

**CITY**

Highways Dept sorry for gridlock

POST REPORTERS

The Department of Highways apologised to the public yesterday for chronic traffic congestion on Rama II Road where ongoing construction to increase the number of traffic lanes has caused severe congestion.

The department's deputy director-general, Kamol Muntham, begged for understanding yesterday, saying that Rama II Road, which is used by more than 200,000 large lorries daily, is the main throughway for traffic to the southern region.

The move comes after complaints posted on social media about bumper-to-bumper congestion on the road went viral.

Mr Kamol said the traffic chaos was the result of a road construc-

tion project which the department launched to improve the Bang Khunthian-Ekkachai interchange stretch covering a distance of 11.7km.

The project is divided into three phases. The first phase covers 3.5km encompassing the distance from Bang Khunthian to Samae Dam Interchange. The second phase is 4.1km and covers Samae Dam-Soi Phanthai Norasing. The third phase, which is also about 4.1km covers Soi Phanthai Norasing-Maha Chai Muang Mai.

Under the project, traffic lanes on the inbound and outbound lanes of Rama II will be increased from 10 to 14, Mr Kamol said.

More specifically, one lane on the service road and main road of the inbound section and one lane on the service road and main road of the outbound section will be added. In addition, two U-turn bridges will also be added.

Construction is expected to finish in three months.

When completed, the expansion will accommodate additional traffic flow, Mr Kamol said.