#) – [December 29](#) – [December 28](#) – [December 27](#) – [December 26](#)

December 27

11:58am, December 27 – [Thai](#)

[paradises lost to nature's fury](#) – *The Nation*

...The popular Ao Nang Beach came in for an especially severe battering. "Phi Phi is a total wreck," lamented Mitchai Anansakul, head of the Nopparat Thara Marine Park. "Almost every building on the island collapsed under the 10-metre wall of water." Only two large hotel buildings, the Phi Phi Cabana and the Phi Phi Hotel, were left standing, but even they suffered heavy damage and will need structural inspection before they can be reopened, Mitchai added...

[Corpses,](#)

[debris cover beach resort](#) – *The Nation*

...A large number of people died in Khao Lak as the waves demolished several crowded hotels...

11:45pm, December 27 – Translations from Thai-language newspapers:

The breaking news section from *Manager Online*

– In Phang-nga, Dr. Porntip Rojjanasunan and other doctors said there are lacking formaldehyde for injection and coffins. The Public Health Department said that bodies that cannot be kept longer will be buried after photos, DNA check, and fingerprints are taken.

– The government approved 10,000 million baht for disaster assistance.

– The Meteorological Department warns that tidal waves can happen again.

– The toll of the victims around the world is almost 20,000 at present.

– The Public Health Department mobilizes to get the medical supplies into the area urgently. They reveal that many victims died because of their lungs being crashed.

– US officers who were following the strong earthquake in Sumatra reveal that they tried to warn Asia one hour before the tidal wave came ashore in Sri Lanka and Thailand."

11:22pm, December 27 – Translations from Thai-language newspapers:

Matichon

"Mr. Sorajjana Nuanyoo, the famous astrologer, forecasted very correctly that there will be a disaster in the end of year 2004, the year of the worst terrorism and sabotage when there will be an earthquake killing lots of people, especially in the south. Meanwhile, Lak Lekhanited, another fortune teller, point to June 2005 when he predicts another disaster."

11:20pm, December 27 – Translations from Thai-language newspapers:

Thairath

"Mr. Samit Thammasarot, the former director general of the Meteorological Department, warned of the danger of tsunamis in the Andaman Sea and south of Thailand on August 16, 1998."

10:00pm, December 27 – [Thailand](#)

[tsunami death toll expected to exceed 1,250](#) – Kyodo

...More than 1,100 people including about 100 foreigners are still reportedly missing and more than 7,300 people have been injured, officials said. Officials estimated that some 60-70 percent of the victims found so far in Phangnga, Phuket and Krabi are foreigners.

Phangnha Gov. Anuwat Methiwibulvut told reporters that he expects that at least 400 bodies, including those seen but not yet recovered as well as those expected to float ashore, are expected to be counted on Tuesday...

9:25pm, December 27 – More of what's on Thai TV



Channel 11 has footage of a ceremony for deceased royal Khun Bhumi Jensen.



Khun Bhumi Jensen's mother, Princess Ubolratana, places a wreath in his honor. Each of the wreaths is from a different royal and has their respective seal on it (Channel 11).



Monks chat for Khun Bhumi Jensen (Channel 11).

จังหวัด	ผู้เสียชีวิต	บาดเจ็บ
ภูเก็ต	130	1,070
กระบี่	92	1,228
พังงา	528	4,799
สตูล	5	15
ระนอง	107	124
ตรัง	4	70
รวม	866	7,306

Latest statistics for deaths and injury by province. From top to bottom: Phuket, Krabi, Phangnga, Satun, Ranong, Trang, and totals. The middle column is deaths and the right-side column is injured (iTV).

9:23pm, December 27 – Continually updated [official death tally](#) from Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, Ministry of Interior (this site is very slow and often times out).

8:35pm, December 27 – What's on Thai TV



Channel 7 honors HM The King's grandson, Khun Bhumi Jensen, who was killed in the disaster.

Frame grabs from the 8:00-8:30pm news on Thai TV. Only Channel 9 and iTV are broadcasting full-time on the disaster. The other stations have regular programming.



Lines of tourists leaving Phi Phi Island (Channel 5).



Navy boat 457 thrown onto rocks on Channel 9.



Tourist arriving in Bangkok on a military plane (Channel 9).



Channel 5 makes extensive use of CNN footage for their broadcast.

8:05pm, December 27 – Kom Chad Luek is [reporting](#) the 866 death toll as well. It is based partially on missing boat crews being declared lost.

7:56pm, December 27 – Swedish newspaper *Aftonbladet* was [reporting earlier today](#) that 800 Swedes were missing in Phuket. At present, they [are reporting](#) hundreds missing. This paper also had an amazing photo of a huge wave about to swamp a poolside cabana (right).



7:18pm, December 27 – CNN International is reporting the death toll at 866. A correspondent in Phuket says it is "hovering near 900, probably going to 1000."

7:17pm, December 27 – [Mobile phone calls to Thailand rise by 100% during disaster period](#) – *Channel NewsAsia*

6:27pm, December 27 – [Thread on Pantip.com](#) listing all the disaster-related threads on the forum.

6:24pm, December 27 – [Thread on Pantip.com](#) with lists of the dead and missing.

6:04pm, December 27 – [Thread on Pantip.com](#) where many interesting photos of the disaster have been posted.

5:18pm, December 27 – For much of the previous 24 hours, those trying to access the the MCOT/TNA site, the official English-language news for Thailand, were met with "connection refused." Around this time the site became accessible again, but the news stories are about 8 hours behind both the international press and local newspaper websites.

3:42pm, December 27 – [All programmes frozen, ModerNine TV covering only catastrophe](#), *The Nation*

ModerNine TV has frozen all regular programmes, shifting its focus to cover the catastrophe in the tidal wave-hit Southern provinces. MCOT Plc's two radio stations, English-language FM107 and Thai-language FM99, will also run all reports about the impacts.

3:42pm, December 27 – [Khun Bhumi's body found](#), *The Nation*
Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said the body of Princess Ubolratana's son, Khun Bhumi Jensen, has been found in Khao Lak, Pang-Nga and his body would be brought to Bangkok by HRH Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn and Princess Ubolratana.

3:37pm, December 27 – *The Nation*
website, long overwhelmed by traffic, is changed to be a simple list of stories. This appears to allow connections to the site again (however, all the stories are erroneously dated December 28).

8:31am, December 27 – Now the quake is considered [Magnitude 9.0](#)

8:01am, December 27 – [USGS: Warnings Could Have Saved Thousands in Asia](#), Reuters
A warning center such as those used around the Pacific could have saved most of the thousands of people who died in Asia's earthquake and tsunamis, a U.S. Geological Survey official said on Sunday. None of the countries most severely affected — including India, Thailand, Indonesia and Sri Lanka — had a tsunami warning mechanism or tidal gauges to alert people to the wall of water that followed a massive earthquake, said Waverly Person of the USGS National Earthquake Information Center...

7:05am, December 27 – [Disastrous scenes in Phuket](#), BBC

2:49am, December 27 – Most of the Thai-language newspapers have gone to press citing 'at least 300 dead.' There will likely not be any more fresh news about the disaster until it gets light again in the morning. On the [forum](#), Medic1669 points out the [live radio feed](#) from Phuket's amateur radio network.

2:14am, December 27 – [Asian quake floods kill 11,300](#), Reuters
...In holiday islands off southern Thailand, emergency workers rescued about 70 Thai and foreign divers from the famed Emerald Cave and dozens were evacuated from around other islands. Two Thais were killed at Emerald cave...

2:00am, December 27 – [Weather](#)

[office says it warned of tidal waves](#) – *Bangkok Post*

The Meteorological Department insists it issued urgent warnings of impending tidal waves to people living in the Andaman coastal provinces, after criticism from people in the area that they received no word...

2B newsfeed: [About the 2B](#)

[newsfeed](#) – [January 3](#) – [January](#)

[2](#) – [January 1](#) – [December](#)

[31](#) – [December](#)

[30](#) – [December 29](#) – [December](#)

[28](#) – [December 27](#) – [December](#)

[26](#)

Thai-language newspapers – December 27-31, 2004

December 27, 2004

Categories: Thai Media Project

<p><i>Matichon</i></p> <p>December 27, 2004</p> <p>* TRT party sells a big dream to throw 600,000 million baht for building happiness for Bangkok residents in the next four years. Suriya, the Minister of Transportation, claims to support the subway and wants a 15 baht fare for all destinations, a reduction of the expressway tax, and expansion of BTS routes.</p>	<p>December 31, 2004</p> <p>* The court in Songkhla acquitted the accused and returned assets to the 20 gas pipeline protesters . The judgment specify that the Thai-Malaysian pipeline is a big project and can impact the community. It also said that the constitution gives the right for people to participate and can assemble in peace.</p>
<p><i>Thairath</i></p> <p>December 27, 2004</p> <p>* For the coming New Year, those who want to get rich by buying the lucky lottery numbers will face the raising price which will be 150 baht from 40 baht per set. A popular number to pick is the Buddhist Era number .</p> <p>December 28, 2004</p> <p>* In the Democrat Party, there are two groups—the New Decade group led by Bunyat Buntadthan and the Shed Leaves group led by Sutep Terksubun. Recently, Sutep found that their candidates are on the end of the party list so this causes some conflict. The Democrats want to solve the problem by adjusted the feng shui. To do this they hang a "teng lung" on the pole of the Democrat party building.</p> <p>* On December 27, a team from the Migrant Crime Suppression Center arrested Mr. Ong Lee Peng Ai Boowa or Mor Hok, a 35-year-old Chinese-Malaysian fortune teller, on the charge of rape. A 25-year-old Thai student in Bangkok said he told her she had bad luck and should check her fortune. He tried to be friends with her and then raped her. After an investigation, he denied it and said that the girl acquiesced.</p> <p>* Khunying Pojaman or Khunying Or, the wife of P.M. Thaksin, was robbed of a Hermes handbag while she was talking with a friend at the Chalon de Oriental, on the ground floor of The Emporium on December 25. At present the police are checking and believe that the robber part of a Philippine gang.</p>	<p>December 29, 2004</p> <p>* The Government Lottery Office reveals that summary of popular lottery numbers for the year 2004. The most popular number is 6 such as in 366, 866 and 966 and popular two-digit numbers are 00, 59, 62 , 64, 66 and 69.</p> <p>December 31, 2004</p> <p>* On December 30, the Dusit poll reports the best of year 2004 by a random poll of 10,183 people. The happiest situation for people is the King's birthday celebration, the second is dropping the paper crane over the South and the relief of the IMF debt. The saddest situation is the disaster of the tsunami and the second is the deep crisis in the south and the bad Thai economy. Meanwhile the most popular singer is still Bird, Thongchai Macintire, and for country songs it is Mr. Mike Piromporn. The favorite politician is Thaksin Shinawatra. Then Chuan Leekpai and Apisit Wetchachiwa from the Democrat Party. For women it is Sudarat Keyurapun, the Public Health Minister, Paweena Hongsakul, and "Bam" Janista Liwchaloemwong from Chatthai Party.</p>

2B newsfeed: Tsunami in Thailand – December 28, 2004

December 28, 2004
Categories: 2004 Tsunami

2B newsfeed: [About the 2B newsfeed](#) – [January 3](#) – [January 2](#) – [January 1](#) – [December 31](#) – [December 30](#) – [December 29](#) – [December 28](#) – [December 27](#) – [December 26](#)

December 28

11:37pm, December 28 – [Casualty toll for foreigners in Thailand](#) – AP
Many, many missing...

10:34pm, December 28 – Just like last night, the Public Relations Department (PRD) is about 24 hours behind in the info it reports. Right now, it is [breathless reporting 700 have died](#) and adds, almost as an apology, "this latest figure is higher than the earlier figure released by the Public Relations Department." The actual toll at this hour is [1538](#).

10:28pm, December 28 – [Another photo gallery](#) from *Krunghthep Turakij*



Right: Channel 3 showing tourists making free phone calls home from the Thammasat University campus where many tourists are staying since they have returned to Bangkok.

10:02pm, December 28 – Translations from Thai-language newspapers: *Matichon*

- * *Maew stays to command relief workers. He cancels election campaign stops. The executive of TRT party makes an urgent order not to make speeches throughout the country for three days to honor the victims.*
- * *At government house, the atmosphere is quiet and lonely. The Prime Minister and the vice PMs have canceled all their work, including making campaign speeches, to assist in relief efforts. Only Mr. Wisanu Kengnam and Mr. Purachai Piemsomboon, both deputy PMs are let to represent the government.*
- * *The Trat provincial governor, Mr.Boonchuoi Kerdasukon, warns people to be careful although Koh Chang is not in the line of the tsunami danger. Thai and foreign tourists who want to come to Koh Chang panic and cancel their trips so the deputy chief of sub-Amphur put out a sign which reads “Koh Chang is safe “ to boost tourist confidence and keep up the image of tourism.*



Left: Tawatchai Kemgumnerd’s amazing aerial photo of the interior of Phi Phi Island on the front of the *Bangkok Post*.

9:47pm, December 28
– Latest official death toll in Thailand (from 9:00pm):

Province	Dead	Injured
Phuket	230	1265

Trang	5	66
Phangnga	952	5541
Krabi	198	1881
Ranong	146	182
Satun	7	15
Total	1538	8950

AP reported earlier tonight: [Death toll could pass 2,000 as fields of death found north of Phuket](#)

9:41pm, December 28 – News from Myanmar: [Burma's Tidal Wave Death Toll 90 and Rising](#) – *The Irrawaddy*
The huge tidal waves caused by Sunday's massive earthquake off Sumatra killed at least 90 people in Burma, according to reports compiled Tuesday. The death toll is expected to increase, say aid agencies...

9:24pm, December 28 – A pulled story from TNA/MCOT?

At around noon today this [link](#) led to this peculiar story:

PM expects all bodies to be recovered today
Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra disclosed he expected relief officials would manage to recover all bodies of victims of the Sunday's massive tidal wave attack today, except those remaining unaccounted for...

By the evening the original story had disappeared and the link led to this:

PM admits relief effort has struggled to cope
Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra has conceded that the post-tsunami rescue and relief effort has been severely hampered by a lack of appropriate equipment...

It looks like a hasty change as the formatting is disrupted (left).



8:56pm, December 28 – [Scenes of horror at French-run hotel in Thailand](#) – AFP



8:30pm, December 28 – Prime Minister Thaksin gives a 15 address to the nation about the situation (on all channels).



8:15pm, December 28 – More notable stories
[Some 800 bodies found in Khao Lak area-French radio](#) – Reuters
[Reports: Hong Kong couple survives tsunami by clinging to mattress for six hours](#) – AP

5:26pm, December 28 – [Relief supplies and blood donation needed!](#)
...We are also aware that the Red Cross is urgently seeking blood supplies, PARTICULARLY PEOPLE WITH NEGATIVE BLOOD GROUPS. The red cross is situated at 1871 Henry Dunant Road, just off Rama IV. Telephone numbers are: 02 256 4034, 02 256 4032, or 02 256 4033 – open from 8am.

2:24pm, December 28 – [Useful contact numbers and websites for relief assistance](#) – *The Nation* – Also this [Panitp.com thread in Thai](#)

12:10pm, December 28 – News from MCOT/TNA
[Three-day mourning period for tidal wave victims and no countdown](#)
Government spokesperson Jakrapob Penkhae declared three-day mourning period for disaster victims from December 28-30, 2004 after tidal waves killed an estimated 2,000 people in southern coastal regions, and asked the people to wear all black. Moreover, there would be religious ceremony throughout the country on December 30 at 7pm. Besides lowering the flag at half-staff, the governmental offices

canceled all the New Year celebrations and activities while Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra would not attend any New Year countdown or celebrations.

Rumour

on arsenal explosion in Phang-nga groundless

Rumours were flying this morning about an arsenal explosion near Khao Lak National Park in Phang-nga province this morning. Rear Adm. Sirichai Kanitthakul, the Commander-in-Chief of the 3rd Fleet Royal Thai Fleet, confirmed to journalists that there was no explosion at the military depot. Some people reportedly heard explosion sound in Phang-nga this morning, sparking rumours and panic that the arsenal near the Khao Lak National Park might have exploded, or possibly a gas explosion.

11:25am, December 28 – After disaster, Asia mulls early warning system – AP

...Officials in Thailand issued the only warnings of the impending disaster, but broadcasts beamed to tourist resorts in the country's south underestimated the threat and a Web site caution was not posted until three hours after the first waves hit.

Residents in Sri Lanka, where thousands were swept away or drowned, expressed disbelief that a warning system was in place elsewhere in the world but not in the Indian Ocean....

But the warnings came as the first waves hit. By the time a Web site warning went up three hours later, at least 700 people were dead in Thailand, including a jet-skiing grandson of King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

9:02am, December 28 – Victim

database – updated in real time (Thai-language)

Username: user, Password: password – This Narenthorn Center site has been up and down throughout the crisis.

9:01am, December 28 – Revised death toll

Revised death toll: 918 dead, 7396 injured

Interesting how news that is not in English can be invisible.

The 866 death toll was posted at 6pm yesterday (December 27) on the [Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation](#) website and this figure was broadcast around the world. At 9pm the same night, the figures were revised to 918. However, since the figures are on a Thai-language site, the international media did not pick it up and all the Thai newspapers were going to press at that time, so the world has to wait a further 12 hours (until the next morning) for the press to discover this new death count. Once AFP starts reporting this morning (as far as we know, there are no overnight wire reports from Bangkok), they are likely to be the first to publish it. Often the Thai-language press even follows AFP on breaking news.

Update: The *Bangkok Post* did manage to get the final death count into their December 28 edition.



The Nation's front page on December 27, 2004

9:01am, December 28 – Thai-language press round-up

*** Krungthep**

[Turakij disaster news roundup](#) – The links on the left side are to photo galleries.

*** Matichon**

[disaster photo gallery](#) – The Thai press disseminates gruesome photos, so beware of the several shots of dead tourists.

* The National News Bureau, which collects latest news from the Public Relations Bureau for broadcast in English, is shockingly behind in its reports. The latest reports are from Monday morning quoting figures from late Sunday that 289 have died.

8:10am, December 28 – News from MCOT/TNA

Marine police rescue stranded tourists

...Marine police, who were ordered this morning by Satun Governor Manit Wattanasen to rush to the rescue of domestic and foreign tourists still stuck on Koh Lipe and Koh Adang after yesterday's tsunami tragedy, this morning managed to evacuate 173 tourists from Koh Lipe, of whom 60 were foreigners.

The remainder of the tourists are to be taken to safety by the end of the day...

Engineers join growing calls for tsunami warning centre

... Dr. Totrakun Yomnak, president of the Thai Engineering Institute, said that while he was reluctant to apportion blame for the huge loss of human life, officials had simply not warned the public in time. "I don't want to blame the Meteorological Department for failing to issue warnings, as the department has no capabilities to measure earthquakes of this magnitude", he said, noting that Thailand's seismological research was concentrated in the northern region, where earthquakes had occurred in the past, whereas scant attention had been paid to the south.

...He also noted that Bangkok, while not in an area thought to be at risk from earthquakes, was also in a delicate position due to its weak land base and large number of tall buildings. Even a minor earthquake with an epicentre near Bangkok could be devastating for the capital, he said. Nonetheless, he confirmed that a disaster of a similar magnitude was extremely unlikely in the near future...



7:01am, December 28 – [Updated quake info page](#) and [animated gif](#) showing the tsunami moving through the Indian Ocean.

6:14am, December 28 – [Hunt Is on for Dramatic Tsunami Pictures](#), AP
 ... "There will still be, I think, the definitive shot, the wall of water," Sandy MacIntyre, director of news for Associated Press Television News in London, said Monday.
 ...APTN is competing fiercely with another news agency, Reuters, to acquire video. APTN producers were sent to six airports in Europe and Asia on Monday to ask tourists if they had captured the scene on their home video cameras, MacIntyre said...

1:31am, December 28 – [Phuket tsunami](#)
 Astonishing photos from an eyewitness. Photos 2-10 are a sequence showing the water rushing in. Notice at the end a man being swept along by the waves.

Left: Swedish newspaper *Aftonbladet* has an interesting photo from Phi Phi Island and a headline that reads "2000 persons still missing." (December 28, 2004).

12:35am, December 28 – [Journalists cautioned](#) – *The Nation*
 ...The TJA said that news coverage should select appropriate angles and respect the dignity of all those affected by the tragedy. It singled out for excoriation the Thai-language Daily News, which ran a photo on its front page yesterday of a female victim's bare buttocks...

12:31am, December 28 – [Warning rejected to protect tourism](#) – *The Nation*
 ... "The very important factor in making the decision was that it's high season and hotel rooms were nearly 100-per-cent full. If we issued a warning, which would have led to evacuation, what would happen then? Business would be instantaneously affected. It would be beyond the Meteorological Department's ability to handle. We could go under, if didn't come," said a source who attended the meeting...

Precisely at 9am that Sunday, waves as high as 3 to 10 metres hit the main southern coastal provinces of Phuket, Phang Nga, Krabi and Ranong.

12:21am, December 28 – Ad for Tsunami Japanese Restaurant
 2Bangkok.com had this piece of ironic news for about 24 hours and was only going to post it after the gravity of the situation subsided somewhat. However, *The Nation* [published something about it today](#), so there is no reason for 2B not to mention it. A reader wrote: *The new 30-trip Skytrain card issued on Sunday features a big ad for the new Tsunami Japanese Restaurant in the Marriott Hotel. It lists their website as www.tsunamibangkok.com. Kind of tacky now, but they could not have known.*

2B newsfeed: [About the 2B newsfeed](#) – [January 3](#) – [January 2](#) – [January 1](#) – [December 31](#) – [December 30](#) – [December 29](#) – [December 28](#) – [December 27](#) – [December 26](#)

2B newsfeed: Tsunami in Thailand – December 29, 2004

December 29, 2004

Categories: 2004 Tsunami

2B newsfeed: [About the 2B newsfeed](#) – [January 3](#) – [January 2](#) – [January 1](#) – [December 31](#) – [December 30](#) – [December 29](#) – [December 28](#) – [December 27](#) – [December 26](#)

December 29

11:48pm, December 29

– What's in the newspapers

Right: The December 29 edition of *Manager Daily* has a photo of the Thai flag at half staff at Government House and a wide shot of corpses on the front pages. Its other two sections have stories about people sending supplies (left) and the relief effort (right).

It seems the popular dailies such as *Matichon* and *ThaiRath* quickly sold out their December 28 and December 29 editions.



11:37pm, December 29 – BTW: Tonight,

2Bangkok.com Editor Ron Morris was interviewed by newspapers in the US and Brazil.

11:33pm, December 29 – Myanmar and Bangladesh

David Gilbert points out: *There was a note on [Command Post](#) that read:* "UNESCO's

International Coordination Group for the Pacific Tsunami Warning System (ICG/ITSU) has an animated graphic showing that the wave was focussed east-west, missing the tens of millions of very vulnerable people to the north. It could have been literally hundreds of times worse, with tens of millions dead. This may be why Myanmar and Bangladesh did not have a disaster as great as did the rest of SE Asia."

11:04pm, December 29 – Anyone heard news of the [Muslim](#)

[fishing village at Ko Panyi](#)? It was mainly restaurants on stilts and small buildings and a mosque on a sandbar in the Phangnga area.

10:50pm, December 29 –

Translations from Thai-language newspapers: *ThaiRath*

** Thairath donates 10 million baht to for the victims in the south. Channel 7 also donates 10 million baht. Meanwhile Khun Ploypailin, the elder sister of [Khun Poom](#), donates 410 cc. of blood at Siriraj Hospital for the Tsunami victims in the south.*

** Around 1000 dead bodies could not salvaged in Phangnga. The bodies are getting rotten and there are not enough coffins.*

** The Election Commission of Thailand gives the green light for the politicians to distribute belongings or support money to give relief to the victims in the six provinces in the south .*

10:43pm, December 29

– Translations from Thai-language newspapers: *Matichon*

** On December*

28 an officer searching for survivors heard a voice cry 'give me milk' and the found ' a 3-year-old boy named Warun Paopas struck in the mangrove forest for 3 days. He survives by a miracle. The boy was taken to Takuapa Hospital.

** Pratep Somdej Prateprattanarajchasuda Siamboromrajchakumari , the vice president of the Thai Red Cross, sent an email to embassies and hotel associations asking for blood group A, O and RH which is needed for foreign injured victims.*

** On December 28, 500 foreigners from the disaster area that are now staying at the gym at Thammasat University Rangsit are delighted with the Thai people's sympathy. They confirmed they would visit Thailand again.*

8:45pm, December 29 – Official death toll posted at 8:00pm – new list includes a ‘missing’ category

The previous three days there have been 5-6 updates of the death toll per day. Today there were only 3 updates, however, a tally of the missing has been added to the official list.

Province	Dead	Injured	Missing
Phuket	263	1265	1580
Trang	5	66	—
Phangnga	1208	5573	2250
Krabi	198	2649	1360
Ranong	149	186	97
Satun	6	15	1
Total	1829	9754	5288

6:11pm, December 29 – [Chilling emails asking about missing persons](#) – CNN

6:07pm, December 29 – [Useful contact numbers and websites for relief assistance](#) – The Nation

4:45pm, December 29 – [Hidden death toll in Myanmar?](#)

Right: *The Nation*, December 29, 2004

4:44pm, December 29 – [Various videos and photos of the waves](#) and list of the [worst natural disasters in history](#).

4:41pm, December 29 – [Another webboard set up to handle missing person questions](#)

3:40pm, December 29 – The [second item on this page](#) quotes [an interesting NYT article](#): ...Bob Calo, an associate professor at the graduate school of journalism at the University of California, Berkeley, said that there had been something of a reversal in the news-gathering process. "If you think back, news gatherers would get the story and then commission a photographer to go and get the pictures," he said. "Now we have flipped it around to where reporters are chasing the pictures, trying to create some context for what viewers are seeing." ...



3:34pm, December 29 – [Media to cancel entertainment programmes for three days](#) – MCOT/TNA

With the entire national plunged into mourning today, the government called on the media to refrain from broadcasting entertainment programmes for the next three days, and instead concentrate on news bulletins. Deputy Prime Minister Wissanu Krea-Ngam said that all branches of the media had been asked to broadcast informative programmes and campaigns for donations to help victims of Sunday's tsunami.

1:53pm, December 29 – [Tsunami death toll at Thai beach resort may reach 3,000](#) – Kyodo

1:38pm, December 29 – [Thieves plague Thai tsunami victims](#) – Reuters

10:17am, December 29 – What's on Thai TV – Channel 3, celebrity interview

Right: Sarawut Marththong or 'Oun' (left), a movie star, and Nathan Oman (right), a singer with R.S. They survived the tsunami at Moka Village next to Surin Island in Krabi province and are being interviewed upon their return to Bangkok.



10:15am, December 29

– Urgent Appeal from Indonesia: Help Needed for the People in Aceh

It is sad that the world is now suffering so greatly from the huge, unexpected earthquake and tidal waves. It is indeed about this that we are writing to you now. We are seeking your help for a humanitarian mission that some of us in Singapore and Hong Kong are trying to organise to help the people in Aceh. We have heard that as many as 5000 people have died and many others injured.

As you know, Aceh is in a conflict situation and due to this, the Indonesian government has banned all international aid from entering Aceh. However, it is important that the international community shows its willingness to assist the people in Aceh and is able to persuade the Indonesian government to allow the aid through.

What is needed at the moment include the following:

- 1. Trained medical personnel to treat patients, dispense medical supplies and ascertain the post-disaster assistance needed*
- 2. Emergency medical supplies, including antibiotics, pain-killers, bandages, dressing trays, surgical supplies, operating tents for triage, stretchers, intravenous drip and other medical necessities*
- 3. Large numbers of body bags for corpses that are quickly decomposing in the tropical heat and which may cause the rapid spread of disease*
- 4. Emergency food supplies*
- 5. Drinking water*
- 6. Equipment for emergency shelter*
- 7. Emergency sanitation equipment*

If you know of organisations and individuals anywhere, who are willing to provide some assistance, please liaise with the following:

Contact person: Ms Titi Suntoro

Organisation: Perserikatan Solidaritas Perempuan

Tel. +62-81-513243018 / +62-21-797-1849 / +62-21-797-1849

Fax. +62-21-7919-8275

Email: <euron@indo.net.id> or <soliper@centrin.net.id>

9:24am, December 29 – Places to search for the missing

Manager Online's [search](#)

[engine for victims](#)

Manager Online's [upload](#)

[photos of the missing persons](#) (scroll down for the photos)

[Place](#)

[to post queries about specific missing persons](#)

[Another list of the](#)

[injured and dead](#)

Warning: [Graphic](#)

[photos of unidentified deceased in hospitals](#)

[List](#)

[of patients in Phuket Hospitals](#)

[People](#)

[posting "I'm OK" notices](#) – there seems to be many Swedes

[posting here](#)

9:18am, December 29

– DigitalGlobe has [satellite](#)

[photos of the tsunami hitting Sri Lanka](#).

8:19am, December 29 – More from

the *Bangkok Post*

[Phi](#)

[Phi Island: Tales of tragedy from a destroyed paradise](#)

Phi Phi Island in Nopparat Thara Island National Park, Krabi, was once a paradise, attracting tourists and divers from around the world...

[New](#)

[Year's Eve celebrations cancelled in show of respect](#)

...Pravit Janyasittikul, vice-president

of marketing at Central Pattana Plc, the operator of Central World Plaza, said the company had called off its Bangkok Countdown 2005

New Year event. Instead, it has launched a relief programme called

the "Biggest Wave of Your Generosity", which is now accepting donations...

8:21am, December 29

– Phuket International Hospital: [Missing](#)

[children separated from their parents](#) and [list](#)

[of patients](#)

8:19am, December 29 – **[Tourist](#)**

[area land misuse 'can now end'](#) –

[Illegal resorts swept away won't be rebuilt](#) – Bangkok Post

...Many resorts obliterated by the powerful tidal waves had encroached upon protected areas in national parks, top environmental officials said.

"Our work could be made easier. Why not turn the crisis into an opportunity," said Natural Resources and Environmental Minister Suwit Khunkitti after a two-day visit of the devastation left by the tsunamis that hit the southern resort islands...

*We wondered when this issue would come up. We know that the forest rangers for Phi Phi Island are not **allowed***

to come to the island—powerful interests were developing every square meter. Now that much is washed away, we will see if they can really prevent rebuilding. **Also:** Some

[Phi](#)
[Phi Island photos](#) from about one year ago.

6:05am, December 29 – [Donors](#)
[queue to give blood, stop traffic](#) – *Bangkok Post*, December 29, 2004

Several thousand people, Thais and foreigners, flocked to the Red Cross Society on Henri Dunant road yesterday to donate blood to injured tsunami victims...

3:05am, December 29 – [FOREIGN](#)
[CASUALTIES: Over 1,500 Swedes still missing](#) – *The Nation*

1:26am, December 29 – Interesting
thread on the forum: [Picture](#)
[of my brother?](#)

1:08am, December 29
– Interesting thread on the forum: [24](#)
[Hr BTS Skytrain Service CANCELED!](#)

2B newsfeed: [About the](#)
[2B newsfeed](#) – [January 3](#) – [January](#)
[2](#) – [January 1](#) – [December](#)
[31](#) – [December](#)
[30](#) – [December 29](#) – [December](#)
[28](#) – [December 27](#) – [December](#)
[26](#)

Thailand's poor to be taught to solve their own problems

December 29, 2004

Categories: The Thaksin Years

[Thailand's
poor to be taught to solve their own problems](#)

– TNA, December 29, 2004

The title of this story sounds like something from *The Onion*:

The Thai government has announced a plan to launch an education programme to teach rural residents how to efficiently solve their problems and lift themselves out of their poverty...

2B newsfeed: Tsunami in Thailand – December 30, 2004

December 30, 2004

Categories: 2004 Tsunami

2B newsfeed: [About the 2B newsfeed](#) – [January 3](#) – [January 2](#) – [January 1](#) – [December 31](#) – [December 30](#) – [December 29](#) – [December 28](#) – [December 27](#) – [December 26](#)

December 30

9:10am, December 30 – Two more sites ([here](#) and [here](#)) collecting video of the event.

8:35am, December 30 – Reports from the smaller islands? A reader asks if there are reports of damage or casualties at Ko Similan and Ko Surin. Does anyone know? **Also:** Yesterday we asked: Anyone heard news of the [Muslim fishing village at Ko Panyi](#)? It was mainly restaurants on stilts and small buildings and a mosque on a sandbar in the Phangnga area.

2:04am, December 30 – On the *Thueung Look Thueng Kon* program on Channel 9, Pipat Sritieng (right) showed a video he took at Ao Nang on Phi Phi Island that captured the progress of the first tsunami. This is probably the best example we have seen of the cycle of a tsunami event: the initial drawing



Tourists having breakfast near the beach.



Suddenly, water is sucked out of the bay. The raging rapids as the water is sucked away can clearly be seen.



Boats are left sitting on land. Exposed coral and rock is in the background.



There is no water near the pier.



From another pier, the suction from the water is so strong that the pier itself is being bent.



A tourist runs on to the pier to get a closer look. This person is later knocked off the pier as it collapses and is carried away by the water.



The pier is swept away. Then the cameraman turns and runs inland as the water sweeps back.



When the camera is righted again after about 12 seconds, the cameraman is being pushed against the first floor roof of a building. This is across the street from the building in the first photo of this series. The cameraman finally climbs onto a roof.

1:49am, December 30 – Articles from *The Nation*

[THAI](#)

[TALK: Horrendous failure of our national warning system](#)

[STREET](#)

[WISE: Inadequate and insensitive TV](#)

The Nation is finally mentioning this issue. It has been on the forums, in the Thai-language papers, and on this site for several days.

...On the scene in Phuket, the anchor and his cameraman showed a complete lack of sensitivity by pointing out dead bodies. When encountering teenage looters, the reporter simply mentioned that looting was normal...

[AN](#)

[EMBATTLED NATION: bids farewell to 2004](#)

This was a year of one crisis after another for Thailand.

1:23am, December 30 – From news at midnight on Channel 9



Thais crowd hospitals to give blood.



Foreigners make pleas to find their loved ones.



12:42am, December 30 – We just belatedly posted a [photo of the Bangkok Post's front page from December 28](#) showing the devastated interior of Phi Phi Island.

12:30am, December 30 – What's in the newspapers
Left: *Khaosod's* December 30 edition's front page: (clockwise from top left): More about deceased royal [Khun Bhumi Jensen](#), photos of tourists already sunbathing again on one of the ruined beaches (several dailies ran photos like this today and yesterday), a photo of the [miracle](#), ["give-me-milk" boy](#), lucky lottery numbers, and a mass morgue photo.

12:30am, December 30 – David Gilbert points out a page with links to [videos](#) and [photos of the tsunami](#).

2B newsfeed: [About the 2B newsfeed](#) – [January 3](#) – [January 2](#) – [January 1](#) – [December 31](#) – [December 30](#) – [December 29](#) – [December 28](#) – [December 27](#) – [December 26](#)

Bangkok Subway News 2004

December 30, 2004

Categories: Subway

Suriya asking

for a further reduction of subway ticket prices to 10-15 baht – translated and

summarized from *Manager Daily*,

December 30, 2004

Even though BMCL has cut ticket prices to 12-18 baht during non rush hour (12 baht for the first 7 stations and 18 baht for the rest), Minister Suriya said he was really not satisfied with BMCL. Minister Suriya wants 10 baht for the first 3 stations and 15 baht for the rest so as to boost the number of passengers to 180,000 a day while MRTA will have the revenue of 2.3 million baht a day—a loss of revenue by 0.4 million baht a day.

Currently, there are 135,000 Subway passengers a day on weekdays and 110,000-120,000 passengers a day on weekends with a daily revenue of 2.7 billion baht. Only during shows at Queen Sirikit National Convention Center boosts the number of passengers to 160,000 a day (3.2 million baht revenue a day).

Minister Suriya will ask the cabinet to approve his plan on Jan 4, 2005 which is likely to be approved as the way to gain more votes from Bangkokians

However, it may not work if the poor feeder bus services have not been rectified. Same can be said about the poor patronage of Bangsue Park and Ride which has no convenient connections to the main roads such as Ratchadaphisek, Prachachuen, Kamphanegphet 2, Kamphaengphet 3, etc. They just make a rush to construct the park and ride to show that they have done something without making serious thought to make them a convenient. Same thing can be said to the plan to implement the Pink Monorail along Highway 304 and Yellow LRT.

Subway update: commercial deal delays

sows seeds of discontent between BMCL and MRTA

– translated and summarized from

Manager Daily, December 17, 2004

BMCL has complained to MRTA that they have not been granted permission for the commercial development around the stations since the MRTA board has not approved their new plan yet. It has already caused a 100 million baht loss to BMCL since they cannot post ads and get revenue from ATM machines.

BMCL said they will buy five more rolling stock sets from Siemens, but are still negotiating the price.

It will offer IPO in 2005 for more cars.

The daily number of passengers: 140,000-150,000 passengers during weekdays and 100,000 passengers a day on weekends

Average revenue: 2.5 million baht a day—to become 4 million baht a day when the number of passenger reaches 200,000-210,000 a day

BMCL has ordered 150,000 additional smart cards since the existing 200,000 smart cards cannot cope with the increasing demand.

BMCL also talks with BTS to implement a jointed ticket system without meddling from the government since they know too well that they have to synergize their ticket system for their own survival. BMCL's Smart card is the model for the new BTS Smart card system. BMCL is also going offer a 1-day pass (120 baht) and 3-day pass (300 baht) which the passengers can use without worrying about the rush hour/non rush hour period discount or even the distance after they have seen the successful implementation of BTS's 1-day pass and 3-day pass. The 1-day pass and 3-day pass will be introduced on December 20.

10,000 more student passengers on the Subway

– translated and summarized from

Manager Daily, December 16, 2004

BMCL said they have 10,000 more students as passengers of the Subway (7%) after the introduction of student discount on smart card systems. Therefore, BMCL will have to introduce permanent student discounts after the discount period has expired.

However, there is no significant change even after the introduction of non-rush hour discount, so they may have to discontinue it after March 2005.

Nevertheless, BMCL will introduce a 24 hour service during new years eve after they have seen the busy Skytrain which runs around the clock during the new year period (December 31-January 1).

BMCL agreeing to pay 7% of revenue to MRTA – translated and summarized from *Thai Post*, November 9, 2004

MRTA agrees to accept 7% revenue sharing from BMCL. MRTA is asking BMCL to share 7% of profit after offering an IPO.

BMCL said the subsidiary will give 25% of revenue to BMCL from year 1 to 5 and 35% from year 6 to 10 and BMCL will give 7% of revenue to MRTA. The estimated of revenue of the subsidiaries will be 200 million baht each while the estimated revenue in the second 5 year will be 300 million baht each. If both subsidiaries gain more profits, BMCL will have to give 7% of dividends to MRTA. BMCL will also have to give MRTA 7% of profit after offering an IPO.

Complete details of 2 new subway lines and 2 new extensions – translated and summarized from *Thaipost*, November 11, 2004 and *Prachachart Thurakij*, November 15, 2004

Subway commercial deals

MRTA says the two new lines and two extensions of the subway with total distance of 71 km would not have new commercial development because of safety concerns. For the telecom deals, all the telecom providers must pay 7% of rent to MRTA. However there are some disputes since MRTA and BMCL could not agree on the definition of a 'telecom deal.' BMCL said it means 'services' while MRTA says 'leasing space.'

For the [How Come deal](#), revenue will gradually increase in the following fashion:

Raw revenue of How Come	BMCL	MRTA
First 100 million baht	10%	7%
second 100 million baht	15%	7%
Third 100 million baht	20%	7%
Forth 100 million baht	25%	7%
More than 400 million baht	35%	7%

The contract with How Come will last for 10 years.

For the case of MetroMall and advertising by Traid networks, there will be a committee to handle this matter before the December meeting and MRTA will receive 7% of revenue.

Subway investment plan

The investment plan for MRTA which is pending for approval by the cabinet this December. MRTA needs to invest 217.4 billion baht for two new lines and two extensions of the blue lines to be done by the end of 2009. The first source is a domestic loan to prevent FOREX fluctuations, but it needs assistance from MOF to find the source. MRTA has to increase the payment for the consultant on detailed designs from 300 million baht to 600 million baht to speed up the projects.

The details on the 217.412 billion baht investment on 71-km of subway lines can be described in details as follows:

- 1) Domestic loan is the first source which have to be done by the end of 2005 to ensure that all will be finished by the end of 2010. The investment form will be in the same way as the Bangsue-Bang Yai section.
- 2) The elevated section (Blue Ring, the elevated section of Southern Blue Line, Orange Line and Purple line) will be 'detailed design' while the underground section (through Rattanakosin Island) will be design and build.
- 3) No commercial development is allowed to prevent terrorist attacks. The stations would not be as deep as the initial phase of the Blue Line (not more than three underground floors) to cut costs and for safety.

Three new subway lines

1) Blue Line – 2 sections 27 km

1.1) Hua Lamphong – Bang Khae (14 km – 5 underground and 9 elevated)

10 stations which pass through Charoen Krung, Wang Boorapha, Sala Chaloem Krung, Wat Po, Pakklong Talad, Bangkok Yai, Phetkasem – Bang Khae

Investment: 48.453 billion baht	System Installation: 9.314 billion baht
Land Expropriation: 4.233 billion baht	Consultant fee: 0.550 billion baht
Construction: 32.981 billion baht	Contractor Managing: 1.375 billion baht
Opened: September 2010	

1.2) Bangsue – Charansanitwongse – Tha Phra (13 km – all elevated)
7 stations from Bangsue to Bangpho, Charansanitwongse, Tha Phra

Investment: 24.063 billion baht	System Installation: 9.477 billion baht
Land Expropriation: 0.437 billion baht	Consultant fee: 0.119 billion baht
Construction: 13.697 billion baht	Contractor Managing: 0.297 billion baht
Opened: September 2009	

2) Orange Line Bang Kapi – Bang Bumru (24 km – 21 underground, 3 km elevated)
17 stations – The line will pass Bang Kapi, Ram Khamhaeng Dindaeng, Victory Monument, Dusit Zoo, Sanghee Bridge, and Bang Bumru

Investment: 80.915 billion baht	System Installation: 17.615 billion baht
Land Expropriation: 5.357 billion baht	Consultant fee: 4.458 billion baht
Construction: 56.339 billion baht	Contractor Managing: 1.146 billion baht
Opened: September 2010	

3) Purple Line – Bangsue – Rat Boorana (20 km – 2nd section of purple line – 14 km underground, 6 km elevated)
This section will pass Tao Poon, Kiakkai, Sri Yan, Samsen, National Library, Bang Lumpfoo. Phan Fah, Wang Boorapha, Memorial Bridge, Wongwian Yai, Sam Reh, Mahaisawan, and Ratboorana

Investment: 63.381 billion baht	System Installation: 14.836 billion baht
Land Expropriation: 3.450 billion baht	Consultant: 0.366 billion baht
Construction: 43.815 billion baht	Contractor Managing: 0.914 billion baht
Opened: September 2010	

The schedule will be as follows:

Period	Task
2005	Consultant submitting the final study results in detail (MRTA has to pay consultants 600 million baht to speed up the study–300 million baht from the budget and 300 million baht from loans.)
March 2005 – April 2007	Land expropriation
November 2005 – June 2006	Hiring the contractors
February 2006 – August 2010	Construction

The financial benefit from the lines is not much:

Blue Line: 3.67%

Orange Line: 0.07%

Purple Line: 0.43%

Economic benefit is 20.56%

The payment scheme will be as follows:

Year	Amount of expenditure (billion baht)
2005	0.516
2006	35.835
2007	59.201
2008	69.923
2009	42.663
2010	9.274

New Year's Eve in Bangkok 2004

December 31, 2004

Categories: New Year's Eve



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

New Year's Eve in Bangkok 2004

Celebrations have been canceled because of the [tragedy](#), but above is a photo taken at the stroke of midnight. You can see '2005' on the giant TV screen on the center right of the photo. Below left are people walking along the street and below right is a shot in the opposite direction of the large photo above. The green structures are diverging Skytrain lines.

Also: [New](#)

[Year's Eve 2004 – Bangkok Biz News – "Say goodbye to the cruel monkey year!"](#)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Wish you were here –
December 11, 2004

Photo of Ratchaprasong intersection in full swing for the holiday season.

2005: [New Year's Eve 2005](#)

2003: [Ratchaprasong intersection – December 31, 2003](#)

Tsunami warning on December 30 based on quackery

December 31, 2004

Categories: 2004 Tsunami, Scams

Back to [2B newsfeed: Tsunami in Thailand](#)

Tsunami warning on
December 30 based on quackery – December
31, 2004

Readers of 2Bangkok.com will be familiar with many articles we have run on quack products and concepts from the West being utilized in Asia by the gullible. The Indian tsunami/earthquake warning from yesterday is one such example:

[False tsunami alarm sparks panic in Indian Ocean region](#) – AP,
December 31, 2004

...Hours later, the Indian government backed down, saying the alert was based on bad information from a little-known U.S. firm. But the confusion and mass panic that ensued from the false alarm highlights the lack of a coordinated tsunami warning system in the region.
... "The whole confusion has occurred because information was received by our department by ... Terra Research. (They) ... claimed they have some sensors and equipment through which they suggest there was a possibility of an earthquake," he told a televised press conference. "On the basis of this communication, for anyone to reach a conclusion that a tsunami will hit the eastern coast of India is unscientific, hogwash and should be discarded."
However, Terra Research's Larry Park said his research facility, which monitors seismic developments, believes another major quake will hit Asia again.
"It was a tough decision, but it was at least important to pass the information on. There is a good chance of a quake coming, yes, we've got a few days' window," he said...

We looked up the 'little-known US firm,' [Terra Research](#) and found a variety of pseudo science quackery. They sell a "Command Center monitors telemetry data from regional sensors and is able to accurately triangulate large earthquakes hours in advance..."

In the [articles section](#):

Insight to the mystery of Ear Tones prior to Earthquakes – how they occur and why

An incessant low frequency 'hum' tone has been torturing residents in an area in the US in Taos, New Mexico, where the noise often drives people crazy. Only heard by a few, called human 'hummers', the low-pitched 30 to 80 Hz tone is perceived as sound, but it hasn't been found with sensitive microphones or electromagnetic sensors. It has baffled researchers for years, but ear tone research of tones prior to earthquakes may unlock this mystery and may even possibly lead to an insight into a remedy for Tinnitus – a constant ringing in the ears that afflicts up to 50 million Americans.

Unlocking the mystery of 'Earthquake Clouds' – how they form & why – Are they accurate in prediction?

God's Firmament & the Earthquake

...This wrong turn formed an errant foundation our current physics and science rests upon, starting from Albert Einstein (Einstein's Postulates & special theory of relativity) to modern day electromagnetic theory. This wrong turn will rock science to its foundation when realized. It will shatter theories and rewrite a century of books. Among the most devastating will be a crumbling of modern astrophysical theory on formation of our universe (big bang, age of, redshift, and more)...

Read the [full article](#) that also claims Science 'goofed' on assuming ether is non-existent.

It is bizarre that the leadership of a nation of one billion would be acting on information from a company like this.

Back to [2B newsfeed: Tsunami in Thailand](#)

2B newsfeed: Tsunami in Thailand Main Page

December 31, 2004

Categories: 2004 Tsunami

Earthquakes and related stories

[Earthquake](#)

[felt in the South](#)

[– March 28, 2005](#)

[Flashback](#)

[1998 – The tsunami warning](#)

[A Bangkok tremor](#)

[story from January 2003](#)



2B

newsfeed (December 26, 2004- January 3, 2005): Tsunami in Thailand

[December 26, 2004](#)

[December 27, 2004](#)



[December 28, 2004](#)

[December 29, 2004](#)



[December 30, 2004](#)

[December 31, 2004](#)

[January 1, 2005](#)

[January 2, 2005](#)



[January 3, 2005](#)

[Post-January 3, 2005](#)

[Eyewitness account from Phangnga](#)

[Tsunami warning on December 30 based on quackery](#)

About the 2B newsfeed (December 26, 2004- January 3, 2005)

This newsfeed was started at [8:10am on December 26](#), moments after the tremors from the initial earthquake were felt in Bangkok and before any tsunamis hit.

2Bangkok.com tries to highlight info on news that may only appear in Thai and we try to have it first. That first day there was little news on the subject locally. Local Thai TV showed game shows and soap operas as the tragedy was underway. We posted links to local useful websites (that were at that time only in Thai) and Thai-language threads on local forums so they could be found by those who needed them.

It was not until three days later that local newspapers started posting links to the local disaster relief agencies and government death toll press releases. 2Bangkok also made sure that each days' last casualty stats were translated from Thai and posted each night. This is because in Bangkok wire reports do not go out overnight and the newspapers go to press early.

As the blog world got involved in the information dissemination in the middle of the week, 2Bangkok.com narrowed its focus to what was showing on Thai TV and what was in the Thai-language newspapers—again to focus on news that was not available elsewhere. The newsfeed was maintained from December 26-January 3. The main 2Bangkok.com page is [here](#).

[Comment:](#)

[Does the Andaman tourist industry deserve a quick revival?](#)

– January 8, 2005

Flashback 1998 – The tsunami warning

December 31, 2004

Categories: 2004 Tsunami

Back to [2B newsfeed: Tsunami in Thailand](#)

Flashback 1998 – The tsunami warning

Smith Thamsaroj (or Samit Thammasarot), the former Director General of the Meteorological Department, will be organizing a new warning system for natural disasters for the country:

[Warning](#)

[system to be built](#) – *Bangkok Post*, December 31, 2004

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra yesterday put Smith Thamsaroj, a former Meteorological Department chief, in charge of establishing an advanced seismic and tidal wave warning system for the whole nation...

[WARNING](#)

[SYSTEM: Veteran forecaster Smith recruited](#) – *The Nation*, December 31, 2004

The government will appoint Smith Thamsaroj to take charge of installing an advance warning system for tsunamis in a bid to prevent a repeat of the catastrophe triggered by Sunday's killer waves, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said yesterday. Smith, a former director-general of the Meteorological Department, has been warning about the possibility of giant waves striking Thailand's west coast since 1993, following a wave disaster in Papua New Guinea. His warning fell on deaf ears however, and many ridiculed him, suggesting he was crazy...

What the *Post* fails to mention and *The Nation* alludes to is the 1998 incident where Thamsaroj tried to issue a tsunami warning for Phuket. At that time the prediction caused panic and commotion. After a few days the publicity died down with Mr. Sanit being criticized for alarming people and hurting tourism.

After the tsunami hit last week, he has been much in demand for interviews on TV and in newspapers. From *ThaiRath*, December 27, 2004: "Mr. Samit Thammasarot, the former director general of the Meteorological Department, warned of the danger of tsunamis in the Andaman Sea and south of Thailand on August 16, 1998." On the same day, he was interviewed on Channel 9 and warned of further aftershocks and suggested a float-based warning system for the Indian Ocean.

Here are some articles from the time when Thamsaroj first issued his tsunami warnings in 1998:

Huge tidal wave reports dismissed – *Bangkok Post*, August 22, 1998

Provincial authorities yesterday rejected news reports that a huge tidal wave may hit the western coast of the South after some 500 people in Kathu District fled to a hill during a heavy downpour on Thursday night...

Tourism businesses slam prediction of tidal wave – *Bangkok Post*, August 19, 1998

The senior official who predicted a tsunami would strike the western coast faced a tidal wave of criticism from tourist businesses yesterday...

Tsunami fear unfounded, say officials – *Bangkok Post*, August 15, 1998

The Meteorological Department said yesterday that rumours of a tsunami about to sweep the west coast of southern Thailand are unfounded, and appealed to the public for calm...

False alarm on tsunami – *Bangkok Post*, August 14, 1998

Families started leaving their seaside homes yesterday after a false alarm that a tsunami was expected to strike the west coast...

And here is an interesting mention of a tsunami that hit Thailand's east coast in 1965:

Disaster centre planned – *Bangkok Post*, March 1 1997

The Interior Ministry has agreed to build a 35-million-baht public disaster prevention centre at flood-prone Laem Talumpuk peninsula in Nakhon Si Thammarat province. The proposal has

recently received the green light from the National Civil Disaster Prevention Committee, which is chaired by Permanent Secretary for Interior Chuwong Chayabutr; a source revealed yesterday. Under the proposal, the ministry will spend five million baht from the 1997 budget and another 30 million baht from the 1998 budget to build the centre, which can accommodate 1,500 people. Laem Talumpuk in Nakhon Si Thammarat's Pak Phanang district is prone to floods. The area was hit by a tidal wave in 1965 which claimed the lives of over 500 people. Currently, there are seven disaster prevention centres in Chiang Mai, Lamphang, Phitsanulok, Ubon Ratchathani, Khon Kaen, Surat Thani, and Songkhla provinces. These centres are manned by officials and volunteers and equipped with disaster relief aids and equipment...

Back to [2B newsfeed: Tsunami in Thailand](#)

2B newsfeed: Tsunami in Thailand – December 30-31, 2004

December 31, 2004

Categories: 2004 Tsunami

2B newsfeed: [About the 2B newsfeed](#) – [January 3](#)
– [January 2](#) – [January 1](#) – [December 31](#)
– [December 30](#) – [December 29](#) – [December 28](#) – [December 27](#) – [December 26](#)

December 31



15:26pm, December 31
– Today's *Post* and *Nation*
It has been difficult this week to get newsstand copies of the English- and Thai-language dailies. Today's editions are still running banner headlines five days after the event. The *Post* (right) has contrasting satellite photos showing how the waves erased coastal features. The *Nation* (right) runs an aerial photo of Phi Phi (the *Post* ran a [photo like this](#) on December 28). Readers were chuckling and shaking their head at the headline 'Thai toll skyrockets' under 'UNDERSTANDING YOUR PET BETTER.'



14:23pm, December 31

– More from *Manager Daily*

Another updated death toll was published at 1:00pm, but the numbers are just a dozen higher. More info from today's *Manager Daily* translated and summarized by Wisarut: *There is only about a 20% chance that the missing people are still alive so the estimation of 7000 deaths is possible. Furthermore, His Majesty's greeting card has been cancelled which is quite understandable since His Majesty lost his grandson, Khun Poom, who had planned to come and see him at Klai Kangwon Palace at Hua Hin on December 31, 2004. The tsunami also killed the bodyguards of Khun Poom as well. There is a plan for a statue of Khun Poom at the Mounted Police Field in Bang Bon and the police are going to posthumously promote Khun Poom to Pol. 2nd Lt. Rescue officers at Phi Phi are required to wear gas masks since the odor from decomposed bodies is going to have a harmful effect on rescue officers.*

13:38pm, December 31 – Japanese tsunami photos

Laurie pointed out KSL running [these tsunami photos](#), however, we believe these are photos from an earlier tsunami event in Japan.

13:11pm, December 31 – Foreign embassies in Bangkok demand their nationals contact their loved ones

As message boards are being flooded with missing person posts and embassies are overwhelmed with requests as well, the foreign embassies in Bangkok are insisting that foreigners living in any part of Thailand let their loved ones know they are okay. Many people outside of Thailand seem to think that the disaster impacted the entire country—even Bangkok. The truth is that Thailand is a huge country and only a small section of its huge coastline was hit.

12:51pm, December 31 – Latest official death toll at 8:00am

Province	Deceased				Injured				Missing
	Thai	Non-Thai	Unknown	Total	Thai	Non-Thai	Unknown	Total	
Phangnga	1662	2027	0	3689	4345	1253	0	5,598	2422
Krabi	108	88	171	367	0	0	2649	2649	1913
Phuket	151	111	17	279	386	225	661	1272	2123
Ranong	162	2	0	164	189	14	0	203	16
Satun	6	0	0	6	15	0	0	15	0
Trang	3	2	0	5	57	9	46	112	1

Total	2092	2230	188	4510	4992	1501	3356	9824	6475
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Info from today's *Manager Daily* translated and summarized by Wisarut: *There is another report that even Phangnga alone has more than 4000 corpses so there could be a lot more uncollected corpses. The bodies at Phangnga have piled up in such extent that many rescue officers have vomited and need to put ammonia into their masks. Rescue Offices have reported that they can see those farang ghosts swimming on the beaches around Phi Phi island even though Phi Phi Island is closed to anyone except local people and rescue officers. So some officers have to make a day trip from the mainland to Phi Phi since they feel very scarred from those ghosts and do not want to stay overnight there. The forensic officers said they need surgery officers and surgery instruments so as to help them identify the rotting corpses from DNA in addition to special spectacles to prevent the contact with blood and liquid. Survivors in Phangnga have to stay in the hills and mountains since they are too scared to go back to their houses which have been trashed by the tsunami. They need electric torches and radio as well as cooking utensils. Satun has more land subsidence—now a seventh giant hole. Also more than 1000 fishermen's ships are missing—90% of them are from the small fishermen. The Ministry of the Interior is working to clear Patong beach to become serviceable again next year. The Ministry of Agriculture is working to clear Ban Nam Khem fishermen's village in Phang Nga since this village has been utterly trashed. They have to remove at least 80 fishermen's ships. Now, the HTMS Chakkri Narubet (the aircraft carrier in the Royal Thai Navy) has reached Phi Phi island to perform rescue, medical aids, and finding any missing in the sea by flying Sea Hawk helicopter.*

9:32am, December 31 – [Confirmed death toll from Thai tidal waves is 4,351 – official](#) – AFP

The confirmed death toll from tidal waves in Thailand is now 4,351, a provincial governor says. Anuwat Maytheevibulwut, governor of the worst-hit province of Phang Nga, said the figure for deaths in his province alone as of Thursday night was 3,530...

[Tsunami warning on December 30 based on quackery](#)
– December 31, 2004

[Flashback 1998 – The tsunami warning](#) –
December 31, 2004

From BoingBoing:
Most shockingly
tasteless tsunami-
related headline
award
[Tsunamis](#)

[shatter celebrity holidays](#) – CNN
More [here](#).
We liked [Oprah's Gay Designer Survives Tsunami](#) (it seems CNN has now fixed this headline)

Photos from Patong Beach of the tsunami coming in to shore

Thanks to Nils for pointing out these [incredible photos from Patong beach](#). Note one of the photos near the bottom which shows the empty bay and the giant wave rushing in.

Karabao song about the tragedy

Mr. Ad of Karabao Band composed a new song named "Zap Namta Andaman" or "Mop up the tears of Andaman" which was played for the first time on iTV Thursday night (November 30).

Update on minor islands

Earlier this week we asked about the fates of Ko Similan, Ko Surin and the Muslim fishing village on Ko Panyi. Wisarut reports: *For the case of Similan and Surin National park, they were spared from catastrophe by coral reefs in the shallow water which protected both from being hit hard by the waves. However, the coral was badly damaged. Here is it being discussed on a [forum](#). However, Phang Nga Naval Base has been utterly trashed by the tsunami to such an extent that the Royal Thai Navy cannot run their ships to help fishermen stranded around the islands. Even the house of the Commander and Deputy Commander of Phang Nga Naval base has been pushed into the sea. No news about the [Pan Yee \(Ko Panyi\) fisherman village](#).*

Translations from Thai-language newspapers: *Matichon*,
December 30, 2004

* Mr. Boonchub Zaeaiw, a 40-year-old resident of Amphur Krato, Phuket, is one of the victims who survived and told

his story to the press with tears in his eyes. He has nothing left. He, his wife, and his daughter sold food at the ground floor of Ocean Plaza Department store. He and his wife survived, but his daughter has been missing for four days so far. He complains why nobody has helped him to find his 14-year-old daughter. He says since he is not a famous person and not rich, nobody cares about this. Now he has no job, lost his daughter, and his car was broken up under the building. He has not got any help from the government. He wants nothing except his daughter's body.

* In Phuket, Ms. Kanjana Adunyanukoson, the head of the Rare Animal Group at the Research Institute of Sea Resources helped a sea cow (dugong). It weighed 300 kgs, was 2.60 meters long, and 40 years old. It was thrown by a giant wave from the sea and when the water retreated it could not swim and was stuck in a moat. After it was found, the officer releases it back into the sea near a bridge at a military base.

* Maew confirmed that the election day will not be postponed. Mr. Suranun Vejchachiwa, the spokesman of the TRT party, pointed out that MP just gave their individual opinions (about the election being postponed), but that the party do not want to postpone. He said that TRT candidates do not dare distribute money and belongings to six provinces (which might violate election laws). The candidates help out as being coordinators only.

Translations from Thai-language newspapers: Manager Online, December 30, 2004

* An English tourists who faced the tsunami still has a lot of stress and cannot accept it. He drinks whisky secretly for relief and then tries to kill himself by jumping off a building at Thammasat University Rangsit.

* On December 30, the news reported that Mr. Samit Thammasaroj, the former general director of the Department of Meteorology said that the PM will set him up to be a Deputy of the Prime Minister's office and the chairperson to set the an Advance Warning Danger System for the country.

* The team of Siriraj Hospital doctors complains that the coordination for assistance in the south is bad. The communication also fails so things go very slowly.

* Ms. Praethongtarn Shinawatra, the PM's daughter, and her friends apply to be interpreters for victims at Thammasat Rangsit where tourists returning from the Phuket area are staying. However, there are plenty of volunteers already so they will put her on the list if they need more. She and her friends will help to organize clothes and other donations.

Translations from Thai-language newspapers: ThaiRath, December 30, 2004

* It is expected that the overall death toll from the tsunami will be 100,000. At Takuapa, Pang-nga there are 4000 dead bodies. Thaksin flew in to inspect in Krabi, Pang-nga, Ranong and Phuket again. The government asks all religious institutions to commemorate the victims.

* Royals express concern for suffering victims of the tidal wave disaster in the six southern provinces. The Crown Prince gave 240 coffins including 54 plastic cloths that cover dead bodies and 1000 bags. Meanwhile the Crown Princess denotes 2 million baht from the merit fund. Somdej Pratep gave 20 million baht from the Chaipattana Foundation to the victims.

* On December 29 at 5:00pm, at the Election Commission Office, Mr. Parinya Nakchattri reveals that after discussing with the representative of Interior Ministry and People's Register Office they decided to survey voters to determine who is alive or dead in the six southern provinces. Also who needs a new ID card to vote.

Last official death toll posted last night (December 30) at 9:00pm

Province	Deceased				Injured				Missing
	Thai	Non-Thai	Unknown	Total	Thai	Non-Thai	Unknown	Total	
Phangnga	1,073	510	0	1,583	4,320	1,253	0	5,573	2,376
Krabi	108	88	171	367	0	0	2,649	2,649	1,913
Phuket	151	111	17	279	386	225	661	1,272	1,815
Ranong	162	2	0	164	189	14	0	203	16
Satun	6	0	0	6	15	0	0	15	0
Trang	3	2	0	5	57	9	46	112	1

Total	1,503	713	188	2,404	4,967	1,501	3,356	9,824	6,121
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What's on Thai TV

Wisarut reports: *From the telephones the conversion between Khun Sorayut (a TV host in Thailand) and officers at Krabi Provincial Hall who handle body collecting, as well as Dr. Khunying Pornthip Rojanasunand : Those who work as corpse collectors at Phi Phi Island said they are too exhausted and frustrated with this job since they get very bad cooperation from Krabi Provincial Hall. The Governor of Krabi tried to find the executives so as to dodge any responsibilities for the frustration of the rescue officers. Khunying Pornthip also complained about the poor communication system. Khunying Pornthip and her coworkers in Phang Nga said AIS seems to let down their customers by failing to restore the mobile phone network while DTAC successfully restored their mobile phone networks on time. Furthermore, she needs more plastic bags to hold corpses as well as cooking utensils since the rations donated from the government require hot water to cook.*

Paucity

of Information on Tsunami in Burma – The Irrawaddy

The tsunami-related death toll of Burmese nationals working in neighboring Thailand continues to increase. As yet there is little information forthcoming on the scale of the damage in Burma itself...

The

warnings were in the names – The Nation

Meaning of the place names of Phang Nga, Krabi, Phuket, Phi Phi Island, and Ranong.

More on needed relief items from the British Chamber of Commerce:

***** URGENT – RH(-) BLOOD DONORS REQUIRED**

There is an IMMEDIATE need for "RH, Negative" blood, of any group ('A', 'B', 'AB', 'O', etc.) at the National Blood Center (near Chulalongkorn Hospital). Tel: 0-2256-4300 or 0-2251-3111 ext: 114, 157, 161, 162 from 8.00 am-7.30 pm everyday – www.redcross.or.th We understand that alternative donation points (from 8.30 am to 4.30 pm) are at the following Government Hospitals but please telephone in advance to ensure that your donation can be taken.

1. Chulalongkorn Hospital, Lumpini Pathumwan Rd – Tel. 02 252 8131-9

2. Police Hospital, Rama I Road, Pathumwan – Tel. 02-25281111-25 (NOT TAKING DONATIONS)

3. Phramongkutklao Hospital, Rajvithee Road, Rajthevee – Tel. 02 246 1400-24

4. Rajavithi Hospital, Prayathai Road, Rajatevee – Tel. 02354-8108-9

5. Siriraj Hospital, Pran-nok Road, Bangkok-noi – Tel. 02 419 7000

6. Lert Sin Hospital, Silom Road – Tel. 02 0-2353-9798-9

My thanks to David Tuck of Weber Shandwick for the following first-hand observations and information:-

I've just come back from the Thai Red Cross. Things are pretty hectic there. The main points I think you could share in an update are:

- 1) The over-riding priority is for RH Negative blood.*
- 2) The Red Cross DON'T have any facilities to test on the spot whether your blood is Rh positive or negative. They are only doing this AFTER you've donated.*
- 3) From start to finish the donation process is currently taking well over an hour – unless you know you are Rh negative in which case you'll be taken care of almost at once.*
- 4) If you're unwell and are taking any medication (or have been in the past week), have high blood pressure or other contrary indicators, you may not be able to give blood (although I think if you're Rh negative they'd be much more lenient).*

In summary, I think that the best advice is that if you know for sure that you are Rh negative – please do what you can to donate. But if you don't know, then it may actually be less helpful to go along, because of system overload.

***** FINANCIAL DONATIONS *****

Many people have asked how they may make a financial donation to the emergency relief effort in Phuket. Our current information is the following:-

H.M. THE KING'S FOUNDATION (Rajaprajanugros Foundation)

Currently donations can only be accepted via cheque to : 1034 Krungkasem Road, Khlong Mahanak, Pom Prab Sattru Phai Bangkok 10100

Tel. 02 281 1902 , 02 628 3467 , 02 282 9595-6

THAI RED CROSS

Name of Account: Thai Red Cross

Bank: Siam Commercial Bank.

Account No.: 045-2-88000-6

Type of Account: savings

Branch: Thai Red Cross

If you would like a receipt for your donation please fax a copy of the pay-in slip to the Thai Red Cross at fax: 0 2252 7976

Alternatively, send an SMS to 4520000 with keyword "rc"

for donation to the relief effort. The service enables consumers that have a DTAC, AIS or Orange subscription to make a 10 baht donation by submitting an SMS with keyword "rc" to access number 4520000. The consumer will receive a thank you message from the Thai Red Cross confirming that the donation has been received. The service is now publicised on the [Thai Red Cross Home Page](#):

You have to scroll down a bit on the page to see. In addition, Red Cross publicises this service via TV and radio broadcasting partners.

THAI GOVERNMENT DISASTER RELIEF

Name of Account: OPM DISASTER RELIEF

Bank: Saving Bank

Account No.: 00-0025-20-014972-3

Type of Account: Savings

Branch: Government House

If you would like a receipt for your donation please fax a copy of the pay-in slip to Government House at fax: 0 2281 4150 or 0 2282 3376

2B newsfeed: [About the 2B newsfeed](#) – [January 3](#) – [January 2](#) – [January 1](#) – [December 31](#) – [December 30](#) – [December 29](#) – [December 28](#) – [December 27](#) – [December 26](#)

Troubles in the South – October-December 2004

December 31, 2004

Categories: The Thai Deep South

Troubles in the South

– October-December 2004

[Troubles in the South index page](#)

Editorial: [Challenges](#)

[Before Bangkok](#) – *Arab News*,

December 25, 2004

[More](#)

[‘safety zones’ to be set up in Bangkok](#)

– TNA, December 25, 2004

The metropolitan police plan to set up nine ‘safety zones’ in Bangkok, backed by an extensive closed-circuit television network, by early next year.

The metropolitan police, in cooperation with Chulalongkorn University, have already set up what is described as the ‘safety zones’ in Siam Square and Khao Sarn Road, two of the Thai capital’s most popular shopping districts and the areas which attract many young tourists...

The terrorist training photos – December 25, 2004

It seems that the *Bangkok Post* is not going to report on the controversy over the Prime Minister’s photos of insurgents training in Malaysia at all. *The Nation* and the Thai-language press are reporting on this issue: [Humiliating discovery](#), *The Nation*, December 24, 2004

Update: The *Post* finally chimes in with an

article: [Erroneous photos](#)

[‘taint ponoh schools’](#), *Bangkok Post*, December

26, 2004

[‘South](#)

[Thailand, next Kashmir?’](#)

– *Financial Express*, December 25, 2004

Less notable for the info in the article than how some in India are viewing the Southern problems.

[Government](#)

[denies school photos are those of alleged militia](#)

– AP, December 24, 2004

*...On Friday, The Nation newspaper printed photos purportedly of young boys dressed in military costumes after a sports day parade in southern Pattani province ([Humiliating discovery](#), *The Nation*, December 24, 2004).*

The school’s director told the daily that these were the photos Sutham thought showed Thais at a militant training camp...

But the minister said he had different prints and that the school photos were not part of his evidence.

"The pictures that I have are different from the ones published in the papers, and (the ones I have) show the militia training in the jungle along the Thai-Malaysia border," Sutham told The Associated Press in a telephone interview...

[Thai army says be alert for saboteurs, offers tips](#)

– AlertNet, December 23, 2004

Bangkok residents should be on the lookout for suspicious packages and saboteurs disguised as camera-clicking tourists, the Thai army says in a new anti-terror handbook.

The seven-page booklet, entitled "Joint Thai Cooperation in Maintaining Public Security", is being handed out amid fears that the capital may be targeted by militants blamed for months of violence in Thailand’s mainly Muslim south...

"Their eyes are constantly surveying areas and they like to whisper to their companions. They would avoid using credit cards to complicate any attempts to trace them, and when asked about their nationality, would look uncomfortable," the handbook says...

[Indonesia](#)

[insurgents planning attacks](#) – AP,

December 23, 2004

Terrorists are plotting attacks next year at tourist resorts across Thailand, according to documents found in the house of a fugitive leader of the country’s Islamic insurgency, a senior security official said...

[‘Thai Muslims condemn Thaksin’](#) – *Straits Times*, December 19, 2004

Right: Note the prominent headline in the Malaysian papers on Monday. (**Update:** We originally identified *The New Straits Times* as a Singaporean newspaper—this is not correct. Chatchawal Phansopa points out that *The Straits Times* is a Singaporean newspaper while *The New Straits Times* is a Malaysian newspaper.)

Community and religious leaders in southern Thailand have expressed disappointment over their Prime Minister's remark that Malaysia provided a training ground for Thai Muslim militants...



[Supreme commander says southern militants lack capacity to attack Bangkok](#) – TNA, December 20, 2004

Thailand's Supreme Commander Gen. Chaisit Shinawatra said on Monday that he believed the southern militants have had no capacity to attack the capital city of Bangkok, but the Royal Thai Army has been on a full alert to act against any threats...

[Terror attacks to hit Thailand in Jan: Official](#)

– Agence France-Presse, Bangkok, December 17

...The attacks would be staged in the five southernmost provinces of Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat, Songkhla and Satun, as well as the capital Bangkok in order to promote the struggle for an independent Muslim state in the south of the predominantly Buddhist kingdom, he said. "According to their plan the large-scale attacks, by means of remote control bombs in five provinces and Bangkok, would be prolonged and severe, as they have stockpiled lots of ammunition," the security source, assigned to work on southern violence, told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"The reason why they have to stage attacks in Bangkok is to prevent the central government from sending additional troops to the South," he added...

[PM dismisses reports of unrest in Bangkok](#)

– TNA, December 18, 2004

...Mr. Thaksin told journalists that reports of plans to sabotage the capital were unfounded and city's residents should not panic.

More suspects behind the violent unrest in the South are expected to be arrested soon as officials have sufficient evidence, he said...

Paper crane drop – December 5, 2004

Right: Origami crane box – November 29, 2004 – Box at Silom Complex for the public to donate paper cranes to be dropped over the South.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

[Thai military drops payloads for peace over troubled southern provinces](#) – AP, December 5, 2004

...The first birds were dropped at 9:09 a.m. (0209 GMT), an auspicious hour because the number nine is considered lucky in Asian cultures. Military officials said Sunday that 54 planes, including giant C-130 transports, would be used to carry out the airdrops. The sorties were to wind up late Sunday with a flyby of planes in formation pulling banners with best wishes to the monarch and leaving smoke trails in the colors of Thailand's red, white and blue flag... Officials have tried to stir up excitement—and encourage people to help clean up a potentially huge litter problem—by specially marking some birds for prizes and offering rewards to people

who collect large quantities.

One bird folded and signed by the prime minister carries a scholarship if found by a child, or a job for an adult.

Province residents who collect 50,000 birds can get a bicycle, 10,000 birds a table fan, and 250 birds a kilogram (2.2 pounds) of sugar, said Yala Gov. Boonyasit Suwannarat.

The government says the collected paper will be recycled to print messages promoting peace and religious harmony.

[Thai PM in paper peace bid](#) – Aljazeera, December 5, 2004

...Children ran in excitement in one village as the plane appeared several thousand feet overhead at the time promised and, although the unloading of the birds was invisible to the naked eye, the paper birds descended.

Unfortunately the wind blew them beyond the village.

"I'm really disappointed," said 11-year-old

Fatima Sulhong. "All I saw was the plane flying over."

Thaksin's bird campaign, just weeks before a general election, caught the imagination of the predominantly Buddhist country, even in Bangkok where sympathy for the Malay-speaking south is limited...

[Thai air force drops 97 million origami birds on southern Thailand](#) – Khaleej Times, December 5, 2004

The Thai air force launched one of its biggest military operations in recent history on Sunday, dispatching 51 aircraft to drop 97 million origami paper cranes on Thailand's troubled deep south to bring peace to the region.

An armada of Hercules 130s, Nomads, BG-37 carriers, Cessna planes, AU-23 fighters, Bell helicopters and a handful of small civilian aircraft began lifting off, packed with paper birds, from Had Yai military airport at 9:09 a.m., deemed an auspicious time. The task force was bound for Thailand's three southernmost provinces, Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala.

"This is a huge task for the air force," said Royal Thai Air Force combat commander Air Chief Marshal Tharit Pukthasuk, director of the origami operation. "We will try to drop as many birds as possible."

The planes have been instructed to fly at 650 metres and higher in risky areas, to avoid being shot at from the ground, but will otherwise try to fly at low altitude, said Tharit...

[100m paper cranes to be air-dropped over South](#) – Bangkok Post, December 4, 2004

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra yesterday handed over to the Air Force about 100 million paper cranes to be dropped over the deep South tomorrow.

Mr Thaksin, joined by senior government officials and hundreds of school children, also saw off a C-130 aircraft taking the paper cranes to the South.

The paper cranes, well beyond the target of 62 million, would be dropped tomorrow to mark the birthday of His Majesty the King over the three southern provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat and some parts of Songkhla that have been hit by violence this year.

The air-drop was inspired by Her Majesty the Queen's recent speech which called on Thais to join a concerted national effort to bring an end to the violence...

What was in the jihadists' book?
– translated and summarized by Wisarut Bholsithi from [mThai](#), December 3, 2004

Shiekul Islam Office (Chularatchamontri office) has finished the writing of "Explanations of the Facts against the Distortions of Islam from Ber Jihad di Patani". This is to explain and refute the statements in a book seized from the dead Jihadists

at Kru Seh. That book said that jihadists should kill the following people:

- 1) People who are not Muslim (Kafir + Mushrik)
- 2) Muslim who are not cooperating with the jihadists—even though those people are their own parents and relatives (Munafik)

It said only the supporters of jihadists deserve to live. The goal is to revive the Kingdom of Patani and allow the royal family of Kelantan to become the rulers of the Patani Kingdom. There would be no religion other than Islam in the same way Saudi Arabia practices now (Darussalam).

NTV7

[crew unearths 'secret' Tak Bai video](#) – malaysiakini.com, December 3, 2004 (Login required—get your login [here](#))

A tale of two newspapers:
the security decree – December 2, 2004

The *Post* has a 'just the facts article,' even managing to mention origami cranes, while *The Nation* has a long article with plenty of perspective and followed up with another front pages story the next day that included critical viewpoints.

Police chief wants

wider powers of detention – Bangkok Post, December 1, 2004

Police should be allowed to detain suspects longer for interrogation in security-related cases and be given more equipment to better cope with violence in the deep South, national police chief Kowit Wattana said yesterday...

DEEP

SOUTH: Severe security decree mulled

– *The Nation*, December 1, 2004
...Thaksin wanted the "the Singaporean and Malaysian examples" to be studied before a Thai version of a national security law is composed, the sources said. While it remained unclear as to what aspects of the neighbouring countries' anti-terrorism laws might be copied, they give police virtually unchecked power to detain suspects without trial...

SECURITY

DECREE FOR DEEP SOUTH: Police seek sweeping powers

– *The Nation*, December 2, 2004
... "A decree like that would be inappropriate in a democratic society such as ours," Karun said. "No Thai government has so far had the nerve to pass such a decree, other than those ruled by military dictators," he added...

Rivalry

hurting terror fight? – *The New Paper*, November 30, 2004

...But insiders said infighting between the police and military may have sparked the outbreak of violence in Thailand's restive region.

...Late last year, the killing of police officers worried the authorities. More than a dozen were killed, many while riding their motorcycles and most by a single bullet, likely by snipers. Why were police officers being targeted? Until late last year, the southern region was controlled by the military. Many of the conscripts were from villages in the south.

Part of their duty, not unlike the Indonesian territorial battalions, was to help farmers with everyday emergencies, like shoring up village dykes.

An academic based in the south, who declined to be named, said: 'When the Thai government dissolved the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre, the army was effectively removed from the leading role in security arrangement.

'A number of the military's informants have been exposed and killed since then – close to 20 so far.'

It stemmed, he said, from inter-agency rivalry...

The local press and patriotism

Wisarat writes: *This Thai-language*

news

on the South condemns the media that adds too many colors to the Southern insurgency since they consider the Southern Insurgency as "another commodity" to write about without caring about the consequences.

More Thai-language articles from *Manager Daily*:

The

Premier Thaksin threatens to walk out of ASEAN summit in Vienchan (and [here](#))

The

threat from PULO about a reward for shooting Thai officers is just a minor thing

Three

patriotic senators fighting back against the MPs and senators in the Malaysian parliament

'20

Thai girls still missing in southern Thailand' – *The Star*, November 22, 2004

Twenty female students from various sekolah pondok (village schools) in southern Thailand are among the 50

still missing after being involved in the tragedy in front of the Tak Bai police station on Oct 25. *Mingguan Malaysia* reported that all the students, aged between 15 and 19, had not returned home after taking part in the protests held in front of the police station... The weekly also quoted Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar as saying that Asean should make the move to discuss matters that could negatively affect people's perception of Asean and threaten the security of member countries...

The media discusses "Communication of the Truth in the South"
– translated and summarized by Asiper from *Manager Online*, November 21, 2004

"I'm very disappointed in the media. They should have understanding. If the media does not reveal the truth fully, we may have an uncontrolled situation in 10 years," said Senator John Ungpakorn at the seminar on "Communication of the Truth in the South" held on November 19 at Chulalongkorn University. It was organized by the Communication Arts Faculty and the Subcommittee of Media Reform, the Senate Commission of Social Development and Human Security. At the beginning a video was shown of the of Takbai incident narrated by Mr. Niran Pitakwatchara, Chairperson of the Senate Commission of Social Development and Human Security. The other speakers agreed that If we need peace and want to solve problems correctly, we have to speak the truth. Actually many innocent people were beaten, killed, and detained such as the five charged with stealing guns. When the lawyer Somchai helped them, he was kidnapped.

In the opinion of The Nation Group reporters, people do not want to solve economic problems of the South, but they do want law and order. The biased view of the media presents maintaining justice a main goal. Nowadays there is the mood to make violence in Thai society. The media's duty should be to reduce this trend and stop conflict by paying attention to the headlines they use and the news they write.

Bangkok Post said the mainstream media pays attention to the news of the government which is a kind of nationalism. This view is that a minority makes the problems and wants to split from the country. It is obvious that this kind of media do not know or understand the Southern problems or Islam.

Prachatai newspaper online said that nowadays most of news presentation in only one view and very sensitive to official positions. It seems like the situation is like a dictatorship.

Dr. Peera Jirasophon, the Dean of Communication Arts Faculty, Chulalongkorn University, said society is facing a crisis of news and truth which breaks society. People think they do not get the full news or in another way they only get harmful news and vague insinuations. The Prime Minister should get a degree on the art of propaganda which was born in the Hitler era. At the conclusion, he added that the Takbai tragedy news shows the restrictions and culture of the media—that they just report the daily situation, but do not analyze the cause. The media should not present feeling instead of truth. It should be separate.

More articles on the South –
November 26, 2004

[THAI TALK : The South: contradictions continue almost daily.](#)

– *The Nation*, November 25, 2004

... We have come to the inevitable and depressing conclusion: the more confident the tone of the official statement, the more uncertain we know the government is in regard to what really is taking place down there.

The general atmosphere of cynicism has in fact deepened. If the government leaders offer some off-the-cuff statements about the unending violence in Narathiwat, Yala and Pattani, the sceptics now tend to think the opposite is true.

When the PM declared not so long ago that the problems down South would be resolved in three months, the cynics soon came to realise that things would get worse after 90 days.

When government leaders stated categorically, "We know who's behind the series of attacks on our government officials in the South," the cynics almost immediately concluded that the leaders had no clue who was responsible for the provocative acts, which have defied all government threats to clamp down on subversive elements....

Contradictions continue to run parallel with the ceaseless violence. One day, it's "the work of just a small group of drug addicts and jobless youngsters". The next day, the blame shifts to "a malicious web of ill-intentioned masterminds with political connections across the southern border".

Nets

[in trees to offer safe landing for millions of paper cranes](#)

– Bangkok Post, November 25, 2004

Villagers are being asked to hang nets in trees to catch the millions of paper peace-cranes to be dropped over the deep South from air force planes.

Authorities are confident the paper birds, to be scattered over Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat on His Majesty the King's birthday, Dec 5, will not all end up as litter—as Muslim leaders predict...

Bangkok's

[handling of Thailand's troubled Muslim south rankles with Malay neighbours](#) – Financial Times, November 25 2004

More than 2,000 Malaysians in the northern borderstate of Kelantan recently gathered in a vast Islamic education centre to say special prayers for Muslims living in conflict zones.

While they prayed for Muslims in Afghanistan, Palestine and Iraq, their most fervent prayers were for Muslims in neighbouring Thailand, where 87 ethnic Malay Muslims died last month when Thai soldiers quelled a protest outside a police station.

Fiery speakers from Malaysia's fundamentalist opposition Islamic Party of Malaysia (Pas) and other Islamic organisations denounced Thaksin Shinawatra, the Thai prime minister, and demanded Kuala Lumpur do more to help Thai Muslims in the area that once was the independent sultanate of Pattani.

"It is time for Pattani to fight the Siamese kafirs", said Zainuddin Abdullah of the Kelantan Labour Federation. "We will stand by our Muslim brothers and sisters in southern Thailand to fight Siam."...

Trouble

[in Thailand](#) – The Independent, November 19, 2004

Also see yesterday's [A](#)

[tale of two newspapers: HM The Queen's speech](#)

A huge upsurge in sectarian violence, including beheadings and bombings, is bringing chaos to southern provinces, where Muslims outnumber Buddhists. The royal family has issued a call to arms, but the police and army have little idea who they are fighting...

A

tale of four newspapers: Which one is wrong? – November 21, 2004

Thailand

[rejects U.N. probe into deaths](#) – The Washington Times, November 18, 2004

Thailand

[says no to UN probe of Muslim deaths](#) – Reuters, November 18, 2004

Thailand

[turns down UN request to investigate southern killings](#) – Khaleej Times, November 18, 2004

Thailand

[to Cooperate with UN Probe into Violent Clashes](#) – Voice of America, November 18, 2004

...Thai government spokesman Jakrapob Penkair says the government is willing to cooperate with any investigation by the United Nations.

"Our standpoint is that if the United Nations feels strongly that this needs to be investigated some more as a lesson for everybody, the Thai government is agreeable, and we would try to accommodate as much as we can," he said...

A

[tale of two newspapers: HM The Queen's speech](#)

– November 19, 2004

Yesterday the Thai-language world was abuzz with speculation on whether the Nation Group and other anti-government leaning press correctly reported the tone of HM The Queen's speech on November 16, 2004 about the Southern troubles...

[Professor's](#)

[comment on TV](#) – November 18, 2004

Fascinating thread that demonstrates the parallel lines of Thai political thought...

[‘Why](#)

[Thailand needs outside help to end conflict’](#) – *The*

Star Online, November 16, 2004

...Sadly but truly, his popularity, which was on the way down before Tak Bai, has suddenly surged in the north and north-east, Thai Rak Thai strongholds. Immediately, the party's top echelon raised its benchmark and expected to win at least 370 parliamentary seats in the 2005 election, up from 270 before Tak Bai!

Judging from this sentiment, it is hard to foresee any solution in the near term. After all, if this current situation persists, with a harsh governmental response, Thaksin and Thai Rak Thai will probably obtain more votes by fanning the flames of nationalism...

[The](#)

[media as political actors](#) – *The*

Star, November 14, 2004

Wisarat found this book review that exactly describes some of the press issues covered on 2Bangkok.com:

...The case of Thailand makes for an interesting contrast, and McCargo paints an arguably more textured and compelling picture. His points of departure are the controversies that erupted in the mid-1990s, and the critical coverage of Thai politics in the international press that were subsequently “recycled” by the local media for their own purposes.

Bear in mind that the Thai-language press is known to be one of the freest and outspoken in the region. Thus, as essentially independent political actors, they have considerable autonomy to pursue their own, respective partisan-flavoured news agenda, sometimes much to the chagrin of the aggrieved individual politician.

There is also a tendency, according to McCargo, for the Thai press to adroitly recycle foreign coverage of domestic politics. A common technique would be the placing of foreign news stories with a Thai dimension as front page leads to gain political mileage.

Thus, “a domestic publication wishing to criticise a Thai politician will seek to establish the credibility and international status of the foreign voice, so as to demonstrate that the foreign voice stands above the domestic ‘game’.”

Sometimes, this approach involves a “wilful misreading of stories in the international press, exaggerating their criticisms of domestic politics.” In short, the most important function of international media coverage of Thai politics is a resource from which domestic media may draw as “a source of agency for restraining power holders and even for promoting political change”...

News of disappearances –

November 11, 2004

This is a time of uncertainty in Thailand and rumors of the ‘disappeared’—a staple in every Thai civil upheaval—have appeared again. Interesting that *The Nation* has chosen not to cover this.

[Forty Tak Bai rioters](#)

[‘missing’](#) – *Bangkok Post*, November 9, 2004

[Govt](#)

[denies rumours of Tak Bai ‘disappearances’](#)

– *TNA*, November 9, 2004

Fear of the insurgency –

November 12, 2004

Wisarat reports: *On Rai Subdah (Thailand Weekly) in Channel 9 on November 4, Khun Sonthi (the owner of Manager Group) warned that now PULO and BRN have trained brainwashed Muslims by disguising them as passengers to travel up north to Ranong, Tak, or even Chiangmai. They will ride boats to Burma and then walk all the way to Bangkaladesh. Some even go to Ache to learn how to fight against the Indonesian army and get training on how to fire a rifle with high accuracy from a motorcycles. Also how to detonate bombs with cellular phones. They have adapted the Vietcong way and rely on the Muslim network inside Thailand as well as in Malaysia, Burma and Bangladesh.*

[PAS](#)

[threatens to sue Thai paper](#) – *AFP*,

November 11, 2004

Malaysia's hardline opposition Islamic Party (PAS) Wednesday threatened to sue Thailand's Bangkok Post newspaper over allegations that it had instigated Muslims in southern Thailand to rebel against the government. "PAS categorically deny that either PAS or its Youth Wing is involved, in instigating the Muslims of southern Thailand to rebel against the Thai government," PAS secretary-general Nasharuddin Mat Isa said in a statement...

[An historical perspective on the South](#) – *The Nation*, November 09, 2004

...Instead of referring to the capital as Krungthep or even Bangkok, the website referred to Bangkok as "Phra Nakorn", a term that refers to the capital of Siam at the time of the Ayutthaya era. With that comes the baggage of history, of centuries of war and subjugation, mostly by Siamese troops. It's undeniable that Thai-Malay Muslim separatists in Pattani want to regain the glory and independence of the Islamic kingdom of Patani that was incorporated into Thailand just a century ago. ...In the early Bangkok period, from the reign of King Rama I to King Rama III, Malay Muslim villagers were forcibly uprooted from Pattani to Bangkok after Siamese troops suppressed a rebellion, or invaded Pattani, depending whose point of view one adopts. The biggest lot of captured villagers transported to Bangkok numbered up to 4,000. The largest number of troops dispatched from Bangkok was 300,000, during the reign of King Rama III, led by Di Bunnag in 1832, after Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin of Pattani tried to liberate his land from Siamese control. ...Soon after the Anglo-Thai Treaty of 1909, in which Britain formally acknowledged Pattani as part of Siam, Tengku Abdul Kadir, the last ruler of the Pattani State, led a revolt. But he was eventually captured and imprisoned in Phitsanulok for 10 years. He later lived in exile in Kelantan, Malaysia, while his son fruitlessly carried the torch...

[‘Colonisation reason for southern Thai conflict’](#) – *malaysiakini.com*, November 9, 2004

We have to understand that the history of the southern Thailand is a clear cut case of Thai imperialism and colonisation. The southern Thai people are in fact Malays by race and Muslims by religion. They speak the Malay language... ...Given the historical background of southern Thailand, there is no other way to end this bloody conflict except by allowing the southern Thai people to determine their own destiny. And this calls for nothing less than a referendum.

[Thaksin says HM The King wants govt to soften approach in the South](#) – *AFP*, November 1, 2004
...Thailand's monarch in a rare intervention has urged the government to soften its approach to turmoil in the mainly Muslim south where two more people died Monday, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said...

Skytrain Extension News 2001- 2004

December 31, 2004

Categories: Skytrain

[Back to the main page on the Skytrain extensions](#)

Skytrain Taksin Extension – 300

million baht loss due to Samak's poor planning

– translated and summarized from *Sawatdee Krungthep*,

November 19-25, 2004

The Taksin extension plan proposed by Governor Samak has been poorly executed. The construction has gone from Taksin-Phetkasem to Klongdan. The proposed nearest BTS station is 400 meter far away from Taksin Center to prevent a blindspot. This is because the proposed BTS route and Mae Klong Railway do not have a perpendicular intersection. The proposed Taksin extension has already been built along Kalapapruek Road (the road parallel with Phaseecharoen canal).

If BMA has to correct this kind of problem, the Taksin extension has to be 800 meters longer and land expropriation is a must, adding more cost to BMA and BTS.

BMA said If OTP really want BTS to interchange with the Maeklong Railway at Taksin Center, OTP must give some loan to BMA to pay for the extra bills and BMA needs an extra 300 million baht to construct a depot so that the that the pillars along Kalapaphruek are not wasted.

Notes: Former Governor Samak likely came up with his own plan without listening or consulting with OTP and TEAM Consultant (the consultants hired by OTP to handle the massive extension of the system) due to his well-known autocratic nature. Many of older generation have such an autocratic nature though.

[Skytrain spurns nationalization:](#)

[will finance extensions and smart card system on its own](#)

– *Prachachat Turakij*, November 22, 2004

BTS urging Premier Thaksin to order BMA to help BTS

to realize the Taksin Extension – translated

and summarized from *Thaipost*, November 18,

2004

BTS is urging the government to help for the Taksin extension. Mr. Super K (Kasem Jatikawanit) has sent a letter to Maew (Premier Thaksin) to use an executive order to allow BMA to help BTS to construct the Taksin extension to Thonburi. BTS is appealing to the government to see the virtue of approving the construction of such a project. BTS is also going to call bidding for smart card system for a joint ticket system by the end of this month.

Mr Kasem Jatikawanit sent the letter to Premier Thaksin on August 27, 2004 to allow the construction of Taksin Extension across Chao Phraya and BMA said they are ready to help BTS to complete this extension. However, PM Thaksin has to issue an Executive Order to allow BMA and BTSC to start the Taksin extension project immediately—if so it can be done in nine months.

He says the nationalization project will not help the people at all.

There are much faster, easier and better ways to expand mass transit projects without applying nationalization project. However he will not go into detail until Premier Thaksin has invited him to discuss the plan.

BTS is going to call bidding for a 300-million baht smart card system to be usable in both BTS Skytrain and MRTA subway. The smart card system will be ready in July 2005, but BTS has to change the ticket collecting system, the software to calculate the ticket prices and the changes on ticket system from magnetic cards to contactless smart cards.

Notes: Since Mr. Super K and his wife have connections with Loxley and Kasikorn Thai Bank (both companies are staunch supporters of the Democrats), it would not be surprising that Premier Thaksin and Suriya would obstruct the plan for Skytrain extensions while they are trying to claim credit for themselves through the mass transit nationalization.

BMA wants to rescue the Skytrain extensions

– translated and summarized from *Thairath*,

November 8, 2004

BMA already has the winners for bidding on the Taksin and Samrong Skytrain extensions, but they cannot declare the winners until the conditions on investment are modified from 100% private to a public-private joint venture with a contribution from BMA. It would not be a good deal if BMA has to wait for another 6 years for this.

The government [failed to nationalize](#)

[BTS](#) even though MOTC insists that they are going to do so for cheap joint tickets with the Subway. However, BMA said BTS could implement the joint ticket system by having the extensions to get more passengers. Furthermore, BMA said they will help BTS to implement the extension

from Taksin Intersection to Bang Wah (4.3 km) with the interchange to the Subway and the Phaholyothin extension (12 km) from Mochit to Saphan Mai (12 km) to tap more passengers. Premier Thaksin is going to make an official opening of the Park and Ride at Bangsue (2000 cars) and Mochit (600 cars) with a price tag of 40 million baht and the areas for parking BMTA buses and taxis. This work was done Army engineers.

Government to punish Skytrain:
no extensions, no connections to other systems
– October 28, 2004

Suriya playing a dirty trick by isolating BTSC and forcing them not to interchange with other systems as the way to bankrupt BTS – translated

and summarized from *Prachachart Thirakij*,
October 25-28, 2004

Suriya has swallowed his pledge to extend the Skytrain by telling the press that: "we are no longer interested in purchasing BTSC stock. We'll force BTSC to readjust the Skytrain routes so they do not connect with other mass transit systems!"

This is due to the unsuccessful deal to negotiate with BTSC to sell their stock to the government.

Furthermore, MOTC will force BTSC to reroute so that the new line will not be able to interchange with other mass transit systems—a punishing measure for BTSC.

For the case of BMCL nationalization, BMCL insists that the price of 3 baht/share is a good deal. Otherwise, they will have to negotiate with MOTC first. However, MRTA and MOTC insist that the first 25% of BMCL stock will be sold at par (1 baht/share – 2.4 billion baht) while the rest would be sold at 1.5-2 baht/share.

Notes: Comments about Suriya's statements are [here](#).

[Routing dispute dogs extension of Skytrain](#) – *Bangkok Post*, November 10, 2004

...The BMA is building the extension straight above Taksin-Phetkasem road, with about 4.5 kilometres of the 6.7km-long extension having been built.

But the OTP wants about 800 metres of the extension to be a curve instead of a straight line so that it will directly connect with a new southern mass transit hub planned at the corner of the intersection. The present site of the construction is 400 metres away from the hub. Deputy Bangkok governor Samart Ratchapolsitte yesterday opposed the proposed change, saying that in order to make the curve the BMA would have to demolish what has already been constructed. Also, the curve could pose safety problems for the train and land expropriation would be necessary, he said...

PM promises to extend the skytrain to city's far western outskirts – *Bangkok Post*, March 8, 2004

Just to point out how fluid the mass transit route lines are and how tied the routes are to politics, the *Post* [mentions](#) this campaign promise: *...Addressing an audience of about 2,000 villagers in Bang Len district, Nakhon Pathom, Mr Thaksin said he would see to it that the railway was extended out from the Thon Buri side of the capital to Nakhon Pathom, about 50km away. "There will be a skytrain service between Nakhon Pathom and Bangkok. That'll make traveling much faster," the Thai Rak Thai leader said...*

The delayed Skytrain extension will

cause cost overruns – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, February 27, 2004

Even though BMA called a bid on October 3, 2003, BMA cannot declare the winner even after March 3, 2004 since the government refuses to change from 100% private investment rule to allow BMA to participate on the project. Furthermore, the government is going to nationalize the project. BMA will face a cost overrun if they insist in dealing with the project. The central government will have to pay 50 billion baht more to nationalize if BMA insists to handle the construction. Nevertheless, BMA agrees with the government that system integration is a good idea but the delay of the project will cause too much suffering—from cost overruns, more cars roaming the roads (at 800 more a day and 250,000 cars a year) and the need more roads to accommodate them which is a big economic waste. System integration is good but the central government should never delay the projects. Now, BMA has sent the letter to Traffic Policy Office about this issue.

Once again: NO Skytrain extensions for the foreseeable future – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, February 24, 2004

Premier Thaksin has asked BTSC and BMA to negotiate with creditors first before approving the fund for the Samrong and Taksin Extensions. This really angers Governor Samak since the government has acted in a way contrary to their claims—dragging the project down while asking to

push the project forward.

The Traffic Committee also asked BMA to come up with a business plan for the Samrong and Taksin Extensions to be submitted the committee before the next meeting and BTSC must make a final settlement on debts with creditors before receiving central government funds for the projects. This central government response causes a lot of anger from Governor Samak since BMA has submitted business plans three times to the Ministry of Interior and another time to OCMLT and got rejected every time. BTSC has told BMA about the debt restructure plan as follows

1. Cutting down the principle and interest of the debt by 10 billion baht
2. Turning debts into equities by 14 billion baht
3. Extend the 14 billion baht debt to be paid in 18 years from the current 12 years and cut down the registered capital to 6.68 billion baht

The three factors of the plan will enable to the handling of the Taksin extension immediately and creditors have no objection for this plan. For the Samrong extension, BTSC is planning to offer an IPO as well as sell more stocks to creditors which could be done before BMA finishes the infrastructure—which will take another six months. Governor Samak said "Waiting another six months is too long! These two sections could be done by calling the contractors to deal with project at the same time while dealing with the creditors! The government is dragging the project down while claiming that they are speeding up the project..." The Traffic Policy Office Director said "BMA has not submitted the business plan yet and the BMA agenda hasn't been discussed yet." Minister Suriya also said he has no clue as to whether BMA is going to deal with this issue and thus more negotiation is needed.

Notes: *Bangkok Biznews* editors feel there must be some political motivation from TRT to come up with such a plan since this plan will take at least 6 years to become a reality....thus forcing Thai voters to vote for Thai Rak Thai whether they like TRT candidates or not. This policy also strengthens centralization, not decentralization as TRT claimed.

More on the halt to Skytrain extensions

– January 14, 2004

On January 9, 2Bangkok.com broke the story (in English) that the Skytrain extensions were halted. It had long been clear that in the current political landscape the extensions would never be permitted and 2B had been [predicting this](#) for several years. Interestingly enough, no mention of this controversy ever appeared in the English-language press. Now here is another report on the halt from a pro-government paper. The English-language press remains silent...

BTS debacles causing delay on extension projects – Creditors want someone to replace Khiree causing the government to suspend Skytrain extensions – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, January 13, 2004

After a discussion between BMA Governor and Premier Thaksin on the extensions, Premier Thaksin agrees to carry a burden of 65% public investment while BMA handles 35% of public investment – after agreeing to allow public investment on the extension project as a substitute for 100% private investment.

However, the government decided to temporarily suspend the Samrong and Taksin extension until either BTSC could come up with a debt restructure which pleases the creditors or the creditors could find a representative to replace Mr. Khiree. Mr. Khiree will fight at all costs to keep BTSC in his portfolio.

So far, Mr. Anat Abhabhirom does not know about this internal conflict within BTSC since he did not work in the debt restructure section of BTSC. He only knows that BTSC want to trim debts by 15% from three major creditors (KfW, World Bank, SCB).

BTS denies any change in the Board of Directors and claims creditors are happy with BTSC performance

– translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, January 14, 2004

After hearing the comment from Governor Samak that the delays on the construction of the Skytrain extension are due the plan to change the Board of Directors and a yet-to-be approved plan to allow public investment on the project ,

Mr. Khiree said there must be some misunderstanding since BTSC has not changed any of the Board of Directors , and BTSC is negotiating with creditors about the plan to write off 15% of debts which will be done in early February 2004. So far the negotiation is going very well. Efficiency is improving due to good teamwork with very satisfying results. Daily passengers has reached 350,000. The number will increase after the [subway](#) becomes a reality due to synergy. And the company is making money—700 million baht profit—so there is no need to change the Board.

Notes: If they show this good result, BTSC will be targeted for takeover.

Earlier: No Skytrain extensions for foreseeable future – January 9, 2004

2Bangkok.com has been reporting for several years about the [political maneuverings](#) that prevent the Skytrain extensions from being implemented.

Here is yet another article about the subject you will not find in English (translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, January 6, 2004):

BTSC Skytrain extensions are put on hold for the foreseeable future. Even though the subcommittee has already finished the assessment on bidding for Skytrain extensions, they decided not to declare the results for another two months—until they receive the approval from the cabinet about the plan to allow BMA to make a joint venture with BTSC. If the cabinet approval is not delivered by after March 3, 2004, BMA will delay the results further.

Notes: The government is likely to delay the BTSC extension project until Thai Rak Thai wins the election for BMA governor and BMA council.

Taksin extension delayed to 2005 at the earliest
– translated and summarized from *Dailynews*,
December 17, 2003

...BTSC is investing 1.1 billion baht on the Taksin extension (2.2 km), but the opening date has been delayed to 2005 due to a snafu on the contractor selection for the construction of Charone Nakhorn and Taksin Station. Even though this section will need a fare hike, BTSC needs to negotiate with BMA for the new terms and wait until the stations are done before handling over the signals and rolling stock. After Taksin extension is done and opened in 2005, it will boost the number of passengers by 2-30,000 passengers a day.

BMA explains delay in Skytrain bidding process – translated and summarized from *Dailynews*, December 4, 2003

The Director of BMA Traffic Bureau said BMA decided to delay the bidding decision on both Skytrain extensions to wait and see if the cabinet has approved the plan to change the investment term from 100% private sector to be public sector investment on infrastructure and private investment on concession in the same way as the [MRTA subway](#). After finishing the assessment, BMA will declare the winners of bidding even though the cabinet has not approved the revision yet.

On November 7, 2001, BMA asked the Ministry of Interior about the extension plan for the Taksin extension and Samrong extension that needs public investment since 100% private investment has discouraged the private sector, including BTSC, from investing in this project.

BTSC then asked the cabinet to allow BMA to deal with infrastructure on May 22, 2002 and the cabinet acknowledged the proposal on September 17, 2002. Even though BMA has submitted the plan to the cabinet via the Ministry of Interior, the cabinet has not made a decision yet.

Furthermore, Premier Thaksin has asked BMA to speed up the Skytrain extension projects at all cost and now the Budget Bureau has approved 740 million baht on BMA civil works, thus BMA decided to call a new bid. However, the agreement is not binding to the contractors yet since the contracts have not been signed by the cabinet yet.

Thus, **BMA explains the rush to build before getting revised cabinet approval claiming a speedy response to Premier Thaksin and not violating bidding regulations.**

Notes: Bangkokians feel very frustrated by how the Skytrain extensions have become a political football. They want to get it done by now even by questionable means to get around the cabinet approvals.

Skytrain extensions delayed by one month
– translated and summarized from *Dailynews*,
November 3, 2003

Even though BMA has called a bid they have not decided the winners for all three contracts yet. However, at least two contractors will be disqualified by technical problems due to stringent criteria.

Notes: It seems to me that Stecon, ITD and CH. Kanrchang will be qualified while others get barred from such business.

BTS needs a big boost to encourage more passengers to use the new Orange line to reach at least 400,000 passengers a day and the Purple Line to reach at least 600,000 passengers a day.

I hope that the 2nd phase after 2010 will come up with some modifications to fit into the local demands (Lad Phrao, Sri Nakharin, Muangthong Thani – Pakkret, Makkasan, Thepharak, etc.).

Earlier articles:

[Fears](#)

[over Skytrain bidding](#) – November 2, 2003

[Who will win contracts](#)

[for Skytrain extensions and who will complain](#)

– translated and summarized from *Prachachart*
Thurakij, Vol. 27, No. 3521



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Connected! – August 30, 2003

The Skytrain bridge over the Chao Phraya is connected. See earlier photos below on this page.

The reasons behind Thaksin's halt to Skytrain extensions – translated and summarized from *Prachachart Thurakij*, Vol 27 No 3515, September 18, 2003

Both the Taksin and Samrong extension of BTSC are not going to have a smooth ride even though they are planned to be opened by the end of 2004 and by the end of 2006 respectively. Even though Premier Thaksin has proclaimed an edict to push the project forward, the debt burden of BTSC is the big stumbling block which compelled Thaksin to postpone BTSC extensions until BTSC can make a debt settlement with the creditors since he fears that BTSC would end up like Hopewell. According to the 30 year contract, BMA will have to allow BTSC to get the concession of the extension lines first. However, BTSC and BMA can not come up with an agreement.

There is a common hypothesis that if BTSC extends the track to Thonburi, Samut Prakarn and Donmuang (especially the first two extensions), BTSC will be able to double and triple the revenue and have enough to pay all current debts as well as the loan for extensions since there are many potential passengers in the Bangkok suburbs.

Therefore, the extension plans have been included in the new rehabilitation plan for BTSC submitted to the Bankruptcy Court – compelling the creditors to finance the extensions as well as the facilities to allow convenient interchanges (see also: [Skytrain in bankruptcy court](#) – *Prachachart*

Thurakij, Vol 27 No 3509, August 28, 2003).

Recently, BTSC has made a preliminary proposal to BMA about the revenue sharing scheme of 26 billion baht in the future – 10% revenue from the 6th to 10th year, 15% for the 11th-15th year and 20% for the 16th to 20th year. BTSC agrees to cap the maximum ticket price for a single trip to 40 Baht to boost use of the system to reach a target of 500,000-600,000 passengers a day (the same level as Manila LRT Line).

According to the plan in 2006, the number of passengers will reach 490,000 passengers a day from the current 330,000-350,000 passengers a day.

BTSC plans to invest 12 billion Baht to improve the system in Sukhumvit line by purchasing 10 sets of 3-car rolling stock from Siemens. However, BMA needs to invest 9.5 billion Baht for Samrong and BTSC needs to restructure the debts.

After Premier Thaksin halted the Samrong extension as well as the second phase of the Taksin extension, BTSC needs to wait and see how BMA will respond. Fortunately, the construction of the Taksin extension (1st phase – 2 stations) could be started immediately since the BTSC board has approved 1 billion baht investment to install signals, TVMs, power supplies while BTSC can use 5-6 sets of spare rolling stock to run the system after the opening of the system by the end of 2004.

For the case of the Samrong extension, BTSC Board has to make an assessment on investment and wait until BMA can get a contractor after October 2003.

If the creditors do not approve the investment plan, BTSC needs to ask for a new foreign partner (e.g. Shanghai Metro) to enable BTSC to open the Samrong extension by the end of 2006. For the commercialization, BTSC is not sure if they are going to allow VGI Global to run the commercialization of the station or the new one.

Since BTSC does not work on structures as they have done before, BTSC is able to freeze the ticket prices to the old 10-40 baht. Investing only the signals, systems, and power supplies will boost the revenue by 600,000-700,000 baht a day.

The conflicts between BTSC and creditors are not the only roadblocks to the extension progress since there are also the continuing and bitter conflicts between BMA (Traffic Bureau) and MOTC (Traffic Policy and Planning Office). BMA and MOTC are in the power struggle to control the mass transit system in Bangkok and vicinity – forcing Premier Thaksin

to halt BTSC extensions. However, Governor Samak is trying get a resolution to enable BTSC to extend to the Bangkok suburbs while finding a settlement with MOTC before the conflicts become unresolvable. BMA will call a new bid on October 3 and negotiate with creditors about BTSC's debts to enable BTSC to extend in all directions. Traffic Policy Office also wants to get up a central office to handle all the mass transit lines – the existing Skytrain and upcoming Subway. However, people want more convenient transportation to relieve their suffering instead of power struggles between agencies.

Samak insisting NO delay for Samrong extension – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily* – September 11, 2003
The same day other papers report the delay, *Manager Daily* quotes another source denying it:
Governor Samak insists that BMA did not halt the BTSC Samrong Extension. They just worry about the creditors who refuse to allow BTSC to run the Samrong extension. BMA will call the bid for Samrong Extension on October 4.
After Premier Thaksin asked to halt the Samrong Extension on September 10, Governor Samak told the correspondents that "BMA will push the Samrong extension forward at all costs." The bidding on October 4, 2003 will go ahead without being halted.
Samak said Premier Thaksin just worries that creditors will prohibit BTSC to run the extension unless the creditor has been paid. Governor Samak will explain to Premier Thaksin that BMA is going to deal with three major creditors in the next few days. The negotiations will have no detrimental effects on the bidding process.
The central government will invest 65% while BMA will invest 35%. Thus the government feels worried that BTSC will not be able to run the services of the Samrong extension after December 2006. However, BMA believes that they can negotiate with creditors and explain that the extension will enable BTSC to pick up more passengers and boost revenue to pay debts.
Notes: The halt of the Samrong extension may have political implications since Samut Prakarn people still vote for candidates under the umbrella of the Assawahem Family (long-standing influential political power in the area – some say the 'mafia' of Samut Prakarn) instead of candidates from the Thai Rak Thai party. Therefore, Premier Thaksin may be punishing Samut Prakarn by halting the Samrong extension.

[Skytrain Sukhumvit extension halted](#) – *Bangkok Post*, September 11, 2003
Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra has put the brakes on plans to extend the skytrain's Sukhumvit line from Onnui to Samrong. Mr Thaksin said yesterday he had ordered city hall not to award further concessions to skytrain operator Bangkok Transit System Co (BTSC), until the firm had secured financial support from its creditors. "At present, the creditors have no confidence in the debtor. So I told city hall to discuss with both parties how to proceed," he said. "The question is whether the debt will be converted into equity."

[More on the extensions](#)
– *Bangkok Post*, September 9, 2003
He said BTSC's investment in the two lines was estimated at 1.6 billion baht and five billion baht, respectively. At present, BTSC's skytrain serves almost 300,000 passengers a day on average. Passenger volumes reach 330,000 daily on weekdays but drop to 270,000 on Saturday and 180,000 on Sunday. This resulted in a daily income of over six million baht. BTSC spends half the income on its operations and pays the rest as interest to its creditors. No money is left for it to pay the total principal of about 36 billion baht.

Skytrain extensions and the local papers
– August 27, 2003
We had a big response to our comparison of the *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation* [yesterday](#). Notes:
Bangkok Post has almost always been a pro-government newspaper since the early days (1946). However, *The Nation* considers itself an "Independent Newspaper," and is almost always in conflict with the government. Furthermore, *The Nation* seems to be aligned with the Democrat Party even though the *Nation* did criticize the Democrats when they were running the government. However, the criticism of the Democrats never reaches the venomous level meted out by the *Manager Daily*.

Here is more on the vague, tangled story of what is happening with the Skytrain extensions:
BTSC to invest in the Taksin Extension
– translated and summarized from *Thairath*, August 25, 2003
Anat Abhabhirom told the press that the BTSC Board had a resolution on August 21, 2003 that BTSC is going to invest in the electric and

mechanic part as well as the service for the Taksin extension... For the case of the Samrong extension, BTSC will wait until BMA comes up with the contractors so that BTSC can make a decision on how to deal with this extension.

BTSC is investing 1.7 billion baht in Taksin Extension

– translated and summarized from *Thairath*,

August 26, 2003

Anat Abhabhirom told the press that the BTSC Board has discussed with Siemens about the investment plan for the Taksin extension which can be separated into four sections as follows:

1. Signals to control the trains
2. Power line to feed the system
3. Ticket vending machines and computers
4. Communication system

The investment funds are coming from monthly interest payment to the three main creditors: Siam Commercial Bank, KfW, and IFC. BTSC is asking the three creditors to cut down the monthly payments by 100 million baht and the representatives from the three major creditors (which were present at the meeting) have approved the plan. BTSC will deliver the investment plan to Governor Samak later.

BTS urged

to clear local debts first – *Bangkok Post*, August 27, 2003

"We really care about the skytrain's extension, as it not only means future business growth for the operator but also will benefit commuters," said Andres Klocke, head of KfW's Southeast Asia office. "But it is unfair (for us) to put in new money while the old money has yet to be settled."

A tale of two newspapers: Skytrain

vendetta – August 26, 2003

Usually 2Bangkok.com contrasts the English language news with the more complete and candid Thai-language news, but today there is wide gulf between the two English-language papers that demonstrates their respective slants. On one side there is the *Bangkok Post*'s usual "government happy news" and on the other, the dire pronouncements of *The Nation*. Both are based on the same comments by Anat Arbhahirama. Since 2002 2Bangkok.com has been reporting on the political vendettas that have been plaguing all mass transit expansion in Thailand (Ch. Karnchang PCL, the company behind the Skytrain, wholeheartedly supports the opposition Democrat Party). These issues still have not shown up in the English-language press...

Skytrain to cross

river in mid-2004 – *Bangkok Post*, August 26, 2003

Despite delays in its 33-billion-baht debt-restructuring programme, Bangkok Mass Transit System Co (BTS) is pushing ahead with plans to extend its skytrain system across the Chao Phraya River, from the Sathon bridge to Taksin road in Thon Buri. Sino-Thai Engineering and Construction Plc has nearly completed construction of the elevated structure to Taksin Road, leaving only track-laying and station construction along the route to be done.

SKYTRAIN:

No funds forthcoming – *The Nation*,

August 26, 2003

The proposed expansion of the Silom skytrain line across the Chao Phya River has run into a snag after the Bangkok Mass Transit System Plc failed to secure loans from its backers...

BTS needs the support of existing backers because, according to a clause in the contract, it cannot turn to other backers to finance the extension. BTS, which is already saddled with debt of around Bt16 billion, also has to confront political hurdles, both at national and gubernatorial levels, because the project involves regulatory approval and investment by the BMA.

...Sources said the Thaksin government might take the matter into his own hands and prevent the BTS from going ahead with the extension project. BTS also has tentative plans to extend the Onnui line 9km to Samrong and Samut Prakan.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

The Skytrain bridge over the Chao Phraya River is almost connected – August 7, 2003
Note the figure hanging on a small platform from the bridge on the right.

NO Charoen Nakhon Skytrain Station on the Taksin extension line – July 21, 2003

There will be no Charoen Nakhon Skytrain station (station S7 at the foot of Taksin Bridge not far from Charoen Nakhon). We get more email on this subject than any other. Many have assumed that the S7 station would be built, but it has always been a future station. This is in keeping with the plan to turn the ferry service into a major mass transit artery and make people connect to ferries at Taksin Station. Most condos and apartments in the Charoen Nakhon area will still tell you a station is being built. However, the first station will be S8-Krung Thonburi—about 400-500 meters before the Taksin intersection. Also: "Taksin" refers to King Taksin—one of the first Thai Kings of the modern era—"Thaksin Shinawatra" is the Prime Minister.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

The Skytrain extension bridge over the Chao Phraya River – June 14, 2003

The bridging between the Taksin Bridges nears completion. When will it be done? *Thairath Daily* reported (on April 28, 2003): *The contractor STECON is working on the construction of tracks and pillars for Taksin Extension across the Chao Phraya River which is now 87% done. After finishing the track construction, the concrete track across Chao Phraya will be installed and then clearing all details to be done by the end of May 2003—well ahead of the deadline of January 14, 2004. The preliminary study on track laying and construction of two stations (Charoen Nakhon Intersection and Taksin Intersection) will be submitted to BMA by the end of October 2003. After getting approval from BMA Board, the installation of tracks and stations should be started and completed within 1 year, ready for service in December 5, 2004.* So even though the tracks are almost done, the two stations are still a long way off. There will be no station directly on the other side of the river—the first one will be at Charoen Nakhon Intersection.

Status of Taksin and Samrong Skytrain extensions

– *Thairath Daily*, translated and summarized,
April 28, 2003

Status of the Taksin extension

The contractor STECON is working on the construction of tracks and pillars for Taksin Extension across the Chao Phraya River which is now 87% Done. After finishing the track construction, the concrete track across Chao Phraya will be installed and then clearing all details to be done by the end of May 2003—well ahead of the deadline of January 14, 2004. The preliminary study on track laying and construction of two stations (Charoen Nakhon Intersection and Taksin Intersection) will be submitted to BMA by the end of October 2003. After getting approval from BMA Board, the installation of tracks and stations should be started and completed within 1 year, ready for service in December 5, 2004.

Status of the Samrong extension

For the case of the Samrong extension, it is in the preliminary detail design period—the Environmental Impact Study will be done by the end of December 2003. It will take six months to construct the new infrastructure (telephone poles, water pipes, underground telephone lines) along the inbound side of Sukhumvit Road before removing the old infrastructure from the construction areas (the middle of Sukhumvit Road). The areas

with all infrastructure removed will be have foundation pillars laid first. The construction of the Samrong extension will be done and open for service in Early 2006.

Notes: After monitoring the [BTS Webboard](#), I found several opinions from those who live on the Thonburi side of Bangkok that "BTS Skytrain should extend to Pin Klao area (or at least the Tha Phra area) after finishing the Taksin Extension." I agree with them on this point. However, it will be a very delicate issue since the track must pass through Rattanakosin Island before going across Chao Phraya (at Sanam Luang) to Pin Klao Intersection and probably ending up at the Southern Bus Terminal (Talingchan) with a feeder bus to Talingchan Junction (Talingchan Junction is not so busy as Bangsue junction since it is in a blind spot area – not at a main road as Bangsue Junction).

A cabinet resolution stated that all railed mass transit systems going through Rattanakosin Island must be underground. Unless BTSC can lease drilling heads and get foreign contractor to help Italian Thai to handle the job, it will be very hard if not impossible to implement Skytrain extension projects through Rattanakosin Island. The extension on the Thonburi side after Taksin extension will go to Bang Wah first. If the new road (Rattathibet – Phetkasem – a road that intersects the road from Tiwanon – Kanchanaphisek via Rama 5 Bridge) is done, BTSC might consider extending along this road, but it would need to turn right at Borm Ratchachonnane Road to go to Pinklao. This will avoid going through Rattanakosin Island, but be a much longer route with less density.



(Photo: Chad Blair)

Skytrain Bridge Progress
– February 20, 2003
Chad Blair sent in this photo (left) of the Skytrain bridge being constructed between the lanes of the Taksin Bridge.

Building the Skytrain bridge across the Chao Phraya
– *Thairath*, September 2, 2002
Construction of the Skytrain bridge (right) between the Saphan Taksin Bridge pillars. In the foreground is the new Sathorn Pier.



(Photo: 2Bangkok.com)

Troubles remain at BTS

– February 14, 2003

Notes: The central government should have a plan to bail BTS (the company that runs the [Skytrain](#)) out of its financial mess. German creditors are sharpening their knives to deal with the BTSC Board since creditors have still not accepted the financial restructuring yet. The German and local creditors said they would like Mr. Khiree to release more shares to pay for the 1 billion Euros in debt.

UPDATE – A schedule for the extension

Translated and summarized from *Bangkok Biznew* and *Dailynews*, December 5, 2002: Governor Samak also told the press that even though BMA asked STECON to readjust Phasaecharoen Elevated Way to become the Taksin extension, there will be no station near Charoen Nakorn since he considers that those who live along Charoen Nakhon can rely on ferries and feeder bus service (the stations on the Taksin extension will be at Krung Thonburi Road and another 200 meters further from the Taksin intersection). After Taksin the intersection, BMA will construct a ramp allowing the Skytrain to go down to go to Machai along Mahachai Railway in the future. However, BMA needs money from the central government to implement the ramp. The construction of the rails and station will be finished in mid 2003 and then BTSC will install the system which will be ready by the end of 2003 or early 2004. The extension to Phetkasem will be done later.

Political

vendettas doom Skytrain extensions – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, September 17, 2002

The Ministry of the Interior previously submitted a proposal from BMA about plans for Skytrain extensions which stated that BMA and the public sector will handle civil works while BTSC or the private sector will handle additional rolling stock and services. The private sector would receive an investment privilege from BOI in the same way as BTSC did originally.

However, the Project Investment Committee had turned down the proposal

by emphasizing that investment by BMA and the public sector is in violation of Article 2.2 of the Cabinet Resolution of February 29, 2000. Article 2.2 states that: "According to the Concession between BMA and BTSC, the concession holder MUST make a 100% investment on the initial project and extensions."

The only possible ways to get around this problem are:

1) Easier credit, public underwriting for new loans, and financial stimulation of BTSC to render 100% private investment possible

2) A new cabinet resolution to override the previous resolution of February 29, 2002 so as to allow BMA and public sector to handle the project

Commentary by Ron: This development is seen to effectively prevent Skytrain extensions...

Commentary by Wisarut: The political vendetta between Ch. Karnchang PCL (a company behind the Skytrain) and the government has put many critical projects on hold: the S1 expressway, consultants for the second airport (to finish the terminal design), and even BMCL concessions for the [subway](#). Ch. Karnchang PCL wholeheartedly supports the Democrat Party (political archrivals of the Thai Rak Thai Party).

Commentary by Ron: Here is an [article](#)

from *Prachachart Thurakij* from about a year and a half ago that hints on the same frustrations over Skytrain extensions. These political vendettas are well-reported in the Thai-language press, but are not much covered in the English-language press. *The Bangkok Post* story about the rejection of Skytrain extensions only mentioned that the *Bangkok Metropolitan Administration told to come up with a more concrete feasibility study...*

Commentary by Wisarut: Several ministers in the Thaksin cabinet have automobiles as a family business (Minister Suriya is a good example). Even worse, some of them (the Premier included) have a prejudice against mass transit systems. The freezing of the railway link between downtown Bangkok and NBIA is a good example.

Commentary by Ron: The railway to the [new](#)

[airport](#) was killed last week: [Thaksin told the press that NBIA does not need to rush on the construction of a mass transit system linking NBIA with downtown BKK due to the fact that there will be an 8-lane highway with no traffic lights.](#)

(Note: This was written in 2002—since then the railway project has been resurrected as the [Airport Link project](#))

Skytrain Insider Info: Taksin Station Fate

– 07:37, July 19, 2002

From an anonymous BTS insider: *I have just confirmed that the Saphan Taksin station will not be torn down, and that the space issue will be dealt with quite simply: The two rails will converge into one, and the opposite-moving trains will take turns using it. Just like a single-lane car bridge with a signal light. Delays will be minimal, under half a minute probably. So Saphan Taksin station is safe—it's an elegant solution that should make everyone happy.* And a "rumor only:" *...new skybridges are being planned for Asoke station to connect to Robinson and the Sheraton, probably early 2003.*

[BTS](#)

[extensions in limbo – Krungthep Thanakhom to handle project if BTSC fails to do so](#)

Prachachart Thurakij, February 28, 2002-March 3, 2002

November, 2001

A trio of articles on the ongoing saga of turning the Phaseecharoen Way to a Skytrain route

[BMA Council detects a lie from the Traffic and Transportation Bureau concerning the Phaseecharoen Elevated Way/Skytrain Extension](#)

Dailynews and *Matichon Daily*, November 29, 2001

[Comment from Thairath Daily – November 24, 2001: Hopewell 2?](#)

by "Mr. Pingpong Head" (a columnist in Bangkok Traffic section)

[BMA inspecting Phaseecharoen Elevated Way for readjustment to a Skytrain route](#)

Matichon Daily, November 22, 2001

September 28, 2001

Wesley Hsu pointed that out that the current construction of the Phaseecharoen Elevated Way project looks suspiciously similar to the existing BTS tracks. 2Bangkok.com checked and found that the underside of the bridging does look EXACTLY like the rest of the Skytrain bridging. It is all being actively constructed by [SinoThai](#).

We called BTS to get the real story. BTS Public Relations Department:

"We have no information on Skytrain extensions. You'll have to

ask BMA." BMA Transportation Department: Presently "it is still intended to be a road only for buses and HOVs (High Official Vehicles)." It could become a Skytrain extension in the future, but "not yet." (Usually HOV refers to High Occupancy Vehicles—we do not know why they contend it is for "High Official Vehicles.") As it appears the Phaseecharoen Elevated Way is already being constructed in a way identical to the rest of the Skytrain, we would not be surprised to hear that a deal was reached declaring it a new extension.

May, 2001

2Bangkok correspondent Wisarut writes: I have seen the pillars in Thonburi side when I was at Suphakharn Building. It was for the Taksin-Phetkasem Road (an elevated road project). The road from Ratchadaphisek to Phetkasem Road is opened for traffic on April 28. However, the pillars left over near the foot of Taksin Bridge will be used for Taksin (Skytrain) extension after trasfering the ownership from Dept. Civil Works to BMA.

Pre May 2001

Are the new supports being erected on the Thonburi side of the Sathorn bridge for the Skytrain? Is this the actual beginning of the Taksin extension?

This is the Phaseecharoen Elevated Way project (Taksin to Wat Ang kao – 6.1 km) initiated during the term of former Bangkok governor Bhichit Rattakul to serve high-occupancy vehicles such as passenger buses and cars with at least three people. BMA has tentatively approved using this project for the Skytrain extension, but many hurdles remain.

We have articles on this project [here](#)

and here's [the same story from two](#)

[different newspapers](#) (On the left is the English-language *Bangkok*

Post version and on the right, the Thai-Language *Dailynews*

version. The *Bangkok Post* version makes it seam like everything

is simple and settled. The *Dailynews* version gives much more

detail on the remaining conflicts).

[Back to the main page
on the Skytrain extensions](#)

[Back to the main Skytrain page](#)

Skytrain News 2004

December 31, 2004

Categories: Skytrain

[Slash](#)

[Skytrain fares, says Thaksin](#) – *The Nation*, December 26, 2004

Thaksin said during his weekly radio programme that he had convinced the Skytrain's operators that if they were to lower their fees they would attract more passengers and would also benefit from side businesses such as shop rentals at the stations...

BTS show the results after 5-years in service: 431 million passenger and counting – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, November 30, 2004

BTS has told the press 5 years of BTS service resulted in 431 million passengers (Dec 5, 1999 – Nov 23, 2004) and growing.

BTS services have been running for more than 18 million km without fatal accidents, a proven testimony to safety. The number of passenger in 2004 is 5% higher than the target, reaching 115 million. The growth in the number of passengers will be 13%. The debt restructure will be done by July 2005. The average number of passengers during weekdays: 380,000 passengers a day–10% higher than the previous year.

The average number of passengers on Saturdays: 304,304 passengers

The average number of passengers on Sundays: 218,741 passengers

The record on Loy Krathong Day in 2004 (Nov 26, 2004): 457,839 passengers

The daily expense: 3-4 million baht

The daily revenue: 7-8 million baht

The profit has been used to pay the interest on the debt (80-90%).

The level of satisfaction has increased from 75% to 80%, especially on safety and service. BTS has run 32 sets of rolling stock from the existing 35 sets and is going to purchase new sets of rolling stocks to ease overcrowding.

The increased number of passengers is due to the increasing number of regulars who use 30-day passes–especially the 30-trip type (540 baht each). This contributes to the additional 10,625 trips a day (or 17%).

The three interchanges with the Subway at Saladaeng, Mochit and Asok are also factors in the increasing number of passengers. 32 more escalators from the road to the ticket level have been installed in addition to the existing 46 escalators from the ticket level to the platforms. Viaduct connections for 9 BTS stations with other buildings and feeder buses also increase the number of passengers.

The debt restructure plan for the outstanding debt of 30 billion baht has been approved by the board and is ready for application by July 2005 before offering an IPO by the end of 2005. BTS met the Nationalization Committee only once and BTS have come up with the plan for the following extensions:

1) Taksin extension (Saphan Taksin – Taksin Intersection – 2.2 km)

2) Samrong extension (Onnut – Samrong – 8.9 km)

3) Phaholyothin extension (Mochit – Kaset – Saphan Mai – 12 km)

BTS agrees to invest 100 million baht on a contactless smart card system installation for a joint ticket system without a nationalization process.

Three interchanges, terminals and major stations will have the smart card system installed.

BTS has come up with the following activities for its 5-year anniversary:

1) A flight to the Maldives to be won by a passenger who purchases a 30-day pass and refills a stored value ticket with at least 100 baht.

2) Free trips for fathers and children who travel together from one station to the another station.

Note: Request for Taksin Extension have become louder as seen

[here](#).

No progress on Skytrain nationalization

– translated and summarized from *Matichon*,

November 25, 2004 and *Thai Post*, November 27, 2004

Very little progress has been made on BTS and BMCL nationalization even after three meetings since there is new data which requires new estimations and assessments. However, the plan for nationalization will go on until the new government has scrapped the plan.

Skytrain spurns nationalization:

will finance extensions and smart card system on its own

– translated and summarized from *Prachachat*

Turakij, November 22, 2004

BTS Boards of Director has approved a debt restructure plan to be submitted to creditors and BTS will start the two extension on their own after 2004 (the year BTS will make a profit)–without being nationalized.

The BTS Board agrees with the plan for smart card system installation to work in both Subway and Skytrain without the Skytrain being nationalized.

BMA is pushing MahadThai (MOInterior) for the plan to enable BMA to help BTS Skytrain to deal with the extensions.

After 2005, BTS is going to start the long-awaited Taksin extension

phase 1 (2.2 km) with a price tag of 1 billion baht. On the other hand BTS is going to offer an IPO to finance the Samrong Extension (8.9 km). Creditors and shareholders agree with the BTS Board that investment on extensions is a big must and they are ready to inject necessary funds to finance the projects after settling the debt restructure. No tax money is needed unless surging public demand compels BTS to ask for taxpayer money to speed up the projects.

Even though Super K has sent a letter to Premier Maew to enable BMA to help BTS speed up projects to satisfy public demands, Thaksin seems to pay attention to Subway investment on expansion instead. BTS is going to introduce a smart card system to function as a joint ticket system with an investment of 250-300 million baht. However, BTS and BMCL have to make a settlement on ticket rates and revenue sharing before introducing the system in the next three months. This is a way to show Premier Thaksin and Minister Suriya that the private sector can come up with a joint ticket system without intervention from the government. Some shareholders such as AIG (Thailand) do not want the nationalization at all.

The BTS Board agree to extend the maintenance contract with Siemens (Thailand) for another 10 years and Siemens (Thailand) has agreed to cut the fee collected from BTS and throw in extra free items such as the software controllers, etc.

More passengers are riding the Skytrain with revenue of 200 million baht a month and the 380,000 daily passengers even without the extensions. BMA has modified the Taksin extension structure so that it nearly reaches Klong Dan and Phet Kasem road. BMA told MahadThai that after Taksin extensions (both phases) becomes a reality, there will be at least 50,000 more daily passengers for BTS.

The debt restructure can be shown as follows:

- 1) Turn 4.31 billion baht debt into equity
- 2) Cut the principle of debt by 2.2 billion baht
- 3) Cut the outstanding interest by 5.76 billion baht
- 4) Turn 10.8 billion baht debt into bonds
- 5) Turn 1 billion baht into priority stocks
- 6) Paying the rest of the debt (14 billion baht) in 18 years
- 7) Cut down the registered capital from 14.933 billion baht to 6.08 billion baht

Such measures will enable BTS to extend across Chaophraya to Taksin Intersection without borrowing from creditors.

BTS benefiting from the delay in commercial development in subway stations – translated and summarized from *Thaipost*, October 16, 2004
BTS has a bigger smile due to the delay of commercial development in Subway stations – compelling the customers to go for commercial deals with the Skytrain. The number of Skytrain passengers is up to more than 400,000 a day thanks to the Subway which picks up the passenger from the route BTSC does not reach.

The number of products sold in the stalls inside Skytrain stations has doubled breaking the target very often. SRT advertising on the rolling stock is not a competitor for BTS advertising on the bogey since they aim for different marketing targets.

Skytrain advertising has a much bigger number of customers due to the ease to spot the ads compared to the subway ads. SRT advertising on the bogey is not considered a competitor. Since the Skytrain advertising is for those well to do customers while SRT advertising is for the mass.

The decreasing number of Subway passengers after August 12 and the delays on commercial development in the Subway stations have compelled agencies to place ads at other places. SRT advertising is good for those who ride the train at Bang Sue, Bang Son, Bang Pho or Ayudhaya as well as those stations along commuter lines. However, most intercity railway passengers have strong hostilities if not outright hatred toward the advertising on the trains.

Mang Pong at Asok Station said that the video rental (Video, CD, DVD) monthly revenue has doubled after the Subway become a reality—from 1-200,000 baht a month to more than 200,000 baht a month.

60% is sold to Thai customers and 40% to foreigners even though foreigners have much more purchasing power than local Thai customers.

The cloth sellers said the revenue from selling clothes in Skytrain stations is doubled from 1-20,000 baht a month to 40,000 baht a month without any signs of stagnation. Most customers are Thai white-collar workers and the other 30% are teens. Very few foreigners buy clothes there, but when they do buy more than 1000 baht worth each time.

Even the sellers of JMart (telecom and mobile phone franchise of Jasmine International PCL) said their monthly sales has been jumped to 80,000 baht a month after the opening of the Subway—80% are Thai white-collar customers and the rest are foreigners.

Skytrain using recorded announcements –
September 30, 2004

Wisarat reports: *BTSC is starting to use recorded announcers (for station announcements). The ladies who make these announcements are not quite at par with Khun Sarocha (the best news announcer) who has recorded her voice for MRTA announcements.*

Skytrain cracks explained
– September 30, 2004

Wisarut reports: *About the cracks mentioned in Pantip.com ([here](#) and [here](#)).*

The answer is it is a termite route and BTSC just cleans them. It will not have any harmful effect on the structure as testified by [Nu Duan of BTS](#) as well as [BTSC Engineers](#).

Earlier: Skytrain cracks? – September 28, 2004

Ton points this [photo](#) of a crack in a Skytrain pillar and the related thread on Pantip.com.

BMA preparing to open skywalk viaduct linking Chitlom and Siam Station – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, September 29, 2004

BMA is preparing a viaduct linking Chitlom and Siam Station as a new tourist spot in Bangkok to be open in mid-December 2004. This viaduct will enable the Skytrain passenger to go to Ratchaprasong Intersection without going down to the street level. Shops along the walk will turn it into another shopping area.

This viaduct will go from Gaysorn Plaza at Ratchaprasong Intersection to Chaloeiphao Intersection near Siam Station with total distance of 513 meter and average width of 7.5 m. The construction started in July 2004. The budget for this viaduct is 260 million baht. The contractor has entered into the construction site to make foundation pillars to carry the bigger pillars of the via duct. After that, they will

put steel pillars and structures for the viaduct along with the roof to be installed later on.

It will be done in December 2004 and ready to be open mid-December 2004. This viaduct will enable BTSC to link Siam Paragon with Siam Station.

Commentary by Wisarut: Some complained that BMA officers have not fixed the clock tower at Ratchaprasong Intersection. Look at this [page](#)

and you will see.

BTSC debt settlement with

creditors closer to reality – translated and summarized from *Bangkok Biznew*, September 16, 2004

Shareholders have approved the BTSC debt restructure with a 8.5 billion baht debt cut to 14 billion baht while extending debt payment from 12 to 18 years. After that, this plan will be submitted to the Debt Restructure Committee (Bank of Thailand) before signing a debt restructure plan with creditors.

ITD told the press that they could sell BTSC stocks at the price below par while Mr Super K said they will have a chance to gain more revenue to invest on the Samrong and Taksin extensions after the successful debt restructure.

The shareholder meeting was held on September 15 about the the debt restructure plan of 39 billion baht with 3 main creditors (KfW, IFC, SCB). The principle of this debt is about US\$800 million . After that, BTSC will submit the debt restructure plan to the Debt Restructure Plan Committee, Bank of Thailand before signing the debt restructure deal with the creditors. The debt restructure will be done in December 2004.

The debt restructure will be:

- 1) Trimming of 8.5 billion baht
- 2) Debt payment extension of 14 billion baht from 12 years (AD 2012) to 18 years (AD 2022). 30% of this debt is in baht denomination (annual Interest cut by 2%) while the rest is in US dollar denomination (interest down by 1%).
- 3) Turning 12 billion baht debt into 12 billion baht bonds with an 18 year term and the company will issue 120 million common stocks for this matter.
- 4) Turning 4.3 billion baht into the equity to add into the registered capital of 12 billion baht with the price at par of 10 baht. After the signing the debt restructure, the par price will be down to 5 baht.

Debts from creditors with no collateral is 8 billion baht:

1. Trading creditors of 5.3 billion baht
2. Bond holders of 2.7 billion baht

They will have the debt trimmed 50% and the rest will become equity. Currently, the daily number of passengers has shot up from 150,000 to 400,000 with daily revenue of 8 million baht while the daily expense is 3 million baht.

After the debt restructure, the old shareholders will be down from 58% to 42.1% while the creditors with collateral will grab 29.8% of shares and the creditors without collateral will grab 28.1% of shares.

After the successful debt restructure, the IPO will be started so as to capitalize the equity for Samrong and Taksin extension.

BTSC said if the government has capital to invest on the mass transit project, they should spend their capital to expand the Subway route instead of nationalizing both companies since they can merge both companies by themselves. Furthermore, it takes time for the government to capitalize the funds for purchasing both companies. The company is willing to pay back the government if the government is willing to lend the companies some funds for system expansion. The payback can be in form of revenue sharing if the government wants. However, ITD is willing to sell their BTSC stock to the government

but the government has to pay at the price that pleases the private sector. However, ITD has a provision to sell the stock lower than 5 baht par to pay off debts.

Commentary by Wisarut: For the case of ITD, their sale of stock to the government is a way to curry favor to get a better chance for mass transit contracts such as the Suvannabhumi Airport Link.

Pangpond on the Skytrain

– September 3, 2004

Thai Pangpond cartoon characters appear on the latest Skytrain tickets.



The Thai-language forums

– July 29, 2004

Wisarut reports on what's going on in Thai-language forums: *Delayed BTSC Extension through the government's intention have already bred distrust in the government and many people want Subway to be extended.*

Keeree claims

BTS not for sale – Debt restructuring plan set to be signed in mid-September

– Bangkok Post, July 29, 2004

Keeree Kanjanapas, chief executive officer and a major shareholder of the Bangkok Mass Transit System, continues to insist that the Bangkok skytrain mass transit system is not for sale.

...Mr Keeree said if the government truly wanted to accelerate the extension of the mass transit project by integrating the skytrain with the new Bangkok subway, it should use money it would raise to buy the two projects to invest in expanding them adding that this seems to be an easier solution than being locked in a dispute with the private firms...

Suriya claiming the government has already purchased

55% of Skytrain stocks from major creditors

– translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*,

July 26, 2004

Minister Suriya told the press that after cutting 45% of BTSC debt, the government has purchased both BTSC debts and BTSC stocks from major creditors (KfW, IFC, SCB) with a price tag of 20 billion baht and the creditors have already forgiven the penalty for debt delinquency of 1 billion baht. This takeover is for the benefit of the people and without hidden agenda. The price for taking over is fair for both companies as well as for the people.

The government is also planning to take over BTSC by owning at least 51% of stocks as the exchange for public investment for the main structure of Skytrain extensions. The creditors will give more loans for purchasing Skytrain rolling stock only when the government has acted as the underwriter or only after the government takeover.

Earlier: [Suriya](#)

defends Skytrain buyback scheme – July

23, 2004

Earlier: [Skytrain takeover deadlock](#)

– Prachachat Turakij, July 19-21, 2004

Earlier: [The real](#)

costs of taking over the Skytrain-Subway? – *Thaipost*, July

19, 2004

Suriya defends Skytrain buyback

scheme – July 23, 2004

The *Bangkok Post* finally openly mentions the accusations that the government is purposely halted Skytrain extension—but only after the charge was made by the Bangkok governor. 2Bangkok.com has been [reporting this since 2000](#).

[\(Suriya defends govt bid to buy skytrain](#)

[– Line extensions 'will proceed' as planned](#), *Bangkok Post*,

July 23, 2004) Transport Minister Suriya Jungreangkiet yesterday defended plans to buy back the skytrain operator's concession before going ahead with route extensions.

His remarks were in response to criticism by Bangkok governor Samak Sundaravej, who on Wednesday accused the government of blocking city hall's plan to expand the line...

Despite being criticised over the buyout plan, Mr Suriya remained firm, saying that what the government was trying to do would benefit commuters in the long run once all mass transit systems, including the subway and buses, were integrated. Fares would be cheaper if the

government could link all systems together instead of having separate firms run the services, he said.

Buying the subway – July 21, 2004

Thailand's

Subway Operator BMCL Plans To Launch IPO In 4Q – Yahoo-Dow Jones, July 21, 2004

Bangkok Metro Co. Ltd., or BMCL, the operator of Thailand's first subway system, said Wednesday it plans to launch its long-awaited initial public offering and list on the Stock Exchange of Thailand in the fourth quarter this year...

"We want to be able to show our revenue to investors first before selling shares," BMCL Managing Director Sombat Kitjalaksana told reporters after a shareholders' meeting.

Previously, BMCL had planned to sell 97.5 million shares to the public to raise between 2 billion baht (\$1=THB40.801) and THB4 billion...

Sombat said the company is also willing to sell its shares to the government at THB3 apiece; however, there is no development in the share sale so far.

The government had earlier indicated it wants to buy back elevated and underground mass transit projects in Bangkok from private operators and to integrate them before expanding the infrastructure.

BMCL to sell subway given the right price – Shareholders approve share sale – Bangkok Post, July 22, 2004

Bangkok Metro Plc (BMCL), the subway concessionaire, said yesterday that it would sell the underground public transit system to the state immediately—given the right price.

"We are ready to deal and have no desire to be locked into a long dispute with politicians," said Dr Sombat Kitjalaksana, BMCL's managing director.

"It's only a question of how long it will take for the authorities to show that they are truly ready."

His latest comments showed that the subway concessionaire has toned down its initial opposition to the proposed state buyout...

According to Dr Sombat, the company has thrown in the towel in its dispute with the MRTA over the state's claim that it has the right to buy up to 25% of BMCL shares at par value...

BMCL's shareholders yesterday agreed to raise some 900 million baht by selling 300 million new shares at three baht apiece to existing shareholders, including leading contractor Ch Karnchang...

Skytrain takeover deadlock

– translated and summarized from *Prachachat*

Turakij, July 19-21, 2004

After the initial failure to convince BTSC to sell their stocks to the government – with the claim that more passengers will ride the Skytrain (from 370,000 to 400,000 passengers a day) even though the subway is open, one of the BTSC creditors told the correspondents from *Prachachat Thurakij* that the creditors are going to reject BTSC's debt management plan despite the 1-year negotiation because BTSC is asking creditors to cut the principle which is unacceptable. So far BTSC is paying only 0.1% of interest rates while they refuse to pay the principle.

Therefore, the creditors will force BTSC to raise more revenue—if they do not want to raise the ticket prices, then through advertising and space leasing. However, there is no creditor willing to help BTSC to deal with investment since they have not paid back their debts. Even the government's plan to take over the company through the purchase of debts is quite difficult since it requires the approval from the shareholders which includes Thanayong which is the major shareholder. The only option for now is to apply the Thai Asset Management Act to force Thanayong to convert more debt into equity. Even now BTSC still pays interest at MLR rates without paying the principle while claiming that they will break even in 8-9 years.

Foreign creditors see no point that BTSC will be able to pay off the debts and they refuse to cut the debts without gaining control of the debtor's company, let alone the new credit lines for extensions.

There are only 3 ways for BTSC to boost revenue:

- 1) Increase ticket prices – especially during the rush hour periods.
- 2) Increase the advertising fee as well as the space leasing.
- 3) Make more investment – out of the question for this option since the company can only pay interest

Minister Suriya successfully convinced the creditors to cut debts by 45% as an exchange for taking over the company via buying the debts with a price of 21 billion baht, turning the asset into equities.

However this plan hit a stumble block from Thanayong. Nevertheless, the government can take over the company by enforcing the Thai Asset Management Act which allow the shareholders of at least 10% to turn debts into equities.

There are 40 billion baht of BTSC debts –

7.4 billion baht is from commercial debts.

33 billion baht is from creditors with collateral – 10.6 billion baht of this is from domestic sources which consist of:

- 1) SCB – 3.2 billion baht

- 2) Thai Asset Management Co.Ltd. – 3.3 billion baht
- 3) Thanachat Asset Co.Ltd. – 2.1 billion baht
- 4) Industrial Asset Co.Ltd – 0.5 billion baht
- 5) IFCT – 1.5 billion baht
- Foreign creditors – 38.2 billion baht
- 1) KfW – US\$ 268 million (26.160 billion baht)
- 2) IFC – US\$ 80 million (2.680 billion baht)
- 3) OKB – US\$ 182 million

Hot Issue by Suphoj Ungthong: taking over the Subway and Skytrain – translated and summarized from *Than Sethkij*, July 18-21, 2004

Now, we see how Suriya is dealing with plan to takeover–applying spin doctor tactics–without even consulting with BTSC and BMCL at all while sychopants like Mr Khumroblux are just trying to reassure the public that Minister Suriya’s Plan is a real plan.

Even worse, Suriya is threatening to bankrupt BTSC and BMCL unless they allow the government’s takeover. This really chokes both Mr Pliw Triwitsawet and Mr Khiree Kanchanaphak – and when Mr Khiree breaks the silence that he is going to settle the debts and come up with the joint smart card ticket, we learn that Mr Suriya has no actual plan for taking over the system at all despite the puppet committee set up by Mr Suriya.

Suriya pushes plan to purchase the Skytrain without listening to Mr Khiree–claims that creditors agrees with government plan – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, July 15, 2004

Minister Suriya told the press that MOTC will push the purchasing plan forward without listening to Mr Khiree’s appeal since the government successfully negotiated with KfW, SCB, Thai Asset Management, and IFC to write off 45% of BTSC debts while BTSC failed to deliver the debt restructure in time.

After that, the government will push the nationalization plan forward and purchase stocks at 3 baht/share even though the shareholders like Italian Thai Development PCL had purchased BTSC stock at 15 baht/share. Minister Suriya claimed that they never bully private enterprises as well as shareholders. The settlement on Skytrain purchasing will be concluded by the end of 2004.

This 45% debt cut enables the government to purchase the debt along with the interest at 21 billion baht while the government will purchase 50% of registered capital of 18 billion baht (9 billion baht) as well as the commercial debt of 3.8 billion baht. The total purchase will be 33.8 billion baht.

Minister Suriya grilled Mr Khumroblux that he should not invite Mr Khiree and BTSC Board of Directors to the first meeting for BTSC nationalization on July 13 since the Nationalization Board should discuss the scope of the government plan to nationalize BTSC and BMCL before inviting BTSC and BMCL to discuss with the government. This mistake enables Mr Khiree to tell the press that the "Government is bullying BTSC!"

Wisarut notes: The Government’s bullying method of nationalization has already bred a sense of distrust [here](#) (in Thai).

Ms Paveena promising Skytrain extensions to Thonburi – translated and summarized by from *Khao Sod*, July 15, 2004
Ms Paveena Hongsakul told Thonburi people during the opening of the Gubernatorial Election Center in Bangkok Noy that she is ready to work with all the parties if she becomes BMA Governor.
She will push the Skytrain and Subway extensions to Thonburi very hard to be ready for service in four years. Furthermore, the Floating Market along Bangkok Noy canal as well as other floating markets in Thonburi will be promoted. The cultural communities in Thonburi will be promoted as well.

A tale of two newspapers: Buying the Skytrain
– July 14, 2004

The English-language press is finally reporting the controversy concerning the Skytrain takeover that 2Bangkok.com has been [mentioning for several years](#). One headline has BTS ‘blasting’ the bid and the other has BTS ‘cautious.’ As usual, *The Nation* presents the story with an anti-government slant, but its report most closely matches the way this story has long been reported in the Thai-language media. The *Bangkok Post* puts the best face on the story by reporting everyone’s comments at face value and even points up the government’s lofty goals in expanding the network. However, running the quote, ‘The state will not force the issue...’ without mentioning the actions taken against the Skytrain and reported in the Thai-language press at length can only be described as outrageous.

[BTS boss blasts takeover bid](#) – *The Nation*, July 14, 2004

...In its strategy to solve the traffic problem, the government is resorting to hardball tactics to seize control of both mass transit projects. It would like to buy out both the Skytrain and the subway before merging them together. Then it would make further investments

in the expansion of their routes to cover more of Bangkok...
The government reportedly threatened to stop BTS from making new investments to expand its routes unless it sells the Skytrain.

[Skytrain firm cautious over buyout plan – Keeree: 'I deserve some credit as well'](#) – Bangkok Post, July 14, 2004

The Bangkok Mass Transit System, operator of the Bangkok skytrain, has expressed reluctance to state proposals to take over the project, with executives saying that the firm expected to sign a debt-restructuring agreement with creditors within the next five weeks. The government has floated an idea of buying out BTSC's 25-year skytrain concession as part of a plan to integrate operations with the new subway system...

"What have I done wrong? I am a good man, a good guy. I deserve some credit as well," he said following a meeting yesterday at the Finance Ministry...

Mr Utid said the government would not apply pressure to take over the company. "Any talks to repurchase the BTS concession must be based on the law. The state will not force the issue, but rather use the principle that the seller must be willing to sell at a fair price."

He said the government was convinced the mass transit system should have a single operator to maximise convenience for passengers.

The government wants to expand the total mass-transit rail network by another 291 kilometres. BTSC operates just 24 kilometres of track in central Bangkok.

Authorities hope to expand the skytrain across the Chao Phraya River to Thon Buri, as well as to the east toward the new Suvarnabhumi Airport and to the outer suburbs.

BTSC says no to the government's plan to nationalize the Skytrain – translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*, July 13, 2004
After the meeting with the BTSC Board of Directors, the Nationalization Committee found that the BTSC Board headed by Mr Khiree Kanchanaphak rejects the proposal offered by the government to buy back BTSC. The company has worked so hard to deal with financial problems and now the company is back on its feet and ready for extensions even though it still has to shoulder 40 billion baht debts (US\$ 1 billion). The company is planning to sign a restructure plan with creditors in the next five months. Therefore, the company disagrees with the government trying to buy back debts back as a way to take over the company. The Deputy Permanent Secretariat of MOF says they have not signed any deal with creditors yet since the committee has to deal with the 1992 contract first. That contract has legal requirements the approvals from both the government (purchasers) as well as the private sector that owns the project.

Satirical comment from *Than Setthakij*: 'Hot Issues' by Ung Thong – translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, June 27-June 30, 2004

Minister Suriya to Mr Pliew: "If you agree to sell BMCL stocks to the government, you'll become the winner of the Subway expansion contracts." A Fraussian deal indeed... However, this kind of promise can be broken if ITD competes against Ch. Karnchang.

Five Skytrain stations (Saladaeng, Phromphongse, Saphan Kwai, Victory Monument, Siam) exceeding noise limits – translated and summarized from *Matichon*, May 31, 2004
The Director of BMA Environmental Quality Control said noise around major Skytrain stations exceeds the maximum limit of 70 dB in all sections (platform, ticket and downstairs) even in non rush hour periods. The rush hour periods are even noisier definitely causing those who live and work along Skytrain tracks for a long time to experience hearing problems. This due to the structure which reflects noise and bounces it inside the station area without spreading it out to cut down the noise. The buildings around the stations are also good sound reflectors.

BMA is now asking BTSC to install noise absorbers to ensure that the noise will be reduced below 70 dB limit all times. However, the company declined to do so since the claim that they have measured the noise and found that the noise has never reached the 70 dB limit. Noise is one of major complaints of Bangkokians to the BMA Office thus BMA may have to force BTSC to comply.

More BTSC Park and Ride
– translated and summarized from *Khaosod*, May 28, 2004

The BMA Civil Works Office said they are going to develop 6-rai of the old Morchit Bus terminal into a full-fledged Park and Ride—not just the temporary parking it is right now. Furthermore, BMA is planning to construct another park and ride at National Stadium, but they have to negotiate with the landlords. After the Samrong extension becomes a reality, a new park and ride at BITEC and Samrong will follow soon.

[KfW](#)
['agreed to sell its skytrain loan'](#) – *The Nation*, May 31, 2004

The Transport Ministry has moved a big step closer to its goal of taking control of the skytrain system by striking a tentative deal last week to buy out the operator's major creditor at a 40-per-cent or more discount, a source said...

Plan for further discounts for the 30-day Skytrain student pass – translated and summarized from *Thairath*, May 28, 2004
After getting the message from the government about further discounts for students who ride the Skytrain, Mr. Anat Ababhhirom (Adviser of the BTSC Board) said BTSC Board will have a meeting with the Traffic Policy Office next week to discuss further discounts for students with the following scheme:

- 1) The time period of the day to offer the discount
- 2) The discount rate from 10-40 baht regular rate a single ticket
- 3) Subsidies to cover the discount

In principal, this kind of discount is possible since it is one of many measures to encourage more mass transit usage to cut traffic jams.

The 30-day student passes are very popular and the 30-trip type (360 baht) sells better than the other types of discount. There 160,000 students who ride Skytrain each one day from the total of 380,000 passengers a day.

However, only regular customers are willing to pay for 30-day passes. The further discount will encourage those casual customers to ride the Skytrain.

The Nation covers mass transit controversy
– May 17, 2004

The Nation features two articles about the government buyout of the Skytrain ([ANALYSIS: A twisted route for railway systems](#) and [SKYTRAIN: BTSC slams move to buy creditors](#)). Previously, information on mass transit controversies were only available in Thai-language papers (and 2Bangkok.com). The *Bangkok Post* is usually the paper that covers mass transit and development, but they have more generalized articles that steer clear of controversial issues.

The
Skytrain—no need to be taken over – translated
and summarized from *Thaipost*, May 11,
2004

Mr. Super K (Kasem Jaticawanit) said the government has to get some advice from NESDB on the suitable price before spending the annual national budget to take over BTSC (the Skytrain) and BMCL (the subway) since more than a half of shareholders refuse to sell the shares and the government should never take over a profitable private enterprise. BTSC will also refuse to sell the stock at any price if the government has borrowed money or used the money from capitalization. Only dire circumstances will compel BTSC to sell the stocks to the government. So far, the government has not come to have a discussion with BTSC. So far, the debt restructure is going very well and the plan will come out in June 2004 – and BTSC is planning to offer an IPO in 2005. Nationalization of BTSC and BMCL is against the government's privatization plan. The government should never meddle in profitable private enterprise. This nationalization is a plan to fool confused people that they can get a mass transit system at very cheap price which usually ends up like SRT railway and BMTA bus systems. If the ticket prices are too high, the people will refuse to ride and the market will readjust the price to keep the passenger numbers high enough for making a profit. Only those at the Traffic Policy Office and MOTC have planned such scheme, but not the government. BTSC also does not acknowledge whether Minister Suriya has discussed with creditors about the takeover plan. BTSC feel convinced that more than a half of shareholders refuse to sell the stocks to the government since BTSC Skytrain is going very well with nearly 400,000 passengers a day with a daily revenue of 8 million baht.

MRTA

Governor: "Samrong-Taksin extension speed up plans dim chance to nationalize Skytrain" – translated
and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, April
25-28, 2004

MRTA Governor said pushing hard on Samrong-Taksin extensions will make the nationalization of Skytrain difficult since it push the price upward since the creditors and shareholders could see more profit ahead and refuse to sell to the government at any price. The change on investment form violates 1992 Joint Venture Act . Furthermore, MRTA is asking the Constitution Court to redefine the authority of BMA.

The BMA proposal to change the investment form of 9.502 billion baht Taksin-Samrong extension is very inappropriate since it pushes the price up making it hard to nationalize the project. He wonders who in BMA is pushing this project forward since it reduces the government leverage on nationalization to buy the project at a cheap price and changes the minds of creditors and shareholders to not sell

the project or to sell at a very high price which is unfair to the people.
If BMA is pushing forward, it will please BTSC
since it will help BTSC to become profitable and no other companies
would come to compete with BTSC since the extension is a few kilometers
long (total 11.1 km) and unworthy for others to invest in at all.
The change of investment form will violate the old contract since the
old contract has no provision to allow such a change and it violates
the 1992 Joint Venture Act.
Therefore, MRTA will ask the government as well as the administration
to redefine the authority of BMA and force BMA to surrender BTSC Skytrain
to MOTC or the Traffic Policy Office.

Commentary by Wisarut: The level of suffering from those who
live in the Bangna-Samrong area and Thonburi makes such arguments total
nonsense. This kind of obstruction has revealed the hypocrisy and insincerity
of the government (and even MRTA) in that they expect to get the project
at a very cheap price instead of helping the people. TRT should expect
to lose votes from those who live in the areas impacted if they still
obstruct the extension projects until they can grab the projects to
please their own interests.

Subway-Skytrain

nationalization plan bogging down – translated
and summarized from *Matichon*, April 14,
2004

Even after negotiation with KfW officers (such as Herr Rudolf Richmuller
– deputy Senior Chairman and Director of Special Asset Dept of KfW)
and successfully cut BTSC debts by 40%, MOTC still wants to make further
cuts of 45-55% so that they can explain to the public that the price
the government pays for BTSC is a very good price. The settlement with
KfW and other creditors will be done by the end of May 2004–after a
visit by the head of KfW.

The price to pay for BTSC debt will be 23 billion baht and the total
price to pay for BTSC will be 30-35 billion baht after including stocks.
BMCL is much more difficult due to the fighting between the government
and CH. Karnchang PCL–so difficult that they have to wait until the
settlement of BTSC debt. The controversial Southern Ring Road is also
a major cause of trouble since a BMCL shareholder is the one who was
involved in building the Southern Kanchanapisek Ring Road project which
had its bid canceled by Suriya–thus the fighting will drag on.

Skytrain company

**vows to bypass the government: Either 15 baht/share for BTSC stock or
an IPO to get 6-7 billion baht for Taksin and Samrong extensions**
– translated and summarized from
Than Setthakij, April 11-14, 2004

BTSC (the Skytrain company) told the government that 15 baht/share is
a fair deal for the government–if not they will have to the Supreme
Court to deal with stock matters. If they cannot make a deal BTSC will
offer an IPO to gain 6-7 billion baht for the Samrong and Taksin extensions.
Mr. Super K (Kasem Jatikawanit) will be the negotiator and he feels
very suspect about the government move to make direct negotiations with
German creditors instead of negotiating through BTSC. This kind of move
implies that the government plans to make a hostile takeover of BTSC
with consent from the creditors.

15 baht/share is a fair deal since the price will zoom up once BTSC
offer an IPOs. Cheaper prices would need a court settlement.
The government should have taken over BTSC after the 1997 economic
meltdown instead of taking it over when the company becomes profitable.
The government should praise BTSC for the ability to weather the economic
storm to become profitable without government assistance.
The plan to buy back the debt while the situation is still in limbo
will cause indefinite delays on Skytrain extensions. Even without extensions,
the company has 7-8 million baht daily revenue. BMA is going deal with
basic infrastructure, but they cannot declare the winners of the takeover
plan.

By the end of 2004, BTSC will offer an IPO to capitalize 6-7 billion
baht for the Onnut-Samrong extension (8.9 km). For the Taksin extension
(2.2 km), they company will use 2 billion baht savings to invest on
this section.

BTSC has 7 million baht revenue with average daily passengers of 400,000.
The debt restructure will add more revenue and profit to pay the debt
from 4-5% increase of passengers. The smart card ticket system will
be issued to deal with the MRTA subway.
Even though BTSC has successfully cut the debt by 35%, the government
said they can cut down the debt at 40% and plan to cut even further
to 55% so that the price to pay for purchasing BTSC is 30 billion baht.
BTSC is negotiating with creditors to cut down the interest rate from
2% to 1.75%.

Earlier: [More on buying](#)

[the Skytrain](#) – *Thairath*, April 7-8, 2004

Earlier: [The](#)

[nationalization plan of BMCL and BTSC is good for the country](#) –
Siamturakij, April 4-11, 2004

Earlier: [Suriya boasting that negotiations with](#)
[Skytrain creditors successful](#) – *Thairath*, April 7, 2004 and
Manager Daily, April 7, 2004

And *Bangkok Post* has the response to this: [Skytrain](#)

[chief lashes out at takeover talk – Demands state deal with BTSC directly.](#)

– *Bangkok Post*, April 8, 2004

Earlier: [BMCL would sell](#)

[the subway at 35 billion baht to reap 200% profit](#) – *Prachachart*

Thurakij, April 1, 2004

Earlier: [More on buying the](#)

[subway – Government counters 300 baht per share offer by offering to pay 1 baht per share](#)

More on buying the Skytrain

– translated and summarized from *Thairath*,

April 7-8, 2004

BTSC is asking the government to buy shares of BTSC at 15 baht/share—a 50% increase from the 10 baht/share par price. BTSC also ask that if the government is sincere for system integration, since if they were they would have initiated the project by themselves 10 years ago.

However, Suriya has retorted back to Mr. Kasem Jatikawanit (a member of BTSC Board of Directors) that BTSC better sell the stocks at par (1 baht /share) in exchange for debt reduction and debt purchasing.



(Photo: Conor)

The Skytrain on Sathorn Road

Suriya boasting that

negotiations with Skytrain creditors successful

– translated and summarized from *Thairath*,

April 7, 2004 and *Manager Daily*, April 7, 2004

Minister Suriya said that the KfW Board of Directors are coming to Thailand to negotiate with MOTC about further debt cutting—after 35% cutting of the BTSC debts from KfW (26.16 billion baht) has been agreed. Even though KfW said they can write off the 40% of BTSC debt owed to KfW, MOTC wants 55% cut. Therefore, further negotiations are necessary to reach a final settlement.

BTSC has owned the debts to the following creditors:

KfW – 26.16 billion baht

IFC – 2.68 billion

SCB PCL – 6.080 billion

Thai Asset Management – 3.28 billion

Siemens (Thailand) Co.Ltd. – 4 billion

ITD PCL – 0.76 billion

Other creditors – 1 billion

The shareholder stocks: 12.16 billion baht

MOTC is asking officers to prepare the data to ensure

very good prices for purchasing BTSC. If everything goes according to the plan—purchasing BTSC at a price less than 30 billion baht—it will force BMCL to sell their system in the government's favor.

MOTC also asks MRTA to respond to letters from Ch. Karnchang PCL that

"MRTA has full right to purchase their stocks at par no matter

that Ch. Karnchang has claimed that MRTA has already forfeited their

right to do so. MRTA has very good reasons to purchase BMCL at the government's specified prices."

And *Bangkok Post* has the response to this: [Skytrain](#)

[chief lashes out at takeover talk Demands state deal with BTSC directly.](#)

– *Bangkok Post*, April 8, 2004

[Beyond](#)

[the Skytrain](#) – *The Nation*, April 2, 2004

Carleton Cole writes an atmospheric piece on the world at the end of the Skytrain route.

Government feeling confident about purchasing

the Skytrain concession from the private sector

– translated and summarized from *Manager Daily*,

March 18, 2004

Minster Suriya said after the meeting with BTSC creditors about the

plan to nationalize BTSC that the major creditors agree to write off

at least 35% of debts (13 billion baht from 38.32 billion baht). However,

the government wants to write off more debts so that the government

can purchase BTSC at a price of not more than 30 billion baht. So far

the creditor have estimated the price of buying the BTSC system at 56.08

billion baht (The total debts of BTSC is 56.08 billion baht).

The government will go to Germany from March 29 to April 9 to negotiate

with KfW about the plan to cut down more BTSC debts—this is expected

to be done in June 2004. The BTSC stocks sold to the government must

be lower than the par price of 10 baht/share. This will help to cut

the costs for nationalization and make the negotiation with BMCL easier.

Furthermore, the joint ticket system between BTSC and BMCL will be possible

with fair rates and not create a burden on the government since the

government is going to accept BTSC workers to work with MRTA.

Furthermore, MOTC is asking MRTA to extend the free ride period from April 13 to June 2004 since the government is going to implement a joint ticket for the integrated system. Debt clearing after nationalization will cause too much of a debt's burden on the government.

There are 3 sections of BTSC debts with a total of 56.08 billion baht:

1) Debts from financial institutes: 38.32 billion baht

1.1) KFW – 26.16 billion baht

1.2) Siam Commercial Bank PCL – 6.08 billion baht

1.3) Thai Asset Management Co.Ltd. – 3.28 billion baht

1.4) IFC (World Bank) – 2.68 billion baht

2) Debts from Trading: – 5.76 billion baht

2.1) Siemens (Thailand) Co.,Ltd.

2.2) Italian Thai Development PCL.

3) Other Debts: 1 billion baht (held by shareholders)

28.21% Thanayong PCL

17.27% CTF Resources

12.67% Credit Suisse First Boston (Hong Kong)

10.46% Italian Thai Development PCL

3.82% Citibank Nominees Singapore

3.13% Land and House PCL

2.70% Chase Manhattan Trustees

2.59% Man Ping Holdings

2.08% B.Grimm Group

2.08% Siam Commercial Bank PCL

After nationalization, The government will hire BTSC to run Skytrain service as a temporary measure to keep the system running without interruption. After finishing the construction of extensions, the government will call a new competitive bid to hire and run the system with the government as regulators of the ticket prices and supervise the system to lower the price.

The comment on this issue can be seen at the [Manager site](#).

BTS Skytrain

asked to clear debts before selling itself to the government in August

2004 – translated and summarized from *Manager*

Daily, February 29, 2004 & *Thaipost*, March 1, 2004

Minister Suriya said MOTC is negotiating with BTSC about the nationalization plan which should be done by August 2004. However BTSC has to negotiate with KFW, Siam Commercial Bank and IFC (World Bank) since the debts of BTS are still high. He is afraid that nationalization of BTSC is considered as "the big bailout" which is not a good thing. MOTC must be able to explain the public how they are going to deal with the business. So far, there is 38 billion baht debt being held by the three major creditors -> 32 billion baht in principle and 6 billion baht in outstanding interest. So far, creditors have cut down the principle by 2 billion baht and outstanding interest by 6 billion baht and there is still have 30 billion baht outstanding. 30 billion baht debt will be converted into equity by 6 billion baht. The other 14 billion baht will be paid in 18 years from the current plan of 12 years.

For BMCL, the plan to sell the company will come out in the next three weeks. However, MOTC still insists that they have right to buy 25% of BMCL stock at par—not at premium as BMCL claimed.

Commentary by Wisarut: Since BTSC is not tied to Thai Rak Thai, those from Thai Rak Thai feel very reluctant to bail the company out. They just refuse to bail the company out of trouble unless they sell their stake to TRT members, but they want the debts cut so they first.

BTS-BMCL

agreeing with plan to nationalize the mass transit system – translated and summarized from *Than Setthakij*, Vol.

24 No. 1882, February 26-28, 2004

Khiree agrees to sell BTSC stock to the government as the way to help people to use the Skytrain-Subway system with convenience since he saw the determination from Premier Thaksin to deal with mass transit system integration and expansion. However, it will take time to settle the deal with the government.

Siam Syntech said it is up to the decision from Ch. Karnchang PCL to deal with the project. The government wants BTSC to clear the balance sheet before adding more capital and the government will purchase new stock which boosts BTSC capital before merging with BMCL.

BECL (subsidiary of Ch. Karnchang) said the private sector will do their best to help the system integration. If the stocks are to be purchased at very good price, they will sell.

So far the creditors of BTSC are voting for Thanayong to come up with a debt restructure plan (defeating the planners from the creditors) with 54% for Thanayong vs. 46% for Silom Planner (set up by Peregrine Fixed Income Limited -> the 95th creditor of BTSC and Credit First Boston (Hong Kong) -> the 66th creditor). Mr Khiree said his planner will proceed with their plan to cut debt to make everybody happy. BTSC is in the second rehabilitation process from August 18, 2003—due to the 39.388 billion baht debt (27.939 billion baht in outstanding principle and 11.449 billion baht outstanding interest).

Stock allocation consisted of:

33% Thanayong

45% Major Foreign Creditors (Credit First Boston, KFW, World Bank, foreign funds)

23-24% Major Local Creditors (Bangkok Bank PCL, Siam Commercial Bank PCL, Bank Thai PCL)

The other are small creditors.

For the case of BTSC, the government will purchase stock to boost the

capital of BTSC as a way to nationalize the system—after converting much of the debts into equity.

MRTA helping force BMCL

to sell stocks at par – translated and summarized from *Thaipost*, February 7, 2004

Minister Suriya said MRTA Governor has reported that MRTA has the right to purchase BMCL stock back at par since MRTA has issued the letter to confirm that MRTA has reserved the right to do so and the company has no objection to the plan even though BMCL said MRTA has forfeited the rights to purchase BMCL back since they asked after the expiration date (August 1, 2001). Minister Suriya said he will not put this issue to the mediators which would rule in favor of Ch. Karnchang PCL.

The government is also planning to purchase BTSC for the system integration.

This will maximize the public interest by cutting traffic jams. Suriya is ready to explain this issue to the public to show that the government has no hidden agenda. The purchase of BTSC is a plan to enable system integration through the nationalization and 400 billion baht public investment to ensure that the system covers all parts of the city.

Ch. Karnchang said the government has forfeited their right to purchase stock back at par, but Ch. Karnchang still allows the government to purchase stock at market price. At minimum, the government has to pay the company more than 10 billion baht in cash to purchase BMCL back.

Commentary by Wisarut: For the case of nationalization, the government should allow Krungthep Thanakhom as well as the local government to participate in this scheme since the BTSC concession was issued by BMA. Otherwise, many people will still suspect that the government has a hidden agenda since MOTC denies the right of the local government to join the system integration scheme.

BTS waiting for the

government to approve Skytrain extensions –

translated and summarized from *Thairath*,

February 2, 2004

Mr. Anat Abhabhirom (Chairman of Advisers in the BTSC Board of Directors)

said after the successful debt restructure, BTSC is going to offer an IPO to finance the extensions. Samrong Extension (8.9 km) need at least 6 billion baht to install signals and 10 sets of new rolling stock.

BTSC has a daily revenue of 7 million baht–3 million baht profit a

day. For the Taksin Extension (2.2 km), BTSC will invest in this section

immediately. On the other hand, BMA is working on the infrastructure which will take three years to be done for the Samrong and Taksin extension—long enough to get fund to handle the project.

The company expects 20,000-30,000 more daily passengers from the Taksin Extension and another 50,000 more daily passenger from Samrong Extension.

However, BMA has to wait until the cabinet allows BMA to invest in this project. The longer waiting period will delay the opening date further.

BTS is waiting for BMA to finish the construction of the stations and to install signals and systems.

The ticket prices for Taksin extension will be frozen due to the short distance and the company has invested from their own pockets and use the existing rolling stocks.

However, BTSC implies that the ticket price for Samrong extension need to be increased to the cap price (45 baht) to cover the expense of this section which goes across the Bangkok-Samut Prakarn boundary line. Furthermore, BTSC has not change the ticket prices for about four years even though the concession has allowed BTSC to readjust the ticket price in every two years according to the inflation rate. However the change of ticket prices requires negotiation between BTS and BMA.

Earlier: [Skytrain](#)

[debt deal: BTS ready for listing, more routes](#) – *The Nation*,

January 31, 2004

...*"The company's employees are not sure why the government wants to take over its operations, since the company is being run well and the plan goes against the government's policy of privatisation," he said.*

And in the [Post](#).

Both papers skirt the point that extensions are actually [on hold](#) until the Skytrain sells out to the government.

New Year's Cartoons December 31, 2004

December 31, 2004

Categories: New Year's Cartoons



Bangkok Biz News: "Say goodbye to the cruel monkey year!"

Bangkok Biz News has their editorial cartoonist recount the major events of the year in a cartoon entitled "Say goodbye to the cruel monkey year!" (2004 was the year of the monkey).

Left to right: A [tsunami wave](#) about to hit, [police](#) and [insurgents shooting](#) over an [origami paper crane](#), and an [Olympic medalist weightlifter](#).

Below that, 'Noi' or Sudarat, Minister of Public Health, next to bird-flu chickens and Deputy Agriculture and Cooperatives Minister Newin, who was insisting that local chicken were free from bird flu. To the right, Sanan Khachornprasart—Democrat power-broker and creator of the Mahachon Party—with his big ears and glass of wine (he has his own line of wines).

At right bottom is [Chuwit](#) and Banham together in a hot tub (Chuwit joined Banham's Chat Thai party this year after running an upstart campaign for [Bangkok Governor](#)).

Above them is one we cannot figure out yet: a Thai woman kneeling with a cat. Update: Several people have commented that the woman is Deputy Prime Minister Suwat—a politician once kicked out of the coalition who dissolved his party and came crawling back to be a part of TRT. The cat is the ineffectual Election Commission. Far right is PM Thaksin dressed as Santa, no doubt giving presents to the electorate. He holds a GMO papaya to symbolize that controversy and is thinking of buying the Liverpool Football Club. Opposition Democrat Banyat holds on to the back of the boat. (Thanks to Wisarut for some of the identifications.)

ThaiRath: "Sawadee Bee Kai!"

ThaiRath's December 31 edition (right) has news of the relief effort including a local movie star and UNICEF representative giving supplies to the injured. At the top of the page is a new year's cartoon with a play on words on the Thai phrase "sawadee bee mai" or "happy new year." Since the word for animal associated with 2005 is "kai" (chicken), and this rhymes with the Thai word for "new" or "mai," the cartoonist entitles the piece, "Sawadee Bee Kai."



Is this the contents of your safe?

ThaiRath also has a photo (below)

of the contents of a safe found after the tsunami hit and asks for the owner to claim it.

Matichon leads (right) with before and after satellite photos of the destruction (same as the [Post ran today](#)), other news of the disaster, and includes a blessing for the new year on the top right of the front page.



Kom Chad Luek (left) continues its banner headlines about the disaster and has a cartoon across the top showing a Thai child dressed in traditional costume and hairstyle holding his hands together in a 'wai.' Next to him are various Thai household items and a chicken—the animal associated with the year 2005.



Dailynews' colorful front page (right), has a new year's wish at the top, a headline about the 6000 missing, and a photo of tennis star Maria Sharapova giving a donation for the relief effort.



Tokyo Ski Dome demolished

December 31, 2004

Categories: Nothing to do with Thailand, but Interesting

[Tokyo](#)

[Ski Dome demolished](#) – December, 2004

In 1993 the Ski Dome SSAWS (located in Chiba, Tokyo, Japan), which stands for Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter Snow, opened its doors. In 2004 it was gone. SSAWS, also known as Tokyo Ski Dome was the worlds first and largest indoor ski area ever built. Even in the hottest Summer you could enjoy skiing on a 500 meter snow covered slope with a 80 meter vertical drop.

Unfortunately it was not as successful as planned and closed its doors in 2001. After a lengthy planning period the demolishing of SSAWS started in Autumn 2003 leaving the whole area covered in fine white dust for months. This documentations shows impressions of the demolishing until the end in Spring 2004 and gives you an idea how huge this building was.

Press corps' annual nicknames revealed

December 31, 2004

Categories: Thai Politics

[Press corps' annual nicknames revealed](#)

– *The Nation*, December 31, 2004

For instance: *Commerce Minister Watana Muangsook:*

“Ua Arthorn In-law”- As an in-law in the family

owning the country's number one food conglomerate,

his work at the Ministry of Commerce was seen as overlapping

with the interests of the business in an “Ua Arthorn”

style...