

Hua Lamphong rail routes get reprieve

Trains to continue running as impact study carried out

POST REPORTERS

The State Railway of Thailand (SRT) has said all train services will remain operational at Hua Lamphong station after tomorrow as it waits several weeks for the results of an impact assessment.

An order was made by Transport Minister Saksayam Chidchob at a meeting for the committee on the Red Line suburban train system about the continuation of rail services from Hua Lamphong.

As part of that, the meeting revised an earlier plan that reduced the number of trains heading to the station.

Previously, the ministry ordered a reduction in rail services from the station to 22 trains per day in a bid to lessen the use of level crossings that were causing traffic jams in various parts of Bangkok.

SRT governor Nirut Maneephan said Hua Lamphong will now continue to provide 40 trains each day for commercial and public services, while six trains will also be provided for tourism purposes at weekends.

Mr Nirut said the plan to cut train services at Hua Lamphong had been in place since the cabinet approved the Red Line project in 2006. The project aims to bring more long-distance trains to stop at Bang Sue Grand Station which will soon become Bangkok's rail system hub.

Long-distance trains and commercial service trains will operate from Bang Sue Grand Station where they will be able to connect with other major rail projects.

In order to reach the best decision, Mr Saksayam instructed the SRT to carry out an impact assessment that included looking into the routes of freight transport trains and the facilitation of traffic.

The impact assessment will help gauge the best way forward for Hua Lamphong, Mr Nirut said.

He said that it will be finished within 30 days or by next month, while all trains will remain operational at the station during this time.

Mr Nirut said that the SRT will work with the Transport Ministry, the Rail Transport Department, the Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning and academics from educational institutions to carry out the assessment that will examine what the impact on commuters will be after the changes are made to the relevant rail routes.

A public hearing will be held again later to determine the fate of the development of Hua Lamphong in the future, Mr Nirut said.