

Hurry up with 2nd Nong Khai-Vientiane bridge, SRT told

The State Railway of Thailand (SRT) has been urged to seek immediate funding so the construction of the second bridge over the Mekong River can be speeded up.



The bridge aims to link Thailand's railway system to the China-Laos high-speed railway so goods can be more easily transported.

Transport Minister Saksayam Chidchob said on Friday that the SRT had received this order at a meeting chaired by Deputy PM Anutin Charnvirakul on Thursday. The meeting was with the committee in charge of integrating agencies' work on implementing the Thai-Lao-Chinese railway project.

At the meeting, Anutin told SRT to immediately seek funding from the central budget so the designing and building of the bridge in Nong Khai can be accelerated.

Separately, the meeting also agreed to include representatives of the Public Health Ministry and Council of State in the Anutin-led committee.

Saksayam added that the officials also approved a framework for holding more talks with Laos and China about extending the high-speed railway to Thailand. If negotiations are successful, the framework will be upgraded into a memorandum of understanding with a binding effect on the three nations, Saksayam added.

The meeting also resolved to set up a sub-committee to follow up on the progress of all relevant agencies regarding the implementation of the railway project, Saksayam added.

The China-Laos railway, or the Boten-Vientiane railway, began operating in early December and Thailand's exports via Nong Khai began surging almost immediately, Saksayam said.

He said the volume of goods crossing the Nong Khai border last month came in at 304,119 tonnes worth Bt6.91 billion compared to 116,552 tonnes valued at Bt4.64 billion in December 2020.

He added that the value of imports via Nong Khai also rose substantially because the railway is 25 per cent cheaper and takes far less time.

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<https://www.nationthailand.com/in-focus/40011090>