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## SCARE TACTICS



Police hold back as they detonate the device at Phuket Airport. Image: Courtesy of Phuket Hod Jung

## BOMB SCARES RATTLE ISLAND, SPUR CALL FOR CALM, UNITY

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Phuket Islamic Council has called for heightened vigilance and full co-operation with authorities to protect the province from ill-intentioned individuals following a series of co-ordinated bomb scares that have shaken the island.

Komol Damluk, President of the Phuket Islamic Council, stressed to *The Phuket News* that such incidents must not be allowed to destabilise the community or undermine Phuket's standing as a world-class tourist destination.

Formal notices were promptly sent to all 63 mosques across the province, urging mosque leaders to step up security, closely monitor

religious gatherings, and carefully screen individuals participating in religious activities.

"As soon as we became aware of the situation, we instructed police to review all CCTV footage at mosques and provided full access to assist with their investigations," Mr Komol said.

"We have already uncovered evidence showing that the suspect visited Tha Chatchai Mosque to eat and pray before carrying out the planned actions later that afternoon."

Security protocols at mosques have since been reinforced, with 15 imams stationed throughout the province tasked with supporting surveillance efforts and safeguarding their communities. The Council also provided key evidence to

investigators, including vehicle details that assisted police in tracking the suspect's movements across the island.

"We are not standing by idly. We are working closely with the authorities at every stage, including supporting forensic evidence collection and DNA sampling. We are fully committed to ensuring Phuket's safety," Mr Komol added.

### ASSURANCES

Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat reassured the public that the situation was under control following the discovery of suspicious objects at multiple locations, including Phuket International Airport, Patong Beach, Laem Phromthep, Surin Beach – and in Phang Nga.

"These incidents were designed to create panic, not to cause harm. The objects made loud noises but contained no shrapnel or lethal components," Governor Sophon confirmed after chairing an emergency security meeting.

The Governor ordered a province-wide security reinforcement, including increased police patrols, random checks at key locations and advanced screening at entry points such as Phuket Checkpoint at Tha Chatchai. Authorities also plan to introduce facial recognition and dangerous goods detection technologies.

"The public, including tourists, should remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity immediately. We must all work together to keep Phuket safe and protect our..."

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# News



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## Bomb scares trigger unity

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...tourism industry," the Governor urged.

### NOT INTENDED TO KILL

Phuket Provincial Police Commander Pol Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum confirmed that the devices discovered across Phuket and in neighbouring Phang Nga were not constructed to inflict mass casualties.

"One of the devices was concealed beneath a cement base at Laem Phromthep in an isolated area rarely visited by the public. This strongly suggests there was no intent to harm," Maj Gen Sinlert said.

Police believe the motive was to create widespread fear and destabilise public confidence, rather than to injure or kill.

Investigations revealed that the suspects used legally registered vehicles to travel into Phuket, passing through checkpoints without raising suspicion. Authorities are also analysing whether the timing and numerical patterns of the incidents carry any hidden significance.

### INTERCEPTED

The security threat escalated after two men transporting explosive devices were arrested at a police checkpoint in Phang Nga early on the morning of June 24.

The suspects, identified as Muhamma Wading, 29,

from Yaring District, Pattani, and Sulaiman Gasa, 27, from Yarang District, Pattani, were stopped around 3:30am near Phang Nga Provincial Hall while travelling in a black Honda City with Surin licence plates.

A search of the vehicle uncovered a suspicious device – a stopwatch wired to a circuit board – hidden among their clothing and bedding. Further inspection confirmed the device contained explosive materials.

Both men confessed that they had been hired to deliver the vehicle, pre-loaded with explosives, from Baan Sakom in Songkhla Province to Phuket. Their journey took them through Songkhla, Phatthalung, Trang, Krabi and Phang Nga before their arrest.

The men said they had received GPS instructions remotely from those who hired them. Their confessions led police to uncover additional devices already planted around Phuket.

The prime suspect, Mahama Wadeh, confessed to planting three of the devices, including the motorcycle bomb at Phuket Airport, which had been disguised inside a food delivery bag. He also admitted to planting devices at Patong Beach and Laem Phromthep.

Wadeh revealed that he had worked with two



Komol Damluk, President of the Phuket Islamic Council. Photo: Phuket Islamic Council

accomplices, who were also arrested.

Following the arrests, Maj Gen Sinlert convened an urgent meeting with all police station chiefs in Phuket, ordering heightened inspections and increased patrols at popular beaches, tourist hotspots, entertainment venues, and transport hubs.

### DEVICES DISCOVERED

The first device was found on the evening of June 25 at Phuket International Airport. The suspicious object was hidden in an abandoned motorcycle near the domestic terminal and was safely destroyed by Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams.

The following morning, June 26, another device was discovered at Patong Beach near the Loma Intersection

on Thaweewong Rd, in front of a hotel. Officials believe the object had been placed several days earlier.

Shortly after, a third device was uncovered at Laem Phromthep. The device had been buried under a cement base and covered with rocks in an isolated area. It was also safely destroyed.

On June 27, a fourth device was found on the Phang Nga side of the Sarasin Bridge, in Tambon Khok Kloi, Takua Thung District. That same day, a fifth device was located in front of the Phang Nga Provincial Governor's residence.

A second device at Patong Beach was also found and destroyed on the afternoon of June 27, while the final device was discovered at Surin Beach at

around 5:20pm, buried near a public restroom in a construction area.

Authorities confirmed that all devices suspected of being planted as part of the co-ordinated scare campaign had been found and safely disposed of.

In a separate incident, EOD teams in Krabi safely defused three homemade bombs believed to be linked to the same wider network, including one device placed just 30 metres from the provincial police station.

### AIRPORT SECURITY

In response to the escalating situation, Phuket International Airport introduced strict new access control measures.

Entry and exit points at both terminals have been reorganised, with specific doors designated for entry or exit to better manage passenger flow.

Vehicle security was also significantly reinforced, with all cars entering the airport's five-storey parking structure now subject to ID checks and thorough inspections.

Airport authorities urged passengers and visitors to arrive well in advance to accommodate the new security procedures and emphasised that safety remains the airport's top priority.

"Safety is our standard, and service is our heart," Airports of Thailand Phuket

(AoT Phuket) said in its announcement.

At time of press the heightened security measures were still in effect.

### CALM AND CO-OPERATION

At the height of the scare, Deputy Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai urged the public and media not to jump to conclusions linking the Phuket incidents to the southern insurgency.

"There is no confirmed connection to terrorism or the unrest in the southern provinces. Premature speculation only fuels panic and could harm the nation's international image," he warned.

Chemical substances collected from the scenes were still undergoing forensic analysis, he said.

However, days later, Mr Phumtham still had yet to publicly recognise that the suspects arrested for planting the devices were all from Thailand's troubled Deep South.

Meanwhile, as the investigation continues, police and provincial officials continue to call for calm and public cooperation.

"Our surveillance and cooperation systems have worked effectively so far, but we must not become complacent," said Maj Gen Sinlert. "The public's support is essential to maintaining safety."

## Phuket soldier laid to rest with royal honours

HIS MAJESTY THE King has graciously bestowed royal burial soil in a special ceremony to honour Private First Class (PFC) Pakom Suden, a young Phuket soldier who was killed while on patrol in Thailand's Deep South last week.

The solemn ceremony took place at 1:30pm on June 26 at the Muslim cemetery in Baan Bang Malao, Sakhu, with Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat and Maj Gen Apinan Chaemchaeng, Commander of the 5<sup>th</sup>

Infantry Division, presiding.

The burial was attended by officials, soldiers, police officers, Islamic religious leaders and grieving family members. The proceedings began with the Imam reciting Al-Fatihah, followed by a speech of gratitude from a family representative.

His Majesty's royal representative then presented the national flag, Bang Rajan medals for bravery and a royal certificate to PFC Pakom's family, in an atmosphere filled with mourning.

PFC Pakom, 22, served as a machine gunner with the 3rd Rifle Platoon, 1st Infantry Company, Special Operations Unit. He was fatally shot by a sniper during a security patrol in Baan Wang Hin, Bannang Sata District, Yala Province, on June 17. He died from his injuries while being transported to hospital.

His body was flown back to Phuket later that evening, where an honour guard from the 1st Battalion, 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment formally received him. That night, his remains were

taken to the Darul Abidin Mosque in Bang Malao for Islamic funeral rites, which were held the following morning.

The funeral was attended by military commanders, local officials and community members who gathered to pay their final respects. Among them were Thalang District Chief Siwat Rawangkun, Sakhu Mayor Trin Panyawai and senior police officers.

On June 19, Their Majesties the King and Queen also sent a royal gift basket to PFC Pakom's



Photo: PR Phuket

family, a gesture of personal condolence and support, delivered by Phuket Vice Governor Suwit Phansengiam.

The final royal tribute on June 26 – the bestowal of burial soil – is a high honour, reserved for those who have sacrificed their lives in the service of

the nation's peace and security.

PFC Pakom's family, friends and community members have expressed profound gratitude for the royal grace and recognition shown throughout their time of loss, said an official report of the event. *The Phuket News*



# Phuket Pride takes to the streets

The Phuket News

editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket Town proudly opened its streets to diversity and equality on Saturday (June 28) as thousands gathered for the vibrant 'Phuket City Pride 2025' festival, held under the theme 'Wave of Generations' to promote inclusivity across all ages, genders and identities.

Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat officially launched the event at the Chartered Bank intersection on Thalang Rd in the heart of Phuket Old Town. The grand celebration, featuring a colourful parade and a variety of cultural activities, aimed to showcase Phuket as a 'city of equality' on the global stage and to strengthen its image as an international destination that embraces diversity.

The opening ceremony was led by Phuket Town Mayor Suphot La-ongphet, who welcomed participants and reaffirmed the city's commitment to supporting the rights and freedoms of the LGBTQIA+ community.



Photo: PR Phuket

"Phuket City Pride is not just a festival. It is a powerful statement that our city is a safe, welcoming space for everyone. We aim to foster understanding and acceptance while driving sustainable, inclusive tourism that leaves no one behind," Mayor Suphot said during a live interview on national television.

The event was a collaborative effort between

the public and private sectors, local administrative organisations, LGBTQIA+ community groups, and networks from across the country. Among the key supporters was Thirasak Phalang-ngam, Chairman of Andaman Charoen Co Ltd., who marched in the parade to demonstrate private sector support for diversity and human rights.

Phuket Nine Co Ltd also

played a prominent role, with its executive Paphasorn Meepa leading a lively procession titled 'Sound of Pride', which highlighted the importance of giving voice to freedom and equality across genders and generations.

"This is about more than celebration – it's about being heard," Ms Paphasorn said. "Everyone should have the right to live, love,

and express themselves freely. That's what the 'Sound of Pride' represents."

The highlight of the festival was a grand rainbow flag parade that swept through the streets of Phuket's Old Town, drawing more than 4,000 participants, including local and international tourists, artists, celebrities, government officials and residents.

Adding a unique cultural touch to this year's event was the introduction of 'Pride Bunny', the official mascot of Phuket City Pride 2025. The rabbit, inspired by Chinese folklore, symbolises gender fluidity, as the animals were believed to exhibit characteristics that blurred gender distinctions. The Pride Bunny served as a powerful symbol of the festival's core message: there are no boundaries when it comes to gender identity.

Throughout the day, the celebration featured live performances, cultural showcases, interactive booths and a seminar on human rights and gender equality. The activities

provided an open, educational platform for participants to explore LGBTQIA+ issues, promote social harmony, and encourage dialogue across communities.

The event's 'Wave of Generations' theme resonated strongly, emphasising the role of people from all backgrounds in shaping a future where diversity is not only accepted but celebrated.

Phuket officials, including Governor Sophon, stressed that the province is determined to position itself as a leading destination for inclusive tourism, where people of every identity can feel safe, valued and free.

"This is the Phuket we want the world to see: a city where equality is not just a word, but a way of life," Phuket Town Mayor Mr Suphot said.

Mayor Suphot also emphasised that Phuket City Municipality will continue to support initiatives that champion human rights, diversity, and inclusive cultural development in line with global sustainability goals.

## NACC vague over Deputy Mayor sentenced for corruption

SUWAT SAOWARAN, CHIEF of the National Anti-Corruption Commission Phuket office (NACC Phuket) has deflected from answering questions about a Phuket Town deputy mayor being jailed for corruption, with four others currently appealing the initial guilty verdict handed down against them.

The confirmation of corruption verdicts came as NACC Region 8 Assistant Secretary-General Suchart Kruakitanon held a press conference at the NACC Phuket office on June 24.

The press conference was held to announce the third-quarter performance results for fiscal year 2025, outlining the NACC's efforts to crack down on corruption in the upper southern region. Joining the press conference were directors from seven NACC provincial offices: Nakhon Sri Thammarat, Krabi, Surat Thani, Chumphon, Ranong, Phang Nga and Phuket.

NACC Region 8 Assistant Secretary-General Mr Suchart revealed that Thaworn Chirapattanasophon had been sentenced to four years in jail

for corruption over a Bang Yai Canal construction project.

Mr Thaworn was still Phuket Town Deputy Mayor at the time the charges were pressed.

However, Mr Suchart failed to present any details of the corruption case against Thaworn, or the four others also initially found guilty of corruption.

### BASIC DETAILS

NACC Phuket Chief Mr Suwat was willing to explain to *The Phuket News*, "The investigation found that the construction project was not completed according to the contract, but an extension was approved without reasonable cause, resulting in damage to the government."

"NACC Phuket resolved to indict all accused under Sections 151 and 157 of the Criminal Code, stating that the approval of the extension was not in accordance with the law and lacked legitimacy," he continued.

"In addition, NACC Phuket resolved to indict several civil servants involved with serious disciplinary offenses," he added.

The Criminal Court for Corruption and Misconduct Region 8 found Thaworn and his group guilty of unlawfully approving a project extension



Thaworn Chirapattanasophon, the Phuket Town Deputy Mayor sentenced to jail for corruption. Photo: Phuket City Municipality

without justification, causing damage to the state. "Thaworn was sentenced to four years in prison, while four others received two years and eight months," Mr Suwat confirmed.

"The contractor, Phang Nga Building Materials Partnership Ltd, was fined B20,000."

"Some of the accused have appealed the verdict and are in the process of being considered by the Appeal Court. Their legal status is still considered innocent until the final verdict is reached," Mr Suwat concluded.

### ODDITIES

Only after being pressed for clarity, Mr Suchart admitted that

the four-year jail sentence was handed down to Thaworn on Sept 11 last year.

Asked why NACC Phuket did not report the sentencing 10 months ago, Mr Suwat said, "The NACC has a policy of holding quarterly press conferences, in which we will select major cases to discuss, even though the office has many cases, but will select only the important ones."

"Previously, we held quarterly press conferences, such as last year in Surat Thani and Chumphon, and this year in Phuket in which we selected only the really major cases."

Further pressed, Mr Suchart revealed that Thaworn had entered a plea of guilty and did not appeal the verdict against him.

Yet Mr Suwat declined to answer whether the sentence was halved, a standard practice by Thai courts for those who plead guilty to charges against them.

Mr Suwat also declined to answer whether the sentence was "with probation" – meaning that Thaworn will not spend a single day in jail.

### THE FOUR OTHERS

Mr Suwat did reveal that among the "four others" found guilty of

corruption included Phuket City Municipality Palad (Chief Administrative Officer) Thawat-chai Thongmang and Kriangsak Chuchatphong, Director of the Phuket City Municipality Engineering Department.

Mr Suwat did not name the other two.

"The court saw that the Palad [Mr Thawat-chai] was a high-ranking position and therefore had a higher sentence. He was sentenced to two years and eight months in jail," he said.

"However, all four have filed an appeal against the initial guilty verdict against them. That appeal is still being heard in the Appeal Court," he added.

"The four can continue to work [as officials] while the appeal is being heard," he said.

"I think they will be given probation, but as for the deputy mayor, I will not answer further questions because the case against all of them has not yet concluded," Mr Suwat noted.

The corruption charges against Thaworn were pressed while he was Deputy Mayor under Phuket Town Mayor Somjai Suwansupana. Phuket Town now has Supachoke Laongphet as its mayor.

Natnaree Likidwatanasakul



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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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High: +36° Low: +29° Wind 11 m/s	High: +36° Low: +28° Wind 11 m/s	High: +35° Low: +28° Wind 11 m/s	High: +35° Low: +27° Wind 4 m/s	High: +35° Low: +28° Wind 4 m/s	High: +37° Low: +28° Wind 4 m/s	High: +36° Low: +27° Wind 4 m/s



Photo: Karon Municipality

## Japanese tourist drowns at Karon

A JAPANESE TOURIST has tragically drowned while swimming at Karon Beach, less than 24 hours after arriving in Phuket.

Police were alerted to the incident at around 12:30pm last Saturday (June 28), when Pol Lt Col Charas Lempan, Investigation Officer at Karon Police Station, was informed by Patong Hospital that a foreign tourist had been pronounced dead after being pulled from the water at Karon Beach.

The deceased was identified as Hikaru Oami, 34, a Japanese national. According to the duty nurse, Mr Oami had already passed away at the scene, but rescue personnel transported him to Patong Hospital in an attempt to perform CPR, which was ultimately unsuccessful.

Police later spoke to Mr Oami's wife, Aimi Oami, 33, who declined an autopsy, stating she believed her husband had clearly drowned. Officers confirmed that the couple had checked into their hotel, on Patak Rd, Friday last week (June 27) and were scheduled to stay until last Sunday (June 29).

Hotel staff reported that the couple left the hotel earlier on the Saturday morning to go swimming at Karon Beach. It is unclear what time the drowning occurred.

Authorities have recorded the case and contacted the Japanese Embassy to provide assistance. The body has been released to Mr Oami's wife for religious ceremonies.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Phuket leads major tsunami exercise

The Phuket News  
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More than 1,000 people took part in a large-scale tsunami response exercise held at Kamala Beach on June 27 aimed at improving disaster preparedness and boosting public confidence along Thailand's Andaman coast.

The tsunami drill, held under the national 'Crisis Management Exercise: C-MEX 25', was led by the Ministry of Interior and focused on testing emergency response capabilities in Phuket.

Deputy Minister of the Interior Thirat Samretwanich, who at the time was serving as the 'Acting Minister of the Interior', presided over the closing ceremony at Ratchaprachanukroh School 36.

She was joined by key officials, including Phasakorn Boonlak, Director-General of the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM), Phuket Governor Sophon Suwanarat, local government representatives from five other Andaman provinces



Photo: PR Phuket

and consular officials from nine countries.

The exercise focused on realistic tsunami scenarios specific to Phuket, with activities including evacuation drills, disaster warnings, search and rescue operations, the establishment of temporary shelters, and the deployment of high-tech response equipment such as KA-32 helicopters, high-speed boats, rescue drones, and simulated tsunami warning towers, explained an official report of the drill.

Ms Thirat highlighted the importance of regular drills in coastal areas like Phuket, saying, "Even though incidents may not happen often, we must never be complacent. We

need to be fully prepared at all times to ensure the safety of our residents and tourists."

DDPM Director-General Mr Phasakorn stressed that the exercise was a valuable opportunity to strengthen Thailand's ability to manage future tsunami risks, especially in regions that still remember the devastation of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.

The national DDPM office will now review the lessons learned from the exercise to improve local disaster response plans, update operational manuals and further develop province-specific strategies to ensure rapid and effective responses in the future, Mr Phasakorn added.

## Russian arrested on Red Notice

PHUKET IMMIGRATION officers have arrested a Russian man wanted on an Interpol 'Red Notice' for his alleged involvement in an international drug trafficking network.

The suspect, identified only as 'Mr Igor', 46, was apprehended following a coordinated investigation by Phuket Immigration in cooperation with the Foreign Affairs Division of the Royal Thai Police and the Russian Consulate in Phuket.

'Igor' was reportedly a key figure in an international drug gang and had been selling illegal drugs to customers in Russia via online platforms. His alleged criminal activities led to the issuance of a Red Notice by Interpol, identifying him as a major suspect in a transnational drug case and a serious criminal organisation.

Authorities said the suspect



Photo: Phuket Immigration

had fled to Phuket to avoid arrest and was residing in the province illegally. He was arrested on charges of overstaying his visa.

Phuket Immigration officers and the investigation team, tracked down and arrested 'Igor'. He has since been handed over to the investigation team to proceed with legal action and deportation.

The arrest was part of a crackdown, following directives from the Royal Thai Police and the Immigration Bureau to target those working illegally, engaging in transnational crimes or posing threats to public safety, said a police report. Eakkapop Thongtub

## Monk fatally shot by monk

A MONK SHOT AND KILLED a fellow monk inside a toilet Khao Rang Temple in Phuket Town last Sunday morning (June 29), following a personal conflict.

Police were alerted to the shooting at about 7:10am. Officers arrived to find the gunman, Phra Charuek Singphan, 47, from Kanchanaburi, hiding in his room at the temple.

He surrendered to the officers and handed over the firearm – a .38-calibre revolver containing six rounds of ammunition. A subsequent search of his room uncovered an additional 14 rounds.

Inside the temple's toilet, officers discovered the body of Phra Niwat Setkit, 36, who had sustained four gunshot wounds to his neck, right arm and chest. Four spent .38-calibre bullet casings and one unfired round were found at the scene.

According to police, preliminary investigations revealed



Photo: Phuket City Police

that the fatal shooting stemmed from ongoing tensions between the two monks.

Phra Charuek told police that he had long been bullied by Phra Niwat. On the morning of the incident, when Phra Niwat entered the toilet without locking the door and began playing loud sounds on his mobile phone, Phra Charuek retrieved his firearm and shot him multiple times.

Phra Charuek then reloaded the weapon and retreated to his room, where he was later apprehended.

The suspect has been charged and is in police custody as further legal proceedings continue, police confirmed. Eakkapop Thongtub



# More large projects, more concerns

## The Phuket News

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Plans for large-scale hotel and condominium developments in Phuket are facing increasing scrutiny from officials and growing criticism from local residents concerned about zoning violations, environmental impacts, and inadequate community consultation.

One of the most high-profile projects under review is the proposed Nebu Resort & Hotel Phuket in Cherg Talay. The project was recently sent back for further review after Phuket's environmental expert committee raised questions about its community engagement process and its Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report.

The issue was discussed last week during the 4th meeting of the Expert Committee on Environmental Impact Assessment Report Consideration in Environmental Protection Areas for 2025. The meeting, chaired by Phuket Vice Governor Samawit Suphanphai, called for more information before a final decision can be made.

The Nebu Resort project had already been ordered to halt construction in February after local residents raised concerns over potential zoning violations,



environmental risks, and a possibly flawed EIA process. The seven-story hotel is planned for Pasak Soi 6, an area classified as a low-density residential 'Yellow Zone'. The project is now under official investigation, with a parliamentary committee examining claims of improper approvals and insufficient community consultation.

Authorities have confirmed that no construction permits will be granted until the matter is fully resolved. Additional issues include misleading marketing, with the project promoted as being in Bang Tao and only a nine-minute walk from the beach. In reality, Google Maps shows the beach is a nine-minute motorbike ride away, or nearly an hour's walk.

### OTHER PROJECTS

The same environmental committee also reviewed seven

other large hotel and residential projects that passed initial inspections:

- \* Madeit Hotel project
- \* NC Kata Beach Hotel project
- \* Sugar Marina Hotel-POP-Kata-Beach project
- \* The Title Hotel Kata project
- \* Payla Cherg Talay Condominium Projects (Phases 1 and 2)
- \* Panya Beach Hotel Project on Naka Yai Island

The committee also approved the cancellation of the EIA for the proposed Chatrium Hotel Surin Beach Phuket project after the developer withdrew.

Another project, the Veranda Suite Phuket condominium, requested to split its development into two phases due to land ownership boundaries. The committee approved this change as it did not alter environmental conditions.

Meanwhile, the Utopia Urban Glam development in Rawai is moving ahead, despite ongoing concerns about large-scale developments in residential areas. The seven-story project, featuring 110 residential units, seven swimming pools, a private cinema, a fitness centre, and a rooftop Sky Lounge, is being actively promoted by local officials as a key driver of Phuket's economy.

The project is led by Utopia Development Co Ltd and was launched with a traditional Brahmin ceremony on June 25. Company executives, investors, and government representatives attended the event.

According to the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket), the project is designed to attract foreign investors, particularly from China and Russia, which remain major players in Phuket's real estate sector. Officials highlighted the potential economic benefits, including job creation and boosting Phuket's profile as a luxury, international lifestyle destination.

Construction is scheduled for completion in December 2027. PR Phuket described the project as a significant part of the government's five-year development plan for Phuket, aiming to

position the island as a modern, sustainable economic city.

### MOUNTING CONCERNS

Despite the promotional efforts, concerns about the rapid pace of development continue to grow. Phuket's chief town planner, Pakorn Waraphasakul, is now working to revise regulations to allow larger hotels and condominium projects in 'Yellow Zones' – areas currently zoned for low-density residential use.

Critics argue that developers are already finding ways to bypass restrictions by splitting large projects into smaller ones to avoid strict environmental reviews. Phuket MP Thitikan Thitipruethikul has publicly warned about this tactic.

Poonsak Chanchampi, Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Land and Resources, who recently visited Phuket, said the island is facing serious governance challenges. He cited weak oversight, ineffective public consultation, and possible conflicts of interest in project approvals. He warned that without stricter zoning enforcement and more transparent procedures, Phuket could suffer long-term environmental damage and uncontrolled urban sprawl.

*The Phuket News*

## Teen pregnancies hit officials' agenda

PHUKET OFFICIALS HAVE REnewed their efforts to address teenage pregnancy, a persistent social issue with wide-ranging impacts, by convening a key multi-agency meeting to review prevention strategies and push for stronger, coordinated action across the province.

A meeting of the Subcommittee on Prevention and Resolution of Teenage Pregnancy Problems held at the Phuket Public Health Office last week brought together representatives from public health, education, social development, and other key sectors to review progress and strengthen efforts to tackle teenage pregnancy in the province.

The subcommittee, formally established under a 2022 provincial order, is working to ensure that Phuket's strategy aligns with national policies and delivers tangible results, said an official report of the meeting.

Officials reviewed the current situation of teenage pregnancy in Phuket and evaluated progress under the province's five key prevention strategies, which have been in place since 2017 and will continue until 2026, the report said.

However, the official report failed to cite any no statistics for teenage pregnancies in Phuket presented at the meeting.

Regardless, the official report noted that the strategies focus on improving sexuality education, promoting family and community involvement, providing accessible reproductive health services, protecting teenagers' reproductive health rights and using data and research to guide effective interventions.



Photo: PR Phuket

The meeting also considered updates to the subcommittee's structure and discussed the selection of model schools and local administrative organisations that demonstrate best practices in preventing teenage pregnancy.

These models will be chosen by a selection committee representing Phuket's education, social development and local government sectors, with final results to be submitted to the PPHO, the report said.

To raise awareness, the subcommittee will also launch a public relations campaign under the theme: 'Teenagers Don't Get Pregnant, Invite Friends to Prevent, Far From Unplanned Pregnancy' The Line Teen Club platform will also be promoted as a supportive space for teenagers to access information and resources.

Phuket Vice Governor Samawit Suphanphai emphasised the need for co-ordinated, sustained action across sectors, noting that teenage pregnancy has long-term social, economic and health impacts, especially in a diverse, tourism-driven province like Phuket. He stressed that prevention efforts must be accessible, safe, and genuinely responsive to the needs of young people. *The Phuket News*



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# Cannabis players brace for impact

Natnaree Likidwatanasakun  
reporter1@classactmedia.co.th

The Phuket cannabis industry is facing a sharp downturn following the new announcement from the Ministry of Public Health that tightens restrictions on cannabis use and sales across Thailand.

Under the new order, cannabis is now strictly designated for licensed medical use only, and the sale of cannabis products without appropriate licensing, including online, is banned.

The announcement also prohibits the sale of controlled herbs or cannabis-derived products for commercial purposes, unless prescribed by a doctor.

Poonwarit Wangpatravanich, President of the Phuket Cannabis Association (PCA), said the announcement will result in a significant drop in cannabis retail sales, particularly affecting small business owners.

"This is a transition period," said Mr Poonwarit. "Business owners and customers are frustrated –



Photo: Poonwarit Wangpatravanich

many wonder why they now need medical certificates. But over the next few months, we expect genuine users will adjust and come prepared with documents."

Mr Poonwarit told *The Phuket News* that the policy shift will hit the economy hard in the short term.

"Income will drop. Phuket's GDP will be affected. But we must follow the law," he said, adding that the association is ready to advise any operators seeking help navigating the changes.

Phuket alone is home to more than 2,000 licensed cannabis shops, Mr Poonwarit noted. Nationally, they estimate 20,000 licensed shops.

Mr Poonwarit believes cannabis shops can adapt by collaborating with clinics or pharmacies.

"It's not just patients with serious conditions – people dealing with stress, insomnia or appetite issues may also qualify for medical certificates," he explained.

"Clinics and cannabis

shops can work together to ensure proper access under the new regulations," he added.

He also defended cannabis as a draw for international visitors. "The legality of cannabis is one part of the reason tourists choose Thailand," he said. "We shouldn't let personal bias overshadow the real economic benefits."

## ONLY POSITIVE

Kongsak Koophongsakorn, President of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce,

welcomed the new control measures as long overdue.

"In the past, the Phuket Chamber of Commerce has always protested that there has been neglect in allowing the use of cannabis, trading cannabis that is against the purpose of the law from the beginning, or the purpose that you said was to use it for medical purposes, or the original purpose.

"This is how it should have been from the beginning. When cannabis was decriminalised, the intention was clearly for medical use," Mr Kongsak said.

He criticised the previous delay in issuing control regulations, saying the lack of oversight created societal issues and damaged Thailand's image.

Mr Kongsak sees the new rules as a positive move for tourism, especially for families who had concerns over the smell and visibility of cannabis.

"Many foreign tourists, especially those with families, felt unsafe. Now, they'll have more confidence that cannabis use is regulated," he said.

Mr Kongsak acknowledged that while the new

restrictions may affect some small cannabis shops, the overall impact on the economy is limited.

"Cannabis was never intended for free trade, so this is simply a return to its original purpose," he said.

"Large operators have always known it was meant for medical use, so there's little ground for opposition. The announcement only prevents those without medical certificates from buying," he added.

He explained that tourism would likely benefit. "I think it is only good and has a positive effect on the tourism business for sure," he said.

Mr Kongsak's position is against relying on cannabis to drive economic growth. "We shouldn't let drugs or intoxicants become legal just to stimulate the economy. It can't be done. There are many other sectors that deserve stronger support than cannabis.

"Cannabis was never meant for free trade. There are other industries that deserve more focus. We shouldn't rely on drugs to stimulate the economy," he repeated.

## Discovery of devices fails to deter tourists

DESPITE THE INTRODUCTION of heightened security measures following the discovery of several suspected explosive devices in two southern tourist provinces last week, tourism operators are still concerned the incident will reinforce negative perceptions concerning safety in Thailand, though none have reported cancellations.

The suspected devices were discovered in the parking area of Phuket airport, on Patong Beach and at Promthep Cape, as well as in Krabi Town's centre. The devices were safely destroyed, without causing any damage, and two suspects were arrested.

In response, the provincial administrations immediately increased security measures.

"Tourism operators remain on alert and continue to inform our staff members to step up safety measures and take care of our guests," said Chinnawat Udomniyom, president of Phuket



A security official scans Surin beach in Phuket last week. Photo: Phuket Police

Boutique Accommodation Consortium.

These types of events rarely occur in the Andaman provinces, he said.

The tourism industry is sensitive to suspected devices discovered in tourist areas, said Mr Chinnawat.

However, foreign tourists have continued to check in as usual at hotels over the past few days, with no reports of guests immediately checking out or of cancellations, he said.

"If the authorities can effectively control the situation, tourism sentiment should not worsen," said Mr Chinnawat.

"Among Chinese arrivals, the impact on their confidence in safe

travel in Thailand should remain relatively subdued."

He said the government should increase staff, CCTV cameras and security measures at major tourist locations, though it should do so in a way that will not disrupt tourism sentiment.

Kasmaporn Limpanapongthep, president of the Krabi Hotel Association, said restoring tourism sentiment is the most important step.

She said the authorities should continue investigating the cases until all doubts have been addressed, revealing to the public the suspects' motivations.

Based on informal talks with hotel members of the association, some tourists inquired about safety and the situation in the province, but they continued with their travel plans. Tourism operators are not worried about the impact of these incidents, as it is still the low season, Ms Kasmaporn said.

Bangkok Post

## Growth of eateries outpaces tourism

THE BANK OF THAILAND HAS observed a glut of restaurants relative to the slower growth in foreign tourist arrivals, with the impact affecting mainly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Between 2019 and 2024, the total number of restaurants grew at an average annual rate of 106%, significantly outpacing 12% annual growth in both domestic and foreign tourist arrivals, according to the central bank, reports the Bangkok Post.

Last year, total retail sales excluding gold grew by 2.4% year-on-year, compared with an average annual growth rate of 2.7% from 1973 to 2019.

However, last year's growth was primarily driven by large corporations, particularly hypermarket businesses.

"Sales growth among large corporations tallied 9.6% last year, whereas SME sales contracted 7.1%," said Sakkapop Panyanukul, secretary of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

As most restaurants are SMEs and employ a large number of people, closures in this sector can significantly affect public sentiment, he said.

Any support measures for the sector should be specifically targeted, said Mr Sakkapop.

The central bank slashed its forecast for foreign tourist arrivals for this year from 37.5 million down to 35mn, and from 40mn down to 38mn in 2026. The adjustment was attributed to a decline in Chinese arrivals.

The regulator projects 4.4mn Chinese tourists this year, down from a previous forecast of 5.1mn, while next year the projection is 6mn, down from 7.1mn.



Street food stalls line Banthat Thong Road. The central bank says the nation has an oversupply of eateries. Photo:

Despite the decline in tourist numbers, tourism revenue is expected to increase from B1.4 trillion in 2024 to B1.5trn this year and B1.7trn in 2026. This growth will be driven by long-haul international visitors, especially from Europe, according to the MPC.

Mr Sakkapop warned that intensified competition from imported goods is posing a challenge for Thai SMEs in both manufacturing and services.

Consumer behaviour also shifted to online shopping, away from traditional merchants.

Due to a flood of imported goods, some Chinese products are priced significantly lower, sometimes up to 50%, compared with similar goods from other countries and Thai-made products, noted the MPC.

This contrast is evident in categories such as textiles and clothing, furniture, petrochemicals and steel.

To address the issue, Mr Sakkapop said relevant agencies should monitor the pricing and quality standards of imported goods, taking action against dumping when necessary. Bangkok Post



# Dual role for Paetongtarn after Cabinet reshuffle

## BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

Paetongtarn Shinawatra was appointed to take on the dual role of prime minister and culture minister after the new Cabinet lineup was announced in the *Royal Gazette* on Tuesday (July 1).

The new lineup was royally endorsed by His Majesty the King on Monday before being published the following day, with an oath-taking ceremony scheduled to take place yesterday (July 3).

Political watchers see Ms Paetongtarn's move as a bid to stay in the Cabinet in the event she was temporarily relieved from duty as prime minister by the Constitutional Court's decision which, at time of press, was due later Tuesday.

The court was set to decide whether to accept a petition initiated by 36 senators accusing her of serious ethical violations shown in a leaked audio of



Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra at Government House in Bangkok on Tuesday (July 1). Photo: AFP

a phone conversation with Cambodian Senate President Hun Sen last month.

The leaked conversation included Ms Paetongtarn's derogatory remarks about the commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army Region, branding him an adversary, as well as a submissive tone towards Hun Sen, with her signalling a readiness to comply with the Cambodian strongman's demands.

On Tuesday Ms Paetongtarn denied the speculation and said her taking on an additional role reflected her desire to oversee the government's soft power policy.

Other key changes in the

new Cabinet include Phumtham Wejyachai, who is now deputy prime minister and interior minister. His previous position as defence minister has been left unfilled.

Commerce Minister Pichai Nariphaphan is replaced by Jatuporn Buruspat, permanent secretary for natural resources and environment, and veteran Suchart Tanchareon returns as PM's Office Minister.

Sudawan Wangsuphakijkosol, who was culture minister until replaced by Ms Paetongtarn, moves to minister for higher education, science, research and innovation.

Narumon Pinyosinwat moves from the agriculture and cooperatives portfolio to serve as education minister.

### DEBT OF GRATITUDE

The cross-border spat was stoked further Hun Sen asserted that Thailand owes him a debt of gratitude for once sheltering members of the Shinawatra family.

"You must understand that Cambodia is not unintelligent; we know your politics well," he said at a local government meeting in Phnom Penh.

"Even when you planned to remove (Bhumjaithai Party leader) Anutin Charnvirakul from his posts as deputy prime minister and interior minister, you told me.

"If you can betray your own citizens, why would you not dare betray me? Of course, you would."

He claimed he had "lost patience" with the Thai prime minister due to repeated insults, describing her comments to the Second Army Region commander as rebellious.

## Healthcare expands to cover LGBTQ+ hormone therapy

### BANGKOK

THE MINISTRY OF Public Health has approved a B145 million healthcare benefit to provide gender-affirming hormone therapy for transgender and gender-diverse individuals under the country's B30 universal healthcare scheme.

Public Health Minister Somsak Thepsuthin, who chairs the National Health Security Office (NHSO) board, on Monday (June 30) endorsed the inclusion of six hormone-related medications into the national procurement list as part of the "Treatment Anywhere" B30 universal healthcare scheme.

They are leuprorelin injections, 17-beta estradiol tablets, estradiol transdermal patches, testosterone enanthate injections, cyproterone acetate tablets and spironolactone tablets.

Public Health Ministry deputy spokesman Jirapong Songwatcharaporn said the move responded to growing concerns over the health risks of unsupervised hormone use among transgender people, which had led to serious side effects and even



Pride 2025 in Bangkok. Photo: Supplied

fatalities. Many self-medicated using over-the-counter drugs without medical guidance.

"Doctors will conduct a thorough review of each patient's medical history and overall health, assess their mental readiness, and discuss the methods and procedures before starting hormone treatment," said Mr Jirapong said.

"Mr Somsak hopes this benefit package will reduce the harm caused by improper hormone use among gender-diverse individuals and help ease the financial burden on transgender people by B1,000 to 2,000 per month."

The policy is being implemented in collaboration with the Health Systems Research Institute (HSRI), the Royal Thai College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and the Thailand Professional Association of Transgender Health (ThaiPATH). *Bangkok Post*

## New rule grants citizenship for stateless people in Thailand

### BANGKOK

A NEW REGULATION THAT WILL facilitate the granting of Thai citizenship to children of stateless people residing in Thailand and also to members of ethnic minority groups living in Thailand has come into effect, being announced in the *Royal Gazette* on Monday (June 30).

Deputy Interior Minister Theerarat Samrejanich said the changes are in line with a Cabinet resolution that approved criteria to fast-track the official recognition of stateless individuals who have lived in the country for a long time.

Under the new rules, Thai citizenship can now be granted to individuals born in Thailand to stateless parents whose personal data is recorded in official population surveys conducted up to 1999; and to stateless persons identified in surveys between 2005 and 2011 under the Strategic Plan to Address Legal Status and Rights Issues, including members of the Moken ethnic group, who meet the required criteria.

Ms Theerarat said the regulation will remain in effect for one year from its announcement on June 30, unless extended by a future Cabinet resolution.

Interior Ministry permanent secretary Unsit Sampantararat said the government of Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra had instructed the Interior Ministry to implement the regulation in line with the Cabinet's resolution approved during the



PM Shinawatra at an event to grant Thai national ID cards in Chiang Rai on June 28. Photo: Government House

Srettha Thavisin administration on Oct 29 last year.

Mr Unsit said that this is the first time Thailand has addressed such issues in a tangible and expedited manner, explaining that the regulation is aimed at ethnic minority groups who have lived in Thailand for years, whose biometric records are already included in the national database.

These individuals, of which there are about 140,000, are not undocumented migrants or illegal foreigners, he said.

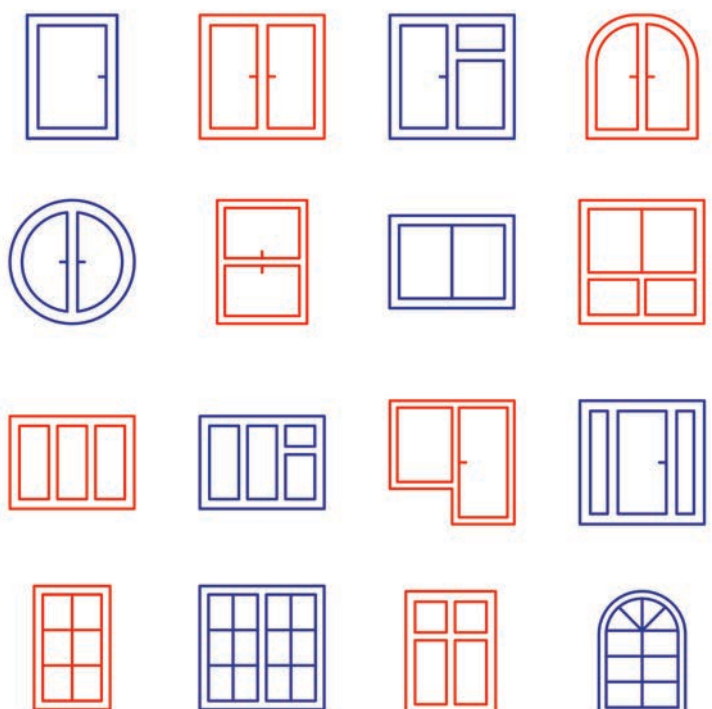
He made it clear the regulation does not apply to migrant workers, displaced people in temporary shelters or foreign passport holders.

Eligible individuals from the two recognised groups must meet the criteria outlined in the regulation and submit their applications through the proper channels.

*Bangkok Post*



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## WELLTHWISE

Libby Heath

I cringe at the word diet – it sounds like something that you vow to start on Monday and abandon by Wednesday. I wish there were a single word that describes sustainable, wholesome choices that support long-term well-being. Being Wellthwise means ditching diets forever and embracing your own feel-good, thrive-fueled way of eating that is all about nourishment, not non-sense.

When it comes to crafting a way of eating that works for you, one golden truth stands tall: there is no universal “best” pattern. Everyone’s nutritional needs are as unique as their fingerprint; influenced by genetics, personal goals, activity levels, age and even cultural background. Therefore, the quest for the perfect plan is not about following rigid rules but rather about embracing a personalised approach that reflects your reality and aspirations.

Your food choices should align with your lifestyle and goals, whether they involve weight loss, improving athletic performance, or simply feeling healthier and more energized. For instance, an active individual may need a higher

proportion of carbohydrates to fuel their workouts, while someone focusing on muscle building might prioritise protein. Similarly, age plays a key role; younger people tend to have higher caloric needs, while older adults may require diets rich in nutrients that support bone and heart health.

## Silver bullet

What works for one person may not work for another. Instead of searching for a silver bullet, focus on identifying what feels sustainable and nourishing for you. Simple, not easy. Honest introspection, curiosity, intrinsic motivation and discipline are required. People are far more likely to succeed at adopting and maintaining healthy eating habits when they have support – whether from a health coach, family or community – compared to doing it solo.

While dietary preferences diverge widely, most health advocates can agree on what not to eat. Ultra-processed foods, sugar-sweetened beverages and items laden with artificial additives are almost universally recognised as detrimental to health. These foods are not only high in calories and provide little nutritional value but often contribute to long-term health conditions like obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Here are a few examples of foods that deserve a mindful pass:

- Processed snack foods: Chips, packaged pastries and other convenience snacks are often high in trans fats, sugar, sodium and artificial flavorings.
- Sugar-sweetened beverages: Soda, energy drinks and sweetened teas and coffees flood the body with sugar while offering minimal sustenance.
- Refined grains: White bread, pasta and rice lack the fibre that whole grains provide, leading to rapid spikes in blood sugar.

By saying “NO” to these items, you pave the way for healthier alternatives.

## Making it easier

Navigating food choices does not have to be overwhelming or restrictive. Here are some practical tips:

## 1. Plan Ahead

Prepare meals and snacks in advance to avoid impulsive decisions at mealtime. Keep healthy staples like fruits, nuts and unflavoured, full or low-fat yogurt readily available for quick grabs. If you are dining out, preview the menu and decide what you are going to order before you arrive and stick with your decision.

## 2. Practice the 80/20 Rule

Allow yourself the occasional indulgence while committing to making nutritious choices most of the time. This balance prevents feelings of deprivation and promotes sustainability. If you want to enjoy dessert, have it after a satiating, nourishing meal – not for breakfast.

## 3. Eat Whole, Real Foods

Choose minimally processed, quality ingredients like fresh vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains and healthy fats. Elevate the flavour with herbs and spices. These foods not only keep you satisfied but also ensure your body receives essential nutrients.

## 4. Stay Hydrated All Day

Hunger and thirst signals can get crossed. You may feel hungry when you are mildly dehydrated. Drink water before reaching for a snack and wait 10-15 minutes to see if you are truly hungry. Also, drinking water before a meal creates a sense of fullness by expanding the stomach’s volume, which triggers stretch receptors that tell your brain that you have had enough.

## 5. Read Labels

Educate yourself about the contents of packaged foods. Look for hidden sugars, fillers and excess sodium and familiarise yourself with ingredient lists to make informed decisions. If you see an ingredient that you would not have in your pantry, put it back on the store shelf.

Finding your best eating pattern is a journey, not a destination. It is a process rooted in self-awareness and experimentation, guided by your goals and grounded in flexibility. By focusing on what your body truly needs and avoiding the food that harms it, you can develop habits that nourish both your physical and mental well-being.

Remember, mindful eating is not about perfection, it is about progress. Small, intentional choices can lead to profound changes over time, all while empowering you to take control of your health in a way that makes you Wellthwise.

*Libby Heath recently became the first Mayo Clinic certified wellness coach in Asia. She shares her insights and advice through her column ‘Wellthwise’ here in The Phuket News. Please note that if you have a condition that requires medical treatment, consult your doctor. Contact Libby at: BeWellthwise@gmail.com.*



# Vibrant and ultra fresh at Café Studio

Bob Mott

Café Studio is situated in a handy location just off the Karon Beach road, along a path through a small grass and tree park area – and far enough to avoid road noise, yet close enough to not be disconnected from Karon's beach scene.

Café Studio is an ideal spot for an early breakfast from the huge selection before hitting the beach – or to pop in during the day for a refreshing drink and a snack. Going or coming it's worth dropping by to check their comprehensive menu. They have special takeaway packs for the beach or to take a snack back to your room.

We called in for late afternoon brunch to relax after spending most of the day at the beach. Notably they close at 6pm so arriving at 4pm gave us plenty of time to relax, cool down in the air-conditioning and indulge. For those who prefer the outdoors, Café Studio has a number of settings outside under large beach umbrellas.

We kicked off with a Passion Fruit Mango Smoothie and a Pineapple And Mint Smoothie. I had forgotten how nice a fruit smoothie tastes on a hot day; these were excellent. Our main meals were shared: a Spinach Quiche, a Baguette with Roast Beef and Salad and a Potato Pasta Salad with Bacon. All very fresh and tasty.

For dessert, I had a Blueberry Cheesecake and my partner a Blue-



Photos: Café Studio



berry Crumble. A very difficult choice due to their extensive selection. We finished off with coffee latte and Americano.

Ordering is straightforward; just go to the counter, order and pay. Staff then prepare fresh on the spot and deliver to your table with cutlery and condiments. Soft background music set the mood for a relaxing afternoon. The staff were attentive, always available when required while all breads and cakes are baked fresh each morning onsite in Café Studio's professional kitchen – so are ultra fresh.

Takeaway packs are made from biodegradable products as are the plastic glasses and straws. Thai Gourmet Gift Sets are available for purchase and make great (and tasty) souvenirs of your visit.

Café Studio is very family orientated and so has chosen not to serve liquor. Guests who want to enjoy an adult beverage can visit MINT Bar & Restaurant right next to the café.

If parking on the beach road proves an issue, the easy alternative is to enter the Paradox Resort from Patak Road, park in the resort's guest parking area then take a complimentary chauffeured

electric cart to Café Studio, which is under the same management as the Paradox Resort.

With my customary luck in finding impossible parking spots, I found a perfect spot just metres from Café Studio and the beach. You may not be so lucky. But lucky you will be if you drop in to experience Café Studio's offering! I will be back soon myself.

*Café Studio, 509 Patak Road, Karon Beach, Phuket. Opening times: 8am-6pm daily. Reservation: 076 683 350. Facebook; Instagram.*

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POP QUIZ

1. Invented by Douglas Engelbart in 1963, the first computer mouse was made from what material?
2. What is a single strand of spaghetti called?
3. Where are cricket's ears located?
4. Who was the first woman ever inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame?
5. What sporting event has a strict dress code of all white?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Easy

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

1. Stopping point
5. Mischievous god
9. Regional flora and fauna
14. Accomplished
15. Masculine side
16. \_\_\_ management
17. Gain wealth wrongfully
20. UK soft drink
21. Perennial plants
22. Refines
25. Clear
26. Provided relief
28. Back talk
32. Conelike structures
37. Window alternative
38. Subject of parent-child talk
41. Alleviated
42. Some eyes and teeth
43. "Isn't it a \_\_\_," Harrison song
44. Old Faithful, e.g.
46. Other side
47. Italian city
53. Pristine
58. Mexican bread
59. Confess
62. New World lizard

63. Gulf leader

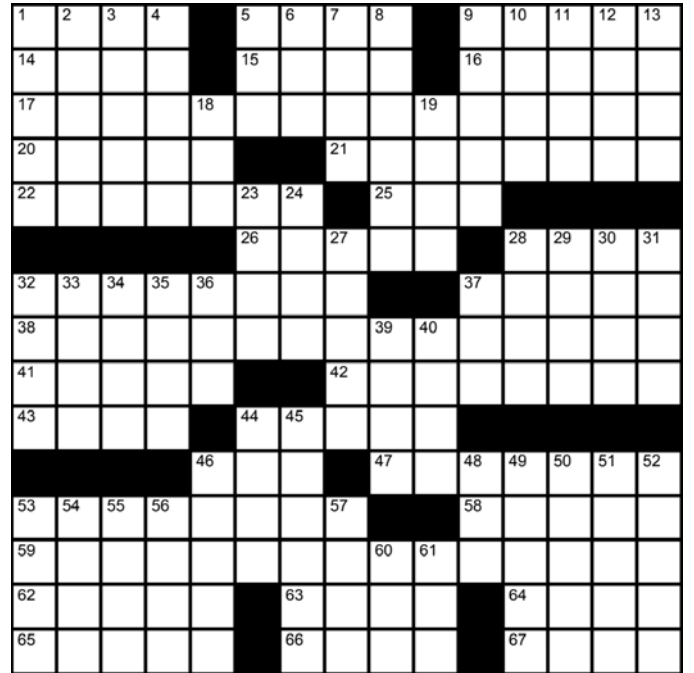
64. Fill beyond full
65. Less
66. Fishing site
67. Genuine

Down

1. Drifts
2. Crosswise, on deck
3. Grassy plain
4. Surrender
5. Burn cause
6. Galley tool
7. Turning point?
8. Slight, in a way
9. Established
10. \_\_\_ of Court
11. S-shaped molding
12. Check
13. Fine things?
18. Radioactive
19. Chisholm Trail town
23. It grows on you
24. Young herring
27. "Rock the Boat" music
28. Bronx cheer
29. Brings into play
30. Bug out
31. German historian

32. Dance bit

33. Pad \_\_\_ (noodle dish)
34. Leftovers
35. Mind
36. Nod, maybe
37. Pop-ups
39. Astringent substance
40. Perceive
44. Arias, usually
45. Looked secretly
46. Manicurist, at times
48. Place for sweaters?
49. Perspicacity
50. Bartender on TV's Pacific Princess
51. Needle point?
52. Still
53. One of seven branches
54. Supreme Court count
55. Singer Phoebe
56. Rake's look
57. It's just for show
60. Melody
61. Blubber



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

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

- 1) Wood; 2) Spaghetti; 3) On their legs; 4) Aretha Franklin; 5) Wimbledon tennis championships

GOT YOUR NUMBER

94

per cent of the Earth's wildlife is found in the ocean.

350

the average number of pizza slices consumed in the United States per second.

1995

the year eBay was founded by Pierre Omidyar

156,721

people have signed a petition for the next heavy metal in the periodic table to be named 'Lemmium', after Motörhead's Lemmy.

36.21 trillion

US dollars is the current national debt of the United States, the largest external debt in the world.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Garden visitor in Kathu. Photo by Brian Stamm

Got an unusual or particularly beautiful picture of Phuket? Email it to [editor3@classactmedia.co.th](mailto:editor3@classactmedia.co.th)

This week in history

July 4, 1946

After 381 years of near-continuous colonial rule by various powers, the Philippines attains full independence from the United States.

July 5, 1954

Elvis Presley records his first single, 'That's All Right', at Sun Records in Memphis, Tennessee.



Elvis Presley.

July 6, 371 BC

The Battle of Leuctra shatters Sparta's reputation of military invincibility.

July 7, 1985

Boris Becker becomes the youngest male player ever to win Wimbledon at age 17.

July 8, 1982

Diet Coke is unveiled to the U.S. public for the first time

July 9, 1893

Daniel Hale Williams, American heart surgeon, performs

the first successful open-heart surgery in United States without anesthesia.

July 10, 2018

A group of Thai school children and their football coach are all rescued from Tham Luang cave after being stuck there for 18 days; one Thai Navy SEAL diver dies during the rescue mission. Source: Wikipedia



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## SAII HOTELS & RESORTS CELEBRATES 'YOUR PEACE OF MIND' BRAND MILESTONE IN PHUKET

SAii Hotels & Resorts recently marked a new chapter in its brand journey with the 'Your Peace of Mind' celebration – an event that brought together partners, media, and industry leaders to unveil the refreshed spirit of SAIi. Hosted at SAIi Laguna Phuket the flagship event highlighted the brand's core promise: no pressure, no stress, no expectations – just the freedom to be yourself in some of the world's most inspirational destinations. Guests enjoyed vibrant cultural moments, immersive experiences, and a taste of SAIi's signature hospitality rooted in sustainability, well-being and local connection. With properties across Phuket, Phi Phi, Koh Samui, and the Maldives, SAIi continues to redefine relaxed luxury while inviting travelers to truly discover their peace-of-mind.







Photo: Supplied

## Drama as Thai girls bag maiden junior world title

### GOLF

THAILAND'S GIRLS' team were one of the feel-good stories at last year's Toyota Junior Golf World Cup, placing second behind a record United States victory. Prior to this they had never qualified.

Last week, Thailand sent nearly the same roster to to Chukyo Golf Club in Japan see if they could do at least something similar. And it was their lone newcomer who delivered a championship – albeit one in nail-biting fashion.

Shaking off a watery tee shot at the 18<sup>th</sup> hole on Friday (June 27), Kritchanya Kaopat-tanaskul managed to scramble for a winning bogey as Thailand edged hosts Japan by one shot to win the team title.

"It means a lot for us," Kritchanya said after signing for a closing two-under-par 70 to help Thailand finish on 24-under 552. "We tried very hard to make it, and we finally made it today."

Her teammates Pimpisa Rubrong and Prim Prachnakorn both shot 71 on Friday.

Japan's Mamika Shinchi claimed the girls' individual title after finishing on 13-under 275, two ahead of Kritchanya. Prim was tied sixth on 282 while Pimpisa finished ninth on 284.

The boys' team trophy went to Japan, who won for the second time in three years, while Colombia's Tomas Restrepo (64) and Japan's Taisei Nagasaki (66) won the boys' individual title after both finishing on 19-under 265. *Bangkok Post*

# McLaren 1-2 at Austrian GP

## FORMULA ONE

AFP

Lando Norris resisted vigorous attacks from team-mate and championship leader Oscar Piastri to claim a masterful McLaren 1-2 in last Sunday's (June 29) Austrian Grand Prix.

In torrid heat at the Red Bull Ring, the 25-year-old Briton came home 2.695 seconds clear of the 24-year-old Australian to trim his lead in the title race by 15 points.

It was Norris's first win in Austria, his third win this year and the seventh of his career. It was McLaren's first win in Austria since David Coulthard triumphed in 2001.

The McLaren pair battled throughout the race to provide thrilling racing for the packed crowd and put behind them their collision in Canada two weeks earlier.

Charles Leclerc was third ahead of his Ferrari team-mate seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton, their best result of the year, with George Russell finishing fifth for Mercedes.

"It was a tough race," said Norris.

"Pushing the whole way through... tricky, hot, tiring, but the perfect result for us as a team, a 1-2 again. We had a great battle, that's for sure."

For Piastri, it was equally demanding. "Intense!" he said.

"I hope it was good watching because from inside the car it was



Lando Norris leads teammate Oscar Piastri to a McLaren 1-2 finish in Austria. Photo: AFP

hard work. Yeah, I tried my absolute best."

Liam Lawson came in a career-best sixth for RB on a desultory day for the senior Red Bull team after four-time champion Max Verstappen retired on the opening lap after being hit by Mercedes' teenage rookie Kimi Antonelli. He is now 61 points behind Piastri.

Two-time champion Fernando Alonso was seventh ahead of Gabriel Bortoleto and his Sauber team-mate Nico Hulkenberg, the future Audi outfit showing their huge potential, with Esteban Ocon finishing 10<sup>th</sup> for Haas.

After a frantic prelude, during which Carlos Sainz's Williams failed to leave the grid and then caught fire in the pit lane, the race was delayed

for 10 minutes – before delivering immediate drama at the second attempt when Antonelli locked up and lost control at Turn Three and hit Verstappen's Red Bull, leading to a safety car being deployed.

By lap 12, the McLaren duo were four seconds clear and delivering a show of their own.

Unhampered by any embarrassing hangovers from their collision in Montreal, they raced side by side and wheel to wheel, but each time the Australian attacked, the Briton hung on to complete a near-perfect day in the Styrian Alps.

In scorching heat of 32 degrees (air) and 55 (track), it was a perfect advertisement for the historic venue which had secured a 16-year contract extension to 2041 before the race.

## Tour de France returns home

### CYCLING

THE TOUR DE FRANCE starts tomorrow (July 5) with superstar Tadej Pogacar's hunger for wins sharing top billing with the magnificent 3,338-kilometre route in the first edition since 2020 not to venture abroad.

Every inch of this year's 21-day course is on French soil, for the first time since the pandemic-delayed edition, with most of the country placed on a heatwave alert in the week leading up to the race.

The heatwave is expected to subside by the end of the week, but riders will still be tested to their limits over the peaks and plains of France lauded in cycling folklore as "the world's most beautiful stadium".

For 21 days this July, the daily doings of this most arduous of sporting struggles provides the drumbeat of summer, with armchair tourists and cycling fanatics alike tuning in around the world.

Team UAE's Pogacar starts as red-hot favourite



Pogacar starts favourite. Photo: AFP

with fans and bookmakers alike, and he can silence any remaining doubters by beating arch-rival Jonas Vingegaard of Visma.

Glimpses of Pogacar and Vingegaard going head-to-head on the Alpine slopes or along the panoramic roads of the French Riviera provide tension, drama and sporting rivalry as enthralling as any involving the old-time legends.

Ready to attack at the slightest provocation, the 26-year-old Pogacar has 21 chances to add to his jaw-dropping 99 professional wins, with the race concluding in the old Parisian neighbourhood of Montmartre on July 27.

AFP

## MotoGP takeover by F1 owner approved

### MOTO GP

THE ACQUISITION OF MotoGP by Liberty Media, the American group that owns Formula One, has received the green light from The European Commission (EU).

Liberty and the Commission both released statements on June 23 saying the deal had received "unconditional approval".

"The deal is now expected to close no later than July 3, 2025, opening the door to a new era for the sport," said MotoGP on its web site.

Liberty had agreed to buy the motor-cycle grand prix competition from Dorna Sports in April 2024, but the EU opened an investigation to determine whether the merger violated competition rules.

Colorado-based Liberty said it would acquire 84% of MotoGP with Dorna, a Madrid-based company, retaining 16% in a deal that valued the company at 4.3 billion euros (B163bn).

The Commission had been concerned "that the transaction could lead to an increase in licensing prices for broadcasting rights to motorsports events."

On June 23 the Commission said it was satisfied that, in the European national markets it investigated, "the companies are not close competitors for the licensing of



Action from the Italian MotoGP Grand Prix at Mugello circuit on June 22. Photo: AFP

broadcasting rights for sports content."

The Commission also looked at Liberty Media's relationship with parent company Liberty Global, a leading cable operator in several European countries.

The statement said there was "insufficient evidence that Mr. John Malone, Liberty Media's largest shareholder, could exercise decisive influence over Liberty Global."

### 'GROWTH POTENTIAL'

"We are thrilled," said Derek Chang, Liberty Media President and Chief Executive Officer, in the company statement.

"MotoGP is a highly attractive premium sports asset with incredible racing, a passionate fanbase and a strong cash flow profile. We believe the sport and brand have significant growth potential."

Since Liberty took control of F1

in 2017, it has implemented an expansion strategy, particularly in the United States, making spectacle its main focus.

With the help of the long-running Netflix series Drive to Survive, the group has attracted a younger, more female audience.

"MotoGP is one of the most thrilling sports on earth, and we look forward to accelerating the sport's growth and expanding its reach to even more fans around the world," said Dorna chief executive Carmelo Ezpeleta in the Liberty statement.

As part of the deal Ezpeleta, CEO since 1998, and his team will continue to run MotoGP.

"Liberty is the best possible partner for our sport and the entire MotoGP community, and we are excited to create even greater value for our fans, commercial partners and everyone competing," he said.

AFP



# Hollywood Samurai wins Samui Regatta

## SAILING

Scott Murray

Ray Roberts and his professional crew on *Team Hollywood Samurai* won all but one race in their Cookson 50 to win the IRC Open Class at the Samui Regatta recently.

The 22<sup>nd</sup> edition of the prestigious event took place from May 25 to May 31 and featured keelboats racing in the IRC Open and Cruising classes.

The wind, as it had done all week, played hard to catch during the final day of competition but Race Director Simon James was able to snare some gusts and hold a final windward-leeward to round out the event.

Indeed, Simon somewhat resembled Captain Ahab throughout the regatta, except instead of looking for a killer whale, he was searching for wind, glorious wind – and Simon, aka ‘The Wind Whisperer’, found it, every single day!

The regatta’s class winners had actually been decided going into the final day as Roberts and his *Team*



Photo: Scott Murray/SEA Yachting

*Hollywood Samurai* crew crossed the finish line first in the last race with an elapsed time of 58:48.

*AfterTremor* (aka *Tenacious*), skippered by Olympian Steve McConaghy, placed second, and *Iolanthe 3*, an Archambault A35, led by Australian skipper Terry Foster, was third. *Gloria* (Philip Harris,

David Hepburn and Simon Plunkett) was fourth, with *SV Senator*, skippered by Chris Uptegrove, placing fifth.

The Cruising class was won by *Gloria* (an Oceanis 45), whose crew hails from the Royal Perth Yacht Club, and *SV Senator* (a Jeanneau 45), with noted Danish yachtsman Nils Degenklow

on board, was second.

McConaghy, Olympic sailor and triple World Champion in the 11 Metre One Design class, brought a wealth of experience to the regatta. His team, *AfterTremor*, sailed with skill and consistency to secure second place in a highly competitive IRC Open Class.

“It was a challenging week,” Steve said. “In the 18 Samui regattas I’ve competed in I have never seen so much current. It’s tough going on a slow boat up wind in light air, against 2-3k. Still my favourite regatta and hope to be back again next year.”

### SAILING HISTORY

The Samui Regatta saw eight races held over five days, with May 29 set as a lay day and an opportunity for the sailors to explore and experience the hospitality of Koh Samui.

Each day’s competition concluded with a ceremony to honour and award the winners, culminating in a gala dinner at the Fair House Beach Resort and Hotel on the final day when dates for 2026 were announced as May 23-30. The opening celebration will be hosted by the Fair House Beach Resort and Hotel on Sunday, May 24.

The Samui Regatta is the island’s longest running sports event and solidifies Thailand’s position as a premier sailing destination and an essential stop in the Asian yachting circuit.

Since its inception in 2001 with a modest fleet of beach catamarans, the Samui Regatta experienced remarkable growth up until 2019, rapidly expanding each year and is now in a rebuilding process post COVID. The event’s objectives remain focused on increasing tourism to Koh Samui, elevating the profile of sailing in Asia, and promoting water sports activities.

Simon James and his partner Kae Wattana are committed to keeping Thailand’s regattas going, with Samui regatta being the island’s longest-running major sports event. Indeed, Koh Samui has a great sailing history as back in the day it was the jewel in the crown of Captain Marty Rijurkis’ Asian Yachting Grand Prix. It was here that Captain Marty presented his customary Amari jacket and bottle of bubbly to the annual winner of his highly competitive series, with skippers that used to bring their crews including Frank Pong, Neil Pryde, Ray Roberts and Sam Chan among the most celebrated in the region.

## Lions too strong against the Force



### THE GLOBAL RUGBY COACH

MUCH OF LAST SATURDAY’S (JUNE 28) pre-game preparation between Western Force and The British and Irish Lions centred on an agreement regarding the availability of Australian test players to play for their franchises.

The Lions’ initial feeling was that the franchises were not strong enough to offer a serious challenge to the Lions squad if Wallaby test players were not released to play before an agreement was loosely reached between the Lions management and the Australian Rugby Union.

However, clearly eager to win, Australia’s coach Joe Schmidt released only a few players and not necessarily test contenders, arguing that the Lions would similarly not play their first-choice test players in every lead-up game.

The Western Force had nine players in the Wallabies squad – five were released to play against the Lions in what was officially the tour opener.

Andy Farrell, the Lions coach, made 13 changes to the side that lost to Argentina, with controversial 20-year-old Henry Pollock making his starting debut at No. 8 for the Lions.

It resulted in an emphatic 54-7 win for the Lions but one that was ultimately littered with some mediocre play and unforced errors, possibly due to the lingering effects of jet lag.

Farrell will be looking for more fluency in performance moving forward. Which



Tomos Williams scores for the Lions. Photo: AFP

players stand out and which units function better will be major questions being asked. The injury to Tomos Williams last Saturday and his subsequent withdrawal from the tour will pose problems, especially as first-choice scrum half Gibson-Park is still not fully match fit.

Schmidt will have noted how easily the Force forwards penetrated the Lions’ sluggish forward defensive line. Only No. 8 Henry Pollock looked to have the required quickness in support play and defensive realignment.

Selecting players who can produce quick ball at the tackle contest will have increasing importance as we near the first Test in Brisbane on July 19.

*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](http://www.rugbycoachingconsultancy.com).*

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# Sport

editor3@classactmedia.co.th



**Lando on top in Austrian Alps > p14**



Photo: Jacob King

## FRISBEE

Michael Marx

Ultimate Frisbee has been steadily growing across Thailand over the past decade and Phuket is now emerging as a key player in that growth. What began as informal pickup games among a small group of expats and locals has transformed into a vibrant, cross-cultural community centred on fun, fitness and friendly competition.

A big part of that transformation comes down to the HAT format – a tournament style where players register individually and are then drawn from a hat before being placed into mixed teams. This inclusive model encourages skill-sharing, adaptability and community spirit, making it ideal for both first-timers and experienced players.

While early HAT tournaments were once held on Phuket's golden beaches, interest began to wane as players moved on. That changed with the formation of the Yeet Fleet, a passionate group of Ultimate lovers who breathed new life into the sport on the island. Through weekly training sessions, consistent outreach, and tournament organisation, Yeet Fleet has rebuilt a solid core of players and turned Phuket into a growing hub for Ultimate in southern Thailand.

"The HAT format is such a great equaliser," says Mike, one of the event's organisers. "It lets people of all levels come together and compete in a way that's fun, fast and friendly. It really captures what Ultimate is about."

### BRINGING THE HEAT

On June 21 the latest edition of the Phuket HAT Tournament took

place at the Alan Cooke Ground (ACG) in Thalang. The day was filled with energy, laughter and plenty of layout grabs and hucks into the end zone. With creatively named teams – from 'Flick Me Baby' to 'Disc-o Inferno' – the tournament was run as a series of mini round robins, allowing players to mix teammates and styles throughout the day.

Each game was played with high intensity, backed by thumping playlists, enthusiastic sideline support and classic tropical weather.

"By the end of the game we all knew each other's names," said one player. "We had people from the UK, the US, Thailand, Canada, China, Russia, Israel... but the moment we stepped onto the pitch, we were teammates. Sport like this reminds us what unites us – not what divides us."

More than just a tournament,

the event felt like a community celebration. Local players were joined by tourists, international teachers and long-time residents, creating a festival-like feel. Friends and family came along to watch, take photos and enjoy the action from the sidelines.

Prizes and certificates were awarded for categories like Best Cutter (Runners), Best Handler (Throwers), Play of the Day – and most importantly, the Spirit of the Game award. Spirit is one of Ultimate's core values, emphasising sportsmanship, mutual respect, and self-officiation – values the entire event was built on.

Jacob, a local photographer, captured the magic of the day in a stunning set of photos submitted for publication. "Perfect day really, rain didn't dampen anything but the field. Cold drinks for lunch and some

live sport, wonderful."

### LOOKING AHEAD

The future of Ultimate in Phuket looks bright. Regular pickup games take place every Wednesday evening at 6:15pm at HeadStart International School in Wichit. Weekend training is also in the pipeline, with more tournaments on the horizon and a growing core of committed players.

"We're seeing more new faces every week," said event organiser Stephen. "The vibe is welcoming, the sport is addictive and we're excited to keep building. Phuket has everything needed to become a Southeast Asian hotspot for Ultimate," he added.

For more information or to get involved, you can find the group on Instagram: Yeet Fleet Ultimate Phuket.

## Andaman International Trail Running 2025 begins in Phuket

### TRAIL RUNNING

THE ANDAMAN INTERNATIONAL Trail Running 2025 (AITR) series kicked-off in Phuket last Sunday (June 29), with over 1,000 keen local and international competitors involved.

The popular off-road running competition took place at Bang Wad reservoir in Kathu over three separate race distances of 7 kilometres, 15km and 25km, with all three categories open to male and female competitors and cash prizes and trophies

distributed to the top three placed finishers.

The challenging course took competitors through forest and jungle while also showcasing the natural beauty and picturesque forest landscape of Phuket and Bang Wad reservoir in particular, said Ratchadaporn O-in, Director of the Phuket Tourism and Sports Office, who officiated the start of the race.

The Phuket leg of the AITR 2025 competition is one of six races being held around the Andaman coast, with others staged in the nearby provinces of

Krabi (July 27), Ranong (Aug 3), Trang (Aug 31), Satun (date TBC) and Phang Nga (date TBC).

The event is designed to allow each province to showcase a feature that is considered unique, with Phuket highlighting the natural beauty of its pristine forests and local environment at Bang Wad reservoir to participants.

The Phuket leg was expected to generate more than B10 million for the local economy, explained Ms Ratchadaporn and is a further example of how

important sports tourism is to the island.

Economic value is created via various principle channels, she explained, such as accommodation, transportation, and general tourism related activities such as shopping for local souvenirs and handicrafts, as well as food and beverage.

Exercise is receiving increased interest from Thai nationals in particular, Ms Ratchadaporn explained, as people are tending to focus more on improving their overall health.



Photo: Sports Association of Phuket

Trail running especially has surged in popularity in recent years with more and more people attracted by the relative accessibility of the sport which still provides a sufficient fitness challenge, Ms Ratchadaporn added.

The Phuket News