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# MIDNIGHT SALE

**PATONG NIGHTLIFE BOSS BRANDS MIDNIGHT CLOSING 'POINTLESS' IN HELPING BUSINESSES TO RECOVER**

Customers take cover from the rain among the bars along Patong's famed Bangla Rd. Photo: PPHO

**Chutharat Plerin**  
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The head of Patong's nightlife business association has called for the government to ease its midnight ban on the sale of alcohol and trading by entertainment venues, branding the curfew as "nearly pointless" in helping nightlife operators recover amid the current tourism situation.

The midnight curfew, in effect since Wednesday (June 1), also does nothing to attract tourists wanting to enjoy Patong's nightlife as part of their holiday, Weerawit Kruesombat, chairman of Patong Entertainment Business Association (PEBA), told *The Phuket News* on Tuesday (May 31).

"We all need the sincere support of the government to earnestly drive the economy of Phuket and Thailand sustainably forward," Mr Weerawit said.

The midnight curfew is an improvement on the previous conditions, which saw the sale and serving of alcohol in tourism "blue zones", such as Phuket, restricted to 11pm.

"But it still doesn't really answer the problem of generating income from entertainment venues in Phuket to help improve the economy," Mr Weerawit said.

From Tuesday, all pubs, bars and karaoke venues were allowed to legally re-open without changing the nature of the primary business.

"We [nightlife venues] have been

closed for about two years. Previously, we were able to open because we changed the format of the business to be a restaurant. It was enough to keep some businesses alive, but it did not really help the industry as a whole," Mr Weerawit explained.

"Even though from June 1, the CCSA [Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration] will allow the opening of pubs, bars and karaokes, they are still allowed to open only until midnight. I think this still doesn't answer the question [of helping the industry]."

"As I have always said, tourists come here to relax on the beach and travel during the day. By the time they return to their hotel, shower and head out to enjoy the nightlife, they don't

reach Bangla Rd until about 11pm. So if businesses are open only until midnight, I think it's almost useless," Mr Weerawit said.

Patong is not alone in calling for later trading hours. Nightlife operators in Pattaya and Samui have also all called for opening times to be extended.

"Some people say that we should open early. But even if we opened at midday, there would be no customers because they are still on the beach or enjoying a tour. They don't come out until late at night," he said.

## MODERN TIMES

Mr Weerawit pointed out that nightlife operators have formally requested that the central government allow...

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# News



People in Patong still queuing for food > p5



Panya Sampaorat last seen performing duties as Mayor of Pa Khlok at a meeting at Pa Khlok Municipality on May 19. Photo: Pa Khlok Municipality

## Pa Khlok mayor sacked over corruption charges

PHUKET GOVERNOR Narong Woonciew has ordered Panya Sampaorat to vacate the position of Mayor of Pa Khlok Subdistrict following the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) finding him guilty of malfeasance in office.

An official notice published on May 26 confirmed that Governor Narong issued the order on two days earlier, on May 24. The order was marked to be in effect immediately.

Prakong Plaikum was also removed from his position as Advisor to the Mayor of Pa Khlok, the order noted.

The notice explained that Governor Narong had received an official order from the Ministry of Interior to remove Panya from his position as Pa Khlok Mayor.

The order to remove Panya follows the NACC investigating allegations of corruption against him, the notice explained.

The corruption investigation specifically involved Panya failing to take any action against Saroj Shocharoen for trespassing on government

land in Baan Khum Phong, Moo 4, Pa Khlok.

The failure to take action was deemed illegal under the Criminal Code on the basis that his actions were that of an official performing or refraining from performing duties resulting in damage to a person, or dishonestly acting or refraining from performing duties, the notice said.

Panya was to be dismissed under the authority of the Municipality Act of 1953, and the Governor of Phuket was empowered to remove him from office without having to appoint another investigative committee, the notice confirmed.

Details of criminal charges against Panya have yet to be revealed.

Panya was elected to office on Mar 28 last year, securing 4,472 votes of the total 9,172 votes cast in the mayoral election.

Athiphong Kongnam placed second with 2,465 votes, while Sattra Karnkanok placed third with 1,660 votes.

There are 12,723 eligible voters in the subdistrict.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## One arrested over Koh Kaew home invasion, shooting

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Police have arrested one man involved in a home invasion and subsequent shootout at a residential estate in Koh Kaew late last month.

The man arrested, Manoon Songlert, 43, from Nakhon Sri Thammarat, was shot in the right foot in the incident.

Manoon was among the gang of assailants who approached the house in the hope of shooting another man, who no longer lived there.

Phuket City Police last week confirmed that Manoon faces charges of attempting to kill another person with a firearm, carrying a firearm in a public place without reasonable cause and without permission, and jointly invading a dwelling with weapons to commit an offense together by two or more people or at night.

Police explained in a statement on May 23 that officers were called to the scene, which they described only as “a well-known housing estate in Koh Kaew”, at 11:30pm after local residents reported hearing seven to 10 gunshots believed to have been fired by teen gangs in the area.

Officers led by Phuket City Police Chief Col Sarawut Chuprasit arrived at the home, in Moo 4 Koh Kaew, to find a gunshot marking on the front of the house and a 9mm bullet casing on the street.



Police question Manoon Songlert, 43, from Nakhon Sri Thammarat, at Vachira Phuket Hospital over the home invasion and shooting. Photo: Phuket City Police

The two people who live in the house, “Mr Su” and “Ms Na” (not their real names), were at the home waiting for police.

The couple explained that Ms Na was home alone when a group of five to six “criminals” entered the house. The group asked for a “Mr Bas”, last name not given.

Ms Na said that she did not know a Mr Bas, only later learning that a Mr Bas had lived in the house before she and Mr Su moved in. Mr Bas moved out of the home on May 3.

The group were still in the home when Mr Su came home, parking his car in front of the house.

The group, believing that Mr Su was Mr Bas, exited the

house. One of the assailants started shooting at him.

Mr Su had his own firearm, a .38-calibre revolver, at the ready, and returned fire, hitting Manoon in the foot.

The group then jumped in an Isuzu pickup parked in front of the house and fled.

In addition to the 9mm bullet casing found on the road, police reported seizing as evidence a black automatic 9mm pistol left dropped next to the house by one of the assailants.

Officers also have as evidence the .34-calibre revolver, which Mr Su readily handed over to police.

Also seized was a Krabi-registered Mazda 2 sedan the group of assailants left parked in front of the home.

Police noted that officers were investigating whether Mr Su is to face any charges over his possession of the .38-calibre revolver.

Phuket Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Sermphan Sirikong has ordered senior officers at Phuket City Police Station, assisted by investigators from the Phuket Provincial Police, to track down the wanted perpetrators of the attack.

Officers are to “arrest all offenders for urgent legal action because it is an outrageous case shocking to the people”, the police statement read.

The statement noted that officers expected to arrest the other members of the group of assailants soon.

## Midnight bar closing branded ‘useless’ for helping tourism recovery

Continued from page 1

...nightlife venues to remain open until 4am.

“We have been calling for 4am closing for a long time, even before the pandemic, but the government has never cared. This time, we have been told that the Tourism Commission has proposed to appoint a working group to consider whether extending trading hours until 4am will have any effect. This seems like good news, but we have to wait,” he said.

“We have been pushing for this issue for almost 20 years, ever since the country truly opened up to tourism. But we still use a law that is backward. It was a law introduced 30 to 40 years ago, which doesn’t provide what is needed in tourist destinations,” he added.

“When the law was made, Phuket was mainly agricultural, but now it is almost 100% a tourist city, so the law can’t be applied here the same it can be applied to any other province that does not rely on tourism,” Mr Weerawit said.

“I want people to see our industry generate income, create jobs, create careers and contribute to the recovery of not just Phuket, but the national economy. Therefore, I want the government to support it in full, not just with a wink,” he added.

Mr Weerawit said he did not expect the June 1 ‘easing’ of restrictions to have any major impact on the financial recovery of entertainment businesses in Patong, as most of the bars have already been converted to restaurants, for which it was already legal to serve alcohol until midnight.



Cinderella Street: Punters at bars on Bangla Rd have until midnight to enjoy themselves. Photo: PPHO

“That’s why we need trading hours extended until at least 2am. This will give business operators the opportunity to differentiate their businesses, and tourists more options of the type of venue they want to enjoy,” he said.

Extending the trading time would avoid disappointment among tourists who discover they have to go back to their hotel room after only one hour of enjoying the nightlife.

Later trading would also avoid other issues created by the midnight closing time, especially tourist safety, Mr Weerawit noted.

“The nightlife venues have to close at midnight, but tourists just go to the nearest 24-hour convenience store, which is still allowed to sell alcohol. The tourists then hang around on the streets enjoying their drink, or they go to drink on the beach, which raises security concerns,” he said.

“When they go to the beach is the problem. There are no officers to control or supervise them properly. This results in security issues, crime problems and various other problems

that may arise. A serious incident might not happen today, but if we keep allowing this, it definitely will happen,” Mr Weerawit added.

“Another important thing is cleanliness. People leaving garbage strewn along the beach is another problem for local municipalities, who must clean the beach each morning before more tourists arrive to enjoy the day,” he said.

“We need this issue to be resolved in a timely manner. If possible, the trading time must be extended a little more. This will not affect the number of people infected with COVID. If we are talking about legal reasons, that the law does not allow different times for different areas, I think there should be a compromise. I believe Phuket can and has the potential to do better,” Mr Weerawit concluded.



# Properties seized in drug network arrests

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Land, houses and businesses worth more than B62 million in Phuket have been seized as part of a police investigation into a major drug network.

Pol Gen Montree Yimyam, special advisor to the Royal Thai Police, announced the properties seized at a press conference held at the Region 8 Police headquarters in Mai Khao, at the north end of the island, last Sunday (May 29).

The properties seized included the company The Naiyang Bay Restaurant and TT Naiyang Beach Phuket, each valued at B5mn; two houses in Moo 5 Sakhu, one valued at B500,000 and the other at B5mn; the businesses Salsa Biel Biel Limited Partnership valued at B10mn, CleanMax Phuket Co Ltd valued B7mn, PYMN Co Ltd valued at B5mn; and 20 rai of land covered with a rubber plantation valued at B20mn.

Gen Montree explained that the properties were seized as part of Operation "Defeat Andaman 1/65", investigating a multinational money laundering network.

The investigation was launched after two men, Rukman Wa-nga and Je Muharushi, were arrested with one kilogramme of crystal meth (ya ice) and 1,399,200 methamphetamine pills (ya



Officers seize the Naiyang Bay Cafe. Photo: Region 8 Police

bah) in Phunphin District, Surat Thani Province, on Oct 14, last year.

Further investigation led to the arrests of Atchariya Chalamwaree and Sathit Panket with 200,000 ya bah pills and 300kg of ya ice in Prawet Subdistrict in Bangkok on Nov 14.

Continuing their investigation into the assets involved, officers uncovered a large money laundering operation with assets located throughout the country, Gen Montree said.

In Bangkok, officers seized one car valued at B1mn, one house valued at B7mn and one firearm valued at B100,000.

In Chiang Rai Province, officers seized one house valued at B500,000 and one plot of land valued at B700,000.

The investigation also led to the Deep South, he added. In Narathiwat Province, officers seized three cars with a combined value of B1.8mn, three motorcycles with a combined value of B110,000, backhoes worth B4mn, two plots of land with a combined value of B6.2mn, two houses together valued at 15mn and a property at the DONE Home housing estate in Narathiwat Muang District valued at B15mn.

Officers are working with staff at private financial institutions to continue to follow the money trail, Gen Montree said.

"For this case, this is a large network involving foreign countries as well. We will further expand our investigation and announce any further arrests," he said.

## Tourists warned of red flags at beaches

LIFEGUARDS AT ALL main beaches in Phuket this week posted red flags warning people to not enter the water while strong waves pounded the coast.

Although the weather across Phuket over last weekend was very beach unfriendly, lifeguards urged tourists trying to make the most of their holiday to not enter the water while red flags were posted for their own safety.

Red flags were posted at Patong, Surin, Nai Harn, Kata and Karon.

Officers also had been assigned to warn any people on the beach to not enter the water, reported the Phuket Tourist Assistance Centre (TAC Phuket).

"Where officials have posted red flags it is absolutely forbidden for tourists to swim in the water," the tourist safety agency warned.

Officers at TAC Phuket also urged beach-goers to observe the red flags and not enter the water even as the heavy weather started to ease, expected by late this week.

"Because Phuket is now entering the rainy season, or the first part of the monsoon



Photo: PR Phuket

season, it must be emphasised for all people to note the 'red flags' placed on the beach.

"These mark very dangerous places to swim because of turbulent seas and whirlpools [and very dangerous rip currents], which make it difficult to swim back to shore, especially for those who panic and are unable to swim against the waves. For these people it can be fatal.

"A 'yellow-red flag' marks where you can swim in the sea, and where lifeguards are posted to take care of your safety," the agency said.

"Beach operators have been asked to keep an eye on and take care of the safety of tourists who come to swim when the waves are calmer," TAC Phuket added.

*The Phuket News*

## Muay Thai tourists have herpes, not monkeypox, says Governor

THREE TOURISTS who travelled to Phuket to train at Muay Thai gyms have been diagnosed as infected with herpes, not monkeypox, Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew has confirmed.

"No people infected with monkeypox have been found in the area. We ask people not to worry as our surveillance measures are ready," Governor Narong said on Monday (May 30).

The confirmation follows Dr Chakkarat Pittayawong-anon, Director of the Department of Disease Control (DDC) Division of Epidemiology, under the Ministry of Public Health, revealing that one confirmed case of monkeypox had been identified as transiting at an airport in Thailand, Governor Narong explained (see page 7).

Twelve people were considered to have had high-risk exposure to the traveller. All 12 were initially asymptomatic, he added.

"Five of them were found to be in the high-risk range. Three of them were Icelandic



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

tourists who had traveled to Thailand to learn Muay Thai in Phuket," he said.

"The three tourists were confirmed to have herpes and they have received treatment to prevent the spread of the disease," he said.

"A report from the Phuket Public Health Office [PPHO] and the director of Vachira Phuket Hospital have confirmed that Phuket has not had any infections of monkeypox at this time," Governor Narong assured.

"At Phuket International Airport, we have measures to screen people arriving from abroad. We have staff to take care of them from our COVID measures who are taking care of this as

well, and will take special care for the tourists coming from European countries, especially high-risk areas," he said.

"I would like to ask the people of Phuket, including the tourists who have travelled to Phuket, to understand that we have screening for entering the airport and public health measures. We are ready to take full care.

"Please don't worry, especially if you have symptoms similar to monkeypox. We ask such people to go see a doctor at a hospital. We also ask to avoid contact with any person with symptoms similar to chicken pox," he added.

*Eakkapop Thongtub*



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Wind 4 m/s

WED JUNE 8



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

THU JUNE 9



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

## Aquifers scoped to bolster supply

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Sakda Vicheansil, Director-General of the Department of Groundwater Resources, last week presided over the launch of a project to explore and assess the potential of deep groundwater in Phuket as part of the government's plan to avoid future water shortages.

During his visit, May 26, Mr Sakda said that the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Varawut Silpa-archa ordered the Department of Groundwater Resources to develop a project to help solve the problem of water shortages following a Cabinet resolution in November 2020.

"Phuket is the largest island in Thailand with a total area of more than 543 square kilometres. The area features mountains and beautiful beaches, which is important to the tourism industry which provides employment and generates a lot of income for the local people," Mr Sakda said.

"There is also the agricultural sector, which covers most of the island, and continuous expansion of urban communities in the Phuket area has



Sakda Vicheansil, Director-General of the Department of Groundwater Resources, samples the water pumped from one of the wells bored to assess Phuket's groundwater reserves. Photo: PR Phuket

affected the demand for various basic utilities," he added.

"Inevitably, that includes water resources, which is a basic utility that is a key factor in development, but with the water management system and water storage in the area being limited, as a result, there is a problem of water shortage for consumption," Mr Sakda said.

"The project is to explore and assess the potential of deep groundwater for management in Phuket in order to use all the obtained data to

analyse and process the summaries of deep groundwater potential, both quantitatively and qualitatively," Mr Sakda said.

A total of 45 wells had already been drilled, with half of those able to provide a volume of more than 5 cubic metres per hour, Mr Sakda noted.

Of the 45 wells, 14 were found to be large groundwater sources able to provide more than 10 cubic metres of water per hour. The 14 wells were in four areas: Rassada, Wichit, Cherng Talay and Mai Khao.

"We will use all the information obtained to analyse and process the data to determine the deep groundwater potential both in terms of quantity and quality as well as designing groundwater pumping systems and water distribution systems to be used for creating guidelines for effective water management and groundwater resource development for better living so that people have a source of groundwater for consumption," Mr Sakda said.

The guidelines developed will be used in other archipelago areas with similar geological features in the future, he said.

Not mentioned was the pipeline from Phang Nga that is supposed to be under construction to supplement Phuket's public water supply – a major infrastructure project launched after Phuket suffered severe water shortages in 2018 and 2019.

Also not explained was why Phuket was looking to deplete groundwater sources when the island just opened a major water park, whose launch was promoted on the Phuket Provincial Waterworks Authority official Facebook page.

## Woman drowns as pickup plunges into Kathu lake

A 50-YEAR-OLD WOMAN failed to escape from her pickup truck and drowned in it after the vehicle plunged into a tin mine lagoon in Kathu last Sunday morning (May 29).

Lt Col Kiattisak Saengmanee of the Kathu Police was notified of the accident, opposite the GSM Duty Free Shop on Phra Phuket Kaew Rd, at 6:20am.

Police along with Kusoldharm Foundation and Kathu Municipality rescue workers arrived at the scene to find a damaged roadside barrier and marks on the ground leading to a nearby lake. The vehicle could not be seen.

Witnesses told police that a blue Ford Ranger pickup truck with Phuket license plates failed to navigate the road, which resulted in the vehicle veering off the road and plunging into the lake. A woman was trapped inside and failed to get out, the witnesses added.

Rescue divers from the Kusoldharm Foundation inspected the sunken vehicle and confirmed the woman's body was still inside. It took more than two hours to recover the vehicle out of the lake and retrieve the body.



The blue Ford Ranger truck plunged into a lake in Kathu with the driver trapped inside. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

The victim was identified as Chanpen Sombat, 50, from Patong. The identity was confirmed by the woman's son and daughter who arrived at the scene while rescue workers were retrieving her body.

From the initial investigation, police believe that Ms Chanpen was driving from Phuket airport to her house in Patong and lost control of her car on the rain-wet road. No other vehicles were involved in the accident, though the investigation had yet to conclude, police noted.

Ms Chanpen's body was taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital for doctors to confirm her cause of death, which police believed to be drowning.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Laem Sai villagers granted permission to live on state land

THIRTY-FOUR VILLAGERS living at Baan Laem Sai in Tambon Thepkasattri have avoided having their homes demolished for being built on government land.

The 34 families on May 27 were handed official documents issued by the Phuket office of the Marine Department confirming they have the right to remain on the land.

The permissions to stay were handed over at the Baan Laem Sai Community Hall at an event led by Thalang District Chief Bancha Thanu-in and Phuket Marine Office Director Nachapong Pranit.

Joining them were Thepkasattri Tambon Administrative Organization (OrBorTor) Chief Sittichai Chantawat and Thepkasattri Moo 5 Village Headman (Phu Yai Baan) Wichai Kraithap.

Mr Nachapong explained that formal complaints had been filed against 48 households encroaching on state land in the area, which led to an order being issued for the villagers to vacate the properties or else face having them demolished.

However, as the land was in close proximity to a natural waterway, the land in question was under the purview of the Navigation in Thai Waters Act, making the issue under the remit of the Marine Department



Photo: PR Phuket

to decide whether or not the villagers can stay.

Of the 48 encroachers, 34 families were permitted to stay on the land, he added.

Fourteen were denied permission to stay, and an order to demolish their structures built on the land has been issued, he noted.

The 34 families were granted permission to stay considering their special economic circumstances, Mr Nachapong said.

"We have now issued certificates to the troubled group confirming that the Phuket Marine Office has issued permits to the Laem Sai villagers allowing them to stay," Mr Nachapong said.

The villagers are to pay Thepkasattri OrBorTor an annual fee of B5 per square metre for the areas they occupy for their homes, and double that fee for any other structures that they are granted permission to build on the land, he added. *The Phuket News*



# Donations needed to maintain food handouts

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

A small church in Patong is calling for donations to help maintain its campaign of providing much-needed "Grace packs" of essential food items to local residents still in need of support due to lack of income.

People continue to queue for food handed out at the New Beginnings Calvary Chapel Patong on Phra Barami Rd each day, explained Aland Tan, Pastor at the chapel.

"We are giving away the food packs from Monday to Friday," Aland explained.

"About 60% of Patong remains closed. The people who come to collect food are those without work or those who work part-time. The motorbike taxis who don't have enough customers come to collect food for their family. We started in April 2020. We are aware of the need of jobless people," he added.

"We are still giving out 150-200 packs of meals daily. A pack of food cost us around B30. Thank God for the support of friends and people we don't know around the world," Pastor Aland noted.

"We are hoping to be able to collect more funds to continue the works we are doing in Patong," he added.

"More funds mean better food quality, and this will enable us to go back to the normal rhythm, which was from 200 to



People in Patong are still queuing for food. Photo: Fabrice Bruneau / Phuket Francophone Magazine

300 'Grace packs' daily," he said.

Pastor Aland and his wife Sunee Koyoma often also travel to poor neighbourhoods in Patong to hand out Grace packs.

Sunee is originally from Saraburi province but has lived in Phuket for the past 17 years. Aland is from Malaysia and has lived in Phuket now for eight years. In pre-COVID days, the couple ran a small restaurant in the beach resort town. Then the pandemic struck, and the couple turned to help people in need.

The couple began their efforts to provide food to those in need through their project 'Hot Meals for All' in March 2020.

Much of their efforts have been financed out of their personal savings, friends and family who have donated money to help keep their work going.

However, to scale up the programme and serve more meals, more funding is needed.

To see the evolution of the program, follow them on Facebook.

Donations to support the efforts can be made through SimplyGiving.com or through the bank account:

Siam Commercial Bank  
Account name: Sunee Koyama  
Account number: 9662053778  
Swift Code: SICOTHBK  
Id. 319010049239

Alternatively, people can visit Pastor Aland at the New Beginnings Calvary Chapel Patong, located at 2/145 Phrabamm Rd, Patong, Kathu. 83150 Phuket, Thailand.

Contact in Thai: +66 (0)80 067 2597 (Sunee)

Contact in English: +66 (0)94 886 3908 (Aland)

## DDPM explains 'missing' tsunami warning buoys

THE NATIONAL CENTRE for the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) has confirmed that of the two tsunami warning buoys in the waters west of Phuket, one was missing and has now been recovered and the other is still in its proper location and transmitting data, but that data is not being relayed to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

In response to the Phuket Info Center, operated by the Phuket office of the Ministry of Interior, publicly asking any agency to explain the 'missing' buoys, the national DDPM on May 25 confirmed that the National Data Buoy Center website operated by the NOAA was not showing any data from either of the two buoys.

The DDPM reported that the National Disaster Warning Center (NDWC) had responded to the query.

During the two-year routine maintenance, it was discovered on Oct 22 last year that the first buoy, Station 23401, installed 965km west of Phuket, had slipped its mounting and stopped transmitting data. The buoy had been safely



Image: Phuket Info Center

recovered and a replacement is scheduled to be installed in November this year.

The second buoy, Station 23461, installed some 340km from Phuket, was confirmed on May 21 to still be at its designated location and transmitting data, but issues in communicating with NOAA servers had prevented the data from being shown on the National Data Buoy Center website.

"The NDWC found that Station 23461 was still active and transmitting data... Currently, it is in the process of coordinating the results of the NOAA inspection and requesting that the buoy data be displayed on the National Data Buoy Center website as before," the DDPM reported.

The DDPM repeated that the buoys are only two of an array set up in the Indian Ocean to detect any impending tsunamis. *The Phuket News*

## Main vaccination centre at Saphan Hin officially closes

PHUKET OFFICIALS have shut down the vaccination centre at Saphan Hin as it has accomplished the mission it was originally set up for. More than 90% of Phuket's population is now considered to have been vaccinated with doses of COVID-19 vaccine.

Phuket Vice Governor Pichet Pananponig on May 28 presided over the ceremony to officially close the vaccination centre at the Indoor Sports Stadium at Saphan Hin.

Joining V/Gov Pichet was Dr Supalak Laongpetch and Dr Witita Jang-iam, Deputy Directors at Vachira Phuket Hospital coordinating the mass vaccinations at Saphan Hin, as well as fellow officials from various government agencies, volunteers and other involved in the daily operations of the centre. The closing event was complete with the awarding of certificates to government agencies and the private sector participating in the campaign.



The vaccination centre at Sapan Hin is now officially closed. Photo: via Eakkapop Thongtub

V/Gov Pichet reminded that the mass vaccination started in Phuket on April 1, 2021. The process had to be swift as Phuket had to reach 70% vaccination level by July 1, the key criteria for launching the Phuket Sandbox project, the first step along the road to re-opening the country for international visitors.

"The opening and op-

eration of the vaccination centres in Phuket received cooperation from all sectors, which helped each other in every vaccination centre. May everyone keep it in their memory and be proud of the job done to help fellow human beings. Let's applaud ourselves for participating in this mission," V/Gov Pichet said.

Eakkapop Thongtub

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# Phuket ready for major events

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Key Phuket tourism figures went on the promotional campaign trail again last week, re-announcing that Phuket is ready to host major events such as the Thailand Tourism Congress 2022 (TTC 2022) and Thailand Travel Mart Plus 2022 (TTM+ 2022) next month.

Among those present for the announcement, at a press event on May 24 held at the newly opened Andamanda water park in Kathu, operated by the Liptapanlop family's Proud Group, were Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew, Phuket Vice Governor Pichet Panapong and Bhummikitti Ruktaengam, President of the Phuket Tourist Association.

The TTC 2022 will be held at Beyond Resort Kata on June 6-8, while the TTM+ will be held at Angsana Laguna Phuket on June 8-10, explained V/Gov Pichet.

The event will see more than 400 guests, including representatives from both local and foreign government agencies and tourism-related businesses, join the event, he said.



Photo: PR Phuket

Meanwhile, the TTM+ event is expected to see more than 700 people from tourism-related businesses and agencies attend, he added.

Also present was Thanet Phetsuwan, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Deputy Governor of Marketing for Asia and the South Pacific, who commented that the government is planning to fully reopen the country to foreign tourists this year, in

order to stimulate the economy and reduce unemployment, especially in the tourism and hospitality sectors.

To ensure the reopening is a success, the TAT will promote Thailand in foreign markets under the marketing theme "Visit Thailand 2022: Amazing New Chapters", he said.

The theme will inspire local and international travellers to explore more of Thailand,

Mr Thanet said

Rawat Areerob, President of Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO), noted that the TTM+ event will provide local businesses the opportunity to expand by developing relationships with international partners.

The event will feature business-matching sessions, a networking dinner and media exhibitions, he added.

The TTM+ was an annual

event jointly organised by the TAT, Phuket provincial authorities and the private business operators since 2001. The event was cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr Rewat noted.

Mr Bhummikitti said the TTC event will also play a key role in promoting improvements and sustainability within the tourism industry.

"Both events are considered necessary and important for creating Thailand's tourism strategy," he said.

"The Thai tourism industry has evolved into focussing on a qualitative tourism destination. Sustainability and balancing growth in terms of both the quantity and quality of tourists are the lessons learned from COVID-19 that have played an important part in making those of us in the Thai tourism industry to stop and think, and rethink, in order to keep going," Mr Bhummikitti said.

Mr Bhummikitti invited business operators and executives of tourism associations throughout the country to come to Phuket to attend the forum to discuss ways to attract more visitors while

minimising the impact of mass tourism, especially on the environment.

Pattanachai Singhavara, Director of the Southern Regional Office of the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB), said that Phuket is highly prepared to be the destination for meetings, seminars and travel as part of reward schemes.

"We are ready in terms of transportation infrastructure, hotels, MICE venues as well as the potential and readiness of MICE personnel in the area," Mr Pattanachai said.

"Join us in encouraging us to offer ourselves to host a special event, the World Specialized Expo, in Phuket. Under the event name EXPO 2028 – Phuket, Thailand, the Thailand team has entered a bid for the rights to host the event," he said.

Thailand is competing with four other countries to host the World Specialised Expo: the United States, Argentina, Serbia and Spain.

The full proposal will be submitted to the Bureau International des Expositions in Paris, France, at the end of next month, Mr Pattanachai said.

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## Hilton to no longer operate Phuket Arcadia in Karon

FROM JAN 1, 2023, HILTON will no longer operate what has for decades been known as the Hilton Phuket Arcadia Resort & Spa.

"As of 1 January 2023, Hilton will no longer operate Hilton Phuket Arcadia Resort & Spa," Oriol Marquez, General Manager of the Hilton Phuket Arcadia Resort & Spa, confirmed to *The Phuket News* on Monday (May 30).

"We are proud of the exemplary hospitality the property has delivered in the island city of Phuket – over the last 20 years – and would like to thank all of those who have contributed to the resort during this time," he said.

"We remain committed to Phuket as a destination with two hotels operating on the island, DoubleTree by Hilton Phuket Banthai and Hilton Garden Inn Phuket Bang Tao," Mr Marquez added.

The five-star full-service resort, which can accommodate some 1,000 guests



Photo: Hilton Arcadia Phuket

and has a comprehensive conference centre at its site in Karon, has been a key landmark on Phuket's southwest coast for more than three decades.

Built in 1986, the hotel, owned by the Narukat-pitchai family, opened in 1987 as the Phuket Arcadia Resort. After a major renovation, the resort became a proud member of the Hilton brand in 2003.

The resort has been a

key local employer through the years, retaining many local hires as staff.

At the hotel's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017, Markus Kaliss, General Manager at the time, noted, "The resort can proudly boast of 66 team members being a part of the resort for over 20 years and 229 members a part of the Hilton family for over 10 years, out of a total 686 team members."

*The Phuket News*



# No monkeypox cases in Thailand, says DDC chief

## BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

The Department of Disease Control (DDC) has confirmed that three suspected cases of monkeypox were in fact herpes.

Dr Opas Karnkawinpong, director-general of the DDC, said on Sunday (May 29) that lab results from the Medical Sciences Department and the Thai Red Cross Emerging Infectious Diseases Health Science Centre under Chulalongkorn University confirmed the cases were not monkeypox.

The three people suspected of having contracted monkeypox, later revealed to be Icelandic tourists who had travelled to Thailand to learn Muay Thai in Phuket, were treated at Bamrasnaradura Infectious Diseases Institute in Bangkok.

Dr Opas said anyone with a condition similar to monkeypox infection will be examined for the disease. Health control measures at airports likewise will include enhanced screening procedures.

"However, initial informa-



Dr Opas Karnkawinpong, director-general of the Department of Disease Control. Photo: DDC

tion shows that monkeypox infection does not spread as easily as COVID-19. Transmission requires close interaction with a symptomatic individual," Dr Opas said.

"So far there has not been a confirmed case in Thailand," he confirmed.

Meanwhile, health officials confirmed on Monday (May 30) that they are monitoring the condition of 12 people who were in close contact with a traveller diagnosed with monkeypox who transited through Thailand for two hours while en route to Australia.

Dr Chakrarat Pittayawong, director of epidemiology at the DDC, said the 12 people were passengers and flight attendants on the same flight as the confirmed case.

They had been asymptomatic over the past seven days and would be monitored for 21 days in total, the disease's incubation period.

Dr Chakrarat said the confirmed case travelled from Europe and spent two hours in transit. He did not identify which airport the passenger transited through.

Those in close contact with

the case were not at high risk because the passenger was asymptomatic during transit.

The confirmed case developed symptoms in Australia, where the diagnosis was made.

Monkeypox infection is less severe than smallpox, which had a fatality rate of about 30% while the fatality rate for monkeypox is 3%-6% in countries with adequate healthcare systems. The ratio may rise to 6%-10% in less developed countries, Dr Chakrarat explained. Even before the most recent global outbreak, monkeypox has never been detected in Thailand.

Studies of monkeypox, herpes, chickenpox and shingles show that they originate from the same virus family.

The clinical sign differentiating monkeypox from chickenpox is enlarged lymph nodes, said Dr Suprakit Jiraratwattana of the Medical Services Department's Dermatology Institute.

Infection risks include eating undercooked infected meat or direct contact with infected meat, especially by those who prepare raw, wild meat, said Dr Suprakit.

# Indians eyed for industry recovery

## BANGKOK

AFTER ATTRACTING more than 100,000 tourists from India since January, the government has confirmed it will continue to focus on the country and that it expects the number to hit 500,000 by the end of the year.

Government spokesman Thanakorn Wangboonkongchana said on Sunday (May 29) Indian tourists could bring in revenue of B22.5 billion.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is aiming to attract 3,000 Indian arrivals a day through various promotions, including opening new routes between India and different parts of the country, such as an India-Chiang Mai route, he said.

Wedding tourism is another area TAT believes holds strong appeal to the Indian market. It has set a target of staging 400 such events in the kingdom over the course of the year, Mr Thanakorn said.

Apart from India, TAT is also focusing on the Middle East region as well as Thailand's neighbouring countries



Indian tourists in Pattaya in 2018. Photo: Bangkok Post / File

until the end of September when peak season returns.

Currently, at least 500,000 international tourists are expected each month, which is a substantial increase from the authority's earlier 300,000 estimate, and reflects growing optimism about the sector's recovery.

During the peak tourism season of October to December, the number could swell to one million arrivals per month, Mr Thanakorn said.

In total, Thailand expects to welcome 7-10mn international tourists and make B1.5 trillion in related income this year, about half the amount generated in the last full year before COVID-19 struck in 2019. Bangkok Post

# Aim to reduce road deaths by two-thirds in next five years

## BANGKOK

THE GOVERNMENT HAS SET AN ambitious goal of slashing road fatalities by almost two-thirds within five years although it admits the effort could be hampered by a lack of public cooperation.

The goal was confirmed by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha at an academic seminar in Bangkok on May 25 titled "New Decade, New Normal, Safe Driving Is Priority".

Road safety has been prioritised in the 20-year national strategy with the goal to cut fatalities from traffic accidents to 12 persons per 100,000 population by 2027 and achieve the Vision Zero target by 2050.

Vision Zero is a strategy first implemented in Sweden in the 1990s to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries while providing safe, healthy and equitable mobility for all.

Thailand has the ninth-highest rate of road fatalities in the world with 32.7 deaths per 100,000 people, according to the World Health Organization.

Fifty-nine people aged 15-19 are injured from riding motorcycles daily on average. Deaths from speeding have risen by 4% in recent times while fatalities connected to drink driving during holidays are also up.

Most accidents in Thailand involve motorcycles with riders often neglecting to wear helmets or driving while under



Prime Minister Prayut at the Bangkok seminar. Photo: Pattarapong Chatpattarasill

the influence of alcohol.

Prayut said meeting the Vision Zero target by 2050 would be difficult but attainable provided everyone plays their part.

"Of course, I know the problem and how to solve it. But it won't work 100% because of a lack of public cooperation," he said.

Organisations responsible for road safety in Bangkok and other provinces play a key role in reducing risk factors leading to road accidents, Prayut noted.

The enforcement of laws related to public transport, private car usage, and maintaining the quality of roads and transport infrastructure are all crucial factors in contributing to traffic safety, he added.

A driver database, safety-enhancement technology and other innovations will also help scale down the number of traffic accidents, he confirmed.

"I ordered that the law must be strictly enforced against traffic offenders," Prayut said. "But I would have liked to seek people's cooperation first. I can't criticise people but I can remind them." Bangkok Post

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OZONE – giving the adults some real competition. Photo: Bee Napat



Photo: OZONE

# The Ozone Band – a real breath of fresh air



## PHUKET MUSIC SCENE

Andy Tong Dee

Once when teaching English, I had to explain to a class what child “prodigies” were. I said, “They’re kids who do something a whole lot better than most adults.” And if you want to see some playing classic rock at local markets, you need look no further than Phuket’s OZONE Band, whose average age is just 10. They’ve already won the Gold Medal and 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize of the under-15s 2021 Valaya Alongkorn Music Competition.

Their manager Rungrod “Roger” Bouthong happens to be a good friend of mine, and he suggested

I go see them. He’s a drum teacher at the Yamaha Music School, and manages the band. They had been practising then for only three months, yet were confidently knocking out songs like *Jump* (Van Halen), *Back in Black* (AC/DC), *Welcome to the Jungle* (Guns n’ Roses) and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (Metallica). But when I heard the opening bass for *Highway Star* (Deep Purple), I wondered if they were now going to mess up – it’s a fast and notoriously difficult song to perform. I was stunned when they played it faultlessly! So who are OZONE?

Praew, on vocals and guitar is, at 12, the oldest and already has a confident and commanding stage presence. She’s clearly the boss. Praew started her guitar and singing lessons when she was seven, then started her first busking show a year after.

JC on bass is an 11-year-old Filipino and is the quiet one. He wants to follow in his father’s footsteps. His father, Boy, is a popular local virtuoso bass player who I’ve played with a couple of times in the Bebop Bar in Phuket Town.

Khao Tang on keyboards is 11 years old and Thai, and has been learning piano for only a year. While he can play some Beethoven and Mozart flawlessly, he clearly knows how to rock too! However, his favourite musician is Chopin rather than Jon Lord of Deep Purple.

Finally, Boon on drums, at just 8 years old, is the tiny Thai baby of the band. He’s always smiling. He started learning drums with Roger a few years ago when still at kindergarten. Boon loves playing rock, and it is a little odd hearing the loud thump of his drums when you can only just see the very top of his head over the kit’s tom toms!

I went to see them rehearsing at Yamaha Music School to find out more about them. OZONE all started when Praew, JC and Boon joined the Band Course there. Praew encouraged Kao Tang to learn piano so he could join them. They played their first gig at the end of October last year when COVID restrictions were lifted.

As Praew is clearly the band’s driving force, I asked her why she wanted to do all this. She said, “I saw boys playing guitar, and I wanted to do it



Photo: OZONE Facebook fan page

better than them... and I want to be a superstar one day.” Well, I thought she certainly had the grit and potential to do just that!

I asked them what it was like playing in OZONE. While they agreed it was a lot of fun and they had become close friends, Praew complained, “But there’s never enough time to sleep.” Well, I thought if she wants to be a true rock and rolling superstar, she’d better get used to that!

And as for OZONE’s future? Praew wants the band to stay together forever – let’s face it, she’s had to put in a lot of work to get things this far. However, while JC wants to be a musician, Kao Tang aspires to be a doctor. But she may have a far more difficult problem than that to deal with.

You see, if little Boon succeeds in his ambition. He could well be stuck on Mars for a few years – he wants to be an astronaut!

Andy Tong Dee is a local expat, musician and live music enthusiast. Read his blog and find out much more about live music in Phuket at [www.phuketmusicscene.com](http://www.phuketmusicscene.com)



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# 'Top Gun: Maverick': Big action, for the big screen

David Griffiths

Filmmaker Joseph Kosinski (*Oblivion*) has one of the toughest jobs in cinema this year. He is responsible for bringing 'Top Gun: Maverick' to the big screen. Mark my words, if the film is a flop there will be people baying for his blood because the original 'Top Gun' is not just a favourite for many cinemaphiles, it is a classic lauded with changing cinema forever.

Kosinski has also had to wait for the verdict on the film because it has been repeatedly pushed back due to the pandemic. By the time it opened in cinemas last week it had been nearly two and half years since the date it was originally scheduled for release.

Well, we have seen *Top Gun: Maverick*, and as a fan who has been waiting over 30 years for another film in the franchise I can say the film more than lives up to expectations.

This time around we find Maverick (Tom Cruise – *Rainman*) still technically a Navy pilot but now testing new era aircraft. It's not his ideal role but at least it isn't retirement, but as usual Maverick tests the nerves and patience of the top brass and soon finds himself close to being forced to retire.

Luckily for him though he is saved by Iceman (Val Kilmer – *The Saint*), who is now a highly ranked officer and he is given the task of being sent to the Top Gun Academy to help train a team of pilots for a near impossible mission.

On arrival at Top Gun, Maverick instantly finds he is not wanted by his new boss, Cyclone (Jon Hamm – *The Town*), and discovers that his deceased former flight partner Goose's son Rooster (Miles Teller – *Divergent*) is part of the team that he has to train.

To the credit of Kosinski and Tom Cruise, who had a lot of creative input into the film, what we have is a sequel that more than matches the original film.



Tom Cruise back in the cockpit for 'Top Gun: Maverick'. Image: IMDb

The action sequences set it apart from anything that we have seen in cinema in decades. Marvel could only dream of creating something as original as this.

There are no shortcuts with this film. One of the rules Cruise had about being part of this film was that the use of CGI was to be limited. Just like the original film, *Top Gun: Maverick* sees the filmmakers having to work very closely with the Navy and shots on aircraft carriers were filmed on real carriers and the sequences with fighter jets were mostly shot with actual jets.

The result is something that nobody could have predicted. The scenes of jet fighters flying low through canyons or shooting off with their afterburner glowing is nothing short of spectacular and needs to be seen on the biggest screen available. Knowing that the cast including Cruise, Teller, Monica Barbaro (*The Good Cop*) and Lewis Pullman (*Them That Follow*) are actually in a jet and experiencing the G's that

put agony across their face adds to a realism that an action film has no right happening.

Even the screenwriting team nailed their jobs with this film. There is nothing in it that disrespects any of the characters from the past and given how ill Val Kilmer was when they were making this film they treat his character with the upmost respect.

In fact it is the performance of one of the actors playing one of the new characters that really steals the show here. Miles Teller is truly sensational as Rooster.

There is simply just so much to love about *Top Gun: Maverick* from sensational visual and action sequences through to a plot that actually allows its stars the ability to put in some brilliant acting performances. As far as sequels go, this is pure perfection!

*Top Gun: Maverick* is currently screening in Phuket and is rated '13'.

5/5 Stars



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# POP QUIZ

1. Which is geographically larger, Singapore or Phuket?
2. Sir Edmund Hillary, first to scale Mt Everest with sherpa Tenzing Norgay, was of which nationality?
3. Empress Dowager Cixi, famed for her role in the Boxer Rebellion, died of what cause?
4. Which make and model of car did James Dean die in?
5. How long was Theresa May UK Prime Minister?

Answers below, centre

## SUDOKU

Medium

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

## Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

1. White rice's lack
5. Balancing pro
8. Put in a nutshell
13. Pervasive quality
14. Fruitless
15. Develop
16. Follow a recipe directive
17. Figure in Maori mythology
18. Corset tightener
19. Be a generous trapper
22. Diaper cream ingredient
23. \_\_\_ Day
24. Mathematical function
27. Epitome of simplicity
29. Car with a bar
33. Divination deck
34. It may be bid
36. Center of a ball?
37. Buy a beachfront boutique
40. Night of poetry
41. Katzbalger, e.g.
42. Undulating
43. Environs
45. Belgium village
46. Climbing herbs
47. Perceive
49. Superciliousness

50. Savory aroma at a clambake
58. Stand for something
59. Eukaryotic organism
60. Hip bones
61. Very, in music
62. Flock member
63. Abdicator of 1917
64. Noah's son, and namesakes
65. Armageddon
66. Round up

Down

1. It may be striped
2. Gordon or Ginsburg
3. "Mi chiamano Mimi," e.g.
4. Role in "Arrested Development"
5. Black band of mourning
6. Falafel bread
7. Jewish month
8. Hot stuff
9. \_\_\_ nitrate
10. Flexible mineral
11. End \_\_\_
12. Title for some priests
14. Bad lighting?
20. Lifts up
21. Run the show
24. Muddleheaded
25. Speed demon
26. Grimalkin
27. Dig, so to speak
28. Shuttlecock
30. Some reality show winners
31. Actress Oberon
32. Doesn't ignore
34. Call to a mate
35. Bridal party members
38. Takes out a fly
39. Metal worker
44. Radiant
46. Air freshener option
48. \_\_\_ Island National Monument
49. Cold
50. Wet septet
51. No gain, no loss
52. Actual being
53. Actor Alan
54. Brio
55. Alternatively
56. Carrey vehicle
57. Enrich, in a way

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11	12
13					14				15				
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58						59				60			
61						62				63			
64						65				66			

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

## Solutions to last week's puzzles:

A	F	R	O		M	U	F		U	P	B	O	W
H	O	A	R		A	S	I	A		P	L	I	C
E	X	T	R	A	C	U	R	I	C	U	L	A	R
A	V	E		G	E	R	M		N	A	M	E	S
				S	E	R	V		T	E	S	P	
S	P	A	W	N	S		T	O	O	T	S	I	E
W	I	N	E	D		E	R		C	U	T		
E	X	T	R	A	O	R	D	I	N	A	R	I	L
A	I	P		L	I	D		M	E	L	E	E	
T	E	A	C	A	D	D		S	A	T	I	R	S
				T	O	N	E	S		S	I	Z	E
M	A	G	O	S		B	E	G	G		S	O	P
R	U	N	E	X	T	R	A	I	N	N	I	N	G
O	M	A	N	I		A	N	N	A		N	I	L
M	A	L	T	A		P	E	E	L		T	E	T

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

## GOT YOUR NUMBER

1

bat can eat up to 1,200 mosquito-sized insects in an hour.

4

years is how long Julius Caesar ruled before being assassinated, despite being one of the most famous Roman leaders in history.

10

percent of American drinkers account for nearly 60% of all alcohol sales.

1916

is when the US Supreme Court ordered Coca-Cola to halve the amount of caffeine the soft-drink contained.

103 million

pairs of genuine Crocs were sold worldwide last year.

Source: Uberfacts

## ISLAND VIEW



Longtail afore a blazing sunset at Kamala Beach. Photo: Josie Burgess

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

## This week in history

June 3, 1839

In Humen, China, Lin Tsehsü destroys 1.2 million kg of opium confiscated from British merchants, providing Britain with a casus belli to open hostilities, resulting in the First Opium War.

June 4, 1989

The Tiananmen Square protests are violently suppressed in Beijing by the People's Liberation Army, with at least 241 dead.

June 5, 1883

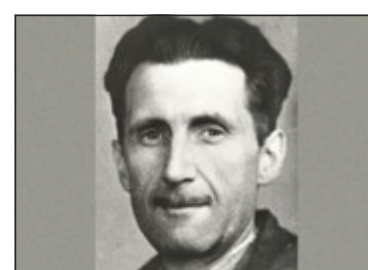
The first regularly scheduled Orient Express departs Paris.

June 6, 1944

Allied invasion codenamed Operation Overlord begins with 155,000 Allied troops landing on the beaches of Normandy.

June 7, 1982

Priscilla Presley opens Graceland to the public; the bath-



Eric Arthur Blair, aka George Orwell.

June 8, 1949

George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is published. The book has since been translated into at least 65 languages.

June 9, 68 AD

Nero commits suicide, after quoting Homer's *Iliad*, thus ending the Julio-Claudian dynasty and starting the civil war known as the Year of the Four Emperors.

Source: Wikipedia

room where Elvis Presley died five years earlier is kept off-limits.



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**5**
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**10**
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**SAT**
**11**
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**8**
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# Ferrari fiasco in Monte Carlo

## FORMULA ONE

Michael Lamonato  
michael@boxofneutrals.com

Charles Leclerc finished his home Monaco Grand Prix for the first time in his career last Sunday (May 29), but a shocking day from the Ferrari pit wall dropped him further off the championship lead.

The Monegasque had been in formidable form all weekend. He dominated qualifying to take pole, and while teammate Carlos Sainz locked out the front row, the Spaniard had no answer to the home hero's blistering pace.

And the Ferrari itself was perfectly suited to the serpentine Monaco streets. Excellent under acceleration and peerless in slow corners, there isn't another circuit on the calendar better matched to the SF-75. Red Bull Racing, leading the constructors standings and drivers title with Max Verstappen, was just aiming to limit the damage.

So when Leclerc started in pole on the grid ahead of the race, he had every confidence he'd be soaking up victory by the end of the afternoon.



Ferrari's Charles Leclerc in the pit lane at the Monaco Grand Prix last Sunday (May 29), where he experienced multiple problems. Photo: AFP

Then the rain started to fall.

Leclerc wasted no time building a crucial strategic buffer to the field in the opening laps, determined to leave nothing to chance. With overtaking difficult in even the wet, the pit stops would be crucial.

There were nominally two pit stops to make – from the extreme wet tyres to intermediates, then from intermediates to slick dry-weather tyres – and nailing the timing of the

changes would be the key to victory or defeat.

But at every juncture Ferrari fumbled badly.

Sergio Perez was the first of the frontrunners to change, coming in from third behind Sainz and ahead of Verstappen.

It took Ferrari two laps to respond, apparently inattentive to Perez's rapid sector times. When Leclerc rejoined the race, he'd lost position to the Mexican by four seconds,

having had an eight-second advantage beforehand.

The race wasn't yet lost. The SF-75 was still the faster car and there was another stop to be made. But whereas Ferrari dithered at the first tyre change, it was too hasty at the second.

It brought Leclerc in just three laps later despite his mighty pace on the intermediate tyres. Worse, he got caught behind teammate Sainz in the pit box, costing

him precious seconds.

Red Bull smelt blood. Verstappen completed another rapid lap on the warmed-up inters before pitting, and now he too was ahead of Leclerc.

The pole-sitter had dropped from first to fourth in just three laps.

### 'NO WORDS'

Sainz wasn't immune to Ferrari's bumbling either. He'd correctly persuaded the strategists to go straight from wets to slicks, skipping a pit stop, but he was brought in a lap too early – not only did he get in Leclerc's way, but he rejoined the race behind one of the slower Williams cars, which cost him time.

When Perez made his final pit stop, he rejoined ahead of the Spaniard by just one second.

Ferrari had scuppered three golden chances to win and handed them all to Perez, who faultlessly converted the opportunity to a third career victory.

"No words," Leclerc radioed his team on the cool-down lap. "The season is long, but we cannot do that."

But the pain in his voice wasn't just for his lost home

victory; it was for the broader championship picture.

The Spanish and Monaco grands prix should've been nailed-on wins. Leclerc led both easily and comfortably early, but an engine failure cost him in Barcelona before the strategy errors in Monte Carlo.

He ends the double-header with just 12 points from a maximum of 52; Ferrari scored just 42 from a maximum of 88.

And not only have Verstappen and Red Bull assumed the lead in both championships by nine and 36 points respectively, but Perez is only six points behind Leclerc – that is, he's closer to Leclerc than Leclerc is to Verstappen.

Ferrari boss Mattia Binotto said he'd be undertaking an inquiry into how his team dropped the ball so comprehensively, and he'll need answers soon. In less than two weeks F1 embarks on an Azerbaijan-Canada double-header – both high-speed tracks expected to suit Red Bull, both danger races for the Italians.

Having held the whip hand at the start of the month, Ferrari is suddenly at the mercy of its title rival with a third of the season gone.



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## Thais qualify for Wheelchair Basketball World Championship

### WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL

THAILAND'S MEN HAVE QUALIFIED for the International Wheelchair Basketball Federation (IWBF) World Championships after finishing in fourth place at the 2022 Asia Oceania Wheelchair Basketball Championship in Phuket.

The Thai men's team made it to the semi-final of the tournament, played at the Prince of Songkla University Sports Complex in Kathu last Friday (May 27), where they lost to Iran 74-46.

Despite losing to South Korea 68-50 in the bronze medal match on Saturday, the team still qualify as one of the final four placed teams. The IWBF World Championships takes place in Dubai this coming November.

The Thai women's team fared less successfully as they finished bottom of the round robin group, losing five of their six games.

The 2022 Asia Oceania Wheelchair Basketball Championship saw over 300 athletes participating in the week-long tournament.

In addition to hosts Thailand, regional teams competing included Australia, Iran, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq and the Philippines.

The opening ceremony at Prince of Songkla University Stadium, Phuket Campus on May 21 was presided over by Phuket Vice Governor Pichet Panapong and President of the Thai Wheelchair Basketball Association Phatthaphan Kritsana.



Thailand in action against Malaysia at PSU Sports Complex on May 21. Photo: PR Phuket

Mr Phatthaphan commented that he hoped qualification for the World Championships in Dubai would prove added motivation for the Thai teams to perform at their maximum capacity as efforts continue to develop wheelchair basketball in the country.

In the men's final Australia beat Iran 56-50 in a tightly-contested match. Despite trailing at half-time, the 'Rollers' hit back with Tristan Knowles leading the way and scoring 21 points in the final.

Mohamadhassan Sayari's 20-point haul for Iran was not enough for gold, but did help him to earn the men's most-valuable player award for the Championships.

Australia's women ensured a double success for the country as they beat Japan 54-46 in the winner-takes-all final round robin clash.

Amber Merritt scored a sublime 40 points in the final, and was later named the Championship's most valuable player.

The Phuket News

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# 'We will go again' pledges Klopp after final heartache

## FOOTBALL

AFP

A season that will live in the memory for Liverpool fans ended in disappointment as Jurgen Klopp's men were beaten 1-0 by Real Madrid in the Champions League final in Paris last Saturday (May 28).

Less than a week ago, the Reds were on the brink of an unprecedented quadruple.

Instead they have to settle for the double of League and FA Cup after missing out on the bigger prizes of the Premier League and Champions League.

Manchester City claimed the English title by one point after a dramatic final day when Pep Guardiola's men came from 2-0 down to beat Aston Villa 3-2.

However, Klopp was upbeat despite Saturday's loss, highlighting his team's "incredible attitude".

"These boys played an outstanding season," he said. "The two competitions we couldn't win we didn't win for the smallest possible margin.



Liverpool's Virgil Van Dijk (right) is left dejected after the loss to Real Madrid in Paris. Photo: AFP

"City was one point better and tonight Madrid was one goal better."

Vinicius Junior scored the only goal in the 59<sup>th</sup> minute as he turned home Fede Valverde's cross-come-shot.

But the fact it was Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois who was named man-of-the-match said more about the flow of the game.

"When the goalkeeper is man-of-the-match then something is going wrong for the other team," added Klopp.

"They scored a goal and we didn't. That's the easiest explanation in the world of football."

For the third time this season, Klopp's men failed to fire in a final.

Twice they beat Chelsea in penalty shootouts after 120 goalless minutes at Wembley.

But Madrid were not so forgiving as they capped a remarkable run through the competition to claim a 14<sup>th</sup> European Cup.

Klopp has now won just

one of his four European Cup finals. Four years ago, Real also won a clash between the sides 3-1 in Kiev.

Liverpool bounced back a year later to win their sixth European crown in Madrid.

And Klopp is confident his side will not stop at reaching the showpiece for a third time in five years.

"The difference between now and 2018 is I see us coming again," he said. "I wished it but I couldn't know it.

"They have an incredible attitude, it's a fantastic group and we will go again."

The result rubbed salt into the wounds of thousands of supporters who were locked out of the Stade de France in Paris amid chaotic scenes.

Kick-off to European club football's showpiece was delayed by over half an hour. Fans described being targeted by tear gas from police, who tried to disperse the crowds on the perimeter of the stadium.

"This is the greatest match in European football and supporters should not have to experience the scenes we have witnessed tonight," Liverpool said in a statement.

# Forest promoted to Premier League for first time in 23 years

## FOOTBALL

NOTTINGHAM FOREST clinched promotion to the Premier League for the first time in 23 years with a 1-0 win against Huddersfield in the Championship play-off final on Sunday (May 29).

Levi Colwill's own goal late in the first half at Wembley was enough for Steve Cooper's side to hit the jackpot in the most lucrative single match in world football, estimated to be worth at least £170 million (B7.3 billion) in increased revenue.

Forest will gratefully accept the huge financial windfall, but it was the relief at ending their long exile from English football's elite that spurred the frenzied scenes of celebration among their thousands of red and white-clad fans.

For the first time in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Forest can look forward to welcoming the Premier League's elite to their City Ground stadium on the banks of the River Trent.

The promotion was a per-



Forest's players celebrate. Photo: AFP

sonal triumph for Cooper, who has revitalised Forest since replacing the sacked Chris Hughton in September when the team were bottom of the table after taking one point from their first seven games, their worst start to a season for 108 years

"I'm really pleased for the players and the supporters. Everybody connected with the football club deserves this today and we're now really looking forward to a positive future," Cooper said.

"It's relief and pride. We've brought Nottingham to Wembley today, we've taken over the place and here we are in the Premier League."

AFP

# Australia's win in London sets up World Sevens finale title-decider

## RUGBY

THE BATTLE FOR THE HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series title will go down to the final event after Australia defeated New Zealand to claim their first gold medal of the season in London on Sunday (May 29).

Hat-trick hero Henry Paterson scored a golden-point try as Australia won 19-14 at Twickenham to ensure the race for the overall title will go down to the wire in the concluding leg in Los Angeles on Aug 28-29.

It was Australia's first gold medal at a men's sevens series event since 2018 and came after they started this London edition with a 24-19 loss to New Zealand.

Fiji took the bronze with a 31-26 win over fellow Pacific islanders Samoa.

Reigning overall champions South Africa could have retained their title on Sunday, but instead the Blitzboks were beaten in the last eight by Australia after blowing a 17-point lead.



Australia celebrate their win at Twickenham. Photo: AFP

Australia appeared to be heading for a quarter-final defeat as they fell 17-0 but they responded with 21 unanswered points, with two tries from Paterson completing a remarkable rally.

South Africa, however, reclaimed top spot in the standings with 124 points, two ahead of Australia on 122. Argentina are third with 118 points, with Fiji in fourth on 104.

History was against Australia ahead of the final, as they had not beaten New Zealand in a final for 20

years, and lost eight of 10 sevens finals against their old rivals overall.

In the other quarter-finals, Fiji overwhelmed hosts England 36-10, Samoa defeated Spain 34-12 and New Zealand saw off Ireland 17-7.

Australia then beat Samoa 26-14 but the other semi-final was a much tighter affair, with New Zealand stunning high-flying Fiji by coming from 14 points behind to win 22-19 after Akuila Rokolisoa's try off a blindside break. AFP



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# Sport



**Real Madrid crowned Euro champs > p15**

## NICE TOUCH



### Phuket Vagabonds host three-week touch rugby tournament

Zach Foose (left) attempts to stop a marauding Kennes Sriwichai (with ball) at the ACG on Saturday (May 28). Photo: Thanawat Phumipraphat

#### RUGBY

Nigel Philip

Fans of touch rugby will be delighted to learn Phuket's leading rugby club have launched the Phuket Vagabonds Touch Rugby Tournament, taking place over three weekends at the Alan Cooke Ground (ACG) in Thalang.

The tournament premiered last Saturday (May 28) with five teams participating, including sides representing British International School Phuket (BISP), UWC Thailand, AC/GC, Can't Grumble and the Vagabonds Academy.

Each team was made up of a mix of senior men, boys, ladies and girls who collectively played a series of friendly but competitive games consisting two 15-minute halves with a five minute half-time and unlimited rolling substitutions. The matches were overseen by the much appreciated volunteer referees who were strict in their duties and faultless in execution.

A spread of players from the Vagabonds club helped make up the squad numbers and assisted in ensuring everyone had their chance on the field of play.

Every game was a close call and special mention goes to the Vagabonds Academy team making their debut in a tournament since their conception last year. They may be younger and more inexperienced but they showed great ball handling skills and mature discipline in defence against more senior opposition. In their final game, the Academy took BISP right to the wire, leaving a nervous BISP captain Dave Walker biting his fingernails and relieved the final whistle sounded.

Following the recent downpours across the island, much credit must go to the staff at the ACG for presenting two perfectly marked out pitches for the inaugural round, each in pristine condition.

A sudden and powerful squall sent everyone running for cover at the final whistle of the fourth game, ending the day prematurely and resulting in the day's final game between AC/GC and BISP being postponed.

Despite the adverse weather bringing a premature end to play, however, there was still much amusement as some of the Vagabond players ran off the field in the rain faster than they had run during the game, something that did not go unnoticed!

#### SCORES FROM THE OPENING ROUND (MAY 28):

UWC 8 - 2 Vagabonds Academy

Can't Grumble 7 - 2 AC/GC  
BISP 5 - 2 Vagabonds Academy  
UWC 5 - 2 Can't Grumble  
AC/GC v BISP – match postponed, to be played tomorrow (June 4).

The Phuket Vagabonds Touch Rugby Tournament continues tomorrow (June 4) and next Saturday (June 11) at the ACG with play starting at 10:30am on both dates.

Spectators are welcome to come along to enjoy the day's festivities and support the teams. Entry is free and refreshments are available all day.

For more information please visit the Phuket Vagabonds Facebook page.

## Phuket hosts 'Deep Week' open freediving festival

#### DIVING

PHUKET RECENTLY HOSTED the huge freedive training event 'Deep Week', the largest of its kind to be held in open water in Asia.

The event, held from May 14-21, saw over 100 freedivers descend on Phuket from over 35 countries to take part in the organised week of training, freediving and events. It sold out in just five days, such was its popularity.

It was hosted and organised by 24-time AIDA and CMAS world

champion and world record holder Alexey Molchanov of Russia and eight-time Australian freediving record holder Adam Stern.

In addition to freediving, everyone who took part was engaged in depth training, theory sessions and workshops to help enhance their knowledge and technique.

Deep Week has positioned itself as a leading freediving educational event where some of the top experts and free divers come together from around the world for one week of shared learning experiences.

However, they also cater to

absolute beginners who want to learn a new skill and hobby, allowing beginners to complete Wave 1 and Wave 2 courses.

Phuket was selected due to the water clarity and conditions for freediving, as well as its location which means that the group only require a short speedboat ride to get to a number of islands with deep and protected dive sites, most with access to 60 metres. Most participants stayed at the conveniently located Boat Lagoon Resort, for ease of island departures each day.

"It's been an exciting week

hosting the Deep Week Thailand participants at our resort," commented Wicky Sundram, GM of the Boat Lagoon Resort. "It is also an honour for us at Phuket Boat Lagoon to have the presence of Alexey and Adam."

"Moving forward, we are excited to work with the organisers for the next Deep Week Thailand at our resort."

Don't worry if you missed out this time as there is already talk of Deep Week Thailand 2023 taking place in Phuket with more details expected in due course. Joanna Matlub

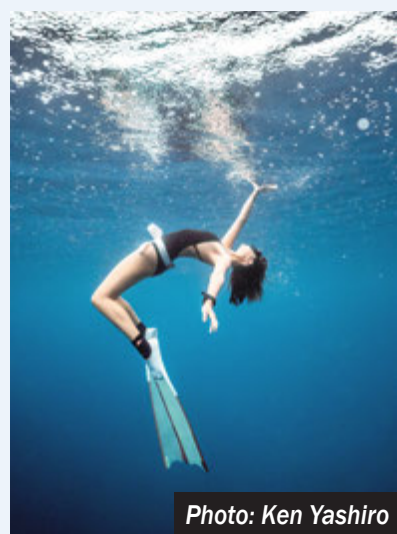


Photo: Ken Yashiro