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# MISS WORLD

## PHUKET'S OPAL FIRST THAI TO BE CROWNED MISS WORLD



Suchata 'Opal' Chuangsri wais after being crowned Miss World. Photo: Miss World

**The Phuket News**  
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In a historic moment for Thailand, Phuket-born Suchata 'Opal' Chuangsri has been crowned Miss World 2025, becoming the first Thai woman to ever win the prestigious international title.

The 21-year-old beauty queen was crowned during a the finale at the HITEX Exhibition Centre in Hyderabad, India, last Saturday (May 31). Her crowning by outgoing Miss World Krystyna Pyszková of Czechia marked the culmination of a month-long festival celebrating beauty with purpose, global sisterhood and social service.

Known to millions simply as 'Opal', Suchata also won the Miss World Online award, topping the global leaderboard with over 2.3 million views and solidifying her status as a fan favourite.

Her rise to the crown comes after a dramatic year on the international pageant circuit, where she previously placed as third runner-up at Miss Universe 2024 – a title later revoked due to contractual disputes.

Born and raised in Phuket, Suchata is the daughter of Thanet Donkamnerd and Supatra Chuangsri, who run a local family business. She completed her early education in Phuket before studying Chinese at Bangkok's

prestigious Triam Udom Suksa School. She recently graduated from Thammasat University with a degree in Political Science and International Relations.

Her Miss World journey was powered not only by poise and popularity but by purpose. Her 'Opal For Her' project, aimed at supporting women battling breast cancer, was praised for its tangible impact and strong community outreach.

During her campaign, Opal also partnered with the World Health Organization's Thailand office to promote early detection and access to treatment.

In an emotional message to her followers, Opal wrote: "This award isn't mine alone – it belongs to

every Thai person. It represents our unity and the hope we've carried for over 75 years, waiting for our very first crown... We did it – together."

Prime Minister Paetongtarn 'Ing' Shinawatra was among the many Thai figures to publicly congratulate Opal, calling her win an inspiration to Thai youth and a source of national pride.

Opal's crowning also marks a new chapter for the Miss World competition in Thailand, which had long yearned for a winner despite strong showings over the decades. Her victory shines a global spotlight on Phuket – not only as a world-renowned travel destination, but also now as the hometown of Miss World.

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All the colours of the rainbow at local fun run



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## News



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## MaAnn sentence overturned

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**S**uwat Saowarat, Chief of Phuket office of the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC Phuket) has criticised the Office of the Attorney General for not appealing the overturned conviction of MaAnn Samran, who was earlier sentenced to two years in prison on corruption charges.

MaAnn is well known in Phuket as the previously longstanding Chief of the Cherng Talay Tambon Administration Organisation (OrBorTor), which oversees the beach areas in Cherng Talay, including Bang Tao.

The case dates back to Mar 6, 2019, when MaAnn, while serving as Chief of the Cherng Talay OrBorTor, unlawfully appointed subdistrict officials to executive positions.

After an investigation, the NACC concluded that his actions constituted criminal misconduct.

The NACC filed the case in October 2021, citing violations of Section 157 of the Criminal Code and Section 123/1 of the Organic Act on Anti-Corruption B.E. 2542 (1999), along with Section 172 of the updated Act B.E. 2561 (2018).

On May 11, 2023, the Criminal Court for Corruption



MaAnn Samran. Photo: The Phuket News / file

and Misconduct Cases Region 8 found MaAnn guilty, and sentenced him to two years in jail.

The court ruled that although his wrongdoing was a single act, it breached multiple anti-corruption laws.

On Sept 6, 2023, the NACC formally accused MaAnn and three other officials; Kreethayut Phiboon, Rongrit Chaihanam and Atthawit Kumchaphon of forging official documents to illegally approve construction for the New Nordic Phuket Water World project in Bang Tao.

The group allegedly altered a building permit originally issued

on May 16, 2017, for a temporary office and used the forged version to allow construction of large condo buildings without legal approval.

The NACC noted that MaAnn violated several laws in the process, including Sections 157, 161, 264, 265, and 266(1) of the Criminal Code, as well as multiple provisions under the Anti-Corruption Act and the Tambon Council and Tambon Administrative Organization Act B.E. 2537 (1994).

While New Nordic Development Co Ltd was cleared of any wrongdoing, the building

permit used for the project was declared void and all illegally built structures subject to demolition.

MaAnn was sentenced to two years in prison without suspension, under Section 123/1.

The section states that any official who dishonestly abuses power or neglects duties to cause harm is subject to imprisonment between one and 10 years, a fine of up to B200,000, or both.

"I'm not certain whether MaAnn actually served a full year in prison beginning in May 2023, as I only assumed the role of Chief of the Phuket NACC last

year. However, I do know that he filed an appeal and successfully had his conviction overturned in October 2024," NACC Phuket Suwat said.

The Court of Appeal overturned the conviction and dismissed the case on Oct 31, 2024.

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG), which has sole authority to pursue criminal appeals, chose not to challenge the verdict, a move that has drawn criticism from the NACC.

This year on Apr 29, the NACC board voted to oppose the OAG's refusal to appeal.

However, the commission acknowledged that it was legally unable to act without the OAG's permission.

NACC Phuket Chief Mr Suwat openly criticised the OAG's refusal to appeal the overturned conviction.

"MaAnn should be punished according to the law," Mr Suwat told *The Phuket News*.

"Clear evidence of misconduct had been presented but ultimately dismissed by the court," he said.

The NACC will continue "discussions" with the OAG in the hopes of convincing the Public Prosecutor's Office to appeal the MaAnn's acquittal and bring justice to the case.

## Thalang Police ramp up student road safety, urge parental support

THALANG POLICE are intensifying their efforts to promote road safety among students as the school term begins, with a focus on instilling traffic discipline and preventing risky behaviour with many students riding motorbikes to school.

The campaign comes amid concerns over increasing reports of underage students riding modified motorbikes without licenses, Thalang Police Chief Pol Col Nikorn Chuathong told students, parents and teachers at several events held last week.

Officers were recently alerted by the public to a group of students gathering at a local petrol station with illegally modified bikes, including those



Photo: PR Phuket

lacking side mirrors and fitted with loud exhaust pipes.

Some riders were found to be underage and without valid driver's licenses, Pol Col Nikorn explained.

In response, police conducted an inspection, temporarily seized the motorcycles and invited the students' parents to discuss the issue. Students will be allowed to reclaim their

vehicles if they can provide the motorcycle manual and reinstall side mirrors in accordance with traffic laws.

Pol Col Nikorn said the approach prioritises educa-

tion and safety over punishment. "We are not here to arrest or penalise, but to protect students and other road users," he stated.

"Creating a shared understanding among students, schools and parents is key to long-term prevention," he added.

Thalang Police have partnered with local schools to run the '5-minute flagpole' programme, a short daily session to teach traffic laws and the dangers of illegal vehicle modifications or unlicensed driving. Officers also participate in parent meetings to reinforce the importance of safe behaviour on the roads, Pol Col Nikorn explained.

In addition, patrol teams have been deployed in high-risk areas near schools to monitor for street racing,

loud gatherings, drug use and the possession of e-cigarettes. These patrols aim to maintain order and provide early intervention when necessary, he told the gatherings.

Thalang Police will ensure that all enforcement actions are guided by fairness, equality and a strong commitment to public safety, Pol Col Nikorn noted.

"We are calling on parents to support the initiative by ensuring their children obey traffic laws and avoid using motorcycles if they are unlicensed," he said.

"Together, we can build a culture of road safety that protects not just students, but the entire community," Pol Col Nikorn assured.

*The Phuket News*



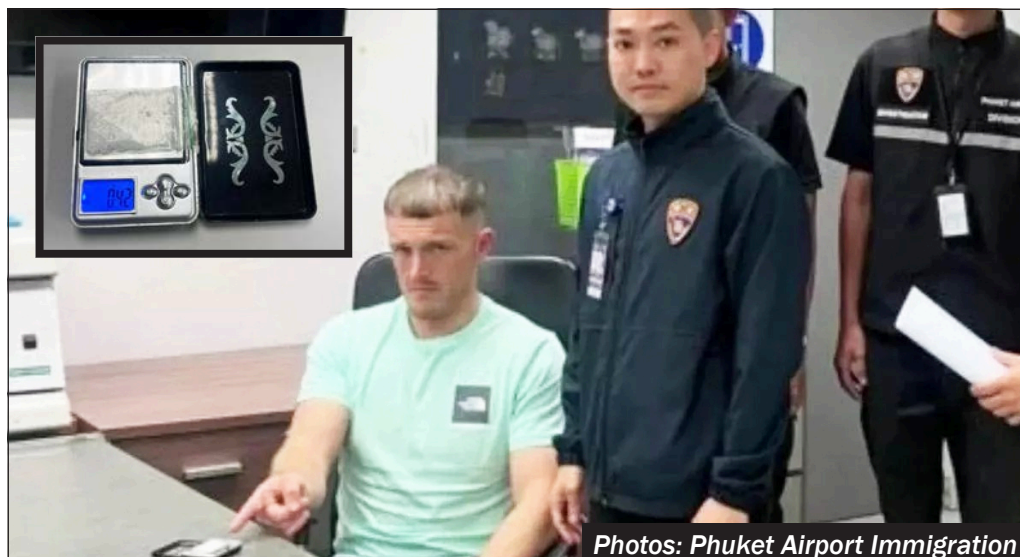
# Officials deny 'cocaine set up'

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Chief of Phuket Airport Immigration, Pol Col Rasarin Thiraphatthanakun, has refuted allegations in the British media that her officers had 'set up' a British man by placing a small amount of cocaine in his passport, for which the British man was detained and charged.

The claim was made by Michelle Swain, 57, the mother of Jamie Louis Swain, who was arrested at Phuket International Airport in May last year. The story was widely reported in the British press, including in *The Daily Mirror*, *The Daily Mail* and the *Daily Record* also published their own version of the same report.

According to the reports, Jamie Swain, then 29, from Stevenage in Hertfordshire, had flown to Phuket with his brother for a holiday. But upon arrival, he was detained by immigration officers who allegedly discovered a small plastic bag containing 0.42 grammes of white powder hidden in his passport.



Photos: Phuket Airport Immigration

The substance tested positive for cocaine, and Swain was arrested under Thailand's Narcotics Act. He reportedly faced a potential prison sentence of up to 20 years. However, following a court hearing in July, he was fined B50,000 and deported back to the UK in early August.

His mother, Michelle Swain, told MailOnline the arrest was a "set up" and that her son had been through two airports without issue before landing in Phuket. "To get through two airports and then suddenly this bag appears, and

he'd had his passport out all that time, I just find it very strange," she said.

She described the ordeal as traumatic, alleging her son was held in a cell without food or water for two days before being granted bail. Ms Swain said she flew to Thailand the same night he was detained and feared he might face jail time in a foreign country.

Swain remained in Phuket for at least three months while awaiting trial, she said. Although the sentence did not include jail time, Ms Swain warned other British tourists to be

vigilant when travelling to Thailand. "It could happen to any young boys going out there. There's nothing you can do... It can ruin people's lives," she told reporters.

In response to the accusations, Pol Col Rasarin told *The Phuket News* the arrest occurred before she took up her current post but defended the integrity of the officers involved.

Pol Col Rasarin took up the post of Chief of Phuket Airport Immigration in March this year, replacing Pol Col Padthongtew Damapong.

After just 10 months of active service as chief of the Phuket Airport Immigration unit, Pol Col Padthongtew was promoted to the post of Immigration Chief of Nonthaburi Province, which forms part of 'Greater Bangkok'.

Pol Col Padthongtew is the son of an older brother of Khunying Potjaman na Pombejra, the ex-wife of former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

"At that time, we would find many people who used drugs and forgot them in their passports," she said. "They were small amounts used for consumption, not for sale. When we arrested them, we didn't find drugs in their bags but on their bodies or in their passports."

She explained that if there was ever a dispute or suspicion of foul play, CCTV footage would be reviewed to track a passenger's movements from the moment they disembarked.

"This was to clear up doubts that our side had framed the charges," she said, adding that in most cases, suspects confessed.

Pol Col Rasarin also stressed the procedures in place to prevent any wrongdoing by staff, including mandatory security checks before each shift.

"Every officer has to go through the scanner. We can't carry drugs and hold them on our person," she said. "We want to confirm our innocence here – we don't have any [wrongdoing]. And if you have any doubts, we can check the cameras. They're always on."

Pol Rasarin added that officers from other agencies, including the Phuket branch of Airports of Thailand, which operates Phuket Airport, and Phuket Immigration, were often present during such cases, serving as witnesses.

"When they went home, they might have cried to their mothers and said something different. But looking at it from the other side, our staff were just doing their job, and we were damaged by being accused of framing tourists when we didn't do it," she said.

## Raids hit foreign criminal businesses

A COORDINATED CRACKDOWN led by Region 8 Police and Phuket Provincial Police has targeted illegally foreign-run businesses, with raids carried out at seven locations across the island.

Four foreign suspects have been arrested in connection with illegal activities ranging from illegal cannabis production to luxury car rental fraud.

Senior police officials, including Pol Maj Gen Pornchai Khajornklin, Deputy Commander of Region 8 Police, and Pol Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum, Commander of Phuket Provincial Police, announced the operation during a press conference at Phuket Provincial Police headquarters on May 26.

The raids stemmed from expanded investigations into previous arrests involving foreign nationals operating businesses illegally through Thai nominees, said Pol Maj Gen Sinlert.

Among the key targets was a Chinese-led criminal group accused of using untraceable funds to run luxury car rentals under the name 'GRQ Alphard Club'.

The suspects allegedly purchased high-end vehicles such as Toyota Alphards and advertised rental services to international clients via social media, undermining legitimate local businesses, he added.

Pol Maj Gen Sinlert explained that warrants were issued for seven individuals linked to the group.

Two Chinese suspects have been arrested, while four others are believed to have fled Thailand. The remaining suspect is still being pursued, he said.



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

The crackdown also extended to a gang linked to a high-profile crypto theft involving Australian nationals.

Police identified 'Mr Billy' as the alleged ringleader, and raided several properties believed to be connected to his operations, including a cannabis cultivation site, a bud boutique, a tattoo parlour and a residence in the Patong area.

'Mr Billy' has been widely reported as Australian Vasilios Pilarinos, also known as Peter Vasilios, whose arrest has drawn scrutiny due to allegations of Pilarinos's connections to Melbourne mafia figures.

In a separate raid, officers searched a car rental business, eDrive Rental, in the Cherng Talay area. This raid followed the arrest of an Israeli national illegally running a car rental company in Koh Samui, explained Pol Maj Gen Pornchai.

One Russian suspect was detained, and authorities seized nine cars and 46 motorcycles for investigation.

Additionally, police and officials from the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office shut down an illegal cannabis extraction facility. Although officially owned by a Thai national, investigators believe the business was foreign-backed and used Thai nominees to operate under the radar.

Eakkapop Thongtub



PHUKET VETERANS PROUDLY PRESENT

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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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# Teens arrested after shootings

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Police have arrested several teenagers believed to be behind two violent attacks involving firearms and giant firecrackers that injured two people in Phuket over the weekend.

Region 8 Police Deputy Commander Pol Maj Gen Pornchai Khajornklin and Phuket Provincial Police Commander Pol Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum announced the arrests during a press conference held at Phuket Provincial Police headquarters on May 26.

The first incident occurred late on May 24, when a group of teenagers opened fire and threw explosives in Soi Bang Thong 3, in Moo 7, Kathu. A 15-year-old boy, Athinan Ruangsantidamrong, sustained a gunshot wound to the right thigh and was taken to hospital.

Over an hour later, at about 12:30am on May 25, the same group allegedly struck again at the Chamcha Market parking lot in Phuket Town, where 31-year-old Jirathip Cho-



Image: Phuket Provincial Police

tiphanit was shot in the right arm.

Officers launched an urgent investigation, with both Kathu and Phuket City Police instructed to track down the suspects quickly due to public safety concerns and the potential impact on the island's tourism image.

Within 24 hours, officers had arrested seven suspects across multiple raids in Wichit and elsewhere in Mueang District. The group, all aged between 16 and 20, were found with weapons and explosive devices.

The arrests included:

\* Case 1: At 3pm on May 25, two suspects, aged 16 and 19, were found in possession of a homemade firearm. Both face charges of attempted murder, illegal

possession of firearms, and carrying weapons in public without permission.

\* Case 2: An hour later, police arrested four suspects aged between 17 and 20. Officers seized three shotgun cartridges. The suspects face charges related to illegal possession of unlicensed ammunition.

\* Case 3: By 5pm, another suspect, aged 18, was arrested with a homemade shotgun and ammunition. He is also charged with attempted murder and illegal firearm possession.

\* Case 4: In the early hours of May 26, police executed an arrest warrant for 19-year-old Muhammad Alham (surname withheld), who was taken into custody on similar charges.

Also presented as seized in making the arrests were five swords and a bag of small 'ping pong bombs', not mentioned in the written report by police.

All suspects confessed during questioning, telling police they had encountered a rival group and responded by opening fire and throwing explosive devices while riding motorcycles, said an official report of the arrests.

Region 8 Police Deputy Commander Pol Maj Gen Pornchai noted that the rapid arrests and seizures of weapons demonstrated swift law enforcement and a commitment to public safety.

In response to the incidents, Phuket police have ramped up security measures, including vehicle checkpoints, special night patrols and background checks on high-risk individuals, Phuket Provincial Police Commander Pol Maj Gen Sinlert added.

Pol Maj Gen Sinlert also urged parents to monitor their children's behaviour, warning that guardians could face legal consequences under the Child Protection Act if found to be neglectful.

Officers are continuing to investigate the teen gang and are working to identify and apprehend any remaining individuals involved in the attacks, he added.

## SHOOTING PRACTICE

Several youths seen recklessly firing guns at Surin Beach have been arrested, following widespread outrage online over a viral video that raised concerns about tourist safety and law enforcement in Phuket.

Of note, the youths were not firing the guns in anger at any specific targets. No people were injured in the 'gun practice' shootings.

In response to the video being posted online, Cherng Talay police tracked down and arrested three of the youths: Siwakorn Prabpol, 24; Athit Manabut, 22; and Prachaya Chuenkeam, 18.

Cherng Talay Police have emphasised that they are treating the matter seriously, particularly in light of concerns about public safety and the island's international image.

Police have not ruled out further arrests as the investigation continues.

## Man, 61, dies after motorbike hits parked tuk-tuk in Kathu

A 61-YEAR-OLD MAN DIED after the motorbike he was riding crashed into a parked tuk-tuk on Phra Phuket Kaew Rd in Kathu on May 28.

Police were called to the scene, in front of the Khum Nam restaurant in Moo 1, Kathu, at about 4:40pm.

The victim, identified as Wisut Charoen, a resident of Wichit, was driving a red Honda Click motorcycle when he lost control and collided with the rear of a yellow tuk-tuk that was parked on the roadside, reported Kathu Police.

Emergency responders from Bangkok Hospital Siriroj and the Kathu Municipality Rescue Unit rushed to the scene and administered first aid before transporting Mr Wisut to Bangkok Hospital Siriroj on the bypass road.

Despite medical efforts, he was later pronounced dead in the



Photo: Kathu Police

hospital's emergency room.

The tuk-tuk, registered in Phuket, was reportedly stationary at the time of the crash, opposite the entrance to Kajonkietsuksa School.

No other injuries or property damage were reported.

Mr Wisut's motorbike was taken to Kathu Police Station as part of the ongoing investigation, Kathu police noted.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Ukrainian woman dies in fall

A 28-YEAR-OLD UKRAINIAN tourist died in the early hours of last Saturday morning (May 31) after falling from the rooftop of a three-storey villa in Chalong.

Police were informed at 5am that the woman, identified as Veronika Kobzova, had died at Chalong Hospital from injuries sustained in a fall.

Officers from Chalong Police Station, led by Pol Lt Kriangkrai Daokrajai, responded to the report and proceeded to the scene at villa estate, off Soi Sainamyen in Chalong.

Witnesses told police that the incident occurred around 3:30am. Ms Kobzova had been drinking beer and was reportedly intoxicated when she began walking along the edge of a rooftop swimming pool at a villa at the resort. She slipped and fell from the third floor into an alley beside the building.

Two women present at the time – Karina Zemliankina, a fellow Ukrainian, and her Thai friend Mesinya Kunasangkam –



Photo: Chalong Police

immediately called for emergency assistance. Ms Kobzova was rushed to Chalong Hospital, arriving at 4:02am, but was pronounced dead by a doctor at 4:28am. Medical staff believe she died before reaching the hospital.

She was found wearing a cream-coloured shirt and short skirt. According to police, she suffered fatal injuries to her head and chin consistent with a high fall.

Police said Ms Kobzova's boyfriend and other friends at the scene did not suspect foul play.

Her body was sent to Vachira Phuket Hospital for a post-mortem examination. Forensic officers will conduct a full inspection of the scene, and the Ukrainian Embassy has been notified, police said.

Eakkapop Thongtub



# Police silent on action as fugitive Fehr missing

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Phuket officials remain tight-lipped on the whereabouts of Urs Fehr, the Swiss national sentenced on May 23 to one month in prison by the Court of Appeal Region 8 for assaulting a doctor.

Fehr, dubbed 'Swiss David' by Thai media, was sentenced to one month in prison for assaulting Dr Thandao Chandam outside his luxury villa in Phuket in February 2024.

The Region 8 Court of Appeal overturned his previous acquittal and last Friday (May 23) ordered that Fehr serve the sentence without probation.

The appeal court ruled that Fehr had kicked and verbally abused Dr Thandao, who was sitting near his rented villa, accusing her of trespassing. The incident, partially caught on video, led to public outrage and calls for his deportation.

Fehr did not attend court and is believed to have fled the country, despite an outstanding arrest warrant.

Asked about Fehr's current whereabouts, Phuket Provincial Police Deputy Commander Pol Col Akanit Danpitaksat declined to comment. Pol Col Akanit was the senior Phuket Provincial Police officer initially assigned to the Fehr case.



Urs Fehr (left) during a hearing held with the Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat last year. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub / file

Chief of Phuket Immigration Office, Pol Col Kriangkrai Ariyaying, told *The Phuket News* that he does not know Mr Fehr's current whereabouts.

"I have no idea where he is," Col Kriangkrai said, declining to comment further.

Pol Lt Col Laddawan Waenkaew, an inspector at Phuket Immigration, also confirmed that officials had no information about Fehr's location.

"I don't know where he is, but we will try to search for him," she said.

Lt Col Laddawan's involvement appears to be procedural, as no specific immigration officer has been assigned direct responsibility for Fehr's case.

Meanwhile, Thalang Police Chief Pol Col Nikorn Chuathong, who was initially responsible for Fehr's case and the area where the incident

occurred also said he has no idea where Fehr is.

"I haven't seen Fehr around the area that I have been responsible for a while. I have no idea where he is," Pol Col Nikorn said.

Niphit Intarasombat, the victim's lawyer, publicly stated on his Facebook post on May 23 that Fehr had already fled Thailand.

"Since the appeal was [initially] filed, he has disappeared and has not returned," Mr Niphit said.

Mr Niphit last week further explained that although he requested the court to restrict Fehr's travel after the appeal was filed, the court did not grant the request.

"I knew from a court official that Fehr has already left Thailand. No one had granted the requested travel ban during the appeal process," he said.



Photo: Chalermpong Saengdee / Facebook

## Mudslide fears halt luxury villa project in Rawai

A LUXURY VILLA construction project in Rawai has been temporarily suspended after local residents filed complaints about mudslides encroaching on public land.

A team representing Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee visited the site, in Moo 2, Rawai, on May 26 to inspect the construction site of 'VIP Galaxy Villa', a two-storey reinforced concrete residential project, MP Chalermpong reported in a post online.

The visit followed complaints from nearby residents in Moo 6, who reported that construction site runoff had caused mud to slide into adjacent public areas, MP Chalermpong explained.

Initial findings revealed that the construction had

already been ordered to halt by Rawai Municipality as of May 8, 2025.

The developer was given 15 days to rectify the issues. Despite the suspension, the project contractor submitted a new construction permit application on May 23.

The municipality cited several violations leading to the suspension, including excavation deeper than three metres and creating an earthen slope covering more than 10,000 square meters without notifying local authorities.

Additionally, the project raised land elevation higher than adjacent properties without required permits.

So far officials have made no mention of legal action against the developer for breach of construction laws. *The Phuket News*

## More hotels, condo projects approved

FOUR HOTEL DEVELOPMENTS and three condominium projects have been approved following a review by the Expert Committee on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in Phuket's environmental protection areas.

The approvals came during the committee's third meeting of the year, held at the Phuket Provincial Natural Resources and Environment Office (MNRE Phuket) and chaired by Phuket Vice Governor Samawit Suphanphai.

The session brought together officials from government agencies, the private sector and environmental experts.

The projects approved include: Madeit Hotel, DoubleTree by Hilton Phuket Banthai Resort, Holiday Inn Express Phuket Nai Yang and SALA Phuket Mai Khao Beach Resort, as well as the condo projects Sky-park Elara Lakeland Phuket, The Nayabella Condominium and Adora Rawai Condominium.



Photo: PR Phuket

All seven proposals had passed field inspections and were reviewed to ensure they complied with environmental regulations, said an official report of the meeting.

The committee emphasised that the assessments are part of a broader effort to promote sustainable development, protect sensitive ecological zones and involve the public in

decision-making, the official report said.

Apparently, according to the report, officials stressed the importance of striking a balance between economic development and the preservation of Phuket's natural resources, with a transparent process that supports long-term environmental stewardship.

*The Phuket News*



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# Keeping legal with Airbnb rentals

James Hutley

You've seen the Instagram reels. A dreamy villa, an infinity pool and a "booked solid on Airbnb" caption. But behind the hashtags and high yields lies a murky legal maze that most property owners in Thailand are either ignoring – or tiptoeing through like it's a minefield.

I've spoken to owners, scoured legal briefs and unpacked the numbers. Here's what you actually need to know if you're thinking about listing your property on Airbnb – or already doing it under the radar.



Image: James Hutley / Canva

## THE LEGAL LOWDOWN

Most short-term rentals in Thailand aren't technically legal. If you're renting for less than 30 days without a hotel license, you're likely in breach of the Hotel Act. That could mean fines up to B20,000, plus B10,000 per day if you stay non-compliant. In some cases, you might even face jail time.

There are exceptions. If you've got up to eight rooms, no more than 30 guests and you live onsite – and you've notified your local district office – you may qualify under the exemption. Renting for 30-plus days also keeps you in the clear.

If you are a condo owner, you'll face even more restrictions. Most juristic offices explicitly ban short-term rentals. Enforcement is often triggered by complaints from neighbours or building management.

**BIG RETURNS, BIGGER RESPONSIBILITY**  
Done right, short-term rentals can outperform long-term leases significantly – sometimes earning two to three times more during peak months.

With Phuket back in full swing post-COVID, occupancy rates are climbing. A Kata Beach owner told me, "I earn more in two peak

months than I used to in six."

But it's not passive income. From guest communication to cleaning and turnovers, running an Airbnb is work. Without solid systems, the cracks show fast.

## HOW TO STAY LEGAL AND PROFITABLE

Go long-term. Rentals of 30 days or more avoid licensing headaches and appeal to digital nomads, retirees and seasonal residents.

Get creative. Some hosts are exploring co-living or serviced apartment models. These offer flexibility while maintaining compliance with local laws.

Pursue licensing. If you meet the requirements, registering your villa as a hotel can legally open the door to short stays.

Stay on top of taxes. Rental income is taxable. If you earn more than B1.8 million annually, you need to register for VAT.

## PLATFORM COMPARISONS

Airbnb leads in curated, experience-based stays. It's great for design-led or unique properties but comes with high guest expectations and rules.

Booking.com delivers volume and visibility but favours a hotel-style setup. In short: Less

interaction, more turnover.

Agoda is strong in Asia and ideal for price-competitive units, though it leans traditional and does not highlight personal hosting touches.

## VOICES ON THE GROUND

"We were doing well on Airbnb until our building clamped down," said one Bangkok condo owner. "Now we just do month-to-month with expats. It's slower, but safer."

A Phuket-based manager added, "You need a legit setup or a backup plan. Flying under the radar isn't a strategy – it's a gamble."

## FINAL TAKE

Short-term rentals can be incredibly profitable in Thailand – but only if you're playing a smart game. Understand the law. Know your building's policies. And above all, treat your property like a business. You can make real money. Just don't cut corners or assume the rules don't apply to you.

*James Hutley is a real estate entrepreneur based in Phuket. For more market insights, follow @james.l.hutley on Instagram, connect at facebook.com/james.l.hutley, or visit www.atlasamg.com.*

## Minister calls for tougher law to focus on nominee firms

DEPUTY COMMERCE MINISTER Napintorn Srisanpang is pushing for a new law to further crack down on businesses that use Thai nominees, with such entities expected to be wiped out within six months.

Mr Napintorn said the Ministry of Commerce is working with the Ministry of Interior to investigate around 46,000 companies across six types of businesses suspected of foreign ownership through local nominees.

These firms have registered addresses across the country, and provincial governors have been instructed to lead task forces to inspect them in a bid to determine whether they are violating the Foreign Business Act.

The nationwide inspection is currently underway. Smaller provinces are expected to complete their investigations within three months, while those with significant numbers of such companies may require up to half a year.

Mr Napintorn said he has assigned the Commerce Ministry's provincial offices to report back to him on the progress made every three months.

If a company is found operating in a sector in which foreign ownership is banned, a deeper investigation will follow to check whether Thai shareholders are genuinely investing and participating in the business, or merely acting as nominees, said the deputy minister.



A street in Bangkok's Huai Khwang district, where restaurants with nominee shareholders are said to be active. Photo: Bangkok Post

Recognising limitations in existing laws, Mr Napintorn said he is working with the Anti-Money Laundering Office (Amlo) to classify nominee-related activities as financial crimes, which would allow authorities to seize assets of violating companies.

The proposal underwent a public consultation, and a new bill is now being drafted by the Council of State (CoS).

Between last September and this January, some 820 nominee businesses, which had caused damage worth over B12.4 billion, were prosecuted. The majority were in the tourism and real estate sectors.

The latest development came after the Department of Business Development started probing companies with foreign stakes ranging from 0.01% up to 49.99%.

This raised the number of targeted companies from 26,830 to 46,918, with e-commerce and hotels among the sectors checked. *Bangkok Post*

## TAT aims for record arrivals from Oceania

THE TOURISM AUTHORITY OF Thailand (TAT) is placing a greater emphasis on high potential short-haul markets to diversify risk away from the sluggish Chinese market, with the aim of reaching a new high of 950,000 tourist arrivals from the Oceania market, which includes Australia.

The agency is also monitoring challenges relating to Australia's sluggish economic growth, which could impact the spending of Australian tourists visiting Thailand.

Pattaraanong Na Chiangmai, TAT Deputy Governor for International Marketing – Asia and the South Pacific, said since the forecast for Chinese arrivals has been revised down to 6.9 million from 8mn earlier, the agency is ramping up other markets showing strong growth potential.

According to the TAT, during the first four months this year, Australian arrivals grew by 16% year-on-year to 273,961.

In 2024, Thailand welcomed 877,651 tourists from Oceania, including 775,010 from Australia and 96,733 from New Zealand.

Ms Pattaraanong said the TAT hopes to see a record 950,000 arrivals from Oceania this year, of which 850,000 will be Australians, as the agency's offices overseas are promoting new flights and targeting new traveller segments.

Pichaya Saisaengchan, director of the TAT's Sydney office, said Australian tourists might take around two overseas trips per year as usual, but they would tend to restrict their spending, or stay in less expensive accommodation due to the



Pattaraanong Na Chiangmai, TAT Deputy Governor for International Marketing – Asia and the South Pacific, at an event in April. Photo: TAT

sluggish Australian economy and weak Australian dollar.

Another persistent challenge for this market is flights, which only serve Bangkok and Phuket, he said.

As 60% of Australian tourists choose Phuket over other destinations, the agency has formulated a plan to encourage them to visit other provinces nearby, such as Phang Nga and Krabi.

The TAT also plans to boost arrivals during all seasons, not only established periods such as holidays or school breaks.

Balancing the market by catering to all travel segments, including family groups and other niche markets such as LGBTQ, senior citizens and meeting groups, is also a key strategy in order to have markets that are able to travel throughout the year without solely depending on long holidays.

"Australians love nature and outdoor activities, such as surfing. The Sydney office will also promote new programmes related to cultural tours which are unseen in their home country," said Mr Pichay. *Bangkok Post*



# Crackdown launched on motorbike helmets

## BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

A new nationwide road safety campaign launched in Thailand last Sunday (June 1) has sparked debate among residents and visitors alike, as authorities begin stricter enforcement of motorcycle helmet regulations.

The 'Safe Roads Project', initiated by Thai traffic police, will see intensified checks on motorcyclists and passengers who fail to wear helmets in an effort to reduce road accidents and fatalities.

Deputy government spokesman Anukul Prueksanusak announced last Sunday that, under Section 122 of the Land Traffic Act, both drivers and passengers on motorcycles are legally required to wear crash helmets at all times, regardless of distance or location.

Mr Anukul confirmed violators now face an increased fine of up to



Intensified checks by police as part of the campaign aim to reduce road accidents and fatalities. Photo: Bangkok Post

B2,000 – quadrupled from the previous B500 penalty. Drivers who allow passengers to ride without a helmet will be subject to a double penalty, he added.

The campaign targets high-risk areas, particularly roads near schools and educational institutions, with a focus on building a culture of compliance with traffic laws.

"This isn't just about personal safety – it's a step toward reshaping driving behaviour for the better," said Mr Anukul.

He added that citizens should strictly adhere to traffic laws, participate in safety awareness campaigns, and help monitor compliance to reduce violations.

The updated law has

prompted questions among expatriates, with one foreign resident taking to social media platform Reddit to enquire about its application to motorcycles equipped with sidecars, commonly referred to in Thailand as saleng.

In his post, the man described a light-hearted disagreement with his Thai wife regarding whether passengers in a saleng are subject to the same helmet requirement. While his wife claimed the vehicle's configuration made helmets unnecessary, he argued that the saleng still qualifies as a motorcycle under Thai traffic law.

Although the Royal Thai Police have yet to issue a

specific clarification on helmet requirements for saleng configurations, the current legislation makes no distinction between standard motorcycles and those fitted with sidecars. As such, all riders and passengers are presumed to be subject to the same safety provisions.

Authorities have also instructed provincial police forces to identify areas with frequent traffic violations or accidents and to focus enforcement efforts accordingly. Repeat offenders may face escalated penalties, and checkpoints are expected to become increasingly common throughout the campaign.

Thailand has one of the highest rates of road traffic fatalities in the world, with motorcyclists comprising the majority of those killed or seriously injured. The government's latest move signals a renewed commitment to tackling this long-standing public health issue through education and enforcement.

## Tougher checks for arrivals

### BANGKOK

NATIONAL POLICE Chief Pol Gen Kittharath Punpetch has ordered immigration police to step up the screening process for foreign arrivals.

Pol Gen Kittharath announced measures on May 28 to combat prostitution rings run by foreign nationals in Thailand and by saying that pre-entry screening measures have been put in place, including a digital arrival card.

This measure is a collaboration between the Immigration Bureau (IB) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Travellers' data will then be matched with data from foreign embassies to determine whether the person is on a watch list or a blacklist.

Data will be sent to the Tourist Police and local police units, allowing them to search and track the individuals later.

Those who enter Thailand on a tourist or student visa will also be scrutinised, he said.

When asked about Bangkok's night entertainment areas where foreign



Photo: Bangkok Post

prostitution rings were found to have emerged in areas such as Sukhumvit, Soi Cowboy and Nana, he said the measures currently in place will help solve issues of transnational criminals and human trafficking.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Commerce and the Department of Lands have signed an MoU to curb the growing trend of foreigners illegally acquiring land in Thailand by registering it under a Thai nominee.

The Department of Business Development will provide a list of 46,918 at-risk legal entities – 55.49% of which are in real estate and land trading – to the Department of Lands for further investigation, a government spokesman confirmed.

Bangkok Post

## Army chiefs try to resolve Thai-Cambodian border dispute

### UBON RATCHATHANI

THAILAND AND CAMBODIA HAVE agreed to try and resolve their latest border dispute within two weeks through their joint boundary committee, the Royal Thai Army (RTA) said in a statement last Friday (May 30).

The statement was issued following rounds of informal negotiations and a meeting between the army commanders of the two countries. It was prompted by a brief clash on May 28 between troops from both sides in a disputed area near Chong Bok, in Nam Yuen district of Ubon Ratchathani province. One Cambodian soldier was reported killed.

While awaiting the outcome of the joint boundary committee (JBC) meeting, expected within the next week, all troops involved in the clash will withdraw from the site, significantly de-escalating the situation, the statement said.

Both sides agreed to use the Regional Border Committee as an additional mechanism to address any lingering misunderstandings and reinforce the effectiveness of the JBC outcome, it added.

The statement affirmed that the commanders of both armies are now committed to strictly overseeing their troops to ensure full compliance with the terms of the negotiations.

The commander of the Royal Cambodian Army reiterated that if any Cambodian personnel violate the agreed



Cambodian and Thai military officials meet on May 29. Photo: Royal Thai Army

terms, they would be immediately transferred out of the border area, while stressing that the Cambodian command structures maintain full control over their units.

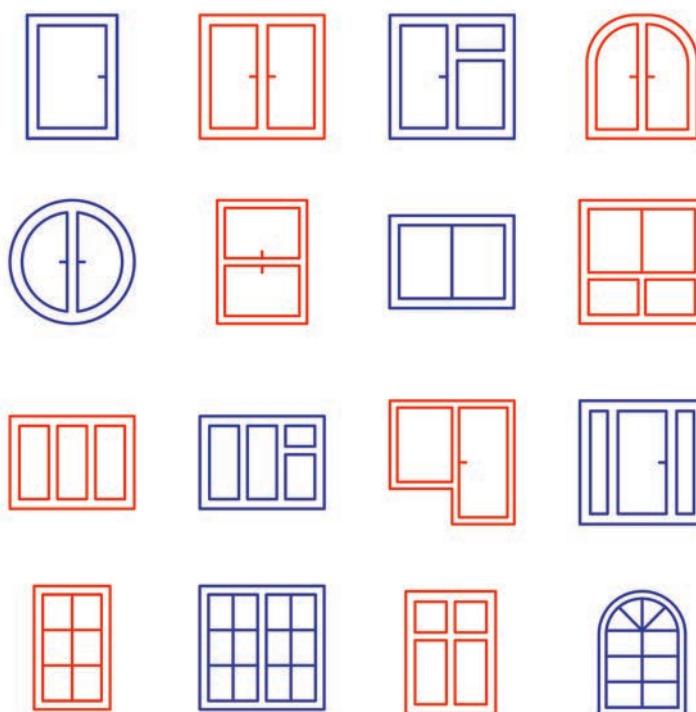
Despite this, Thai army spokesman Winthai Suvaree confirmed on Sunday (June 1) it is prepared for any possible border eventuality.

"Any movements of the Thai military are meant to protect the national interest in accordance with international principles and they are prepared for any situation that may happen," he said.

However, Foreign Affairs Minister Maris Sangiampongsa explained that he had discussed the issue with his Cambodian counterpart and the Cambodian prime minister and both sides agreed to cooperate to reduce tension and use existing joint boundary mechanisms to solve the issue peacefully. Bangkok Post



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# Phuket fund-raiser helps TCDF sustainability goals

Photos: Supplied

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

A fund-raising initiative held in Phuket late last year has provided a major boost to the Thai Child Development Foundation (TCDF) facility in Paksong, near Ranong.

Hosted by the Rotary Club of Patong Beach at Carpe Diem Beach Club, the Reggae Waves Fundraiser last October was the first phase of fund-raising efforts to help regenerate community facilities, raising an incredible B209,200.

The funds were allocated efficiently to create durable infrastructure by restoring the organic vegetable garden and introducing new sustainable farming techniques to ensure long-term benefits for students and the community; an irrigation system is also to be implemented in time.

In the garden at the Paksong facility students learn essential farming skills, such as how to grow vegetables, and entrepreneurship skills, including how to market and sell their produce. Since many of the students come from farming families, equipping them with sustainable farming techniques ensures

long-term food security and economic stability.

It also teaches children and community members how to grow vegetables without chemical fertilisers and pesticides, thus promoting environmental stewardship while enhancing an understanding of sustainable agricultural practices.

The impact of this project extends beyond simply restoring the organic vegetable garden. The COVID-19 pandemic meant the facility was closed to visitors and volunteers for more than three years. As a result, the old garden was left abandoned and damaged, putting a vital part of TCDF's sustainable food program at risk.

However, the funds raised from the Phuket event on Oct 19 have contributed to: the building of a large multipurpose fish pond for raising fish and snails, which also serves as an irrigation source for the garden; the installation of a new sprinkler system to ensure efficient watering; the repair and restoration of all abandoned and damaged vegetable patches; the construction of metal racks for seedlings and installation of educational signage to help students learn the correct names of crops in Thai and English.

## BRIGHTER FUTURES

TCDF's mission is focused on creating brighter futures for underprivileged children in rural Thailand through education, healthcare and sustainable development. At TCDF's special needs school in Paksong children receive the support they need to develop foundational skills in reading, writing, math and daily life activities. As they grow, they transition into the Vocational Training Center, where they gain practical skills that empower them to become self-reliant and contribute to their families and communities.

The Paksong facility, located on a little mountain, houses a Circular Community Campus, which has a Special School for children with special needs, a vocational training centre, a farm, food forest and an Eco-Logic resort with a farm-to-fork restaurant. The campus is surrounded by a food forest, where students grow fruits, vegetables and herbs using organic methods. Kitchen scraps and fallen leaves are composted, feeding the soil. Rainwater is collected and solar power reduces reliance on outside resources.



Students, many with special needs or from underprivileged backgrounds, learn by doing – tending gardens, crafting herbal balms and upcycling materials. They don't just receive support; they become part of a cycle, gaining skills that empower them for a more independent life.

At the heart of it all is "Learn, Earn, Return" – a philosophy where those who benefit today give back tomorrow. Former students return as mentors, volunteers or entrepreneurs, keeping opportunities flowing. Income from eco-tourism and handmade products – like forms of 'Tiger Balm' – helps sustain future generations.

Some graduates go on to work in community-based roles, while others contribute to TCDF's social enterprises, where their handmade goods generate income that supports the program. With the right training and opportunities, every young adult – regardless of their abilities – can find their place in society, contribute meaningfully and lead a fulfilling life.

The second phase of the project, also funded by monies raised from the Reggae Waves event, is to provide a roof to not only protect the crops but to catch rainwater for use in this ecosystem. A further update on this phase of the project will be shared on completion of the project.

For more information contact:  
tcdfoffice@gmail.com

## The July/August 2025 hard copy issue goes to print very soon

Distributed in resorts/hotels lobbies, in a high number of restaurants and coffee shops, plus inserted in one issue of *The Phuket News* each month, it is a great way to Talk to Phuket about your F & B outlet

# Want to be in it?

CONTACT JASON TODAY – gm@classactmedia.co.th



# JaakDin goes all in and hits its stride

JP Mestanza  
tv@classactmedia.co.th

**L**ocated in the recently-constructed La Green Hotel & Residence near Layan Beach, JaakDin is a restaurant that plans to make a name for itself. Tucked away in a quiet corner of Cherno Talay, the location provides relaxing seclusion amid the hustle and bustle of Phuket's booming tourism.

JaakDin's menu strikes a balance between the familiar and the unique, offering contemporary dishes with quality of the highest order. There is something for everyone, from the pickiest eater to those looking for an elegant dining experience with the freshest ingredients. The restaurant makes incredible use of the high-quality seafood and produce that Phuket is becoming known for, starting with their sumptuous appetisers.

The Chef's Pâté, a delightful offering made of chicken liver, cranberry gel and mustard chutney, is a great place to begin your culinary adventure. A decadent start to a fine meal, packed with flavour, the dish is a rich balance of sweet and savoury. The chicken liver pâté itself is delicate in texture, yet a little goes a long way in terms of taste.

The Octopus Ceviche, while a new addition to the menu, is made fresh to order. You can practically taste the Andaman Sea through the grilled octopus, as notes of citrus and parsley cut right through, enhancing the flavour.



Photos: JaakDin Restaurant & Bakery



The island's seafood is renowned for its diversity and quality, and nowhere is this more represented than in JaakDin's Grilled Red Snapper Fillet. The fish is the star of the show here, grilled to perfection and given new life with splashes of extra virgin olive oil. The dish is served boneless for 'no-fuss' dining, with a medley of avocado and tomato salsa and a sauce made of dill and mustard. The sides complement the dish nicely and provide a beautiful display that is easy on the eyes as soon as the waitress places this on the table.

The freshness of the red snapper is evident in not just the sight of the dish, but from the very first bite. The sear was beautiful and went perfectly with the salsa that provided tangy notes to enhance the dish.

Our party also ordered another new addition to the menu – a dish of Tagliatelle and Duck. The pasta is served in a truffle cream sauce while the duck is cooked sous vide and finished on the grill. This preparation makes the duck delicate but with a great char on the skin, giving it a depth of flavour that is complemented by the delicious pasta. The tagliatelle, as with all of JaakDin's pastas, is made in-house, and cooked al-dente for a memorable meal that makes you sad when it's over. A healthy portion of sauce gives one ample opportunity to taste the homemade bread, a vessel for our tasty truffle cream.

To end an incredible meal, one must not forget the desserts, of which JaakDin provides ample choices. We opted

for the Honey Cake, made with real organic honey. In addition, the Dark Chocolate Eclair, a soft and light pastry filled to the brim with delightful cream, is the perfect conclusion to a meal at one of the top new restaurants on the island.

JaakDin's atmosphere has the feel of a cosmopolitan restaurant in any international city, from New York to London. From comfortable seating to delicious and high-quality dishes, and a modern feel with a minimalist style, I'm already planning my next reservation.

*JaakDin Restaurant & Bakery*  
Opening times: Daily 7am-11pm  
Reservation: +66(0)76 643 841 / [lagreenhotel.com/restaurants/jaakdin](http://lagreenhotel.com/restaurants/jaakdin)

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POP QUIZ

1. Who painted 'Girl with a Pearl Earring'?

2. What do you call a group of porcupines?

3. Michael Jackson teamed up with what notable guitar player for the 1982 song 'Beat It'?

4. Who was the first US president to visit all 50 American states?

5. What is the name of the world's hottest chili pepper?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Hard

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

1. A Ramsey

6. Bite

10. "Oh, \_\_\_!"

14. Relieve

15. Screen symbol

16. Jump on the ice

17. Dog breed

20. Sugar amt.

21. Make, in arithmetic

22. Like many a basement

23. Discomfit

25. Algonquian Indian

27. Develop a passion

34. Hip bone

35. Back muscle, familiarly

36. Maintained

37. KLM calculation

38. Dress material

42. Counter offer?

43. Bread served with korma

44. Ready for battle

45. Poker ploy

47. Heavy metal band

52. Australian prime minister

53. Not to be trusted

54. Auspices

57. One of a couple

58. Safari sight

61. Cochran hit

Down

1. Snoop Dogg song

2. "The Sound of Music" backdrop

3. Camper's purchase

4. Go downhill fast?

5. Hunger

6. Like many wedding cakes

7. Small field

8. Discouraging words

9. Econ. yardstick

10. Noriega

11. x, y or z

12. Face up to

13. Comrade in arms

18. Where Samson died

19. Final word

23. Swine \_\_\_

24. Bullets, e.g.

25. Greenish blue

Across

26. Big name in hotels

27. Evil one

28. Hitching post

29. Jungle vine

30. Guanaco's cousin

31. Circle

32. Ballroom dance

33. Submit

39. South African monetary unit

40. Amsler \_\_\_

41. Seed covering

46. "\_\_\_ calls?"

48. Hampers

49. Yorkshire river

50. Everyday

51. Cheeky

54. Fungal spore sacs

55. Continental coin

56. Govt. operative

57. Small amount

58. U.S. territory

59. "Scream" star

60. Computer operator

62. Light into

63. Pedi subject

64. Hidden means of support?

65. Muumuu go-with

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14						15					16			
17						18					19			
20						21					22			
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27	28	29						30				31	32	33
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37					38	39	40				41	42		
43					44						45	46		
47			48	49				50	51					
					52					53				
54	55	56						57				58	59	60
61						62	63				64	65		
66						67					68			
69						70					71			

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

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

27

Queen Elizabeth II's age when she was crowned the Queen of England

1,000

is roughly how many miles per hour the earth spins

1760

yards are in a mile

700,000


microplastic fibres pass into wastewater and, eventually, into the environment with each use of a washing machine

3,333,360

is the maximum number of points someone can achieve on the video game Pac-Man

Source: [Today.com](http://Today.com)

ISLAND VIEW



Mai Khao Beach at dusk. Photo by Gus Chesterton

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

June 6, 1859

Queensland is established as a separate colony from New South Wales. The date is still celebrated as Queensland Day in Australia.

June 7, 1982

Priscilla Presley opens Graceland to the public; the bathroom where Elvis Presley died five years earlier is kept off-limits.

June 8, 452

Attila leads a Hun army in

June 9, 1959

The USS George Washington is launched, the first nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine.

June 10, 1829

The first Boat Race between the University of Oxford and

June 11, 2001

Timothy McVeigh is executed for his role in the Oklahoma City bombing.

June 12, 1942

Anne Frank receives a diary for her 13<sup>th</sup> birthday.  
Source: [Wikipedia](http://Wikipedia)

the invasion of Italy, devastating the northern provinces as he heads for Rome.

the University of Cambridge takes place on the Thames in London.



# Trades & Services

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6 JUNE



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SUN

8 JUNE



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TUE

10 JUNE



### United Legends Supporting Emerging Thai Soccer Stars

Between the 10<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2025 three Manchester United Legends will be coming to Thailand to support 'Copa Tailandesa' 2025, a youth football academy tournament taking place at Arena, Hua Hin. Brian McClair and his United friends will also be meeting locals, fans and players at a Legends dinner on the 14<sup>th</sup> June at Avani+ Hotel. Tickets are now on sale now at 2950 Baht. facebook.com/copatailandesa/

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11 JUNE



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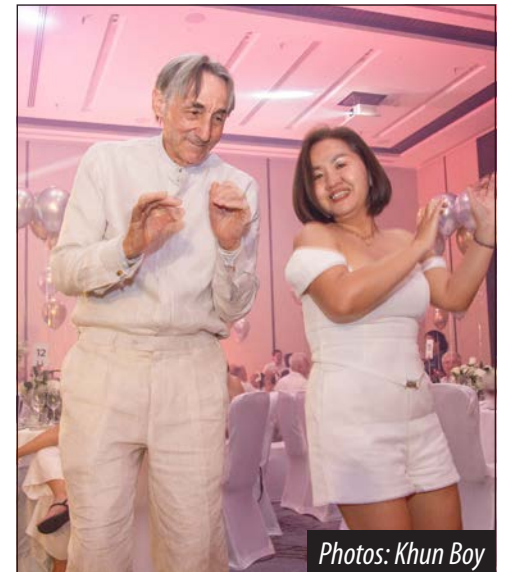
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## GIVE IT UP FOR MUSIC AND HELPING CHILDREN EVENT

Rotary Club of Patong Beach held their White Dinner Gala on May 31 at the ballroom at SAii Laguna Phuket. It was also the 80th birthday celebration of O.B. Wetzell, who on the night said, "Age is just a number, but boy is this number big." Fantastic live music from Rannzé, Colin "Illy" Hill, Moody and Dating Blondes kept the dance floor full all night. Proceeds from the dinner and actions are going to the Rotary Club of Patong Beach service projects for children. For more info visit [Facebook.com/RCoPB](https://www.facebook.com/RCoPB)

Photos: Khun Boy



## AUSTCHAM JOINT CHAMBERS PHUKET SUNDOWNERS - MAY 2025

AustCham Thailand, in collaboration with Australian Alumni, AMCHAM, BCCT, Belgian-Luxembourg/Thai Chamber, CanCham Thailand, FTCC, GTCC, NTCC, Phuket Chamber of Commerce and Thai-Swedish Chamber, hosted the Joint Chambers Phuket Sundowners on Friday, May 30 at Le Méridien Phuket Beach Resort. A wonderful night of making new connections and catching up with familiar faces in the Australian-Thai business community in Phuket. To find out more visit [austchamthailand.com](https://austchamthailand.com)



## Thai F1 would 'break even' within one year

### FORMULA ONE

THE MINISTER OF tourism and sports has expressed confidence that a Formula 1 race, if held in Thailand, would "break even" within a year.

Sorawong Thienthong made the comment last Friday (May 30) during an update on the plan, following Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra's meeting with Formula One Group CEO Stefano Domenicali at the recent Monaco Grand Prix.

Mr Sorawong said a feasibility study and budget proposal is ready to present to the Cabinet, following talks with potential sponsors of the highly anticipated Thailand race.

The minister said the financial returns would be "definitely seen during the first year, directly and indirectly", and that it depends on how many years the contract will last.

The cost of staging a Formula 1 race varies greatly, but it can range from US\$200 million (B6.5 billion) to over \$1 billion



Sorawong Thienthong (centre) on May 30. Photo: Bangkok Post

for construction, with annual hosting fees potentially reaching \$55mn.

While many events generate substantial revenue, profitability depends on various factors including ticket sales, sponsorships and overall economic impact.

Thailand has long sought to host F1 but there was a pause in the negotiations, which resumed during the Srettha Thavisin administration, Mr Sorawong said.

He added that routes in Bangkok are expected to be included in the race, with four to five being studied. F1 is interested in having more street circuits, which is why "we were approached", he said.

Bangkok Post

## Piastrì leads McLaren Spain win

### FORMULA ONE

AFP

Oscar Piastrì drove with exemplary calm and control in a torrid race last Sunday (June 1) to beat rival and team-mate Lando Norris as McLaren claimed a first Spanish Grand Prix victory since 2005 with a resounding 1-2 triumph.

The 24-year-old Australian came home 2.4 seconds clear of Norris to extend his lead in the drivers' championship to 10 points with Ferrari's Charles Leclerc finishing third after a dramatic finale.

Four-time champion Max Verstappen of Red Bull went for a three-stop strategy that resulted in him losing third place in the final laps before being handed a 10-second penalty for crashing into Mercedes' George Russell who finished fourth.

It was Piastrì's fifth win of the season and the seventh win of his career – and his eighth consecutive podium finish for McLaren, a feat that had only been achieved before by three-time champion Ayrton Senna and seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton.

Nico Hulkenberg was fifth, from 15<sup>th</sup> on the grid, for Sauber ahead of Hamilton in a Ferrari, Racing Bulls' rookie Isack Hadjar and Pierre Gasly of Alpine.

Two-time champion and local hero Fernando Alonso finished ninth for Aston Martin with Verstappen



Piastrì crosses the line. Photo: AFP

classified 10<sup>th</sup> after his bruising late incidents.

### 'GREAT WEEKEND'

"It was a bit of a surprise to see Max try a three-stop and it nearly worked for him," said Piastrì.

"But it's been a great weekend overall. The overall pace was really good and we could turn it on when we needed to – and I am just very proud of the work we've done this weekend.

"It's a nice way to bounce back from Monaco. It's been a superb weekend."

Monaco winner Norris started second but ceded his position to Verstappen on the first lap before battling back to follow his teammate home.

"Oscar drove a very good race today," said Norris.

"It was a good, fun race and for us as a team to finish one-two is even better."

The incident between Verstappen and Russell happened shortly after racing restarted with five laps left following a safety car. Verstappen immediately lost third to Leclerc and then went off the track as he tried to hold off Russell.

Verstappen's Red Bull team told their driver to hand the place to Russell and the Dutchman appeared about to do that as he slowed into turn five with two laps left. Instead he speared into the Mercedes.

Verstappen did not deny that his move on Russell – with whom he was involved in a war of words last season – was deliberate.

"Does it matter?" he said. "I prefer to speak about the race than just one single moment."

## World Boxing introducing gender tests for all boxers

### BOXING

WORLD BOXING announced last Friday (May 30) it will introduce mandatory gender testing to determine the eligibility of male and female athletes wanting to take part in its competitions.

The international federation said it was introducing the policy after the furore surrounding boxers including women's welterweight gold medallist Imane Khelif of Algeria at the Paris Olympics last year.

World Boxing said it had informed the Algerian Boxing Federation that Khelif would have to undergo the test if she wanted to compete at the Eindhoven Box Cup in the Netherlands on June 5-10.

Under the new policy, all athletes over 18 that want to participate in a World Boxing owned or sanctioned competition



Khelif at the Paris Olympics. Photo: AFP

will need to undergo a PCR, or polymerase chain reaction genetic test, to determine what sex they were at birth and their eligibility to compete.

The PCR test is a laboratory technique used to detect specific genetic material, in this case the SRY gene, that reveals the presence of the Y chromosome, which is an indicator of biological sex.

The test can be conducted

by a nasal or mouth swab, or by taking a sample of saliva or blood.

National federations will be responsible for testing and will be required to confirm the sex of their athletes when entering them into World Boxing competitions by producing certification of their chromosomal sex, as determined by a PCR test.

AFP

## New world No.1 Kunlavut makes it double joy for Thai shuttlers

### BADMINTON

NEW WORLD NO.1 KUNLAVUT Vitidsarn capped off a historic week by winning the US\$1 million BWF Singapore Open last Sunday (June 1).

The 24-year-old Thai star claimed his fourth title of the year after storming past China's Lu Guangzu 21-6, 21-10 in just 37 minutes to win the World Tour Super 750 event at the Singapore Indoor Stadium.

Kunlavut, who is also the reigning world champion and an Olympic silver medallist, became the first Thai male player to reach No.1 in the world after winning the semi-final against Lin Chun-yi of Taiwan on Saturday.

He replaced China's Shi Yuqi, who lost to Lu in the round of 16 in Singapore, as the world's top-ranked player after the new rankings were released on Tuesday by the World Badminton Federation.

Kunlavut also won the Indonesia Masters and the Thailand Open – both World Tour Super 500 events – and the Asia Championships this year.

On Saturday mixed doubles pair Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Supissara Paewsampran combined to claim their third World Tour title of the year.

The sixth seeds defeated the reigning Asian champions and second seeds Tang Chun Man and Tse Ying Suet of Hong Kong 21-16, 21-9 to add the Singapore title to their growing trophy collection.



Kunlavut (centre). Photo: Supplied

Dechapol and Supissara have won five out of five finals they have contested since starting their partnership in October last year.

Saturday's victory followed their wins at the Malaysia Open (Super 1000) and the Thailand Masters (Super 300) earlier this year. The pair won the Kumamoto Masters Japan (Super 500) and the Syed Modi International (Super 500) in 2024.

They have now won at least one title at all BWF World Tour levels.

Meanwhile former Olympic champion Chen Yufei won her fourth consecutive tournament as the Chinese fifth seed eased past second-seeded compatriot Wang Zhiyi 21-11, 21-11 to claim the women's singles title.

Seventh seeds Kim Hye-Jeong and Kong Hee-Yong of South Korea won the women's doubles champions, defeating fifth seeds Rin Iwanaga and Kie Nakanishi of Japan 21-16, 21-14. Bangkok Post



# Chelsea aim higher after Euro win

# FOOTBALL

**AFP**

The UEFA Conference League was not where Chelsea wanted to be, but their triumph in Wroclaw, Poland could prove to be a turning point for a club that had lost their trophy-winning habit.

The Premier League team beat Real Betis 4-1 on May 28, recovering strongly from being outplayed in the first half by their Spanish opponents.

Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca's second-half substitutions lifted his team but an inspired Cole Palmer was the catalyst for victory, producing two pinpoint crosses for Enzo Fernandez and Nicolas Jackson.

Jadon Sancho's fine finish made it 3-1 and Moises Caicedo added a fourth in stoppage time to give Chelsea their first silverware since Todd Boehly and Clearlake Capital acquired the club in May 2022 from Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich.

During the past three years the owners have spent more than £1 billion (B42.6bn) on promising young talent, but until now have had little to show for it.

Chelsea had been clear favourites to win Europe's third-tier club competition from



**Chelsea's players celebrate with the trophy after winning the UEFA Conference League final on May 28. Photo: AFP**

the start, enabling Maresca to field youth and fringe players.

They rampaged through the group phase, outclassing teams with a fraction of their resources such as Noah, Astana and Shamrock Rovers.

Maresca spoke on the eve of the final in Poland about how he had stressed the importance of the Conference League to his players.

He will not need to persuade them next season as they are back where they feel they belong, the Champions League, following a fourth-place finish in the Premier League.

## ‘WINNING MENTALITY’

Maresca, in his first season at Stamford Bridge, said he hoped winning the Conference League would be a launchpad for bigger and better.

“Hopefully, it can be a starting point to build a winning mentality,” he said. “You need to win games. You need to win competitions.

“And for sure, the trophy we won tonight is going to make us better. But also, I’m very proud about the path or the journey we have done in the Premier League.

“For me, it’s the most difficult competition in the world. You have to be consistent in 38 games. And these players, they showed it.”

Maresca had a rollercoaster first season after replacing Mauricio Pochettino.

His team were within touching distance of eventual Premier League champions Liverpool in mid-December before stumbling badly.

But they found an extra gear towards the end of the campaign, negotiating a tricky run-in to finish in the Champions League spots.

“For sure, we have improved a lot since we started,” said former Leicester boss Maresca. “We also start to win games in an ugly way.

“That is something with a young squad that you struggle to do that.”

The Italian has been keen to highlight the extreme youth of his expensively assembled squad.

The average age of his starting side was the youngest in a single Premier League campaign.

Under Abramovich, Chelsea became serial trophy winners, claiming five Premier League titles and winning the Champions League twice.

It is too early to predict whether they will return to those heady heights but the Conference League is a start.

Next on the agenda is a trip to the Club World Cup in the United States, for which Chelsea qualified by winning the 2021 Champions League.

"Now we have 10 days off, 10 days where we need to recover energy, and then we're going to start the Club World Cup," said Maresca.

“The target is to go game by game, try to go step by step, but at this moment we don’t have any target for the Club World Cup.

“Now the only target is to recover energy, because the season has been very long.”

# Phuket national youth sports qualifiers underway

## ALL SPORTS

THE PHUKET QUALIFYING leg of this year's national youth sports finals is underway as the province seeks out local and national sports stars of the future.

The annual provincial event runs from June 2-29 and incorporates a total of 15 sports. Competitors no older than age 18 from a range of schools across the island will be competing and the top performers will qualify for the finals later this year. The winners of that event will then represent Phuket province at national competition level later in 2025.

A budget had been previously received from the Sports Association of Thailand's National Sports Development Fund to plan and deliver the month-long competition, which strives to encourage and development sports excellence among Thai youngsters throughout the country.

This year's event will include the following sports

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on the stipulated dates at the specified venues: Swimming; incorporating various competition distances, June 28-29 at Saphan Hin sports stadium; Petanque, June 12-13 at gym 2 of the Saphan Hin sports stadium; Karate, June 21-22 at gym 3 of the Saphan Hin sports stadium.

Tennis, June 14-15 at Sanamchai Sports Stadium, Talat Yai; Tech-ball, June 10-12 at Satee Phuket School and Pibulsawasdee Municipality School; Football, June 5-15 at the Saphan Hin sports stadium, Futsal, June 11-14 at the artificial football pitches, Phuket Rajabhat University.

Muay Thai, June 19-20  
at Municipal School No.2,

Kathu; Taekwondo, June 7-8 at the Dragon Gym on Soi Ta-Iad, Chalong; Snooker, June 14-15 at the Nimit Snooker Club 1983 in Phuket Town; Badminton, June 7-8 at gym 2 of the Saphan Hin sports stadium; Sepak Takraw, June 7-8 at gym 3 of the Saphan Hin sports stadium; Jiu-Jitsu, June 28-29 at gym 3 of the Saphan Hin sports stadium; Athletics, June 14-15 Municipal School No.2, Kathu; Beach volleyball, June 14-15 at Plai Laem Saphan Hin.

Organisers confirmed all events are free to attend and everyone is welcome to come along to enjoy the action and cheer on the athletes. *The Phuket News*

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# Sport



**Kunlavut on top of the world > p14**



Thailand's women's volleyball team will be looking for home advantage in the upcoming tournament. Photo: FIVB / AFP

## Phuket to host women's world volleyball

### VOLLEYBALL

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket is among four official Thai venues that have been confirmed to host the FIVB Volleyball Women's World Championship 2025.

A total of 32 teams will be vying for the prestigious world champions title across 64 matches and 14 competition days between Aug 22 and Sept 7.

Teams involved include world ranked number one side and current Olympic champions Italy, world ranked number two team Brazil and world number three ranked team and runners up at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, the United States.

In addition to Phuket, the tournament – a historic first for Thailand and Southeast Asia – will be staged across Bangkok,

Nakhon Ratchasima and Chiang Mai.

Phuket will host matches at the Saphan Hin Municipal Sports Complex in Pool B involving Italy, Belgium, Buba and Slovakia, as well as Pool G, which includes Germany, Poland, Kenya and Vietnam.

Phuket has a long tradition of welcoming international volleyball events, having most recently served as the host city of the 2021 FIVB Under-19 and Under-21 World Championships.

In Bangkok, matches will take place at the 6,000-seater Indoor Stadium Huamark, a venue with extensive experience in hosting international competitions.

Nakhon Ratchasima will host matches at Chatchai Hall. In Chiang Mai, the World Championship will make its debut at the Chiang Mai International Exhibition and Convention Centre, a state-of-the-art complex

and one of the largest venues in northern Thailand.

The 20<sup>th</sup> edition of the Women's World Championship will feature 32 national teams divided into eight groups of four teams for the round-robin phase with the two best teams from each group moving into the knockout phase.

The round-robin matches will be played in the four cities, while the knockout stages – round of 16, quarter-finals, semi-finals and final – will take place in Bangkok.

Hosts Thailand, coached by Kiattipong Radchatagriengkai, have been drawn in Pool A along with the Netherlands, Sweden and Egypt.

### ACTION-PACKED

The tournament will kick-off simultaneously at 4pm local time on Friday, Aug 22 with the Czech Republic facing Argentina in Pool D in Nakhon Ratchasima, while

Puerto Rico take on France at the same time in Pool C in Chiang Mai.

An hour later the action continues as the Netherlands meet Sweden in Pool A in Bangkok and Belgium take on Cuba in Pool B in Phuket.

Two games involving world heavyweights will then take place at 7:30pm at the United States start Pool D off against Slovenia Nakhon Ratchasima and Brazil take on Greece in Pool C in Chiang Mai.

Rounding off an action-packed opening day of competition Thailand's spikers take on Egypt in Bangkok with the host side no doubt eager to capitalise on home-court advantage and deliver a strong performance in front of their fans. Reigning Volleyball Nations League 2024 champions and Paris 2024 Olympic gold medalists Italy open their Pool B campaign against Slovakia in

Phuket. Both these games take place at 8:30pm.

Competition in the first phase will see each pool play on alternate days, with Pools A, B, C, and D competing on Aug 22, 24 and 26, while pools E, F, G and H take the court on Aug 23, 25 and 27.

The top two teams from each of the eight pools will advance to the knockout phase, starting with the Round of 16 from Aug 29 to Sept 1.

The Quarter-Finals will be held on Sept 3 and 4, followed by the Semi-Finals on Sept 6.

The tournament will culminate on Sept 7 with the bronze medal match at 3:30pm, ahead of the final gold medal match at 7:30pm at the Indoor Stadium Huamark in Bangkok, where the next world champions will be crowned.

*Tickets for the championship can be purchased on the Thai Ticket Major website.*

## An explosion of the senses at the Thanyapura 'Color Fun Run'

### RUNNING

MORE THAN 1,000 runners of all ages and abilities came out last Saturday morning (May 31) to enjoy the annual 'Color Fun Run' at Thanyapura Health & Sports Resort.

The event, as always, was popular with tourists and families residing in Phuket, mainly down to the fact that it is the only one of its kind in Phuket and is

very different to many other sporting events that take place on the island.

As opposed to some of the more serious events geared towards professional athletes, the Color Fun Run promotes fitness for fun rather than competition, welcoming everyone from very young children to those that are young-at-heart, regardless of athletic prowess.

The run took place at the Thanyapura Health &

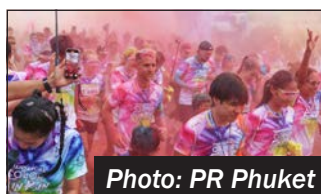


Photo: PR Phuket

Sports Resort in Thalung between 9 and 11am under overcast but dry skies and participants had two distances to choose from this year: a 1.5 kilometre or 5km course.

Each participant was equipped with a pair of

sunglasses and a bag of colourful powder before setting off for their run. Throughout the course, volunteers at colour stations showered the runners with multi-coloured powders and the runners threw their own coloured powder back at volunteers, other runners and spectators.

By the end, everyone was covered head-to-toe in the colours of the rainbow. The coloured powder that is used is certifiably safe,

washes off with water, and does no damage to the surrounding environment.

The occasion is inspired by the famous Holi Festival from India, hence the explosion of vibrant colours, energy, music and movement that are witnessed on the day.

After the run, guests enjoyed a range of refreshments, while live musical entertainment provided chance for anyone with any energy remaining to shake a

leg. Each participant was given a T-shirt and a commemorative medal of completion.

Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat oversaw the opening ceremony on the day and was joined by his wife, Ms Busadee, who is currently President of the Phuket branch of the Red Cross Society of Thailand, and Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) President Rewat Areerob. *The Phuket News*