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## Kra Isthmus history (The Thai-Canal)

The idea of digging the Kra Isthmus or a canal to connect the Andaman Coast and the Thai Coast together have been evident in:-

1. **Ayudthaya Era**, in the reign of king Narai the Great, when Siam (now known as Thailand) opened to trade with European Countries
2. **Early Rattanakosin Era**, Baworn Mahasurasihanat, Prince of the second rank, was the first Thai to issue the Thai Canal dig, to join the Andaman Coast with the Thai Coast
3. **In the reign of King Rama 1<sup>st</sup>** around the year 1793 Baworn Mahasurasihanat, Prince of the second rank, issued the canal dig to connect both sides of Thailand (there is written evidence)
4. **In the reign of King Rama 4<sup>th</sup>** around the year 1858, England proposed for the King's permission to dig the canal in the Ranong-Langsuan route which is the shortest. The King approved but they ran out of funds ending the dig. In the year 1863 , England surveyed the shortest route but got stuck by not having enough tools to dig through the mountain ridge. In the year 1866-1868, the Thai canal is known throughout the world, France, after completing the Suez Canal negotiated to dig the Canal. King Rama 4<sup>th</sup> did not approve by reasons of the Kingdom's security.
5. **In the reign of King Rama 5<sup>th</sup>** around the year 1872, Captain A. G. Lopton R.N. a English delegate came to survey the canal line again, in the Ranaong-Chumporn route. The survey shows that the canal is possible to dig but the king disapproves for international political reasons.
6. **In the reign of King Rama 6<sup>th</sup>** around the year 1917, the King was interested in the Kra Isthmus, the King saw that the canal would benefit and bring prosperity to the nation but the King had the same international political problems. The King disapproved the canal dig.

7. **Preedi Phanomhyong**, in the year 1935 during being Minister of Interior, brought the canal project back for consideration. When the canal is complete, Thailand must have the authority over the canal, so Thailand cannot depend on other countries to dig the canal. Thailand at that time did not have the funds to dig the canal so the project was canceled.

8. **In the year 1946, after the World War II**, Thailand had to sign an agreement to cancel the war status with England. Verse 7 in that agreement forbade Thailand in digging a canal to join the India Ocean to the Thai coast without England's approval. Which states the impact of the canal to the Malay Peninsula trade? However, in the year 1954, the agreement was canceled.

9. **In the year 1960**, Chao Chaokwanyhun and Co. in the name of Lhamtong Pattana Co. proposed the Thai government to revive the Kra isthmus project and requesting permission to study the Kra canal and port. The government approved both the requests but on 31 March 1964, the National Security Council restrained the contract for security reasons and to avoid the southern separation problem.

10. **In the year 1970**, with permission from the Ministry of Interior, Chao hired TAMS corporation to study the economical feasibility of the Kra Isthmus dig. The study indicates that the optimum route is the Satul-Songkla route

11. **In the year 1973**, a proposal of the Kra Canal was sent to the government but there was a change of governments.

12. **In the year 1982**, a group of people's representatives from the Charthai party lead by Mrs. Yupa Udomsak, a representative from Pijitr province proposed the Krabi canal dig at Ranong province. Mr. Chumpol Silapa-archa was the head of the committee to study the Kra canal dig. The study was canceled with national security reasons.

13. **Lieutenant General Harn Lelanon** commander of the 4 division proposed to a revival of the Kra Canal dig to create prosperity in the south, the House of Representatives appointed a committee to study the project but the government was dissolved.

14. **In the year 1983**, the Executive Intelligence Review (EIR) and the Fusion Energy Foundation (FEF) held a seminar about the Kra Isthmus and the feasibility of the

project. The seminar had support from the Ministry of the Transportation, which had Mr. Samak Suntoravej as Minister.

15. In the year 1984, the FEF office in Thailand with support from the Thai American Embassy contacted the Ministry of Transportation to hold a seminar for businessmen, technical specialists and government organizations involved to brainstorm ideas about the Kra Isthmus dig and create a report proposed to American investors. Mr. Samak Suntoravej as Minister of Transportation fully supported the project, the study went along well but there was a problem in the governmental parties, General Prem Tinasulanon, Prime Minister declared the dissolution of the government

16. In the year 1986, General Prem Tinasulanon as Prime Minister, the Kra Isthmus Canal dig went along well, Japan and America proposed to be the project investor. Dr. Bunrod Bintasan head of specialists disapproved of the project and wouldn't let foreigners be the investors in the project. Dr. Bunrod Bintasan and his team proposed a new alternative about the Kra Isthmus canal to the government. Their alternative was to have the canal as a cooperation project with countries in the peninsula especially in funds and technology, but Thailand and Thai citizens must be the majority. They proposed a new name for the Kra Isthmus canal, "the Golden Peninsula Development Project" but General Prem's government did not respond. The House of Representatives appointed a new committee to continue the previous committee with Mr. Wattana Assawahem, a representative from Samut Prakarn province leading the committee.

17. In the year 1987, the special committee made a lot of progress by cooperating with high officials in the government including high-ranking officers in the three military forces. They went to study the Suez and Panama Canal and the technologies in building dams and water control systems in the Netherlands to apply for use with the Kra Isthmus Canal dig. However, there was an economical crisis with the deflation of the Thai Baht, making problems in funds. There was a worldwide deflation as a chain reaction making the Kra Isthmus Canal project stop.

18. In the year 1988, General Chatchai Chunhawan as Prime Minister, clearly supported the project. He emphasized on foreign investment as a concession, harvesting from the government. There were investors from Japan, Taiwan and Germany

proposing for investment, the Japanese investors were the first to propose to the government. The Japanese company, DIALCHISOGYO made a contract signed by Mr. Taka Kiyoshi, CEO to General Chatchai Chunhawan.

19. On 6<sup>th</sup> february 1990, Japanese financial tycoons are ready to support the Kra Isthmus Canal but General Chatchai Chunhawan emphasized to open the indo-china region so he stressed on the “Eastern Seaboard” or the Eastern Coast development project and stress his whole time to the project. The Kra Isthmus project was second in priorities and was on hold till the coup d’tet by the National Order Group.

20. In the year 1992, General Sujinda Kraprayul as Prime Minister, was not interested in the Kra Isthmus Canal project till the “Bloody May” incident and General Sujinda Kraprayul resigned.

21. In the year 1992, there was a public election, Mr. Chuan Leagpai, head of democrat party was elected as Prime Minister. On 10<sup>th</sup> November 1992, the Kra Isthmus Research foundation, founded by a cooperation of a number of public organizations, applied for support from the government in the whole system study of the Kra Isthmus project. However, the government’s attitude from the democrat party which held the lead in the government was in disapproval of the project. The attitude came from the representatives from the southern provinces by the reason that the project would create confusion for the foreign investors between the Southern Seaboard Project and the Kra Isthmus Canal Project. The result was, the foundation restrained the request to Mr. Chuan abruptly.

As for the Japanese investors, they still held interest in the Kra Canal project. Ichinawachina Hard Industries (IHI) declared interest in investing in the Kra canal project and was looking for allies in the project, whether Japanese or not. The company’s executives also expressed basic interest in funding a full project which is investment in construction and administration but after that there was no more progress from this Japanese firm or other foreigners.

Other than that, there was objection from politicians, by reasons of security. They claimed that the canal dig would separate the country in to two parts and may bring the lost of the southern provinces by seperationists. They also accused the project supporters of receiving money from muslim countries, the root of terrorism. Some

politicians even quoted the constitution that states that “Thailand is as one, that nobody can separate” which turned out to a joke because “Thailand” means the whole country, not only the land or territory but the power in governing the country which is given by the King, so the canal dig does not violate the constitution at all.

**22. In the year 1994**, the government led by Mr. Chuan Leagpai did not give interest in the Kra Canal Project because the government turn their interest to the Second International Airport (Nhong Ngu Haow) in Samut Prakarn province till the problems of the government increased and the government dissolved.

**23. In the 1996**, the government led by Mr. Banharn Silapa-Archa as Prime Minister with the majority in the Kwam Whung Mai (NEW ASPIRATION) party were not interested in the Kra Canal Project.

**24. In the year 1997**, General Chaowalit Yongjaiyut as Prime Minister. The Kra Canal project is still unattended because the government continued the International Airport Project from the previous government but assigned Mr. Dhen Toh-Mena, Head of Advisors of the Prime Minister, to study the feasibility of the project with the Economical and Social development committee and the National Security Council. In late 1997, General Chaowalit Yongchaiyut's government met a financial crisis, Mr. Tanong Pittaya, as Minister of Treasury declared the free float of the Thai Baht currency, the declaration made the crisis a financial disaster. General Chaowalit resigned from Prime Minister. The Kra Canal Project was on hold once again.

**25. In Late 1997**, Mr. Chuan Leagpai as Prime Minister for a second time. There is no record of any study involving the Kra Isthmus Canal project because the country was correcting the financial crisis.

**26. In the year 2001**, The Thai Senate with Mr. Kamnuan Chalopatham a senator from Singburi province revived the Kra Isthmus Canal project again with approval from the House of Senators. He appointed a special committee to study the feasibility of the project. On 17<sup>th</sup> May 2001, the government with Dr. Taksin Shinawatra as Prime Minister, appointed a national committee to study the feasibility of the Kra Isthmus dig to help solving the economical and social crisis under the supervision and policy of General Chaowalit Yongjaiyut, Vice Minister and Minister of Defiance.

27. In Late 2005, House of senators reached consensus on Thai Canal Project at 4:09 pm. on Friday 24 June 2005.

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