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STALLED



Phuket MP Somchart (centre, left) hands the 'letter of initiation' to House Speaker Wan Muhammad Noor Matha. Photo: Thailand Parliament

PHUKET AUTONOMY PUSH HITS BUMP AS CONSTITUTIONAL LAW COMES INTO PLAY

Natnaree Likidwanasakun
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The long-awaited push to have Phuket granted greater autonomy has hit a delay, as House Speaker Wan Muhammad Noor Matha has refused to accept the draft Phuket Metropolis Act, citing constitutional violations.

A formal "letter of initiation" for the creation of the Phuket Metropolis Act, was presented to Wan Noor on Aug 13 with the aim of decentralising administrative power, improving local governance and addressing persistent inequalities in tax and budget allocation within the province.

It is also hoped to be an avenue for Phuket to directly address critical issues facing the island, including traffic and construction.

The draft law was presented to Wan Noor by Phuket MP Somchart Techathaworncharoen and Chiang Mai MP Somdul Utcharoen, both from the People's Party, along with Warunee Sakolrattanathara, representing local Phuket citizens, and Adisak Aksinthawangkun, Chairman of the Phuket City Community Organisation Network.

Ms Warunee explained that Phuket, despite being one of the country's top revenue generators, suffers from tax and budget inequalities. Funds returned to the

province do not meet local needs, she said, and residents have little say in shaping development priorities.

"We hope this draft will ensure Phuket's resources benefit its people and become a model for other provinces," Ms Warunee said.

Mr Adisak said on the day of submission that decades of a rapid increase in tourism have left Phuket struggling with a slew of critical issues, including traffic, solid waste disposal, untreated wastewater being dumped into Phuket canals and coastal waters, and crime.

"The draft represents a new

hope to improve quality of life and make Phuket a livable destination for both residents and visitors," Mr Adisak said.

DENIED

However, Wan Noor's official reply, dated Aug 28, refused the draft law proposal on the grounds that it violated the Constitution.

Wan Noor pointed out that any proposals for new legislation must follow Chapters 3 and 5 of the Constitution. Failing to do so constitutes a violation of Chapter 6 of the Constitution.

MP Somchart explained that the Constitution provides two main ways for laws to be introduced...

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Local athletes receive praise



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News



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...MPs can submit a draft law proposal, while the general public can submit a petition signed by at least 10,000 Thai nationals to have a proposed law put before Parliament.

However, he noted, "Under the Constitution, the general law on citizen proposals cannot be applied to changes in the state power structure.

"While Members of Parliament, as legislators, are allowed to propose such laws, the same does not apply to the public. Under the Constitution, if a draft law submitted by citizens affects the state's power structure, it is considered inconsistent with the intent of the Constitution," he said.

"Of note, it can be applied to other laws that do not touch the state power structure, such as the Alcohol Act, Marriage Equality Act, or laws related to the basic rights and liberties of citizens, such as the Ethnicity Act," he added.

"Because this draft bill proposes to change the actual administration system for Phuket, it requires at least 20 MPs to sign a 'letter of initiation' that must be presented to the House Speaker," MP Somchart continued.

"These are the requirements to amend laws affecting the form of government under Chapters 3 and 5 of the Constitution," he said.



House Speaker Wan Noor. Photo: Thailand Parliament

While Wan Noor cited the Constitution for refusing to accept the proposal, MP Somchart argued that the proposal is consistent with Sections 249-254 of the Constitution, which commit the state to decentralisation and local self-governance.

"Current laws fall short of this principle, leaving provinces like Phuket without the flexibility or independence needed to solve local problems," he said.

"The existing system of regional administration is outdated. Phuket needs an administrative structure that matches its potential and addresses its people's needs," he added.

PRECEDENTS

House Speaker Wan Noor declined to answer questions from *The Phuket News* on the difference between Phuket gaining its autonomy and Pattaya, which already has long had special status under the law with greater autonomy in managing its own affairs.

House Speaker Wan Noor would only repeat which sections of the Constitution were relevant, saying that the draft law proposal violated the Constitution.

Of note, back in 2012, Patong residents and local leaders also raised the issue of making Patong a special administrative city like

Pattaya, instead of giving autonomy to the whole province.

The issue was raised by Pian Keesin, Patong Mayor at that time, along with Weerawit Krueasombat, the long-standing President of the Patong Entertainment Business Association and today also serving as President of the Patong Council.

Other supporters of the move at the time included Charan Sangsan, Deputy Secretary-General of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce; Dr Suthep Chaowalit; and Preechavude 'Prab' Keesin, son of Mayor Pian and President of the Patong Council at that time.

They all believed that Patong had the potential to manage its own budget and powers. However, the move was stifled by Bangkok figures, with no reasons given other than the matter "was under consideration".

Many observers at the time commented that their understanding was that Bangkok figures, for various reasons, did not want to relinquish direct control over budgets allocated to Phuket.

Although the push to make Patong a special administrative area has so far failed, Phuket MPs this year are pressing ahead with the even bigger goal to turn the entire province into an autonomous province, and have gained much support, even among high-ranking officials such as Sophon Suwannarat, who served as Governor of Phuket for the

past two years, but retired on Tuesday (Sept 30).

MOVING FORWARD

Following Wan Noor refusing the draft law proposal, Mr Somchart and his team are going through the proposal to make sure there are no more opportunities for opponents to stall the proposal any further.

"The real problem is if the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Aphet Sukhanan, from the Pheu Thai Party... He could reject the draft for another reason. That's why we need to go through and review it thoroughly again," MP Somchart said.

At time of press, MP Somchart and his team had arranged to speak with Wan Noor on Thursday (Oct 2) in order to ask Wan Noor to publicly clarify why the proposal was first rejected, and to discuss any other issues that may prevent the draft proposal from being accepted.

Getting the required 20 MPs to endorse the draft law proposal will not be a problem, MP Somchart assured.

"We nearly have the required 20 signatures now," he said.

"Following this, the House will decide whether to accept the draft for its initial reading. Only after this step can the bill move through committee reviews, debate, and potential amendments before a final vote," MP Somchart concluded.

Patong promenade project falls behind schedule

THE LONG-AWAITED promenade upgrade along Thaweewong Rd in Patong is running behind schedule, with only 30% of the work completed and no clear date for when it will be finished.

Kittisak Morasilp, Director of Patong Municipality's Engineering Division, confirmed fines have already been imposed. "Progress is only about 30%. The company has fallen behind schedule and penalties were applied," he said, but declined to disclose the amounts.

"The first instalment of the B42 million contract has already been paid to the company, although the payment schedule was adjusted



Photo: Patong Municipality

after the contract was signed," he said.

"The contractor has not abandoned the site and is being fined for delays," Mr Kittisak noted.

"However, I cannot say when the work will be finished," Mr

Kittisak added, and denied to give further details.

Patong Municipality signed a B42 million contract with I&P Joint Venture to deliver the first phase of the 'Patong Welcome Zone' The 300-day contract began on July 24, 2024, and was due to

conclude on May 21 this year.

The phase covers a 950-metre stretch from Coral Beach Bridge to Soi Mor Watthana and includes a new footpath, parking areas, a Patong Beach landmark sculpture and outdoor recreation and performance spaces.

Weerawit Kruesombat, President of the Patong Entertainment Business Association (PEBA) and President of Patong Municipality Council, said the delays reflect the same problems long faced by other local government projects.

"Local government agencies always faced the same issue: contractors who lack competence or abandon projects," he told *The Phuket News*.

"This project is different. The

contractor has not left in any way – they found issues during construction that required time to fix. We have continued with the same company and fined them for the delay. At least they didn't run away," he added.

Mr Weerawit added that the promenade aims to bring order to Patong's chaotic beachfront. "The goal is to improve parking, accessibility, and organisation, while creating a more functional and attractive walkway," he said.

Lalita Maneesri, Mayor of Patong Municipality, has actively monitored the Thaweewong Rd landscaping project, visiting the site and discussing issues and obstacles with local business owners and residents.

Natnaree Likidwatanasakun

Locals fight for Bang Tao land rights

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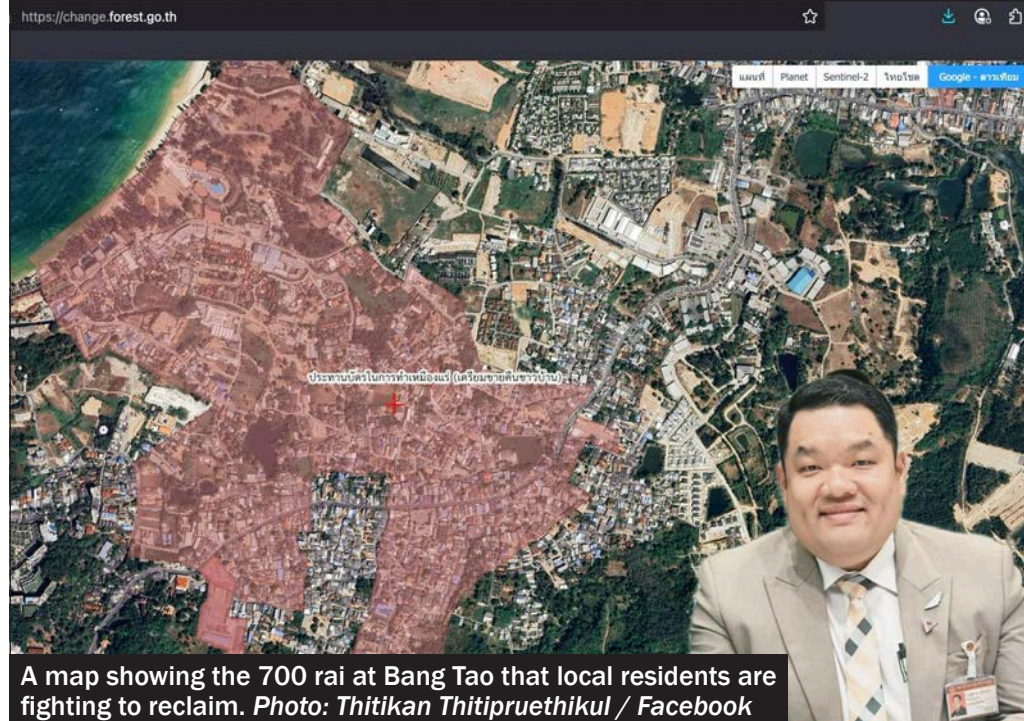
Phuket MP Thitikan Thitipruethikul has pressed the government to act, as more than 1,000 households in Bang Tao are still waiting for justice 40 years after the state promised to return 704 rai of land seized for foreign mining concessions more than a century ago.

MP Thitikan last week in Parliament urged the government to comply with a Cabinet resolution passed nearly 40 years ago to sell back more than 700 rai of Crown Property land in Bang Tao.

His questions were directed at Deputy Finance Minister Chulphan Amornvivat.

"The land, registered as Plot PhorKor 263, was forcibly purchased from over 1,000 households in 1920 for mining concessions by a private company," MP Thitikan explained.

"While the concession expired in 1977, the land was never returned to its original owners, despite Cabinet resolutions in 1986



A map showing the 700 rai at Bang Tao that local residents are fighting to reclaim. Photo: Thitikan Thitipruethikul / Facebook

and 2000 ordering that it be sold back to the local residents under agreed terms," he continued.

"This is a struggle that has lasted more than 40 years. The people were told the land would be returned, but they are still waiting. We want the government to act on its own resolutions and deliver justice," he said.

"Locals explained they have been unable to obtain house registration, electricity, water connections or

building permits due to the unresolved ownership status," he added.

"This case has been left unresolved for too long," MP Thitikan said. "The Cabinet in 1986 and again in 2000 already resolved that the land must be sold back to the original landholders or their heirs. Yet the process has stalled for decades. People have suffered without rights, without basic services, and with no legal certainty."

He further warned that current land values in Cherg Talay, estimated at around B50 million per rai, would make it impossible for local residents to buy back their land if the state insists on market prices.

"If the government applies today's market value, no one will be able to afford it," MP Thitikan said. "This must be based on the original Cabinet resolutions, ensuring fairness and restoring the rights

of local people, not punishing them with prices they cannot pay."

"After I presented the issue, Deputy Finance Minister Chulphan confirmed that the Treasury Department has drafted legislation to enable the transfer, and the Council of State is currently reviewing it. Mr Chulphan pledged the Cabinet would uphold the principle of affordability," MP Thitikan explained.

According to MP Thitikan, successive Cabinets have twice resolved to sell the land back – first on Nov 11, 1986, and again on May 2, 2000 – with clear guidelines dividing landholders into three groups:

Group 1: Original landholders or heirs – eligible to repurchase at the state's compulsory purchase price plus 7.5% interest from 1977.

Group 2: Long-term occupiers of more than 30 years – eligible to repurchase at the Land Department's 1977 appraisal value plus 7.5% interest.

Group 3: Occupiers of less than 30 years – only entitled to leasehold rights

under Finance Ministry regulations.

"The state must find a balance," he said. "We will respect the Cabinet resolution to set a price acceptable to the people, while ensuring the state is not harmed."

Meanwhile, the Phuket Treasury Office has promised to submit the necessary documents by October to allow the Treasury Department to expedite the enactment of the law before the current House term ends.

During the parliamentary session, Deputy Finance Minister Chulphan Amornvivat said, "We will respect the Cabinet's principle to set a price that is acceptable to the people, while ensuring the state is not harmed. Other fees under the Land Code may be adjusted to ease the burden."

Meanwhile, MP Thitikan called for immediate interim measures. "While waiting for the law, local residents should at least be able to register houses and connect utilities. This issue has been ignored for far too long. The people of Bang Tao deserve their rights restored now."

'No brakes' semi causes huge underpass pile-up

THIRTEEN VEHICLES WERE damaged and three people injured when a trailer truck ploughed into traffic inside the Darasamut Underpass in Wichit last week.

Police said the Ranong-registered truck, driven by 42-year-old Sopak Honsoda, slammed into vehicles after its brakes failed as it entered the tunnel at about midday on Sept 23.

The force of the impact left a detached truck bed and a chain of smashed cars blocking both lanes, bringing traffic to a standstill for several hours.

Rescue workers from the Kusoldharm Phuket Foundation transported three people to hospital with chest pain, abrasions and other minor injuries. All were later discharged, and no fatalities were reported.

Wichit Police confirmed that initial alcohol and drug tests returned negative. However, Investigator Pol Lt Col Chonlathit Khiao-on said Sopak has been charged with reckless driving causing injury and property damage.

"Officers inspected the vehicle and determined there was a brake leak, as the driver claimed," he said. "But truck drivers are required to check their vehicles before every trip. Failing to detect the defect is still considered negligence under traffic law."

Police estimate that about 15 people, including passengers, were directly affected by the incident, which saw the truck smash into a line of vehicles while others collided in the chaos. Traffic through the underpass was halted until emergency crews cleared



Photo: Wichit Police

the wreckage, allowing the tunnel to reopen just after 3:30pm.

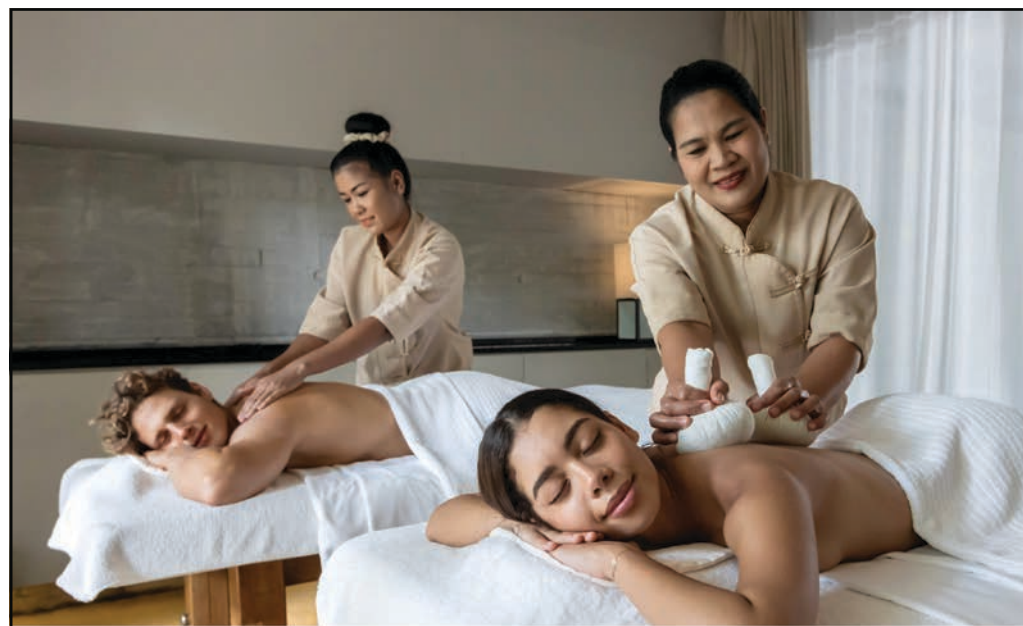
Sopak admitted to officers that his brakes failed as he entered the underpass and has accepted responsibility.

His employer has also acknowledged civil liability and has contacted police to arrange compensation, police confirmed.

The company has pledged to cover repair costs, loss of vehicle use and other restitution expenses. A meeting between victims, police and the company was scheduled to finalise compensation claims. Victims who are not satisfied with the agreement will be able to pursue civil action through the courts, Wichit Police Chief Pol Lt Col Chonlathit said.

The Phuket Highways Office closed the Darasamut Underpass for overnight repairs from 9pm last Saturday (Sept 27) through to 7am Sunday (Sept 28) to replace damaged barriers and other safety equipment.

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Wind 4 m/s

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Wind 4 m/s

THU OCTOBER 9

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Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

Dive boat smuggling 500kg of meth seized in Chalong

PHUKET MARINE POLICE, working with the Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) and multiple security agencies, have seized more than 500kg of crystal meth from a tourist dive boat that had taken shelter in Chalong Bay, with the vessel's captain later dying after attempting to flee arrest.

The seizure was confirmed in a report released by Phuket authorities following the late-night operation, which began at about 10:30pm on Sept 24.

Acting on intelligence from the ONCB, officers from the ONCB Region 5 office, the Third Naval Area Command, the Marine Police Region 3 branch and the Phuket Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) deployed three patrol boats to intercept a suspicious double-deck passenger vessel anchored near Chalong Pier.

After surrounding the vessel, officers boarded and discovered four men on board along with 20 sacks containing more than 500kg of crystal meth. During the search, one of the men leapt into the water in a desperate bid to escape. He was later identified as the boat's



Photo: Phuket Marine Police

captain, a 61-year-old Myanmar national known as 'Captain Bat'.

Witnesses said the captain clung to a mooring rope and appeared exhausted as officers attempted to bring him back on board. He was eventually pulled from the water and transported by ambulance to Chalong Hospital, where he was pronounced dead a short time later.

Investigators said the vessel, a tourist snorkelling and diving boat, had departed Kawthaung, Myanmar, carrying one tonne of crystal meth. Half of the shipment had already been offloaded in Satun Province before the boat was forced by heavy seas to take shelter in Chalong Bay from Sept 21-23.

According to police, the crew planned to continue their journey to international waters or the border of a neighbouring country once the weather improved.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Viral pickup sex video spurs police response

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Two Russian men and a Thai woman have been charged over a viral video showing a sex act in the back of a moving pickup truck on Phuket's bypass road, an incident that has sparked outrage across Thai social media and drawn condemnation from officials.

The case began on Sept 24 when a short clip of a naked foreign man and a Thai woman having sex in the open cargo bed of a black Ford pickup spread rapidly online. The footage, filmed by a passing motorist, showed the truck travelling northbound in Ratsada and quickly went viral, with commenters slamming the act as dangerous, obscene and damaging to Phuket's reputation as a tourist destination.

Phuket City Police identified the foreign man as 23-year-old Russian national 'Mr Georgii'. After learning he had flown out of Phuket International Airport, investigators coordinated with Suvarnabhumi Airport Police to intercept him as he arrived



Photo: Phuket City Police

on a connecting flight to Vietnam.

He was arrested at about 3:45pm on Sept 25 and was returned to Phuket to face charges of public indecency, publishing obscene material online and offences under the Computer Crimes Act. Police have recommended that Immigration revoke his visa and blacklist him from re-entering Thailand.

Last Friday (Sept 26), police charged a second Russian, 25-year-old 'Mr Alex', who surrendered with the black pickup used in the video. He admitted providing the vehicle after knowing Mr Georgii for only four days and said he expected payment for helping film social media content.

Mr Alex faces charges of

aiding and abetting a public indecency offence, reckless driving endangering others, and supporting the import of obscene material into a computer system.

The Thai woman in the video, a 42-year-old Rawai resident identified only as 'Ms B', has also been charged with public indecency and has already appeared in Phuket Provincial Court.

At last report police confirmed the investigation was still ongoing to identify the person who filmed the clip. Further charges may follow once court proceedings and Immigration actions are complete, warned Pol Lt Col Kan Aksornthong, Investigation Superintendent at Phuket City Police.

Huge haul of illegal cigarettes

PHUKET AIRPORT CUSTOMS officers have seized nearly 9.6 million illegal foreign cigarettes in a bust valued at more than B71 million, in one of the largest anti-cigarette smuggling operations ever recorded on the island.

Customs officials confirmed on Sept 25 that the haul of 9,568,000 illegal cigarettes was intercepted as part of an intensified crackdown on goods violating customs and intellectual property laws.

The seizure followed inspections carried out under the Customs Department's national policy to protect the public from illegal products and to safeguard the Thai economy, said an official report of the operation.

Investigators said the counterfeit cigarettes represented economic damages estimated at over B71mn, reflecting both the



Photo: PR Phuket

value of the illegal goods and the potential loss of tax revenue.

Officials warned that such contraband poses a serious threat to public health and undermines legitimate businesses.

Phuket Airport Customs stressed that enforcement efforts will continue to target smuggling networks and copyright infringements, with officers maintaining strict checks on inbound and outbound cargo.

Authorities did not disclose details about the shipment's origin or whether any arrests were made but confirmed that further investigations are underway to identify those behind the operation. *The Phuket News*

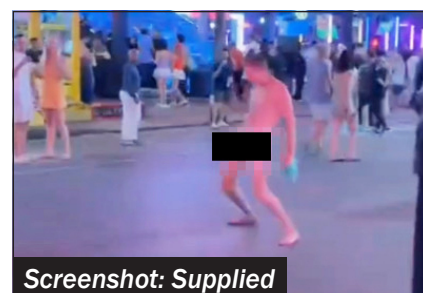
Brit charged for naked Bangla antics

A BRITISH TOURIST HAS been arrested in Patong after stripping naked and dancing in the middle of Soi Bangla in the early hours of last Friday morning (Sept 26).

Patong Police confirmed that at about 12:12am, the man, later identified as Aidan Jesse Phillimore, 44, was seen removing his clothes and dancing on Bangla Rd. The incident was quickly shared across social media, drawing widespread attention.

Officers from Patong Police Station moved to locate Mr Phillimore following the reports. He was found later in the day and taken into custody. A search of his belongings uncovered 0.89 grams of psilocybin "dung" mushrooms, which are classified in Thailand as a Category 5 narcotic.

Police said Mr Phillimore was also found to have overstayed his visa by 162 days. He now faces charges of possession of a



Screenshot: Supplied

Category 5 narcotic, overstaying his visa, and public indecency for stripping and dancing in the entertainment street.

The arrest was carried out at 5pm Friday by a team of officers from Patong Police Station's investigation and Bangla Rd patrol units.

Mr Phillimore was taken to Patong Police Station where at last report he remained in custody pending legal proceedings. Police confirmed he will be prosecuted according to Thai law, with separate charges for the narcotics, immigration and public order offences.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Veg Fest readies for 200

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Phuket is moving into high gear for the 2025 Phuket Vegetarian Festival, a nine-day celebration of Chinese-Thai culture that this year carries special weight as Kathu Shrine, the birthplace of the festival, marks its 200th anniversary.

At a second provincial planning meeting held last week at Phuket Provincial Hall, Vice Governor Samawit Suphanphai chaired discussions on safety, logistics and ceremonial details for the island-wide event, scheduled for Oct 21-29.

At the meeting, representatives from the Ministry of Culture, Phuket Provincial Police, Phuket City Municipality and the Phuket Shrine Association reviewed a draft order appointing the organising committee and finalised key arrangements.

The meeting confirmed that the festival will again feature the 'Song Keng' royal blessing ceremony to honour His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn, to be held at Saphan Hin. Vice Governor Samawit urged all agencies to coordinate closely to ensure public safety and smooth operations throughout the nine days of ceremonies and street



Photo: Kathu Municipality

processions, which are expected to draw tens of thousands of residents and visitors.

Known locally as 'Gin Jae' or 'Jia Chai', the Vegetarian Festival is rooted in Taoist beliefs honouring the Nine Emperor Gods. According to the Chinese lunar calendar, the festival spans the first to ninth nights of the waxing moon in the ninth month. Devotees follow a strict vegetarian diet and observe rituals of purification, believing that abstaining from meat and other impurities will bring health, good fortune and spiritual merit.

Thailand's Ministry of Culture recognised the festival as national Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2018, and last year it received the

IFEA Haas & Wilkerson Pinnacle Award for its outstanding social and spiritual significance.

Nine principal shrines across Phuket will host prayers and rituals, each dedicated to different deities offering blessings ranging from safe travel to business success and academic achievement. Kathu Shrine will lead the key ceremonies, while Jui Tui, Bang Liao and Sui Boon Tong shrines will also welcome thousands of devotees seeking the gods' protection.

The festival's most dramatic moments will again unfold on Phuket's streets. Each day, 'Mah Song' spirit mediums – devotees believed to be possessed by the gods – will lead processions

through Phuket Town and surrounding districts. Dressed in elaborate costumes, the mediums pierce their cheeks with swords, spears and other objects while carrying sacred emblems, accompanied by deafening firecrackers and drumming.

Other rituals include the Ceremonial Bridge Crossing for spiritual cleansing, the Fire Walking rite and the climactic farewell procession leading up to midnight on Oct 29, when the Nine Emperor Gods are sent back to heaven.

Residents and visitors are advised to check the official programme for exact times and to plan for road closures during the processions.

ORIGINS

Adding to this year's significance, Kathu Municipality last week staged a historic ceremony to welcome three revered deities from China to Kathu Shrine. On Sept 23, Kathu Mayor Wannayut 'Beng' Suthikul led municipal executives, council members and local residents in inviting the deities Hyo Hoi, Hyo Yen and Dian Hu Nguan Soi (Lord Lao Ei) from the People's Republic of China.

The 700-metre procession, known locally as the Phra Lao Eia ceremony, filled the streets with

incense, colour and the sound of traditional music.

Mayor Wannayut described the ritual as a symbolic bridge between the Chinese-Thai community of Kathu and its ancestral homeland. "This ceremony reflects the cultural roots and faith of the Chinese-Thai people of Kathu," he said. "It shows our unity and pride in preserving this heritage for future generations."

Organisers emphasised that the bicentennial celebration highlights the community's enduring commitment to safeguard its spiritual and cultural legacy as Kathu Shrine embarks on its third century of worship and celebration.

Vice Governor Samawit said the 200th anniversary adds profound meaning to this year's festival. "With centuries of tradition, a rich spiritual heritage and a spectacle of colour, sound and devotion, the Phuket Vegetarian Festival 2025 promises to be a defining celebration of our island's Chinese-Thai culture," he said.

Visitors and residents alike are invited to witness the rituals, join the vegetarian observance and experience an event that continues to unite Phuket's communities after two centuries of devotion.

Turtle rescued at Leyppang, two others die on beaches

MARINE OFFICERS IN PHUKET ARE urging the public to properly dispose of fishing gear and waste after one sea turtle was rescued and two others died in separate incidents along the island's west coast over the past week.

At about 6:45pm on Sept 24, Cherng Talay Police were alerted to an injured sea turtle stranded on Leyppang Beach. Layan patrol officer Pol Lt Suvarin Mueat Muang found the animal, about one metre long and weighing more than 100 kilograms, with a fishhook embedded in its mouth and a deep 10-15cm wound on its lower right front fin.

The Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR), the Siretarn Marine Endangered Animal Rescue Centre and the Kusoldharm Phuket Foundation worked together to safely retrieve the turtle and transport it to the Siretarn centre for urgent veterinary treatment. Officials said the goal is to rehabilitate the turtle and return it to the wild once it recovers.

Meanwhile, the DMCR has confirmed that a different sea turtle rescued on Mai Khao Beach on Sept 19 has died despite extensive efforts to save it.

The mature female olive ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), with a 68cm carapace and weighing 29kg, was found alive but severely weakened after becoming entangled in marine debris, namely a discarded fishing net.

A preliminary examination showed deep muscle lacerations at the base of both front flippers, a missing left flipper, dehydration



Photo: Rawai Municipality

and multiple fractures in the left hind leg. X-rays revealed a fishhook near its stomach.

Despite rehabilitation and plans for surgical removal of the hook, the turtle died on Sept 23. A necropsy revealed systemic infection caused by severe wounds from the entanglement, with evidence of pneumonia, liver congestion, inflamed reproductive organs and an empty stomach containing sand and gravel but no natural food.

In a third case, Rawai Municipality officers on Sept 26 recovered the carcass of a sea turtle that washed ashore on Nai Harn Beach. The 20kg turtle showed no obvious injuries and has been sent to DMCR experts to determine the cause of death.

Officials reminded beachgoers to report any sightings of stranded or injured marine animals so that specialists can respond promptly. *Eakkapop Thongtub*

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Phuket tourism revenue slips

Natnaree Likidwatanasakun
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Phuket's tourism industry slowed in August, with visitor numbers and revenue falling compared with last year, the Tourism and Sports Ministry has reported.

The ministry's latest figures, presented to Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat at the 'Vision to Action' sustainable future seminar last week, show the island welcomed 9,252,029 visitors from January to August 2025, a 3.24% year-on-year decline. Total tourism revenue for the period reached B355.53 billion, down 5.06% from the same eight months of 2024.

Average hotel occupancy from January through August stood at 77.43%, a slight 1.19% drop. Foreign travellers continued to dominate the market, generating B327.09bn in revenue, down 6.09% year-on-year, while domestic tourism grew 8.69% to B28.44bn.

The slowdown was most pronounced in August, when arrivals plunged to 996,136, a sharp 17.34% drop from August last year. Tourism income for the month fell to B36.74bn, down 26.69%, and hotel occupancy averaged 68.97%, down 7.18%.



Tourists at Kamala Beach. Photo: TAT Phuket

From January to August, Phuket welcomed 6,747,753 foreign visitors compared with 2,504,276 Thai visitors. The island's top five international markets were Russia, China, India, the United Kingdom and Australia. Officials reported that average hotel rates in August were B8,300 per night, with foreign guests spending about B8,800 per night and domestic travellers around B4,800.

Despite the August dip, officials remain optimistic as Phuket gears up for the year-end high season. Key events drawing visitors included sports competitions, cultural festivals and the Toyota One Make Race.

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Thailand overall welcomed 23,450,122 international visitors from Jan 1 to Sept 21, a 7.44% decline year-on-year. Monthly arrivals fluctuated, peaking at 3.71 million in January before easing during the low season. August saw 2.58mn visitors, followed by 1.57mn in the first three weeks of September.

Officials attributed the nationwide slowdown to the seasonal lull ahead of the October-March high season, despite government measures to make travel more convenient. Malaysia remained the largest source market with 3,380,339 arrivals, followed by China

(3,301,185), India (1,711,381), Russia (1,244,626) and South Korea (1,105,186).

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) forecasts 33.4mn foreign visitors for 2025, about 6% fewer than last year, citing contractions from Southeast and East Asian markets. October arrivals are projected at 2.62mn, rising to 3.07mn in November and 3.63mn in December.

East Asian arrivals are expected to shrink by 25%, mainly because of a steep fall in Chinese travellers, while Southeast Asian markets may decline by 8%. Within East Asia, visitor numbers from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea are all softening, though Japanese arrivals remain steady. In Southeast Asia, Malaysia is seeing fewer outbound travellers to Thailand, with some choosing alternative destinations.

Of note, Vietnam in particular is enjoying a tourism boom, recording nearly 14mn foreign arrivals in the first eight months of 2025, up 21.7% year-on-year.

The TAT offered some positive notes: European arrivals are expected to grow 15% this year, while South Asia, the Americas and Oceania are each forecast to rise 8%, and the Middle East by 4%. Even so, officials warned that boosting spending per traveller will

be challenging amid a tough global economy and rising competition from neighbouring countries.

STRONG BAHT

Kriengkrai Thiennukul, Chairman of the Federation of Thai Industries, said the baht's appreciation to a four-year high against the US dollar is squeezing both exports and tourism. The stronger baht makes Thailand less competitive as destinations such as Japan, with its weak yen, and Vietnam, with a depreciating dong, become more attractive to foreign travellers.

Mr Kriengkrai urged the tourism industry to develop more man-made attractions and embrace sustainable tourism to stay competitive. He noted that China has successfully created new destinations integrated with existing sites to form comprehensive travel routes.

If Thailand can diversify its markets and enhance its offerings, the country could eventually attract 70mn foreign visitors a year, with tourism contributing more than 20% of GDP, he said.

For now, all eyes are on the approaching high season, when cooler weather, less rain and year-end festivals are expected to draw millions of long-haul visitors back to Phuket and the rest of Thailand.

Senate shoots down casino bill

THE SENATE HAS FORMALLY rejected the government's draft bill proposing the establishment of integrated entertainment complexes that include casinos, citing serious concerns over social impact, economic disruption and national security.

The controversial bill, introduced by the administration of former prime minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra, was reviewed by a special Senate committee chaired by Senator Dr Veerapun Suwannamai.

The committee's report, presented during a session led by Deputy Senate President Gen Kriengkrai Srirak, concluded that the proposed legislation could lead to long-term harm, including increased vulnerability to money laundering and an erosion of public trust.

The committee urged that any future attempt to legalise casinos must involve public participation through a national referendum.

Senator Sornchat Vichaya Suwanaprom, vice chair of the committee, proposed the formation of a new study group so alternative models can be explored.

These include building entertainment complexes without casinos, limited-access casino zones with strict controls, and regulated online gambling platforms.

He cited international examples such as Sydney, Australia, where casino access is restricted to registered tourists, as a potential model for Thailand.



Photo: Bangkok Post

Senator Chinachot Saengsang delivered a scathing critique, accusing the bill of misleading the public by disguising its true intent.

"The casino is not a side feature – it's the core of the proposal," he said. "If the new government includes casino legalisation in its policy platform, it risks undermining public confidence and long-term governance."

Senator Sitthikorn Thongyos echoed these concerns, warning that recent government initiatives – such as reclassifying poker and promoting retirement lotteries – have normalised gambling behaviour.

He argued these trends could pave the way for full-scale casino legalisation and urged the incoming administration to withdraw the bill completely.

Dr Veerapun clarified that with parliament set to be dissolved in four months – any political party intending to legalise casinos should declare it openly during their campaign.

Bangkok Post

Phuket real estate cools

PHUKET'S CONDO AND VILLA market cooled markedly in the first half of 2025, with both new launches and sales contracting by more than 50% from the same period in 2024, after two consecutive years of peak new supply in 2023-24.

Siddhipen Siddharthapong, acting assistant director-general of the Real Estate Information Center (REIC), said Phuket recorded the highest level of new residential supply launches, with an initial peak in 2023, followed by another in 2024.

"Although last year saw record-high sales, the surge in new launches also carried over significant unsold inventory into this year, particularly for condos, which now take up to 28 months to sell out compared with no more than 14 months since the second half of 2022," she said.

Last year, new condo launches reached a record high of 14,454 units, more than doubling the 7,106 units launched in 2023, which was a peak at that point in time.

By comparison, launches tallied 475 in 2022, 439 in 2021 and 685 in 2020.

In the first half of 2025, new condo launches stood at 2,113 units, down 51% from 4,295 units year-on-year.

Sales also fell by 51%, with 2,192 units sold compared with 4,438 units year-on-year.

Although last year recorded the highest number of condos sold at 10,971 units, more than double the 5,007 units sold in 2023 and far exceeding the 2,065 units in 2022, the number of unsold units by the end of June 2025 also reached a new record of 10,466 worth a combined B88 billion.

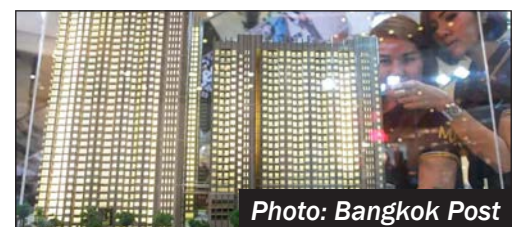


Photo: Bangkok Post

"Developers should exercise greater caution with new condo launches, as the monthly absorption rate has dropped to just 2.9% from 7% last year – the lowest level post-pandemic," said Ms Siddhipen.

The villa market in the first half of 2025 saw new launches plunging 74% year-on-year to 298 units worth B10.6bn, a 72% decline in value.

New sales also fell 70% to 231 units worth B7.5bn, down 75% from the same period of 2024.

Maetapong Upatising, president of the Phuket Real Estate Association, said residential market performance was closely tied to the tourism industry as strong tourism drives strong residential demand.

"This year, tourism fell due to a decline of Chinese visitors," he said. "Although Russian and Indian tourist arrivals increased, the drop in Chinese arrivals caused an overall decline."

Some villa and condo owners, who had bought as investment properties, sold them to realise returns, he said.

"The resale market has grown thanks to the decrease in land available for new developments and higher prices of new supply," Mr Maetapong added.

Bangkok Post

Foreign Minister blasts Cambodia in UN address

NEW YORK

Bangkok Post

Thai Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuangketkeow told the United Nations General Assembly last Saturday (Sept 27) that Cambodia continued to lie, act provocatively and violate its ceasefire agreement with Thailand.

Speaking at the UNGA's 80th session in New York, Mr Sihasak responded to Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister Sokhonn Prak, who alleged that Cambodian civilians had been evicted from land they had lived on for decades and that an unprovoked attack had occurred near a sensitive site.

The Cambodian official appeared to be referring to Thailand's attempts to reclaim part of Ban Nong Chan village in Sa Kaeo province from Cambodian refugees who remained after fleeing the civil war in the 1970s.

"To my dismay, Cambodia continues to present



Thai Foreign Affairs Minister Sihasak Phuangketkeow addresses the United Nations General Assembly in New York last Saturday (Sept 27). Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

itself as the victim. Time and time again it has portrayed its own version of the facts, which does not hold up to scrutiny because it is simply a distortion of the truth," Sihasak said.

"We know who are the real victims: they are Thai soldiers who have lost their legs to landmines, children whose schools were shelled, and innocent civilians who were shopping that day at the grocery store that came under attack from Cambodian rocket fire.

"Yesterday... we talked about peace, dialogue, mutual trust and confidence...

but unfortunately, what was said today by the Cambodian side was completely opposite. The allegations were so far-fetched they make a mockery of the truth."

Mr Sihasak added that he had originally intended to deliver a positive speech but was forced to rewrite it in response to the Cambodian remarks.

"The villages referred to by my Cambodian colleague are in Thai territory, full stop. In fact, they exist because Thailand made the humanitarian decision to open up our borders in the

late 1970s for hundreds of thousands of Cambodians fleeing the civil war. As a young diplomat, I witnessed that scene myself."

Thailand also played a key role in rebuilding Cambodia after the 1991 Paris Peace Agreements, constructing homes, roads and hospitals "because peace in Cambodia is in Thailand's interest," he said.

Mr Sihasak accused Cambodia of mobilising civilians, firing weapons and deploying surveillance drones inside Thai territory which constitutes a violation of Thailand's sovereignty and territorial integrity and the ceasefire agreement.

"Thailand has always, and will always, stand for peace," he concluded. "At the same time, Thailand will always stand firm and resolute in the defence of our sovereignty and territorial integrity.

"Thailand chooses the path of peace... but we really question whether it is the intention of Cambodia to join us in the pursuit for peace."

Repairs on Bangkok sinkhole underway

BANGKOK

OFFICIALS IN BANGKOK said on Tuesday (Sept 30) that repair work on the massive sinkhole on Samsen Road is progressing on schedule, with concrete already poured into the collapsed area and sand infilling underway.

A section of the road in front of Vajira Hospital and immediately above a train station subsided on Sept 24, forming a large hole estimated to be 30 metres wide and 50 metres deep. No injuries were reported.

Traffic was closed for safety reasons, while outpatient services at the state hospital were suspended. About 3,500 inpatients were evacuated from nearby buildings, as were residents of nearby apartments.

On Sunday, workers used a crane to remove debris from the caved-in section in front of the Hospital before cutting underground communication cables blocking the site. The next stage will see sand poured into voids, including beneath the nearby Samsen



Photo: Bangkok Post

Police Station, to stabilise the subsidence zone.

Asst Prof Thanee Weerasiri, adviser to the Council of Engineers Thailand, said the concrete pouring was proceeding as planned and engineers were waiting for it to set. Shotcrete was also being sprayed under the Samsen police station building to strengthen its foundation.

Deputy Prime Minister and Transport Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn inspected the site on Sunday, assuring the public there were no obstacles to the repair plan. He said more than 10 monitoring cameras had been installed to track ground movement around the clock, with worker safety a top priority.

Bangkok Post

Four-ballot national poll to include charter referendum

BANGKOK

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER Bowornsak Uwanno confirmed on Monday (Sept 29) that the next general election will involve four separate ballots: two for polls and another two for referendums.

The four ballots are: one for electing constituency MPs, another for party-list MPs, a third for a referendum on constitutional amendments, and a fourth for a referendum on whether to revoke the memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Cambodia.

Mr Bowornsak said the government's policy clearly supports holding a referendum to amend the constitution, emphasising the importance of listening to the public and encouraging participation from all sectors.

This approach aligns with the Constitutional



Bowornsak Uwanno. Photo: Bangkok Post

Court's ruling and aims to uphold the democratic system with the King as head of state.

Mr Bowornsak explained that drafting the new constitution is the first step in the process. The second step involves a referendum to approve or reject the draft constitution, which will be the first question posed to voters.

The new draft constitution will introduce an additional Chapter 15/1 of necessary legislative details including a new stipulation regarding the formation of a 99-member constitution drafting assembly (CDA), whose members would be selected exclusively by parliament, to produce the document.

In the initial stage, parliament will determine how to involve the public in drafting the new constitution, in a manner that does not contradict the Constitutional Court's ruling that prohibits a direct election of the CDA by the public.

Should parliament approve this, the second step will be to draft the new constitution by the CDA or other authorised persons as stipulated in Chapter 15/1, following the referendum.

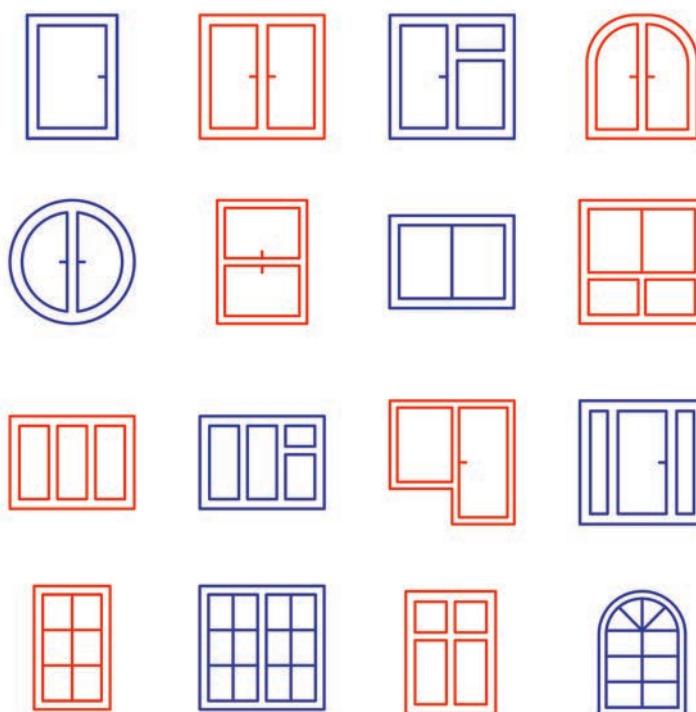
Mr Bowornsak said that two major political parties have already confirmed that they will not amend Chapters 1 and 2 of the constitution.

Chapter 1 contains sections that define Thailand as a single, indivisible kingdom with a democratic regime and establish the King as the head of state.

Chapter 2, meanwhile, outlines royal prerogatives. Bangkok Post



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Indochinese Roller. Photos: Simon Lomas



Red Throated Barbet.



Lesser Coucal.



Zebra Dove.



Blue Winged Pitta.



Greater Coucal.

Exploring Natural Phuket in Green Season

Simon Lomas

For me the green season, or monsoon season, is a great time to get out and about for several reasons. Firstly, it's not so hot so you can actually spend time wandering around at your leisure to find new places and see new things without getting cooked. Secondly, with the rain the plants and insects come out so there is a lot for the birds to feed on and as such more to see. There are also far less people around, meaning it is

quieter and less likely to scare the wildlife away. As normal this year, there are many birds around even in the busy tourist areas, if you take your time and look, especially in the back streets.

A common bird here that you will see many days and maybe not even notice at all is the Zebra Dove. This is often found on the ground, under trees, in car parks, on the edge of footpaths, scratching around for whatever it can find. Often they are in pairs as they generally mate for life, though this isn't always the case and they may form new pairings if their original partner dies or

if circumstances change. They are known to be very devoted and form strong pair bonds, with both parents caring for their young. Very easy to spot as they are not shy and, as the name suggests, pale in colour with dark stripes and pink flashes on the breast.

One of my favourites is the Indochinese Roller. These are stunning blue and grey birds similar size to an urban pigeon. You often see them high up on tree tops or power poles. They seem to like high points so they can have a good view of the surrounding area. Like the Zebra Dove, the Indochinese Roller forms long-lasting pair bonds and tends to be monogamous. Returning to the same partner each breeding season and forming strong pair-bonds that are often considered a symbol of marital fidelity. There has been a pair I see for the last three years always back to the same nest site each year. Always together during the nesting time, side by side.

Under threat

Another quite common bird here on Phuket, if somewhat hard to spot due to its colours, is the Red Throated Barbet. This bird is actually listed as under threat in Thailand and near threatened globally, although I have been lucky enough to see them a fair bit. The red-throated barbet is a species of bird in the Megalaimidae family, found in Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore and Thailand. Its natural habitats are subtropical or tropical moist lowland forest and subtropical or tropical swamps. It is threatened by habitat loss. I see them a fair bit when in the hills above Patong. Normally in low trees in places like the trek to Freedom beach. The male and female are very different. The male has a lot more colour with red, blue and yellow on the face as well as the green body. The female is mostly green with more subtle reds on the face. Given the species is under threat globally, it is encouraging to see them a fair bit in Phuket and perhaps a nudge for over development to cease.

A bird that is pretty common is the Greater and Lesser Coucal. These are found more in the less built up areas as they prefer the countryside, trees and open areas rather than the concrete city life. These are fair-sized birds and, as the names suggests, the greater is big-

ger than the lesser. The Greater Coucal is a large crow-like bird with a black body, chestnut wings, a long black tail and red eyes. The Lesser Coucal is significantly smaller, has a dark eye and features silvery streaks on its wings and back. Both are non-brood parasitic Cuckoos (in that they do not lay eggs in other bird's nests like most cuckoos) found in Asia, but the Greater Coucal is larger with a longer bill and a plain, dark wing, while the Lesser Coucal is smaller with silvery wing streaks and black eyes.

Lastly is the Blue Winged Pitta. There are several types of Pitta but the Blue Winged seems to be less shy and can be seen more often. A very colourful bird often bolder than other pittas and occasionally seen in city parks, especially while on migration. They prefer wooded areas but are often around the outskirts and back streets in the towns too. Measuring 180 to 205mm (7.1-8.1 inches) in length, it is a colourful bird with a black head and a buff stripe above the eye, a white collar, greenish upper parts, blue wings, buff underparts and a reddish vent area. Its range extends from India to Malaysia, Indonesia, southern China and the Philippines. Its habitat is moist woodland, parks and gardens and it avoids dense forest. It feeds mainly on insects and worms. It breeds in the spring, building an untidy spherical nest on the ground, often near water and between tree roots. A clutch of about five eggs is laid and incubated by both parents, hatching after about 16 days. Again, they can be typically found in areas where there are open spaces and gardens and can often be sighted in Phuket.

That covers a small selection of the more interesting birds that you can see just on the average day walking around the island without out having to go hiking through national parks. Yes, there are so many more which I will cover in future articles. If anyone spots any other colourful, unknown or interesting birds, please let me know so I can and take a look myself. That also applies to all other wildlife, for example, the pure white squirrels that are rare but have been spotted in several areas. So, if you like wildlife or photography, get yourselves out of the towns and into the hills with the camera as there really is so much to see.



The November/December 2025 hard copy issue goes to print very soon

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NORA's Divine Wine Room Dinner Experience

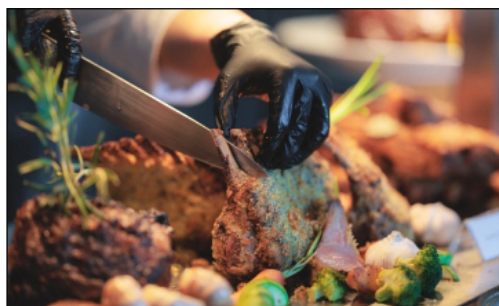
Joanna Matlub

Tucked inside the beachfront NORA Beach Club, the Wine Room offers an intimate and romantic dining experience. Perfect for special occasions, from anniversaries to elegant wedding dinners, it is a hidden gem for those seeking a unique culinary evening in Phuket. With a floral entrance cascading dramatically from the ceiling as you walk through the main restaurant, the mood is set before you even reach the private space.

Inside the romantic room, white drapes softly hang from the ceiling with floral elements in the centre, which add a delicate detail to the floor to ceiling walls of fine wine bottles. These actually create a visually stunning backdrop that certainly caters to more than just function. With wooden floors and candlelit holders nestled in soft beach sand, we were served a subtle reminder of being mere steps from the Andaman Sea.

Extravagant

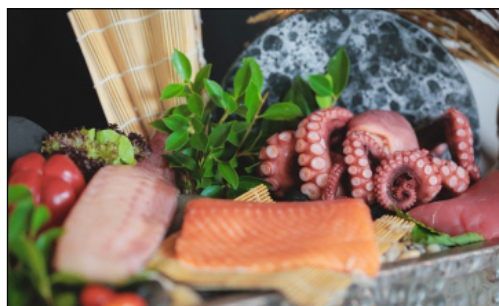
We were seated for their signature six-course tasting menu in the private room designed for just four guests, though our evening focused on the standout mains and dessert. Our experience began with an extravagant Caviar & Brioche amuse-bouche, accompanied by a Tuna 'Tartare' which was placed inside a visually captivating black cone,



adding a fantastic crunch to the small tasting that set a high bar for the rest of the evening.

For the main course, we sampled both options. The Miso Toothfish was a beautifully delicate dish, which was cooked perfectly and lay beside a bed of rustically crushed peas and a generous pour of thick and silky miso sauce. I personally thoroughly enjoyed this dish, which was light but bursting with flavour.

The Wagyu Steak, by contrast, was bold, earthy and satisfying. The meat was tender, full of depth and served with winter-feeling sides of beetroot, mushrooms and potatoes. My guest felt that the rich red wine sauce was the perfect addition and, as such, did not



leave a single trace on the plate! It was a well-executed dish that felt both indulgent and comforting.

Charming

Dessert arrived in the form of the Dumpling Cheesecake, an unexpected and charming finale. The sweetness of the quince jelly and strawberry purée, paired with whipped cream, gave it a fresh lift. I do love a little twist on a classic and this did not disappoint. Beyond the menu details, it was served with a creamy avocado ice cream, resulting in an entire plate that looked almost enchanting with the pastel colours and textures. A refined dessert that delighted both the eye and palate; subtle, fresh and perfectly light for a



satisfying finish.

Service throughout was warm and attentive, with staff ensuring each detail was looked after without being intrusive. The only note we would add? A gentle background soundtrack would have been the cherry on the cake. While the quiet setting did allow us to fully connect and savour the meal, a touch of soft music would have rounded off the experience perfectly.

Nora Beach Club

322, Moo 2, Srisoonthorn Road, Bang Tao Beach, Chong Talay Thalang, Phuket 83100 Opening times: Tuesday to Sunday, 11am- 9pm (Closed Monday) Reservations: +66 0616532232 www.norabeachclub.com

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POP QUIZ

1. The Mau Mau were terrorists in which country in the late 1950s and early 1960s?

2. Carlo Collodi created which famous children's character?

3. What is the capital of Sicily?

4. What is mainly extracted from pitchblende?

5. What was invented by Dr Edward Land in 1947?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Medium

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across

1. Shed

5. Tees

9. Confusion

14. "Alfred" composer

15. Grunt

16. Beguile

17. Collections

18. Hint

19. "Family Affair" role

20. Replaces Samantha with Aunt Clara?

23. Get into a stew?

24. Sweep

25. Atoll protector

26. Trial

28. Get with strain

30. Put away

33. Secrets

35. Truth ____

37. Breaks the hearts of milliners?

41. "Bellefleur" author

42. Treeless region

43. Turk. airlines

44. Bring to bear

45. Ground ball

49. Hinged catch

52. + or - item
53. Gametes

54. Smaller Bic?

59. Butterfly genus

60. Nitwit

61. Michael Collin's country

62. As a whole

63. Affaire d'honneur

64. Model Kate

65. Rumble

66. Lofty nest, var.

67. Arrogant one
- Down

1. Dissed, in a way

2. From the 1930s

3. Discrete unit

4. Actor Adam

5. Impossible

6. Gulf ship

7. Wildebeests

8. Warp

9. Butter up?

10. Liturgical vestment

11. Grassland blaze

12. Sum, ___, fui

13. Pewters

21. Seeks
22. Cholera

27. Part of A.P.R.

28. Flow from

29. U.S. architect

31. Blackguard

32. Germany's Dortmund-____ Canal

34. Bell and Carney

35. Persuasive

36. Roster abbr.

37. Cold porter fan?

38. Derisive laugh

39. Irregular

40. With skill

44. Final: Abbr.

46. Hand ____

47. Extremely

48. Most unusual

50. Twinkle-toed

51. Thrash

52. German river

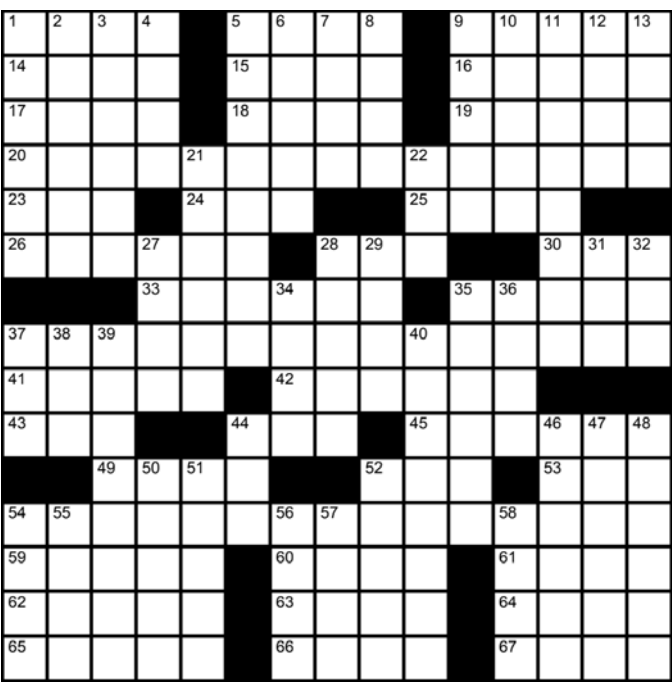
54. Big loser's nickname?

55. Crescent

56. Icelandic epic

57. Profligate

58. Hesitates



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

1

in every 10,000 chickens can change their gender.

2

pairs (one up, one down) is the total number of escalators in the entire US state of Wyoming, which covers 97,914 square miles.

80

percent of the world's opioids are consumed by the United States.

1,160

US dollars a month and \$13,926 annually is how much New Yorkers save on average by using public transportation.

60 billion

US dollars of sunken treasure is estimated to be still sitting at the bottom of the world's oceans.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW

Breathtaking views at Promthep Cape. Photo by Maria Foz

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

This week in history

Oct 3, 1863

The last Thursday in November is declared as Thanksgiving Day by U.S. President Abraham Lincoln.

Oct 4, 1957

Sputnik 1 becomes the first artificial satellite to orbit the Earth.

Oct 5, 1962

The first Beatles single 'Love Me Do' is released in Britain.

Oct 6, 1683

Immigrant families found Germantown, Pennsylvania, in the first major immigration of German people to America.

Oct 7, 2001

The U.S. invasion of Afghanistan begins with an air assault and covert operations on the ground, starting the longest war in American history.

Oct 8, 1967

Guerrilla leader Che Guevara and his men are captured in Bolivia.

Oct 9, 1804

Hobart, capital of Tasmania, is founded.

Che Guevara.

Source: Wikipedia

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FRI 3 OCT



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

SAT 4 OCT



Beach Clean & Zumba - Rawai Beach, PHUKET

The Litter Club, in partnership with TOPS, invites you to a one-of-a-kind event: the TOPS 'Together Our Planet Shines' Community Beach Cleanup! This isn't just a cleanup – it's a celebration of our planet and a chance to make a tangible difference in our community. We're setting a goal to recruit 100 dedicated volunteers to help us restore Rawai Beach to its pristine beauty. The event will be a perfect mix of fun, fitness and environmental action. Here's our agenda for Saturday, October 4th, at Rawai Beach (Pier Entrance): Event agenda 0800 - Meet and registration 0830 - Briefing - Site and Safety Information - OBP Education 0835 - Zumba on the beach (10 mins) 0845 - Beach Clean - Weighing and sorting of collect items (ongoing) 1000 - Cool down stretching and hydration (10 mins) 1045 - Group Photo & Snacks 1100 - Event End Every piece of plastic we remove is a victory for our ocean and a step toward a healthier planet. Your participation makes all the difference! Ready to be a part of something big? Register now to secure your spot. Register here: https://forms.gle/c2BqQxVSdYmRT8MH7 Don't forget to share this with your friends and family! Let's make this the most impactful cleanup Phuket has ever seen. 096 639 6252



Sunset Sips & Canapes at 7th Floor

Let's mingle for a cause at 7th Floor Rooftop Restaurant, Sole Mio. A vibrant evening of refreshing drinks, delicious bites, live entertainment, and prizes for just 1,000 THB NET, with a 20% discount on dinner available for those who wish to stay and enjoy the night with us. Or, if you're still in the mood to party... head over to the after-party at Solis. Enjoy drinks at golden hour prices from 8:30pm till late. Just show them the flyer you'll receive at the 7th Floor (as golden hour usually finishes at sunset). A portion of the proceeds will be donated to Phuket Has Been Good To Us, a local charity providing free English education and after-school programs to over 600 underprivileged children. Spaces are limited, to book: barbara.scalzi@gmail.com WA: +66 63 213 3404

SUN 5 OCT



Sunday Roast

12PM – 9PM: All you can eat Sunday Roast Buffet Beef, Pork & Capon chicken – Cauliflower, Broccoli, Peas, Carrots, Fried mushrooms, Grilled Tomatoes – Yorkshire pudding – Roasted Potatoes, Mashed Potatoes – Gravy, Mushroom sauce, Horse radish, 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

MON 6 OCT



Monday BBQ Night

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

WED 8 OCT



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

FRI 10 OCT



Phuket Business Networking - Oct 2025

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

SUN 12 OCT



Canadian Thanksgiving Dinner

The spirit of Thanksgivings follows us wherever we may go. This year's Cdn's in Phuket Thanksgiving Dinner will be extra traditional, our special guest chef is a Canadian Certified Master Chef who formerly called Quebec home. Join us for a Traditional Canadian Thanksgiving! Welcoming you with a classic Canadian Caesar. Begin with maple-glazed bacon lollipops and mini tourtière bites. Savour roast Heritage Turkey with classic giblet gravy and cranberry sauce, silky mashed potatoes, maple-roasted Brussels sprouts, and glazed carrots. Then to finish with a Pumpkin & Maple Symphony dessert. A special mini turkey plate awaits our little Canucks! Thanksgiving is about community, gratitude and sharing a meal together – values that travel with Canadians no matter where they live. This day is not only for Canadians, but also for our Commonwealth friends and those from other countries to join in this special occasion. Join us at the Avista Hideaway Resort, Tri Trang, Patong. This event sells out every year. Tickets - thephuketnews.com/phuket-ticket-master.php

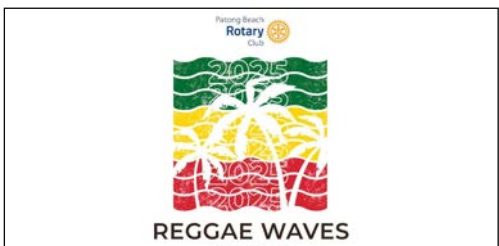
THU 16 OCT



Skål Phuket October Member Drive Dinner

We are delighted to invite you to our upcoming Skål International Phuket Member Drive Dinner, hosted by SAii Laguna Phuket. This special evening will begin at 5:00 pm with an engaging panel discussion on "The Future of Hospitality in Phuket 2027". Panelists - Bart Callens, General Manager, SAii Laguna Phuket, Khun Sears, Vice President, Thai Hotel Association (Southern Chapter) and Lighthouse, Business Development Representative. Following the discussion, we will enjoy a networking drinks and Skål dinner, surrounded by Phuket's leading professionals in hospitality and tourism. Bookings - contact@skalphuket.org

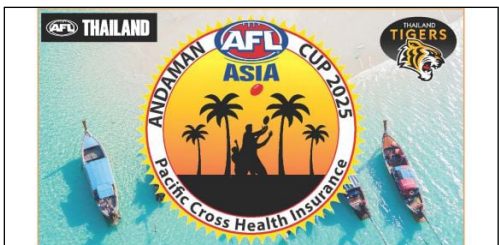
FRI 24 OCT



REGGAE WAVES

Rotary Club of Patong Beach is pleased to announce the return of Reggae Waves to be held at Carpe Diem Beach Club - Bang Tao, Phuket. Block the date for a great evening of fun and for a noble cause, all proceeds from this event will benefit the local community. More details coming soon.

SAT 25 OCT



AFL Masters Cup 2025

AFL Masters is confirmed for Phuket on October 25 from 9am at the ACG Cricket & Sports facility, Baan Liphon. This one day event features AFL teams from Indonesia, Singapore, Australia and Thailand. Players must be 35 years or older. Matches consist of 2 x 12-minute halves with a final between the top sides to decide who raises the Pacific Cross Health Insurance AFL Andaman Cup. For more info visit facebook.com/ThailandTigers

FRI 31 OCT



AustCham Joint Chambers Phuket Sundowners - October

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

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SAT 1 NOV



Spooktacular Halloween Family Fun Carnival

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TUE 4 NOV



Melbourne Cup Brunch

The fabulous Melbourne Cup Brunch is back at Casa Boho, Hyatt Regency Kamala Tuesday, 4th November • 9:30 AM – 2:30 PM • Free-flow drinks & brunch • Fashions on the Field with prizes for Best Hat, Best Dressed, Best Suited & Chicest Couple • Raffles & auctions • Live screening of the race that stops a nation • DJ with ocean views Casa Boho is the perfect brunch spot: air-conditioned, with ocean breezes and panoramic views across Kamala Bay. All proceeds go to Phuket Has Been Good To Us Foundation, funding free English education for disadvantaged children. Donation: 3,000 THB Tickets: tina@phukethasbeengoodtous.org Don't miss this party with a purpose!

SAT 8 NOV



Music Festival at Le Meridien Phuket Mai Khao Beach

Save the Date! The Experience Unlocked Music Festival on the Beach is back at Mai Khao! Get ready for an electrifying night where music meets the waves. Headlining the stage is DJ Pegg, crowned DMC Thailand 2025: The Open Champion, bringing his award-winning beats to the shore. Joining him are DJ Alex, DJ Tob, Violin Roman, Gunny Jazz Band, and a spectacular fire show under the stars. Unlimited food, free-flow drinks, and non-stop energy await you right on the beach. Le Méridien Phuket Mai Khao Beach Resort | 17:00 – 00:00 Early Bird THB 2,099 (until 31 Oct 2025) Regular THB 2,599 (01–08 Nov 2025) Call us: (+66) 76 603 699 Email: fbadmin@lemeridienmaikhao.com

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Marc Marquez wins seventh MotoGP title

MOTO GP

AN EMOTIONAL MARC Marquez clinched his seventh MotoGP world championship and his first since 2019 last Sunday (Sept 28) after finishing second at the Japan grand prix, with Francesco Bagnaia winning the race.

The Spanish Ducati rider has been in brilliant form all year and he underlined his dominance by wrapping up the title with five events of the season remaining.

He knew that placing first or second would clinch the title regardless of where his brother and closest championship rival Alex finished.

After crossing the line, Marquez raised both arms aloft as his achievement began to sink in.

It marked a triumphant return from an injury nightmare when he broke his right arm in 2020, almost convincing him to hang up his helmet.

"It's impossible even to speak," said the 32-year-old as he choked back tears.

"I just want to enjoy the



Marquez. Photo: AFP

moment. It's true that it was difficult, super difficult."

Marquez clinched the world championship in Japan for the fourth time in his career, following 2014, 2016 and 2018 and now draws level with Italian motorcycle legend Valentino Rossi on seven titles.

Marquez's fellow Ducati rider Bagnaia claimed only his second grand prix win of what has been a frustrating season for the two-time world champion.

The Italian also won the Saturday sprint and looked back to his best all weekend.

"I don't want to take the spotlight from Marc, he deserves the spotlight today," said Bagnaia.

AFP

Europe's big Ryder Cup triumph

GOLF

AFP

Europe fought off a thrilling United States rally to win an emotional Ryder Cup last Sunday (Sept 28) with Irishman Shane Lowry securing the trophy on a dramatic six-foot birdie putt on the 18th hole.

Lowry's tension-packed putt lifted him into a tie with American Russell Henley for the half-point that clinched Europe keeping the trophy and two late ties gave the visitors a 15-13 victory.

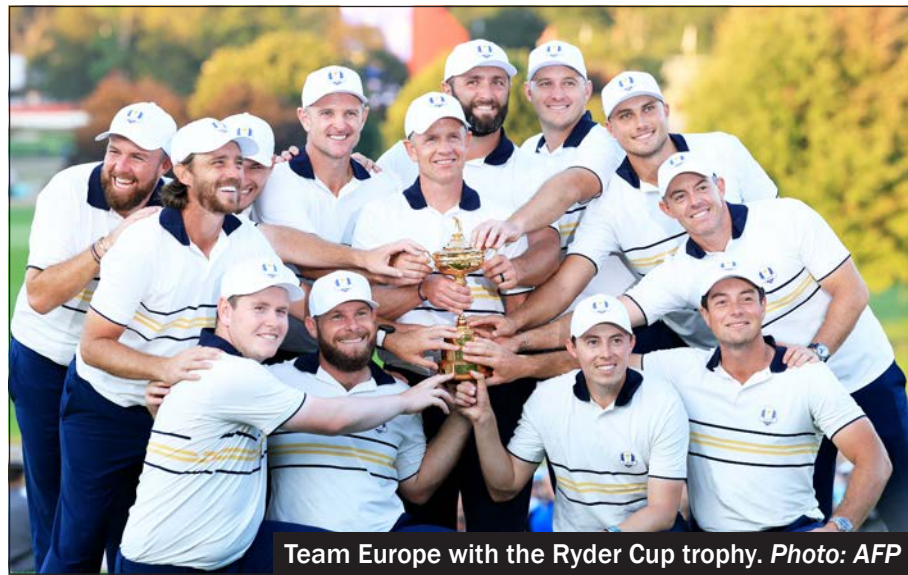
"That was the hardest couple of hours of my whole life," a tearful Lowry said. "I just can't believe that putt went in. I stood over it going 'This is it.'"

"The Ryder Cup means everything to me... To do it out there today in front of everyone – it was so hard out there."

Europe's triumph was their 11th in the past 15 Cup showdowns and their fourth on the road in that span, the first away victory since Europe's 2012 "Miracle at Medinah".

"It was probably the most stressful 12 hours of my life," Europe captain Luke Donald said. "I didn't think they'd be this tough on Sunday. They fought so hard. But we got it done."

Americans lead the all-time rivalry 27-16-2 but Europe lead 13-9-1 since the roster was expanded beyond



Team Europe with the Ryder Cup trophy. Photo: AFP

Britain and Ireland in 1979.

Europe seized a record 11.5-4.5 lead after the conclusion of the pairs sessions, which became 12-5 after Norway's Viktor Hovland withdrew from singles due to a neck injury and his match with Harris English was declared a draw.

Early losses by Rory McIlroy, Jon Rahm, Tommy Fleetwood and Justin Rose had Europe reeling.

But Sweden's Ludvig Aberg beat Patrick Cantlay 2&1 for the only Europe singles win of the day and Matt Fitzpatrick, despite squandering a 5-up lead after seven holes, tied Bryson DeChambeau to put Europe on the brink.

Having won the Cup in Rome in 2023, Europe needed only 14 points to keep it while the Americans needed

14.5 point to recapture it, which would have taken the greatest last-day comeback in Cup history.

It nearly happened and tensions grew to epic levels before Lowry's heroic finish.

Europe skipper Donald, who guided Europe's 2023 win at Rome, became the first captain to win back-to-back Cups since English compatriot Tony Jacklin in 1987.

Asked about a return in 2027, Donald said, "I don't think my heart can take two more years. We'll see."

Donald's US counterpart Keegan Bradley meanwhile took sole responsibility for the loss.

"This is no one's fault but mine. When you are the leader of the team... and you lose, you have to take the blame," he said.

Springboks on target for Championship title



THE GLOBAL RUGBY COACH

THE WOUNDED ALL BLACKS bounced back against the Wallabies in Auckland last Saturday (Sept 27) to record a 33-24 win in The Rugby Championship.

Following the loss to South Africa the previous week in Wellington, which stirred the media and supporters into a frenzied mob, New Zealand returned to the fortress that is Eden Park and quickly raced into a 20-3 lead.

By half-time Australia had fought back to within 3 points, and the unlikely seemed very likely. However, the All Blacks are made of sterner stuff, and a late score secured the win.

Over in Durban, South African coach Rassie Erasmus shuffled his cards once again and it paid off with a resounding 67-30 victory against Argentina.

As a South African friend told me, "Erasmus will keep doing this until they retain the next World Cup."



Feinberg-Mngomezulu. Photo: AFP

The game saw the emergence of the latest Springbok fly-half Sacha Feinberg-Mngomezulu, who could well be the star of the 2027 World Cup in Australia.

The final two matches tomorrow (Oct 4) see the Wallabies take on the All Blacks in Perth, while Argentina face South Africa in London. I'm tipping the latter to emerge as overall winners of The Rugby Championship.

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.

England on top of the world

RUGBY

ALEX MATTHEWS SCORED two tries as tournament hosts and favourites England ended their long wait to win a third Women's Rugby World Cup title with a 33-13 victory over Canada at Twickenham last Saturday (Sept 27).

Victory in front of a record and raucous crowd of 81,885 gave England their first world title since defeating Canada 21-9 in the 2014 final in Paris – a match in which No 8 Matthews played – and third in total following their 1994 triumph.

This success also extended England's record run to 33 consecutive wins, with the Red Roses having won 63 of their past 64 matches – the lone blemish a defeat by New Zealand in the COVID-delayed 2022 final.

It was a much-needed win for an England side whose temperament had been repeatedly called into question after five defeats by New Zealand in the previous six World Cup finals.

"It's absolutely unbelievable, to do it here at home," said England captain Zoe Aldcroft after a much-needed win that followed five defeats by New Zealand in the previous six World Cup finals.



England lift the trophy. Photo: AFP

"I am just so proud of every single one of those girls."

This was England's best performance of the tournament, with coach John Mitchell, brought in after the team's 2022 heartache specifically to win the World Cup, saying: "I thought we were superb defensively in the tournament; our attack didn't need to be at its best but it was effective enough to get the job done."

Mitchell added England had "massive respect" for Canada. "They are a good side, but they hadn't come up against us and we were waiting," he said.

'BETTER THAN US'

Canada coach Kevin Rouet admitted England deserved to win.

"I think they were just better than us. Against England, if you don't score when you have to score, you can't win the game," he said.

England enjoyed a 21-8 half-time lead after outscoring Canada, appearing in just their second final, three tries to one.

Canada's Asia Hogan-Rochester opened the scoring in just the fifth minute before England hit back through Ellie Kildunne, Amy Cokayne and Matthews.

Fly-half Zoe Harrison converted all three of those tries in front of a crowd that comfortably surpassed the previous highest attendance for a 15-a-side women's international of 58,498 at Twickenham for England's 2023 Six Nations match against France.

England's forward power proved increasingly telling and lock Abbie Ward's try early in the second half put them in command at 26-8 before Matthews, after a period of sustained Canada pressure, scored her second try 11 minutes from time to seal the win. AFP

Eagles soar to topple Reds

FOOTBALL

AFP

Liverpool's perfect Premier League start came undone in a 2-1 defeat at Crystal Palace last Saturday (Sept 27) as The Eagles became the only undefeated team in the Premier League after extending their club record run to 18 games in all competitions without losing.

The English champions were finally made to pay for another disjointed performance after being bailed out by a series of late goals in winning their opening five league games.

Ismaila Sarr fired the FA Cup winners into an early lead before Federico Chiesa swept home a loose ball in the box to equalise on 87 minutes.

However, substitute Eddie Nketiah produced a composed finish in a packed penalty area with almost the last kick of the game.

"These are the moments why we love football. The fans will have a great Saturday evening now," said Palace boss Oliver Glasner.

"We deserved it. Great performance, great game, great win."

Victory takes Palace up to third and within three points of Liverpool at the top of the table.

Arsenal produced a dramatic late fightback to win 2-1 at Newcastle on Sunday to move into second place, two points behind Liverpool.



Palace's Eddie Nketiah scores the winner against Liverpool. Photo: AFP

The Gunners were heading for a fourth consecutive defeat at St. James' Park after falling behind to Nick Woltemade's first-half header.

However, Mikel Merino headed in the equaliser before Gabriel Magalhães powered in the winner from a 96th minute corner.

DISASTROUS

Manchester United boss Ruben Amorim's wait for back-to-back Premier League wins goes on, nearly a year into his reign, after a disastrous defensive display at Brentford saw his team fall to a 3-1 defeat.

Igor Thiago scored twice for the home team before Benjamin Sesko's struck his first goal for United.

Bruno Fernandes then missed a penalty before Mathias Jensen sealed victory for the home side late on.

Manchester City cruised to a 5-1

win against Burnley with Erling Haaland's brace taking his tally for the season to 15 goals in nine games for club and country.

For the second consecutive weekend, Chelsea were undone by a red card in a 3-1 defeat to Brighton while Tottenham needed a 94th minute equaliser from Joao Palhinha to rescue a 1-1 draw at home to bottom-of-the-table Wolves.

Newly-promoted Sunderland are up to fifth after Omar Alderete scored the only goal at the City Ground to leave Ange Postecoglou still without a win as Nottingham Forest manager, while Bournemouth and Leeds drew 2-2 at Elland Road.

Aston Villa earned their first win of the season thanks to a 3-1 triumph over Fulham at Villa Park, while West Ham's new manager Nuno Espirito Santo saw his side draw 1-1 at Everton.

IPC lifts partial suspensions of Russia, Belarus athletes

PARALYMPICS

THE INTERNATIONAL Paralympic Committee (IPC) has lifted a partial suspension of Russia and Belarus imposed since Moscow's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

This decision, taken at the IPC's general assembly meeting in Seoul, South Korea last Saturday (Sept 27), opens the way for Russian and Belarusian athletes to compete under their own flags at the Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics next year.

However, the decision on which nations compete in the six sports on the winter programme is governed by the international sports federations that have so far maintained a ban on Russian and Belarusian athletes.

The Russian Paralympic Committee welcomed the move, calling it "a fair decision" and "an example of how athletes' rights should be protected without discrimination on national or political grounds."

To be eligible, each athlete must have an active licence for the 2025/26



Photo: AFP

season from their international federations for para Alpine skiing, para cross-country skiing, para snowboarding, para biathlon, para ice hockey and wheelchair curling.

The partial suspension was adopted by the IPC General Assembly in 2023.

However some Russian and Belarusian athletes were permitted to compete at the 2024 Summer Paralympics in Paris under a neutral flag and strict neutrality conditions.

The IPC had excluded the Russian and Belarusian Paralympic Committees from the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.

The IPC's latest decision comes eight days after the International Olympic Committee authorised the presence of Russian and Belarusian athletes at the Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics, providing they compete under a neutral flag and meet neutrality conditions. AFP

Thailand wins back right to host petanque events

PETANQUE

A THAI OLYMPIC Committee delegation has successfully negotiated the return of petanque to the 33rd SEA Games after urgent talks in France with the World Petanque and Bowls Confederation (WPBC) on Monday (Sept 29).

The breakthrough came after WPBC president Claude Azema had earlier ordered Thailand barred from staging petanque competitions at the regional games, citing irregularities by the Petanque Association of Thailand and the Sports Authority of Thailand's (SAT) failure to comply with the federation's ruling.

The dispute also led to Thailand being suspended from international competition.

Deputy Prime Minister Capt Thammanat Prompao, who oversees sports, intervened by directing the national Olympic committee to dispatch a high-level delegation to France.

The team – led by Olympic committee president



From left: Pimol Srivikorn; Claude Azema; Chaiphak Siriwat. Photo: Bangkok Post

Pimol Srivikorn, vice president Chaiphak Siriwat and Gen Mangorn Kosin – presented a formal letter pledging reforms and compliance with WPBC guidelines. The letter was co-signed by Thammanat and SAT governor Gongsak Yodmani.

Following the assurances, Azema expressed satisfaction and agreed to reinstate petanque as a medal sport at the 33rd SEA Games in Thailand, scheduled for Dec 9-20, 2025.

Pimol hailed the outcome as a collective success, thanking Thammanat, Gongsak and the members of his negotiating team for restoring Thailand's credibility.

"This is a victory for our

athletes, for the Thai people, and for the country's reputation in ASEAN," he said.

The international petanque community was shaken earlier this month by an unprecedented decision from the WPBC to ban the sport from the 2025 SEA Games, following a governance crisis within Thailand's national federation.

The exclusion of petanque from the 2025 SEA Games would have been a significant setback for Thailand, who have traditionally been a powerhouse at regional and international levels, topping the world federation's 2025 rankings ahead of France, where the ball sport originated. Bangkok Post

OVER 35's AUSTRALIAN RULES FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT IN PARADISE

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Sport



Thai petanque hosting ban lifted > p15



A selection of Phuket athletes cheer their achievements. Photos: Sports Association of Phuket

ALL SPORTS

The Phuket News
editor3@classactmedia.co.th

Officials have hailed the standard of sporting prowess among Phuket residents, praising athletes of all ages and abilities who have collectively won more than 100 medals at a variety of national sporting competitions in the past calendar year.

Whether it be emerging talent at the National Youth Games, older participants at the National Senior Games or disabled athletes at the National Para Games, the medals have continued to flow, which officials claim is testimony to the talent, dedication and hard work of all involved.

Speaking at a media meeting held at Prem Suk Restaurant in Mueang on Sept 17, Thanawut Petchara, the director of the Phuket office of the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT), paid praise to Phuket athletes who have thus far amassed over 100 medals at national and inter-provincial competitions.

The key events that Phuket athletes participated in and achieved medal recognition in include:

- The 49th National Games, otherwise known as the “Chan Games”, held in Chanthaburi Province from Dec 9-20, 2024, where 226 athletes representing Phuket won five gold medals, 13 silver and 16 bronze, ranking 9th in the country’s southern region and 37th nationwide.



- The 39th National Para Games, known as the “Anmanee Games”, held in Chanthaburi between Jan 25-31, where 47 Phuket athletes won four gold medals, two silver medals, and four bronze medals, ranking 7th in the southern region and 25th nationally.

- The 40th National Youth Games, otherwise known as the “Young Shark Chon Games” in Chonburi Province from Mar 23 to Apr 3, saw 440 athletes from Phuket participated in over 29 sports, winning 10 gold, 11 silver and 12 bronze medals to rank 6th in the southern region and 22nd nationally.

- At the 7th National Senior Games, known as the “Nibong Games” and “Khao Lam Games,” held in Chonburi from Apr 20-26, Phuket athletes won a total of 13 gold, 13 silver and 10 bronze medals, placing them 6th in the southern region and 19th nationwide.

PROUD

Mr Thanawut praised all the Phuket athletes who contributed to the impressive overall tally of more than 100 medals, stating their collective achievements demonstrated the potential, dedication and readiness of the province’s sports personnel.

He added that each athlete competing should be proud of their personal and collective achievements, praising them for representing the province with style, grace and the highest levels of sporting integrity. He further added that all Phuket residents should be proud of the athletes’ conduct and accomplishments.

Mr Thanawut was also quick to highlight that the achievements reflect the continuous cooperation of all sectors, including government agencies, sports associations, coaches and parents, who work tirelessly together to

help the athletes develop and achieve their potential.

Similarly, he explained, the cooperative also encourages and inspires youngsters to engage in sports in the first place, which provides the opportunity for them to develop into top class athletes who one day may potentially represent not only Phuket but Thailand in international sporting competition.

Promoting and developing a healthy and active lifestyle, especially among youngsters, is an integral part of his office’s directive, Mr Thanawut said, adding that it also helps deter impressionable youngsters away from dangerous societal temptations such as drugs and crime.

NEXT GENERATION

While acknowledging the fine efforts of all competing athletes across all competitions, Mr Thanawut extended particular praise to the achievements of young athletes at the 40th National Youth Games in Chonburi earlier this year, explaining how important this event is in highlighting the potential of the next generation of sports stars from Phuket and how the annual tournament is regarded as an important step in cultivating core sporting strength for the future.

Among the medal winners at the 40th National Youth Games in Chonburi were: Korakot Nonthichan, who won a gold medal in jiu-jitsu in the women’s under 15 years of age, under 36kg weight class; Kawinthida

Ngamriap, who won bronze in jiu-jitsu in the women’s under 15 years of age, under 40kg weight class; Patin Mutitakun, who won gold in wushu; Thasharat Bhimonpun, who won silver in Wushu; and Prawarin Tawes-amhan, who won bronze in Wushu.

Isika Choden Semaphakdee won silver in the women’s individual sabre fencing; Victor Vorona, won silver in the men’s singles taekwondo, under 63kg weight class; Nomsen Natnicha Saimuang won bronze in the women’s under 59kg weight division in judo; Bai Phlu Pailin Kongchuai won bronze in the women’s cadet under 44kg division in judo; and the men’s golf team won gold in the “extreme team” golf event.

Looking forward Mr Thanawut revealed how he and all the associated personnel at the SAT Phuket office are working hard towards upcoming events, including: the 41st National Youth Games in Surat Thai, to be held in May 2026; the 8th National Senior Games, known as the “Tapi Games” in June 2026; the 50th National Games in Udon Thani in December 2026; and the 40th National Games for the Disabled, otherwise known as the “Ban Chiang Games”, in January 2027.

“Phuket aims to build on this year’s success and systematically develop athletes at all levels to achieve even more outstanding performances on national and international sports stages in the future,” concluded Mr Thanawut.