

# Govt confirms motorway payouts

## Denies expropriation default accusation

**MONGKOL BANGPRAPA**

The government yesterday insisted that land owners whose property was expropriated for construction of the Bang Pa-in-Nakhon Ratchasima elevated motorway have received compensation.

A total of 6.6 billion baht had been approved by the cabinet for paying land expropriation costs to people entitled to receive it.

The compensation was paid between 2016 and 2020, government spokesperson Anucha Burapachaisri said.

He was responding to claims by activist Srisuwan Janya that the compensation payments were delayed and some were excluded from the payouts.

Mr Anucha said 361 people had not yet picked up their compensation cheques as they had appealed against the offered rates, feeling they were too low.

Payments amounting to 415 million baht, earmarked for those in the appeal process, are expected to be approved in the next fiscal year.

Those not satisfied with the results

of their appeals can file claims with the Administrative Court, he said.

Seksakol Atthawong, a vice minister at the Prime Minister's Office, said all recipients of land expropriation money were being treated equally.

He said Mr Srisuwan should have at least studied the facts about the compensation payments before making accusations and misleading the public.

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha will today preside over a ceremony to allow motorists to use part of what will be new M6 motorway during the Songkran holiday, Mr Anucha said.

A section of the motorway from Pak Chong district to Sikhiu district in Nakhon Ratchasima will be opened during the Songkran holiday, he said.

The outbound lanes of the motorway will be open to four-wheeled vehicles only, from Friday until next Tuesday and the inbound lanes from next Wednesday to April 19, he said.

The use of the motorway is free of charge and should help ease traffic on Mitraphap Road by 40%, he said.

Normally more than 100,000 vehicles use Mitraphap Road each day. Twice that amount of traffic is expected during next week's holiday period, he said.

"The Bang Pa-in-Nakhon Ratchasima motorway is thought to be the most beautiful elevated route in the country," he said, referring to scenic

views along the way including those overlooking the Lam Ta Klong reservoir.

The 84.6-billion-baht construction project, running through Ayutthaya, Saraburi and Nakhon Ratchasima, is now 94% complete and is expected to be fully operational by 2023, he said.

Also, the M7 motorway from Bangkok to Pattaya and M9 from Bang Pa-in to Bang Khunthian will also be toll-free from April 9-16, according to the Department of Highways.

The department announced it will work with the Highway Police and other government agencies to jointly operate 421 service points 24/7 on roads all over the country during the Songkran holiday.