

**ROADS**

OTP pushes B1.2 trillion of motorways

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The Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning (OTP) has floated seven motorway projects at a cost of 1.27 trillion baht.

The projects, covering 2,796 kilometres, are included in the country's motorway development masterplan, which would be handed to the Transport Ministry to consider, putting them in the national strategy, OTP deputy director Chayathan Promsorn said.

The North-Northeast route is divided into three sections — Tak-Phitsanulok, Phitsanulok-Phetchabun and Phetchabun-Khon Kaen.

The Central Plains-North highway is divided into three parts — Nakhon Sawan- Phitsanulok, Phitsanulok- Uttaradit and Uttaradit-Lampang.

The Northeast road involves two sections — Nakhon Ratchasima-Khon Kaen and Khon Kaen-Nong Khai.

The road in the South is split into four sections — Phetchaburi's Cha-am district-Chumphon, Chumphon-Surat Thani, Surat Thani-Songkhla and

Songkhla-Narathiwat.

The so-called Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) route concerns two sections — Laem Chabang Port (Chon Buri)-Prachin Buri and Prachin Buri-Nakhon Ratchasima.

The sixth connects Bangkok with Sa Kaeo and the final motorway concerns a Chon Buri-Rayong section and a Rayong-Trat stretch.

Mr Chayathan said the Bangkok-Sa Kaeo motorway, called M71 Section 1, as well as the Nakhon Sawan-Phitsanulok route, called M5 Section 3, would be constructed first as pilot schemes.

The locations where the motorways are to be built require suitability in terms of road structure, intersections as well as toll gates and other services such as rest stops.

Department of Highways (DoH) director-general Anon Luangboriboon said the motorway master plan requires a joint discussion with the Transport Ministry. He expressed confidence the new plan would not disrupt a 3-5 year motorway development plan ironed out by the DoH.