

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha presides over the opening ceremony of a new motorway from Bangkok to Ban Chang and from Pattaya to Map Ta Phut in Rayong yesterday. It is hoped the route will serve to expand trade and investment, boost transport and logistics and benefit tourism.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE PHOTO



## TRANSPORT

# Prayut applauds 'crucial' new Bangkok motorway

**MONGKOL BANGPRAPA**

A new motorway from Bangkok to Chon Buri and Rayong provinces was opened by the prime minister yesterday.

"The route is Thailand's first-ever inter-city motorway connecting land, water and air transportation systems," said Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha. "The route also connects tourist sites, industrial estates and agricultural areas in the eastern region."

Gen Prayut said the motorway would be "crucial" to the country's export sector since it leads to a gateway of international trade and links with the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC), which will transform the eastern region.

The motorway is key to the government's 20-year national strategy and will help to expand trade and investment

opportunities, distribute income more equitably to rural areas, stimulate tourism and shorten travel times.

The PM thanked all involved, including government organisations, businesses and residents who gave up their land to make the new motorway possible.

The Pattaya-Map Ta Phut route passes through Chon Buri and Rayong provinces, connecting with Highway 7 in Chon Buri and Highway 3 in Ban Chang district, Rayong.

The 32-kilometre motorway cost 17.78 billion baht and a trial service opened for the public in March, with one tollgate at U-Tapao.

Two more tollgates, at Huay Yai and Khao Chi On, opened on Aug 24, with rates expected to be 1-2.3 baht/kilometre.