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## FIRST PASS



The BIE delegation with the Phuket Governor are all thumbs-up for Phuket at the formal reception last week. Photo: PR Phuket

## PHUKET RECEIVES POSITIVE FIRST REVIEW FROM BIE EXPO INSPECTION TEAM

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The VIP treatment of the delegation of representatives from the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) made a favourable impression during the delegation's inspection of the island last week.

The delegation arrived in Phuket on July 26 to finally begin their inspection of the island in person as part of the assessment of whether Phuket should be selected to host the World Specialised Expo 2028.

The 10-member delegation exited the terminal at Phuket International

Airport just after 2pm to be greeted by 600 mostly elderly local women in traditional Phuket-style dress performing traditional Thai dance.

The delegation arrived in Bangkok on July 24, and spent July 25 receiving a full day of presentations of Phuket's bid to host the Expo in 2028. Their arrival in Phuket followed a meeting with Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha and Deputy Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul at Government House before the PM joined the Cabinet meeting on July 26.

The delegation were treated to tours and local Phuket cuisine in Phuket Town and a turtle-release at

Nai Yang on July 28 as part of their inspection of the island.

BIE Secretary General Dimitri S. Kerkentzes, at an official reception for the delegation on July 28, spoke well of the delegation's experience during their visit.

"We have received very high level presentations. We have seen a project that is of immense high importance to Phuket. A project that was born out of something that was already conceived even before the idea of an expo arrived in the minds of the people of Phuket. I think that is very important," Mr Kerkentzes said.

"We also have a theme that will

become more and more important, and especially over the past three years that has really become the issue that the world is now looking at.

"I can only say positive things in how well the presentations were done, how good the answers were that we received. Any doubts that we had I believe have been dissuaded," he added.

"There is still a lot of work in front of us for the enquiry mission to put together the final details of this report to submit it to the Executive Committee in October, before any final approval can come during the general assembly in November," Mr Kerkentzes noted...

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# News



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## Turning on the charm for BIE

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“There is still a long road to go... As you know you have four other competitors for this competition. It’s a long road, but I believe you have made an excellent start,” he said.

### SUPPORT

At the official reception, held at The Slate resort in Nai Yang on July 28, Chiruit Isarangkun Na Ayudhya, Director of the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB), explained that Thailand’s bid for Phuket to host Expo 2028 was under the theme “Future of Life: Living in Harmony, Sharing Prosperity” and was aimed at developing Thailand to become a comprehensive health destination.

“If Phuket receives the right to host the expo, it will be the first city in ASEAN to host a global expo,” he said.

The event is expected to attract up to 7 million visitors from countries around the



The delegation was welcomed on landing at Phuket airport by 600 women, most of them elderly, performing traditional Thai dance. Photo: PR Phuket

world, generating approximately B50 billion in income during the event, he added.

“It is also an opportunity to develop the infrastructure of Phuket and improve the quality of life of people in the area,” he said.

“An important consideration is the guidelines for the development of the area after the event. This is something that the BIE is concerned

about. If Thailand is chosen as the host, it will generate income not only within the city where the event is held, it will generate income for the Andaman provinces and Thailand as a whole,” Mr Chiruit said.

“[The Expo] is expected to increase the value of the country’s gross domestic product, GDP, by B39.357bn and create more than 110,000

jobs. The government expects income from tax collection of B9.512bn. Overall, the return on investment (ROI) is as high as nine times,” he added.

“Most importantly, it will create an image and emphasise the reputation of Thailand and Phuket as a world-class travel destination and promote the image of potential health tourism. Therefore, I would like to ask the Thai people

to join together to support Phuket being chosen to host this event,” Mr Chiruit said.

The BIE will conduct another inspection in November, Mr Chiruit added.

“After this, BIE will officially announce the selection of the host country in June 2023,” he said.

Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew said support for Phuket to host the expo was wide ranging. “The heart of the event is to use the development area [of 141 rai in Mai Khao] to become a comprehensive health centre to present Phuket as a world leading wellness destination,” he said.

“If Phuket is chosen as the host, in addition to the economic benefits of tens of billions of baht to come to Phuket, it is also an opportunity to accelerate infrastructure development and increase the island’s capacity to host international events,” he added.

“The government has a project to improve Phuket’s economy with a comprehensive health tourism industry to become a world-class medical destination, and doing so requires developing various aspects of city management to enhance the quality of life of the people of Phuket and nearby areas,” Governor Narong said.

“The infrastructure development for Expo 2028 Phuket will help expedite development plans that are beneficial to people in Phuket and nearby.

“After the event, the building will be used as an international medical and health centre, as a premium rejuvenation and international convention centre and a health and therapeutic park, an ecological learning resource centre and provide areas for physical and mental health of the people. The Cabinet has already approved a budget of B4.18bn for the project,” he said.

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ALCOHOL MAYBE A HEALTH HAZARD

### Thalang man tests negative for monkeypox

PHUKET PROVINCIAL Public Health Office (PPHO) Chief Dr Kusak Kukiattikoon has confirmed that a 40-year-old man transferred from Thalang Hospital to Vachira Phuket Hospital on July 26 has tested negative for monkeypox.

Laboratory tests on blood and secretion samples taken from the man had ruled out the man’s infection as monkeypox, Dr Kusak announced on July 28.

Dr Kusak did not confirm what the man’s infection was, though the initial diagnosis by Dr Weerasak Lorthongkham, Director of Vachira Phuket Hospital, was that the man had chickenpox.

The man was taken to Vachira hospital in Phuket Town after he had presented himself at Thalang Hospital with fever and blisters and rashes all over his body.

Dr Kusak said that a throat swab, a pustular swab in VTM, a pustular swab in lysis and a whole blood test had failed to find any traces of monkeypox infection.

“Therefore, people are asked not to panic. Don’t be fooled by rumours and fake



PPHO Chief Dr Kusak Kukiattikoon. Photo: PR Phuket / file

news and we ask that people follow the correct information from the government,” Dr Kusak said.

Meanwhile, the Department of Disease Control announced through a statement that health officials had identified the country’s second confirmed case of monkeypox in the Dusit area of Bangkok.

DDC Director Dr Opas Karnkwinpong said the man was diagnosed by a private hospital in Dusit District, Bangkok, on July 27.

A preliminary investigation by DDC officers found that the patient, a 47-year-old Thai man, had recently had sex with a foreign man.

He started having body aches a week ago, and developed pustules on his genitals. The infection spread and he soon developed pustules on his arms, legs, face and head.

The man self-isolated in the house where he is living, but by that time had already come in close contact with 10 other people, Dr Opas said.

The man later presented himself at the hospital when the symptoms worsened. He was admitted for a rash and pustules on his genitals, with swelling, pain and a burning sensation.

Samples taken from the man later were tested and confirmed by DDC officials that the man was infected with monkeypox, Dr Opas said.

The DDC team is now investigating more possible infections in the area and trying to track down the foreign man, he said.

Dr Opas repeated that monkeypox is not easily transmitted, but can be contracted through very close contact.

“So we are asking risk groups to be very careful,” he said. The Phuket News



# COVID cluster at home for elderly in Pa Khlok

The Phuket News  
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Phuket health chief Dr Kusak Kiattikoon has expressed concern over the welfare of elderly people staying at the state-run Phuket Home for the Elderly in Pa Khlok after 45 seniors staying there were confirmed to have contracted COVID-19.

Dr Kusak, Chief of the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO), revealed the cluster last Friday (July 29), when 17 senior patients were transferred from the home, officially called the “Social Development and Welfare for Elderly Persons Project Phuket Province”. The patients were transferred to hospitals for care and observation.

Of the 74 elderly residents and 29 staff members at the home, tested positive by ATK on July 27, Dr Kusak said.

Those who tested positive were isolated from the other elderly people staying at the home, and further tests confirmed that in total 45 people at the home were infected, he said.



One of the elderly people staying at the state-run home in Pa Khlok arrives at Thalang Hospital for care and treatment. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

One elderly person was admitted to Thalang Hospital due to complications, but so far no seniors staying at the home have died from COVID infections, Dr Kusak said.

“At-risk persons [at the home] are being tested every three to five days, while the others are being tested every week,” he said.

“Health officials have continued their investigation and no more infections have been found,” Dr Kusak added.

Visits from outsiders were

suspended over the long weekend (July 28-31) and elderly staying at home are not permitted outside except for receiving medical treatment, said Phuengphan Phaochinda, Director of the state-run home.

Seniors staying at the home travelling outside for medical care may explain how infections were brought to the home, she said.

“Every elderly person has a congenital disease and they must be taken to various hospitals for treatment, so this may

be how they became infected with COVID-19 from outside,” Ms Phuengphan said.

“However, now that COVID-19 had been detected here, infected patients have been separated from the general group, and staff at the Pa Khlok Community Health Centre and Thalang Hospital are providing treatment for the symptoms. All the elderly people infected have undergone x-rays of the lungs to determine the severity of the infections,” she added.

## Mother, daughter drown at Nai Thon

A VIETNAMESE MOTHER and daughter on holiday in Phuket drowned in strong surf at Nai Thon Beach last Sunday morning (July 31).

Police reported they were called to the beach at 8:50am after the mother and daughter, Hoang Hai Van, 52, and her daughter Nguyen Chuc An, 16, had already been rushed to Thalang Hospital, where they were pronounced dead on arrival.

Staff at a nearby hotel on the beachfront reported that Ms Hoang and daughter, along with one other person described by police in their report as a friend, went swimming in the strong waves at about 7:30am.

Staff said they waved at the tourists and tried to warn them to get out of the water, but their pleas were ignored.

According to the police report, lifeguards at the beach said they patrolled the beach only from 8am to 6pm, inferring that the incident happened before they arrived. Lifeguards added that they have two lifeguard stations on the beach.

However, the police report also noted that CPR was performed on the beach and while



Photo: Sakhu Police

Ms Hoang and her daughter were rushed to Thalang Hospital.

The lifeguards also pointed out that the mother and daughter were swimming where red ‘no swimming’ flags were posted, although according to the police report the incident appeared to have happened before lifeguards arrived.

Thalang Police said that the Vietnamese embassy in Bangkok had been notified of the incident, and that police were awaiting instructions from the family as to what is to be done with the bodies of the mother and daughter.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Sword-wielding man shot dead by pub guard

A PUB SECURITY guard in Phuket Town shot dead a Thai tourist in the early hours of Monday morning (Aug 1) after intervening in an altercation the man had with a woman at the venue, and attempted to attack security guards with a sword.

Police were called to the scene, the parking lot of the Nai Mueang Phuket pub and karaoke bar opposite Phuket Customs House on Phuket Rd, at 5:50am.

By that time Kusold-harm rescue workers had already arrived to find the man, Traitaewit ‘Got’ Chindamaikul, 27, a resident of Phuket Town, unconscious and unresponsive. He had been shot once in the chest.

Rescue workers performed CPR at the scene and en route to Vachira Phuket Hospital, but Mr Traitaewit was pronounced dead on arrival.

According to the police report no less than five senior officers from Phuket City Police Station arrived to inspect the scene, including Phuket City Police Chief Col Sarawut Chuprasit.

Lt Col Sakchai Chu-



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

nyong, Chief Investigator at Phuket City Police, noted that Mr Traitaewit was found beside his white pickup in the car park.

On the ground nearby was a sword with a blade about half a metre long.

Police also found one spent bullet casing.

The pub security guard who fired the shot, Chaiwat ‘Od’ Chuwong, 35, was waiting for police at the scene. He immediately surrendered the Glock 9mm handgun he fired in the incident.

Mr Chaiwat, registered as living in Rassada, was taken to Phuket City Police Station for questioning, Lt Col Sakchai confirmed.

According to witnesses

at the scene, Mr Traitaewit was involved in an altercation with a woman at the venue, Col Sarawut reported.

Security guards intervened, but Mr Traitaewit took exception to their involvement and grabbed a sword from his pickup and turned to attack.

In response, Mr Chaiwat fired one shot at Mr Traitaewit, hitting him in the chest.

All people involved in the incident will be questioned further, Col Sarawut said.

At time of press police had yet to make any comment on why the venue was open at the time of the incident. Eakkapop Thongtub



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## Firearms seized in raids

Eakkapop Thongtub  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Two illegal firearms were seized and five suspects arrested in two separate drug raids carried out by Phuket Provincial Police in Chalong and Rawai last week.

Phuket Provincial Police announced the arrests last Friday (July 29), marking the beginning of an anti-crime campaign being conducted over the long weekend (July 28-31).

The official dates for the campaign, led by Lt Col Pichit Thongto of the Phuket Provincial Police, were July 29-31, police reported.

The first three arrests were made at a house on Wiset Rd in Moo 5, Rawai.

Marked as a separate case in the raid was the arrest of Athiwat 'Gift' Sanae, 28, registered as living in Moo 4, Rawai.

Athiwat was arrested at the house in Moo 5 then taken to his house in Moo 4, where officers found him in possession of two bags containing in total 33.64 grammes of crystal meth (ya ice).

Police also seized four pills of methamphetamine (ya bah), a pack of clear plastic zip-lock bags, a device for consuming ice, a digital weighing scale and his Oppo A12 mobile phone.

Athiwat was taken to the Chalong Police Station and charged with two



Photo: Phuket Provincial Police

counts of illegal possession of a Category I narcotic with intent to sell.

Marked as the second case in the same raid on the house on Wiset Rd were the arrests of Chakrit 'Sodik' Kangkarorb, 31, and Juthathip 'May' Thong-On, 24, both registered as living at different address in Moo 5, Rawai.

The couple were found in possession of 25.45g of ya ice and 794 pills of ya bah.

Officers also seized one digital weighing scale and a Vivo 1724 mobile phone, and a homemade gun with a three-inch barrel made to fire .38-calibre bullets.

In seizing the firearm, police also seized two .38-calibre bullets, one

22-calibre bullet and two 12-gauge shotgun cartridges.

The couple were taken to Chalong Police Station and charged with joint possession of a Category I narcotic with intent to sell and joint illegal possession of a firearm and ammunition.

The other two arrests reported were both made at the house of Subandit 'Dit' Thanubamrung, 41, in Moo 9, Chalong, said the report.

Subandit was found with 1.57g of ya ice, 61 ya bah pills and three items used for consuming ya ice.

Officers seized his OPPO A16 mobile phone and a custom-made rifle with a barrel 25.5 inches long, made to fire .22-calibre bullets.

At the same house Pornthep 'Iew'

Thepchampa, 33, registered as living at another house in Moo 9, Chalong, was arrested after he was found in possession of 10 ya bah pills.

Both Pornthep and Subandit were taken to the Chalong Police Station.

Pornthep was charged with illegal possession of a Category I narcotic, while Subandit was charged with illegal possession of a Category I narcotic with intent to sell and illegal possession of an illegal firearm.

Meanwhile, a Region 8 Police anti-crime blitz across seven provinces last month saw a total of 551 suspects arrested and 81 firearms seized.

The results of the anti-crime campaign, from July 18-22, were announced at Krabi Provincial Police Station on July 25 by Region 8 Police Deputy Commander Maj Gen Wanchai Ekaphonpitch.

Region 8 Police, headquartered in northern Phuket, are responsible for overseeing police operations in seven provinces of Upper Southern Thailand: Phuket, Phang Nga, Krabi, Ranong, Surat Thani, Chumphon and Nakhon Sri Thammarat.

Maj Gen Wanchai noted that DNA samples were collected in 433 police operations during the period.

In total, 81 firearms were seized along with 762 bullets at locations that included tourist accommodation venues, he said.

## Body of American man, 73, found near Yanui Beach

THE BODY OF A 73-YEAR-old American man was found floating in the waters just north of Yanui Beach in Rawai on July 27,

Rescue workers took hours to recover the body from where it was found by a local fisherman at about 7am nestled among rocks in front of the Windmill Viewpoint.

The body, later identified as that of John Joseph Sheridan, from Pennsylvania, was in an advanced stage of decomposition. Police believe he had died at least seven days earlier.

A red waist bag was still on the body, containing Mr Sheridan's passport and a variety of currencies including Thai baht, US dollars and Korean won, together totaling more than B30,000 in value. Officers also found Mr Sheridan's 'Alien Registration Card' issued by South Korea.

Officers also found a key card for a room at the Naiharn On The



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

Rock resort located nearby.

Police at last report postulated that Mr Sheridan had fallen from the rocks into the water.

Chalong Police are checking CCTV in the area and have confirmed that Mr Sheridan was last seen at the hotel on July 7.

Officers are continuing their investigation.

The body was taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital for post-mortem examination in the hope of confirming the cause of death.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Brit, Dane caught in gambling raid

A BRITISH NATIONAL AND A Danish national were among 11 people arrested in a raid on a gambling den on Koh Siray, east of Phuket Town, early on July 29.

Phuket Provincial Police along with officers from Region 8 Police raided the venue, a villa on Theprathan Rd, at 3:30am.

The raid followed a tip-off via a post online, teasing police to raid the venue, or else risk being accused of taking bribes to allow the gambling to continue.

The post also shared an advertisement posted online promoting the venue, which called itself "The Royal Club", as the "The Best Poker House in Phuket". The grand opening was marked as from July 28-30.

Officers conducting the raid arrested eight Thais, one Cambodian, one British citizen and one Danish citizen, police reported today (July 29).

When officers arrived, betting chips for more than B2 million were on the poker table.

Officers seized the poker table, three decks of cards and a further 783 betting chips which altogether were



Photo: Region 8 Police

marked to cover B1,579,150 in bets.

Police also seized a laptop computer. According to records of betting chips exchanged at the scene, the gambling began at 9:30pm, police noted.

Two of the 11 arrested said they had travelled from Bangkok to gamble at the venue. Both had made bookings to confirm their attendance at the event, police said.

All 11 were taken to Phuket City Police Station to be charged, and for further questioning, police reported.

One person, identified as the organiser of the event, faced extra charges for illegal possession of gambling equipment and paraphernalia, and for organising an illegal activity, police said.

Eakkapop Thongtub

the Phuket News



# Police stroll Bangla over sale of cannabis products

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket Tourist Police led an excursion along Bangla Rd, Patong, last week to explain to shop and venue operators that they must have a license in order to sell marijuana products

Col Pichetphong Jengkhai-kom, Deputy Superintendent of Tourist Police Region 3, led the foray along Phuket's premier party street on July 27, joined by Kathu District Chief Siwat Rawarangkul and Patong Police Chief Col Sujin Nilabadee.

Also present were health officers from Patong Municipality, administrative officers from Kathu District Office and local police.

Col Pichetphong explained to vendors that any persons found breaking the law will be charged.

"The Ministry of Public Health issued an announcement on June 16 confirming that cannabis is a controlled herb that any person can now study, research, export, sell or process.



Photo: PR Phuket

"However, they must apply for permission from the provincial public health office first, otherwise it will be an offense under Section 78 of the Act on Protection and Promotion of Thai Traditional Medicine, B.E.," he added.

Breach of Section 78 incurs a fine of up to B20,000 or up to one year imprisonment, or both, he noted.

His office had received a letter on July 26 instructing police chiefs to prosecute those found breaking the law by not having the required

permits, Col Pichetphong explained.

However, police did not report any legal action taken against any operators found with cannabis products during their inspection.

## TOTAL RECALL

The Ministry of Public Health has since recalled an urgent formal request sent to the Royal Thai Police asking them to take legal action against those who failed to seek permits related to the use of cannabis.

Royal Thai Police (RTP) spokesman Pol Maj Gen Yingyot Thepjamnong said there are certain issues the RTP had to clarify with the Ministry of Public Health in regard to the letter.

He said the national police chief found contradictions that must be addressed, reported the *Bangkok Post*.

"To prevent public confusion and ensure effective enforcement, the national police chief has asked the RTP's Law and Litigation Office to straighten some issues out with the ministry," Maj Gen Yingyot said.

Maj Gen Yingyot said there were certain issues the RTP had to clarify with the Ministry of Public Health in regard to the request. He said the national police chief found contradictions that must be addressed.

"To prevent public confusion and ensure effective enforcement, the national police chief has asked the RTP's Law and Litigation Office to straighten some issues out with the ministry," Maj Gen Yingyot said.



Photo: PR Phuket

## Phuket marks HM The King's birthday

PHUKET GOVERNOR Narong Woonciew led the official ceremonies to commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> birthday of His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn Bodindradebayavarangkun on July 28.

The ceremonies at Phuket Provincial Hall began at 7am with merit-making by offering alms to 79 monks.

At 7:45am, Governor Narong presided over the oath of allegiance ceremony. The participants of the ceremony pledged their oaths of allegiance in unison, then sang the royal anthem and hymns to the King.

The official events continued at Phuket Provincial Hall at 5pm when a performance of traditional Thai dance was held at the Auditorium building in honor of His Majesty

The King.

Governor Narong Woonciew led the final formal ceremony, held at the Auditorium building, at the auspicious time of 7:19pm.

Joining the ceremony were hundreds of officials in full dress uniform, including the senior officials, soldiers and police as well students, members of community organisations and other members of the general public.

Governor Narong led the ceremony by laying offerings in front of a large image of His Majesty in the Auditorium hall to pay tribute to HM The King.

The tribute ceremony was followed by a candlelight ceremony during which blessings were recited in honour of His Majesty.

The Phuket News

## Human Rights mediates mosque speaker noise

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR Suchart Setthamalani of the National Human Rights Commission was in Phuket last week as mediator with the hope of amicably resolving complaints over the volume of the speaker noise emanating from Kamala Mosque.

The complaints have centred on the noise from the mosque's loudspeakers disturbing residents in the area, said a report by the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket).

Kamala Tambon Administrative Organisation (OrBorTor), led by Jutha Dumlak, has yet to post a report about the meeting.

At the meeting room of the Kamala OrBorTor offices on July 27, Asst Prof Suchart heard first-hand complaints from residents, explaining that the volume of the loudspeakers of the Nurul Aiasan Mosque (Ban Naka) was too loud.

Present to hear the com-



Photo: PR Phuket

plaints were Kamala OrBorTor officials, the Tambon Kamnan (subdistrict chief), the village headman of Moo 6 Kamala, representatives from the mosque.

Asst Prof Suchart explained to all present that the goal was "to find a solution to the problem together".

"Such complaints can be negotiated and an agreement can be reached. This is an open space for meetings to discuss and express opinions

of each party, which previously may have misunderstandings," he said.

"The National Human Rights Commission has come here to connect the two parties to have the same understanding, to find a settlement that both parties can agree on and can live together peacefully," he added.

However, the report did not clarify whether an amicable solution was agreed on.

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MEMBER OF DMS



# Airports ready for influx

The Phuket News  
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Transport Minister Saksayam Chidchob has instructed the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) and Airports of Thailand (AoT) to prepare to welcome up to 19 million air passengers in the last quarter of this year.

Mr Saksayam said the order followed a surge currently being experienced in the United States and Europe after the easing of COVID-19 travel restrictions, reports the *Bangkok Post*.

The Bank of Thailand forecasts up to 19mn inbound international arrivals during the fourth quarter, when Thailand's peak tourism season begins, he said.

According to the CAAT and the AoT, Thailand welcomed about 1.08mn international visitors from Jan 1 to May 20, and the number of new visitors was expected to rise to 6mn in the second quarter, he said.

The number of tourists was projected to slowly grow in the third quarter, the tourism "low season", before picking up again and rapidly rising in the fourth quarter, he said.

Thailand should learn from what is happening in the US and Europe to better prepare for a similar situation, Mr Saksayam noted.

Massive flight delays and



Korean tourists are starting to arrive on direct flights from Seoul. Photo: AoT Phuket

close to 100,000 flight cancellations have occurred in Europe since April, while at least 20,000 cancellations happened in the US in the past two to three months. The chaotic situation stemmed from shortages of aviation and airport workers due to layoffs during the COVID-19 pandemic, he said.

The number of passengers rapidly rose while the number of workers remained low, he added.

To help airlines cope better with the current high costs of operation, financial measures for airlines operating flights to and from Thailand have been extended for another quarter, he said.

Measures include a 50% landing and parking discount for both domestic and international flights and a waiver for airlines suspending their operations, he said.

Credit terms for the fee

charged to inbound and outbound flights have been extended from 15 days to 90 days and the fine for delayed payments has been frozen, he said.

## INDIA, MALAYSIA

Sisdivachr Cheewarattanaporn, President of the Association of Thai Travel Agents (ATTA), said only 10% of 1,600 ATTA members are able to restart their businesses at present.

Most of them have had to shift from the Chinese and Russian markets to India and Malaysia, which were the top markets with 381,542 and 322,079 arrivals, respectively, as of July 26.

"Most tour operators remain closed, particularly 400 companies that previously focused on the Chinese market. However, as the outlook for the upcoming high season is promising, we have to prepare for resumption by restarting

business matching in popular destinations like Phuket this month," said Mr Sisdivachr.

ATTA brought 170 tour operators to Phuket for business matching with 70-80 local hotels last weekend.

He said tour operators and hotels have to work together to gauge the tourism demand in the final quarter and prepare their services to avoid a supply shortage as most hotels in Phuket have been shuttered for over two years.

## RUSSIA

Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Governor Yuthasak Supasorn said Aeroflot has confirmed the resumption of the Moscow to Phuket service in the winter schedule, starting from Oct 30 with a daily service.

Aeroflot and several other Russian carriers suspended flights to the island in March this year.

As of July 26, the number of Russian visitors to Thailand stood at 76,739. Most entered the country during the first quarter before Russia's invasion of Ukraine escalated, which prompted the European Union (EU) to impose aviation sanctions against Russia, reported the *Bangkok Post*.

"In discussions with tour operators focusing on this market, they are confident about demand to Thailand. The only problem is the lack of connectivity. If Aeroflot can resume direct services as planned, while more airlines could follow in the next few months, we can still anticipate an influx of tourists in the final quarter," said Mr Yuthasak.

He said many airlines from Thailand, such as Thai Airways and Thai AirAsia X, were interested in operating this route to replace Russian carriers, but due to sanctions from European countries, technical assistance such as maintenance and shipments of spare parts were also banned over the past few months, as well as insurance that would not provide coverage in such circumstances.

However, the EU on July 27 announced an exemption for the sharing of technical information in the framework of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), which includes any technical support related to repairs, development, manufacture, assembly, test-

ing, maintenance, or any other technical services.

Mr Yuthasak said it has to clarify with related authorities again how this revised sanction from the EU could make any changes to the current aviation situation regarding Russia.

## PHUKET BOOST

Flights between South Korean capital Seoul and Phuket have resumed with two airlines relaunching direct flights last week.

Asiana Airlines flight OZ747 direct from Seoul Incheon International Airport touched down in Phuket at 9:20pm on July 28, bringing a total of 180 passengers.

The resumption of the Asiana Airlines services followed JINAIR flight LR015 also direct from Incheon International Airport landing in Phuket at 9:25pm on July 23, bringing 179 passengers.

## JEDDAH

Meanwhile, Thai Airways International (THAI) has announced that it will launch four weekly flights between Bangkok and Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, beginning on Aug 19.

Suwatana Sibunruang, the interim CEO of THAI, stated that the resumption of commercial flights after 32 years of hiatus provides an opportunity to strengthen economic, trade and tourism connections between the two nations.

## Phang Nga launches 'Post COVID Syndrome' tourism campaign

MINISTER OF TOURISM and Sports Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn has launched a new 'Post COVID Syndrome' travel campaign to help tourism businesses in Phang Nga to recover.

Speaking at La Flora Hotel Khao Lak resort on July 24, Mr Phiphat likened the new campaign to "unveiling a new dimension in tourism for Phang Nga", in what he called an aspect of "Creative Economy".

The campaign aims to attract tourists by providing a holistic rehabilitation programme for people with Post Covid Syndrome through Thai traditional medicine and integrated medicine.

The programme was developed by the Prince of Songkla University Faculty of Thai Traditional Medicine in collaboration with La Vela Hotel Group, Khao Lak, and the Andaman and Gulf of Thailand Health Promotion



Tourism Minister Mr Phiphat. Photo: MoTS

Hotels Association.

"By highlighting the selling point of being the world's leading health tourism centre by combining Thai traditional medicine and integrated medicine to rehabilitate people with Post Covid Syndrome," Mr Phiphat said.

"This is a group of new quality tourists that are being watched from all over the world at the moment, demonstrating the far-reaching

vision of the government and private sectors in Phang Nga Province in providing such rehabilitation programmes for these people," he added.

"It is an operation that is in line with the policy development concept 'Creative Economy' of the government because it is the production of new goods and services using knowledge, creativity, technology and innovation to further develop to create

added value to the economy," Mr Phiphat said.

"This will generate income from health-promoting tourism for every stage of the supply chain, from the people to communities to a wide range of business operators," he noted.

In addition to Phang Nga Governor Chamroen Ti-payapongthada, who has previously served as Governor of Phuket, the launch featured a powerhouse of Phang Nga tourism figures, including Paiboon Kulphaeng of the Phang Nga Tourism and Sports Authority office, and Aman Mad-Adam, Director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Phang Nga Office.

Also present were Institute of Thai Traditional Medicine Director Chakrawut Phuekkong, Phang Nga Provincial Public Health Office Chief Wittaya Wattanarungkowitz and Phang Nga

Provincial Administrative Organisation President Tharithip Thongjerm.

Representing the private sector were Sompong Dao Piset, President of the Andaman and Gulf Hotels Association; Kanthat Kulwanich, President of the Phang Nga Chamber of Commerce; and Lertsak Panklin, President of Phang Nga Province Tourism Business Association.

The launch also featured a forum on the topic of "Wellness Integration: Recovering your body and mind with Holistic Post COVID care".

Phang Nga Governor Chamroen pointed out that incomes of tourism operators in Phang Nga had been heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The Phang Nga Provincial Office has worked with various sectors to stimulate the economy, and increase the potential of Phang Nga's tourism business to become

more valuable by supporting health-promoting tourism, which is in line with the national development strategy to help the economy of Thailand to recover," Mr Chamroen said.

"Phang Nga Provincial Office is ready to support health-promoting tourism in the area. There will be projects that will help support entrepreneurs and people in the future," he added.

"In addition, university departments such as the Science Park Research and Development Office and other agencies have brought different products related to health-promoting tourism, which is the result of work of university researchers, to present to local business owners to use their products and knowledge to benefit their businesses. Increase tourism income in the area," Mr Chamroen said.

The Phuket News



# Prayut ditches proposed power tariff increase

## BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

A new higher power tariff is to be postponed following an intervention by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha to curb rising living costs, says a source at the Energy Ministry.

The higher tariff was due to be imposed between September and December this year, but now it will not be increased.

The new rate, which had been authorised by the Energy Regulatory Commission, was initially scheduled to be announced on Monday (Aug 1), according to the source who requested anonymity.

The new power tariff was earlier expected to rise to B4.72 per kilowatt hour, up from a rate of B4 between May and August. The fuel tariff (Ft), a key element in the power tariff, is expected to rise to B0.93 per kilowatt hour, up from B0.24.

The planned rise was blamed on higher energy prices following sanctions



Electricity towers and power lines are seen at Chatuchak station. Photo: Bangkok Post

imposed by the United States and its allies on Russia after its invasion of Ukraine in February.

Global crude oil prices have been increasing since late last year when many countries relaxed measures to contain the spread of COVID-19. Demand for oil also increased when Western nations entered the winter period.

A higher power tariff has also resulted from a huge decline in the domestic gas supply from the Gulf of Thailand, causing the country to import more expensive liquefied natural gas.

Gas makes up around 60% of the fuel used to generate electricity in Thailand.

The state-run Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (Egat) has subsidised the power tariff to help relieve pressure on the cost of living, but this has cost it more than B87 billion.

Last month the government gave Egat permission to borrow B30bn from banks to help it deal with the huge financial burden.

Meanwhile, this week the Energy Policy Administration Committee (Epac) is also expected to raise the

price of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), which is used as cooking gas.

The LPG price will increase to between B393 and B408 per 15-kilogramme standard cylinder in August and September, respectively, permanent secretary for energy Kulit Sombatsiri said. Mr Kulit is a member of Epac.

The increase is part of the government's efforts to relieve the burden on the state's Oil Fuel Fund, which is used to subsidise diesel and LPG prices.

The fund has already run up losses of over B166bn.



Photo: Bangkok Post

## Navy prefers women to refrain from bikinis

### CHON BURI

THE NAVY HAS SAID it is not explicitly prohibiting women from wearing bikinis on its beaches in Chon Buri but is asking visitors for their cooperation in not doing so, out of respect for Thai culture, a spokesman said last Friday (July 29).

Vice Admiral Pokkrong Monthatpalin confirmed that the navy is asking visitors to not wear bikinis on its beaches for the sake of "order and in accordance with Thai culture and tradition".

He was responding to a July 27 Facebook post on the "Quotidien de Thaïlande" account of a photo showing a "No Bikini" sign on Koh

Samae San, off Chon Buri province. The island is designated as navy territory.

V/Adm Pokkrong said such signs were aimed only at persuading tourists not to wear bikinis and that the navy did not ban bikinis outright.

The signs were being removed and would be replaced with new ones to create a better understanding of the navy's intention to encourage a conservative form of tourism, the spokesman said.

Koh Samae San is a tourist attraction but it is under the jurisdiction of the navy, the spokesman added. The number of visitors was limited and they were not allowed to stay overnight, drink alcohol or gather in noisy groups.

Bangkok Post

## NACC fails to hit target on integrity

### BANGKOK

THE NATIONAL ANTI-Corruption Commission (NACC) has announced a 20% rise in the number of state agencies meeting its minimum integrity and transparency standards.

The NACC's annual transparency assessment also noted that a number of agencies under the Interior, Public Health and Industry ministries still had room for improvement.

Released on Monday (Aug 1), results of this year's Integrity and Transparency Assessment (ITA) showed a total of 5,855 out of all 8,303 state organisations, or 70%, passed the assessment, which represents a 20% increase from last year, said NACC chairman Pol Gen Watcharapol Prasarnrajkit.

"Despite the significant increase, the overall result doesn't actually meet the NACC's target of at least 80% of state agencies scoring a minimum of 85% in the ITA's benchmark.

"All parties are, therefore, encouraged to join

hands in further raising the levels of their integrity and transparency until the target is met," Gen Watcharapol added.

Of all 10 indicators, corruption prevention was found to be the least achievable, especially regarding high-level commitment to adopting anti-graft measures in organisational work plans, he explained.

Low-scoring agencies were mostly tambon administration organisations, municipality offices, higher education institutions and funds, while the Interior, Public Health and Industry Ministries helmed the fewest organisations to pass the ITA.

Analysed by province, the administrations in Ratchaburi, Ubon Ratchathani and Chaiyaphum performed poorly, Gen Watcharapol said.

Among the highest-scoring units were those under the judicial and parliamentary umbrellas.

The Department of Provincial Administration earned the highest overall score among departments



Photo: Bangkok Post

while the Government Housing Bank topped the state enterprise category.

News of the assessment report came days after the NACC confirmed MPs from smaller parties had received monthly allowances from the government over the past three years.

The MPs are accused of receiving a monthly bribe of B100,000 to cast votes for Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha and 10 targeted ministers during the recent no-confidence debate.

By law government officials cannot receive benefits worth more than B3,000. Violators can face three years imprisonment and/or a fine of up to B60,000. Receiving bribes in exchange for votes could see those found guilty facing up to 20 years in jail.

Bangkok Post



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Read online





Mangroves of Ban Bang Rong.



Monkeys sunbathing on the pier.



Khun Prasert Ritaksa-President of the Bang Rong Community Based Tourism Club.

# The importance of Phuket's mangroves



## SUSTAINABLY YOURS

Palmer Owyong

**M**angrove forests are an overlooked attraction on Phuket. They are not places that you will find most tourists, who generally favour our sunny beaches and raucous nightlife, but with the recent announcement that the forests east of Phuket Town will be developed into an eco-tourist attraction, perhaps that will soon change.

These dense thickets of trees with gnarled roots, that grow into the muddy soil, filled with saltwater, were once mistaken for worthless swamps that didn't serve any real purpose other

than to breed mosquitoes.

However, once you understand their interconnectedness to the surrounding ecosystems, and how they protect our island against flooding, and erosion and provide a home for thousands of species of insects and animals, you will begin to see how amazing and beautiful they are.

### What are Mangroves

The Phuket mangroves line the east coast of the island, stretching from Cape Panwa in the south up to Saphan Hin and Koh Siray in the middle up to Baan Bang Rong and Baan Ao Kung in the north.

In the fight against climate change, they are one of our most powerful weapons and can sequester four to five times more CO<sub>2</sub> than a tropical rainforest of comparable size. Every hectare of mangroves can store an estimated 554,000kg of carbon making them one

of the most important terrestrial-based defences.

The reason these salt-tolerant trees and shrubs act as storage powerhouses is that when leaves and branches fall into the low-oxygen soil they don't break down and their carbon is stored there, unlike in a regular forest where organic matter eventually degrades and releases its CO<sub>2</sub>.

It is also due to the complex root system of the mangrove trees that captures sediment and turns it into soil, which builds new roots. This combination of soil and root building allows mangroves to suck out large amounts of carbon from the air and store it within the tree and the ground.

### The Value of Mangroves

Not only do these forests store carbon, but also their tree branches are homes to monkeys, birds, snakes and lizards, while their submerged roots act as nurseries for fish, crabs, lobsters and other marine animals.

Their true value became apparent in 2004 after the tsunami that devastated Phuket. Areas where mangrove forests were left standing fared much better than those that were torn down. This is because when storm surges strike the coastlines the densely packed trees bear the brunt of the force from the waves, often sparing the villages behind them by reducing flooding and erosion.

Mangroves also help keep the ocean clean by absorbing pollution, and excess nutrients from fertilisers, which can make it into the ocean causing algal blooms, which lead to dead zones.

These forests are so valuable that one study estimates that over their lifetime each hectare provides approximately US\$600,000, worth of services, which translates to about US\$37,500 per year.

Despite their immense economic value, it is estimated that between 50-60% of mangroves in Thailand have been destroyed.

According to Dr Vipawee, a biologist and botanist at Prince Songkhla University, from the 1970s through the '90s the mangroves were turned into shrimp farms, cut down for their wood that was turned into charcoal briquettes, and developed into real estate. Although they are protected today, mangrove forests are still under threat from pollution, developers and illegal encroachment.

### Saving the Mangroves

The Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR) is responsible for maintaining the mangrove forests, but with little funding the government is turning to tourism. The Ratsada Mu-

nicipality recently announced that the area east of Phuket Town and north of Koh Siray will be used for eco-tourism, starting with 100 rai. it will eventually expand to 1,234 rai.

However, using tourism to protect the mangroves isn't new. Baan Bang Rong, located in the northeast of Phuket, launched a successful community-based tourism scheme in 2015 as a way to monetise and protect its mangroves. This Muslim village is known primarily for its pier where tourists can catch a speedboat to Koh Yao, but if visitors stopped to take a look around they'd see an area steeped in history.

At one time Bang Rong served as a busy hub for transportation and trade, but today it is a sleepy fishing village surrounded by a lush mangrove forest. However, it wasn't always this way. According to Prasert Ritaksa, President of the Baan Bang Rong Community Based Tourism Club, just over 20 years ago the area was denuded of trees, after a government programme incentivised locals to cut them down so they could be turned into charcoal and shipped overseas. This caused the fish and crab population to collapse and left fishermen without a way to earn an income.

That's when Khun Prasert decided to restore the mangroves through a combination of reseedling and planting saplings. Today most experts advocate rewilding over replanting as it creates healthier, more biodiverse forests, but at the time replanting was the only thing anybody knew about.

The process was slow going at first and was met with little enthusiasm from others in the community. The project started in 1999 and cost a total of about B20,000.

The timing was fortunate because in 2004 the tsunami hit. But, unlike other villages, the mangroves bore some of the brunt of the water rushing in and helped keep Bang Rong from flooding worse than it did. It also saved lives by preventing the debris from tearing through the community.

The community-based tourism project started seven years ago and includes a cruise through the mangrove forest on a longtail boat or in a kayak, a cooking lesson, harvesting pineapples, picking coconuts, touring a rubber tree plantation, and releasing crabs with their eggs into the seagrass.

Khun Prasert says that the goal is to teach visitors about traditional Thai culture.

Find out more about the project by going to [BangRongConnect.com](http://BangRongConnect.com)

Palmer Owyong is an environmental activist working with the Kamala Green Club and the Global Sustainability Hub.

## GIN & JAZZ



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ALCOHOL IS A HEALTH HAZARD.



# Learning essential water-safety skills

The Phuket News  
editor1@classactmedia.co.th

**M**ore than 100 local children took part in a water-safety education and training campaign and learned basic life-saving skills last week in the hope that they learn essential skills that may prevent them from drowning, and that they might be able to help save the lives of others.

The “Educate Water Safety for Youth” activity held at Ao Yon on July 25 saw 105 children from Baan Borrae School, Baan Laem Panwa School and elsewhere from throughout Muang District take part.

Phuket Vice Governor Anupap Rodkwan Yodrabam presided over the opening, joined by Australian Consul-General in Phuket Matthew Barclay.

At the event, Mr Barclay handed over a donation of ‘Pirate Kim’ books, bilingual books created to help children learn basic water safety, to Wichit May- or Kreeetha Chotiwitpipat so they could be handed out to children at schools in the area.

Leading the training were lifeguards from the Phuket Lifeguard Service, led by PLS Vice President Witanya Chuayaun, who also serves as the PLS Lifeguard Education Coordinator and International Lifeguard Supervisor.

The project to educate children about water safety was focussed on chil-



Photo: PR Phuket

dren aged 7-15 years old, Ms Witanya said.

“Over the past 20 years, since the project began in 2004, more than 8,000 children have participated,” she explained.

“July 25 each year is World Drowning Prevention Day, when we call on the world to come together to prevent drowning, especially children,” Ms Witanya said.

“Children are taught how to swim

and other water skills, but learning in the pool and the sea are different,” she noted.

“Therefore we want children to learn to swim in the sea and how to use water equipment to keep themselves safe – and to enjoy these things,” she said.

“They should learn how to use nature to their advantage, especially while waiting for help from an adult, including knowing how to help other people and first aid,” Ms Witanya explained.

During their special day out at Ao Yon, the children were taught general knowledge about the beach and the sea, about poisonous animals and treatment methods, fun sea knowledge, basic buoyancy and swimming skills, and the basics of surfing.

They also learned basic emergency first aid, and even CPR.

“Each section received a lot of attention from the children, especially the fun sea part and the paddleboard part, because the children had the opportunity to swim in the sea and use life-saving equipment,” Ms Witanya said.

Mr Barclay highlighted the importance of the exercise, especially for children in Phuket. “As an island province, water safety is incredibly important to Phuket – as it is in Australia where 85% of the population live within 50km of the ocean. We have a lot to share with each other on the risks and opportunities this provides,” he said.

The water-safety training for children on July 25 was just one episode in a series of events also to be held across the island, he added.

“We are proud to support a series of events over the next two weeks – alongside the Phuket Hotels Association – to bring greater awareness to the risks of drowning and to build strategies to reduce this risk in the future. We should all be thinking about what we can do as a community to reduce these senseless deaths,” Mr Barclay said.



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POP QUIZ

1. What is the name of the druid in the Asterix comics?

2. Which letter was the last to be added to the English alphabet?

3. Charles Dickens had an unusual pet named Grip. What was it?

4. What is the capital of Morocco?

5. In the 1975 movie *Jaws*, what was the name of Quint's boat?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Medium

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

1. In accordance with

6. Catalan surrealist

10. Made like time?

14. Western director Sergio

15. Tucked in

16. It may be polished

17. Say before thinking

18. Get carried away?

19. Some pods

20. Duel

23. Kind of patch

24. Tending to business

25. Bargain

28. Empty talk

31. Imprison

35. Palindromic title

36. City in Arizona

37. Cooling-off period

38. Of unsound mind

41. Electron tube

42. They may provide relief

43. United Nations agcy.

44. Hindu holy man

45. Place

46. Throw off

47. "Nothing \_\_\_ Matters" (Metallica song)

Down

49. Heater

51. Unwelcome one

59. Berry touted as medicinal

60. Got on

61. Drew a bead on

62. Blade in the 'hood

63. Wished undone

64. Like some walls

65. Seafood selection

66. G-men

67. Uncool candies?

13. Sport

21. Flower part

22. Clan members

25. Imitates a hot dog

26. Plato's plaza

27. Fissiped mammal

29. Venomous hairy caterpillar

30. Actress Watts

32. Dyed fabric

33. Catlike

34. Plant more seeds

36. Mathematical adverb

37. Challenge

39. Well integrated

40. Bill encl.

45. Association

46. Labor

48. Devour

50. On the other hand

51. Get by

52. Ring

53. Marsh bird

54. Impecuniosity

55. Chances

56. Certain chieftain

57. Began, with "off"

58. Subjoins

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14					15				16			
17					18				19			
20					21				22			
			23				24					
25	26	27			28	29	30		31	32	33	34
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41						42				43		
44					45					46		
			47		48			49	50			
51	52	53				54	55			56	57	58
59					60				61			
62					63				64			
65					66				67			

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

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

7

months is the gestation period of the anaconda. Females often eat smaller males after mating so she can survive fasting during pregnancy.

33

is the age all three of actor Tom Cruise's ex-wives were when they split up.

1,275

percent is the average markup on popcorn bought at cinemas.

180,000

is how many kilometres the average person walks in their lifetime, the equivalent of walking around the equator 4.5 times.

2.1 billion

US dollars of Pablo Escobar's earnings was eaten by rats, damaged or lost every year and he didn't even notice.

Source: *Uberfacts*

ISLAND VIEW



Karon View Point. Photo by Istvan Gal

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

This week in history

August 5, 1861

In order to help pay for the war effort, the United States government levies the first income tax as part of the Revenue Act of 1861 (3% of all incomes over US\$800).

August 6, 1991

British scientist Tim Berners-Lee releases files describing his idea for the World Wide Web. WWW debuts as a publicly available service on the Internet.

August 7, 1974

Frenchman Philippe Petit performs a high wire act between the twin towers of the World Trade Center 1,368 feet (417m) in the air. He performs for 45 minutes, making eight passes along the wire.

August 8, 1967

The Association of South-east Asian Nations (Asean) is founded by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand at the charter signing in Bangkok.

August 9, 1965

Singapore is expelled from Malaysia and becomes the only country to date to gain independence unwillingly.

August 10, 1897

German chemist Felix Hoffmann discovers an improved way of synthesizing acetyl-salicylic acid and in doing so creates aspirin.

August 11, 1786

Capt Francis Light establishes the British colony of Penang in Malaysia and its capital city of George Town.

Source: *Wikipedia*



Asean is founded in Bangkok, 1967.

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## Phang Nga international marathon confirmed

### MARATHON

AUTHORITIES HAVE confirmed the 2022 Phang Nga International Marathon is to take place next weekend (Aug 12-13) at Khao Lak Beach.

The marathon is expected to attract many well known runners from all over the world who will compete across a 5.9km fun run, a 10.5km mini marathon, a 42km marathon and a “fancy” run.

The 42km marathon will take place at night to avail the cooler conditions, with lights and sounds in place to assist runners around the course.

There will be a total of B1.7 million in prize money on offer, with the best performing Thai runners receiving the “Best of Thailand” award and prize money in each category.

The marathon will be

known as “The Happiness Home of Runner”, said Phang Nga Governor Chamroen Tipayapongthada at a press conference on July 26.

It strives to promote Phang Nga as a leading sports province in both Thailand and the Asean region, as per directives as part of a five-year sustainability plan outlined by the national Sports and Tourism office.

Gov Chamroen added that it is hoped the race will become regarded as one of the leading marathons in Thailand that will appeal to international runners by providing a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

He added that official certification assessments at all levels for the races have been sought from the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS).

*The Phuket News*

# Vettel retires, Alonso confirmed to replace

### FORMULA ONE

AFP

Four-time world champion Sebastian Vettel will retire at the end of the 2022 season and be replaced by Fernando Alonso, it has been confirmed.

“The decision to retire has been a difficult one for me to take, and I have spent a lot of time thinking about it,” Vettel, 35, announced last Thursday (July 28).

“At the end of the year I want to take some more time to reflect on what I will focus on next; it is very clear to me that, being a father, I want to spend more time with my family. But today is not about saying goodbye.

“Rather, it is about saying thank you – to everyone – not least to the fans, without whose passionate support Formula One could not exist.”

Vettel won four successive championships with Red Bull from 2010 to 2013, but struggled to reproduce his best results after moving to Ferrari before joining Aston



Vettel (left) will be replaced by Alonso at Aston Martin next season. Photo: AFP

Martin last year.

His 53 Grand Prix victories place him third on the all-time list behind Lewis Hamilton (103) and Michael Schumacher (91). Vettel last won a race in Singapore in 2019.

Only Schumacher, Hamilton (both seven) and Juan Manuel Fangio (five) have won more world titles than Vettel, who is level alongside Alain Prost.

The German made his F1 debut with Sauber in 2007.

He then joined Toro Rosso, becoming the youngest Grand Prix winner at Monza aged 21 in 2008 – a record since broken

by reigning world champion Max Verstappen.

Vettel made the step up to Red Bull in 2009. His first title in 2010, aged 23 years and 134 days, saw him crowned the youngest world champion in history.

His fourth and final title in 2013 was rubber-stamped by a remarkable nine straight wins to round out the season.

He joined Ferrari in 2015 and twice finished runner-up for the world title to Hamilton in 2017 and 2018.

Aston Martin announced on Monday that double world champion Alonso, 41, would

be joining the team on a multi-year contract from 2023 to replace Vettel.

Alonso, who won his world titles with Renault in 2005 and 2006, said the Aston Martin team is “one of the most exciting teams in Formula One today”.

“I still have the hunger and ambition to fight to be at the front, and I want to be part of an organisation that is committed to learn, develop and succeed,” Alonso said.

“I intend to win again in this sport and therefore I have to take the opportunities that feel right to me.”

## Hong Kong Sevens returns but with a difference

### RUGBY

FANS IN THE STANDS at November’s Hong Kong Sevens will be allowed to drink, but not eat, with masks having to be worn between sips, officials said on Monday (Aug 1).

The famously rowdy rugby extravaganza will return after a three-year coronavirus pandemic hiatus in a much-needed boost for sports-starved residents from Nov 4-6.

But in contrast to most of the world’s major sporting events, strict coronavirus measures will be in place including a Beijing Olympics-style “closed-loop” system for players.

Hong Kong’s sports commissioner Yeung Tak-keung outlined what fans can expect in the 40,000-seat stadium, which will be capped at 85% capacity.

While drinking will be allowed in the stands, eating will be limited to specific “eating outlets” instead.

“For eating, you need to take off the mask, and we want to reduce and minimise the mask-off activities at the



Fans in the South Stand in April 2019. Photo: AFP

spectator stands,” Yeung told the city’s public radio station RTHK.

Officials would also be keeping an eye out to ensure fans kept their mouths covered.

“We want the spectators to observe the rules themselves and, also, the Rugby Union will send people around to remind people to put their masks back on after drinking,” said Yeung.

That could prove to be an unenviable task for stadium stewards.

The Hong Kong Sevens is known as much for its raucous crowds as it is for rugby, especially in the South Stand – famous for its fancy dress, party atmosphere and

all-day drinking, singing and dancing.

But it is unlikely Hong Kong will see a large influx of tourists any time soon.

International flights remain well below pre-pandemic levels and all arrivals must currently undergo a week of mandatory hotel quarantine.

Hong Kong’s new administration, which took office this month, has been saying it plans to reduce the quarantine period soon, bringing in a health code traffic light system similar to China’s.

But there has been no firm commitment or time-frame yet for ending quarantine.

AFP



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# Expect another pulsating Premier League season

## FOOTBALL

Ben Tirebuck  
editor3@classactmedia.co.th

The Premier League returns to action this evening (Aug 5) as Arsenal travel to south London to Crystal Palace in the season's curtain raiser.

It promises to be another pulsating campaign in the English top flight, albeit with an unfamiliar 44-day break to account for the Qatar World Cup starting Nov 21.

It will be hard to look past defending champions Manchester City winning a further league title, particularly given the astute summer signings Pep Guardiola has made in Erling Haaland, Calvin Phillips and Julian Alvarez.

If any team is to finish ahead of the Citizens then the smart money is on Liverpool. Last season's runners-up took the title challenge to the wire and, whereas they have lost Sadio Mane, have managed to renew Mohamad Salah's contract and bring in Uruguayan striker Darwin Nunez. Expect Luiz Dias to fire too and fill



Expect Liverpool and Manchester City to be fighting for the title once again this season. Photo: AFP

the gap left by Mane.

If any team has the potential to disrupt the top two then look no further than Tottenham, who many anticipate will have a strong season. Now manager Antonio Conte is fully settled at the club expect to see his side more attuned to his high-tempo, direct style. In Harry Kane and Son Heung-min they have the finest strike force in the land, with the summer signing from Everton Richarlison providing excellent support.

Arsenal have experienced an excellent pre-season and have the ability to push the very best. Gabriel Jesus and Oleksandr Zinchenko, both signed from Manchester City, are solid acquisitions and Martin Odegaard is a class act.

It has been all change at Chelsea and it will be interesting to see how they fare. The signings of Raheem Sterling and Kalidou Koulibaly, however, suggest a top-four finish is very much possible.

At Manchester United

Erik ten Hag has a significant rebuilding job on his hands and a top-six finish seems more likely.

Elsewhere, Everton will be hoping to improve on last season's horror show which saw them escape relegation by the skin of their teeth. Ditto Leeds United although losing their two best players in Calvin Phillips and Raphinha is a concern.

Steven Gerrard, Patrick Vieira, Graham Potter and Eddie Howe will be looking to continue their fine progressive work at Aston Villa, Palace, Brighton and Newcastle respectively while Leicester City will be hoping the return to full fitness of several key players will compensate for their lack of summer signings.

Newly promoted Nottingham Forest, Fulham and Bournemouth are expected to struggle although there is always a surprise team that defy the odds to survive. Should one of them do so then expect Southampton to be one of the main candidates for relegation to the Championship come season's end.



Liverpool players celebrate their win. Photo: AFP

## Nunez shines as Liverpool win the Community Shield

### FOOTBALL

LIVERPOOL STRUCK first blood against Manchester City ahead of the new Premier League season as Darwin Nunez made an instant impact for Jurgen Klopp's men to win the Community Shield 3-1 last Saturday (July 30).

In a tale of two big summer signings, Nunez came off the bench to win a penalty and score his first goal since a 75-million euro (B2.8 billion) move from Benfica, while Erling Haaland had a City debut to forget.

Trent Alexander-Arnold's blistering strike gave Liverpool a deserved half-time lead in Leicester before Julian Alvarez equalised for City.

Tying down Mohamed Salah to a new three-year deal was Liverpool's other major piece of summer business

and the Egyptian was deadly from the penalty spot after Nunez's header was handled by Ruben Dias.

The Uruguayan then got his own glory moment by stooping to head home in stoppage time before tearing off his shirt in celebration.

Victory saw Liverpool win the traditional season curtain-raiser for the first time since 2006 and lay down an early marker in what is expected to be another battle between the sides for the Premier League title.

"He's good," said Klopp of Nunez. "Today we played the smart passes. We saw Darwin in dangerous situations. He used the spaces and finished well too."

"All the subs made a real difference. It was the most important thing I learned today, that the boys are ready."

AFP

## England's women help 'change society' in Euro 2022 triumph

### FOOTBALL

ENGLAND WOMEN'S manager Sarina Wiegman hailed the impact her players have made in changing perceptions beyond the pitch after the Lionesses won a major tournament for the first time at Euro 2022 last Sunday (July 31).

In front of a record crowd of 87,000 at Wembley for a European Championship match, the hosts were roared over the line to beat Germany 2-1 after extra-time.

"Winning is what we are here for, we try to win and do our job as good as possible," said Wiegman. "But through football you can make little changes in society and that is what we hope for."

Queen Elizabeth II was among those to pay tribute to the England squad for providing "inspiration for girls and women today, and for future generations."

Chloe Kelly and Ella Toone became national heroes by coming off the bench



The victorious England women's team. Photo: AFP

to score the goals as, not for the first time in the tournament, Wiegman's substitutions changed the course of the game.

Five years on from leading her native Netherlands to their breakthrough on the international stage in the women's game at Euro 2017, Wiegman repeated the trick to inspire another home nation.

"When I took the job you hope one thing. We knew there was quality and such big potential in this country," she said. "My challenge was to bring people together from another country and it worked out. It's something you dream of and hope for."

England's female foot-

ballers are now the pride of the nation and have a powerful message to share on changing perceptions.

"For every change of judgement or perception or opening the eyes of somebody who views women as somebody with the potential to be equal to her male counterpart, I think that makes change in society," said England captain Leah Williamson.

"The strides that we take forward can impact everybody on that wider scale."

After a 56-year wait to win a major tournament in either the men's or women's game, England has earned the right to revel in football finally coming home. AFP

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# Sport



The return of the Premier League > p15

## ON A MISSION

### History maker Celest seeking ONE contract

Celest has already made Muay Thai history and is now looking to advance her career to the next level. Photo: Pap Muay Thai / Panom Yinsri

#### MUAY THAI

Ben Tirebuck  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

She may be about to head into the ring at Lumpinee Stadium in Bangkok for the biggest fight of her career so far but Celest Muriel Hansen has no nerves or doubts. She is, after all, a trailblazer who has already been a part of history at the famed home of Muay Thai.

Phuket-based Celest is fighting Phetsinin Sor Phuangthong in the women's atom-weight quarter-final as part of the Fairtex Fight Road To ONE Thailand tournament next Friday (Aug 12). She

is one of only two foreign female fighters selected for the competition.

Should she advance and ultimately win her division, Celest will receive a six-fight contract with ONE Championship worth US\$100,000 (B3.6 million). Singapore-based ONE is Asia's largest sports media property featuring bouts in mixed martial arts, submission grappling, kick-boxing and Muay Thai.

The 28-year-old Australian took up the sport six years ago and moved to Phuket in 2017. She trained at the now defunct Kaewphitak Muay Thai gym, devouring fights every Friday and Sunday evening until she had won the Patong Stadium

Belt and the PK1 51kg World Championship belt.

However, despite her rapid rise, opportunities for women were few and far between outside of local contests and official rankings were non-existent. This was especially the case at Lumpinee where women were banned from competing and even sitting ringside. Celest recalls being part of the corner team for a male fighter a few years ago and seeing signs stating no women were allowed to enter or even touch the ring. "I had a security guard approach me and ask me to move away," she says.

Celest saw it as a challenge, stating that one day she

would fight at the acclaimed venue, an assertion that was met with much derision at the time.

However, once the rules were reversed in November 2021 and women were permitted to compete, Celest made history when she became the first ever female athlete to set foot in the ring at Lumpinee to fight Kullanat Ornok.

She may not have won the fight that evening but the result was somewhat secondary in comparison to the significance and enormity of the occasion. Being part of the first ever female bout at such a hallowed venue was a far bigger win.

"We have come such a

very long way. This was so much more than just a fight," Celest told AFP at the time.

Now ranked as the WBC Muay Thai Light Flyweight world number one, Celest has been training at Phuket Singha Muay Thai Gym in Chalong since the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions and is very much at home in her surroundings. She has found a kindred soul in coach Kru Pat and is thriving under his acclaimed tutorship.

"Kru Pat said to me 'We are going to be world champions'. That is exactly in line with my personal goals so it is great to have that support and to be developing with someone in sync," she says.

The future is bright and there is clearly still much more to come from this talented, driven young fighter who has done much to change attitudes and open up opportunities for women in the sport.

"When I said I wanted to be the first woman to fight at Lumpinee Stadium people laughed at me and said that was never going to happen," she recalls. Focused and determined, Celest achieved her goal and proved a lot of people wrong.

Her next test comes on Friday evening at the famous venue and she is full of confidence, as she should be. After all, she has already made history there once before.

## Thailand claim nine-medal haul at World Games

#### WORLD GAMES

THAILAND FINISHED IN 18<sup>th</sup> place out of a total of 70 competing countries at the recent World Games in Birmingham, Alabama, USA.

A total of 80 Thai athletes competed at the event, which took place July 7-17, securing a nine-medal haul of four gold, three silver and two bronze.

In Jiu-Jitsu Kanjutha Phattaraboonsorn won gold in the women's 48kg class then secured

silver in the women's ne-waza 48kg category. Orapa Senatham claimed silver in the women's 63kg weight while Lalita Yuennan and Warawut Saengsriruang won gold in the mixed duos.

In Muay Thai Anueng Khatthamarasri won gold in the men's 67kg class and Thanet Nitutorn won gold in the men's 71kg class. Weerasak Tharakhajad claimed a silver medal in the men's 63.5kg.

Phantipha Wongchuej won bronze in the women's Petanque Precision Shooting event while compatriots Nantawan Fueangsani

and Phantipha Wongchuej won bronze in the women's Petanque Doubles.

Following the conclusion of the Games, a meeting was held last Wednesday (July 27) at the Olympic Committee of Thailand headquarters in Bangkok to acknowledge the athletes and their achievements.

The meeting was presided over by Deputy Prime Minister Prawit Wongsuwan, who was joined by Minister of Tourism and Sports Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn and Governor of the Sports Author-

ity of Thailand (SAT) Kongsak Yodmanee.

The SAT also confirmed that while at the Games it partnered with the United States Sports Academy (USSA) to hold a training course aimed at developing its officials in the fields of sports coaching and international sports management.

The development course was held on July 15 at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Birmingham, overseen by Mr Kongsak and USSA President and CEO Dr TJ Rosandich.

Practical and theoretical teach-



Jiu-Jitsu gold medal duo Lalita and Warawut. Photo: SAT

ing methods were shared as well as the opportunity for the Thai delegation of coaches to interact and exchange knowledge with their American counterparts, something Mr Kongsak believes will pay dividends in future. *The Phuket News*