

**NEW YEAR**

# Making some merit tops the to-do list

**POST REPORTERS**

Almost 40% of Bangkok residents plan to make merit to celebrate New Year, another 30% will return to their home towns in other provinces, while the rest would rather stay home, according to a poll conducted by the Bangkok University Research Centre.

The pollster interviewed 1,147 respondents aged over 18 living in 23 out of Bangkok's 50 districts between Dec 14-18.

Asked what they intended to do over New Year, 83.8% planned to travel outside the capital or to other regions. Of them, 37.6% wanted to visit temples to make merit, 28.8% said they would visit relatives upcountry.

Meanwhile, 20.8% intend to go shopping and eat out in their neighbourhoods in the city, 17% plan to go sightseeing in other provinces, 16.2% said they will relax at home, while 1.3% will travel abroad.

Asked what concerned them most about going on New Year trips, 64.6% of respondents leaving the capital were worried about traffic congestion, 60.7% voiced concerns over road accidents, and 34.4% did not want overcrowded tourists spots.

Of the group, 19.5% worried about being ripped off with overpriced food and accommodation, while 5.7% feared acts of terrorism.

Those asked why they chose to remain at home, 44.5% said they wanted to avoid traffic congestion, 42% said they wanted to save money, and 35.5% said they want to avoid overcrowded tourist attractions.

Meanwhile, those wanting to pay tribute to the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej and Her Majesty Queen Sirikit can attend a prayer ceremony at Dusit Palace today at 6pm. His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch and another 275 monks will recite the prayer.