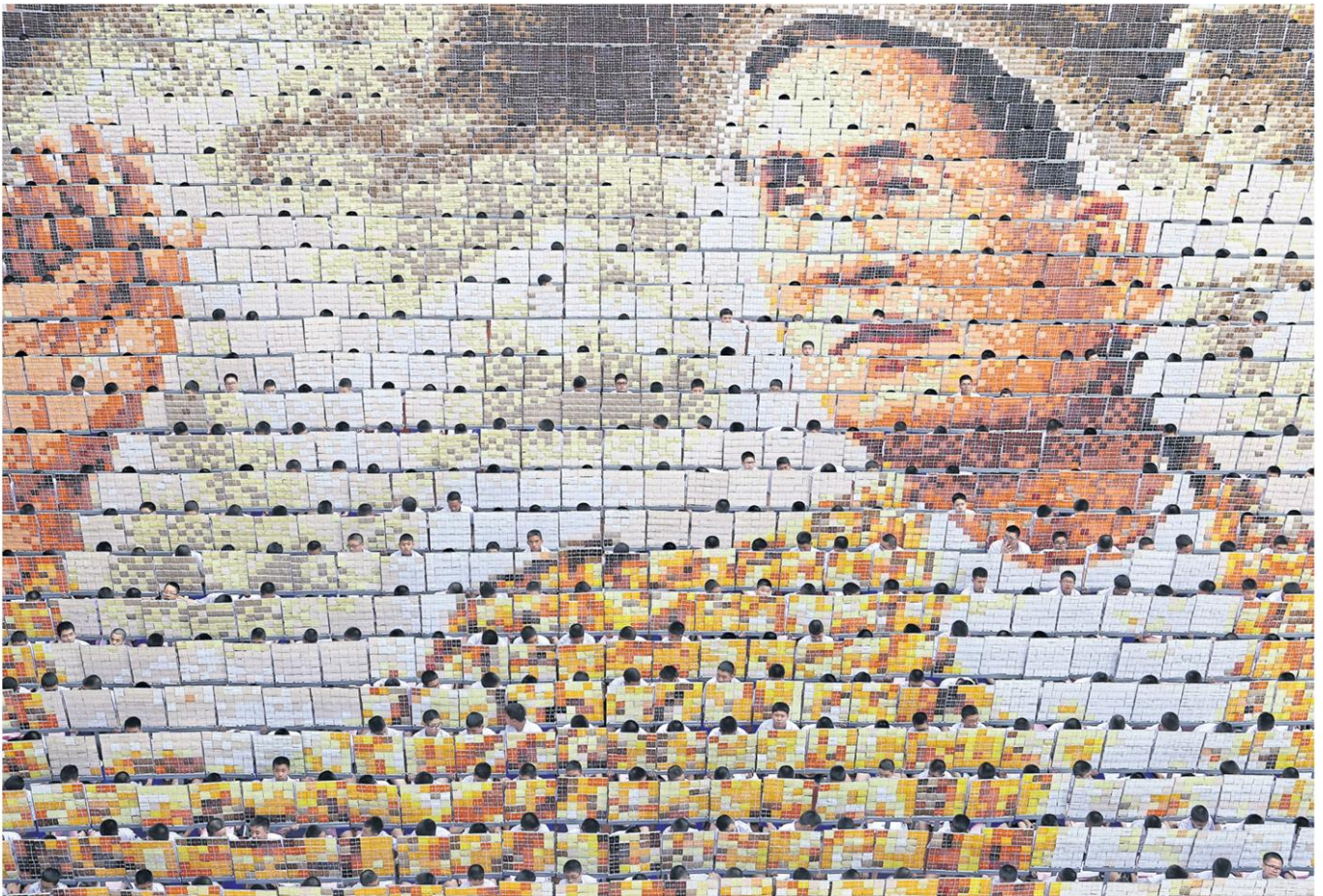


HIS MAJESTY KING BHUMIBOL ADULYADEJ | 1927-2016

Public gets travel boost to mourn



Tens of thousands to visit throne hall today

POST REPORTERS

All public transport services have been boosted to full capacity to accommodate tens of thousands of mourners who will

today be allowed to pay their respects before the King's body in the Dusit Maha Prasat Throne Hall.

Officials from various agencies have been working round the clock to ensure safety and accommodate the continuous arrival of mourners this weekend, with about 3,000 police officers to be deployed around the Grand Palace, Sanam Luang and adjacent areas to help with secu-

MAIN PHOTO

A total of 1,250 students and teachers at Assumption College in Bangkok's Bang Rak district form a mosaic depicting His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej in a school activity to pay respects to the late King.JIRAPORN KUHAHAN



riety and traffic.

The joint Peace and Order Administration Centre, which was set up to provide optimal surveillance during the occasion, has launched an operation to boost security around the venue.

This includes encouraging homeless people whose number has increased to more than 100 in recent days not to set up camp in the area and advising street vendors to behave appropriately during the occasion.

Tens of thousands of mourners are expected to turn up today, the first day that mourners are allowed inside the Dusit Maha Prasat Throne Hall, even though the government says the number will be limited to 10,000 a day.

The throne hall will be open to mourners to pay their respects from 8am to 9pm every day, but it will be closed to the public from time to time during royal merit-making ceremonies.

Groups of 70 people will be led inside the throne hall each time and those who participate must obtain queue numbers first.

According to Maj Gen Pongsawat Panchit, deputy commander of the joint centre, queue numbers will be handed out at Sanam Luang opposite the Supreme Court.

At present no queue numbers are being issued online, according to Maj

Gen Pongsawat.

Of the 10,000 people to be allowed inside the throne hall, about 3,000 will be people who have travelled from provinces across the country with assistance from the Interior Ministry.

Transport Ministry Arkhom Termpitayapaisith said ferries, passenger boats and large privately owned vessels with a carrying capacity of 200-400 passengers have been arranged to service the mourners free of charge this weekend. Together, they can accommodate up to 100,000 people.

He said eight patrol boats will be deployed to ensure safety while marine officials will make sure the boats do not carry more than the capacity allowed to avoid accidents.

Almost 1,000 public buses and shuttle buses including 100 buses by private companies will be in service free of charge and a fleet of 100 buses has been put on standby. The buses can accommodate about 200,000 passengers.

More train carriages have been added to free train services between Bangkok and Surin, Khon Kaen and Phitsanulok while Bangkok-Chachoengsao, Bangkok-Nakhon Pathom and Bangkok-Thon Buri train services will be more frequent.

The Transport Co, which provides inter-provincial bus services, has also increased trips by 25%. The buses can

LEFT

Mahayana Buddhist monks at Wat Thung Setthi in Bangkok's Prawet district take part in a ceremony paying respects to the late King to mark 15 days since his passing. THANARAK KHUNTON

now serve 300,000 passengers a day.

Mourners are being strongly urged to park and ride as heavy traffic is expected.

PM's Office Minister Suwaphan Tanyuwardhana said the number is still limited to 10,000 per day but the government will assess the situation on a daily basis and make adjustments if needed.

He said there is no need for the public to rush to join the event because the last date for paying respects to His Majesty the King has not been specified.

He said authorities have held talks with tour operators to make sure tourists and mourners can share the area as the Grand Palace is scheduled to be reopened to tourists on Nov 1.

According to Mr Suwaphan, authorities have also stepped up security around Sanam Luang to keep the area in order after some vendors occupied public space to sell their wares.

Meanwhile, authorities in the provinces are also making preparations to help people who want to travel to Bangkok to pay their respects to the late King.

Phuket has started a registration process for people who want to join the event in Bangkok. The province will take a total of 3,000 people on Nov 6, Nov 25, Dec 14 and Jan 2 next year.

A total of 750 people from Kalasin are among the first who will pay respects before the late King today. A total of 17 buses left the province last night and are due to arrive in Bangkok at 11am.

About 350 will leave Khon Kaen today in a caravan of seven buses and arrive in Bangkok tomorrow. Up to 4,000 people have registered to join the trip.

Yesterday was the last day mourners were allowed to pay tribute before His Majesty's portrait and sign condolence books at the Sahathai Samakom Pavilion in the Grand Palace.

The pavilion closed at 4pm yesterday after it was opened to the public on Oct 14. More than 44,000 people paid their respects before the late King's portrait yesterday. Over 475,000 people have paid their respects before the late King's portrait over the past 14 days.

The Royal Household Bureau has urged the public to strictly follow its suggestions when they pay tribute to the late King in the Dusit Maha Prasat Throne Hall.

Editorial: Page 8

Commentary: Page 9

In the service of Majesty: Page 11

Photos: Page 12