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# THE BILL

## PUBLIC PETITION TO SUPPORT DRAFT LAW FOR PHUKET AUTONOMY

Phuket MP Somchart Techathavorncharoen  
with a draft of the 'Phuket Metropolis Act'.  
Photo: Supplied



**Natnaree Likidwatanasakun**  
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Phuket needs just 10,000 signatures of eligible voters – from anywhere in the country – in order to have a draft bill presented to Parliament that will give Phuket 'Special Administrative Status' – and greater autonomy in resolving the island's own issues.

Phuket MP Somchart Techathavorncharoen is spearheading the people-powered push to pass the Phuket Metropolitan Administration Act, with a goal of collecting 10,000 citizen signatures – the constitutional threshold for submitting a draft law to Parliament.

MP Somchart announced the petition at an event to explain the move and the need for Phuket to have greater autonomy held last Saturday (July 26).

Under the draft law, Phuket people would elect their own Governor, MP Somchart noted.

"I plan to visit all 17 sub-districts [tambon] in Phuket to gather support," he said. "We will launch the petition in mid-August, and we will announce the details as soon as they become available."

"Anyone with a Thai 13-digit ID card from anywhere in the country can sign in support. If we gather more than 10,000 names, even better," Mr Somchart said. "It is open to anyone who believes in and supports decentralisation."

Mr Somchart emphasised that decentralisation is the only way to break the cycle of corruption embedded in Thailand's centralised system. "Corruption happens most where power is concentrated – at the centre. That's why it's time to transfer power to the people," he said.

He warned that fears about local corruption are often used to resist reform, but argued that local governance allows for greater accountability.

"If a corrupt official lives in Phuket, people can knock on their door and protest. But when power comes from Bangkok, there's no access, no accountability. The people are left powerless," he added.

The proposed law would allow Phuket to elect its own governor and take over decision-making powers currently held by central ministries, including issuing permits and managing infrastructure.

MP Somchart said this would help unblock long-delayed development, such as the light rail project, stalled for decades due to reliance on Bangkok's budget and approvals.

"For 20-30 years we've been stuck. To improve the infrastructures, we need approval from the Phuket forestry office, the national parks office, the expressway authority – everything has to go through Bangkok. That's why nothing gets done," he told *The Phuket News*.

MP Somchart collaborated with the Phuket Citizens Council and national legal experts to draft the bill. He emphasised that unlike previous decentralisation discussions, this is the first serious legal draft for Phuket, written with public input and legal oversight.

While 20 MPs could agree to submit the bill, he insists on pushing it through as a true people's draft to prevent rejection from political motives.

"If any party rejects this bill, they're rejecting the 10,000 citizens behind it. That reveals who..."

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# Phuket fights for self-governance

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...truly supports decentralisation – and who doesn't," he said

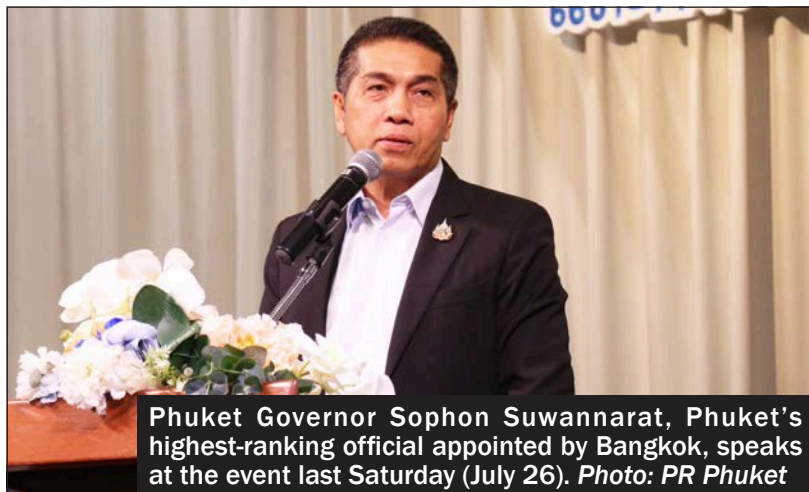
He added that public scrutiny would be stronger under local rule, as oversight agencies like the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) and the Phuket Provincial Audit Office can better track corruption when power is decentralised and closer to the people.

"Developed countries began with decentralisation. If we want real change, we must stop fearing it and be open to a new system," MP Somchart said.

## PHUKET NEEDS CONTROL

Fellow Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee also joined the call for decentralisation, citing Phuket as a glaring example of the failure of Thailand's centralised administrative system.

"If there is any province that reflects the deformity of government under central control, it's Phuket," MP Chalermpong said. "It's time for Phuket to take care of itself."



Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat, Phuket's highest-ranking official appointed by Bangkok, speaks at the event last Saturday (July 26). Photo: PR Phuket

Phuket, the country's top tourism province, generated nearly B500 million (B497,523.93 mn) in income from tourism in 2024, attracting around 13-14 million visitors, he said.

"Yet the province still suffers from outdated infrastructure, severe traffic congestion and development bottlenecks – problems that, I think, could have been solved long ago if the power and budget were in local hands," he said.

"The problem isn't money or capability – Phuket generates more than enough income. The problem is that the budget and decision-making power sit in Bangkok, with people who don't live here and don't face the consequences of these delays," he added.

"Every time we want to fix something, we must submit a proposal to the central government and wait – often just to be ignored or postponed until the

next budget year. Meanwhile, problems pile up," MP Chalermpong explained.

A case in point: 14 urgent infrastructure projects valued at B1.19 billion (B1,197,870,200) are still awaiting funding. While some may be included in future budgets for fiscal years 2026 or 2027, the province continues to wait.

"Phuket generated nearly B500mn last year, yet we're still begging Bangkok to approve a budget for urgent projects – because the power to solve our own problems isn't in our hands," MP Chalermpong told *The Phuket News*.

He stressed that this is not just a Phuket issue but nationwide. Under the current system, only minor decisions are left to local administrative organisations, while major decisions remain in the hands of governors appointed by the central government.

"We have been elected by people or locals from the area, but the most important decisions

are still made by people we never voted for. This structure of 'provinces within provinces' is the root of the problem," he said.

To address this, Chalermpong advocated for allowing Phuket residents to elect their own governor – a move he believes would ensure that local problems are prioritised and solved more effectively.

He said Phuket residents have been ready to elect their own leadership for years and that decentralisation must go beyond symbolic reforms.

MP Chalermpong said that he sees the proposed Phuket Metropolitan Act as the first step toward enabling the island to manage its own affairs and reach its full potential.

"We must move toward a genuine decentralisation model, where provinces control their own budgets, staff, and development direction. Phuket must be allowed to design its own future," he concluded.

## Charity concert to help close cancer centre funding gap

AS DONATIONS CONTINUE for Phuket's first government-run radiation therapy centre, the Meuang Rae Phuket Rotary Club has announced a new charity concert to help bridge the final funding gap.

'The Legends Concert #Queens of Rock' will be held on Aug 30 at Phuket Rajabhat University. Proceeds will go toward purchasing medical equipment for Thalang Hospital – marking the second year the club has hosted a concert to support local healthcare.

The announcement follows confirmation from Vachira Phuket Hospital on July 25 that donations for its radiation therapy centre had surpassed B415 million, exceeding the initial B290mn target but still B6mn short of the B421mn construction contract.

The facility will be the first of its kind in Phuket, expected to serve over 1,600 cancer patients each year from Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi. Around half require radiation therapy, which currently means travelling to hospitals in



Photo: PR Phuket

Surat Thani, Songkhla or Bangkok.

"For many families, the cost of travel is too high," said hospital director Dr Weerasak Lorthongkam. "That means they give up – not just on therapy, but on survival."

The Public Health Ministry has pledged B152mn to purchase key equipment, including a B120mn high-energy particle accelerator and a B32mn planning system. However, delivery depends on completing the specialised building, which still needs final funding.

Minister of Public Health Somsak Thepsuthin, during a visit on July 18, did not commit to covering the B6mn shortfall.

The Rotary Club's upcoming concert aims to keep donations flowing. This year's theme celebrates iconic female rock performers, with artists including Am Saowalak, Mai Charoenpura and The Palace.

Tickets are available via the club's Facebook page. To donate directly to the cancer centre, visit the Vachira Phuket Hospital Facebook page.

*The Phuket News*

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# Zoning to end Bang Khanun dispute

Natnaree Likidwatanasakun  
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The Royal Thai Navy and Phuket provincial authorities have agreed to move forward with creating a zoning plan to resolve the long-standing issue of land encroachment in the Bang Khanun national forest reserve in Thalang.

The decision came during a recent meeting held at Phuket Provincial Hall, chaired by Phuket Vice Governor Adul Chuthong.

The meeting was attended by Admiral Chonlathit Nawanakroh, Deputy Commander of the Royal Thai Navy and Vice Admiral Suwat Donsakun, Commander of the Third Naval Area based at Cape Panwa.

Also present were Rewat Areerob, President of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) and representatives from several government agencies.

Speaking after the meeting, V/Adm Suwat requested that the provincial officials set up a committee to draft zoning regulations that would distinguish areas designated for residential use from those reserved for environmental conservation and for Navy use.



Photo: Thitikan Thitipruethikul / Facebook

"As personnel responsible for enforcing the law and maintaining order in the area under the jurisdiction of the Royal Thai Navy, we must state that those residing in the area are considered to be encroaching on government land," V/Adm Suwat said. "However, there is currently no policy or command from the central government or the Royal Thai Navy regarding enforcement. We are waiting for further instructions. The province must take the lead to mediate between the residents and the Third Area Command to ensure fairness."

Vice Governor Adul confirmed that efforts are underway to divide the 5,000-rai

forest reserve into four main zones: watershed conservation zone (1,000 rai); government use zone (1,800 rai); residential zone (about 2,000 rai); and shared public use and tourism community zone.

Of note, and downplayed in an official report of the meeting, was the Navy agreeing to greatly reduce the 3,700 rai it initially requested to use.

At a meeting with local residents in 2023, the Navy announced that it had been granted use of 3,763 rai in the park to create a new home for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Anti-Aircraft Battalion, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anti-Aircraft Regiment, the Anti-Aircraft Command Unit, an

Air Defense and Coastal Defense Center and the 4<sup>th</sup> Naval Police Battalion of the Naval Police Department.

Regardless, V/Gov Adul continued, "The public use zone may include public utilities such as parking for the Phuket Pillar Shrine, an OTOP sales area, a new water reservoir (10 million cubic metre capacity), a community kiln or a public park."

V/Gov Adul noted that while some villagers have occupied the land since before 1957, others are considered new encroachers. Legal action is already underway against nine individuals accused of unlawfully occupying forest land.

"Last year, two meetings were held to review the use of the reserved forest and to verify registration records. Originally, about 200 households had occupied the land since 1957, while 14 government agencies requested use of certain portions," he explained.

"Of the 5,000 rai, 3,000 rai were allocated to the Royal Thai Navy and other agencies, but the conflict stems from some people living in the 3,000 rai area."

He added that the zoning plan will aim to allocate up to 10 rai per household for existing villagers, in accordance with the

law. A technical team from the Phuket Forestry Department will draft the layout and ensure the land is divided fairly.

Currently, about 260 villagers occupy land in the park that is located within Tambon Sakhu and Tambon Thepkasattri. Local officials say zoning will help distinguish between residents and government agencies while avoiding forced evictions.

"The Third Area Command only requests to use 1,800 rai of the 3,000 rai granted. The remaining land can be used to support the community in a legal and sustainable manner," V/Gov Adul said.

"The provincial committee will handle this sensitively, listening to all sides before finalising the plan," he added.

The committee overseeing the issue includes the Phuket Governor, representatives from local administrative organisations, the district chief, village leaders, the Provincial Ombudsman's Office and representatives from the Administrative Court for those facing legal action.

The meeting concluded with agreement for the next steps, including drafting a detailed zoning map and holding further discussions to ensure the final plan addresses both conservation goals and the rights of residents.

## New 'Koh Kaew flyover' plan moves forward

THE FINAL PUBLIC meeting for a new major road linking Pa Khlok to Kathu via a 'Koh Kaew Flyover' was held last week, as the Phuket Highways Department prepares to finalise its feasibility study and submit the project to Bangkok for official approval.

The meeting, held at The Pogo Design Hotel in Phuket Town, reviewed the economic, engineering and environmental viability of the proposed 10.6km route. All feedback will now be used to complete the study, which will be forwarded for design and budget consideration.

Despite the expansion of Route 4027, which circles through Pa Khlok, traffic continues to choke at the Heroines Monument, where both Route 402 (Thepkasattri Rd) and Route 4027 converge, explained Phuket Highways Chief Somkit Kittisopit.

The project is also aimed at easing severe traffic congestion at the Koh Kaew Intersection.



Image: Phuket Highways Office

Mr Somkit said a new route through the area was essential. "Phuket's rapid growth in tourism, trade and investment has pushed our main roads beyond capacity," he said.

Consultants have been commissioned to map the route and conduct public consultations. Firms involved include Asian Engineering Consultants Co Ltd, Chotijinda Consultant Co Ltd and Consultants of Technology Co Ltd.

The proposed route begins near the PTT gas station on Route 4027 in Pa Khlok and ends at Phra Phuket Kaew Rd in Kathu.

It passes through Pa Khlok, Srisoonthorn and

Kathu, as well as four subdistricts.

The road will follow existing local routes, run near residential areas including Baan Udomsuk and Supalai Bella Village, and is intended to eventually connect to the Koh Kaew-Kathu expressway when that is finally built.

A key feature is a two-lane, 13-metre-wide elevated bridge, or flyover, over Thepkasattri Rd near the Supalai Bella estate at northern end of Koh Kaew.

Senior Civil Engineer Sawitree Sripayak said the study also considered safety, environmental impacts, and long-term development goals.

Concerns raised at earlier hearings about the elevated bridge's effect on local communities were addressed at the meeting.

Officials stressed the final study will include all stakeholder feedback. Once approved, the project will move to the design and funding stage.

Natnaree Likidwatanasakun



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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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Wind 11 m/s

SAT AUGUST 2

High: +36°  
Low: +28°

Wind 11 m/s

SUN AUGUST 3

High: +35°  
Low: +28°

Wind 11 m/s

MON AUGUST 4

High: +35°  
Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

TUE AUGUST 5

High: +35°  
Low: +28°

Wind 4 m/s

WED AUGUST 6

High: +37°  
Low: +28°

Wind 4 m/s

THU AUGUST 7

High: +36°  
Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

## Toddler killed in motorbike crash on steep hill incline

A TWO-YEAR-OLD girl has died and three adults were injured after the motorcycle they were riding lost control and crashed on a steep hill in Thalang.

Police were notified of the accident at midday on July 23. Pol Lt Sumet Chitphet, Deputy Inspector of Investigation at Thalang Police Station, was dispatched to the scene along with rescue workers from the Srisoonthorn Municipality, Kusoldharm Phuket Foundation and an ambulance from Thalang Hospital.

The accident occurred on a narrow road next to the Jee Hong Moo Krob restaurant in Moo 2, Srisoonthorn. At the scene, responders found a damaged pink-and-white Honda Scoopy motorbike lying at the roadside.

Nearby, the driver, Phanom Sae Lim, 41, was

found with a laceration to his left chest and abrasions across his body. He was conscious but agitated and was quickly rushed to Thalang Hospital for treatment.

Police said Mr Phanom had been riding down the hill with three passengers on the motorbike: Ms Premrudee Thirantikul, Ms Yaowalak Thirantikul, and a young child, later identified as Kwanrudee Intraraksa, aged 2.

Preliminary investigations suggest the motor-cycle hit a hole in the road, causing Mr Phanom to lose control of the vehicle. The bike then veered off the damaged roadside and struck a rock, resulting in serious injuries to all four riders.

Nong Kwanrudee was pronounced dead at the hospital.

Police said they were continuing their investigation.

## Gov touts 'success' of anti-drug blitz

The Phuket News  
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Police and other law-enforcement personnel in Phuket have arrested more than 43 suspects in coordinated raids targeting 26 locations across the island last week under the 'No Drugs, No Dealers' campaign.

During the four days from July 22-25, officers netted 24 suspects charged with serious drug offences and 19 arrested for drug use, Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat announced at a press conference at Provincial Hall last Friday (July 25).

Officers also seized 1,873 methamphetamine pills (ya bah), 43.64 grams of crystal meth (ya ice), three grammes of ketamine and five ecstasy pills. Seven assets worth an estimated B123,000 were also confiscated, he added.

Governor Sophon went on to emphasise the results of anti-drug operations in Phuket in the past.

From Oct 1, 2023 to July 21, 2025, law enforcement on Phuket closed 2,262 drug cases, which involved

Officials arrest a drug suspect in Phoonphon, Phuket Town.  
Photo: PR Phuket

arresting 2,379 suspects – including 1,401 for serious offences and 978 for drug use, Governor Sophon explained.

Seized during that time were: 253,876 ya bah pills; 28.9kg of crystal meth; 1.49kg of cocaine; 28,268 ecstasy pills; 4kg of ketamine; and other illegal substances.

Nineteen drug trafficking networks were dismantled, and 456 assets with a total value of over B42 million were seized during the period, Gov Sophon added.

During the 11-month period, Phuket officials closed 13 major cases involving 17 suspects – including two foreigners, he said.

Gov Sophon reaffirmed that the crackdown will continue in line with national policy and emphasised the need for all sectors to work together.

"This campaign is not just about arrests. It's about long-term prevention, rehabilitation and cooperation," he said. "We are committed to protecting the people of Phuket from the dangers of drugs."

"This campaign is about making Phuket a safer, healthier place to live," said Gov Sophon. "The success so far is thanks to strong cooperation across all sectors – police, health, administration and the local communities," Governor Sophon concluded.

## Saudi tourist drowns at Bang Tao

THE BODY OF A 22-YEAR-old Saudi tourist who went missing while swimming at Bang Tao Beach last Saturday (July 26) was recovered after washing ashore near Layan Beach in Cherng Talay the next day.

Lifeguards conducting a shoreline search discovered the body in front of the beach at the southern end of Sirinat National Park. The man, identified as Mr Dhaher Suhayb Mohammed S, was wearing only swimming trunks.

Cherng Talay Police and rescue workers from the Kusoldharm Foundation's Mueang Mai unit recovered the body, which was carried off the beach and taken for an initial examination.

The body was then later transported to a forensic doctor to confirm identity and determine the cause of death.



Photo: Sakhu Police

The Saudi Embassy was informed, and Mr Dhaher's relatives have since collected his body for religious rites.

Mr Dhaher had been swimming with three other Saudi nationals when he was swept away by strong currents. According to police, three members of the group entered the water around 4pm and were soon seen signalling for help. Local residents managed to rescue two men, but Mr Dhaher could not be found.

A search was launched and continued over the next day, hampered by strong surf and shifting tides. Eakkapop Thongtub

## French drug fugitive arrested

A 22-YEAR-OLD FRENCH man wanted by authorities in his home country for drug trafficking has been arrested in Phuket after weeks on the run, Immigration Police have confirmed.

The suspect, identified only as 'Mr Bachir', was apprehended by Phuket Immigration officers in coordination with Immigration Bureau 6 and the Crime Suppression Division.

He was the subject of an arrest warrant in France for possession of narcotics for consumption and illegal trafficking, and is alleged to be part of a major international drug network.

His arrest followed a request from the French Embassy. Investigators traced him to a hideout in Phuket, where he had been staying to evade capture.

Mr Bachir reportedly confessed to involvement in drug smuggling in France and admitted fleeing to Thailand to avoid prosecution.



Photo: Phuket Immigration

Officials said the operation was part of a broader crackdown targeting foreign nationals engaged in transnational crimes, including call centre scams, nominee businesses, and illegal employment schemes that harm Thailand's economy and reputation.

The campaign is being led by Immigration Bureau Commissioner Pol Lt Gen Phanumas Boonlak and Region 6 Commander Pol Maj Gen Songprot Sirisukha. Phuket Immigration said it remains committed to protecting residents and tourists and keeping the island safe.

At last report, Mr Bachir remained in custody awaiting extradition. Eakkapop Thongtub



# Concerns raised over dengue

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Phuket health authorities have introduced new measures to combat the rising number of communicable diseases across the province, as the rainy season fuels concerns about outbreaks of dengue fever, diarrhoea and sexually transmitted infections.

At the Phuket Provincial Communicable Disease Committee meeting, held at the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO) last week, officials reviewed current disease trends and agreed on a series of public health actions aimed at reducing infections and protecting vulnerable groups.

The meeting was chaired by Phuket Provincial Chief Administrative Officer (Palad) Thiraphong Chuaychu and attended by key health and government officials including PPHO Deputy Director Supalak Damrongchuea and Kusuma Sawangphan, Head of the PPHO Communicable Disease Control Group.

Key diseases discussed included influenza, COVID-19, dengue fever, acute diarrhoea, HIV, and syphilis. Four proposals were presented for approval by



Photo: PPHO

the committee, including draft measures for dengue prevention, stigma reduction related to HIV, and integrated screening and treatment for HIV, STIs and hepatitis B and C.

## DENGUE ON THE RISE

One of the most pressing concerns raised was the increasing number of dengue fever cases, which have now surpassed last year's figures for the same period. One death has been reported so far in 2025, with most cases found among working-age adults (20-29 years) and young children (5-9 years). Outbreaks have been reported in all subdistricts across the island.

The committee is preparing an official announcement detailing

updated dengue monitoring and control measures. Residents are being urged to protect themselves from mosquito bites by applying repellent, removing stagnant water weekly, and seeking prompt medical care if they experience a high fever.

The public is also warned not to take fever-reducing medications such as aspirin or ibuprofen, which may worsen dengue symptoms, and to rely on paracetamol under medical supervision.

## INCREASE IN HIV, SYPHILIS AND STIS

The meeting also reviewed statistics on sexually transmitted infections, which have shown a worrying rise.

Since the beginning of 2025, Phuket has recorded 204 HIV/AIDS cases, with 41 people officially registered for treatment. Syphilis continues to spread, with 607 patients recorded so far this year, including 13 new cases in the past week alone.

Other STIs included 268 cases of gonorrhoea, 156 of non-gonococcal urethritis, 67 of chancroid, and other venereal diseases affecting lymphatic systems.

Authorities are developing public health campaigns aimed at reducing stigma around HIV and improving access to screening, diagnosis, and treatment for sexually transmitted infections. These efforts will include education initiatives targeted at both individuals and communities, with a focus on rights protection and the elimination of discrimination related to HIV and gender.

## DIARRHOEA, INFLUENZA, COVID-19

Phuket has also seen a sharp increase in diarrhoea cases, with more patients reported in 2025 compared to the same period in 2024. The number of cases has exceeded the five-year median, although no deaths have been recorded. The highest infection

rates are among children aged 0-4 and adults aged 20-29.

Health officials reminded the public to maintain good hygiene practices, particularly handwashing, and to monitor symptoms in young children closely.

Officials are calling on at-risk groups to get vaccinated against influenza, which is expected to spread more easily during the rainy season. The vaccine is available free of charge at all government hospitals and public health units.

PPHO Communicable Disease Chief Ms Kusuma stressed the importance of simple protective measures such as avoiding close contact with people with respiratory symptoms, using personal utensils, and wearing face masks in crowded areas.

"Patients should rest for at least three days or until fully recovered and wear a mask at all times to prevent transmission," she said.

Although the COVID-19 situation has improved, health authorities urged continued vigilance. Individuals with suspected symptoms should use ATK test kits and, if positive, follow isolation guidelines, avoid gatherings and wear masks, especially during the early days of illness.

## 'Safe Space School' to tackle bullying

PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES joined with justice officials, teachers and students to drive forward the 'Safe Space School' initiative, a major campaign to combat bullying and promote human rights in schools.

Speaking at an event held at the Phuket Administrative Litigation Office, Phuket Vice Governor Suwit Phansengiam said the campaign marked a significant step in protecting the rights of children and youth.

Themed 'Safe Space School: Stop Bullying, Create Safe Spaces in Schools', the initiative is part of a broader effort to raise awareness of human rights and freedoms while tackling the persistent issue of bullying – whether physical, verbal or emotional – in educational settings.

Mr Suwit was joined by Wichian Chaisorn, Director of the Phuket Provincial Justice Office, alongside representatives from the Department of Rights and Liberties Protection, teachers, human rights speakers and students from across the province, many of whom attended the



Photo: PR Phuket

launch event in large numbers.

"The principles of freedom and human rights are fundamental and must be equally upheld for all, especially children and youth," Mr Suwit said in his opening remarks.

"When a young person is bullied, teased or subjected to violence, it deeply affects their mental health and can hinder their learning, development and overall growth."

He said the 'Safe Space School' concept aligns with both human rights principles and Phuket's provincial policies, which seek to build school environments that respect individual dignity, embrace social diversity and foster peaceful coexistence.

The campaign calls on a unified approach, encouraging collaboration between

teachers, school administrators, parents, students and relevant agencies to build supportive and respectful learning environments free from discrimination or harm.

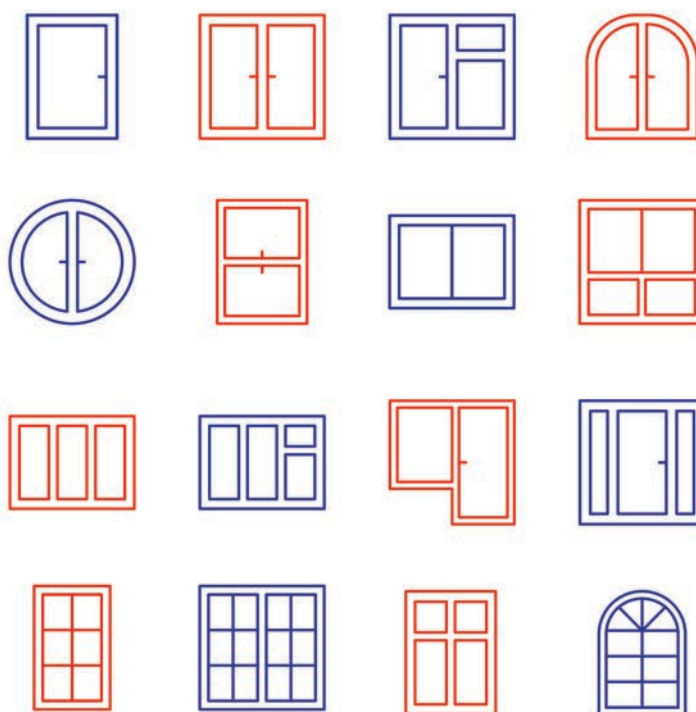
Organisers of the event explained that the initiative seeks to act as a local mechanism to safeguard youth rights, paving the way for a more equitable education system and a safer, more inclusive society.

Participants also took part in workshops and discussions aimed at promoting awareness of students' rights, particularly the right to a safe and nurturing educational space. These sessions were designed to equip both students and educators with the tools to identify, prevent and respond to bullying and rights violations within school communities.

Officials hope the campaign will serve as a model for other provinces across Thailand, ensuring that schools are not only places of academic learning, but also environments where every child is valued, protected and empowered to thrive. *The Phuket News*



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# TAT seeks B2.8trn income in 2026

Bangkok Post

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is targeting B2.8 trillion revenue next year and aims to be among the top 10 countries worldwide when it comes to generating the largest amount of tourism revenue.

Tourism and Sports Minister Sorawong Thienthong said the TAT reported its target for 2026 to the ministry, which saw the overall revenue target rise by 5% to B2.8trn, noting that this would be implemented under a principal idea of promoting “value over volume”.

Under this target, foreign arrivals would record a revenue increase of 8% to B1.63trn, while domestic revenue would increase by 3% to B1.17trn from 214 million domestic trips, a 5% increase year-on-year.

However, Mr Sorawong said even though the TAT has set the direction for next year with a specific goal, the government would enhance the growth to as great a degree as it can to enable the result to exceed the target.

TAT Governor Thapanee Kiatphaibool said the agency aims to change the perspective of Thai tourism to “The New Thailand”, prioritising value over volume.



Photo: Bangkok Post

It would focus on four aspects: adjusting the structure of the tourism industry to quality tourism, distributing opportunities to local areas, creating new attractions by designing experiences that meet the needs of specific tourist groups, and joining hands with all sectors to head towards sustainability.

She said it would achieve a greater balance, with 58% revenue from the international market and 42% from the domestic market.

In the short term, it would continue implementing market recovery measures, while boosting new emerging foreign markets to help sustain the industry over the long run.

As of July 16, the short-haul markets tallied 12.1mn, a 13.1% decrease year-on-year. It accounted for only 42.8% of the target this year, according to the TAT.

Pattaraanong Na Chiangmai, deputy governor of international marketing for Asia and South

Pacific at the TAT, said short-haul markets still have to face the perception of an unsafe image for Thailand, a sluggish Chinese economy and a flight capacity recovery of only 78% compared to 2019.

For the long-haul markets, Thailand welcomed over 5.8mn, increasing 14% year-on-year, as of July 13.

Chiravadee Khunsub, the TAT's deputy governor for Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas, said the long-haul market is expecting strong forward bookings for the remainder of the year, plus new direct and chartered flights.

However, challenges remain with geopolitical tensions, economic pressures as well as rivalry from rising competitors within Asia.

In the first five months of 2025, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Japan and China experienced a 21%, 15%, 24% and 30% increase in visitors year-on-year, respectively.

## TOURISM REVIVAL IN REVERSE

Over the past three years, Thai tourism has been struggling to regain the peak it once reached prior to the pandemic, while neighbouring countries Malaysia and Vietnam have already

surpassed their performance in 2019, recording 37mn and 17mn tourist arrivals, respectively.

The closest opportunity occurred in 2024 when Thailand welcomed 35.5mn foreign tourists, an increase of 26% year-on-year.

However, repeating the success of 2019 when 39.9mn foreign tourists arrived and spending hit B1.9trn is unlikely to occur in 2025, given that Thailand only attracted 16.6mn foreign arrivals in the first half, dipping 4.6% year-on-year.

Even if Thailand was actually able to achieve the revenue goal of B2.8trn next year, there is still a long way to reach the B3trn earned in 2019.

Former TAT Governor Yuthasak Supasorn said that the market downturn in the past few years mostly stemmed from Asian travellers, particularly Chinese, which saw the daily average drop by half, from 21,380 in January 2025 to an average of 12,000 daily visitors in the first six months.

He said that if this trend persists in the second half, Thailand might have only 4-5mn Chinese visitors in 2025, which will be the first time in 12 years that the number has fallen below the 5mn benchmark, excluding the COVID-19 lockdown period.

## Class Act Media wins regional ‘APAC Insider’ media award

CLASS ACT MEDIA / IMAGE ASIA, publisher of *The Phuket News*, has been named ‘Best Print & Online Lifestyle Media Company 2025 – Southern Thailand’ in the UK-based APAC Insider South East Asia Business Awards.

Now in its seventh year, the South East Asia Business Awards recognise outstanding businesses across the region for excellence, innovation, and commitment to their communities. The 2025 winners, announced this month by APAC Insider Magazine, were selected for their performance, reputation and dedication across a wide range of industries.

“Wonderful achievement and very honoured to receive this recognition from the APAC Insider South East Asia Business Awards 2025,” said Class Act Media & IMAGE asia General Manager Jason Beavan.

“The dedication from our wonderful teams – at *The Phuket News*, *Khao Phuket*, *Novosti Phuketa* newspapers, Live 89.5 FM radio, Phuket News TV, *Window on Phuket* and *Where to Eat* in Phuket magazines – to keep the people who visit and live here updated on all the good and interesting happenings in Phuket.

“Thank you to our team, advertisers, readers and suppliers for their past and future support, we could not do it without you. It’s our island, and we are your local media company,” he said.



This year’s award adds to a growing list of accolades for the media group. IMAGE asia / Class Act Media was voted ‘Best Printed & Online Media Company 2024 – Southern Thailand’ and ‘APAC Insider Community News Excellence Award 2024’.

In 2023, Class Act Media and IMAGE asia were named ‘Most Comprehensive Print & Online Regional New Media Company – Thailand’. In 2022, the company received two awards: ‘Most Outstanding News & Information Business – Phuket’ for Class Act Media / IMAGE asia, and ‘Leading Provider of Digital News & Information – Southern Thailand’ for *The Phuket News*. That same year, *The Phuket News* was also named ‘Best Online News Platform’ in the region.

Other Phuket winners in the APAC Insider 2025 awards were: Baan Rim Pa – Best Seaview Restaurant 2025 – Phuket; 360INT Media Co. Ltd. – Leading Innovators of Virtual Tour Experiences 2025; GD Web Studio – Best Web Design Agency 2025 – Thailand. *The Phuket News*

## Russian arrivals to top last year’s figure

DESPITE US SANCTIONS and intense tourism competition, the Russian market this year is expected to exceed the 1.74 million visitors recorded in 2024, according to the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT).

In addition to the fear over the impact of US tariffs, Thailand is also facing fiercer competition from Vietnam, where Russian travel agents shifted chartered flights this summer, resulting in a 10% lower seat capacity year-on-year, said Kanchana Sing-udom, director of TAT’s Moscow office.

Despite economic and geopolitical headwinds, including the war in Ukraine, she said affluent tourists are still willing to travel overseas, as the agency is mainly targeting them.

Based on discussions with Russian agents, the number of chartered flights to Thailand should pick up in the fourth quarter, with Phuket and U-tapao Airport standing as the major ports of entry, said Ms Kanchana.

“Thailand remains a favourite destination for the



Photo: Bangkok Post file

Russian market, consistently attracting repeat visitors, even though sometimes they might want to experience new destinations such as Vietnam,” she said.

While beach destinations like Nha Trang and Phu Quoc in Vietnam are popular among Russian tourists at the moment, Phuket still has an advantage thanks to its complete facilities and more hotel options, she said.

As of July 20, the number of Russian tourists tallied 1.08mn and was still the largest long-haul market with the fourth-largest number of foreign tourist arrivals in Thailand.

According to TAT, Thailand is among the top five overseas destinations for outbound Russians.

Last year, Thailand welcomed over 1.74mn Russian visitors, accounting

for 15% of the overall outbound Russian market, just below the all-time record set in 2013.

TAT’s working target for Russian tourists this year remains at 2mn. If achieved, this would set a new high for this market.

However, TAT needs to evaluate the market momentum during the upcoming winter before committing to that goal, said Ms Kanchana.

During the first half of 2025, Russian arrivals exceeded 2024’s level in every month but May.

She said that Thai culture, hospitality and the country’s products, including wellness facilities and world-class hotels for family groups, would continue to attract Russian tourists.

At present, they not only choose Phuket, but also visit destinations nearby, such as Krabi and Phang Nga. Some long-stay Russians also want to explore mountainous areas such as those around Chiang Mai, while TAT is promoting Thailand as an all-year-round destination, she said.

Bangkok Post



# Truce broken, says Thai army

## SURIN

AFP

Thailand's army accused Cambodia on Tuesday (July 29) of violating an hours-old truce, saying clashes continued despite a deal meant to end the bloody fighting that has engulfed their jungle-clad frontier.

Following peace talks in Malaysia on Monday, both sides agreed that an unconditional ceasefire would start at midnight to end fighting over a smattering of ancient temples in disputed zones along their 800-kilometre border.

"At the time the agreement took effect, the Thai side detected that Cambodian forces had launched armed attacks into several areas within Thai territory," said Thai army spokesman Winthai Suwaree.

"This constitutes a deliberate violation of the agreement and a clear attempt to undermine mutual trust. Thailand is compelled to respond appropriately, exercising its legitimate right to self-defense," he added.

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet refuted the claims on Tuesday morning, saying: "The frontline has eased since the ceasefire at 12 midnight."



Hun Manet (left), Anwar Ibrahim and Phumtham Wechayachai at the truce meeting in Putrajaya on Monday (July 28). Photo: AFP

Jets, rockets and artillery have killed at least 38 people since July 24 and displaced nearly 300,000 more – prompting intervention from U.S. President Donald Trump over the weekend.

The flare-up was the deadliest since violence raged sporadically from 2008-2011 over the territory, claimed by both because of a vague demarcation made by Cambodia's French colonial administrators in 1907.

### 'GOOD FAITH'

A joint statement from both countries – as well as Malaysia which hosted the peace talks –

said the ceasefire was "a vital first step towards de-escalation and the restoration of peace and security."

Both sides are courting Trump for trade deals to avert his threat of eye-watering tariffs, and the U.S. State Department said its officials had been "on the ground" to shepherd peace talks.

The joint statement said China also had "active participation" in the talks, hosted by Malaysian Prime Minister and ASEAN bloc chair Anwar Ibrahim in his country's administrative capital Putrajaya.

Hun Manet thanked Trump for his "decisive" support, while his

counterpart, Thai acting Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai, said it should be "carried out in good faith by both sides."

Thailand says 11 of its soldiers and 14 civilians have been killed, while Cambodia has confirmed only eight civilian and five military deaths.

More than 138,000 people have fled Thailand's border regions, while around 140,000 have been driven from their homes in Cambodia.

### 'DAILY LIES'

Meanwhile, the Thai military on Tuesday denied Cambodia's claim that Thailand used chemical weapons, saying it is an example of the daily lies told by the Cambodian side.

"Thailand Denounces Cambodia's Daily Lies and Deceptive Tactics Aimed at Manufacturing Legitimacy," the Royal Thai Armed Forces Headquarters wrote on its Facebook page ahead of its written dismissal of Cambodia's chemical weapon use claim.

The armed forces headquarters said that the allegation by Lt Gen Maly Socheata, spokeswoman of the Cambodian Ministry of National Defense, was baseless. She accused Thailand of "violating Cambodian sovereignty and

employing chemical weapons during military operations," the headquarters said.

"These claims are completely unfounded and constitute a serious distortion of facts," it said.

"Thailand has never adopted a policy to develop, produce, possess, or use chemical weapons under any circumstances. We remain fully committed to our obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and strictly abide by the principles of international humanitarian law, with utmost regard for the safety of innocent civilians.

"In contrast, the Spokesperson for the Ministry of National Defense of Cambodia has resorted to the strategic use of disinformation in an attempt to fabricate legitimacy in the eyes of the international community.

"This conduct is not only irresponsible but also deceitful, manipulative, and detrimental to peace and stability in the region."

Regarding the fake news, Nikorndej Balankura, spokesman of the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said it reflected organised efforts to distort information and discredit Thailand in the eyes of the international community.

- Additional reporting by Bangkok Post

## Five dead in market shooting sparked by parking dispute

### BANGKOK

A MAN SHOT DEAD FIVE PEOPLE before taking his own life at the OrTorKor market in Chatuchak district of Bangkok on Monday (July 28).

Rescue workers confirmed that four market security guards and one woman vendor were shot dead, while two other women sustained injuries.

The shooting occurred at 12:38pm, according to rescue workers. CCTV footage captured the gunman opening fire and killing three guards before searching for another guard, whom he also shot dead.

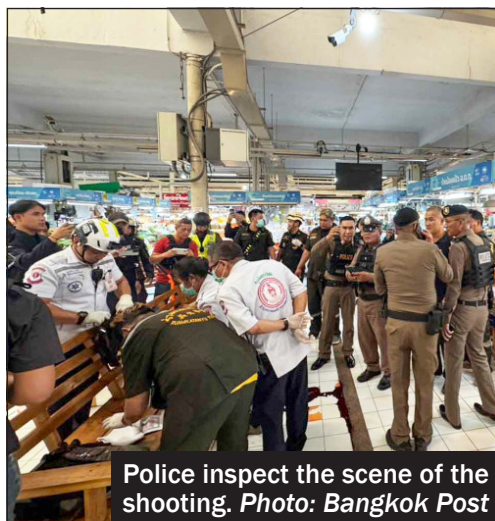
He then entered a stall and shot a woman vendor twice at close range, despite her desperate pleas before walking out of the stall, shouting angrily and firing a shot into the air.

The gunman was found dead by self-inflicted gun shot on a bench inside the market building where police recovered an ID card and a driving licence.

Bangkok police chief Pol Lt Gen Sayam Boonsom later confirmed the gunman as 61-year-old Noi Praidaen from Khong district, Nakhon Ratchasima.

According to the chief, the gunman forced a taxi driver at gunpoint to take him to the market, telling the driver he intended to shoot security guards.

The conflict reportedly stemmed from an incident several years ago when his vehicle was scratched while parked at the market, where his wife operated a stall.



Police inspect the scene of the shooting. Photo: Bangkok Post

Noi believed one of the security guards was responsible and harboured a grudge ever since. He was said to be highly protective of the car.

According to Pol Lt Gen Sayam, the man had a reputation for being hot-tempered and had physically assaulted his wife when intoxicated.

"He had no criminal record but was a member of a shooting club. He legally owned a 9mm CZ Shadow pistol. Over 10 shots were fired. I confirm this was a personal dispute," said Pol Lt Gen Sayam.

Paew, the gunman's wife, said the grudge dated back about five years. She added that he had shown no unusual behaviour that morning, having dropped her off at the market as usual. She never imagined what would follow later that day.

Bangkok Post



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# Phuket's traffic and the science of Smarter Cities

Marco Capriz

Every morning at 8am Phuket's Chao Fa West Rd transforms into a sea of idling vehicles. What was once a tropical paradise known for its tranquil beaches now suffers from rush hour gridlock that rivals downtown Bangkok. The transformation has been gradual but undeniable – as tourism numbers swelled from 5 million annual visitors in 2010 to over 11mn today, the island's infrastructure has failed to keep pace.

The problem stems from Phuket's unique geography. The island is essentially a mountainous rock in the Andaman Sea, with limited space for road expansion. Steep hills funnel all traffic into just a few main arteries, creating perfect conditions for bottlenecks. During peak tourist season from November to April, the situation becomes particularly dire as rental cars, scooters and tour buses flood the already congested roads.

## A microcosm of global challenges

Phuket's traffic woes mirror urban transportation challenges worldwide. The island serves as a living laboratory for studying how communities can adapt to limited resources. With transportation accounting for 27% of

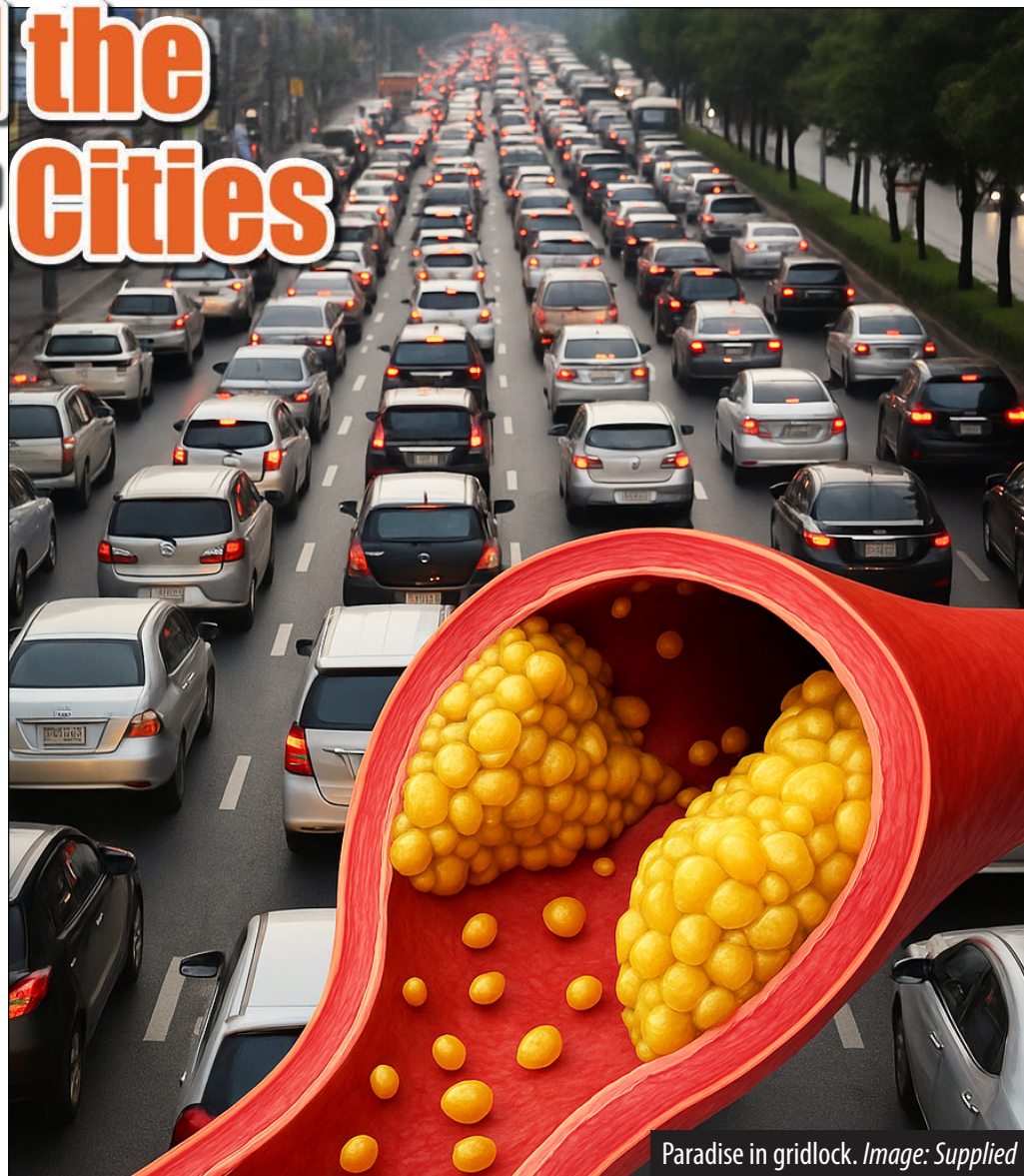
global carbon emissions, Phuket's idling vehicles contribute to both local air pollution and broader climate change.

The haze that sometimes obscures Phuket's famous turquoise waters serves as a visible reminder of this connection. Yet rather than simply lamenting the situation, we can view Phuket as an opportunity to develop and test innovative solutions that could be applied to cities globally.

## Rethinking urban systems

The concept of "urban metabolism" provides a powerful framework for understanding Phuket's challenges. This approach views cities as living organisms that consume resources (fuel, electricity, food) and produce waste (emissions, garbage). When this metabolic system becomes unbalanced – as when too many vehicles overwhelm limited road capacity – the entire system suffers.

For decades, the standard response to congestion has been to build more roads. But this approach has repeatedly failed in Phuket, as it has worldwide. Within months of road widening projects, traffic volumes inevitably increase to fill the new capacity. Urban planners call this phenomenon "induced demand," and it explains why simply adding lanes can never provide a lasting solution.



Paradise in gridlock. Image: Supplied

## The efficiency of public transport

The physics of road space reveals stark differences in transportation efficiency. Consider these comparisons:

- A typical car carries 1.3 passengers while occupying 10 square metres of road space
  - A standard bus requires 40 square metres but can transport 60 passengers. This means buses use just 1.5 square metres per person compared to 7+ square metres for cars.
- The implications are clear: shifting just 10% of car trips to buses could dramatically reduce congestion. Yet Phuket's public transportation system remains underdeveloped, with no comprehensive bus network and limited options for visitors.

## Learning from biological systems

Nature offers valuable lessons for managing urban traffic. Biological systems maintain balance through feedback mechanisms – when you drink alcohol, your liver doesn't grow larger to compensate; instead, regulatory systems limit consumption.

- Cities can apply similar principles:
- Congestion pricing acts as a metabolic inhibitor, discouraging unnecessary vehicle use
  - Bus lanes function like high-efficiency arteries, keeping vital flows moving
  - Traffic enforcement provides the energy needed to maintain system order
- Without these regulatory mechanisms, traffic systems naturally descend into chaos – a manifestation of the physical principle of entropy.

## Simulating solutions

Agent-based modelling (ABM) offers powerful tools for testing potential solutions. These computer simulations create virtual versions of Phuket's traffic system, allowing planners to:

- Test the impact of staggered school start times
- Evaluate potential new bus routes
- Model the effects of congestion pricing

The technology has proven effective in cities worldwide. Singapore's Electronic Road Pricing system, developed using similar modelling techniques, has successfully managed congestion for decades.

## The path forward

Immediate improvements could include:

- Smart traffic lights that adapt to real-time conditions
  - Expanded park-and-ride facilities at key entry points
  - Incentives for ride-sharing and off-peak travel
- Long-term solutions require more substantial investment:
- Development of a comprehensive bus rapid transit system
  - Infrastructure for bicycles and electric scooters
  - Integration of land-use and transportation planning

The key insight is that Phuket doesn't need to choose between tourism and liveability. By applying scientific principles and learning from global best practices, the island can develop transportation solutions that preserve its natural beauty while supporting economic growth.

## Conclusion

Phuket stands at a crossroads. The same geographic constraints that create its traffic problems could make it an ideal testing ground for innovative solutions. By viewing the island as an interconnected system rather than a collection of isolated roads, planners can develop approaches that work with Phuket's natural limits rather than against them.

The solutions won't be easy or immediate, but the alternative – unchecked congestion threatening both quality of life and the tourism economy – is untenable. With careful planning and political will, Phuket could transform its traffic challenges into an opportunity to demonstrate how island communities can thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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# Learning to trust ourselves as parents

Rashmi Grover

In the age of social media, parenting advice is not just abundant – it's relentless. Scroll through Instagram and you'll find parenting gurus preaching everything from attachment theory to Montessori minimalism. Other parents swear by discipline over freedom. Your in-laws bring their rule book from the '80s. Everywhere you look, someone is guiding you on how to raise your kids.

It's not surprising to be overwhelmed, confused and – ironically – less confident than ever. From pregnancy to becoming a full-fledged parent, every step demands you to listen to someone else. Your doctor will tell you what to do with your body and how to take care of newborns. Then you are inundated with advice from friends and family to podcasts, Pinterest boards, WhatsApp forwards, schools, online courses – everywhere you look, someone is telling you how to raise your kids.

Look, read the books if they help. Join parent groups if you find your people. But take a moment to acknowledge the wisdom inside you that no expert can give you. You know your child, your family needs and your toxic patterns better than anyone else. You are allowed to learn, grow and most importantly, trust yourself. We are living in the age of outsourced parenting and while the tools and tips can be helpful, the one voice that gets drowned out the most is our own.



Photo: Bangkok Post

## Myth of the Perfect Parent

Let's be clear: there is no such thing as the perfect parent. Your kids don't need you to be perfect. They need you to be present. They need you to be working on yourself. Parenting becomes much easier when we stop asking, "How do I fix my child's behaviour?" and start asking, "What's happening inside me right now?"

## It's the hardest work to do

When your child pushes all your buttons – that's the most important

moment. It is a great opportunity to observe yourself. What's happening in your body? Dig deeper and ask yourself, what part of my own story is getting activated? Is there something I can do to ground myself rather than react the way I usually do? It's a messy process and we all fail more often than we would like to admit. But, that's the learning part. We can come back to the situation and address it again. When we heal our own stuff, we naturally become more patient, more present, more connected.

## The real work starts within

Here's the hard truth: the biggest obstacle in parenting isn't the child's tantrums, dramas and endless demands. It's our own unhealed baggage. The unresolved emotions that we allow to fester and linger in all aspects of our lives. Are we obsessing over routines because children need discipline or because chaos in our childhood taught us to survive through control? Are we yelling because our child is disrespectful or because we were never allowed to speak up as kids?

We unconsciously pass down not just values, but wounds. And if we don't pause to reflect, we will continuously repeat our patterns. When we do our inner work and heal our own childhood wounds, naming our emotions, breaking toxic patterns, we create a safer space for ourselves and our family. We don't have to follow a script because our parenting stems from a place of clarity instead of chaos.

## Final Word

Yes, read the books. Join the workshops. Ask questions. But don't forget – you're allowed to say, "No, that doesn't feel right for my family."

When you listen to yourself, you come home within. Slow down and notice the way their eyes light up when they spot something that fascinates them. Watch them gain confidence doing things they never thought possible. Breathe deeply. And from that place, the answers come. The strategies flow. The connection deepens.

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### POP QUIZ

- Who was Erich Weiss better known as?
- If you had pogonophobia what would you be afraid of?
- Which country grows the most fruit?
- What kind of animal is a lurcher?
- What is the Islamic equal to the red cross?

Answers below, centre

### Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

- Stylish, in the 60's
- Asian area
- Rapture
- Hidden winner, \_\_\_ in the hole
- Get too many
- Lode load
- Wizard of Oz footwear
- African flower
- Encounterer
- Card game
- Footnote abbr.
- Live
- Airs
- Drudge
- Bust
- Pan type
- Field of play
- Flowering plant
- Cheer starter
- Flock
- Principle of life, in Hinduism
- Fancy neckwear
- Military Order, for short
- Overcoats
- Darth Veda's side
- Cool one's heels
- Destructive pest

Down

- Rattle
- Eye piece
- Fillet
- In place of
- Blvd.
- Saxophonist, Joshua
- Leprechaun land local
- Fully fit
- Legal action
- Create an email
- "Mud"
- "Catch-22" pilot
- Go word
- Vote of support
- Before the finals
- In a consistent manner
- Eustacian area related
- Poi source

27. Cosmetics company

28. Advance

31. Elaborate display

32. Bummed

33. Spots

34. Nor partner

36. Agave rug fiber

37. Bee \_\_\_

38. M\_\_\_: Chinese owned area

39. Craft

40. Meadow

45. Granola cereal

46. Goatees

47. Familiarize

48. Off course

51. Wee hour

53. Periodical publications

54. Surveyor's work

55. Without purpose

56. Commuter line

58. Squeeze (out)

59. "Cool" amount

60. Call off

61. Biddy

62. Swamp

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8	9	10		11	12	13
14				15								16		
17			18								19			
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49								50			51			
				52	53	54	55	56			57			
58	59	60								61	62			
63				64								65		
66				67								68		

Visit: [www.ilovecrosswords.com](http://www.ilovecrosswords.com)

### SUDOKU

Medium

2		4	7					
3			2			5		7
	1			9				
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6								3
	8			7				
				1			3	
4		2			3			5
					9	7		8

### Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

(1) Harry Houdini; (2) Beards; (3) China; (4) Dog; (5) Red Crescent

### Solutions to last week's puzzles:

A	D	A	M	S		G	A	B	S		A	C	T	S
G	R	I	O	T		U	G	L	Y		D	U	A	L
H	A	N	D	E	D	N	O	O	N		H	O	R	S
A	T	T	I	L	A		W	C	O		A	T	E	
			S	A	L	A	D	S		M	O	T	E	T
F	E	C	H	E		K	E	Y		I	D	O		
A	L	L			H	I	M		A	N	O	R	A	K
C	L	A	S	S	E	N	E	R	G	Y	R	I	S	E
T	A	M	P	E	R		R	O	E		A	I	L	
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N	E	H	R	U		S	T	E	R	E	O			
A	R	E		P	E	P		E	C	L	A	T	S	
B	A	L	L	S	T	R	U	N	G	L	I	G	H	T
O	S	L	O		N	E	S	T		A	T	R	I	A
B	E	S	T		A	Y	A	H		W	H	A	N	G

5	9	7	1	2	3	6	4	8
4	8	1	9	5	6	3	7	2
6	2	3	7	4	8	1	9	5
2	7	8	5	6	1	4	3	9
9	6	4	2	3	7	8	5	1
1	3	5	4	8	9	7	2	6
3	1	9	8	7	2	5	6	4
8	4	6	3	9	5	2	1	7
7	5	2	6	1	4	9	8	3

### GOT YOUR NUMBER

## 3

Academy Awards were won by Sylvester the Cat, more than any other Looney Toons character.

## 54

years is how long a person can eat out at a different restaurant every night in New York City and not eat at the same place twice.

## 100

lightning strikes happen around the world every second.

## 80,000

miles of steel wire is how long the two main cables on the Golden Gate Bridge are when unraveled – long enough to circle the equator three times.

## 1.81 trillion

kilogrammes of TNT exploding releases the equivalent amount of energy to that released by a magnitude 9 earthquake.

Source: Uberfacts

### ISLAND VIEW

Patong sunset. Photo by Penny Williams

Got an unusual or particularly beautiful picture of Phuket? Email it to [editor3@classactmedia.co.th](mailto:editor3@classactmedia.co.th)

### This week in history

**Aug 1, 1927**  
The founding of the People's Liberation Army in China.

**Aug 2, 216 BC**  
The Carthaginian army led by Hannibal defeats a numerically superior Roman army at the Battle of Cannae.

**Aug 3, 1936**  
Jesse Owens wins the 100 metre dash, defeating Ralph Metcalfe, at the Berlin Olympics.

**Aug 4, 1693**  
Date traditionally ascribed to

Jesse Owens.

Dom Perignon's invention of champagne; it is not clear whether he actually invented champagne, however he has been credited as an innovator who developed the techniques used to perfect sparkling wine.

**Aug 5, 1914**  
In Cleveland, Ohio, the first electric traffic light is installed.

**Aug 6, 1945**  
The atomic bomb "Little

Boy" is dropped by the United States on Hiroshima, Japan, killing 70,000 people instantly, with tens of thousands dying in subsequent years from burns and radiation poisoning.

**Aug 7, 1858**  
The first Australian rules football match is played between Melbourne Grammar and Scotch College.

Source: Wikipedia



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Legend Michael Bisping to Host Exclusive Two-Day Event

Bangtao Muay Thai & MMA is proud to welcome UFC Hall of Famer and former Middleweight World Champion Michael "The Count" Bisping for an

exclusive two-day seminar this August 9 & 10, 2025 – marking his first-ever appearance at our world-renowned facility. After winning The Ultimate Fighter Season 3, he made history by becoming the first British fighter to capture UFC gold! Bisping retired with 30 professional wins, including 20 victories in the UFC – solidifying his place among the sport's all-time greats.

**Saturday, August 9 (Start 11:00am)**

- Meet & Greet with Michael Bisping (with photo opportunities)
- Open Workout – Watch Bisping hit pads and share stories from inside the Octagon
- Merchandise Signing Session.

**Sunday, August 10 (Start 11:00am)**

- Technical Seminar: Learn from the former champion as he shares his signature approach that made him one of MMA's elite.
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For more info and bookings – [bangtaomuaythai.com/legend-michael-bisping-to-host-exclusive-two-day-event-at-bangtao-muay-thai-mma](http://bangtaomuaythai.com/legend-michael-bisping-to-host-exclusive-two-day-event-at-bangtao-muay-thai-mma)

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## SKÅL PHUKET JULY DINNER: THAI FLAVOURS & FRIENDSHIP

Skål Phuket held their July dinner at the wonderful Albatross Café, Canal Village, Laguna Phuket, hosted by Skål member Robert de Graaff and Khun Odd on Thursday, July 24. An exceptional evening of networking, a delicious Thai dinner and the unbeatable Skål spirit. It was an evening of Thai flavours, laughter and great company. For more details of Skål Phuket and the next event, visit [facebook.com/SkalPhuket](https://facebook.com/SkalPhuket)



## EXCITING NEWS FROM SAILABILITY PHUKET

Sailability Phuket is thrilled to announce the launch of two brand new S\V14 accessible sailing boats at the beautiful Royal Phuket Marina on Saturday, July 26. These incredible vessels have been generously donated by the Masonic Lodge Light of Siam #9791 E.C. and the District Grand Lodge of the Eastern Archipelago. Their unwavering support for inclusive sailing is truly inspiring.

With these fantastic additions to their fleet, Sailability Phuket is now fully equipped to organise inclusive sailing events that welcome international participants from around the world. This means more opportunities for people of all abilities to experience the joy and freedom of sailing. The S\V14 boats are specifically designed for accessibility, ensuring that everyone can participate safely and confidently in our sailing programs. This is what inclusion on the water looks like.

Huge thanks to: Masonic Lodge Light of Siam #9791 E.C., District Grand Lodge of the Eastern Archipelago, United Relocations Thailand for their invaluable help with the import process, all the amazing volunteers who made this grand launch event possible and Royal Phuket Marina for hosting. Together, we're breaking down barriers and creating waves of opportunity for sailors of all abilities.



## Pogacar wins Tour de France for fourth time

### CYCLING

TADEJ POGACAR completed a supreme performance to win the Tour de France in a rainy Paris last Sunday (July 27), crushing his rivals to collect a fourth title.

Pogacar embarked from the start in Lille as clear favourite and won four stages along the way.

In the first week, he struck on rolling runs in the north and west at Rouen and the Mur de Bretagne.

He then turned the screw on the slopes of the Pyrenees in week two with his rivals as good as vanquished.

Despite the rain, tens of thousands of spectators packed Montmartre to follow Pogacar's progress through the narrow streets of the popular tourist spot on the final day as he passed the Moulin Rouge cabaret before charging to the finish line on the Champs-Élysées avenue.



Pogacar. Photo: AFP

The Slovenian has now won the world's greatest bike race four times in six years and finished runner-up twice.

Jonas Vingegaard, the champion in 2022 and 2023, ended second overall, 4 minutes 24 seconds adrift while breakout German star Florian Lipowitz, 24, took third on his debut, rounding out the podium a distant 11mins off the pace in third.

After it was all over, a beaming Pogacar said he could finally relax.

"Everybody has different ideas about how to celebrate. I want some peace and beautiful weather, enjoying some quiet days at home," he said. *AFP*

# Phuket launches youth football training course

### FOOTBALL

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) has partnered with the Football Association of Thailand (FAT) to produce a FIFA-endorsed youth training development course for students at schools across the island.

The course sees the launch of the first FIFA for schools international curriculum development course in Phuket which will deliver a series of intensive practical and physical tutoring sessions geared towards creating long-term development in the sport.

The first 3-day course was carried out between July 21-23 at the Ban Mai Riap Provincial Administrative Organization School (Tantigowit Bamrung) in Kathu, drawing pupils from schools island-wide and attracting more than 300 children on the first day alone.



Photo: PR Phuket

One of the main attractions of the first day saw the former goalkeeper of the Thai national team Kawin Thamsatchanan, nicknamed "Kawin Bin Dai" and otherwise now known as "Coach Win Bin Dai" in his coaching capacity, deliver a series of sessions to the pupils, in addition to sharing numerous stories from his professional playing days.

A further five schools hosted courses throughout the following two days, including: Ban Kathu Municipality School 2; Patong Municipality School (Ban Sai Nam Yen); Ban Bang Thong School; Ratchaprac-hanukroh School 36; and Thai Rath Witthaya 29 School in Kathu.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed at an official ceremony on July 21 at the Baan Mai Riap Provincial Administrative Organisation School.

PPAO President Rewat Areerob oversaw the MoU signing and was joined by PPAO secretary Akkrawat Sirithanthanakorn who delivered an overview report on the project's objectives. A further welcome speech was delivered by Ari Nu Chong, Director of Baan Mai Riap School.

The list of MOU signatories is as follows: Songyos Klinrisuk, FAT Deputy Director of Technical Development; Kawin Thamsatchanan,

former goalkeeper of the Thai national team; Paradorn Kamonlert, FAT grassroots development manager; and Thammawat Wongcharoenyos, President of the Phuket Provincial Sports Association.

Mr Rewat explained how the PPAO places huge significance on the role of sports in serving as a means to help develop youngsters in a variety of ways, including physically and emotionally as well as in promoting good discipline and teamwork.

Mr Akkrawat added that the project is a model of cooperation between local and national sports associations that aims to create true learning through sports and lay the foundation for new athletes in the future.

Mr Rewat concluded by explaining that the PPAO is planning to run similar courses in the near future as it aims to make sports a true part of youth lifestyle while developing Phuket into a pilot province for youth development through sports at the national level.

## ONE Championship releases big hitters

### MMA

ONE CHAMPIONSHIP HAS released its former atomweight submission grappling champion Danielle Kelly, along with several other notable fighters.

The list also includes Meng Bo, Shinechagtga Zoltsetseg, Xie Wei and Antonio Mammarella.

American Kelly, 29, was one of the promotion's most high-profile signings when it began building a roster of elite no-gi grapplers in 2022. She became the inaugural champion in her division with a decision win over Jessa Khan in September 2023.

But Kelly dropped the belt to Mayssa Bastos in August 2024, and failed to win it back in a rematch last December, both by decision.

Kelly's release came as part of a wider shake-up, with a group of fighters quietly removed from the ONE athlete roster on July 23.

Most surprising is No 4-ranked women's atomweight MMA contender Meng, who had been tipped for a future title shot.



Danielle Kelly. Photo: Bangkok Post

Also released is Zoltsetseg, a long-time bantamweight MMA fixture from Mongolia who was submitted in the third round by Jhanlo Mark Sangiao at ONE Fight Night 33 last month. The 28-year-old went 5-4 after debuting in 2019.

Chinese flyweight veteran Xie is also out after suffering three straight defeats while Italy's Mammarella has departed after a brief 0-2 run. He was submitted by Adrian Lee in the second round of his debut at ONE 167 in Bangkok and lost his second fight by decision to Oliver Axelsson in March. *Bangkok Post*

## Piastrri extends lead at Spa

### FORMULA ONE

SERIES LEADER OSCAR Piastrri grabbed an early lead and extended his title advantage last Sunday (July 27) when he drove to a perfectly-controlled triumph ahead of McLaren team-mate and title rival Lando Norris at a rain-delayed Belgian Grand Prix.

The 24-year-old Australian managed his tyres expertly to remain out of reach in the closing laps as the Briton, 25, who had started on pole, closed in on a harder-wearing compound, finishing 3.415 seconds clear as McLaren reeled off their sixth 1-2 in a dominant season.

It was Piastrri's first win at the classic Spa-Francorchamps circuit, his sixth this season and the eighth of his career, extending his lead in the drivers' championship to 16 points after 13 of this season's 24 races. For McLaren, it was a 10<sup>th</sup> win this year.

Charles Leclerc came a solid third for Ferrari ahead of four-time champion Max Verstappen of Red Bull, under the race leadership of new team boss Laurent Mekies for the first time, and Mercedes George Russell.

Alex Albon clung on to finish sixth for Williams ahead of



Piastrri celebrates his win. Photo: AFP

chasing seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton of Ferrari, who started from the pit lane, and Racing Bulls' rookie Liam Lawson.

Gabriel Botoletto was ninth for Sauber ahead of Pierre Gasly of Alpine.

Carlos Sainz, Fernando Alonso, Kimi Antonelli and Lewis Hamilton all started from the pitlane, having made changes to their power units or set-up overnight.

As the lights went green, Norris powered away to lead through La Source, but he was unable to resist when Piastrri sneaked out of his slipstream to take the lead going into Les Combes chicane.

On lap 12, Hamilton was the first in for medium slick tyres, rejoining 18<sup>th</sup>, followed by Piastrri, Leclerc, Verstappen, Russell and more. Norris stayed

out one lap longer for hards, hoping to profit if his rival's rubber degraded in the closing laps. He was the only one.

By lap 15, everyone else had switched to mediums and it was Piastrri on top ahead of Norris by 9.3s with Leclerc third leading Verstappen, Russell, Albon and... in flying form, Hamilton.

As Norris closed in, Piastrri said his tyres were already degrading. "I think it will be tough to get to the end," he told race engineer Tom Stallard, raising the prospect of a dramatic finale.

On lap 26, Norris slid wide at Puhon, falling back to nine seconds adrift before remounting his charge. It was a process of marginal gains as Piastrri managed his tyres.

Norris was close but Piastrri's craft and calm prevailed.

AFP



# Lionesses retain Euro title

## FOOTBALL

AFP

Chloe Kelly converted the decisive kick as England beat Spain 3-1 on penalties to lift the Women's Euro 2025 trophy after last Sunday's (July 27) game had finished 1-1 at the end of extra time, allowing the Lionesses to avenge their defeat in the World Cup final two years ago and retain their continental crown.

It looked as though Spain would repeat their victory over England in Sydney in 2023 as they dominated the game at St Jakob-Park in Basel and led through Mariona Caldentey's first-half header.

But England did not panic, having already trailed against both Sweden in the quarter-finals and Italy in the semis before finding a way to win.

Alessia Russo headed in their equaliser just before the hour mark, and no further goals meant a shoot-out in which Kelly – who once again had a huge impact off the bench – netted the winner.

"I was cool, I was composed. I knew I was going to hit the back of the net," Kelly told the BBC of her penalty.

It was an agonising way to lose for Spain, but they failed to score three of their spot-kicks, with reigning Ballon d'Or Aitana Bonmati seeing her effort saved.



England's players celebrate with the trophy. Photo: AFP

Sarina Wiegman's England are therefore back-to-back European champions, with this triumph coming three years after they defeated Germany in extra time at Wembley to win a first women's major tournament.

Defeating Spain here helps make up for the agony of losing that World Cup final in 2023, and the victory also confirms Wiegman's place among the coaching greats.

She has now won three consecutive European Championships, having led her native Netherlands to victory in 2017 before doing the same with England three years ago.

"We said we can win by any means and that's what we have shown again today. I am so proud of the team and the staff. It is incredible," said Wieg-

man, whose team lost to France in their first match at the tournament.

"Losing your first game and becoming European Champions is incredible," she added.

Spain fell short in their quest to add a maiden European Championship title to the World Cup they won in Australia.

La Roja dominated possession as expected, but ultimately paid the price for not putting the game to bed against an England side who never know when they are beaten.

"I am in shock," Bonmati told broadcaster TVE before apologising for failing from the spot.

"Football is cruel. Everything seems bad right now, but I think we played the best football during the tournament."

# Hosts shatter Thai U23 dream in semis

## FOOTBALL

THAILAND'S BID FOR the 2025 ASEAN U23 Championship crown came to grinding halt with a 7-6 sudden-death penalty shootout defeat to hosts Indonesia in the semi-finals following a 1-1 stalemate after extra-time last Friday (July 25).

Yotsakorn Burapha had put the Thais in front on the hour mark with a calm finish but Jens Raven's 84th minute header took the game into extra-time and the home side eventually prevailed on penalties at Gelora Bung Karno Stadium in Jakarta.

Thailand U23 head coach Thawatchai Dumrong-ontrakul praised both sides for putting on a quality display.

"First of all, congratulations to the Indonesian team for making the final of the tournament, but we have to praise both teams as they played really well and produced an exciting match," he said.

"We did create a lot of chances. Our attacking



Thailand's Teerapat Pruetong (left). Photo: Bangkok Post

game was good and we were able to score first.

"However, we lost our rhythm late in the match and ended up conceding the equaliser."

Pichitchai Sienkrathok thumped his opening attempt in the shootout against the crossbar while Robi Darwis saw his spot-kick in the third round saved by Sorawat Phosaman prior to sudden-death.

It was in the eighth round when Yotsakorn's weak penalty was saved by Ardiansyah, leaving Alfharezzi to hit the winner for the hosts.

Thailand beat the Philippines 3-1 in the third place play-off on Monday, while Indonesia were set to face Vietnam in the final on Tuesday (July 29).

Bangkok Post

# Lions roar to series win



## THE GLOBAL RUGBY COACH

IN THE MOST DRAMATIC AND contentious finale to the second test, Hugo Keenan snatched a last-second try to secure a 29-26 victory and a series victory for the British and Irish Lions at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) last Saturday (July 26).

The story doesn't end there, however. Harry Wilson, the Wallabies' skipper, beseeched the referee to look at the final ruck, which produced the ball for Keenan's try.

Ninety thousand spectators and millions watching worldwide held their breath as the referee and assistants watched the replay.

The laws of the game suggested a penalty to Australia for contact with the neck of the Wallaby player trying to jackal the ball. On-field and off-field fury erupted when the referee indicated fair play and the Lions secured the ball, Keenan scored, and the Lions won the series 2-0.

Before this, the game had been a spectacle. The Wallabies played some exhilarating rugby and went into a 23-5 lead just before half-time. But the strength of the Lions is their unity and they roared back to win, outscoring their opponents 5 tries to 3.

Much of modern-day rugby union is contentious and left to the referee's



Hugo Keenan scores for the Lions. Photo: AFP

interpretation. The lawmakers attempt to both speed up the play and make it safer. Barristers could make a legal case for both sides. The sad part is that a huge blockbuster would have taken place in Sydney tomorrow (Aug 2) had the referee's decision gone in the Wallabies' favour.

Arguments will rage on throughout the week. Only pride is on the line, so I expect a Wallabies win, hopefully in less contentious circumstances.

Then in four years, it's off to New Zealand for the Lions and no doubt more drama and intensity.

*The Global Rugby Coach, Mike Penistone, is a globally renowned professional rugby coach based in Phuket who is also an ambassador for the Asia Center Foundation, a charity for disadvantaged children. For more information visit: [www.rugbycoaching-consultancy.com](http://www.rugbycoaching-consultancy.com).*

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# Sport

editor3@classactmedia.co.th



**Youth football course kicks off > p14**



The two teams line up at the ACG ahead of kick-off on July 19. Photo: Grace Layard

## RUGBY

Neil Quail

**R**elentlessly ripping through Australian opposition, the current British and Irish Lions side have come out on top in the 2025 tour Down Under.

With a number of both Australian and home countries' expats making up a good part of the Phuket Vagabonds RFC, the atmosphere leading into the warm-up games and the Lions' two Test wins in Brisbane and Melbourne evoked intelligent commentary alongside firey but friendly banter at the Alan Cooke Ground (ACG) clubhouse in Thalang.

The 'bantz' and players' competitive nature inevitably led to a challenge match being arranged to coincide with the first Test and as an homage to this enthralling, if somewhat one-sided tour.

So it was on Saturday, July 19, a Vagabonds British and Irish selection took to the ACG Rugby theatre of dreams facing a Bahababonds Southern Hemisphere side in a sweltering 10s encounter.

Having flown in especially for this ex-

traordinary fixture, referee Jim Layard blew his whistle to begin the battle for bragging rights, with roars of 'Lions, Lions, Lions' and 'Aussie, Aussie, Aussie' raising hairs and heckles around the ground!

### SEALED

Within minutes of the start, a Lions kick for ground found its way to the B'bonds try-line with Alex "blood, sweat and" Sears and Neil "where am I" Quail racing to recover, preyed upon by Paul "dey do do don't dey" Rothwell and Harry "hand of God" Layard. A moment of indecision and a helping hand from Layard allowed Rothwell to gather and touch down for the games first try.

The Lions' second try was far less controversial, when Jacob "Georgian royalty" King burst from his own 22 then offloading to find Cillian "it's my island" O'Neill, who in turn delivered inside for Layard to collect and finish for Lions second score.

B'bonds fate seemed as if one was licking the glue on an envelope – almost sealed – until the envelope was pushed into a cloud of dust, kicked up by the jet-like speed of Sears.

Taking a pass just outside the opposition 10-metre line, Sears cut back inside from the right sideline to put B'bonds on the scoreboard as two Lions defenders were left sprawling in anguish and awe.

Respite for B'bonds was all too brief as King almost immediately after the restart exploited a lax defensive line to restore the Lions two-try lead, closing out the first quarter.

### SEARING

Rugby is a tough sport in any conditions, but under a cloudless, searing mid-afternoon sun in the tropics, players were already beginning to wilt.

The second quarter, despite the baking heat, could only be described as the 'Sears show'. Having never played rugby until a year ago, Sears has literally and figuratively picked it up and run with it... and boy, can he run! Minutes into the second quarter a solid B'bonds ruck allowed Sears to whip past the opposition on the blind-side, outpacing the covering Brad "never giving up" Haygarth whose valiant attempt at an ankle tap grasped only turbulent air.

Sears' hat-trick came midway through the quarter showcasing pace, power and precision. Building up a head of steam from inside his own 10 metre line, Sears first shrugged then swayed past defenders before a hypnotic hip shimmy entangled the last defender in a world of flat-footedness to level the scores at three tries apiece.

Lions were yet again to prove their resilience at the end of the quarter, when Layard gave chase from inside his own half to another deep, searching kick from the investigating boot of Rothwell. Layard, who turns out for Vagabonds when not at university in Australia, is hands-down one of the best young players the club has within its ranks, and his second try of the day was proof thereof. Latching on to the bobbling ball, Layard secured the score to boast his brace and edge Lions ahead going into the half-time break.

### DEXTROUS

The games third quarter ended in equivalency, with Sears claiming his fourth score following a dextrous bit of handling, before debutante Camdon "more Scottish than the Scottish

themselves" Dicks danced his way through a tired B'bonds defense to score his maiden Vagabonds try and keep Lions ahead by one.

It was during this period of play that veteran Quail tried to flatten an area of turf with the back of his head, realising then why it's called terra firma.

Fortunately, the Vagabond's favourite Bahrani-ans were on hand (not Layard), with Lee "you'll have to carry me away from rugby in a box" Stones guiding Quail from the battlefield while calling for his wife Laura "Angel of the ACG" Stones, who administered the utmost professional care.

The game was put beyond B'bonds reach in the fourth quarter when James "it's my ball, I'm taking it home" Warwick seeing Stones in a better scoring position from a ruck formed just one-metre away from the try-line, sacrificed common sense and selflessness to pluck the ball and dive over for the day's final score.

### WONDROUS

The highlight of this quarter, however, will be remembered as the "Parry-

neum" when Dazz "I'm not Messi-ing around" Parry erupted from the pack to kick and chase for a good 40 metres. Unfortunately a try was not the result of this bit of magic, but 'tis a rare and wondrous sight to see a unit of a prop footballing at full tilt!

Saturated and sore, but immensely satisfied, the players moved swiftly to the clubhouse applauding each other en route, with a 6-4 Lions victory to be celebrated as some players immersed in Paul "can't grumble" Hickey's recovery ice bath.

It was also a notable day with three father-son appearances in Lee and Alex Stones, Jim and Harry Layard, and Neil and Guy Quail (also debutante).

The ACG takes this opportunity to thank all those involved who gave their time and effort to ensure this game went ahead, especially Anthony and Sa Van Sleuwen, with James Warwick's predictor garnering B20,000, all of which was raised to assist with Hugo Hattingh's hospital fees. Well done everyone as we look forward to the Vagabonds touring to Kuala Lumpur later this month.