

Rama II roadworks irk locals

Dept promises to fix 'never-ending' chaos

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The Department of Highways (DoH) is stepping in to resolve critical traffic woes stemming from improvement work on Rama II Road that has dragged on for two years.

DoH chief Anond Luengboriboon said the department will coordinate with other agencies to tackle traffic woes caused by the project.

There have been reports of frequent road accidents and heavy congestion on the 11-kilometre stretch.

Additional police and traffic officials will be drafted in to try to keep traffic moving and more safety features will be installed and road signs erected along the road.

The road improvements are needed to prepare for construction of the 10-km Bang Khunthian-Mahachai elevated road costing 10 billion baht.

A firm has been selected for the project and construction is expected to start immediately after the contract is signed at the end of next month, according to the DoH.

Mr Anond was speaking after a group calling itself "Rama II Road Loving Residents" staged a protest outside Wat Panthai Norasinga in Muang district to voice their frustration over slow roadworks progress.

The group put up placards demanding the government hurry the project

along, charging that "never-ending" construction has caused dust pollution and traffic gridlock.

The project involves improving the road connecting to the Bang Khunthian-Ekkachai ramp. The main section of the road, in both outbound and inbound directions, is being widened from three to four lanes. The adjacent frontage lanes are also being enlarged.

The work also involves laying a new water drainage pipe and installing more roadside lighting. Bridges crossing Khlong Bang Nam Jued and Khlong Kok Kwai are also being expanded with a U-turn ramp being built over the railway bridge.

The time it has taken, however, has enraged residents, who through the group have submitted a letter of complaint to Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha and the transport minister.

Apichart Pairungrueng, president of the Federation of Land Transport of Thailand who was also at the rally, insisted the protest was not against the project.

He said there appeared to be a long delay in winding down the road improvements, which has crippled traffic. Also, the work has made the road unsafe to use.

If the problem continued unabated, residents would voice their grievances with the prime minister in person, Mr Apichart said.

Meanwhile, Wutthichai Thawee-kanchanawat, Samut Sakhon's chief traffic inspector, said the traffic snarls were particularly bad between the Samae Dum area of Bangkok and the adjoining district of Samut Sakhon.