

**GOVERNOR ENTERS MONKHOOD BEFORE RETIRING > PAGE 2**

# PROMISES



PM Srettha Thavasin tours Bangla Rd in Patong last Friday night (Aug 25). Photo: PR Phuket

## NEW PM SRETTA VOWS TO REIGNITE PHUKET'S TOURISM ENGINE

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Prime Minister Srettha Thavasin, within 48 hours of being royally endorsed as the 30<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister of Thailand, arrived in Phuket last Friday (Aug 25) to deliver a clear message of support for solving the critical issues hampering the island's tourism industry.

The visit was praised as a clear statement of the importance the island plays in the national economy. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Phuket generated more income for the country than any other province outside Bangkok. Since then, the island has struggled to regain its prominence as a leading tourism destination.

Even before boarding his flight to Phuket, PM Srettha accompanied by Dr Promin Lertsuridet, Chairman of Pheu Thai's tourism policy committee, and other members of the committee, met with executives of Suvarnabhumi Airport to discuss airport expansion projects.

### SWEET 16

At an event at the Ramada Plaza by Wyndham Chao Fah on Chao Fa West Rd in Wichit, no less than 16 different organisations briefed the prime minister on a slew of issues arresting Phuket's development.

Bhumikitti Ruktaengam, Advisor to Phuket Tourist Association, explained the main development strategy of the major tourism organisations

on the island, while PTA President Thanet Tantipiriyakit explained the issues of connecting tourism from abroad and within the country.

Assoc Prof Dr Phan Thongchum, Vice President, Prince of Songkla University Phuket Campus, and Dr Sawatchai Navakijrungsan, Deputy Director of Vachira Phuket Hospital, explained the 'Health Tourism Center Project', moving forward at the northern tip of the island.

Kongsak Khupongsakorn, President of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce, gave a description of the projects underway to develop Phuket's transportation network, and Thanusak Puengdech, Advisor to the Phuket Chamber of Commerce, explained which infrastructure projects were

deemed urgent.

Other issues explained to PM Srettha included environmental preservation and management, the strengthening of safety and law enforcement, zoning and extension of entertainment venues and the need for town planning.

PM Srettha expressed his support for the major meg-projects presented as urgent for Phuket's development, especially concerning the light rail project, the Patong Tunnel project, the 'Phuket Airport 2' project (to build another international airport in Phang Nga) and the supply of household water from Phang Nga.

However, Mr Srettha made it clear that his visit was to learn about the issues affecting Phuket, not to issue...

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## News



Rare sighting of humpback off Phuket > p5

# Governor readies for retirement

The Phuket News  
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Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew has entered a 15-day ordainment as a monk at a temple in Lamphun province to make merit ahead of his official retirement as Governor of Phuket on Sept 30.

Governor Narong entered the 15-day ordainment at Wat Pa Phutthaphot Hariphunchai last Saturday evening (Aug 26) through a ceremony administered by the revered Chao Khun Luangpo Arayawangso.

The governor's decision to embark on this monk ordainment holds significance as he prepares for his forthcoming retirement later this year. Such a 15-day ordination is a customary practice for Thai men, reflecting their deep-rooted cultural and spiritual values, Sapon Keamkan, Chief of the Phuket office of the



Photo: Wat Pa Phutthaphot Hariphunchai

Public Relations Department (PR Phuket), told *The Phuket News* on Monday (Aug 28).

"Governor Narong's choice to undertake this temporary monkhood showcases his commitment to both his official role as a government representative and his personal

dedication to the betterment of the nation. This act reflects a tradition where government officials symbolically offer themselves in service to the country," Mr Sapon said.

*The Phuket News* was told that Governor Narong will return to Phuket after his

15-day ordainment, on Sept 10 or thereabouts.

In his absence, Phuket Vice Governors Amnuay Pinsuwan, Anuparp Rodkwan Yodrabam and Danai Sunantarod will fulfill his gubernatorial duties.

As the governor engages in this spiritual journey, the

anticipation for the announcement of the incoming governor continues. The succession plan for leadership after Governor Narong's retirement remains an intriguing topic, generating curiosity among the people.

So far, there have been no official announcements detailing who will succeed Mr Narong as Governor of Phuket.

However, *The Phuket News* was told, "Stay tuned for updates as we follow Governor Narong Woonciew's transformative path and await news of Phuket's new governor in the days to come."

Governor Narong arrived in Phuket in June 2020 to replace Phakaphong Tavipatana, who had come under fierce criticism for his handling and implementation of COVID-19 policies.

According to reports in the Thai media online at the time, some people said Governor

Phakaphong did too little too late, while others reported that the measures he rolled out were too harsh.

Mr Phakaphong was assigned to the post of Governor of Phetchaburi.

Before his posting to Phuket, Governor Narong, a native of Phatthalung, had previously served as Governor of Chaiyaphum province.

On Governor Narong's arrival at Phuket Provincial Hall three years ago, the welcoming party was out in force, with many officials present to greet him with flowers.

"I will do my best for Phuket, to develop and lead Phuket to move forward," Governor Narong told the press as he entered Provincial Hall.

Governor Narong was immediately aware of the plight many people on the island were suffering without any income amid the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Srettha talks in Phang Nga focused squarely on new airport

Continued from page 1

...any orders or make any major announcements.

Regardless, he said he supported all major projects that improve Phuket's development, especially with regard to tourism.

### LATE CLOSING

During his visit to Bangla Rd in Patong last Friday night (Aug 25), PM Srettha was welcomed to the popular party street by a host of officials, led by Weerawit Kreuasombat, President of the Patong Entertainment Business Association (PEBA).

The prime minister toured the street, stopping to speak with venue operators, including Preechawude 'Prab' Keesin, the head of the Pisona Group and founder of the Patong Development Foundation, as well as tourists and even masseuses at establishments along his walk-through.

Mr Weerawit explained that entertainment venue operators were not allowed to stay open to 4am because of a law that is 30 years old. Phuket, and especially Patong, would greatly benefit from extending the closing time, as the area attracted many tourists from around the world, he said.

Representing the Patong venue operators, Mr Weerawit over the years has repeatedly submitted formal requests for the government to allow pubs, bars and nightclubs in the area to open later.

In 2018, Mr Weerawit publicly admitted that the request is a way

to end the ongoing "pay for play" racketeering by officials who collect bribes from venues in order to stay open late.

"This needs to be resolved. While Bangkok officials continue to stall on giving an answer, it leaves open the opportunity for officials to demand bribes from venue operators to stay open late to serve tourists," he said.

Extending the closing time of nightlife venues in Patong by two hours, from 2am to 4am, could see revenues by Patong operators boosted by B100 million a month, Mr Weerawit has repeatedly pointed out.

During his own visit to Bangla Rd in September last year, Minister of Tourism and Sports Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn said he had spoken with many tourists. "More than 70% of tourists want to extend the hours of the nightlife establishments at night until 4am. They all agree to extend the closing time from 2am because it's still a fun time," he said.

Regardless, the government so far has still yet to make any commitment to allowing Patong's nightlife venues to stay open late.

Last Friday night, Mr Srettha was just as non-committal. Asked whether the government would allow the extended trading hours, he answered: "It's possible".

### PHANG NGA

PM Srettha and his tourism policy working group entourage continued their visit to the Andaman coast with a



PM Srettha arrives in Khao Lak, where much focus was placed on a new airport for Phang Nga. Photo: PR Phuket

visit to Khao Lak in Phang Nga, north of Phuket, last Saturday (Aug 26).

The prime minister and his delegation group met local tourism and business figures, joined by Phang Nga Governor Ekarat Leesen and other Phang Nga provincial officials, at the Moracea by Khao Lak Resort Hotel, where three key development projects to develop Phang Nga's tourism industry were presented.

At the top of the agenda was the construction of the 'Phang Nga airport', also referred to as 'Phuket Airport 2' in other reports.

Pongsakorn Ketprapakorn, President of the Tourism Council of Phang Nga, earlier last week said that the airport, initially slated to be built in Khok Kloi, was necessary for the Andaman provinces as expansion at Phuket International Airport had reached maximum capacity, while tourist demand for the South had grown rapidly after the pandemic.

Mr Pongsakorn said the gov-

ernment should assign Airports of Thailand (AoT) to start conducting a feasibility study and environmental impact assessment as soon as possible, as airport construction takes many years, reported the *Bangkok Post*.

Based on a previous study for a potential airport in Phang Nga, he said the new facility could have the longest runway in Thailand, which could accommodate the large aircraft such as the Boeing 747 and Airbus A380, unlike Phuket airport, which has physical limits.

Moreover, the new airport could have a capacity of up to 25 million passengers per year, double the 12.5mn at Phuket, he added.

"The recovery of tourism in Phang Nga has reached 70% of the level in 2019. Some hotels already have full bookings for the upcoming high season. Provinces along the Andaman coast need a new airport to accommodate the stronger passenger flow in the near future," Mr Pongsakorn said.

Mr Pongsakorn added that Phang Nga had 150 hotels with 17,000 rooms. If the government agrees to build the new airport, the province will draw more investment.

At the meeting in Khao Lak, the Phang Nga tourism figures said that the new airport would include EV buses to transfer passengers to and from Phuket International Airport and Krabi International Airport. The service is intended to facilitate tourism throughout the Andaman region.

Construction of the airport would help drive development and investment into Phang Nga, the group added.

Also discussed at Khao Lak was the construction of a four-lane highway from Surat Thani to Ranaong and Phang Nga to help reduce travel time by domestic tourists. Other major projects discussed included a new pier (or port) to develop water transportation along the Andaman Coast and the construction of a rail link from Surat Thani.

PM Srettha and his tourism policy working group also heard from Phang Nga business figures a plea to further develop the 'Andaman Wellness Corridor' (AWC) to promote tourism to Phang Nga.

Holding marine and sport tourism event during the tourism high and low seasons would also help to stabilise Phang Nga's tourism industry.

Key issues that also needed to be acted on included "funding of 'Community Tourism' projects, solving basic infrastructure problems (water, electricity, public health) and coastal erosion", said an official report of the meeting.

In response to the lengthy proposals, Prime Minister Srettha said, "It is important to move forward to drive the country's tourism economy, not just Phang Nga Province. We must look at the whole picture, especially important and urgent matters."

PM Srettha promised he would return to Phang Nga in the future.



# TikTok post lands man with defamation charge

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Chalong Police have charged a man with criminal defamation over a TikTok post that accused Chalong Traffic Police officers of stopping motorists at a traffic checkpoint only to get money, and not for improving road safety.

In Thailand, defamation is not only a civil suit action. It is a criminal offense. Under Section 326 of the Thai Criminal Code, defamation is defined as whoever imputes anything about another person to a third person in a manner likely to impair the person's reputation or place the person in contempt or hatred by others.

Chalong Police confirmed the charge through a post on their own Facebook page on Aug 21.

The charge alleges that the man had damaged the reputation of the Traffic Police Division of the Royal Thai Police, and specifically of the traffic police officers seen in the video.

The man, not named by



A screenshot of the video posted on TikTok. Image: via Chalong Police

police, had uploaded a video showing Chalong Traffic Police stopping people on motorbikes at a checkpoint.

Accompanying the post was the note in Thai: "Chalong Police take everything" followed by "Don't care about anyone's children."

The post also included the hashtags, also in Thai: #PhuketProvince #Election66 #ChalongPhuket #takemoney-fromtourists #thievesinpoliceuniform

The post had received more

than 150 "hearts" and was forwarded at least 36 times.

The man presented himself at Chalong Police Station on Aug 25 to meet Pol Lt Col Peerasit Nupayan. The man "felt remorse for having acted recklessly", Chalong Police said.

He presented a gift basket and "apologised to all traffic police officers", and "apologised to all traffic police who were unknowingly posted in the clip", Chalong Police added.

However, despite the apology, Chalong Police are continuing with the charge, maintaining that they were carrying out their duties correctly at the time of the video recording, Chalong Police confirmed.

The man acknowledged the charge against him, Chalong Police said.

Of note, national police chief Pol Gen Damrongsak Kittipraphat in February issued an order stipulating the conditions under which police must set up checkpoints and conduct patrols and perform their duties at inspection points.

The order was presented as highlighting that police officers must wear bodycams while performing duties at checkpoints.

The notice was posted publicly just 10 days before a German tourist went public about a Chalong Police officer asking him to pay a fine of B5,000 for illegally riding a motorbike through the Chalong Underpass, then suggesting and accepting B2,000 cash by the side of the road. No receipt was handed over.

## Woman slain by ex in knife attack

A 32-YEAR-OLD MAN from Phetchabun has been taken into custody after he attacked his estranged wife with a knife, killing her, in Kathu on Monday (Aug 28).

Police were called to the scene, in front of a motorbike shop and a visa service office on Wichit Songkram Rd, at about 8:20am.

Officers arrived to find the man, Petai Hantaku, 32, from Phetchabun, still attacking the woman, his estranged wife Wimon Ketyu, 30.

Officers quickly arrested Petai and had Ms Wimon rushed to Vachira Phuket Hospital. However, Ms Wimon was later pronounced dead from her injuries.

Lt Col Kiattisak Sangmanee of the Kathu Police said the couple previously lived together in Phetchabun.

Petai said he wanted to make things better with Wimon, but she didn't want to, he explained.

Petai had followed her to his motorbike, sparking yet



Petai Hantaku, 32, in custody at the scene on Monday (Aug 28). Photo: Kathu Police

another argument, this time ending with Petai repeatedly attacking Ms Wimon with a knife.

"It's a very sad situation," Lt Col Kiattisak.

Police have yet to confirm the formal charges against Petai, which are presumed to include first-degree murder, among others.

If you or anyone you know is in need of emotional support and counselling, please contact the Samaritans of Thailand at their 24-hour hotline 02-113-6789 (English & Thai) or the Thai Mental Health Hotline at 1323 (Thai).

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Tambon chiefs grilled over illegal houses near airport

THALANG DISTRICT Chief Bancha Thanu-in has ordered the chiefs of the Thepkrasattri Tambon Administration Organisation (OrBorTor) and the Sakhu OrBorTor to investigate 49 houses believed to have been built illegally within their areas.

Mr Bancha issued the order to investigate the suspected illegal structures earlier this month, with the two OrBorTor chiefs given until Friday, Sept 15 to report their findings, reported news agency Isra.

A total of 34 houses are suspected of being built illegally in Tambon Thepkrasattri, and a further 15 houses are suspected of being built illegally in Tambon Sakhu, notably in areas around Phuket airport, said the report.

The order was issued in response to a complaint filed by Jamroon Kerddam, Chairman of the Gulf of Thailand – Andaman Area Conservation Network, reported Isra.



The view from the Bang Khanun forest overlooking Phuket airport. Photo: PR Phuket

Also in response of the complaint, Pol Capt Piya Raksakul, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Special Investigation (DSi), arrived in Phuket on Aug 15 to inspect illegal structures and illegal occupation of areas within the Bang Khanun Protected Forest.

The complaint reportedly included "confidential information from a conservationist who's part of the network in Phuket", Isra noted.

"The information highlighted a flooding incident that occurred at Phuket International Airport in Thalang District, Phuket Province, last year. This incident has

had a serious negative impact on the city's reputation as a top-tier tourist destination. Such a destructive event has never been experienced before.

"Upon investigation, the network discovered that the surroundings of Phuket International Airport are encompassed by numerous mountains, steep hills, and flat areas. Despite this challenging terrain, unauthorised construction is taking place.

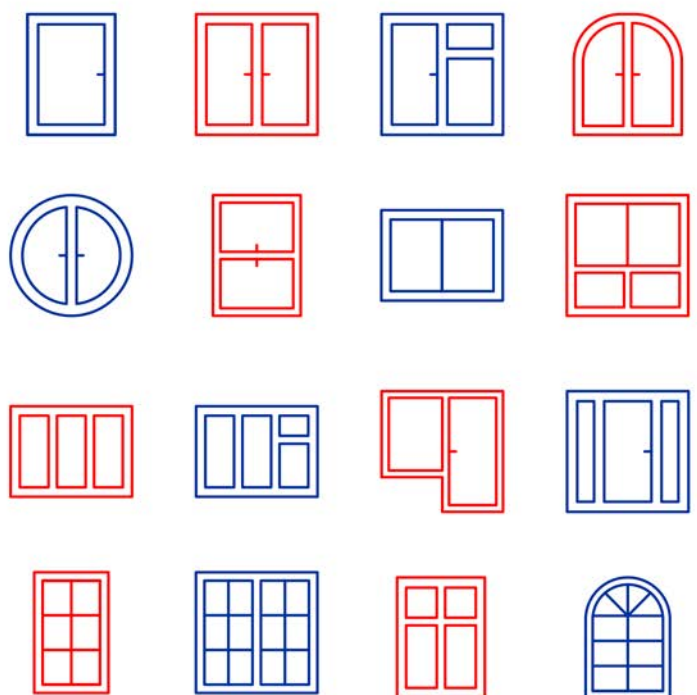
"These buildings have been erected without proper authorisation from local authorities, contravening the regulations set forth in the Building Control Act of 1979, which was later amended in 1992. The unauthorised construction including 34 houses have been built without proper authorisation in Thepkrasattri and 15 houses in Sakoo.

"However, the responsible parties for this negligence remain unknown, whether they are relevant officers or not," the network said.

The Phuket News



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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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Wind 11 m/s

SAT SEPTEMBER 2



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

SUN SEPTEMBER 3



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

MON SEPTEMBER 4



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

TUE SEPTEMBER 5



High: +32°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

WED SEPTEMBER 6



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

THU SEPTEMBER 7



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

## Grab driver smashes tour bus window in road rage dispute

LOCAL POLICE WERE called to defuse a road rage incident between a tour bus driver and a Grab motorcycle driver on the main road through Pa Khlok (Route 4027) last week.

The altercation unfolded on Aug 23 near the PTT petrol station.

The tour bus, registered under Pornprom Corporation Co Ltd, bore the brunt of the dispute, with its driver's side window shattered.

According to the bus driver, Thiraphong Pan-chuay, 36, the dispute arose as a small van attempted to turn onto a narrow road just as he was pulling out onto the main road.

In an attempt to allow him passage, the van momentarily stopped.

Meanwhile, a motorcyclist identified as Uruphong

Kaosuk, 42, was traveling in the same direction, but had to quickly avoid colliding with the tour bus pulling out.

Expressing displeasure over the "sudden exit" from the side street, Uruphong resorted to using his helmet to shatter a window of the bus. He argued that larger vehicles should give way to smaller ones.

Pol Capt Chanita Bunyanuch of the Thalang Police soon arrived to resolve the dispute.

At last report, bus driver Thiraphong and motorbike ride Uruphong were both asked to join Capt Chanita at Thalang Police Station so she could further question both of them.

In the end, Uruphong was charged with causing damage to another person's property.

Eakkapop Thongtub



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

## Truck loaded with gas canisters overturns

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An alarming incident occurred as a truck carrying cooking gas cylinders overturned on the southbound lanes leading into the Samkong Underpass on the bypass road on Aug 22.

Luckily, none of the metal canisters exploded or caught fire.

The accident happened at about at 10:20am. Both lanes into the tunnel were closed for more than two hours, leading to long tailbacks of vehicles heading both directions, north-

bound and southbound.

Officers from Phuket City Police and rescue workers swiftly arrived at the scene.

A passenger in the truck cab sustained minor injuries and was promptly taken to Mission Phuket Hospital.

The driver of the truck, Dawit Kongsumboon, 28, uninjured, told officers that he was driving from Mai Khao in Thalang to deliver gas to Ao Makham.

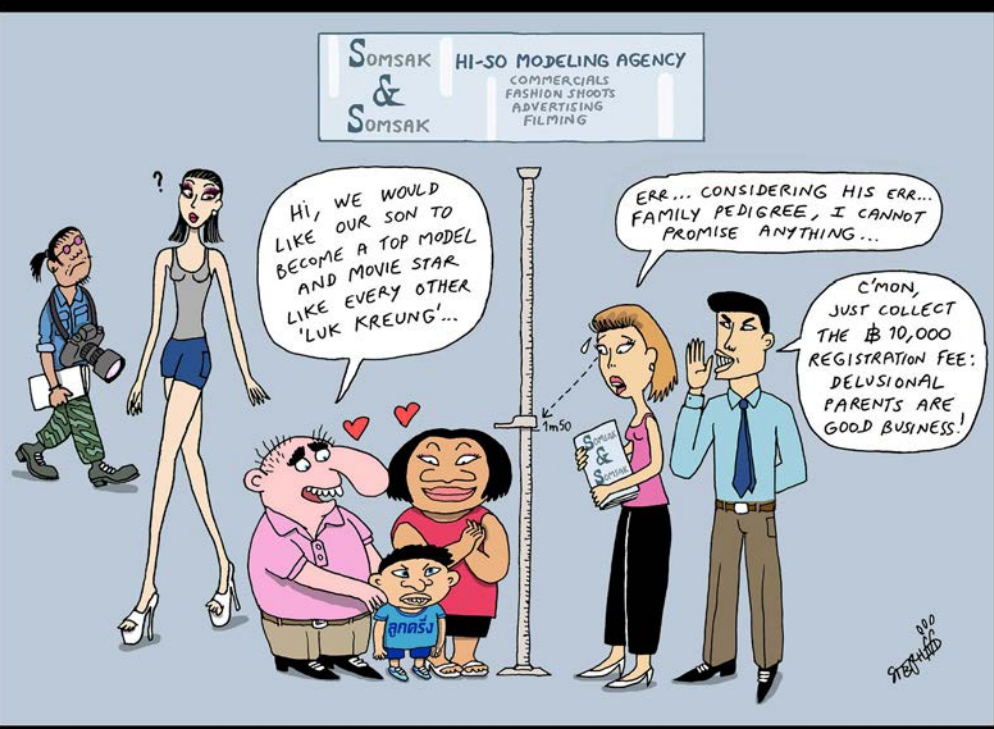
While driving into the tunnel the truck began to increase speed, and he struck the guardrail, causing the truck to overturn, he said.

Of the 30 gas cylinders in the back of the truck, seven were found to be leaking. The rescue workers doused the truck and had the gas cylinders safely removed before reopening the road for normal traffic flow.

At last report, Phuket Provincial Police were still investigating the incident, awaiting footage from surveillance cameras within the underpass and assessing the extent of the damage caused by the accident. Further legal action will be taken based on the investigation's findings, police said.

## FARANG AFFAIRS

By Stephff

<https://farangaffairs.com>

## Pothole blocks lane in Kathu

KATHU MUNICIPALITY has asked motorists to exercise caution when using Phra Phuket Rd after a dangerous pothole near the entrance to Lotus's Kathu supermarket was discovered and fenced off pending repairs.

The warning to motorists was posted on the Phuket Info Center page around 3:10pm on Aug 25.

The single pothole is in the middle of the left eastbound lane of the road, next to the entrance of Phuket Goldenville / The Space housing project and Lotus's supermarket.

"Kathu Municipality has installed flashing lights, traffic cones, and barrier sticks [at the scene]. Reflective detour signs have been placed around the pothole to prevent road



Photo: Phuket Info Center

accidents. Drivers are kindly requested to drive slowly and exercise caution," stated the Phuket Info Center.

Not explicitly mentioned in the report but clearly visible in the picture is that the road space in the eastbound direction (towards Samkong and the bypass road) has been limited to one lane only.

The Phuket News

the Phuket news



# 'Flying SorKor' suspected in B225mn Sirinath land grab

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**P**ol Capt Piya Raksakul, Deputy Director General of the Department of Special Investigation, arrived in Phuket on Aug 22 to inspect a parcel of land valued at B225 million that is under investigation for encroaching on Sirinath National Park.

Joining Capt Piya was Police Lieutenant Colonel Amorn Hongritong, Director of the DSI's Bureau of Natural Resources and Environment Crime, and fellow DSI Special Case Investigators.

The officers used a drone to take aerial images of the land, and gathered other evidence and questioned officials in the area.

The land covers about 15-3-71 rai. With the land estimated to be valued at about B15 million per rai, the entire plot is estimated to be worth more than B225mn, Capt Piya said.

"The Department of Special Investigation has focused on the protection and preservation of natural resources, especially in the national



Photo: DSI

forest reserves, national parks and public land shared by the people, in order to create stability and sustainability in the natural economy and tourism," Capt Piya said.

"The appraisal of the said plot of land at approximately B15 million per rai; the initial total value should be around B225 million, which represents a loss of the country's economic security," he said.

The encroachment was first reported by officers from the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) after park staff noticed the plot had been cleared and appeared to

be within the national park's boundaries in Moo 1, Sakhu.

The DSI reviewed the complaint and accepted it as a Special Case on Feb 15, the DSI noted in its report of the inspection.

"The team of officials has examined and found that the land where the incident occurred overlaps with the area of Sirinath National Park and is located in the area of public land," the DSI said in its report.

The person claiming to own the land had presented SorKor 1 (No. 283) as evidence of rights to ownership.

"It is believed that the land

ownership notification form (SorKor 1) referred to does not match the location of the plot of land at the scene," the DSI said plainly in its report.

The use of a SorKor 1 land document issued for one parcel of land in order to claim land elsewhere has become renowned in Phuket as a 'Flying SorKor'.

"The incident area is in the national park area, and public interest. It is a valuable resource area of the land. It is also close to Phuket International Airport, which is an important area with high land value and is a source for the country's economy," the DSI noted.

"It is therefore a matter that has a serious impact on public order and good morals of the people that impacts on the economy," the agency added.

The Department of Special Investigation has assigned the Natural Resources and Environment Litigation Division to be the "owner" of the case, the DSI noted.

"If there is any progress in the investigation, the Department of Special Investigation will report to you in the future," the agency assured.

## Phuket holds earthquake 'standard response' drill

PHUKET DISASTER officials conducted an earthquake response drill last week as part of the national plan for the country to be prepared for major earthquakes.

There are 23 provinces at risk of suffering damage from earthquakes, Charan Kwankaew, Assistant Chief of the Phuket Provincial office of the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM-Phuket), explained at a briefing of the exercise on Aug 23.

Phuket is located near the Klong Marui fault, which stretches across Phang Nga, and includes a fault line off Phuket's east coast.

The exercise was predominantly a 'Table Top Exercise: TTX', with the aim of officials at all levels in all three districts in Phuket following the guidelines under the National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Plan 2021-2027.

The exercise conducted was one of 10 situations in the guidelines, Mr Charan explained.

The hypothetical situation was Phuket provincial officials being informed by the National Disaster Warning Center and the Meteorological Department



Young students at Baan Nam Yen School take cover under their desks as part of the response exercise. Photo: Patong Municipality

that an earthquake occurred at the Klong Marui Fault at 10:30am. The hypothetical earthquake had a magnitude of 6.2 and struck 12 kilometres deep.

In response a response command centre was set up under the direction of the Phuket Governor, with all relevant agencies coordinating their response, including evacuations. As part of the exercise, students at Ban Nam Yen School in Patong and students at Mueang Thalang School in Thalang were evacuated from the school buildings.

Phuket Vice Governor Anupap Rodkwan Yodrambam noted that conducting such drills was important in helping to protect people's lives and property from natural disasters. *The Phuket News*

## Rare sighting as humpback whale spotted off Phuket

AN EXTREMELY RARE sighting of a humpback whale was reported off the coast of Phuket on Aug 24 by the owner of a tour boat company.

The Phuket Info Center posted on its Facebook page an account by tour boat operator Charoen Chanaphon who explained he was sailing a boat from Phuket towards Phi Phi island around 11:45am when the whale was spotted. It was not confirmed whether any tourists were also aboard the boat at the time of the sighting.

Mr Charoen explained the whale appeared to be heading from the south-east direction towards the southwest. Shortly after the whale was spotted by Mr Charoen, it commenced its dive procedure whereby its tail emerged out of the water before it began its descent.

Initially Mr Charoen was unsure as to the exact species but later explained that the rare marine animal team from the Department of Marine and Coastal Re-



Photo: Charoen Chanaphon via Phuket Info Center

sources (DMCR) had examined the picture he managed to take and confirmed it as a humpback whale.

Such sightings are extremely rare in the waters surrounding Phuket, with the Phuket Info Center stating this was only the second official recorded sighting of the humpback species in such waters.

Humpback whales, or *Megaptera novaeangliae* to use their official name, migrate each year from Antarctic feeding grounds to tropical areas where they gather to mate and calve, particularly in the southern regions of the Indian Ocean.

Whereas sightings might be rare in the Andaman

Sea, closer to Phuket and the surrounding islands, it does prove that the majestic mammals do swim in such waters.

Maritime officials did urge a note of caution, however, to anyone that may similarly come across the whale, or whales, in the following days in the waters off Phuket, near Racha Island or Phang Nga Bay.

In such a situation people are advised to keep their distance and sail with caution and respect. Also, if possible, people were urged to report further sightings to the authorities, ideally stating date, time, location and/or coordinates.

*The Phuket News*

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# Chinese slowdown hits tourism

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Thailand's tourism and exports of chemical products and plastic pellets are expected to decline because of the Chinese economic slowdown, according to the latest study by the Commerce Ministry's planning unit.

Poonpong Naiyanapakorn, director-general of the Trade Policy and Strategy Office (TPSO), said the liquidity crunch in China's real estate sector is a major concern for the economy, hampering its recovery after Beijing lifted strict measures to control the spread of COVID-19.

Real estate businesses in China mostly utilise extensive borrowing for a high volume of projects. This creates risk for a property bubble, Mr Poonpong said.

Earlier this month, the People's Bank of China announced the 'Three Red Lines' criteria aimed at reducing the risk of a property bubble and restraining the expansion of debt in the real estate business. Only 6.3% of Chinese real estate businesses met these criteria, making it nearly impossible



During the first half of 2023, only 1.4 million Chinese tourists visited Thailand, indicating a significant decline in numbers. Photo: AOTGA

for most businesses to borrow more money to operate.

Combined with reduced sales during the pandemic, many businesses faced severe financial difficulties, including major player Evergrande.

Evergrande has more than 1,300 projects, accounting for almost 25% of China's economy, making it one of the most heavily indebted companies globally. It filed for bankruptcy earlier this month. Additionally, Country Garden, China's top real estate business, is showing

signs of defaulting on dollar-denominated bond interest payments.

Given the immense size of the real estate sector, which contributes about 29% of China's GDP, its troubles have far-reaching consequences for the Chinese economy. In the second quarter of this year, the economy expanded by only 0.8% from the first quarter.

This has also affected the financial status of the population since around 70% of urban residents invest in real estate for income and investment,

and plummeting real estate prices lead to significant financial losses.

The real estate slump has also impacted the labour market, as the construction sector is a major job provider of over 62 million positions. Those jobs may be subject to elimination while new job opportunities have dwindled, especially for new graduates who have suffered due to reduced real estate investments since 2022, according to the TPSO's study.

Retail sales of home-relat-

ed goods, particularly home decor, saw a significant decline from January to July.

According to Mr Poonpong, the consequences of these events have also hit the Thai economy, particularly affecting tourism and consumer spending on overseas travel among the Chinese, as well as other knock-on effects.

The tourism sector of Thailand has been impacted due to the fact that Chinese tourists previously constituted about 28% of the total number of visitors entering the country. In 2019, 11.1mn Chinese tourists visited Thailand, generating revenue of B530 billion.

However, in the first half of 2023, only 1.4mn Chinese tourists visited Thailand, indicating a significant decline in numbers.

Furthermore, the export sector has been affected through a number of channels, including: reduced purchasing power of Chinese consumers due to the economic slowdown caused by the sluggish real estate sector; and impacts on exports of certain raw materials due to China's real estate issues, particularly chemical products (used in construction) and plastic pellets.

Additionally, other products related to construction, such as steel and steel products, aluminium products, machinery used in construction, and cement and plastic products, are unlikely to be much impacted as China is not a major export market for Thailand.

Nevertheless, Mr Poonpong said that as China is a major consumer and importer of commodities such as steel, copper and gold, the country's economic slowdown may result in volatile prices of those products, impacting Thailand as a price taker.

He advised Thai entrepreneurs to closely monitor the real estate situation in China as it significantly affects the country's economic recovery, which in turn impacts Thailand's economy, particularly in terms of tourism and international trade.

In the case of trade, China is Thailand's top trading partner and the second-largest export market, representing about 12% of Thailand's total export value. Therefore, the Chinese economic situation has significant implications for Thailand's export sector, Mr Poonpong said.

## Impact study due for 'Andaman road'

AN IMPACT STUDY WILL be carried out on a proposed Andaman coastal road project linking Ranong and Satun provinces, according to the Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning (OTP).

The two-lane road covering 600 kilometres is expected to improve tourists' access to attractions in six provinces – Ranong, Phang Nga, Phuket, Krabi, Trang and Satun, said OTP director Punya Chupanit.

Recreation areas, parking, viewpoint stops and possibly a bicycle lane will be included in the project. The office is now looking for a consultant to conduct the study, he said.

The Ranong-Satun road was approved by the cabinet in October 2021 and the Transport Ministry assigned the OTP to carry out a feasibility study, including project planning and the environmental impact assessment (EIA) study.

A budget of B80.75 million was set aside for the feasibility study, which will take 18 months, Mr Punya said.



Tourists take photos at the Samed Nang Chee viewpoint in Phang Nga. Photo: Sarot Meksophawannakul / Bangkok Post

If the contract can be signed this month, the feasibility study can get under way next month and be completed by March 2025.

He said the OTP will hold three public hearings to which citizens, local administrators and provincial chambers of commerce are expected to be invited.

The office will submit the study results to the Transport Ministry for Cabinet

approval.

The Department of Highways and the Department of Rural Roads are the main agencies expected to manage the project.

The Department of Rural Roads has experience with the Transport Ministry's Thailand Riviera project, proposed in 2022 to boost tourism in the Andaman region, Mr Punya said.

Bangkok Post

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# Cabinet finalised: Srettha

## BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

Newly appointed Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin said on Monday (Aug 28) his Cabinet line-up was finalised, amid speculation the new defence minister could be a civilian member of the prime minister's Pheu Thai Party.

Mr Srettha, who was royally appointed as the country's 30<sup>th</sup> prime minister on Aug 23, said the Cabinet line-up was settled as far as he was concerned. It would go to the Cabinet secretary-general for scrutiny of the new ministers' qualifications and then be proposed for royal approval.

The Prime Minister declined to comment on a report that some Pheu Thai members and red-shirt supporters of his party did not want Gen Natthapol Nakpanich to be defence minister, only saying that whoever fills the role would have to be able to discuss and coordinate security issues and show leadership.

He refused to be drawn on speculation the new defence minister may be a civilian. He said only that people would not be disappointed when the



New Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin. Photo: Bangkok Post

line-up is announced.

Sources said Pheu Thai deputy leader Sutin Klungsang could be the new defence minister, succeeding outgoing Prime Minister and Defence Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha.

The sources said Mr Sutin was chosen at the last minute instead of Gen Natthapol, who was secretary-general of the National Security Council and also served as the operations director of the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration in the Prayut administration.

Bhumjaithai leader Anutin Charnvirakul is tipped to serve as a deputy prime minister as well as interior minister while deputy Bhumjaithai leader Chada Thaiset may become a deputy interior minister. Pol Gen Permpoon Chidchob and Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn are expected to be confirmed as education minister and labour minister respectively.

Assigning such key positions to members of the Bhumjaithai party, the second largest in the coalition govern-

ment, would not prove disadvantageous to the Pheu Thai party, according to Stithorn Thananithichot, director of the Office of Innovation for Democracy at King Prajadhipok's Institute.

"In the past, coalition leaders had to keep the post of interior minister for themselves. But this time has to focus on fixing economic woes as a priority," he said.

Generally, the Interior Ministry is among the most coveted portfolios by parties as it controls tens of thousands of local organisations, which can be enlisted to help build political support.

Citing the latest line-up reported by the media, Mr Stithorn said Pheu Thai would take several Cabinet seats available, including those handling economic affairs, such as the commerce, finance, tourism and sports portfolios.

"These ministries are crucial to reinvigorating the economy and boosting exports and tourism.

"Pheu Thai also needs to carry out one of its key election pledges, the B10,000 digital wallet scheme. If the scheme succeeds, Pheu Thai can win back its popularity," Mr Stithorn said.

# Seafood imports from Japan under review

## BANGKOK

THAILAND'S DEPARTMENT of Fisheries has raised the frequency of random inspections on seafood imported from Japan after authorities began the release of treated radioactive water from the damaged Fukushima nuclear plant into the Pacific Ocean on Aug 24.

Despite reassurances from the International Atomic Energy Agency that the release was safe, concerns still prevail among many segments of society in East Asia and beyond.

Department of Fisheries Deputy Director-General Taworn Thunjai said on Monday (Aug 28) his agency is placing particular focus on products imported from locations deemed at greater risk of contamination, including Tokyo, Fukushima, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Niigata, Nakano and Saitama.

The heightened inspection effort is made possible by the department collaborating with the Office of Atoms for Peace and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (MHESI).



Photo: NNT

Together, the agencies are taking radiation readings on imported seafood products to prevent items contaminated with unsafe levels of radioactive materials from being imported.

According to Mr Taworn, no readings exceeding the allowable standard stipulated by the Ministry of Public Health have been found up to date. He added that 4,375 samples of seafood and fishery products inspected by the Japanese health ministry from last year until April 2023 did not detect contamination that exceeded the Thai health ministry's requirements.

Mr Taworn explained any contamination by radioactive materials that exceeded the standard would immediately prompt a recall or import halt on the product in question. NNT

# Jailed Thaksin remains in hospital

## BANGKOK

PAETONGTARN "UNG Ing" Shinawatra, leader of the Pheu Thai Family, visited her father and former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra at the Police General Hospital on Monday (Aug 28).

Thaksin, 74, was admitted to Bangkok Remand Prison on Aug 22 after landing at Don Mueang airport on a private jet, ending 15 years in self-exile, and being immediately taken to the Supreme Court, which jailed him for eight years on charges he was convicted of in absentia and sentenced.

He was transferred from Bangkok Remand Prison to the Police General Hospital on Aug 23, suffering from chest pain, hypertension and low blood oxygen, according to the Department of Corrections (DoC).

The DoC said Thaksin has four critical ailments – heart disease, lung disease, high blood pressure and a herniated disc.

After five days in quarantine, the hospital is allowing him visitors from 9am-3pm.



Thaksin Shinawatra with his daughter Paetongtarn at Don Mueang airport after the former prime minister's return from exile on Aug 22. Photo: Bangkok Post

Ten people, mainly other family members, registered to visit Thaksin on the first day although Ms Paetongtarn was the first to see him.

She began her visit about 1pm and left at 1:45pm without talking to reporters. When asked about her father's illness and his mental condition, Ms Paetongtarn did not reply.

Santhana Prayoonrat, a former special branch police officer who was at the hospital to see his father, said the rooms on the 14<sup>th</sup> floor were reserved for high-level police officers. His father had been admitted for treatment for lung inflammation on

July 28 and was on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor of the same building, he said.

He believed Thaksin was in room 1401. He saw doctors and nurses in front of that room on Aug 23 when he went up the 14<sup>th</sup> floor to take a look.

Mr Santhana said the room had just been renovated and was fully equipped with such basic amenities as a bed, a living room, a kitchen and a bathroom. Every room on the 14<sup>th</sup> floor had a full view of the nearby golf course and horse race-course, as reported by the media, he confirmed.

Bangkok Post



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# Korean epic 'The Moon' impresses

David Griffiths

Disaster movies don't normally come with a serious storyline. Normally they are films full of amazing special effects, loud noises and people running for their lives. A decent screenplay is normally the last thing on the filmmakers' minds – but the latest film from South Korean director Kim Young-hwa (*Take Off*) bucks that trend as it delivers both amazing visuals and a biting screenplay that makes a strong political statement.

To call *The Moon* just a decent disaster film might be understating it because this is an absolute gem – perhaps even one of the best films we have seen in the genre over the past decade.

Set in the near future *The Moon* chronicles the events of South Korea's second manned space mission. Five years earlier their first expedition ended in disaster. Under the watchful eye of the then space mission director Kim Jae-guk (Sol Kyung-gu – *Public Enemy*) the first mission exploded, killing all on board.

The second mission starts off uneventfully but then everything changes when a strong solar wind causes a shocking disaster. Two crew members die leaving one astronaut, Hwang Sun-woo (Doh Kyung-soo – *My Annoying Brother*), to fend for himself. That in itself is an issue as he does not have the experience to keep the shuttle running.

As Sun-woo tries to keep the mission on track, back on Earth at the Naro Space Centre they work hard to try and convince Jae-guk to return to his old role, despite him suffering from post-traumatic stress, while trying to talk NASA into helping them – a move that seems futile seeing that NASA warned South Korea from attempting to go into space again.

*The Moon* is very much a movie that is told in two sections. First of all, you have all the action set out in space. There are catastrophic spacewalks, the tension



Doh Kyung-soo in 'The Moon' (2023). Image: IMDb

of Sun-woo deciding to continue his journey and land on the moon and then comes the meteor shower that sends the film into an action overdrive that brings director Kim Young-hwa's brilliant action film-making skills to the fore.

Then there is the second storyline set back on Earth. It is here that the strength of Young-hwa's screenplay is on display. Not only does it tackle the storyline of a man suffering from post-traumatic stress trying to put his life back together, but it also looks at the political ramifications of what has just happened. Not only does it show senior officials worried about the political fallout from the disaster but also explores the relationship between Naro and NASA and even has the courage to ask the question why NASA always feels like they have the power to dictate what the rest of the world's space programs are doing. It's not hard to see the parallel between that and the way the American Government acts towards other nations.

Often a film in this genre will shy away from anything serious and just rely on the action sequences to make it work, but with *The Moon* it really is the bril-

liant screenplay mixed with the action that makes it a memorable film. Even making the head of NASA a former Naro employee and ex-partner to Jae-guk brings a whole new dramatic level to the film that works amazingly well.

The amazing screenplay also lends itself to some great acting performances. Sol Kyung-gu is stunning as the emotionally wracked Jae-guk. It is rare but this is an Oscar-worthy performance in a genre film. Also amazing is Doh Kyung-soo; he shows his brilliance during the on-moon action sequences but still has a dramatic acting side when needed. The other powerful performance in *The Moon* comes from Kim Hee-ae (*Moonlit Winter*) who plays the torn NASA boss – again she is someone who puts in an award-worthy performance here.

The film's only weakness is that it tries to do too much with its storyline in space. While the twists and turns in the plot certainly add to the suspense levels there is a strong feeling that perhaps too many different disasters seem to fall on Seon-woo when realistically the solar wind and meteor shower are probably more than enough.

That aside, though, *The Moon* is one of the cinematic highlights of 2023. This is the film that many expected 2013's *Gravity* to be. But while *Gravity* was a major disappointment *The Moon* is not. Not only is this one of the best films of this year, it is an absolute masterpiece in the disaster movie genre.

*The Moon* is currently screening in Phuket and is rated G.

4.5/5 Stars

David Griffiths has been working as a film and music reviewer for over 20 years. That time has seen him work in radio, television and in print. He is also an accredited reviewer for Rotten Tomatoes. You can follow him at [www.facebook.com/subcultureentertainmentaus](https://www.facebook.com/subcultureentertainmentaus)



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# A Year in Phuket



## BLAZING SADDLES

**Baz Daniel**  
baz\_gunner2000@yahoo.com

I moved to Phuket to live and take over the editorship of Art Asia Publishing's *Phuket Magazine* in 2006. I'd jumped from the grinding maw of an exceedingly high (blood) pressured career as an advertising agency Vice President, based in Bangkok.... one of the hottest, congested and polluted cities on Earth.

For years I'd been spending huge amounts of my increasingly jet-lagged and sleep-deprived time hurtling around the Asia-Pacific region from high-stress client meetings to commercial shoots to regional board meetings. I was exhausted, regularly took sleeping pills, had intractable sinusitis from Bangkok's acrid air pollution and I was desperate to slow down and see if I could regain my happiness once again.

I'd been reading Peter Mayle's hugely successful book *A Year in Provence* and identified strongly with the biographical story he told of an advertising executive, much like myself, who'd quit the madness of the corporate rat-race to move to a beautiful part of the globe and concentrate on writing and creativity. Indeed, Mayle had even worked for Ogilvy and Mather and the legendary David Ogilvy, as I had done as a young adman in Toronto in the 1970s

Peter Mayle, an Englishman like myself, was born in 1939, 10 years before me, so he was somewhat ahead of me when in 1989, in his early 50s, he moved to Provence to continue his writing career. I realised that in my own 2006 move to Phuket, I was searching and hoping for some of the romantic idealism which Mayle discovered and then wrote about so vividly when he moved to Provence.

Bicycles feature large and centre stage in Mayle's Provencal dreamscapes as crusty locals in berets are seen cycling to the morning bakery and the aromas of freshly-baked croissants enliven their sleepy pedalling through the early mists. Late evening tipplers are hilariously depicted, weaving their unsteady way home from extended sessions of banter and pastis with their cronies in the town square.

Dusting off my own trusty mountain bike to start to get to know Phuket, I wondered if I would find similar scenes of amusing local life, as Peter Mayle had portrayed. As the year from May 2006 when I arrived in Phuket unfolded, I did indeed seem to find a wide number of distinct parallels between our experiences of disconnecting from the mainstream world of congested cities and stressful corporate life.

The wondrous natural and topographical beauty of the Andaman was of course very different from the rural agrarian charms of Peter Mayle's Luberon, but both seemed to have a mystical ability to unleash happiness in our souls. Much like Mayle, I started



Much like Peter Mayle in Provence, Baz found new life in Phuket.

to find myself smiling again for no apparent reason, other than the unbridled pleasure of being alive in the lovely new outdoor world in which I found myself.

Like Mayle, I certainly fell afoul of the trickery, mendacity and money gouging of the locals, but again even this was mostly done, as Mayle had observed, with an almost comedic obviousness. It was certainly a case in Phuket of 'Foreigner Beware' and if you failed to wise up pretty quickly to the scams and cheating, then that was your problem Mister Stupid!

As I gradually settled into my island idyll, other parallels between Provence and Phuket announced themselves. There were the wonderful fresh food markets bursting with colourful local produce, not to say colourful locals! Cheeses, cured meats, olives, artichokes, fungi, truffles and rabbits in Provence and pla kapong, shellfish, lobsters, durian, rambutan, eggplants and mountains of chilies in Phuket.

The whole reverence with which eating and drinking were celebrated also

mirrored each other across the two cultures. Meals were grand occasions for extended communal enjoyment, full of banter, gossip, shared gustatory pleasure and copious libations to wash down the endless courses. Often occurring outdoors, these meals were a joyous contrast to the cold, often lonely, mas-tication of 'meat and two veg' which formed a major part of both Peter Mayle's and my own post-war boyhoods!

These many similarities between my Phuketian baptism and that of Peter Mayle in Provence lead me to ponder the possibility of writing the book *'A Year in Phuket'* then turning it into a global bestseller, with film rights, celebrity and financial rewards to match. I'm sure I'm not the first to have had this romantic idea, but thus far this 700-word article, rather than a 200-page book, will have to suffice!

*'Bicycling' Baz Daniel has been penning his Blazing Saddles column, chronicling his cycling adventures in Phuket and beyond, since 2013.*



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POP QUIZ

1. What is the official colour for Phuket Province?

2. Besides Thailand, which two countries have coasts on the Gulf of Thailand?

3. Which was the last pitched battle fought on British soil?

4. Which company owns the trademarks and products of Parker Brothers and Milton Bradley?

5. Clyde Chestnut Barrow and Bonnie Elizabeth Parker were better known as who?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Hard

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

1. Burnett

6. Tiny openings

11. Mud bath locale

14. Swears

15. Aquarium fish

16. Euripides play

17. Simon and Garfunkel classic

20. Kind of socks

21. Bolt down

22. "American Idol," for one

23. Increase, with "up"

25. Look-see

26. French collagist

29. Food fish

32. Saudi Arabian money

36. At an easy pace

38. Bit of dust

39. Noiseless

42. \_\_\_ de force

43. Pregnancy part

44. Pitchers

46. Shoestrings

47. Cow chow

48. Facility

50. Catch red-handed

52. Not wholesale

Down

1. Wine holder

2. Shakespeare, the Bard of \_\_\_

3. Debauchee

4. Dog tag datum

5. Kind of trip

6. Ancient gathering place

7. Hit the road

8. "\_\_\_ De-Lovely"

9. Hackneyed

10. Food tray

11. Trigonometry function

12. Somewhat, in music

13. From the top

18. Exacting

19. Inuits

24. Needle holder

25. Purging medicine

26. Winged

27. Plant more seeds

28. Provoke

30. See 28-Down

31. "The Nutcracker" lead

33. Sonic \_\_\_

34. Bewildered

35. Distrustful

37. Dreamlike

40. Pecuniary punishment

41. Tableland

45. Popeye, e.g.

49. Inclination

51. Modern \_\_\_

52. Invitation letters

53. List ender

54. Wee

55. Poker variety

56. Resistance units

58. Turkish title

59. Some candy, to a Brit

60. Carve in stone

62. Flipper

63. Catch a few Zs

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) Pink; 2) Cambodia and Vietnam; 3) The Battle of Culloden (1746, near Inverness); 4) Hasbro; 5) Bonnie and Clyde

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14					15						16	
17					18					19		
20					21			22				
			23	24			25					
26	27	28		29		30	31			32	33	34
36			37							38		
39								40	41			
42					43							
44				45		46					47	
			48		49				50		51	
52	53	54				55	56			57	58	59
61						62				63		
64				65						66		
67				68						69		

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

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

1

single mouthful of krill consumed by a blue whale has as many calories as an average person consumes in roughly 180 days.

7

percent of all US households don't have a bank account.

70

percent of millionaires in the US don't consider themselves 'wealthy'.

600

places in Australia are named after the emu.

2.7 million

pages is how much evidence prosecutors had in pressing sex trafficking charges against Ghislaine Maxwell

Source: *Uberfacts*

ISLAND VIEW



Kamala Beach. Photo by Alena Plotnikova

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

This week in history

Sept 1, 1974

The Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird sets (and holds) the record for flying from New York to London in 1 hour, 54 minutes and 56.4 seconds at a speed of 1,435.587 miles per hour (2,310.353 km/h).

Sept 2, 1666

The Great Fire of London breaks out and burns for three days, destroying 10,000 buildings including St Paul's Cathedral.

Sept 3, 1878

Over 640 die when the crowded pleasure boat *Princess Alice* collides with the *Bywell Castle* on the River Thames.

Sept 4, 1781

Los Angeles is founded by 44 Spanish settlers, who name the city El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora La Reina de los Ángeles de Porciúncula (The Village of Our Lady, the Queen of the Angels of Porziuncola).

Sept 5, 1698

In an effort to Westernise his nobility, Tsar Peter I of Russia imposes a tax on beards for all men except the clergy and peasantry.

Sept 6, 1492

Christopher Columbus sails from La Gomera in the Canary Islands, his final port of call before crossing the Atlantic Ocean for the first time.

Sept 7, 1776

Ezra Lee makes the world's first submarine attack in the 'Turtle', attempting to attach a time bomb to the hull of HMS Eagle in New York Harbor.

Source: *Wikipedia*



The SR-71 Blackbird.

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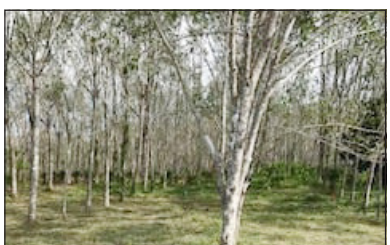
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## THIRSTY THURSDAY BY TRAVEL DAILY MEDIA - AUGUST

Held on August 24 at Blue Tree Phuket, over 100 travel and hospitality professionals enjoyed a great evening of networking, healthy treats and drinks in the Tree House overlooking the spectacular Blue Tree Phuket lagoon.





HRH Princess Sirivannavari competes at the 2017 SEA Games in Malaysia. Photo: Bangkok Post

## Princess to spearhead Thai equestrian squad

### ASIAN GAMES

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS Princess Sirivannavari Nariratana Rajakanya will lead the Thai equestrian team in the upcoming Asian Games in Hangzhou of China, the Thailand Equestrian Federation has confirmed.

The Princess will take part in dressage along with Supasin Kongphan, Pavarisa Thongpradab and Supajit Wattanadit.

Suphap Khao-ngam, Preecha Khunchan, Veerapat Pitakanon and Kornthawat Samran will compete in eventing.

Chanokporn Karunyathat will be the only Thai athlete in the jumping category in the 19<sup>th</sup> Asian Games to be held in the Chinese city of Hangzhou between Sept 23 to Oct 8.

The equestrian tournament takes place from Sept 26 to Oct 6 with the dressage competition starting on Sept 26.

HRH has previously represented Thailand in both

equestrian and badminton in international events.

She was a silver medallist in the dressage team event at the 2017 SEA Games in Malaysia and also competed in the discipline at the 2014 Asian Games in South Korea.

As a badminton player, the Princess won gold in the women's team event at the 2005 SEA Games in the Philippines, also competing at the Asian Games in Qatar a year later.

Thailand are sending 940 athletes and 335 officials to compete in 40 sports at the Hangzhou Games, postponed from last year due to COVID.

It was confirmed last Friday (Aug 25) that broadcast rights holder AIS Play and 11 TV channels will show the Hangzhou Games live.

The 11 stations are NBT2HD, Thai PBS, TV5 HD, T Sports 7, JKN18, WORKPOINT TV 23, TRUE4U, GMM25, MCOT HD, CH7 HD and PPTV HD36.

Bangkok Post

# Shock results ahead of Rugby World Cup kickoff

### RUGBY

AFF

The final warm-up matches for this year's Rugby World Cup took place last weekend with holders South Africa hammering New Zealand and Fiji stunning England among the standout results.

There were two huge surprises in west London in less than 24 hours as South Africa inflicted a record 35-7 defeat over New Zealand on Friday (Aug 25) and then Fiji claimed a first win over England with a 30-22 victory on Saturday.

Three-time World Cup winners the All Blacks will drop down below the Springboks in the world rankings to fourth after the loss, but the gulf in quality, and strength in depth between the historic rivals was difficult to ignore.

Unlike New Zealand, England's expectations were low prior to the tournament and the defeat to the Pacific Islanders sent shockwaves around global rugby.

The visitors are considered as outsiders in Pool C, behind Australia and Wales, but now can be seen as serious contenders to reach the quarter-finals for a third time. Georgia could also cause problems alongside Fiji in the group. Despite los-



South Africa's fullback Damian Willemse (centre) during the 35-7 win against New Zealand last Friday (Aug 25), a record defeat for the All Blacks. Photo: AFP

ing 33-6 to Scotland, they had led 6-0 at the break.

### SAMOA SIMMERING

Hours after their Pacific neighbours overcame England, Samoa ran leading World Cup contenders and Six Nations Grand Slam winners Ireland very close in Bayonne.

Seilala Mapusua's outfit led by a point with under 20 minutes remaining before losing 17-13 in the Basque Country but put their hands up as serious threats.

They will join struggling England in Pool C as well as Argentina, who eased past a second-string Spain and Japan,

who lost in Italy.

Samoa's chances of a first last-eight appearance since 1995 have enjoyed a massive boost and with the likes of ex-All Blacks Lima Sopoaga and Steven Luatua in the squad they have plenty of experience at the highest level.

### BARRETT BLUNDER

The build-up to the World Cup during the past month was overshadowed by England pair Owen Farrell and Billy Vunipola's suspensions, ruling the two out of their potentially crucial opening game with the Pumas.

What rubbed further salt

into the wounds of New Zealand was lock Scott Barrett's red card and potential ban.

He will appear in front a disciplinary hearing in the coming days and is likely to miss games in the World Cup, including the first match against hosts France.

Les Bleus will be licking their lips following the All Blacks' defeat and their easy 41-17 victory over Australia on Sunday.

As an extra bonus for Fabien Galthie's side, New Zealand could also be without Barrett's fellow lock Brodie Retallick, a World Cup winner in 2015, due to an injury.

# Home comfort for Verstappen after record-equalling victory

### FORMULA ONE

MAX VERSTAPPEN CLAIMED a record-equalling ninth victory after a sudden downpour red-flagged his home Dutch Grand Prix seven laps from the finish last Sunday (Aug 27).

What looked like a straightforward Verstappen victory from pole came undone before the end of the lap, when a downpour forecast for later in the race arrived ahead of time.

The Dutchman delayed his pit stop for wet tyres until the end of the second lap, but the slow reaction time meant he dropped briefly to as low as 13<sup>th</sup> in the chaos before recovering to fourth and quickly rising back to second.

The new leader was teammate Sergio Pérez, who had astutely switched rubber at the end of the first lap and found himself with an almost 15-second lead over the home favourite once the pit stops were done.

But Verstappen was on a



Red Bull Racing's Max Verstappen celebrates winning the Dutch Grand Prix last Sunday (Aug 25). Photo: AFP

charge, and by lap 11 he was only three seconds adrift of the leader and considering his options for a pass.

By then the rain had stopped, however, and slick tyres were faster once again. Fernando Alonso, who had gained a pair of places off the line to run third, was first in among the top three.

Sensing an undercut threat, Red Bull Racing pulled Verstappen in first. He comfortably covered the following Spaniard, and his advantage on fresh dry-weather rubber was so great that Pérez rejoined behind him when he made his own

stop just one lap later.

Red Bull Racing denied favouritism played a role in the decision-making, though the happy side-effect was not having its drivers battle for position in the sketchy conditions.

Verstappen looked to have the race sewn up with a 10-second advantage with 12 laps to go when the heavens opened once more.

All drivers pitted between laps 60 and 61 for new tyres, but this time the rain was far more intense.

Pérez locked up at the first turn and lost second place to Alonso, but further back Zhou Guanyu wasn't

as lucky, spearing into the barriers and bringing out the red flags.

The race was suspended for almost 50 minutes to recover the unhurt Chinese driver's car and to wait for conditions to improve. The race got back underway with a rolling restart and just five racing laps remaining.

Despite some inquiries from Alonso, Verstappen held the lead comfortably in the slick conditions to finally secure victory after 72 laps.

### 'INCREDIBLY PROUD'

"Incredible," Verstappen said. "Today they didn't make it easy for us with the weather to make all the time the right calls. But I'm incredibly proud."

The win extends Verstappen's lead to 138 points and sets him up to potentially win the championship as early as in Japan in three races time.

Alonso resumed the season in strong form, with a muscular first lap setting him up for his first podium since June in a revised Aston Martin car that the team hopes will return it to regular top-three contention.

"It was a very intense race," he said. "The car was flying today – very competitive, very easy to drive."

"In these conditions, you need a car that you can trust, and I did trust the car a lot today."

Pérez should have secured at least a podium, up from seventh on the grid, thanks to his strong call to pit on the opening lap, but the Mexican locked up on his way to the pits for the red flag and was found to have broken the pit lane speed limit, incurring a five-second penalty.

Pierre Gasly, who had also made big gains with some well-timed stops at the start of the race to rise from 12<sup>th</sup> to fourth, clung to the back of the Red Bull Racing car in the final five laps to ensure he could capitalise on the punishment, securing a rare rostrum appearance for the beleaguered Alpine team.

Pérez finished fourth ahead of Carlos Sainz, Lewis Hamilton and Lando Norris, with Alex Albon a strong eighth.

Oscar Piastri finished ninth, while Esteban Ocon completed the top 10 for Alpine. Michael Lamonato



# Man City dig deep to go top

## FOOTBALL

**AFP**  
**M**anchester City opened up a two-point lead at the top of the Premier League as Rodri's late winner at Sheffield United last Sunday (Aug 27) ensured the champions are the only side still with a 100% record after three games.

City dominated the game yet struggled to score, with Erling Haaland missing not only a first-half penalty but a number of other chances.

The Norwegian finally broke the deadlock in the 63<sup>rd</sup> minute before Jayden Bogle shocked the defending champions with an equaliser shortly after.

However, Rodri blasted home with only two minutes remaining to secure the win and their place at the top of the table.

Elsewhere, 10-man Liverpool produced the performance of the weekend by coming back from 1-0 and a man down inside half an hour to win 2-1 at Newcastle thanks to substitute Darwin Nunez's decisive late double.

"He was obviously fired up from not starting," said Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp after the match.

"This is a new team with new key players. It needs time. He scores two goals and can't get the smile off his face. For the team, it was super important."

West Ham and Tottenham are alongside Liverpool and Arsenal on seven points as they continue to make light of the departures of Declan Rice and Harry Kane, respectively.



Manchester City's Rodri (centre) celebrates his late winning goal at Sheffield United with teammates last Sunday (Aug 27). *Photo: AFP*

Spurs' manager Ange Postecoglou has shrugged off the loss of the club's all-time record goalscorer to rapidly whip a new-look side into his own image.

The Spurs fans have a new idol in James Maddison, who scored his first goal for the club in a 2-0 win at Bournemouth last Saturday.

But it is Postecoglou's positivity, in stark contrast to the dour recent regimes of Antonio Conte and Jose Mourinho, that has lifted the mood around Tottenham.

West Ham ended Brighton's perfect start with a 3-1 win at the Amex Stadium. The Hammers enjoyed just 22% possession but picked off the hosts thanks to goals from James Ward-Prowse, Jarrod Bowen and Michail Antonio.

Manchester United hit back from conceding twice in the first four minutes on Saturday to beat Nottingham Forest 3-2 thanks to goals from Cristian Eriksen, Casemiro and captain Bruno Fernandes.

Arsenal made a similarly sluggish start, going 1-0 down to Fulham in the first minute then chasing the deficit for 70 minutes before stumbling to a 2-2 draw.

Raheem Sterling was the star of the show, scoring twice and assisting Nicolas Jackson, as Chelsea beat Luton 3-0 to give Mauricio Pochettino his first win in charge of the Blues.

At the bottom, Everton's miserable start to the season continued as they lost 1-0 to Wolves at Goodison Park, while Brentford and Crystal Palace drew 1-1.



Thailand players celebrate. *Photo: Bangkok Post*

## Thais finish third at Asean U23

### FOOTBALL

THAILAND FINISHED third in the AFF U23 Championship following a 4-3 penalty shoot-out victory over Malaysia after a goalless stalemate at the end of a 90-minute tussle in Rayong last Saturday (Aug 26).

Thailand U23 had lost 3-1 to Indonesia U23 in the semi-finals while Malaysia were beaten 4-1 by Vietnam on Aug 23.

The Thais controlled most of the game and got a chance in the 32<sup>nd</sup> minute but Phantamit Praphan was denied by the Malaysian goalkeeper.

In the second half, the hosts kept pressuring Malaysia but saw Chukid Wannaphaphao waste a good opportunity with a wide shot.

As both sides failed to find the net in 90 minutes of play, a shoot-out was called under the tournament regulations in

which the Thais edged Malaysia 4-3 to seal third place in the regional championship.

In the group stages Thailand beat Myanmar 3-0 in their first game and then Brunei by the same scoreline in their second encounter in the group.

They defeated Cambodia 2-0 in their final group game to secure qualification for the knockout round.

Vietnam beat Indonesia in Saturday's final 6-5 on penalties after the game ended 0-0 after extra time.

Vietnam had the chance to win the game in normal time when they were awarded a penalty in the 33<sup>rd</sup> minute. However, Nguyen Quoc Viet's spot kick was saved spectacularly by Indonesian goalkeeper Ernando Ari.

The win meant Vietnam secured their second consecutive AFF U23 Championship title, after winning last year. *Bangkok Post*

## Kunlavut makes Thai badminton history

### BADMINTON

KUNLAVUT VITIDSARN made history when he became Thailand's first world badminton champion in men's singles at the BWF World Championship 2013 at the Royal Arena in Copenhagen, Denmark, last Sunday (Aug 27).

The 22-year-old Thai player, ranked world No 3 and nicknamed 'View', came from behind to beat No 4 seed Kodai Naraoka of Japan 2-1 with scores of 19-21, 21-18 and 21-7.

The two were neck and neck after two lengthy games which lasted 81 minutes, but Kunlavut stormed ahead in a dominant final game to secure a historic victory and become the first Thai player to win a men's singles gold.

Kunlavut is the fourth badminton player from Thailand to win a gold in the world badminton championship after Ratchanok Intanon who was the world champion in women's singles in 2013 and Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Sapsiree Taerattanachai who won the world championship in



Kunlavut with his medal and Badminton Association of Thailand president Patata Leeswadtrakul. *Photo: Bangkok Post*

mixed doubles in 2021.

Despite there being no prize money on offer, unlike the BWF World Tour events, Kunlavut is entitled to a B1.5 million reward from the National Sports Development Fund after his win.

The marquee event also comes with the highest points on offer at any BWF event in a calendar year, which will heavily influence the badminton world rankings and help determine which players qualify for the 2024 Olympics in Paris.

Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin tweeted this message of congratulations on Monday:

"I would like to congratulate View – Kunavut

Vitidsarn, Thailand's first world badminton champion in men's singles at the BWF World Championship.

"In 2013 we had the first world champion in women's singles and in 2021 we won world championship in mixed doubles. The Thai players can show a very high potential with arduous training, resilience and strong determination, physically and mentally.

"Congratulations to View and his family and his team for contributing to this success."

An Se-Young of South Korea beat Spain's Carolina Marin 21-12, 21-10 in the women's singles final, also played on Sunday.

*Bangkok Post*





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