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LEGAL AID



Darren Cramer, 55, appeals for information about his missing son at Chalong Police Station. Photo: PR Phuket

FREE LEGAL SERVICE EXPANDED TO FOUR MAJOR POLICE STATIONS

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

An Australian father last week located his 28-year-old son within 24 hours after contacting a free legal service now provided at four major police stations in Phuket.

The father, Darren Cramer, 55, made the appeal in the search for his missing son, Kieran James Cramer, at Chalong Police Station on July 23.

Kieran arrived in Thailand on July

1. The last known contact with him was in Bangkok, after which he was scheduled to be in the Phuket area, Mr Cramer explained.

Concern grew as days passed without any communication, prompting him to take action, he added.

Mr Cramer reached out to the Chalong Police Station, seeking help to locate his missing son after explaining his situation to the Phuket branch of the Lawyers Council of Thailand, which provides limited

free legal advice at selected police stations on the island.

By the next morning (July 24), local officials confirmed that Kieran had been found safe in Bangkok. For reasons unexplained, Kieran did not want to speak with his father.

FREE LEGAL SERVICE
Runnapha Putkaew, President of the Phuket branch of the Lawyers Council of Thailand, explained that the free legal service that Mr Cramer

used had already been previously provided at Phuket City Police Station and Patong Police Station.

As of July 21, the free service was expanded to Chalong Police Station and Thalang Police Station, she said.

In announcing the expansion of the free legal advice service, Ms Runnapha emphasised the importance of providing free legal assistance to those in need.

“We are organising a team of volunteer lawyers at police stations...

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Baby turtle rescued from beach trash > p5



Photo: PR Phuket

Free legal service at police stations

Continued from page 1
...in Phuket Province to ensure that everyone has access to basic legal help," she said.

The free legal service is provided by lawyers at the four key police stations daily from 8:30am to 4:30pm, excluding public holidays.

The free legal service is also available at the Phuket Provincial Court on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8:30am to 4:30pm.

Ms Rungnapha highlighted that the service is open to citizens and tourists of all nationalities, both Thais and foreigners.

"This project benefits society by providing a source of justice and legal advice, ensuring that everyone can exercise their basic legal rights," she said.

"Volunteer lawyers are ready to serve and help reduce legal gaps, creating equality and equity in society."

The move to expand the free legal service followed Pol Gen Chatchawan Suk-somchit, at the time chair-

man of the Senate Standing Commission on Law, Justice and Police, visiting Phuket in May last year.

At the time there were 76 registered lawyers willing to perform the service, Ms Rungnapha said, speaking at the Phuket branch of the Lawyers Council of Thailand headquarters at PK International Law Office on Chao Fa East Rd in Chalong.

The lawyers can provide assistance to foreigners on basic legal issues, such as traffic accidents, Ms Rungnapha said.

"Some of the lawyers have language skills to help foreigners with basic legal advice, and if on the day the lawyer cannot communicate well [with the foreigner], we would suggest the foreigner return another day to meet with another lawyer," she added.

However, the limitations came from funding. The lawyers providing the service are paid by the government, Ms Rungnapha admitted. She declined to elaborate on how much the lawyers are paid for providing free legal advice.

Phuket dengue cases continue to spike

The Phuket News
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Phuket has recorded the highest rate of dengue infections in the seven provinces of Upper Southern Thailand, the Department of Disease Control regional office has confirmed.

Dr Darinda Rosa, Acting Director of the Disease Control Office 11, in a notice issued on July 24 reported a significant rise in dengue fever cases within Health Region 11, from Jan 1 to July 19.

A total of 5,853 cases have been reported, with the highest infection rates among the 10-14 age group, followed by the 5-9 and 15-19 age groups, Dr Darinda said.

Phuket leads the list of provinces with the highest dengue infection rates per 100,000 population, followed by Surat Thani, Phang Nga, Nakhon Sri Thammarat, Krabi, Chumphon and Ranong, she added.

Dr Darinda emphasised the importance of eliminating mosquito breeding grounds, especially during the rainy season, when stagnant water in containers and various materials can foster the proliferation of Aedes mosquitoes. The Aedes mosquitoes are primary carriers of dengue fever.

Dr Darinda urged the public to follow the "3 Collects, Prevent 3 Diseases" measures:

1. Keep your house clean: Improve the environment in



Image: MOPH / Health Region 11

your house to be tidy, and do not allow dark corners where mosquitoes can rest.

2. Collect garbage around your house: Prevent Aedes mosquito breeding grounds.

3. Collect water: Close containers with tight lids, change the water in vases every week, and scrub the edges of containers to eliminate Aedes mosquito eggs.

Dr Darinda also advised the public to use mosquito nets, apply mosquito repellent and take steps to prevent dengue fever, Aedes arthritis and Zika virus infection.

Clinics and pharmacies were asked to cooperate by refraining from administering

NSAIDs such as ibuprofen, diclofenac, aspirin or combination drugs to suspected dengue patients, as these can cause gastrointestinal bleeding and complicate treatment.

Patients whose symptoms do not improve within two days are urged to visit a hospital. Key symptoms to watch for include high fever, headache, pain in the eyeballs, red face, nausea, vomiting, rash, or bleeding spots on the torso, arms and legs.

People seeking more information about dengue symptoms and the public healthcare treatments available were urged to contact the Department of Disease

Control hotline at 1422.

At time of press the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO) had not reported any dengue infection rates for the island this year, and has not posted any dengue warning notices since the annual rains returned in May.

One local government report did mark a visit by officials from the Ministry of Public Health Region 11 office, based in Nakhon Sri Thammarat, to Phuket on July 24.

That report, however, only marked Phuket City Municipality's efforts to have Phuket Town assessed and declared to be a "Healthy City".

Woman arrested over fake US\$50 banknotes

KAMALA POLICE ARE investigating claims by a Russian woman that she had no idea US\$50 banknotes that she says were given to her by her father were fake.

The woman, named by police only as 'Ms Evgenia', 22, was arrested at a pool villa in Moo 5, Kamala last Saturday evening (July 27).

Ms Evgenia's arrest followed a formal complaint filed with police by a currency exchange booth in front of the Big C store



Photo: Kamala Police

in Kamala, which reported three of four US\$50 bills given to them by Ms Evgenia

were fake,

At the villa, police seized 32 more counterfeit US\$50

banknotes.

Ms Evgenia and three fellow Russians staying at the villa with her were taken to Kamala Police Station for questioning, police reported.

Ms Evgenia explained that her father had given her 60 US\$50 banknotes to travel to Phuket with friends.

The group flew to Shanghai, where they changed planes and arrived in Phuket on July 22. The next day, Ms Evgenia exchanged four of the banknotes given to her by her

father at the foreign currency exchange counter in front of the Big C department store in Kamala.

Police were notified by staff at the exchange counter after they had realised that three of the US banknotes given to them by Ms Evgenia were fake. Police were able to track her down by the photocopy of her passport, Kamala Police said.

Ms Evgenia said she had no idea that three of the four banknotes were fake, police said.

However, she currently faces a preliminary charge of importing into the Kingdom counterfeit or altered banknotes and distributing counterfeit banknotes in the country, police confirmed.

Meanwhile, police were continuing their investigation to determine whether Ms Evgenia (and her father) were victims of a larger operation by a criminal organisation, police said.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Deadly surf claims more lives

Eakkapop Thongtub
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Tourist Police have issued yet another reminder urging tourists not to ignore red 'no swimming' flags at local beaches after two tourists drowned in waters off Phuket last week.

The body of a 27-year-old Chinese tourist who disappeared in dangerous surf at Karon Beach last Friday (July 26) was discovered on the rocks near Freedom Beach on Monday (July 29).

Local fisherman Phacharadanai Kingjam discovered the body and notified police at about 9am.

The search for the tourist, Qin Yuen, began after the alarm was raised by his girlfriend last Friday evening when Mr Qin disappeared amid large waves and was believed to have been swept out to sea by a rip current.

A joint search by Karon Police, lifeguards, rescue workers and even a Royal Thai Navy helicopter failed to locate Mr Qin, and the search was suspended in parts over the weekend due to heavy weather conditions, making it unsafe for the search teams.

Mr Qin's body was recovered on Monday by rescue workers using a dinghy and brought ashore at Pak Bang Canal, Kata Beach. It was then transported to Vachira Phuket Hospital, where a forensic doctor was to



The body of 27-year-old Chinese tourist Qin Yuen is brought ashore at Kata Beach on Monday (July 29). Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

conduct a post-mortem examination to confirm the cause of death before the body was released to Mr Qin's relatives for religious ceremonies.

Mr Qin reportedly ignored red 'no swimming' flags to enter the water at Karon Beach where lifeguards had already marked the area too dangerous for swimming.

Mr Qin's death came after a spate of drownings in Phuket in recent months, particularly among foreign tourists at beaches along the island's west coast.

Most recently, a 27-year-old Indian tourist drowned at Surin Beach on July 24 after becoming caught in a rip current during an early morning swim with friends.

Pol Capt Kraisorn Bunprasop, investigator on duty at Thalang Police Station, was informed of the death

at 9:40am on July 24 by Thalang Hospital.

Pol Capt Kraisorn travelled to the hospital, where he confirmed the drowning victim as Indian national Kapoor Manav, 27.

Mr Manav had checked in at a local hotel on July 21, and on July 24 went swimming in the sea at Surin Beach with a group of four friends.

Hotel staff were notified to ask for help at 6:45am after Mr Manav and a friend were caught in a rip current. The other friends managed to swim to nearby rocks to safety.

Mr Manav, face down in the water, was brought back to the beach where it was found he had no pulse, Pol Capt Kraisorn reported.

CPR was administered and Mr Manav was rushed to Thalang Hospital. Paramedics continued to perform

CPR, but to no avail. Doctors at the hospital pronounced Mr Manav dead at 8:54am.

IGNORED

Late last month, Viroon Chuasaman, Head Lifeguard at Surin-Bang Tao Beach, called for intensive campaigns to educate tourists of the dangers of rip currents and strong waves during the southwest monsoon to help reduce the number of people drowning at tourist-popular beaches.

Mr Viroon told *The Phuket News* that the current efforts of lifeguards to save tourists from drowning are merely addressing the problem's symptoms rather than its root cause and called upon the Tourism Authority of Thailand to actively promote the dangers of ignoring red flag warnings during the monsoon season.

Not two weeks after Mr Viroon's call for better surf-danger awareness a local teenager disappeared in strong surf at Surin Beach.

Pramet 'Nong Mix' Nonthabutr, a Mathayom 3 student at Thalang Pranangsang School in Tambon Thepkasattri, was one of five friends who ignored red 'no swimming' flags and ventured into the sea at Surin Beach on July 13. The students were soon swept away by strong waves.

Lifeguards quickly responded, deploying jet-skis to rescue the students. Four were pulled from the water, but only three survived.

The body of Pramet was found washed ashore at Surin Beach late at night the next day (July 14).

AWARENESS

Meanwhile, an initiative has been launched to teach young children swimming skills in an effort to prevent accidents and potential drownings.

Ratchadaporn O-in, Director of the Tourism and Sports office in Phuket, oversaw a ceremony at The Park Hotel in Surin last Friday where she handed out certificates to children who had recently successfully passed a series of swimming skill tests as part of an ongoing course.

The "Swimming Skills Training Activity to Prevent Drowning" teaches children how to swim to provide them with the necessary skills to minimise accidents in the water.

In addition to potential life-saving skills, the project also promotes the benefits of a healthy lifestyle through exercise with a particular focus on preventing online gaming addiction among youngsters.

The Phuket Tourism and Sports Office has been assigned by the Department of Physical Education and the Ministry of Tourism and Sports to arrange the course as part of a national "Thai Children Can Swim" project this year which is focused on training youngsters with the requisite skills to prevent drownings.

Bang Tao taxi drivers charged for vicious assault on rival driver

CHERNG TALAY POLICE last week confirmed the arrests of two taxi drivers for a vicious assault on an app taxi driver in Layan that left the app taxi driver with a fractured skull.

Cherng Talay Police Chief Pol Col Weeraphong Rakkhito said that on learning of the assault, which occurred on the morning of July 24, he ordered a Deputy Superintendent to investigate and inspect the area where the attack occurred.

The app taxi driver, Wirot Emleng, 39, from Trang, was assaulted on Soi Layan 1/1 Moo 6, Cherng Talay, at 10:30am.

The assault was recorded on the dash cam of his car. During the assault, after the two men had repeatedly punched Mr Wirot in the face, one of the two attackers is seen holding Mr Wirot while the other kicks him in the head. The two men continued to kick Mr Wirot in the head while he is on the ground before they walked away.



Screenshot: via Phuket Info Center

Mr Wirot was taken to Thalang Hospital where an x-ray confirmed a skull fracture beside his right eye. He was then transferred to Mission Hospital Phuket for further treatment.

Cherng Talay Police confirmed that same afternoon (July 24) that the two attackers – named as Phichet Thipbamrung, 34, and Suthon Ketkaew, 38 – had been arrested for the

assault.

Mr Wirot was able to positively identify the two men as his attackers.

Cherng Talay Police confirmed that the two men were both drivers of 'green licence plate' taxis in Phuket.

"Legal proceedings have been completed," Cherng Talay Police reported, without confirming the exact charges pressed against the two. *Eakkapop Thongtub*



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Human remains wash ashore in Wichit

POLICE ARE HOPING to identify a portion of a human skeleton found washed ashore beside the Bo Rae - Khao Khat Road in Wichit last Sunday (July 28).

After being informed of the discovery by Wichit Municipality, Wichit Police Chief Pol Col Chattri Chukaew and Deputy Chief Pol Lt Col Natthi Phichitchainithimeth and fellow officers arrived at the scene, at Laem Dinso, on the northern shore of Chalong Bay.

The officers were joined by a team of forensic doctors from Vachira Phuket Hospital.

The skeleton remains were of the pelvic are and upper leg bones only. The section of remains were still wearing black underwear with "CK" printed on the front and "SPORT" on both sides.

The forensic team confirmed that the remains belonged to a male who had been dead for at least eight weeks. The age of the deceased could not yet be determined.



Photo: Wichit Police

No other human remains were found in the immediate area. However, about 50 metres away were a pair of men's shorts with a black leather belt.

Inside the shorts' side pocket was a brown leather wallet containing documents identifying a 28-year-old male named Muzakkir, a registered fisherman from Aceh Province, Indonesia. The wallet also contained a fisherman's insurance card and two ATM cards.

Aceh Province is on the northern tip of the Indonesian island Sumatra, which at its closest point is only 300km from the southern tip of Phuket.

The police are continuing their investigation to determine whether the bone fragments and the documents found in the shorts are related. *Eakkapop Thongtub*



Photo: Kusoldharm Phuket

One killed as pickup ploughs into market

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One person was killed and five other people were injured when a delivery pickup slammed into a motorbike before flipping onto its side and wiping out roadside stalls at Muang Mai market last Friday (July 26).

CCTV from Thepkasatri Tambon Administrative Organisation (OrBorTor) showed the pickup travelling southbound on Thepkasatri Rd at about 8am when it struck the Honda Wave motorbike, which in turn hit a power pole then spun

across the road.

The pickup then ploughed into a series of roadside stalls at the market before being brought to a stop by a power pole.

One person injured was Bichuan Naebnian, an official from the Mueang Mai branch of the Kusoldharm Foundation. She was taken to Thalang Hospital.

The driver of the motorbike, Ms Suhaila Kasaw, appeared to have escaped without serious injuries.

Police reported those affected by the wipeout as five women: mobile phone stall operator Malina Santhong,

fruit shop owner Nonglak Chuaykarn, dumpling shop operator Radjai Phlengngan, drink shop operator Rungpailin Boonyarit and noodle shop owner Mitchaya Srichampa.

Details of their injuries were not made clear.

Police named the driver of the Bangkok-registered delivery pickup as Adikiat Phumrak. Rescue workers needed to cut him free from the wreck before rushing him to hospital.

The full extent of the property damage was being assessed, and officers were continuing their investigation, Thalang Police reported.

Women make B500k in illegal cig sales in three months

TWO WOMEN HAVE BEEN arrested for selling untaxed cigarettes and illegal vaping paraphernalia at a shop in Soi Pha-niang, in Moo 5, Ratsada, where they sold more than half a million baht of the illegal contraband in just the past three months.

The women – Sarinya Phonkaew, 23, from Satun, and Chonlada Chuewong, 25, registered as living in Chalong – were arrested at 5pm on Saturday (July 27) in a raid led by Pol Capt Aphichat Musikasang of the Phuket City Police.

In total, 487 packs of untaxed cigarettes and 64 packs of vaping liquids along with B4,840 cash were seized.

According to account books seized in the raid, the women recorded B582,515 in illegal sales in the past three months: B239,265 in May; B185,755 in June; and B157,495 in July.



Photo: Phuket City Police

The women were taken to Phuket City Police Station and charged with possession and the sale of goods without paying the required taxes, in violation of Sections 203 and 204 of the Excise Act 2017, police reported.

They were also charged under Sections 242 and 246 of the Customs Act BE 2017, which pertains to the handling and sale of smuggled goods, police noted.

According to police, the two women admitted to the charges against them.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Heroines traffic warning

SRISOONTHORN MUNICIPALITY has urged motorists to avoid using the southbound lanes along Thepkasatri Rd from Thai Watsadu to the Tha Reua Shrine when the power poles beside the road are moved before construction of the Heroines Underpass begins.

In an announcement posted on Monday (July 29), Srisoonthorn Municipality explained that the work was to begin on Thursday (Aug 1), and continue from 9am to 4pm each day through to next Monday (Aug 5).

Thalang Traffic Police issued the same warning.

"The Thalang Electricity Authority has scheduled the relocation of electric poles on the inbound side of Thepkasatri Road, between Thai Watsadu and Tha Ruea Shrine. This operation will impact traffic flow, leaving only one inbound lane available," the announcement by Srisoonthorn Municipality explained.

The southbound lanes along the affected section of Thepkasatri Rd will be reduced to one lane. The northbound lanes will remain two



Image: Srisoonthorn Municipality

lanes, with rubber cones dividing a bus lane, the announcement said.

Traffic police officers will be deployed to facilitate the flow and ensure safety. "Motorists are advised to avoid the area if possible," Srisoonthorn Municipality urged.

Motorists heading southbound along Thepkasatri Rd were advised to use the Mueang Mai - Pa Khlok route or the shortcut to Cherg Talay.

Motorists heading northbound along Thepkasatri Rd were advised to use the route around the island via Kamala, Cherg Talay, or the road past British International School, Phuket, or the route behind Wat Tha Ruea to Srisoonthorn Rd.

"Thank you for your cooperation," the announcement concluded.

The Phuket News

Koh Hei gifted mooring buoys, beach cleanup

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Rawai Municipality and Royal Thai Navy Region Third Area Command at Cape Panwa jointly led an event last week to mark a project to install more mooring buoys off Koh Hei (Coral Island).

The project, and the event, held on July 24, were held in honour of His Majesty the King's 6th Cycle Birthday (72 years) last Sunday (July 28).

The event was presided over by Rawai Mayor Aroon Solos and Rear Admiral Suchat Thammakitakwet, Commander of the Royal Thai Navy Region Third Area Command and Director of the Phuket branch of the Thai Maritime Enforcement Command Center (Thai-MECC 3).

The initiative involved the laying of boat mooring buoys and a beach cleanup at Koh Hei, both aimed at preserving the marine ecosystem and promoting environmental awareness. The installation of the mooring buoys is to prevent the destruction of coral reefs



Photo: Third Area Command

and marine habitats caused by boats dropping anchors.

Joining to support the project were local organisations and businesses, including the Phuket branch of the Tourism Council of Thailand, Andaman Rotary Club, Rawai Beach Rotary Club, along with tour boat operators Nikorn Marine Co Ltd, Nonthasak Co Ltd and Bohemian Marine, as well as Indochina Productions (Siam) Co Ltd and several others.

The project, which began

on April 19, involved placing mooring buoys at seven points around Koh Hei, including in front of Coral Beach, in front of Krahang Beach, in front of Banana Beach, and four points for submarine viewing spots behind the island.

Each buoy was anchored using four 2-ton underwater cement bases. The work was successfully completed by July 24.

The equipment used in this activity included 21 two-tonne

cement buoy bases, 12 orange floating buoys and buoy tie-down ropes. The project was supported by a purchasing budget of B239,000, reported the Third Area Command.

The trash collection activity saw the participation of 120 individuals from the participating organisations as well as Royal Volunteers, who worked together to clean a 500-metre stretch of the east side of Koh Hei beach, collecting a total of 750 kilogrammes of trash.



Photo: DMCR

Baby turtle rescued from beach trash

A BABY HAWKSBILL turtle has been taken into care after it was rescued from being tangled in a pile of marine trash washed ashore at Rawai Beach last Sunday (July 28).

Officers from the Sireetarn Marine Endangered Animals Rescue Centre – under the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR) Marine and Coastal Resources Research Center of the Upper Andaman Sea, based at Cape Panwa – arrived at the beach after they were informed of the baby turtle's condition by staff from Rawai Municipality.

The turtle, with a shell 27.5 centimetres wide and

31.5cm long, weighed 1.8 kilogrammes, marine biologists reported.

The turtle was in weak condition, with a body condition score (BCS) of 2/5, indicating relative malnutrition.

A deep, necrotic wound was discovered on its front left flipper, extending to the upper arm bone with muscle inflammation, and the bone was found to be fractured.

Marine biologists provided initial treatment, but was taken back to the Sireetarn Marine Endangered Animals Rescue Centre for further care and rehabilitation.

Eakkapong Thongtub

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Health Expo brings welcomed boost

THE 'PHUKET HEALTH Expo' held over four days at Central Festival Phuket shopping mall last week is hoped to boost the local health and wellness industry by B10 million.

Present to announce the start of the event, touted as an 'international trade fair', on July 24 were Phuket Provincial Administration Organisation (PPAO) President Rewat Areerob and Kongsak Khoopongsakorn, President of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce.

The expo, which continued through to last Sunday (July 28), aimed to showcase Phuket's potential as the Wellness Tourism Hub of Asia, promoting health and wellness tourism, and establishing new events that could grow into international attractions.

The event also sought to build a comprehensive network of health-related businesses and services, supporting the province's strategic plan and aligning with the government's policies.

The expo featured products and technologies from international exhibitors and chambers of commerce nationwide, and included displays and services



Photo: PR Phuket

from various health associations in Phuket, traditional Thai medical services offering disease diagnosis, herbal medicine prescriptions and specialised treatment preparations.

On show, and available for visitors to sample, were traditional Thai massage therapies, herbal compresses and steam treatments. Local five-star community products from across Phuket were on display, and attendees were able to enjoy events like the floating flower arrangement competition in a spa setting.

Prizes were awarded to the winners of the floating flower arrangement competition. The first prize went to the "Trans Tara" team, who received B5,000 and a gift voucher for a boat trip worth B10,000. The first runner-up received B4,000, and the second runner-up received B2,000 along with a gift voucher for a boat trip.

The Phuket News

'Genting Dream' returns to Phuket

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Cruise liner 'Genting Dream' docked at the Phuket Deep Sea Port at Ao Makham, on Phuket's east coast, last week, bringing 3,700 tourists in its first visit to Phuket in a year.

Phuket Vice Governor Adul Chuthong and Phuket Marine Office Director Natchapong Pranit, along with other officials, were on hand to warmly welcome the tourists after the ship made port on July 24. Following the arrival, the Vice Governor Adul and his delegation visited the ship and exchanged souvenirs in a ceremonial gesture.

The arrival of Genting Dream, over 300 metres long, on its Singapore-Phuket route is intended to foster friendly relations and stimulate the tourism economy in Phuket.

V/Gov Adul highlighted the recent dredging efforts that have deepened the water channel, enabling larger cruise ships to dock at Phuket. He



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

noted that this development is expected to increase tourist arrivals by sea, complementing the 50,000-60,000 tourists arriving daily via the airport.

The anticipated increase in tourist numbers, potentially to 100,000-200,000 per day, is expected to positively impact both the public and private sectors, as well as local residents, by generating more income.

Mr Natchapong noted a significant rise in cruise ship

tourism post-COVID-19.

"Over the past month, about seven to eight large cruise ships have called at the port, and since January, there have been 14-17 trips per month, tripling previous numbers," he said.

"This trend is particularly favourable for Phuket's tourist market. Previously, large cruise ships like the Genting Dream had to anchor offshore and use smaller boats to ferry

tourists to land, which was time-consuming and less convenient," he explained.

The Genting Dream is scheduled to dock at Phuket twice a month until 2026. Meanwhile, the Phuket Marine Department plans to further develop the port into a navigation centre for large cruise ships on the Andaman coast, or a 'Marina Hub', catering to the preferences of tourists travelling on large ships.



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Fresh weed policy U-turn

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

Thailand will work towards controlling the use of cannabis through legislation instead of re-listing it as a narcotic, according to Deputy Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, signalling yet another policy U-turn.

Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin has agreed that legislation was the appropriate step to take, Anutin said on July 23.

"I would like to thank the prime minister for considering this issue and deciding to enact an act," said Anutin, whose Bhumjaithai Party has long championed decriminalisation of cannabis for medical and economic uses.

"It will be a matter of law and debated in parliament where there is already a draft law," said Prommin Lertsuridej, secretary-general to the prime minister. "Whether it is a narcotic or not is up to parliament."

Thailand in 2022 became one of the first countries in Asia to decriminalise marijuana, but without a law to govern it or clear regulations in place to prevent its recreational usage. Anutin was the minister of public health at the time.

The move prompted an explosion of recreational use, cannabis cafes and retailers, along with public concern about its abuse.

Bhumjaithai subsequently drafted a bill to regulate cannabis use but it failed to get past first reading before the election was called last year.



Anutin Charnvirakul's Bhumjaithai Party has long championed the decriminalisation of cannabis. Photo: Bangkok Post

The current government led by the Pheu Thai Party has maintained that recreational use of cannabis would not be allowed under new regulations being drafted by the Ministry of Public Health.

Mr Srettha said previously that the plant would be put back on the narcotics list, with exceptions allowed for medical use and research. He gave officials until the end of the year to draft the necessary rules.

Thailand has seen rapid growth of a domestic retail sector for marijuana, with tens of thousands of shops and businesses springing up in the past two years in an industry projected to be worth up to B2 billion by 2025.

Bhumjaithai, the second-biggest party in the current coalition, has always insisted that it favours marijuana

for health and economic purposes, but not for recreational use, and has argued against re-criminalising it.

Anutin, who is also the interior minister, said the government would now discuss plans for a draft bill to regulate the cannabis industry, and political parties might submit drafts to parliament.

Proposed regulations to recriminalise cannabis have already been set in motion, but they have yet to clear the Narcotics Control Board. As a member of the board, Anutin had vowed to vote against the plan.

The Office of the Narcotics Control Board had proposed making the changes effective from Jan 1, 2025 to give a grace period of a few months for operators concerned about their legal status to adapt and apply for new licences.

Maya Bay closes for natural rehabilitation

KRABI

POPULAR TOURIST spot Maya Bay and two other destinations will be closed for two months as of yesterday (Aug 1) for natural rehabilitation during the monsoon season.

Maya Bay, Loh Samah Bay and Lo Ko Bay on Mu Ko Phi Phi in Tambon Ao Nang of Krabi's Muang district will be closed from until Sept 30, Yutthaphong Dumsrisuk, chief of Hat Noppharat Thara-Mu Koh Phi Phi National Park, said last Friday (July 26).

The closure also aims to ensure tourist safety, as strong winds and waves during the monsoon can create hazardous conditions, particularly at Ao Loh Samah Pier, the entrance to Maya Bay, where tour boats will not be able to dock during this period, said Mr Yutthaphong.

Maya Bay – made world famous by the Hollywood blockbuster *The Beach* starring Leonardo DiCaprio 23 years ago – attracted many



Photo: Bangkok Post

tourists wanting to experience its natural beauty.

From Oct 1 last year to July 22, the bay welcomed 1,683,430 visitors, generating B549.86 million in entry fees for the national park.

In July 2023, the park collected about B23mn in entry fees from 110,436 visitors. This month, the site raised approximately B34.74mn in entry fees from 96,236 tourists. Although visitor numbers dropped by 13,328 compared to last year, the park managed to collect an additional B11.74mn due to stricter fee collection measures.

The Hat Noppharat Thara-Mu Koh Phi Phi National Park posted on its Facebook page that other areas of the national park remain open to tourists.

Bangkok Post

New senate speaker sworn in

BANGKOK

THE NEWLY ELECTED Senate Speaker Mongkol Surasajja and his two deputies were sworn in last Saturday (July 27).

Mr Mongkol and his deputies, Gen Kriangkrai Srirak and Boonsong Noisophon, received a royal command that formally ushered them into their posts during a ceremony held in parliament.

Senators and high-ranking officials were present to receive the royal command, which was conveyed to the ceremony by Natjaree Anantasilp, the Cabinet secretary-general.

Ms Natjaree read the command proclaiming Mr Mongkol, a former Buri Ram governor, as the new Senate speaker, Gen Kriangkrai, a former adviser to Bhumjaithai Party leader Anutin Charnvirakul, as the first deputy speaker, and Mr Boonsong, a former election commissioner, as the second deputy speaker. The swearing-in marks the culmination of the appointment process, and the speaker and



Mongkol Surasajja (centre). Photo: Bangkok Post

his deputies have officially begun their duties.

Mr Mongkol was elected by fellow senators to be speaker with 159 of 200 votes. Gen Kriangkrai received 150 votes, and Mr Boonsong received 167 votes. The speakership votes followed the three-tier, intra- and inter-professional elections conducted at the district, provincial, and national levels on different days.

The so-called "blue" bloc, a reference to Bhumjaithai, is said to be the largest of the three factions in the new Upper House. Some other senators are believed to be closely linked to the red camp, understood to be the ruling Pheu Thai Party, and the orange group has close ties with the main opposition

Move Forward Party (MFP).

Emerging from the ceremony, Mr Mongkol said he was powerless to stop people from speculating about any senators' political affiliations or closeness to political figures. He has been in the civil service all his life and has met many people. To say he is not acquainted with or was never close to anyone would be untrue.

"However, when it comes to legislative duty, it's a whole different story. The duty must be performed in compliance with ethics, the law, and tradition," he said.

He concluded by saying that he and his deputies have vowed to protect and preserve the nation, religion and the monarch.

Bangkok Post

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Perfumed Petal Power: A Whiter Shade of Pale

Gardenia. Photo: Patrick Campbell



GREEN THOUGHTS

Patrick Campbell

White has so many associations – positively, it is associated with innocence and purity; on the distaff side, with coldness and sterility. In Thailand, the white lotus flower symbolises spiritual perfection for the Buddhist community, and judged by the presence of white in floral garlands, the colour is associated with both friendship and good fortune. Most lucky leis contain two or three white flowers – buds of jasmine and milkweed (calotropis) plus a pair of creamy magnolias for good measure.

And the colour is equally well rep-

resented in the average Phuket garden – from the pure white of the day and night flowering jessamines, jasmines and bauhinias to the creamy tinted flowers of buddleia paniculata. It is a massive bonus that most of these flowers are fragrant, as though Mother Nature decided that their pallor needed something extra to attract the attention of pollinating insects – or nature-loving humans.

To illustrate the point: the most perfumed shrub in my garden over the years has been the buddleia. Its racemes are insignificant visually, its small grey-green leaves are rough to the touch, and it is fussy about conditions. Nonetheless, the scent of the tiny flowers is rich and intense, especially in the morning. It is a magnet for insect pollinators and with good reason is sometimes referred to as the butterfly bush.



Tabernaemontana (variegated). Photo: Patrick Campbell

Other white bloomers are more visually alluring. Take the gardenia (cape jasmine). Belonging to the same family as coffee (rubiaceae), it is beloved of florists worldwide because of its large, scented blooms and glossy, dark evergreen leaves. Its matte, funnel-shaped flowers are up to four inches across and are usually creamy white. As a consequence of the work of hybridists, the gardenia exists in any number of cultivars which range from single and semi-double varieties such as Magnifica to the double blooms of Mystery. Preferring acidic soil, the gardenia is a good choice for a container since it is a shallow rooting plant and in the tropics may need some protection from the sun. And it will take readily from cuttings.

The tabernaemontana (what a mouthful of a name!) has much smaller flowers that superficially resemble those of the single-flowering gardenia. Five-petalled and curved, they remind me of propellers and look as though they should be revolving in the breeze. This evergreen shrub also has masses of small, shiny leaves and will – given the right conditions, which means plenty of sun and water – flower for most of the year. Hardier and much more vigorous than the gardenia, it can, given the right conditions, grow into a substantial shrub, even a small tree. Need one add that it is fragrant, especially at night. Easy to propagate from seeds or cuttings, it is, like the gardenia, available at most garden centres. A go-to choice for the Thai garden.

Most famed of all for their perfume is the family of jasmines. The common version, jasminum officinale, was hardy enough to thrive in my London garden. Characterised by pinnate leaves and pinkish buds which develop into star-shaped flowers, it is a vigorous climber which can, if unchecked, reach 30 feet (more than nine metres) in height. But it is not really a shrub for the tropics, and its relatives do better here.

A favourite of mine is the Arabian jasmine (jasminum sambac). Native to Southeast Asia, it is a small shrub

which sometimes grows as a vine. The sweetly scented white flowers are borne in clusters at the ends of branches and open in the evening. Granted the right conditions, it will bloom throughout the year. Like its cousin the common jasmine, the flowers are a source of flower oil; hence its continuing cultivation for the perfume industry. Oddly, this jasmine does not produce seeds and needs to be propagated by cuttings or layering.

The orange jasmine (murraya paniculata) is not a vine and thus needs no support. A very vigorous species which will accept most types of soil and semi-shade, it will grow into an attractive and bushy tree some five metres high in three or four years. Like all its family, its small, curved blooms possess a spicy fragrance which attracts butterflies and other insect pollinators. While I am not a huge fan of the oriental propensity for pruning and clipping shrubs into symmetrical shapes and hedges, the orange jasmine will tolerate such treatment and for this reason is widely grown here in Phuket.

So too, wrightia religiosa (mohk baan), a white flowering shrub from the apocynaceae family. Sometimes called water jasmine, it is one of the most popular plants here in Phuket, usually grown as a hedge or arranged as a front line of earthenware pots. I confess I am a little perplexed by this vogue, since the flowers are of little consequence, pendulous and bell-shaped, but minuscule. Moreover the light green leaves are pretty insignificant and unless cultivated in rich soil, the plant has a very open structure. To its credit, it is evergreen and it does bloom for much of the year. And, dare I say, it is yet another of those white shrubs that smells divine.

Perhaps I should revise my opinion...

Patrick Campbell's book 'The Tropic Gardener', described in one Bangkok review as the best book on Thai gardening for 50 years, is available for B500 (half price) to personal callers from 59/84 Soi Saiyuan 13 in Rawai (Tel: 076-613227 or 085-7827551).

WINDOW ON PHUKET

August/September 2024 issue



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Taking the Rotary reins in Patong



Cabbie Rein, the new President of the Rotary Club of Patong Beach.

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

As the 10 Rotary Clubs in Phuket held a joint club presidents installation ceremony at The Pogo Design Hotel Phuket on July 12, Carol-Ann 'Cabbie' Rein took the reins as President of the Rotary Club of Patong Beach, the only English-language Rotary club on the island. Here in a statement to The Phuket News, Cabbie introduces herself and outlines her goals as Club President for the term 2024-2025.

It is an honour to be elected as the second female President of the Rotary Club of Patong Beach. I returned to Rotary two years ago after being a charter member of the Rotary club of Gonubie (District 9370) in South Africa for a short while before leaving for the Middle East.

I realised the extent of parenting only when I became a parent myself; and I feel much the same about becoming the President of our Club. Similar to our parents, the work of all of our Past Presidents to get the club to where it is today is remarkable and I thank each of them for their contribution – this has made the start of my year easier. A special thank you to our Immediate past president Walter Wyler who led us through a year of consolidation and focus. His continued support and contribution to our club is very much appreciated.

Our Board is composed of a dynamic, forward-thinking team who will continue to build on current club projects as well and embrace new ones. Our Scholarship program provides educational opportunities to students of varying ages, who would not otherwise be able to afford access to education. As Nelson Mandela said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." This is a solid investment in the future of our community. Our Save-a Child-Swim program takes place towards the end of the Rotary year usually during the low season so that we have easier access to the use of swimming pools. Thai students are taught the basics of swimming, floating and survival by a wonderful group of Thai instructors. This is an important life skill considering that drowning is the number one cause of death among Thai children under 15 years old. We

contribute to the Lenses for Learning program in collaboration with the other Rotary clubs in Phuket, where students in need have their eyes tested and are sponsored a pair of eyeglasses. By improving their vision it helps students function better in their environment and also hopefully have a positive impact on their education and learning.

We also have minor projects that we participate in yearly; the Vegetarian Festival, a cook-a-thon for World Food Day and for Children's Day in Thailand, to name a few. Already this year we raised funds to assist less fortunate families in Thalang affected by the flooding at the start of July. At the beginning of August we are working collaboratively with the other nine Rotary Clubs on the island in a project providing dental services to prisoners. We also have a fundraiser reggae event in October and additional details will be made public shortly.

Rotary International President Stephanie Urlich has chosen the theme of "The Magic of Rotary" for the current year 2024-2025, where she calls upon Rotarians around the globe to "amplify the organisation's power to save lives". She has asked us to create magic with every project completed, all monies donated, and with new members joining. As Rotarians we are mandated to find a balance between continuity and change, and work for peace.

Our current District Governor, JakChai Visutthakul (District 3330) has a motto, "Take it Easy", where he asks members to develop sustainable community projects built on strong friendships. This year, one thing I will focus on is building a strong relationship with the other nine Rotary clubs (all Thai) in Phuket so that we can work with synergy and make a difference in our island community.

I am a global nomad, used to being a minority in every country I have lived. I go by my nickname Cabbie with my birth name Carol-Ann being reserved for official documentation – I rarely recognise it ;) I was born in Zambia, travel on a South African passport and have lived and worked in eight countries across Africa, the Middle East and Asia. I thrive in and respect cultural diversity as I believe this strengthens my ability to understand society and therefore contribute more meaningfully to the community within which I chose to live. I bring to the position of President a career spanning many aspects of Education which includes; Corporate

Training and Development, consulting for school reform, school teaching and leadership, adult literacy... I've worked with learners as young as 3 years old to those nearing retirement. I have also owned a small retail outlet in South Africa.

I am positive and energetic about whatever challenges I face in my life. I also have a strong guiding light and that is to pay my way forward in life – to do something unexpected for someone else without expecting anything in return. I am a champion of kindness to all living things. Our members come from over 20 countries with a vast array of professional and personal experience. We embrace diversity, equity and inclusion and I believe my mandate

is to harness the collective abilities of members so that we can make a difference in our community. We would like to attract new members who want to be active in the club and use their knowledge and skills within our committees to make a difference in our community.

To find out more about our club follow us on our Facebook page, Rotary Club of Patong Beach or via our website RotaryPatong.org. We meet on most Tuesday evenings from 7-9pm at the Four Points by Sheraton in Patong with interesting speakers and a variety of topics. The first Tuesday of the month we have a dinner out and we invite prospective members, guests and friends to join us and find out more about the club and meet members.



The September/October 2024 hard copy issue goes to print very soon

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POP QUIZ

- 1. The Bayeux Tapestry of the 1070s depicts a man installing a rooster weathervane on which building?
- 2. What was the common name given to the burial grounds of gunfighters?
- 3. What does it mean when a wine is said to be 'hot'?
- 4. Why are the Dartmouth, Beaver and Eleanor historically famous?
- 5. Which zodiac sign runs from November 22 to December 21?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Hard

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across

 - 1. Formal accessory
 - 5. Shillong was its capital
 - 10. Mosque chief
 - 14. Famous Amos
 - 15. Hot spot
 - 16. Bamako is its capital
 - 17. Taro variety
 - 18. Sots
 - 19. Barbershop emblem
 - 20. Discourage
 - 23. Old name for nitrogen
 - 24. Blue-pencils
 - 25. Roman priest
 - 28. Excellent
 - 30. Flowering shrub
 - 31. Greek cheese
 - 33. Soothing the body and soul center
 - 36. One in an unfamiliar setting
 - 40. Jump into a pool?
 - 41. Laser light
 - 42. Sluggish
 - 43. Empty a vessel
 - 45. Bad blood
 - 46. Category of
- Down

 - 1. Dance instructor's call
 - 2. Foo faraw
 - 3. Pakistani tongue
 - 4. Landscape replicas
 - 5. In a faint
 - 6. Artificial leg?
 - 7. Rocket
 - 8. Affirm
 - 9. Flat-topped land formation
 - 10. Hold back
 - 11. Native New Zealander
 - 12. Dispense
 - 13. Appearances
 - 21. Central European
- 22. Mark of perfection
 - 25. Exercise target
 - 26. Long sentence
 - 27. Dismounted
 - 28. Einstein's preoccupation
 - 29. Bonehead
 - 31. Feed
 - 32. Flight board abbr.
 - 33. Hold back
 - 34. Big copper exporter
 - 35. Sciences' partner
 - 37. Part of a geisha's attire
 - 38. Hoisting machine
 - 39. Cordial
 - 43. Engenders
 - 44. Publicize
 - 45. Channel
 - 46. Conscious
 - 47. Chalice
 - 48. Compensate
 - 49. The out crowd
 - 50. Insider's vocabulary
 - 52. Gulf war ally
 - 53. Actress Miles
 - 54. Banish to Hades
 - 55. Nay sayer
 - 56. Track event

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

names of the ships at the Boston Tea Party; 5) Sagittarius

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	35
36						37					38	39		
40						41					42			
				43	44						45			
46	47	48						49	50					
51						52	53					54	55	56
57						58						59		
60						61						62		
63						64						65		

Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

14	M	A	S	S	E	R	E	T	E	16	V	I	T	C	H	
15	O	T	H	E	R	A	V	E	R	18	C	O	L	A		
17	R	H	E	A	S	B	I	L	A	T	E	R	A	L		
19	R	E	E	S	T	A	B	L	I	S	H	M	E	N	T	
21	I	N	S			V	I	S	C	E	R	A				
23	S	A	H	A	R	A										
25	P	I	T	E	O	U	S									
27	R	E	O	R	G	A	N	I	Z	A	T	I	O	N	S	
29	N	A	N			R	E	L	I	N	E	D				
31	A	R	O	M	A											
33	P	A	N	A	P	E	S	T								
35	R	E	S	C	O	N	C	I	L	I	A	T	I	O	N	S
37	O	V	E	R	A	C	T	E	D							
39	D	E	L	I		R	O	M	E							
41	E	L	L	S		A	N	I	S							
43																

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

1

second of activity in the most accurate simulation of the human brain ever created took one of the world's largest supercomputers 40 minutes to calculate.

2

rats will stop playing with each other if the bigger rat doesn't let the smaller one win at least 30% of the time.

4

times more likely is an air rage incident in economy class if the plane also has a first class.

8

percent of guys who own televisions don't watch any sports at all, according to Nielsen data.

17

percent of Brits admit they would be willing to have sex with an android, and 11% are willing to raise a robot baby.

5,840

people in the United States have a last name that ends with their first name, with Donald MacDonald being the most common.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Phuket Town time. Photo by Jeffrey Ephreim Villanueva Villegas

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

This week in history

August 2, 1610

Henry Hudson discovers what is now known as Hudson Bay.

August 3, 1492

Christopher Columbus sets sail from Palos de la Frontera, Spain, in the hope of reaching the East Indies (South and Southeast Asia) by sailing westward.

August 4, 1693

Date traditionally ascribed to Dom Perignon's invention

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

August 5, 1926

Harry Houdini performs his greatest feat, spending 91 minutes underwater in a sealed tank before escaping.

August 6, 1991

Tim Berners-Lee releases



Harry Houdini in Boston, 1908.

files describing his idea for the World Wide Web, which later debuts as a publicly avail-

able service on the Internet. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 2004 for his pioneering work.

August 7, 1970

Ivory Coast becomes independent from France.

August 8, 1908

Wilbur Wright makes his first flight at Le Mans, France. It is the Wright Brothers' first public flight.

Source: Wikipedia

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SAT 17 AUG

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Friday Mussels Night

6 PM onwards: Belgian style mussels served with French Fries. All you can eat. Your choice, Your style: Marinere, Selected drinks, Provencale, Garlic & cream, Creamy curry, Blue cheese or Thai style. We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 325 baht P.P. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/shakersphuket Oliver, Shakers restaurant 98/18 Vises Road, Rawai 83130, 081 891 4381

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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

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



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AustCham Thailand
Business - Community

JOINT CHAMBERS PHUKET SUNDOWNERS

Friday, August 23, 2024
18:00 - 21:00 hrs.
Venue: nH Boat Lagoon Phuket Resort
Corporate sponsor: BDO

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, TICC and Thai-Swedish Chamber, Joint Chambers Phuket Sundowners. This event is scheduled to take place on Friday 23 August 2024, 18.00 - 21.00 hrs., at nH Boat Lagoon Phuket Resort. Get to know and learn from our corporate sponsor BDO in Thailand, an accounting advisory firm that provides comprehensive audit and assurance, advisory, tax and legal, and business services and outsourcing to small and large companies in Thailand and beyond. THB 650 members, THB 1,200 non members. office@austchamthailand.com

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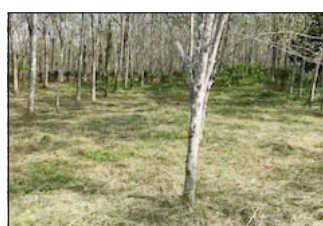
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LONG LIVE HIS MAJESTY



Ceremonies were conducted all across Phuket last Sunday (July 28) in honour of His Majesty the King Maha Vajiralongkorn Bodindradebayavarangkun's 6th Cycle Birthday (72 years).

Buddhist chanting and auspicious religious ceremonies, including merit making by offering alms to monks, took place all across the island to mark the esteemed occasion.

At 7am at the Mahisorn Phakdi Auditorium at Phuket Provincial Hall, Phuket Vice Governor Sattha Thongkham presided over such an official ceremony, where he was joined by Busadee Suwannarat, President of the Phuket Red Cross Society/President of the Phuket Provincial Housewives Association and wife of Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat.

Also present were Phuket Vice Governors Adul Chuthong and Norasak Suksomboon, in addition to selected heads of government agencies and various private sector entities and members of the public who all joined the religious chanting ceremony of the five auspicious religions, including the Buddhist prayer ceremony, the oath-taking ceremony to be a good civil servant and the alms-giving ceremony to offer royal merit.

On arriving at the auditorium, Mr Sattha lit incense and candles to worship the Triple Gem, before offering incense and candles in front of the portrait of His Majesty the King and leading the royal hymn to offer auspicious blessings.

The ceremonies of the five auspicious religions then began, consisting of Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Brahmanism-Hinduism and Sikhism.

Once the oath-taking ceremony was completed, Mr Sattha led the participants in making merit by offering alms to 101 monks and novices in front of Phuket Provincial Hall.

Phuket Governor Sophon led another ceremony and a toast to His Majesty at the Auditorium on Monday night (July 29), as the nationwide celebrations continued on the public holiday.

A special broadcast across all TV channels also on Monday night highlighted festivities across the country in honour of His Majesty.



Photos: PR Phuket



Russell rues Spa weight charge

FORMULA ONE

Michael Lamonato
michael@boxofneutrals.com

George Russell was sensationally disqualified from the Belgian Grand Prix last Sunday (July 28) after leading home a shock Mercedes one-two finish, gifting victory to teammate Lewis Hamilton.

Russell's car was found to be 1.5 kilograms underweight during routine post-race scrutineering, leading to automatic exclusion from the results.

The Briton emerged as a surprise winner from the race after blindsiding Hamilton and the rest of the frontrunners by making just one stop in what had widely been expected to be a two-stop race.

The strategy, driven by both driver and team after his first tyre change on lap 10 of 44, got the Briton out of the tightly congested field and into clear air, where he was able to maximise his pace and massage the tyres to the finish.

It forced a thrilling conclusion to the grand prix as Hamilton realised that this teammate was set to win a race he thought he'd been comfortably controlling.

The seven-time champion aced his start from third on the grid to run Sergio Pérez, launching from



George Russell crosses the finish line to win the Belgian grand prix before he was disqualified for car weight violations. Photo: AFP

second, side by side through the La Source hairpin.

They jostled for position down the hill into Eau Rouge, where the Mercedes car nosed ahead and forced the Mexican to yield.

It set Hamilton up to pursue pole-getter Charles Leclerc for the lead on lap three, making an easy slipstream pass down Kemmel straight.

Russell, meanwhile, was having a more difficult time in fifth, up from sixth on the grid, where he was struggling to get the most

from his car in dirty air.

The team made the early call to pit him at the end of lap 10. Extracted from traffic and now on the hard tyre, which turned out to be the quickest on the day, Russell felt renewed, and he encouraged his team to leave him out until the end. The Mercedes pit wall agreed, forecasting that fifth would be his best finish with or without another stop.

Hamilton had a similar feeling at the front of the field, but with victory on the line, Mercedes was less willing to risk it. When Leclerc, then

second, stopped on lap 25, Hamilton was called in to prevent an undercut on a day when overtaking was more difficult than anticipated.

FATEFUL

It proved fateful to his race. While he stayed ahead of Leclerc and could keep the fast-finishing Oscar Piastri at bay, it gradually dawned on him that Russell's pace at the front was strong enough that he'd catch him with only a few laps remaining.

On lap 40 of 44 Hamilton got within a second of his teammate, but

in the same machinery he struggled to find a meaningful advantage with which to launch a move.

It allowed a perfectly defensive Russell to close the deal, taking the chequered flag by 0.526 seconds.

But Russell's celebrations were cut short with a report from the technical delegate that his car had weighed in below the mandatory 798-kilogram minimum, attracting automatic disqualification from the stewards.

Mercedes accepted it had been a "genuine error" without mitigating circumstances.

The car's minimum weight includes tyres. The team theorised that Russell's unplanned 34-lap stint on one set of tyres meant the rubber had worn down more than calculated, leaving him below the limit.

A quirk of the long Spa-Francorchamps lap also means drivers don't complete a cool-down lap, meaning they're unable to pick up discarded rubber and other detritus on their tyres on the way back to pit lane to bolster car weight.

Oscar Piastri moved up to second, Leclerc to third, while Max Verstappen recovered from 11th to finish fourth ahead of Lando Norris and Carlos Sainz.

Pérez finished seventh ahead of Fernando Alonso, with Esteban Ocon and Daniel Ricciardo rounding out the final points places.

Toyota Gazoo Racing returns to the streets of Saphan Hin

MOTORSPORTS

PHUKET IS GEARING up to welcome the return of the Toyota Gazoo Racing Motorsport Thailand at Saphan Hin Park this weekend (Aug 3-4).

The hugely-popular event returns to Phuket with a whole host of additional fun activities away from the racing for everyone to enjoy.

The race itself is a flat car style format, meaning that vehicles do not travel at maximum speed throughout. Male and female drivers will be competing in four separate vehicle models, namely: the standard Yaris; the Yaris Ativ Lady One; the Hi-Lux Revo; and the Corolla Altis GR Sport.

Running concurrently with the two-day race is the Toyota Gazoo Racing Thailand Academy Campus Tour which provides opportunity for youngsters interested in motorsports to learn more about the



Photo: PR Phuket

sport through a series of talks and meet-and-greet sessions with experts and former race winners.

Outside of the action on track, there will be a host of stands and exhibitions showcasing live musical entertainment, cheerleading squads and an array of delicious food and beverage stalls.

Additionally, there will be beauty contest, a TikTok photo contest and a cosplay

contest, with a mini concert from a range of famous artists rounding out the weekend's entertainment on Sunday (Aug 4).

Admission is free and everyone is welcome to attend what promises to be another engaging and memorable occasion as the streets of Saphan Hin come alive with the sound of roaring engines.

The Phuket News

Vagabonds overcome Krabi RC in feisty encounter at the ACG



THE GLOBAL RUGBY COACH

ONE OF THE JOYS OF BEING a Global Rugby Coach is that you can enjoy watching games at all levels, in all parts of the world.

I took my notebook and pen along to Alan Cooke Ground (ACG) last Saturday (July 27) to watch Phuket Vagabonds play the Krabi RC team. Vagabonds a mixture of Thais and expats, Krabi a 100% Thai team.

As the game started, a French supporter sat next to me and we proceeded to chat in our respective pidgeon English and pidgeon French. Great fun.

The great thing about watching an amateur sport is what you see is what you get and that was certainly the case at the ACG as a truly fesisty match unveiled. My new French friend Yannis was entranced and gasped at some of the physicality (in French of course!).

As a coach I feed off commitment. If you do not have it, please move on! Someone who personifies this is Vagabonds forward Dan Ashburn. He is



The Vagabonds' Dan Ashburn powers through. Photo: Thanawat P.

my type of player. In selection meetings you do not spend much time discussing Dan, you just make sure he is in the squad. He can play in all the back five positions of the scrum, runs hard and regularly and in defence he is a bone-cruncher.

He can turn a game with his willingness to keep turning up. When the pressure is on, and you need a player to make you the tough yards, Dan's your man.

The early part of the game at the ACG suggested it was experience against speed. The strength of the Vagabonds forwards would surely win the day, but scoring opportunities were squandered through poor technique or lack of concentration.

Krabi found it difficult to

put their speedier backs into space until, on the stroke of half-time, one of their centres did exactly that, exploiting the situation with brilliant footwork and acceleration to beat three defenders and score. 10-10 at half time.

I suspect the Vagabonds' half time team talk focused on keeping possession and building pressure, while Krabi's may have focussed on not throwing wild passes.

Regardless, the Vagabonds' message made the greater impact and in a hard fought, competitive second-half they edged away to win 20-10.

I will keep readers updated on upcoming Vagabonds games. The atmosphere at the ACG is warm and welcoming, the refreshments tasty and if you are lucky, you may make new friends with a Frenchman.

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.

Olympic sparkle in City of Light

PARIS

AFP

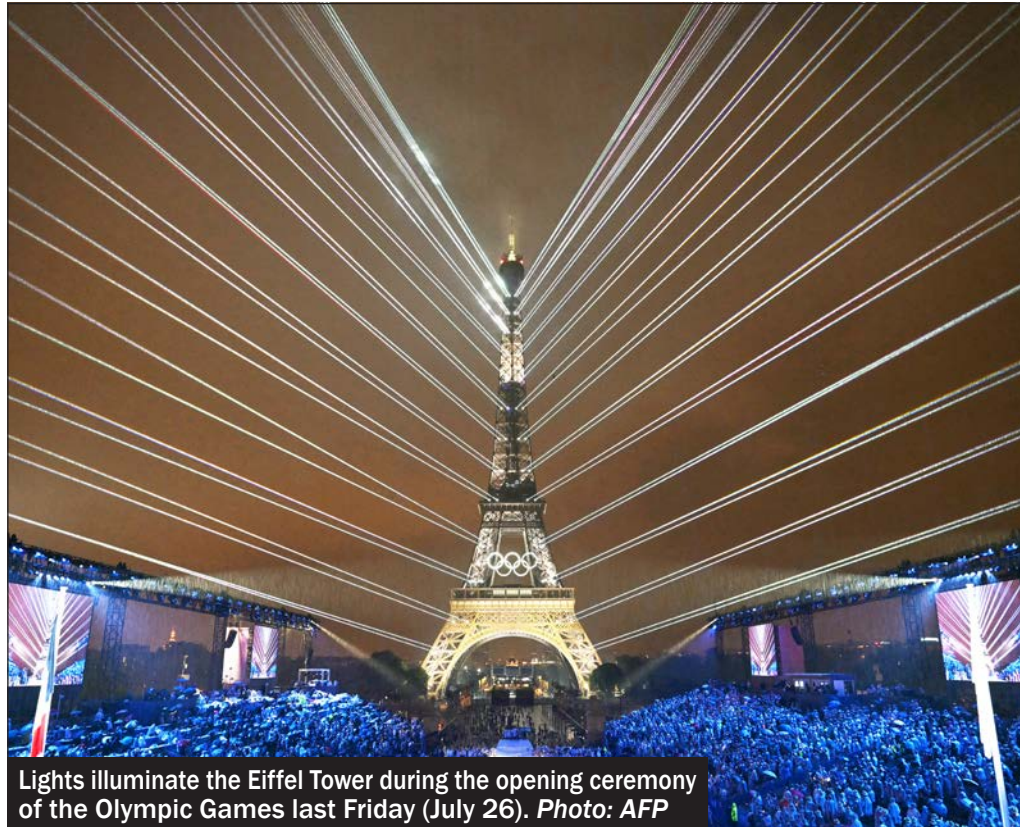
A historic boat parade down the River Seine launched the Paris Olympics with spectacular French flair last Friday (July 26), as the City of Light welcomed the world's greatest athletes for a sporting extravaganza.

A show-stopping performance by Celine Dion, a flaming Olympic cauldron lifted into the night sky by hot-air balloon, and a dazzling Eiffel Tower light show brought the curtain down on a four-hour celebration of French culture, history and art.

Braving torrential rain, some 300,000 people had lined the river banks to cheer on the armada carrying competitors past the city's iconic sights: the Eiffel Tower bearing the five Olympic rings, the Louvre and Notre Dame Cathedral.

The wildly ambitious display was the first time the Olympic opening ceremony has been staged outside the main stadium, making it the biggest-ever launch for the "Greatest Show on Earth".

But that gamble also made



Lights illuminate the Eiffel Tower during the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games last Friday (July 26). Photo: AFP

the ceremony hostage to the weather, with spectators, VIPs, and athletes alike drenched or huddling in transparent ponchos.

In the City of Love, the ceremony stressed togetherness and unity in a world that has suffered wars, massacres, and political upheaval since the COVID-delayed Tokyo Olympics.

Four jets from the French air force display team drew a large pink heart in the Paris sky to set the tone.

For just over a fortnight, organisers hope the superhuman performances of stars like gymnast Simone Biles, tennis champion Novak Djokovic or sprinter Noah Lyles will provide the world with much-needed distraction.

ceremony needed to "push the limits as far as possible", showing from the start France's ambition for the Games.

And from Moulin Rouge performers doing the cancan to a video showing dancers on the scaffolding of fire-damaged Notre Dame, it was a colourful festival of all things French.

Led out by Greece through jets of water cascading from a bridge, accompanied by an accordion player, around 7,000 athletes cruised down a six-kilometre stretch of the Seine to the Eiffel Tower on 85 boats.

The ceremony kicked off with a video of French football legend Zinedine Zidane, who took the torch on an offbeat journey through the Metro, and the Paris catacombs.

Beach volleyball at the Eiffel Tower, breakdancing in Place de la Concorde, equestrian sport at the Palace of Versailles: 100 years since Paris last staged the Olympics, the city will provide a stunning backdrop to the sport.

'PUSH THE LIMITS'

Paris 2024 organiser Tony Estanguet had said the opening

city, only 4% of the competing athletes were women.

But the ceremony did not shy away from the chaos in the world – to the strains of John Lennon's "Imagine", the city was plunged into darkness in an invitation to reflect.

With extra security for Israeli athletes, plus a call from the Palestinian team for Israel to be excluded over the Gaza War, geopolitics has been an unwelcome intruder in the run-up.

Russian athletes have been banned from the Paris Olympics over the Ukraine invasion, and possible Russian destabilisation efforts sparked fears ahead of the Games.

But with the Games now open, the stage is set for the 10,500 athletes to fulfil their dreams and turn in the performance of their lives.

With US legend Biles looking to bounce back from her "Twisties" heartbreak in Tokyo, Lyles striving to establish himself as the rightful sprinting heir to Usain Bolt, LeBron James on the basketball court, Carlos Alcaraz on the Roland Garros clay, France's swimming hope Leon Marchand in the pool, the stars are aligned for sporting brilliance.

Rodtang to defend world title

MMA

THAI MEGASTAR RODtang Jitmuangnon's next fight has been confirmed and will take place at ONE 169: Atlanta against a familiar foe.

"The Iron Man" will defend his ONE flyweight Muay Thai world title against No.3 ranked Jacob Smith at the blockbuster event that goes down inside the State Farm Arena in Atlanta, Georgia, on Nov 9.

The pair will renew hostilities just over two years after their first meeting in the quarter-finals of the ONE flyweight Muay Thai world grand prix, which Rodtang won by unanimous decision.

Rodtang is also fresh off a thrilling unanimous decision win over Denis Puric under kickboxing rules on June 7 at ONE 167.

Although he missed weight in the lead-up to the contest, the 26-year-old churned out another classic performance and even wowed fans with some refined footwork that he had not yet shown in his six-year ONE tenure.



Rodtang Jitmuangnon. Photo: ONE Championship

The victory took his overall tally to 15 since joining the martial arts giant in 2018, having racked up five defences of his flyweight Muay Thai crown after winning the belt in 2019.

Since Smith's gallant performance in his promotional debut against Rodtang, he has secured the No.3 spot in the divisional rankings.

The highlight of his ONE career so far was a stunning first-round TKO win over former Rodtang challenger Walter Goncalves.

A former British Muay Thai champion, the 31-year-

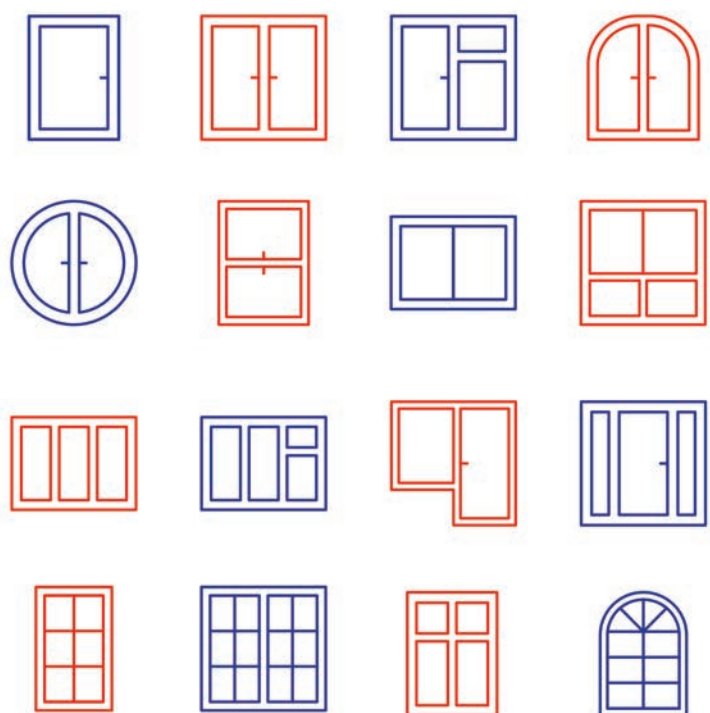
old is one of the finest talents to come out of the UK. His all-action fighting style has also endeared him to ONE's global fan base, and he will be sure to go all-out in a bid to wrest the ONE flyweight Muay Thai world title away from its long-time owner.

ONE 169: Atlanta will be ONE's second event in the US in 2024, where a staggering four world title bouts have been confirmed for the bill.

In the interim, the organisation's next American event will be ONE 168: Denver on Sept 6. *Bangkok Post*



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Sport



Toyota Gazoo Racing back in Phuket > p14

A NEW ERA



Amornrat Khuephat (second left) and Russ Horsley (centre left) are looking to drive a change in fortunes for Phuket Andaman FC on and off this pitch in the season ahead. Photo: Phuket Andaman FC Facebook

Optimism after Phuket Andaman FC takeover

FOOTBALL

Simon Cautson

As a long-term Phuket Andaman FC fan, I have witnessed the club's tumultuous journey through the highs and lows of Thai football.

From the early days of Phuket FC in 2009, through promotions, financial struggles, dissolution, mergers, and name changes, my unwavering passion for the Lobsters has never wavered.

However, recent seasons have tested that loyalty, with limited information, inconsistent results, and a growing frustration among fans like myself.

We yearned for progress, for a glimpse of the potential that our beloved club once held. The recent news of Higher Sports Co.'s takeover, therefore, is a beacon of hope, signalling a new era for Phuket Andaman FC. As a fan who has experienced the highs and lows firsthand, I am cautiously optimistic about the future.

Russ Horsley, co-owner of Higher Sports Co., a partner of The Higher

Sports Academy, brings a wealth of experience and a clear vision for the club. With a background in education and sports management, a UEFA qualified coach, and coach educator who has held roles with The English Colleges FA, The FA, Nike International Academy, and several leading professional clubs across Europe, he is the leader that can hopefully steer us towards success.

Russ's passion for the project is infectious, and his partnership with Amornrat Khuephat, a local expert, demonstrates a commitment to both global expertise and local knowledge.

ABUNDANT TALENT

The new ownership group's plans for the club are ambitious and comprehensive. Their primary goal is to achieve success on the pitch, stabilising the club, improving results, and refining the playing style.

While acknowledging the challenges ahead, they aim to secure promotion to the top flight and establish Phuket Andaman FC as a regional powerhouse. This will be achieved through strategic player acquisitions, a revamped coaching

staff, and a renewed focus on tactical development. The aim is to build a pool of great local talent and keep them on the island.

This ties in with another key initiative with the establishment of a Phuket-based academy. This academy will nurture the island's abundant football talent, preventing young players from being lured away by larger clubs.

Outreach programs with local and international schools will create a pathway for aspiring footballers, providing coaching and development opportunities. As a parent, I'm particularly excited about this initiative. My daughter's first football game was a memorable 4-3 comeback win for the Lobsters against Young Sing Hat Yai FC, and I hope to see her and many other young talents wear the Phuket Andaman FC jersey in the future.

But perhaps the most significant change for fans like me is the commitment to better communication and engagement.

In recent years, it has been difficult to get information about the club, leading to frustration and a sense of disconnect. The new

owners have promised to change this through a multilingual website, updated social media channels, and a more engaging match day experience. As a fan who has felt left in the dark at times, let's hope these developments shed some light on things.

SOURCE OF PRIDE

Phuket Andaman FC's new dawn is not just about on-field success. It's about giving back to the community and becoming a source of pride for the entire island. The new ownership group understands the importance of social responsibility and plans to support local initiatives. As a fan who has always seen the club as an integral part of the community, I applaud this commitment.

The challenges ahead are undeniable, but the future is bright. With a passionate fanbase, experienced leadership, and a clear vision, Phuket Andaman FC is poised to become a force to be reckoned with in Thai football.

The team will compete in the coming season under the watchful eye of recently hired "Coach Ko" Jarupong Sangphongin in the Pui

Rungarun League Southern Zone against 11 other teams: FC Yala, Krabi FC, Muangtrang United, Phatthalung FC, Nara United, Pattani FC, Ranong United, PSU Suratthani City, Satun FC, Songkhla FC and Yala City FC.

"Coach Ko" was previously in charge of the Lobsters during the 2022-2023 season before he took over the management reigns at Custom United Club in Thai League T2. He is now back in Phuket enthused and ready to tackle the season ahead.

For me, this new era represents a chance to reconnect with my beloved club, to share in the excitement of a new chapter, and to create lasting memories with my family and fellow fans.

As we prepare for the 2024/25 season, I can't help but feel a renewed sense of excitement. The Lobsters are back, and this time, we're ready to make waves. We'll continue to play our home games at the Surakul Stadium, on Ekwanit road, Wichit. The fixtures will be released soon, and I, for one, can't wait to be back in the stands, cheering on my team with renewed passion and hope.