

# UNITED HEMISPHERES

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The Connection

## updates



Bangkok  
Thailand

## To Thailand, Now!

A splendid new airport will make the capital city a regional gateway.

WITH THE OPENING THIS YEAR OF THE SUVARNABHUMI AIRPORT, THAILAND WILL POSITION itself as the aviation hub of Southeast Asia. The airport, which replaces the overburdened Don Muang International, was begun in 2002 after lingering some 30 years in the pipeline. Now complete, the airport celebrated its **inauguration in September**, and commercial flights are expected to begin soon. Suvarnabhumi (pronounced *su-wanna-poom*), meaning "Golden Land," is about 18 miles (30 kilometers) **east of Bangkok** in an area known as Nong Ngu Hao, or "Cobra Swamp." It can be reached by highways from downtown Bangkok, and plans call for access by high-speed rail. The complex covers **20 square miles** (32 square kilometers) with runways, cargo and passenger terminals, parking areas, catering

The existing Don Muang International in Bangkok is the world's oldest airport on its original site. It celebrated 90 years in 2005.

facilities, maintenance locations, a hotel, a water supply, a flood prevention system, and an air traffic control center. The airport's control tower is the world's tallest, at 432 feet, or 132 meters. The passenger terminal has **360 check-in desks, 120 gates**, and accommodations for handling **45 million passengers a year**. The structures incorporate leading-edge technology sure to catch the visitor's eye. Although construction has been dogged by disagreements, the wait will surely seem worth it when this exciting new "city" for travelers begins to hum. ■—*Ron Emmons*



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—*Spencer Carney*



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