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SLOW LAKE



The stalled redevelopment works at Nai Harn Lake. Photo: Natnaree Likidwatanasakun

MAKEOVER AT NAI HARN LAKE HITS BUREAUCRATIC SNAG

Natnaree Likidwatanasakun
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The long-stalled makeover of Nai Harn Lake has reignited the public after MP Chalermpong Saengdee visited the site and shared photos and videos online. The project, originally intended to improve the recreational space for locals and tourists, has drawn criticism for its prolonged delay, unfinished construction and potential safety risks.

According to MP Chalermpong, residents have complained that the site remains unusable for recreation or jogging, with incomplete construction posing a safety risk to tourists.

"The project has dragged on for far too long," MP Chalermpong

stated in his post, explaining that the makeover was initially proposed in response to local complaints.

The B66 million landscaping and bike path project at Nai Harn Lake was set for completion by early February. The project, in total 1,973 metres long, was supposed to see parking spaces made available alongside the park beside the lake as well as a bike lane and the installation of solar-powered street lights.

The contract, with developer Sasivarai Construction for precisely B66,600,000, was initially agreed to on May 7 last year, with 515 days allowed to complete the works.

However, due to delays in the official bidding process, the

completion date was pushed back to Feb 10, 2025.

Yet the project has since been abandoned by the developer Sasivarai Construction, leading to more complaints, and the follow-up by MP Chalermpong.

FRACAS

The post by MP Chalermpong quickly drew attention, especially after Opas Chobdee, Chairman of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) Council, commented with the word "Suek" – a Thai term meaning "obtrusive" or "nosy." The remark prompted swift backlash online.

MP Thitikan, soon criticising Opas's response, said, "Our tax money, which we should help each other inspect and protect according

to our duties, has been attacked like this. Do you have any suspicious intentions?"

"I would like to ask Rewat Areerob, President of the PPAO, to train your team's manners," he posted.

PPAO President Rewat defended the MPs' right to question the project's progress, and called Opas's reaction as "stupid" – keeping in mind that Mr Opas is Chairman of the PPAO Council.

"Opas's crazy. How can you say that to an MP? He has the right to investigate," Mr Rewat told *The Phuket News*.

"I will certainly talk to him about this," he added.

Mr Rewat is fully aware of the role of a Phuket MP. He represented Phuket as a Member of...

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Thai teenager bags US spot



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HAIR LAB



Nai Harn Lake progress stalls

Continued from page 1
...Parliament in the House of Representatives for two terms.
For his second term, in 2011 he won the seat for Phuket MP District 2, alongside Anchalee Vanich Thepabutr, with both representing the Democrat Party.

FAILED FUNDS
Mr Rewat clarified that the previous contract, awarded through the Government Procurement E-bidding process, was valued at B66mn – below the project’s allocated budget of B72mn.
“Even though there is a median price, the government’s E-bidding system prioritises the lowest bid,” Mr Rewat said.

Mr Rewat declined to explain as to why the B66mn contract was approved, even though the PPAO already knew it was not enough to complete the project.
“The Sasivarai Construction won the bid by undercutting others by B6mn, but after construction began they ran out of



The sign explaining that the contract for the public works project has been cancelled. Photo: Natnaree Likidwatanasakun

budget and they couldn’t continue, leading to a complete halt in progress,” he said.
Mr Rewat also explained to *The Phuket News* that he had deep concerns that Sasivarai Construction may sue for its contract being cancelled.
If Sasivarai Construction

decides to sue, the PPAO could potentially lose the case, he said.
The contract was officially terminated on Apr 8, the PPAO has since announced in a public statement.
The relevant documents have been sent to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of

Finance “for consideration [of Sasivarai Construction] as a job abandoner”, the public statement added.
“Sasivarai Construction has received only B7-8 mn from the PPAO,” Mr Rewat said. “They worked only one week and then stopped – so we stopped payment because we were not confident they would continue
“Fortunately, since no further payments were made, most of the budget remains intact to be used to pay for a new contractor,” he added.

NEW CONTRACT
Mr Rewat assured that the PPAO aims to select a “qualified contractor who can complete the project properly.”
“I expect the revamped project will be completed by early January 2026,” Mr Rewat pledged.
“E-bidding for the new contract will open on May 1, and will remain open for bids for one month,” he said.

Under the Terms of Reference (TOR) in the new contract to open for bids is that the project budget is estimated to cost, on average, about B73,994,975.03
The contract does not stipulate an actual start date, but the duration of the work is to be 518 days.
The bidder must have construction work of the same type as the construction work bid for no less than B30 million and the work is a direct contract with “a government agency or a private agency that the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation trusts”.
Once bids close on May 30, the successful bid is to be selected within seven days, and the contract with the PPAO must be signed within seven days from the date of notification.
Interested contractors can access the full Terms of Reference (TOR) and project details via the PPAO website at <https://phuketpao.go.th/news/detail/89095>

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Popular town restaurant has bay-front land seized

PHUKET OFFICIALS HAVE SEIZED over four rai of coastal land and 17 structures at a popular seaside restaurant on the east side of Phuket Town for alleged forest encroachment and illegal construction along a public waterway.
Officials from the Phuket Provincial Forestry Office, led by Sorasak Rananan, Director of the Phuket Forestry Center, coordinated with Phuket Marine Chief Natchapong Pranit and representatives from the Natural Resources and Environment Office and Phuket City Police, to post official seizure notices on the disputed property, the Khon Thai Restaurant 2, located at the end of Soi Senaniwet, fronting onto Phuket Bay.
The land is located near the Office of the Attorney General, was the description given in an official report of the raid.
Signs were installed at two points: one at the gated entrance of the restaurant and another at the far edge of the property.
Meanwhile, the restaurant displayed its own sign claiming the land is legally held under Title Deed No. 15632, warning against unauthorised entry but welcoming customers.
Mr Sorasak stated the operation followed a complaint and site inspection conducted on Mar 12, during which officials discovered unlicensed occupation of forest land and 17 illegal buildings on more than four rai.
A formal complaint has been filed with Phuket City Police, and the case will now

Photo: PR Phuket

proceed through the legal system, Mr Sorasak said.
According to Mr Natchapong, the Phuket Marine Office had earlier been alerted by forestry officials and inspected the site, finding that the restaurant had also encroached on public waterway areas.
A letter was sent requesting the landowner to provide permits for the construction. When no permits were produced, the Phuket Marine Office ordered the demolition of structures, including a 950-square-metre, 140-metre-long bank barrier built to prevent sea erosion.
The restaurant has 90 days to comply but retains the right to appeal.
Criminal complaints have also been lodged in relation to the alleged violations, the official report confirmed.

The Phuket News

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Exchanges hit in crypto raids

The Phuket News

editor@classactmedia.co.th

Two digital asset exchange companies in Cherng Talay have been raided as part of a major crackdown on unlicensed cryptocurrency trading operations allegedly connected to drug trafficking and scam networks.

The companies – named by the Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) as ‘Ex24.pro’ and ‘Cryptopida’ – were among eight locations targeted in a coordinated operation led by the CIB’s Economic Crime Suppression Division (ECD).

The raids, carried out under the court-issued warrants issued on Apr 18, form part of ‘Operation Crypto Phantom’, a national campaign to dismantle underground financial networks moving billions of baht through illegal digital asset exchanges, tyhe CIB explained in a report posted online.

In total, four sites in Phuket were searched, including a commercial building in Moo 10, Chalong, and another in Patong, which operated under the name ‘Money Markets’.



Photo: CIB

Of note, several of the ‘shops’ raided featured Russian language among their signage inside their exchanges.

The exchanges were engaged in ‘hand-to-hand’ cryptocurrency transactions – particularly involving USD Tether (USDT) – conducted outside of licensed platforms to avoid financial oversight and taxation, the CIB report said.

According to investigators, such unregulated services are often ex-

ploited by criminal groups to launder money and funnel funds into illicit activities such as narcotics trafficking and call centre scams.

Preliminary analysis of financial data has uncovered more than 1,000 suspicious transactions, totaling over 425 million USDT, equivalent to more than B14 billion, the CIB report noted.

Further raids were also conducted in Chon Buri and Bangkok, including private residences and front com-

panies posing as currency exchanges and family service centres.

One such location, operating under the name ‘Hua Pi Tui Huan Chang’ (货币兑换 Exchange), was found in Bangkok’s Huai Khwang District.

CIB officers are continuing to examine digital evidence and financial records seized during the raids.

Additional arrests and asset seizures are expected as the investigation progresses, said the report.



Photo: Royal Thai Air Force

F-16s at the airport

FOUR F-16 FIGHTERS led a Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) exercise at Phuket International Airport on Apr 22 to showcase the RTAF’s “flexibility” in responding to emergency situations.

The exercise was to highlight the ability to operate from civilian airfields as part of a broader readiness strategy for 2025, the RTAF reported in a post online.

The exercise involved coordinated operations between the Air Force and airport authorities, focusing on takeoffs, landings and tactical air maneuvers in a civilian environment.

Aircraft participating in the drill included four F-16MLU fighter jets from Squadron 403, Wing 4; a

C-130H transport aircraft from Squadron 601, Wing 6; and a DA-42MNG reconnaissance plane from Squadron 402.

Air Force officials said the operation was aimed at enhancing operational flexibility to enable the military to quickly adapt to a wide range of situations, from national defense to disaster relief and humanitarian missions.

The exercise was to highlight how the Air Force can “create advantages in various situations, whether in terms of using forces to defend the country, air transport and providing disaster relief to the people effectively”, the RTAF said in its post.

The Phuket News

Tsunami drill to be held at Kamala

THE PHUKET PROVINCIAL Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Office ((DDPM Phuket) is preparing to host a major tsunami simulation exercise at Kamala Beach as part of the National Disaster Management Exercise 2025.

The national exercise, titled ‘Crisis Management Exercise: C-MEX 25’ will be carried out by disaster officials throughout the country from June 24–27.

DDPM Phuket Chief Wichit Sutthaso explained that C-MEX 25 is a Level 3 national command exercise, with Phuket’s practical training focused specifically at Kamala Beach.

The exercise aims to strengthen disaster response and inter-agency coordination, he told a preparatory meeting on Apr 22.

The drill will involve officers, local residents, and tourists in a simulated tsunami emergency. Activities include five key training stations: evacuation and warnings, search and



Photo: PR Phuket

rescue, emergency medical response, shelter setup and water rescue, Mr Wichit said.

Command and coordination drills will also be conducted at Phuket Provincial Hall in coordination with the central DDPM office in Bangkok.

“The goal is to improve disaster response, enhance coordination between agencies and build public confidence in our ability to handle real emergencies,” Mr Wichit said.

The exercise in Phuket will take place only at Kamala Beach, Mr Wichit noted.

“Other areas such as Mai Khao, Kata and Ley Phang Beaches will not be included in the training,” Mr Wichit added.

Mai Khao and Ley Phang Beaches are currently without any tsunami warning towers, while the tsunami warning siren at Kata Beach is under repair.

C-MEX 25 aims to ensure that local and national agencies are fully prepared to respond quickly and effectively to any future disaster events, particularly those affecting Thailand’s vulnerable coastal communities, Mr Wichit said.

Natnaree Likidwatanasakun



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Photo: Phuket Immigration

'Big Pu' orders arrest of Patong Frenchman

A FRENCHMAN HAS been arrested and charged in Patong for reckless driving after he was caught running red lights, making excessive noise and not wearing a helmet.

His arrest came after his antics were brought to the attention of national immigration Bureau Chief Pol Lt Gen Phanumas 'Big Pu' Boonnalak, who in turn ordered Phuket Immigration officers to take action.

Local immigration officers reviewed CCTV and traffic light cameras to track down the offender, identified only as 23-year-old French national 'Mr Ali', at the hotel on Phra Mettha Rd where he was staying and placed him under arrest.

The date and time of his arrest was not reported.

Mr Ali was detained and handed over to Patong Police Station for further investigation, and to face legal proceedings, immigration officers confirmed.

Mr Ali reportedly was fined for his transgressions, and apparently apologised and said he would not do it again.

Phuket Immigration said they will take action against tourists who break the rules, in order to prevent others from doing the same.

"Phuket Immigration aims to stop illegal behavior by foreigners and are committed to keeping everyone safe, both locals and tourists, to build trust in Phuket as a safe place to visit," Phuket Immigration reported.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Sword rampage over construction deal

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

A man has been arrested after he brandished a sword amid a roadside assault on Chao Fa Suan Luang Rd in Wichit last Friday (Apr 25).

Wichit Police were called to the scene, some 450 metres from Chao Fa West Rd, just before 3pm. By the time officers arrived, both men had left the scene separately.

Video footage shared on social media showed the victim, Chatchai Sae-Ku, 46, of Moo 6, Wichit, exiting the car he was travelling after it was struck from behind by his attacker, later identified as Nattapol Sawangchaeng, a resident of Moo 1, Chalong.

Sword in hand, Nattapol circled Chatchai while brandishing a sword and filming the scene with his phone.

According to police, the two men had an argument over a construction contract fee. After the argument Nattapol chased down Mr Chatchai and crashed into the car he was in, forcing Mr Chatchai to stop.



Screenshot: Supplied

During the video Nattapol is seen kicking Mr Chatchai several times in the head.

Not clarified by police is that photos circulating online of Mr Chatchai's leg show a wound that required about 30 stitches to close. Another wound on the same leg required at least eight stitches to close.

When Mr Chatchai exited his car, his left leg was already bandaged.

According to witnesses, Nattapol and Mr Chatchai, who had prior dealings, became embroiled in a dispute over a construction contract fee. The argument escalated into a chase before culminating in the violent confrontation, Wichit Police Chief Pol Col Somsak Thongkhang later confirmed.

By 6:30pm Friday, police had Nattapol in custody. He was charged with multiple offenses, including premeditated assault, coercion, public possession of a weapon, causing property damage, reckless driving, and illegal use of a Category 1 narcotic (methamphetamine).

Police seized from Nattapol his white MG pickup truck, registered in Bangkok, and a 25-inch sword sheath. Officers confirmed that he had tested positive for methamphetamine use.

Nattapol was informed of his legal rights, questioned, fingerprinted and detained pending further investigation, police confirmed.

Additional reporting
Eakkapop Thongtub

Sinful thief steals cash donations

LOCAL RESIDENTS HAVE voiced their anger after a man was caught on CCTV stealing money from a Kathin offerings tree at a shop on Bangkok Rd in Phuket Town.

The footage, posted online, shows a grey-haired man wearing an orange motorbike taxi vest entering the shop and lingering at the counter area.

After ensuring no one was looking, the man approached the Kathin offerings tree – a traditional Buddhist display where banknotes are attached for donation to monks – and snatched a banknote before calmly walking out.

The incident has sparked outrage online, especially as it is reportedly the third time such a theft has occurred at the same location.

Social media posts condemning the act have widely



Screenshot: Supplied

circulated, with captions such as "#SuperSinfu" and "Karma Will Follow Him Home". The suspect has been dubbed "#OrangeShirt-MotorcycleTaxiUncle" by commenters urging anyone with information to come forward.

The Kathin offering is a significant tradition in Thai Buddhism, and stealing from such a display is seen not only as a criminal act but also a profound moral violation.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Illegal Russian guides arrested

TOURIST POLICE HAVE arrested two Russian nationals and fined two tour companies during a coordinated operation targeting violations of the Tourist Business and Guide Act.

Tourist Police officers led by Pol Lt Col Ekkachai Siri alongside officers from multiple units and the Southern Region 2 Tourist Business and Guide Registration Office made the arrests on Apr 23.

The Russian nationals were arrested for illegally working as tour guides without the required licenses, Tourist Police reported.

One was apprehended at the Laem Tukkae public beach pier on Koh Siray, the other was arrested at Baan Hin Rom Pier in Klong Khian, Takua Thung district of Phang Nga.

In addition to the arrests, two tour companies were fined for administrative violations, Tourist Police confirmed.

Charges included failing to submit tour guide work orders for



Photo: Tourist Police

inspection and neglecting to provide licensed guides to accompany tourists, in breach of regulations under Section 33 of the Tourist Business and Guide Act.

The violations were detected during an inspection at Wat Khao Kok Kloy Waterfall in Kok Kloy, Phang Nga, Tourist Police noted.

The names of the Russian nationals or the tour companies were not included in the report.

Eakkapop Thongtub

'Go' for Belgian Honorary Consul

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Kingdom of Belgium has officially opened an Honorary Consulate in Phuket, with Bhummikitti 'Go' Ruktaengam appointed as the Honorary Consul. The new office is located on Phuket Rd in Phuket Town.

The opening ceremony, held on Apr 23, was attended by Phuket Vice Governor Samawit Suphanphai and Deputy Ambassador Sarah Gasquard from the Belgian Embassy in Thailand, who welcomed guests and dignitaries.

Mr Bhummikitti's appointment covers consular responsibilities for the provinces of Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi. The Vice Governor congratulated Mr Bhummikitti on his new role, highlighting the importance of the consulate in fostering closer ties between Belgium and the region.

The consulate will play a key role in supporting Belgian nationals and promoting cooperation in tourism, trade, and investment. It will also help enhance safety and services for Belgian visitors to the Andaman region, said an official report of the event.

The Belgium Embassy notes that "Honorary consul Mr Bhum-



Photo: PR Phuket

mikitti Ruktaengam is competent for consular assistance to Belgians in need, issuance of temporary passports and signature of life certificates."

"Honorary consuls are volunteers who exercise their mandate free of charge," the embassy also noted.

Mr Bhummikitti told *The Phuket News*, "It is a great honour. The duty of being an honorary consul is to take care of the citizens of the country that appointed me to this position, not just tourists but also Belgians living here."

Belgium is a very small country. Mr Bhummikitti noted. "The number of tourists who came to Thailand last year [2024] was 117,000, which is not a lot, and only 35% of 117,000 came to Phuket.

"However, Thai Airways

launched a direct flight on Dec 1, 2024, making it easier for more Belgians to travel to Phuket," he added.

"There are 220 Belgians officially registered as residents in Phuket, but there may be more who are not registered with the embassy.

"This is a common issue in every country – some people register, while others do not inform us, but we estimate that there should be about 400-500 Belgians living in Phuket," he said.

The Belgium Honorary Consulate in Phuket is located at 63 Phuket Rd, Talad Yai, Muang, Phuket 83000. Tel: 076-211932. Email: contact@belgiumconsulatephuket.com

The Honorary Consulate is open "Monday to Friday (upon appointment)".

OUTSTANDING CREDENTIALS

Mr Bhummikitti served as the President of the Phuket Tourist Association from 2020-2022. He was replaced by Thaneth Tantipiriyakij.

While seeing Phuket through the onslaught of COVID-19 restriction policies, which ground Phuket's tourism revenues to a halt, Mr Bhummikitti openly criticised the government for its lack of support of tourism businesses suffering on the island.

In response, he piloted and promoted the highly successful 'Phuket Sandbox' campaign, which finally brought tourists back to Phuket.

The 'Sandbox' concept was so successful national figures still use the concept today to promote later initiatives, including the now ongoing 'Green Hotel Plus Phuket Sandbox' to have hotels on the island certified for their environmental status.

Mr Bhummikitti in recent years has focussed more on environmental concerns, and is currently Chairman of the Sustainable Tourism Development Foundation.

As an Advisor to Phuket Chamber of Commerce, Mr Bhummikitti in 2023 met with then Phuket Governor Narong

Woonciew and a host of leading local government figures to discuss a new 'zero food waste' project underway and the ambitious goal of making Phuket a 'Low Carbon Destination City'.

Late last year, Mr Bhummikitti led a team presentation of the 'Phuket Old Town Carbon Neutrality Project' at the 25th International Island Tourism Forum (ITOP), held at the Pullman Karon Beach Phuket Resort. The forum attracted over 150 leaders and policymakers from island destinations worldwide.

Mr Bhummikitti was also a key figure involved in the official launch of the 'Phuket Old Town Carbon Neutrality 2030' project, aiming to position the historic area as an international model for sustainable tourism. The official launch was inaugurated by Minister of Tourism and Sports Sorawong Thienthong in Phuket in November.

Mr Bhummikitti's efforts, and achievements, in supporting Phuket's push to a more sustainable model led to Prime Minister Paetongtarn coming to Phuket to officially open Thailand's first 'Sustainable Tourism Conference', held in Mai Khao late March.

'Opal' crowned Miss World Thailand

PHUKET MODEL SUCHATA 'Opal' Chuangsri has been stripped of her Miss Universe 2024 third runner-up title due to breach of contract, and she has now been crowned Miss World Thailand and 2025.

Miss Suchata was crowned Miss Universe Thailand in July. The 21-year-old is native of Phuket province. Her family runs a hotel on the island.

Fluent in Thai, English and Chinese, Miss Suchata pursued Chinese studies at Triam Udom Suksa School and is now a graduate in political science with a focus on International Relations at Thammasat University.

She was bestowed the accolade third runner-up in the Miss Universe 2024 finals held in Mexico City last November.

However, the Miss Universe Organization last week in a public statement stated, "Recently, we have discovered that TPN Global did not comply with the protocols set by the National Directors (ND) by sending a Miss Universe Queen to participate in another pageant before



The statement came just one day before Miss Suchata was crowned Miss World Thailand 2025 in the finals held in Bangkok on Apr 23.

In response, Miss Suchata posted on her official Facebook page, "A memorable and honored crowning moment... I am deeply honored, Mister Brian, for the privilege of receiving this esteemed title directly from you.

"I am truly grateful for your confidence in my potential and for granting the Opal For Her project the opportunity to continue its journey on the prestigious Miss World platform.

With sincere appreciation, thank you."

Miss Suchata has not commented on the action taken by the Miss Universe Organization.

However, her official Facebook page shows that she has since continued with public fundraising events, including a 'Pay it Forward' event to raise funds for building an inpatient building at Kanchanabhisek Medical Center, and undertaken several commercial projects.

The Phuket News

completing her reign. We deeply regret any incidents where these actions have violated our internal protocols and expectations.

"The role of a Miss Universe winner is not only an honor but also a responsibility that requires dedication and respect for the commitments agreed upon. For this reason, we have made the difficult decision to withdraw the third runner-up title from the person who had been honored with it, due to the breach of her contractual obligations by participating in an external pageant."

Of note, the Miss Universe Organization did not refer to Miss Suchata by name.

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Time Capsule Ceremony Marks Milestone at Layan Verde

ADVERTORIAL

In northern Phuket, in the prestigious Layan area, construction has officially begun on Layan Verde – a landmark mixed-use development already being hailed as the island's first truly iconic residential and resort real estate project. Developed by VillaCarte Group, this visionary undertaking is designed to set a new benchmark in sustainable luxury living, while enhancing Phuket's appeal as a premium investment destination.

On April 18, a symbolic time capsule ceremony marked the project's transition from planning to active construction, celebrating both the physical and conceptual foundations of the complex.

A MESSAGE TO THE FUTURE

One of the symbolic milestones of the project, the time capsule – a sealed steel container – was buried half a

metre beneath the foundation of Building A5, during early construction work on the pile caps and support columns. Inside the capsule is a letter from the development team, reflecting on architecture, the future of Phuket, and Layan Verde's envisioned role in the island's transformation.

A commemorative plaque marks the location of the capsule, which is intended to be opened by future generations, serving as a tangible message of legacy, vision, and responsibility.

"This project is designed to last for decades," said VillaCarte founder Vadym Buhkalov at the ceremony. "The capsule represents our commitment to creating something that will benefit not just today's residents, but those who come after."

A VISIONARY DEVELOPMENT

Layan Verde is a large-scale development spanning over 200,000 square metres, crafted for the high-end residential and resort market.



Designed by renowned international architect Mohamed Adib of Devan Studio, the complex integrates architecture, nature and lifestyle in a seamless composition.

The landscape design, developed by acclaimed Thai studio SHMA, includes more than 16,500 square metres of green space, aimed at creating an immersive and environmentally harmonious living experience. Most residences will feature sweeping sea views, while the development will include over 65 infrastructure elements – ranging from commercial zones and

hospitality areas to wellness spaces and public parks.

Layan Verde will be operated by Dusit, a global hospitality brand, ensuring that the service level matches the project's architectural and environmental ambitions.

CONSTRUCTION IN MOTION

Phase I of the project covers 51,000 square metres, with Building A5 occupying 8,200sqm. Currently, around 110 specialists are working on site, with that number expected to rise to 400 during peak construction phases. The general con-

tractor, Westcon – one of Thailand's largest and most respected construction firms – is leading the build, ensuring technical excellence and adherence to the highest quality standards.

Layan Verde is also undergoing EDGE certification (Excellence in Design for Greater Efficiencies), a globally recognised standard that validates energy efficiency, resource-conscious building practices, and reduced environmental impact.

A LEGACY IN THE MAKING

VillaCarte Group has been an active player in Phuket's real estate scene since 2012, offering services in development, consulting, sales, investment, and rentals. Layan Verde is the group's flagship project, representing more than a decade of experience, long-term vision and a deep commitment to the future of the island.

"This isn't just another development – it's a

statement about what Phuket can become," Buhkalov said. "We're creating a place where sustainability, architecture and community values meet."

SHAPING PHUKET'S FUTURE

More than just an attractive investment opportunity, Layan Verde is poised to become a defining element in Phuket's evolving urban and architectural landscape. With its emphasis on sustainable development, exceptional design and community integration, the project is expected to elevate the region's profile as a global destination for premium living and eco-conscious tourism.

The time capsule ceremony stands as a symbolic gesture – both literal and metaphorical – of the values underpinning the entire project. As construction continues, Layan Verde carries with it a message of hope, vision and enduring impact for the generations to come.

Mol checks in on Phuket tourism

SUPASIT KOCHAROENYOS, Deputy Chief Inspector-General of the Ministry of Interior, visited Phuket last week to inspect and follow up on the progress of initiatives aimed at transforming the province into a sustainable tourism city.

The meeting, held at Phuket Provincial Hall on Apr 23, was chaired by Phuket Vice Governor Samawit Suphanphai.

The meeting brought together representatives from 35 government agencies, local administrations, state enterprises and private sector partners to report on ongoing efforts, share challenges and provide recommendations.

The inspection focused on three key areas: sustainable community-based tourism management, safety of life and property for tourists, and conservation-based tourism in the Sirinat National Park area.

As part of the visit, Mr Supasit and his team also toured the OTOP Nawatwithi community tourism project in Ban Nok Le in Kamala.

During the session, agencies presented updates on

their operations, outlined obstacles and discussed potential solutions, said an official report of the meeting.

ARRIVALS BY NUMBERS

At the meeting it was confirmed that from January to March 2025, Phuket welcomed a total of 3,890,510 visitors, an increase of 6.93% compared to 2024, but still 19.94% lower than in 2019.

Of these, 2,813,173 were international tourists, a 5.77% increase from 2024, but a 20.14% drop compared to 2019. The remaining 1,077,337 were Thai tourists, up 10.06% from 2024, but down 19.40% from 2019.

Tourism revenue during this period was B149.38 billion, up 9.09% from 2024, but slightly down 1.35% from 2019.

Foreign tourists generated B138.02bn, up 8.39% year-on-year, and even 3.30% higher than in 2019. Thai tourists contributed B11.37bn, a 18.44% increase from 2024, but down 36.21% from 2019.

In comparison, during the same period in 2024 Phuket saw 3,638,456 visitors, a 25.13% decline from 2019. There were 2,659,610 international tourists (down 24.50%) and 978,846 Thai tourists (down 2.77% from 2019).

Revenue stood at B136.94bn, 9.57% lower than in 2019. International tourists contributed B127.34bn, down 4.69% from 2019, while Thai visitors generated B9.60bn, down 4.14%.

During the same three months in 2019, the benchmark year that Thai officials are using for their tourism comparisons, Phuket received 4,859,388 visitors, comprising 3,522,636 foreigners and 1,336,752 Thais.

Total tourism revenue reached B151.43bn, of which B133.60bn was from foreign visitors and B17.82bn was from Thai tourists.

It was also reported that from January to March 2025, Phuket recorded the highest number of international arrivals from the following top 10 countries:

1. Russia topped the list with 429,254 visitors, making it the largest source of international tourists to Phuket.
2. China followed with 196,880 visitors.
3. India was third, contributing 132,623 visitors.
4. The United Kingdom came in fourth with 77,951 visitors.
5. Germany ranked fifth with 76,541 visitors.
6. Kazakhstan sent 66,166 visitors.

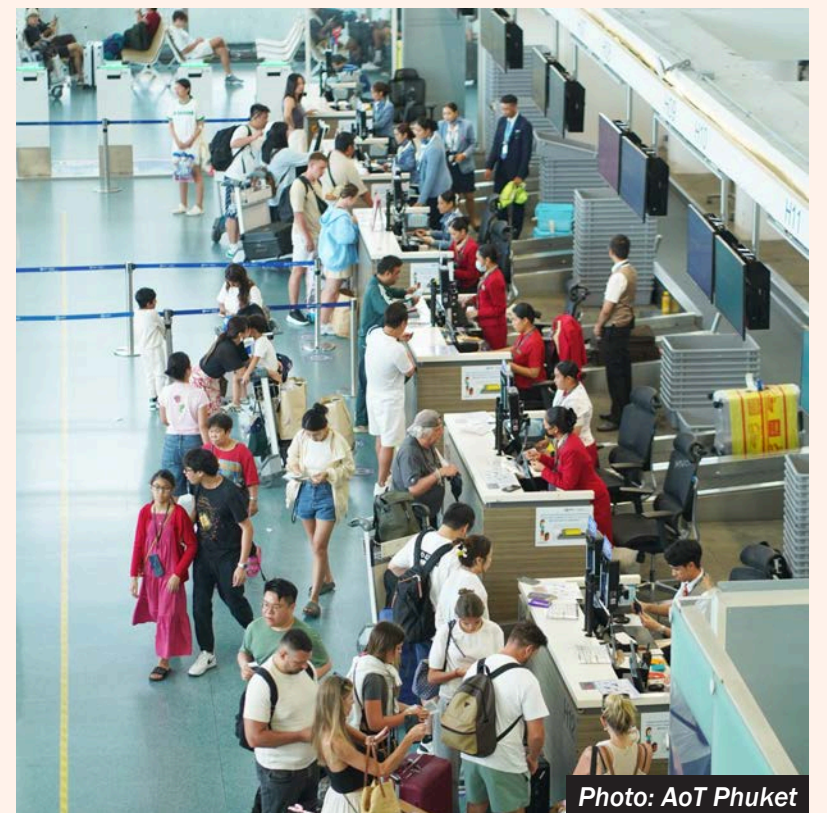


Photo: AoT Phuket

7. France followed closely with 65,541 visitors.

8. Australia brought in 61,441 visitors.

9. Malaysia accounted for 36,105 visitors.

10. The United States rounded out the top 10 with 35,960 visitors.

These figures reflect Phuket's strong appeal to tourists from both traditional and emerging markets in early 2025, Mr Supasit said.

Mr Supasit emphasised that the purpose of the visit was to listen to

feedback from all sectors and support local authorities in achieving effective and goal-oriented tourism development.

The initiative is part of broader efforts by the Ministry of Interior to promote sustainable tourism across Thailand by integrating environmental conservation, community participation, and visitor safety into provincial tourism strategies, the report noted.

The Phuket News

Transwoman slain by Chinese suspect

PATTAYA

Bangkok Post

A Chinese male suspect said he killed a Thai transwoman in Pattaya because she refused to have sex with him, before admitting he then cut open her body and removed her heart because he wanted to “play” with it.

According to police, Fu Tongyung, 42, confessed to slaying Woranan Pannacha, a 25-year-old transwoman who was a native of Nong Khai province.

Fu was quoted as saying through a translator that he met Woranan near South Pattaya beach last Friday evening (Apr 25) and exchanged WeChat application contacts with her. At that time, he thought Woranan was a woman by birth.

At about 9pm on Friday, Woranan contacted him. They met at Fu's rented room and agreed to have sex for B8,000.

The Chinese man said



Suspect Fu Tongyung at Pattaya Police Station on Apr 26. Photo: Bangkok Post

that Woranan later refused to have sex with him, so he demanded a 50% refund.

As she did not give the partial refund, the two quarrelled and fought. The woman scratched Fu's face and kicked him off his bed. Fu then got back on the bed, sat on her body and strangled her.

He dragged her body to a toilet room, used scissors to cut open Woranan's breasts and pulled out her silicone implants.

Fu told police he then felt like he wanted to “play”

with the body so he used the scissors to cut open the body from the neck to the genitals and took out the heart.

Afterwards, he washed the body and himself, went to bed, slept, woke up in the morning, reserved a flight and travelled to Suvarnabhumi airport to return to China. He was arrested at the airport in Samut Prakan province on Saturday.

Local police were called to the scene at 10am on Saturday after other tenants reported hearing the suspect

and another individual engaged in a heated argument between 1am and 2.30am.

Fu said he did not know if he was mentally ill because he had never sought a diagnosis. He said he could not control himself after the victim attacked him.

He was a welder in China and had paid three visits to Thailand previously. On his first visit, he travelled in a tour group but for the last two visits, he visited the country alone.

He said he did nothing with the lungs of the victim, which were missing from the body. He apologised for the crime.

Pattaya Police Chief Pol Col Anek Sathongyu said the suspect confessed amid strong evidence proved he had committed the crime. The chief said that the lungs of the victim went missing but the bag that the suspect carried contained only a drinking bottle, not an organ.

Thailand threatens vapers with tougher legal action

BANGKOK

THE THAI GOVERNMENT will take tougher action against e-cigarette smokers, who can be charged with receiving smuggled products, according to a spokesman.

The government has stepped up suppression of e-cigarettes and related products, covering not only smugglers and distributors but also smokers, deputy government spokesman Anukul Prueksa-anurak said on Apr 23.

“E-cigarette smokers can be prosecuted for receiving smuggled products,” he said.

Under the Customs Act, the offence carries a jail term of up to five years and/or a fine equivalent to four times as much as the prices of smuggled products plus any duty.

E-cigarettes are illegal in Thailand but that has not stopped them from being openly sold, even in areas near schools, leading to an alarming increase in vaping among young people. The recent hospitalisation of teens with lung damage has



Photo: Bangkok Post

drawn further attention to the problem.

Ramathibodi Hospital found in a study that vaping-related diseases cost it about B30 million for medical treatment last year, Mr Anukul said. The diseases included chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, stroke, heart attack and asthma.

He said the percentage of vape users among people aged 15-29 years rose from 5.8% in 2019 to 12.2% in 2024.

Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra recently ordered a serious crackdown on e-cigarettes, particularly online sales channels. Mr Anukul said that in the two months since the crackdown began, sales and the number of e-cigarette users had dropped by more than 80%.

Bangkok Post

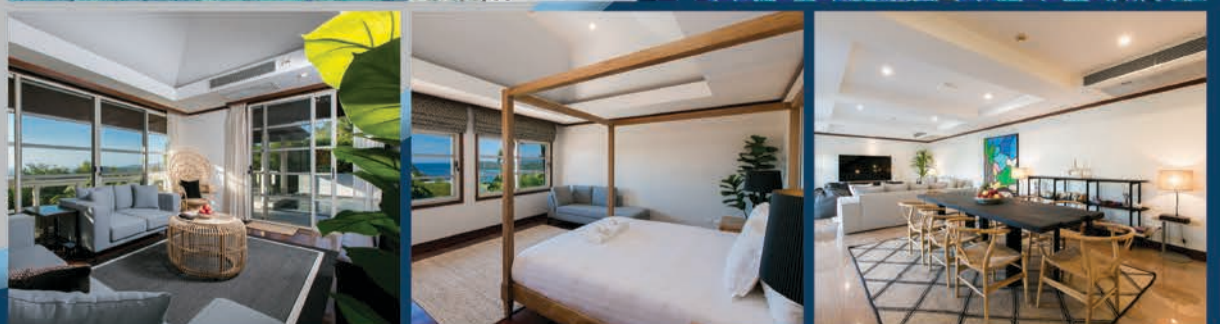
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Rami Malek and Rachel Brosnahan in *The Amateur*. Photo: IMDb

Malek proves he's no amateur

David Griffiths

When it comes to heroes in spy films on our screen it feels like there are two extremes. You either get the highly trained at their job, like Ethan Hunt or James Bond, or you get the bumbling buffoon like Johnny English, who is there for comedic relief.

That is where the brand new spy thriller *The Amateur* is very, very different. Its main character, Charlie Heller, played by Rami Malek may work for the CIA but he is desk bound

and certainly can't hold his weight in a fight or even shoot a weapon. Yet when his wife is killed in a terrorist attack and he is backed into a corner by his superiors he embarks on an international journey to bring the people responsible to justice.

The obvious comparison that people are going to make are that Charlie is so similar to the character that make Malek a household name – that of Elliott Alderson in *Mr Robot* – and that is a similarity that Malek himself can see as well.

"I remember there was a moment saying goodbye to that character of El-

liot Alderson that was quite sad, as I know we've all had those moments where you kind of have to walk away," he says thoughtfully. "Or they live with you to a degree, and you carry them with you. I don't know how we all go about this. But I was a bit reluctant to relinquish him. And I won't say this is an iteration, but there are similarities, of course. I gravitate to those characters who are on these, you know, the fragile intersections of feeling broken, maybe brilliant at the same time. And going through some sort of grief and persevering.

"So many elements to him were rich and complex. Reminded me of Elliot, but in a different way. He has this magnetic, incredible wife that allowed for this beautiful love story. And what Rachel does so seamlessly, easily, brilliantly, just by virtue of her screen presence and then, as a performer, elevates that to a level that, yeah, it's otherworldly at times. So I thought that would be the perfect partner.

"And that takes it to a place where, you know, Elliot was probably not capable of that, and Charlie is capable," he adds. "And she sees something in him that is just as magnetic in a certain way, that felt very real. And if you could take all of that and allow that to, just the combination of everything, galvanize it and put it into an action thriller. I thought, what a way to transcend the genre and make it authentic and real and emotional."

PERSONAL

That leads me to ask the question were there any personal moments or emotions that Malek was able to tap into for the role.

"Oh, how personal could I get?" he asks. "I mean, sadly, most of us I imagine have dealt with a certain amount of grief in our lives, and I don't look at acting or filmmaking as – I'm not trying to have a therapy session or seek some personal catharsis from it. But there are definitely things I could access as a human being. Who couldn't? But I tried not to lead with that. I put myself in the position of creating that relationship with Rachel's character, Sarah, and just the immense amount of loss that you would feel. I kept reminding myself that, naturally, I think someone could go one of two ways, and the other way would be quite bleak.

"And talking through this with James Hawes, our director, we went

through the stages of grief and we were very meticulous about how to pinpoint those throughout the film. So, there would be kind of this subversive relationship that the audience would have to, oh, that's where I would be if I was him. I would understand that relationship because these are natural reactions that he's having. And that made it a very, you know, personal, it tethered me personally to him because all of us would be tethered in the same way, I think. Or psychology probably tell us that, to a degree."

Of course, the other big difference this time around for Malek is that he is also a producer on the film and he says that definitely did impact his involvement.

"I guess it did have an impact on my performance as an actor in a number of ways," he says after thinking for a moment. "But I just love to see things from beginning to end, all the way through, every element. I hope it's not a perfectionist aspect, but I found myself, we were just talking about this, on *Bohemian* and *Bond* remembering moments on certain cameras, certain lenses on other actors that I would talk to the directors about, or in post and wanting to make sure we get the best of the best. And I think I hear about a lot of actors who come in into the editing suite, and I thought, how could I do that without having to do it in kind of this sneaky manner in this thing.

"And so the way to do that was to start from the iteration," he continues. "And it was nice to see this develop, to work on the script with Dan Wilson and of course, great to have Hutch Parker and James Hawes and sit down day in and day out and try to make this feel as authentic and unique as possible from beginning to end. And there's nothing like getting into a sound mix at the end of the film and seeing how you can elevate that for the big screen as well."

The Amateur is in Phuket cinemas now, rated PG-13.

David Griffiths has been working as a film journalist for over 25 years. That time has seen him work in radio, television and in print. He currently hosts a film podcast called *The Popcorn Conspiracy*. He is also a Rotten Tomatoes accredited reviewer and is an alternate judge for the Golden Globes Awards. You can follow him at Facebook: *SubcultureEntertainmentAus*

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The Asteroid that could sock the Moon

ISLAND SCIENCE CORNER

Marco Capriz

Once upon a starlit evening in December 2024, astronomers discovered something small, fast and potentially very rude hurtling through our solar neighbourhood. They named it Asteroid 2024 YR4 - because apparently 'Doom Pebble' didn't make it past the naming committee.

At first glance, YR4 appeared to be heading our way. And not just in a 'wave from a distance' sort of way. Early calculations suggested a 3.1% chance of Earth impact on Dec 22, 2032. That might not sound huge, but in astronomical terms, it's enough to make scientists swap their tea for something stronger.

Cue global headlines, planetary defence discussions and schoolchildren asking their teachers if they still had to do their homework.

But just as we were all preparing to duck under the table - metaphorically or otherwise - came an update: more data, better models and lower anxiety. By early 2025, ESA and NASA had refined their calculations. The risk of YR4 hitting Earth had plummeted to a far more relaxing 0.001%.

So... no apocalypse. No Bruce Willis. No giant crater. Earth, it turns out, can relax.

But not so fast. Because while Earth might be safe, it seems the Moon is in the splash zone.

Now Aiming for the Moon?

Yes, you read that right. Revised estimates now suggest that Asteroid 2024 YR4 has a 3.8% chance of hitting the Moon - also on Dec 22, 2032. Which gives us a cosmic plot twist and possibly the best lunar viewing party since the last blood moon.

And should that impact actually happen - and happen on the Moon's near side - we plan to be watching. Here at BCIS Phuket, our 8-inch telescope is already scheduled for duty that evening. It may not have the punch of the Hubble or James Webb, but it's more than enough to capture a brief lunar flash from a well-aimed space rock strike (conditions permitting).

What Is YR4, anyway?

Asteroid 2024 YR4 is a small to mid-sized object - anywhere from 40 to 90 metres in diameter, depending on its reflectivity (what scientists call "albedo") and what it's made of.

That puts it somewhere between a tennis court and a football pitch in size. Not quite big enough to star in a dinosaur-ending reboot, but definitely not the sort of thing you'd want crashing into your backyard.

It's currently thought to be a stony asteroid (S-type), though there's an outside chance it's metal-rich (M-type) - the sort of object full of nickel and iron. If it were headed for Earth, its impact energy would range from around 4 to 100 megatons, roughly the explosive range between a garden-variety hydrogen bomb and the legendary Tsar Bomba.

But again: it's not headed for Earth. So, let's talk about how scientists figured that out.



Artist impression of an asteroid impacting the moon. Image: Don Davis

How do you know where a rock will be in 2032?

Good question! Predicting asteroid paths is a bit like predicting the path of a paper plane tossed in a hurricane, based only on the first few seconds of flight.

Astronomers start by taking images of the asteroid against a background of 'fixed' stars. Over days and weeks, they observe its changing position and use Newton's and Kepler's laws to map its orbit around the Sun. They calculate six key orbital elements, including how stretched, tilted, and rotated the orbit is. This gives them a rough path - but not a perfect one.

Why? Because measuring anything in space is hard. A tiny error in the asteroid's position can translate to thousands of kilometres of uncertainty years down the line. That's why calculations are constantly refined as more data comes in.

And then there's the Yarkovsky effect - a small force caused by uneven heating from the Sun. As the asteroid rotates, one side warms up and radiates heat into space, giving it a tiny push. Over years, this can subtly alter its course. It's like trying to predict a marathon runner's finish line when they're being nudged ever so slightly by invisible elbows.

To deal with all this, scientists run simulations - thousands of them - using "what if?" scenarios. Over time, the uncertainty shrinks, like tightening the lasso around a wild trajectory.

Enter the Big Guns: JWST and Goldstone

In 2025, NASA announced that the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) would join the observation campaign. Its mid-infrared instruments are helping to determine the asteroid's surface temperature, reflectivity and composition.

Meanwhile, radar facilities like Goldstone in California remain crucial for tracking. Radar bounces signals off the asteroid, allowing scientists to pinpoint its distance and speed far more accurately than with optical methods alone.

Thanks to these tools, we now know: Earth is safe, and the Moon is... well, not out of the question.

What Happens If It Hits the Moon?

Here's the good news: the Moon gets hit fairly regularly by small asteroids. But YR4 is bigger than the usual suspects.

If YR4 did slam into the Moon, it would release energy equivalent to several megatons of TNT, blasting out a new crater and sending a plume of debris skyward. No danger to Earth, but it could be visible - briefly - as a flash of light.

The size of the resulting crater would depend on the composition and speed of the asteroid but could be in the range of hundreds of metres across. That's enough to interest both professional scientists and curious observers down here on Earth.

Bigger picture: What YR4 taught us

The journey of Asteroid 2024 YR4 is a brilliant example of science in action.

What started as a low-key discovery turned into a global exercise in observation, modelling and refinement. It's also a reminder that space is far from empty - and that we're getting better at keeping an eye on it.

Between ground-based telescopes, space observatories, and increasingly accurate software models, the global astronomy community is better equipped than ever to detect and monitor threats from space.

And here in Phuket, we're doing our part to inspire the next generation of planetary defenders.

So, should you look up?

Absolutely. Especially on Dec 22, 2032. Because while Earth has dodged this particular bullet, the Moon may be about to take one for the team. And if it happens on the visible side, you can bet we'll be looking - along with students, telescopes and a few excited teachers - here at BCIS.

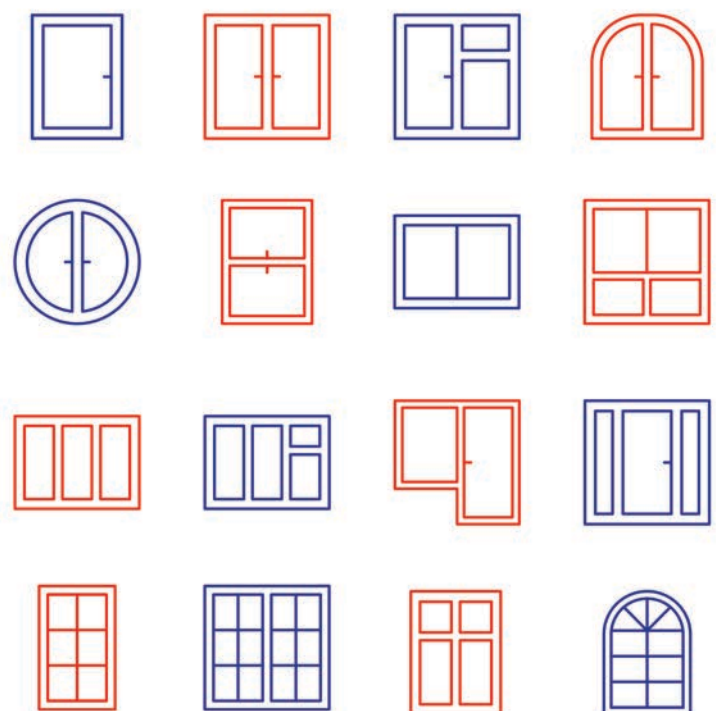
In the grand ballet of the solar system, sometimes the spotlight lands on a humble asteroid. And when it does, it's a wonderful excuse to step outside, look at the sky (assuming you can see it - no small feat in Phuket!), and remember that science isn't just about textbooks.

Sometimes, it's about watching a rock fly across 100 million kilometres just to put on a show.

A former telecoms and aerospace engineer, Marco Capriz is Planetarium Director at BCIS Phuket International School, Phuket.



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POP QUIZ

1. In which decade was the first complete version of the Oxford English Dictionary first published?
2. Which is the inner and larger of the two bones in the human forearm?
3. What is the capital of Ghana?
4. What type of insect is a velvet ant?
5. From which country did French horns originate?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Medium

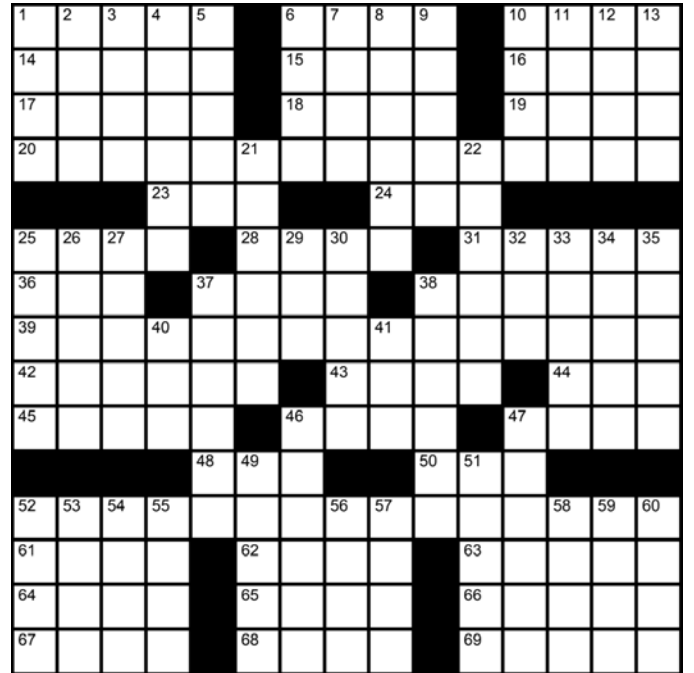
		6				3		
7				6				4
			7		9			
	6	8	5	4	2	3		
	5						1	
	9	7	2		1	8	5	
			8		3			
6				1				8
		5				1		

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across
1. Ground cover
 6. Controversial apple spray
 10. ___ Minor
 14. Élan
 15. Carry on
 16. Talk like Daffy
 17. Sign of fall?
 18. Computer symbol
 19. Look up and down
 20. Season 5 contestant
 23. Hilo garland
 24. Cobbler's tool
 25. Count
 28. Pickle flavoring
 31. Long-tailed primate
 36. Give it ___
 37. Computer command
 38. End
 39. Season 6 winner
 42. More inexplicable
 43. Stuffing herb
 44. "Andy Capp" cartoonist Smythe
 45. Cordwood measure
 46. "Begone!"
 47. "September ___" (Neil Diamond hit)
 48. Go for the gold?
 50. The facts of life?
 52. Season 9
- Down
1. Hit the links
 2. Agitate
 3. Early pulpit
 4. With liveliness
 5. Ghost
 6. Puccini piece
 7. Delicate
 8. Frank acknowledgment
 9. Extend
 10. Buckets
 11. Suspiration
 12. "Cast Away" setting
 13. Impressionist
 21. Above ground level
 22. Assert without proof
 25. Libertines
 26. Plume source
 27. France's longest
- contestant
61. Chipping choice
 62. Tater
 63. Pledges
 64. Fluff
 65. New money
 66. Tropical vine
 67. ___-mutton
 68. Have words (with)
 69. Overthrow, say
- river
29. Wrigley Field flora
 30. Chow line?
 32. Relative of an ostrich
 33. Prefix with surgery or transmitter
 34. Theater worker
 35. Despot's duration
 37. Imbues
 38. Dome-shaped shrine
 40. Word said with a salute
 41. ___ jacket
 46. Buy in a hurry
 47. Suit fabric
 49. Pack animals
 51. Fireplace
 52. Run of the ___
 53. Buffalo's lake
 54. Yearn
 55. Keen about
 56. Island in western Scotland
 57. Quality
 58. Ice cream thickener
 59. Attorney General Janet
 60. Winter Palace ruler

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) 1920s (1928); 2) Ula; 3) Accra; 4) Wasp; 5) Germany



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

9

rooms are on the Cluedo game board

660

feet are in a furlong

2003

was the year when Concorde planes were retired from service

10,080

minutes are in a full week

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

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

Source: BusinessBalls / UberFacts

ISLAND VIEW



Good Morning Phuket, at Layan Beach. Photo by Cynthia Tomaszewski.

Got an unusual or particularly beautiful picture of Phuket? Email it to editor3@classactmedia.co.th

This week in history

May 2, 1945

World War II: The Soviet Union announces the fall of Berlin.

May 3, 1921

Ireland is partitioned under British law by the Government of Ireland Act 1920, creating Northern Ireland and Southern Ireland.

May 4, 1776

Rhode Island becomes the

first American colony to renounce allegiance to King George III.

May 5, 2023

The World Health Organization declares the end of the COVID-19 pandemic as a global health emergency.

May 6, 1527

Spanish and German troops



The Beatles – Let It Be

sack Rome; many scholars consider this the end of

the Renaissance.

May 7, 1824

World premiere of Ludwig van Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in Vienna, Austria.

May 8, 1970

The Beatles release their 12th and final studio album Let It Be.

Source: Wikipedia

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FRI
2 MAY



Grow Boating Evening - May 2025

We look forward to seeing you at the Grow Boating Evening at the Isola restaurant at the Royal Phuket Marina from 5pm. There will be a delicious buffet sponsored by Isola Restaurant for all attendees and as always, all your favourite beverages will be available from the bar. Come and join in the fun, everyone is welcome and there is no entry fee and if you know anyone you think would be interested in coming, please invite them along. Find us on Facebook at facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket/

MON
5 MAY



Monday BBQ Night

6 PM onwards: All you can eat BBQ buffet cooked to order. Beef, Pork, Chicken, Burgers, Sausages, Fish, Prawns & Squids, salad buffet and veggies, Choice of potatoes, cold and hot sauces, Bread, Buns & garlic bread. We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 395 baht P.P. Kids under 12 years old: 195 baht P.P. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/shakersphuket Oliver, Shakers restaurant 98/18 Vises Road, Rawai 83130, 081 891 4381

WED
7 MAY



Wednesday BBQ Night

6 PM onwards: All you can eat BBQ buffet cooked to order. Beef, Pork, Chicken, Burgers, Sausages, Fish, Prawns & Squids, salad buffet and veggies, Choice of potatoes, cold and hot sauces, bread, buns & garlic bread. We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 395 baht P.P. Kids under 12 years old: 195 baht P.P. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/shakersphuket Oliver, Shakers restaurant 98/18 Vises Road, Rawai 83130, 081 891 4381

SUN
4 MAY



Sunday Roast

12PM – 9PM: All you can eat Sunday Roast Buffet Beef, Pork & Capon chicken – Cauliflower, Broccoli, Peas, Carrots, Fried mushrooms, Grilled Tomatoes – Yorkshire pudding – Roasted Potatoes, Mashed Potatoes – Gravy, Mushroom sauce, Horse raddish, Mint Sauce. We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 350 baht P.P. Kids under 12 years old: 195 baht P.P. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/shakersphuket Oliver, Shakers restaurant 98/18 Vises Road, Rawai 83130, 081 891 4381

FRI
9 MAY



Phuket Business Networking - May 2025

Make sure to bring lots of business cards, as getting to know each other is what PBN is all about. A small entry fee, THB 500 per person, that includes the first 3 drinks and a light buffet. Location - Oasis Bar, Koh Kaew, starting 5pm. Register your attendance here - facebook.com/phuketbusinessnetworking or call Jason - 086 479 7471.

SUN
11 MAY



Phuket Eco Market

Phuket's FIRST Eco Market is Coming Soon! We're officially launching the first Phuket Eco Market at Junkyard Theatre on 11 May 2025 – a one-of-a-kind event bringing together sustainable shopping, fun activities, great food and eco-inspiration under one roof! Sunday 11 May 2025 Junkyard Theatre, Bypass Road (Near IKEA) From 2:30PM onwards Free Entry for All! Are you a vendor of recycled, handmade, eco-friendly or secondhand goods? Want to run a workshop, activity or offer a wellness session? Let's build Phuket's most vibrant eco community together – be part of the change. Message us on +66 (0) 966 396 252 (Josh) or email support@thelitterclub.org to get involved!

FRI
30 MAY



AustCham Joint Chambers Phuket Sundowners

AustCham Thailand, in collaboration with Australian Alumni, AMCHAM, BCCT, Belgian-Luxembourg/Thai Chamber, CanCham Thailand, FTCC, GTCC, NTCC, Phuket Chamber of Commerce and Thai-Swedish Chamber, will host the Joint Chambers Phuket Sundowners from 18.00 - 21.00 hrs., at Le Méridien Phuket Beach Resort. Join us for a wonderful night of making new connections and catching up with familiar faces in the Australian-Thai business community in Phuket. 650 THB for AustCham members, partner Chambers' members, and Australian Alumni Members, 1,200 THB for non-members. To book contact - office@austchamthailand.com

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ANZAC DAY MEMORIAL SERVICE – PHUKET

Phuket Veterans organised the ANZAC Day dawn service, on April 25 at Kamala Beach. Over 120 joined the service in honouring the sacrifices of Australian and New Zealand service members. A very moving service that was attended by Kirsten Fletcher – Australian Consul-General, Phuket; Barbara Welton – First Secretary & Consul, NZ Embassy, Bangkok; and Royal Australia Navy – LCDR Eren Ulusoy. Following the service, all attendees headed to a Gunfire Breakfast at Devils Bar, Kamala.



SKÅL PHUKET SPORTS DAY 2025

A great fun Sunday afternoon on Apr 27, to celebrate SKÅL Day. At Kindee Pizzeria & Steak House Cherg Talay, an active group of SKÅL members and guests battled it out on a range of pub games – ping pong, Foosball, darts and pool. Thanks to all who attended and to the team at Kindee for the great brunch buffet and service. To find out more about SKÅL Phuket visit facebook.com/SkalPhuket

Running into the future

MARATHON

AFP

Step by mechanical step, dozens of humanoid robots took to the streets of Beijing early on Apr 19, joining thousands of their flesh-and-blood counterparts in a world-first half marathon showcasing China's drive to lead the global race in cutting-edge technology.

The 21-kilometre event held in the Chinese capital's E-Town – a state-backed high-tech manufacturing hub – was billed as a groundbreaking effort to test the limits of bipedal robots in real-world conditions.

At the crack of the starter's gun, the robots began taking their first tentative steps as the Chinese pop song 'I Believe' blared out from loudspeakers.

Curious human runners lined the roadside, phones in hand ready to photograph each machine as it began the race.

One smaller-sized android fell over and lay on the ground for several minutes, before getting up by itself to loud cheers.

Another, powered by propellers, veered across the starting line before crashing into a barrier and knocking over an engineer.



A robot and its engineers during the run on Apr 19. Photo: AFP

Around 20 teams from across China participated in the competition, with robots ranging from 75 to 180 centimetres tall and weighing up to 88 kilograms.

Some jogged autonomously, while others were guided remotely by their engineers. Robots and human participants ran on separate tracks.

Crossing the finish line first despite a mid-race fall was the tallest droid and one of the heaviest in the competition. At 180cm tall and weighing 52kg, the metallic black 'Tiangong

Ultra' finished in two hours, 40 minutes and 42 seconds.

The men's and women's winners, both from Ethiopia, finished in one hour, two minutes and 36 seconds, and in one hour, 11 minutes and seven seconds respectively, according to state media.

Enthusiastic onlookers cheered the robots on from the sidelines.

"It was quite a breathtaking experience - we were able to see some of the most cutting-edge robots in our country," commen-

ted spectator Huang Xiaoyu.

GIANT LEAP

Tang Jian, chief technology officer of the Beijing Humanoid Robot Innovation Center which developed 'Tiangong', told reporters the company was "very happy with the results".

"We had set three goals for ourselves: first, to win the championship; second, to complete the entire half marathon with a single robot – a very important goal for us; and third, to finish the race in under three hours," he said.

"We collected real-world running data from professional athletes and trained the robot so that its gait, cadence, stride length and various postures could match those of professional runners as closely as possible."

The Beijing Humanoid Robot Innovation Center, first established by the government, is now owned by Chinese tech firms Xiaomi Robotics and UB Tech Robotics as well as two state-owned companies, according to business data provider Tianyancha.

"Getting onto the race track might seem like a small step for humans, but it's a giant leap for humanoid robots," Liang Liang, Beijing E-Town's management

committee deputy director, told AFP.

Engineers said the goal was to test the performance and reliability of the androids – emphasising that finishing the race, not winning it, was the main objective.

"There are very few opportunities for the whole industry to run at full speed over such a long distance or duration," said Cui Wenhao, a 28-year-old engineer at Noetix Robotics.

"It's a serious test for the battery, the motors, the structure – even the algorithms."

Kong Yichang, a 25-year-old engineer from DroidUp, said the race would help to "lay a foundation for a whole series of future activities involving humanoid robots".

China, the world's second-largest economy, has sought to assert its dominance in the fields of artificial intelligence and robotics, positioning itself as a direct challenger to the United States.

In January, Chinese start-up DeepSeek drew attention with a chatbot it claimed was developed more cost-effectively than its US counterparts.

Dancing humanoid robots also captivated audiences during a high-profile, televised Chinese New Year gala.

Eubank Jr defeats Benn in grudge bout

BOXING

CHRIS EUBANK JR SURVIVED a brutal grudge bout against Conor Benn to seal a unanimous points decision against his bitter rival last Saturday (Apr 26).

Eubank Jr won the eagerly-anticipated all-British catchweight fight after the three judges scored it 116-112 in his favour.

The 35-year-old traded blows with his nemesis throughout a gruelling 12-round showdown at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium that ranked as the latest chapter in the Eubank-Benn family feud.

There was no love lost between Chris Eubank Sr and Benn's father Nigel when they famously went head to head in two bouts in the 1990s.

Eubank Jr and Benn produced a gritty contest that sparked memories of the clashes between their fathers, with both dads watching at ringside in north London.

"The fact our fathers did it years ago brings out a different



Eubank Jr (right) throws a punch. Photo: AFP

spirit into you and that's what we showed here tonight," Eubank Jr said.

Saluting his son's performance, Eubank Sr said: "He couldn't move around the ring, he had to stand toe-to-toe and that is legendary behaviour in the ring. I am so proud of him."

Eubank Jr had missed the weight for the fight by 0.05lb, earning a £375,000 (B16.7 million) fine after two attempts at weighing in at 160lb.

But he was still in condition to last the pace against Benn, who is seven years younger, and ultimately claim victory. AFP

Leadership and coping with pressure



THE GLOBAL RUGBY COACH

WHAT MAKES A GOOD leader? This is a question I am constantly asked in my rugby coaching capacity.

For me the best leaders are simply uncomfortable with anything that embraces the status quo. Leadership is pursuit; pursuit of excellence, of truth, of results, of what's next, of something bigger than the players themselves.

Successful leadership is not only the pre-requisite of the top professionals, it also pertains to community coaches and captains. One of the joys of being a rugby coach is meeting those with passion and drive who believe in their clubs and players. Their passion is infectious and you very much want to be part of it.

Captaincy and players who can cope with pressure have a major role to play. Leinster has announced the signing of Reiko Ioane, who has earned 84 caps for the All Blacks, and who will arrive later this year. Leinster appreciate what a player of his calibre can bring to their club, and not only on the playing side.

Pressure can become overwhelming, causing many coaches to break down. No one deals well



Andy Farrell (left) and Johnny Sexton in Oct 2023. The two rejoin in a coaching capacity for the upcoming Lions tour. Photo: AFP

under pressure. Great performers have learned the ability to take pressure off themselves. They have learned to love the struggle, the battle and the confrontation. Pressure is something you put on yourself.

Try this: "I'm just going to focus on doing my job as well as I can. I have trained hard for this moment and I'm going to enjoy it. I love tough situations, the tougher the situation the better I perform. My mental toughness is now such that I can handle any situation. I am well prepared mentally and physically and ready to go."

Meanwhile, May 8 is the date when Andy Farrell announces his Lions squad for UK players ahead of the tour to Australia. He has recently added another coach in Johnny Sexton, meaning the

retired Irish fly-half who criticised Finn Russell in the press is now working with him.

No player other than the captain is certain of selection. Those who tick the playing and mental strength box will have the best chance.

To win at any level you must cope with pressure. Don't succumb, challenge yourself. Once conquered, your performance will improve and you will enjoy every aspect of playing.

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.rugbycoachingconsultancy.com.

The Pope who loved the 'beautiful game'

FOOTBALL

AFP

His predecessor loved Mozart, but Pope Francis's passion was football – for him “the most beautiful game” and also a vehicle to educate and spread peace.

From Argentine compatriots Lionel Messi and the late Diego Maradona to Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Gianluigi Buffon, Francis received the greatest stars of football at the Vatican, signing dozens of shirts and balls from around the world.

And the admiration flowed both ways. Following news of the Pope's death on Apr 21 at the age of 88, Messi took to Instagram to pay tribute.

“A different Pope, close, Argentinian... Rest in peace, Pope Francis,” the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner posted.

“Thank you for making the world a better place. We will miss you.”



Pope Francis meets Maradona in 2014. Photo: AFP

Francis often recounted playing as a young boy on the streets of Buenos Aires, using a ball made of rags.

While admitting he was “not among the best” and that “he had two left feet”, he often played as goal-keeper, which he said was a good way of learning how to respond to “dangers that could arrive from anywhere”.

His love of football was inseparable from his loyalty to the San Lorenzo club in Buenos Aires, where he went to watch matches with his father and brothers.

He maintained his membership even after becoming pope – and caused a minor uproar when he received a membership card from rivals Boca Juniors as part of a Vatican educational partnership.

Francis kept up to date with the club's progress thanks to one of the Vatican's Swiss Guards, who would leave results and league tables on his desk.

Francis, a Jesuit, saw football as a way of spreading peace and education, despite the money and corruption linked to the sport.

In 2014, the Olympic stadium in Rome hosted an ‘inter-religious match’ for peace at his initiative.

“Many say that football is the most beautiful game in the world. I think so too,” Francis declared in 2019.

He dedicated an entire chapter of his 2024 autobiography to Maradona, whose infamous ‘hand of God’ goal helped Argentina beat England in their 1986 World Cup quarter-final clash.

“When, as pope, I received Maradona in the Vatican a few years ago... I asked him, jokingly, ‘So, which is the guilty hand?’” he said in 2024.

And asked once who was the game's greatest player, Maradona or Lionel Messi, the pope hedged his bets.

“Maradona, as a player, was great. But as a man, he failed,” Francis said, referring to his addictions to cocaine and alcohol.

He described Messi as a “gentleman”, but added that he would choose a third, Pele, “a man of heart”.



Nualphan bails out Thai FA with B30mn boost

FOOTBALL

THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION of Thailand (FAT) has paid the first portion of its debt to Siam Sport Syndicate, thanks to its president Nualphan Lamsam.

The FAT chief donated B25 million to pay off part of the organisation's massive debt caused by a legal defeat in the case against Siam Sport over the unfair termination of a commercial rights contract.

The FAT was ordered by the Supreme Court to pay B360mn in compensation plus interest. The incident occurred during Pol Gen Somyot Poompanmoung's tenure as president in 2016.

Nualphan has also given out another B5mn which will be used to fund all the expenses of the FAT activities.

She has also announced the “Thai People of Thai

football” project to raise funds for the FAT, which has been thrown into a deep financial crisis due to the lost court case.

The project includes four activities – a musical theatre show, T-shirts sales, the national team road show to all four regions and a fund-raising campaign.

A special stage performance of Dang Bireley's and the Young Gangsters, the Musical will take place on May 29 and is expected to raise around B30mn.

Following the Supreme Court ruling last month, Nualphan vowed to pursue legal action against her predecessor Somyot after emphasising that the debt was inherited and not of her making.

The FAT will further discuss the remaining debt with Siam Sport next month. *Bangkok Post*

Top action expected at the Toyota Thailand Open 2025

BADMINTON

ANTICIPATION IS HIGH ahead of the upcoming Toyota Thailand Open 2025 after officials held a press conference to confirm final details on Apr 22.

Sorawong Thienthong, Minister of Tourism and Sports, confirmed that athletes will be competing for a share of US\$475,000 (B16.2 million) between May 13-18 at the Nimibutr Arena at the National Stadium in Bangkok.

Furthermore, competitors will be challenging for the official tournament trophy bestowed by His Majesty the King as part of the HSBC BWF World Tour Super 500 event, organised in cooperation with the Badminton Association of Thailand under Royal Patronage.

International athletes will be competing in the six-day tournament which will be televised globally to millions of viewers, in addition to the watching spectators in the arena.



Photo: SAT

Among the Thai athletes competing will be newly-crowned Asian champion and world number 2 ranked player Kunlavut Vitidsarn. Also leading the Thai charge will be Ratchanok Intanon, Kantaphon Wangcharoen, Pornpawee Chochuwong, Supanida Ketthong and Busanan Ongbamrungphan.

Joining Minister Sorawong at the press conference on Tuesday was: Khunying Pathama Leeswadtrakul, member of the International Olympic Committee, Vice President of the Badminton World Federation and President of the Badminton Association of Thailand under Royal Patronage; Chakraphol Tangsutthitham, Assistant Minister of Tourism and Sports; Krisada Tanterdtit,

Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Sports; and Dr Kongsak Yodmanee, Governor of the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT).

Mr Sorawong explained that not only will the tournament showcase top level badminton action from globally renowned athletes but it will provide opportunity for Thailand to demonstrate its ability to host a major international sporting event, highlighting the warm, generous and welcoming Thai spirit.

Tickets are now on sale at all major Thai ticket branches, ranging from B1,200 to B100. The entire tournament will also be broadcast live on the BWF TV YouTube channel and via True Visions.

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Sport



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Liverpool's Andy Robertson (left) and Cody Gapko celebrate Mo Salah's (centre) goal. Photo: AFP

FOOTBALL

AFP

Liverpool demolished Tottenham 5-1 to clinch the Premier League title at an impassioned Anfield last Sunday (Apr 27), sealing a record-equalling 20th English top-flight crown.

Arne Slot's men stormed back after conceding a surprise early goal to dominate the match, feeding off the crackling energy from the 60,000-plus crowd.

Liverpool, who can no longer be caught by second-placed Arsenal, are now level with bitter rivals Manchester United as the joint-most successful club in English top-flight history.

It is just their second title of the Premier League era and the first they have celebrated in front of fans since 1990 – their 2020 triumph came at a near-empty stadium due to COVID restrictions.

Slot, who is in his first season in English football, said he had

built on solid foundations left by Jurgen Klopp, who departed last year after a successful nine-year reign.

"Almost the whole season we were on the top of the league and had a team that could win it," he said afterwards.

"We know how tough the Premier League is, but we always had the belief we could win it.

"The work Jurgen (Klopp) and (assistant) Pep (Lijnders) left, the culture, work-rate, quality, was outstanding. We started (the season) really well and maybe it helped that (Manchester) City had a difficult spell that they have not had in five years.

"When the season started we would have been happy with top four. But I don't think that is fair on the players as they are much better than that and they have shown it this season."

Slot's men started on the front foot at an expectant Anfield after a stirring rendition of club anthem 'You'll Never Walk Alone' in the warm spring sunshine, but they were rocked by an early goal

from Tottenham's Dominic Solanke.

However, Liverpool barely blinked and roared back with a Luis Diaz tap-in and a screamer from Alexis Mac Allister.

Now the party was well and truly started and Cody Gakpo made it 3-1, slamming a shot into the bottom corner after a much-changed Spurs team failed to clear.

Top-scorer Mohamed Salah scored the goal the crowd craved, celebrating by grabbing a fan's phone before taking a selfie in front of the Kop.

Liverpool had a fifth when Spurs defender Destiny Udogie poked the ball past his own goalkeeper from close range with 21 minutes to go.

As the game went into added time the club's anthem rang out again as scarves were held aloft and the final whistle elicited a thunderous roar.

The win leaves Liverpool on 82 points, 15 clear of nearest challengers Arsenal with just four games remaining.

At the start of the campaign, Pep Guardiola's City were favourites to extend their dynastic Premier League reign and make it five titles in a row but their form collapsed.

Arsenal emerged as Liverpool's closest challengers but they drew too many games, failing to take advantage of the rare slip-ups from Slot's team.

It was feared the club's players would need time to adapt to the methods of Slot but the former Feyenoord boss has sailed serenely through the season.

"A lot of emotions before the game, during the whole week, but we got the job done and we are truly deserved champions of England," said Van Dijk.

"The most beautiful club in the world and I think we deserve all of this."

IPSWICH DOWN

Elsewhere, Ipswich Town were relegated from the Premier League after slumping to a 3-0 defeat against Newcastle on Saturday.

Their relegation alongside Southampton and Leicester, who were both already condemned to the drop, means all three promoted sides will be back in the second tier next season.

Nicolas Jackson struck for the first time since December to seal a vital 1-0 victory for Chelsea against Everton at Stamford Bridge, while Ryan Sessegnon struck in stoppage-time as Fulham won 2-1 at Southampton to stop the hosts moving past the record-low Premier League points total.

Brighton reignited their European push by piling more misery on former manager Graham Potter with a dramatic last-minute 3-2 victory over West Ham at the Amex Stadium and Wolves claimed a club record-equalling sixth successive top-flight win as they put relegated Leicester to the sword with a 3-0 victory at Molineux.

Manchester United needed an injury time goal from Rasmus Hojlund to rescue a 1-1 draw at Bournemouth as their miserable season limps to its conclusion.

Sung triumphs in Phuket, Namo secures ticket to US

PHUKET

SOUTH KOREA'S TEENAGE sensation Sung A-Jin secured a wire-to-wire win at the Annika Invitational Asia at Blue Canyon Country Club, capping her dominant run with a final-round 3-under-par 69 to finish at 11-under 205 last Friday (Apr 25).

Sung, who led the tournament from the opening round, held her nerve on the final day despite a bogey on the par-3 17th hole – her

first of the week. A tee shot into the bunker forced her to settle for a two-putt, but four birdies on holes 5, 9, 16 and 18 kept her comfortably ahead of the field.

"My hard work and dedication truly paid off," said Sung, who secured the title and a place in the prestigious Annika Invitational 2026 to be held in the United States in January.

"I'm grateful to my coach for the guidance and for helping me stay mentally strong. A big thank you to Annika, all the sponsors,

and Blue Canyon Country Club. Now, I'll start preparing for the tournament in the US, and I hope to deliver another strong performance there," she added.

Thailand's top performer was 17-year-old Namo Luangnitikul, who fired a strong final round to secure solo second at nine-under 207. Despite an early stumble with back-to-back bogeys on holes 4 and 5, she bounced back brilliantly with an eagle on the par-5 9th after a perfect approach from the fairway.

On the back nine, she added birdies at 13, 14 and 18. Her highlight came on the challenging 17th, where she saved par with a stunning chip after overshooting the green.

"I'm happy to finish in second place. Thank you to all the supporters," Namo said.

Tied for third at six-under 210 were You A-Hyeon (17) and Hong Su-Min (18) of South Korea, both earning spots in the 2026 Annika Invitational alongside Sung and Namo.



Sung A-Jin. Photo: Bangkok Post

China's Zheng Yaoyun and Singapore's Sydney Ng shared fifth place at 216. Bangkok Post