



AS IT IS

Thai Government Explains Official Name Change for Bangkok

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Thailand's government recently provided new guidance on how the official name of the capital, Bangkok, would be used internationally.

The guidance, however, caused some **confusion**. Some people thought it meant that English speakers would need to start calling Bangkok by its longer, local name, Krung Thep Maha Nakhon.

But Thailand's Royal Society recently explained that the new guidance did not mean that people should stop calling the capital Bangkok. The Royal Society is responsible for creating academic and language guidelines for the country.

In its recent guidance, the agency said the capital would now be officially known internationally as "Krung Thep Maha Nakhon (Bangkok)." This was a change from the old guidance, which described the capital as "Krung Thep Maha Nakhon; Bangkok."

As people tried to understand the meaning of the new guidance, many saw the use of **parentheses** around Bangkok as a sign that the short form may no longer be welcomed like before.

The short name for the capital means "great city of angels" in Thai. When speaking, most Thais shorten that name to Krung Thep.

Some language experts wondered if the new guidance would lead to difficulties for people not aware of the capital's longer, official name. As the issue gained attention in Thailand, the Royal Society released a statement on Facebook explaining that its new guidance simply represented a **stylistic** change.

“Writing the capital city's official name with the Roman alphabet can be done both as Krung Thep Maha Nakhon and Bangkok,” the statement said.

What some people may not know is that even the term used by Thais to describe the capital is a shortened version of the official name. That name, which has roots in the Pali and Sanskrit languages, stretches 168 letters. It is more of a phrase to describe the city than a traditional name.

The Guinness World Records organization [lists](#) Bangkok's extremely long official name as the world's longest place name.

I'm Bryan Lynn.

The Associated Press reported on this story. Bryan Lynn adapted the report for VOA Learning English.

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Words in This Story

confusion – *n.* a state in which people do not understand what is happening or what they should do

parentheses – *n.* two curved lines that are used around extra information or information that should be considered separate

stylistic – *adj.* relating to a particular style of doing something