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GREEN LIGHT

PM SRETTHA PLEDGES BILLIONS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT



Photo: Government Spokesperson's Office

The Phuket News
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Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin has pledged to support mega-investment projects on the island to the tune of at least B93.9 billion to develop Phuket's key tourism and transport infrastructure.

PM Srettha, who also serves as the Finance Minister, made the pledge after arriving in Phuket last Friday (Sept 29) to follow up on promises to develop Phuket's tourism and transport infrastructure as a way of boosting the revenue generated by the island for the national economy.

Just one day before the prime minister arrived, Transport Minister Suriya Juangroongruangkit, already

in Phuket, reportedly said the government was looking to spend B148bn on improving Phuket's tourism and transport infrastructure.

The visit marked the second time in just over a month that Mr Srettha had visited Phuket as the prime minister. He last visited the island on Aug 25, less than 48 hours after being royally endorsed as the 30th Prime Minister of Thailand. During that visit, PM Srettha was also presented with many critical issues negatively affecting Phuket's development as a tourism destination.

Mr Srettha last Friday landed at Phuket International Airport, where he was joined by Transport Minister Mr Suriya and Tourism & Sports Minister Sudawan Wangsuphakijkosol for a

meeting to discuss the development of airports along the Andaman coast.

Chai Watcharong, Spokesman for the Prime Minister's Office, explained the development projects consisted of:

- 1) Phase 2 expansion of Phuket International Airport, costing B5.8 billion;
- 2) Development of Krabi International Airport, costing B2.7bn;
- 3) Construction of Phang Nga Airport, also now being called the "Andaman International Airport", in Khok Kloi, Phang Nga, costing B80bn.

Also discussed were improving road transportation on the island, namely the Patong Tunnel and Muang Mai - Koh Kaew - Kathu Expressway projects, both being developed by the

Expressway Authority of Thailand (EXAT), and a series of projects by the Highways Department, including the underpass planned for the Heroines Monument and Route 4027 through Pa Khlok.

An official report posted after the PM's visit confirmed the budget figures for the road projects as:

- 1) Route 4027, from Baan Para in Pa Khlok to Baan Muang Mai in Thepkrasattri – budget of B510mn
- 2) Road construction from Muang Mai to the Phuket Airport Intersection – budget of B2.468bn
- 3) Underpass at the Heroines Monument, B2.425bn

The total budget amounts for the airport and road projects combined tallied B93.903bn.

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Bouquets, blessings for farewell

The Phuket News
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Narong Woonciew was showered with bouquets and blessings on his last day as Governor of Phuket last Friday, before he officially retired from government service the next day (Sept 30).

After attending a meeting with Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin at Phuket International Airport, Governor Narong was joined at Phuket Provincial Hall by leading provincial officials and other government employees along with local community leaders and members of the public to thank him for his service and to wish him the best during his retirement.

Among the bouquets presented to Governor Narong, roses were aplenty, as were garlands to bring him blessings of good fortune.

After receiving a 'farewell of honour' as he exited Phuket Provincial Hall, Governor Narong reviewed an assembly of local civil defence volunteers, who he saluted as he walked past, before he and his wife, Ms Boonwandee, paid



Photo: PR Phuket

home to the shrine in front of Provincial Hall, located on the grounds of the Phuket Provincial Administration Center.

Governor Narong and his wife then departed, with officials offering his car a salute as he drove past.

Earlier that day at the meeting at the airport, PM Srettha himself specifically thanked Governor Narong for his efforts during his term as Governor of Phuket.

"On behalf of the govern-

ment, I would like to thank you for the entire period of your employment. The Governor has worked with dedication, dedicated to working for the country. After retirement, may you continue to be happy and live happily," he said.

MERIT MAKER

Before his last days as Governor of Phuket, Governor Narong on Aug 26 entered a 15-day ordainment as a monk at Wat Pa Phutthapong Hariphunchai in Lamphun province

as a way of making merit.

Bestowed the monk name Phra Nathaplo, he returned to Phuket as a monk on Sept 10 and joined a procession of 15 monks, including Phra Ajahn Ariyawangso, the abbot of Wat Pa Phutthapong Hariphunchai, to walk the 2.5-kilometre route from in front of Wat Phuttha Mongkol Nimit opposite Soi Rommanee in Old Phuket Town to the Governor's Residence on the corner of Krabi Rd and Satun Rd in Phuket Town.

Along the route, Governor

Narong, as Phra Nathaplo, received alms from people lining the streets as a way of showing respect and making merit to enhance prosperity for themselves and their families.

With his 15-day ordainment complete, Governor Narong returned to formal duties on Sept 15, attending an event in Bangkok to join the heads of local Phuket municipalities and tambon administrative organisations (OrBorTor) in receiving certificate awards for serving as 'Outstanding agency in using the Traffic Fondue platform to serve the people'.

ALL CHANGE

Governor Narong took up the post of Governor of Phuket in June 2020, after the then Governor, Phakaphong Tavipatana, was hastily transferred following a slew of heavy criticism from island residents over his handling and implementation of COVID-19 policies.

According to reports in the Thai media online at the time, some people said Governor Phakaphong did too little too late, while others reported that the measures he rolled out were too harsh.

Mr Phakaphong was assigned to the post of Governor of Phetchaburi.

Before his posting to Phuket, Governor Narong, a native of Phatthalung, had previously served as Governor of Chaiyaphum province.

Expected to arrive on the island today or tomorrow to take up the post of Governor of Phuket is Sophon Suwanarat, who has just completed a term serving as Governor of Chaiyaphum Province.

Mr Sophon has served as Governor of Chaiyaphum for only one year, taking up the post there on Oct 1 last year.

Before then, Mr Sophon served as an Inspector General at the Ministry of Interior (Dec 15, 2021 - Sep 30, 2022), and before that post he served as Deputy Governor of Loei Province (Oct 1, 2017 - Dec 14, 2021).

His highest academic achievement is graduating with a Higher Diploma in Public Administration and Public Law at King Prajadhipok's Institute in Bangkok.

At 58 years old, Mr Sophon is not scheduled to officially retire from government service until Oct 1, 2025.

'Andaman Airport', slew of tourism mega-projects to be rolled out

Continued from page 1

"The government is ready to work together to develop the tourism sector and to revive the economy again along with confidence in the potential of Phuket Province, which is a model that can stimulate the economy. With the prominence of the province, [we] can connect tourism in cluster provinces (Phuket, Krabi, Phang Nga), which all have different identities. It is a destination for tourists from all over the world who choose to travel here," PM Srettha said.

Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew, also present at the meeting, pointed out that projects to alleviate traffic on Thepkasattri Rd (Route 402) were vital, as the road already suffered from traffic problems.

"It is the only route into the city. The traffic volume is as high as 62,609 vehicles per day. Heavy traffic and accidents are therefore a problem for tourism, and confidence in trade. We need investment in passenger mass transit systems. There is not enough coverage within the province and not enough to meet the needs of citizens and tourists, of which there are approximately 1.2 million people," he said. Of note, a combined population of 1.2mn

residents and tourists on the island at the same time is a peak figure that Phuket has yet to reach this year

Regardless, Transport Minister Suriya said that the budget for the projects is expected to be disbursed during fiscal year 2024 (Oct 1, 2023 - Sept 30, 2024) and that some of the projects, especially highway upgrades to facilitate transportation for local people and tourists, should be completed by 2026, noted state news agency NNT.

Following the meeting at Phuket airport, PM Srettha and his entourage travelled south to Kathu for a site inspection of the Patong Tunnel project, where he was briefed on the two-tunnel plan and designs for the main roads to provide access to and from the tunnels.

The Prime Minister "confirmed that the government is continuously following up on the work".

"In the past, I had the opportunity to work with government officials from the Ministry of Transport. It is considered a good example of work - work driven by good management, using limited budgets to create worthwhile benefits in response to government policy," he said.

"Even though important projects



PM Srettha at Kathu.

have been implemented in Phuket province, throughout the [coming] four-year period the government will have to continue development.

"Phuket Province is a world-class city and must not stop its development. It is important to leave the relevant agencies to take care of tourists. I want the first step to the last step for tourists travelling to Phuket to be happy. To be safe. To not cause problems. In addition, I urge the police to take care of safety. Make an impression.

"And for AOT's part [airports of Thailand, which operates Phuket airport], we ask that they manage the private jet issue well so that it does not affect the flight schedule of tourists," the prime minister said.

Following his visit to Phuket airport and the site inspection in Kathu,

PM Srettha departed from Phang Nga, where he was to be briefed on the plans to build the B80bn airport in Khok Kloi.

The planned site to be developed covers more than 7,400 rai, explained Airports of Thailand (AoT) President Dr Kerati Kijmanawat.

"The reason for choosing this area is because there are no mountains... The flight route from east to west is along the same route as [for planes approaching] Phuket Airport, meaning there will be no crossing of the flight paths between planes approaching the 'Andaman Airport' [in Khok Kloi] and those approaching Phuket Airport," he said.

"Construction will include a runway-taxiway system, a passenger building, an aircraft parking apron, and a main terminal and a parking lot.

"There will be two runways, each 3,600 metres long, supporting 60 flights per hour. The airport will be able to receive 22 million tourists per year and can be expanded to receive 50 million tourists per year in the future," Dr Kerati continued.

"AoT will take about 18 months to expropriate the land, then hand it over as state property. AoT will rent the land from the Treasury Depart-

ment," he added.

"Construction of the Andaman Airport is expected to be completed in time for the airport to open for service in 2030," he said.

After hearing an official summary update on the plans for the Phang Nga airport, Mr Srettha emphasised that any development work must not cause any adverse impact on local residents and they should be fairly and properly compensated for any inconvenience incurred by the project, including any land expropriated. Such measures should be clearly specified in the plan ahead of any work commencing, he added.

Mr Srettha explained that it is important to develop transport systems to connect with the proposed airport project and appropriate utility infrastructure to enable urban expansion in the future.

Chai Watcharong, Spokesperson for the Prime Minister's Office, stated, "The Prime Minister emphasised that the visit to Phuket and Phang Nga provinces did not have any political implications and that Mr Srettha purely came on behalf of the government to listen to get an update and hear any problems that may arise from the development project."

CEO Governors are back

The Phuket News
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Phuket officials have been instructed to prepare for a return to the 'CEO Governor' system first introduced under Thaksin Shinawatra administration more than 20 years ago.

Phuket Vice Governor Amnuay Pinsuwan chaired a meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall on Sept 27 to ensure local administrations got the message.

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the Office of the Public Sector Development Commission held a meeting on Sept 26 to discuss "administration in the form of integrated provincial governors (CEO Governors)", reported the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket).

Ministry of Interior Permanent Secretary Suthiphong Chulcharoen chaired the meeting and "gave orders to all provinces", the report said.

The aim is to return to an "administration in the form of integrated provincial governors (Governor CEO) by which the Ministry of Interior and the



Phuket Vice Governor Amnuay Pinsuwan handing down the order last week. Photo: PR Phuket

Office of the Public Sector Development Commission are informed so that relevant action can be taken", the report noted.

Senior officials were seeking suggestions and opinions on operational guidelines and problems and obstacles in current public administration, the report added.

Of note, when the same system was implemented under the Thaksin administration, the main point promoted was that 'CEO Governors'

had more latitude in dealing with problems specific to the province they were designated to govern.

In reality, the result was the end of any real effectiveness of provincial administrations that operate under the Department of Provincial Administration (DOPA). In Phuket, that organisation is the Phuket Provincial Administration Organisation (PPAO, or OrBorJor).

Other than the three Members of Parliament that rep-

resent Phuket (all three from the Move Forward Party), the highest elected official on the island is the President of the PPAO, a position currently held by Rewat Areerob. The Governor of Phuket, like all provincial governors, are selected and appointed by officials in Bangkok.

The CEO Governor system arose from the policy of reforming the civil service system by applying the management concepts of private businesses, explained the PR

Phuket report.

The system was first tested in five provinces – Sisaket, Chainat, Lampang, Phuket and Narathiwat – for one year, from Oct 1, 2001 to September 30 2002. The system was rolled out nationwide on Oct 1, 2003.

Under the system, the governor's main goal as 'CEO' is to push the national agenda, by creating area-level agendas, solving problems and developing areas, and reducing the government's burden in solving problems at the area level, the PR Phuket report continued.

"In this regard, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Interior requests that all provinces join together to drive government policy and the mission of the Ministry of Interior to be quickly successful, to develop the quality of life of the people to be rich and happy, with people happier and having a sustainable quality of life," the report said.

The report noted that the CEO Governor system that is now to be reimplemented "is an integration of cooperation, budget, resources from various sectors, focusing on

measurable results".

So-called "provincial teams" are to ensure they cater to people's needs and "keep up to date". According to the policy of the new Minister of Interior, Anutin Charnvirakul, "up-to-date" means understanding the world situation and being able to adapt, the report said.

"Up-to-date" means understanding the changing context, to use technology to the maximum benefit and be 'timely', meaning being able to make decisions quickly and in time with the situation," the report concluded.

Meanwhile, PR Phuket earlier on Sept 27 reported a provincial budget-funded project to install 43 solar-power street lights in one moo baan (neighbourhood) in Kamala alone, Moo 6, at a total cost of B2.967 million – meaning the solar-powered street lamps and posts are to cost B69,209 each.

The provincial budget funds are to be disbursed via the Kathu District Office, which is to forward the funds to the Kamala Tambon Administration Organisation (OrBorTor).

PPAO Chief Rewat denies splurging B50mn on Chalong-Patong road

REWAT AREEROB, PRESIDENT of the Phuket Provincial Administration Organisation (PPAO), has refuted claims made online that his office has spent B50 million on building the road over the hills from Chalong to Patong.

Mr Rewat's comments came at a press conference held on Sept 25 at the old Provincial Hall, on Narisorn Rd in Phuket Town, which is now used by the PPAO.

At the press conference it was explained that the PPAO and the Office of Natural Resources and Environment had worked together to create the new road as an alternative route for motorists to drive to and from Patong.

The project was launched as an immediate response to the landslide on Patong Hill in October last year.

Chalong Municipality and Patong Municipality jointly applied to the Royal Forest Department (RFD) to allow the road to be built where it crosses RFD land.

The PPAO used a Cabinet resolution on June 23, 2020 as its basis for being legally allowed to proceed with the project, the PPAO said in a



PPAO President Rewat Areerob at the old Provincial Hall last week. Photo: PPAO

post online.

However, a claim made on social media saying that the PPAO had spent B50mn on building the road was untrue, the post added.

"The total amount was B905,862, of which B808,500 was for fuel and B97,362 for crushed stone," the PPAO said in its statement.

"In addition, the Phuket Highways Office supported the project by providing asphalt concrete [road] surfaces. Other government and private agencies also supported [the project] in various parts," the statement added.

Of note, the announcement last week marked the first time the PPAO had publicly revealed any financial figures related to the project.

However, the figures fall far short of what the road

would have actually cost.

Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee last month vowed to raise in Parliament questions about the construction of the road.

The key issues are the issue of road damage and the cost-effectiveness of construction, Mr Chalermpong, MP for Phuket District 2, said in a post online.

The inspection revealed that the road condition was "seriously damaged" and "hardly usable", Mr Chalermpong noted.

The road was built under a budget "of tens of millions of baht" after Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew last October declared the landslide on Patong Hill a "disaster", Mr Chalermpong explained.

Though no people were injured or killed in the landslide, declaring the incident a "disaster" allowed access to the provincial disaster relief fund to pay for road improvements to alleviate the impact on essential traffic travelling to and from Patong, Phuket's main tourism town. The "disaster relief fund" has long been reported as B50 million.

The Phuket News



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Consuls talk marijuana, ensuring residence registration of foreigners

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

As one of his last official duties as Governor of Phuket, Narong Woonciw on Sept 25 chaired a meeting with local consuls and honorary consuls to discuss key issues affecting foreigners visiting or staying on the island.

The meeting also marked an official farewell for Matthew Barclay, who is concluding more than three years of serving as the Australian Consul-General for Phuket and the surrounding region.

Present at the meeting, held at Phuket Provincial Hall, were consuls and representatives from more than 13 countries, including Brazil, Austria, Chile, the United Kingdom, Estonia, France, Germany, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Nepal, Mongolia, Norway and the Netherlands.

Present as representatives of local offices of the Thai government were Ratchadaphon O-in, Director of the Phuket Tourism and Sports Office; Somsuk Samphanprathip, Deputy Chief of the



Photo: PR Phuket

Phuket Provincial Health Office (PPHO); Samerjit Limlikit, chief of the local Passport Office; Subchacha Intarit, Director of Phuket Damrongtham Center (Phuket Ombudsman's Office); and Pol Col Thanet Sukchai, Superintendent of Phuket Immigration.

Governor Narong thanked the consuls for their support in taking care of foreign tourists in Phuket. "Phuket province has a large number of tourists traveling here. Therefore, requesting cooperation from tourists to follow the rules is important for a happy and peaceful coexistence between local people and tourists,"

Governor Narong said.

Phuket Immigration chief Col Thanet highlighted the 30-day stay now allowed by the visa exemption policy for Chinese and Kazakhstan nationals, which came into effect on Sept 25 and will remain in effect for five months, until Feb 29 next year.

Col Thanet pointed out that 377,830 Chinese tourists had arrived in Phuket from Jan 1 to Sept 23 this year, which he noted was 83% less than for the same period in 2019.

Of the Chinese visitors who have come so far this year, 2,898 had requested to extend their stay, a 66% decrease

from the same period in 2019.

In contrast, 89,350 tourists from Kazakhstan had arrived in Phuket already so far this year, a 483% increase on the number for the same period in 2019, he said.

Col Thanet also highlighted the 'White Accommodation Project', which is the Phuket Immigration name for the campaign to target venues where foreigners are staying to ensure their stay at each venue is registered with Immigration.

Phuket Immigration had launched a new system to facilitate the registration of foreigners staying at accom-

modation venues, namely hotels, condos and privately rented properties, he added.

In the future, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will be made with luxury villa and condominium projects "to allow juristic persons to support and cooperate in inspecting foreigners who come to stay", Col Thanet noted

Such an MoU may serve as a model for the country, he said.

From Aug 1-31, 309,253 foreign tourists had arrived in Phuket, but 412,515 tourists were reported as staying at guest accommodations on the island, Col Thanet noted.

"Such data creates confidence in providing tourism safety to tourists," he said.

In which areas tourists can buy and smoke marijuana was one of the key issues raised by consuls, said an official report of the meeting.

The official response by PPHO Deputy Chief Mr Somsuk was that people can smoke marijuana only in the area of their own residence, and they must not create a nuisance to neighbours or other people around.



Photos: Patong Police



Police continue campaign against minors working in Patong bars

PATONG POLICE HAVE charged another bar operator in Patong for hiring a minor as hostess. The venue operator was also charged with operating without a permit.

Officers raided the Landmark Bar on Nanai Rd, Patong, at about 11:30pm on Sept 26, Patong Police reported through a post online the next day (Sept 27).

In addition to photos of the minor working in the bar, the officers seized a cash bill, complete with the bar's name, indicating the cost of

the paying the minor to provide a "drinking service".

The report by Patong Police did not name the person held responsible for the infractions, but confirmed that the charges to be pressed were operating a service venue without a permit, and having children under 20 years of age working in a service establishment during inappropriate hours.

"The accused was taken to the Patong Police Station to proceed according to the law," the report concluded. *The Phuket News*

Russian tourist drowns at Bang Tao

A 34-YEAR-OLD RUSSIAN TOURIST drowned after being caught in a strong rip current at Bang Tao Beach last week

Lifeguards at the beach became aware of the Russian man's plight early in the afternoon of Sept 28 and dispatched a jet-ski to render assistance.

The man*, later identified as a Russian tourist who arrived in Phuket on Sept 23, was one of three people caught in the strong rip current together about 200 metres from the shore, lifeguards reported.

Two of the people were able to be safely rescued, but the Russian man was already unconscious face down in the water.

Lifeguards rushed him to shore, where he was administered CPR. The man remained unconscious and unresponsive, but lifeguards and rescue workers at the beach continued their efforts to revive him.

The man was rushed to Thalang Hospital, with CPR continued en route, but the man was formally pronounced dead soon after.

Pol Lt Col Yuthaphon Wattanasat of



Photo: Phuket Info Center

the Chong Talay Police was informed of the incident at 1:40pm.

Police were at last report coordinating with doctors at Vachira Phuket Hospital, where a post-mortem examination was to be conducted, and contacting the Russian embassy to have the man's body returned to his family.

Lifeguards continue to urge all people to swim only in 'Safe Swim' areas marked by yellow-red flags.

All beachgoers are urged to not enter the water where red flags are posted, marking where the water is too dangerous to swim.

* *The Phuket News is withholding the man's name until it has been confirmed that his next of kin have been notified.*

Eakkapop Thongtub

Rawai Mayor, Eva Beach undone

Supreme Court rules permits illegal, officials negligent in duty

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Supreme Administrative Court has ruled the office of the Rawai Mayor and a committee that performed the environment impact studies for the Eva Beach project in Rawai acted unlawfully and negligently in performing duties as required by law.

The court handed down its decision on Sept 15, after a month of hearing the case against Rawai Mayor Aroon Solos and the construction of the Eva Beach project, which was to originally comprise 22 two- and three-storey beachfront villas that 10 years ago were priced from B32.6 million up to B46.7mn each.

However, at the time the first formal complaints against the project were filed, more than 10 years ago, construction was stopped at 16 units in two- and four-storey beachfront buildings.

The Supreme Court decision supported the ruling handed down by the regional Administrative Court in Na-



Rawai Mayor Aroon Solos (2nd from right) was present when court officials inspected the Eva Beach project in 2015. Photo: The Phuket News / file

khon Sri Thammarat in 2017.

"The judgement stands," said the court in its 39-page report of the hearing.

"The Administrative Court of First Instance ruled that the 1st respondent [Mayor Aroon] should perform his duties according to the Building Control Act, B.E. 2522 (1979), as well as other related

laws, and must be completed within 90 days from the date the case becomes final," the court judgement read.

The Supreme Court verdict marked the exhaustion of any avenue of appeals against the ruling by the regional Administrative Court in Nakhon Sri Thammarat, the supreme Court also noted in

its judgement.

After the regional court ruling was handed down in 2017, Mayor Aroon told *The Phuket News*, "I am waiting for the judgement details to be sent this week. Only then will I order public works officials to issue an order for the offending structures to be removed, which will then

be handed to Property Phuket Eva Group Co Ltd."

After the notice is issued, the developer will have 30 days to remove the offending structures, he said at the time.

"If they delay in doing that, we will have the choice of either removing the structures ourselves or have a court order issued to have them do it," he said.

"We have to uphold our responsibility, if we don't not we might face complaints about us not performing our duties," Mayor Aroon noted at the time.

However, despite the Supreme Court ruling now being handed down nearly two weeks ago, Mayor Aroon and Rawai Municipality have yet to announce any action to be taken against the project or its developer, the Eva Group, which at the time was overseen by Managing Director Authanop Pankamnerd.

Mr Authanop back in 2012, when the complaints against the project were initially filed, steadfastly denied that any part of the Eva Beach had been built illegally.

However, the Supreme Administrative Court has now upheld the ruling that the buildings exceeded height limits allowed within the distance from the water on the Chalong Bay beachfront. The buildings are in 'Zone 1', which allows structures no taller than six metres within the first 50 metres of the water line.

Also deemed illegal is a walkway constructed at the site, and landscaping along the beachfront, including the installation of swimming pools, on land that the group does not own. The land is deemed to be public land.

The Supreme Court also ruled that some of the building permits had been issued illegally as the environmental impact assessment committee that inspected and reviewed the building permit applications had not properly conducted their assessments.

Further, Eva Group was found to have exceeded even the illegally issued building permits, with the buildings not even five metres apart, as required by law.

Phuket hosts the 1st Andaman Sustainable Tourism Forum

THE 1ST ANDAMAN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM FORUM was held in Phuket last week to highlight strategies for the province to become a fully-fledged sustainable tourism city by 2026.

Held at the Ramada Plaza by Wyndham Chao Fah Hotel in Wichit on Sept 28, the event attracted over 400 delegates from public and private sector entities and saw a cooperative framework to develop sustainable tourism data intelligence signed.

Phuket Vice Governor Amnuay Pinsuwan chaired the occasion and was joined by: Thelingsak Petsuwan, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment; Senator Weerasak Kowsurat; Namfon Bunyawat, Deputy Speaker of Policy and Planning from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT); Associate Professor Dr Teeranee Ajalakul, Director of the Big Data Institute; Thanet Tantipiriyakit, President of the Phuket Tourist Association; and Bhumikitti Raktaengam, President of the Sustainable Tourism Development Foundation.

Also present were: Pracha



Photo: Phuket Info Center

Asawatheera, Director of the Southern Region Digital Economy Promotion Agency; Jaruwan Suwannasat, Director of MICE Intelligence and Innovation Department from the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB); Pittaya Pramotewaraphan, Deputy Director General of the Pollution Control Department; Thada Warunchotikul, Manager of the Low Carbon Business Certification Office of the Greenhouse Gas Management Organisation; as well as a range of heads of government agencies, private sector organisations and tourism operators.

Mr Amnuay emphasised how there is currently a huge focus on the importance of environmental management and sustainable and responsible tourism, adding that Phuket

has begun to design a strategy to become a sustainable tourism city by 2026 in collaboration with the Sustainable Tourism Development Foundation.

He pointed to a 'Chef's Table' event that took place on Wednesday (Sept 27) at the Tin Baron restaurant in Phuket Town that strived to promote sustainability in relation to zero food waste where two Michelin-starred chefs created a top quality menu from food discarded from selected hotels and supermarkets across the island.

The event was just the start and something that he believed would help spark further tangible efforts to commit to a sustainable approach to enhance Phuket's ultimate objectives.

Further topics discussed during the forum included 'ESG Sustainability Dimension and Thai Tourism Development' and 'Wake Up for Sustainable Tourism in Thailand' which included a presentation on 'Carbon Footprint in Tourism' in Thailand, with a specific focus on the current situation of plastic waste in Thai seas. *The Phuket News*

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Small hotels still unable to register

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

A delegation representing small hotel owners in Phuket has appealed to the Senate for help in allowing small and boutique hotels on the island to legally register as hotels – a task they still cannot complete despite new regulations brought into effect this year specifically allowing them to do so.

The formal request for help was submitted by the Tourism Council of Thailand (TCT) to Senator Gen Akanit Mueansawat, Chairman of the Senate Public Administration Commission.

Gen Akanit in turn tasked Senator Gen Buntham Oris, who served as chairman of the working group to consider studying solutions to the problems of operating a daily accommodation rental business in 2021, to oversee a Senate investigation into the issue.

Present and joining the “joint problem-solving committee” was Manosit Jangjob, head of the TCT’s small hotel subcommittee, said a report by the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department



(PR Phuket).

The Ministerial Regulation Specifying the Characteristics of Other Types of Buildings used for Hotel Business (No. 4) B.E. 2023 was signed into effect on June 7 this year by Gen Anupong Paochinda, who was Minister of Interior at the time. The new ministerial regulation, finally allowing small hotels to register to be legally recognised as ‘hotels’, came into effect with its promulgation in the Government Gazette on June 20.

However, despite the ministerial regulation, operators still cannot register their businesses as small hotels due to another ministerial regulation, this one issued by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, said the PR Phuket report.

The MNRE regulation specifically regards area demarcation and environmental protection measures in Phuket province, the report noted.

However, exactly which environmental measures in

effect in Phuket prevented small hotels from registering was not explained.

The Ministerial Regulation Specifying the Characteristics of Other Types of Buildings used for Hotel Business (No. 4) B.E. 2023 does make it clear that small hotels applying to be legally registered as hotels must comply with all environmental protection measures.

However, when small hotels last year made yet another plea to be able to legally register, one of their requests

was to waive the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment regulation requiring that 30% of the plot area be left undeveloped (the ‘green areas’ rule that requires buildings’ footprint to cover no more than 70% of the total square area of the plot).

The MNRE regulation preventing small hotels in Phuket from registering only became apparent when small hotels tried to register, the delegation said.

The issue affects only small hotels in Phuket trying to become legally registered, the delegation added.

The Boutique Accommodation Consortium - Phuket (BAC Phuket) raised the issue with Prime Minister Srettha Thavasin during his visit to Phuket on Aug 25.

When raising the issue with PM Srettha last month, BAC Phuket also submitted a formal request for help to the Tourism Council of Thailand. TCT President Chamnan Srisawat responded, leading to the Senate’s involvement last week.

Of note, TCT President Chamnan was in Phuket in June to head a two-day ‘SME Restart’ event, promoting the

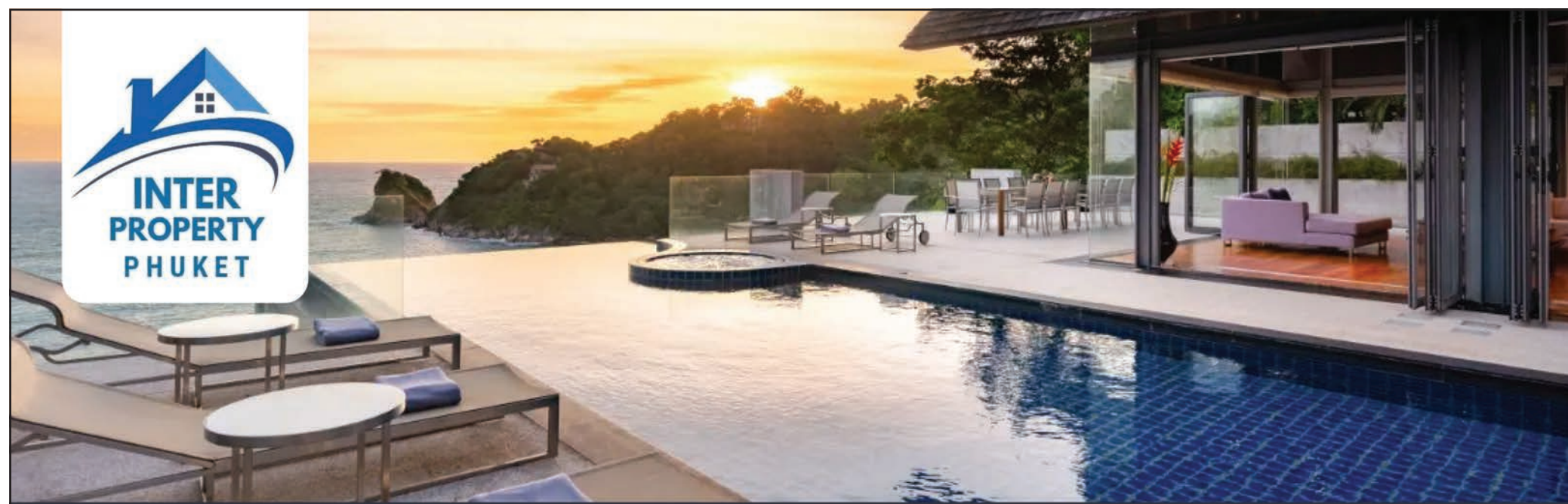
fact that small hotels could be finally register as legally recognised hotels.

Wirintra Paphakityotphat, head of the Tourism Council of Thailand (TCT) Region 11 branch, which represents Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi, was also present in Bangkok last week.

Ms Wirintra explained, “The TCT brought the matter to the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Public Administration to help follow up and expedite agencies related to the [respective] laws to help solve the hotel’s licensing problem urgently in order to increase [guest accommodation] supply this coming tourist season.

“This is because a hotel license is necessary [for small hotel operators] to obtain a loan from a bank for use in improving buildings used for hotel business. Hotels that are still closed can be improved and opened in time for this tourism high season, and provide more accommodation for tourists.

“It will stimulate the economy, and increase employment, people’s incomes and generate revenue during the last quarter of the year,” she said.



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PM calls for arms deals delay to focus on needy

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin has asked the armed forces to delay their arms procurement plans for the 2024 fiscal year so the government can spend its budget to help those who are most in need.

"The PM wants the budget to be spent on urgent efforts to help the people. Budgets that have already been approved will remain unchanged," a source said.

The newly appointed Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) commander, ACM Phanphakdee Phatthanakul, confirmed that the government had asked the armed forces to prioritise efforts to deal with natural disasters such as flooding, forest fires and haze problems.

ACM Phanphakdee also rejected a report which said the RTAF was planning to buy three Gripen jet fighters from Sweden to add to its fleet in Wing 7 in Surat Thani, after the United States refused to sell its F-35A fighter jets.



PM Srettha wants to focus on those most in need. Photo: Bangkok Post

The air force had bought a fleet of 12 Gripen fighters but lost one in a crash, a RTAF source said, adding that each Gripen fighter aircraft costs around B2 billion.

ACM Phanphakdee said that the RTAF will not seek to procure jet fighters in the 2024 fiscal year due to the country's economic situation.

However, the RTAF will consider procuring new jet fighters in the 2025 fiscal year, he said, adding that a working panel will be set up to consider the matter.

"The RTAF will present the procurement plan in the 2025 fiscal year and will ensure taxpayers' money will be spent in the country's best interests and for the sake of national defence," the RTAF commander said.

He went on to say that the RTAF is planning to retrofit its BT-67 utility aircraft with a water tank so it could be used to combat forest fires and drought during the dry season.

ACM Phanphakdee said the prime minister has also

emphasised that if the armed forces were to buy any military equipment from any country, they must convince those countries to buy Thai-made products as part of the deal.

Akkaradet Wongpitakrote, a United Thai Nation Party MP for Ratchaburi who sat on a House committee vetting budget bills for the 2020-2023 fiscal years, praised ACM Phanphakdee for his willingness to comply with the government's policy.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Srettha has confirmed he will donate all of his income from the monthly salaries and meeting allowances paid to him throughout his tenure to various foundations in the country.

Mr Srettha's monthly income as prime minister and finance minister amounts to B125,590 – a B75,590 salary plus a B50,000 position allowance.

These earnings will be conveyed through foundations to people in need, a quicker way of giving help than by relying on the normal legislative process via the parliamentary system.

Torsak named new national police chief

BANGKOK

POL GEN TORSAK Sukvimol has been approved as the new national police chief by the Police Commission.

Former deputy national police chief Pol Gen Torsak succeeds Pol Gen Damrongsak Kittiprapas, who retired on Sept 30.

Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin chaired the meeting of the commission to select the 14th police chief at the Royal Thai Police (RTP) headquarters on Sept 27, where attendees selected Pol Gen Torsak by a vote of 10 to 1.

His Majesty the King endorsed the appointment on Saturday (Sept 30), the Royal Gazette confirmed.

Pol Gen Torsak, a high-profile officer who rose to fame in the Crime Suppression Division (CSD), was fourth in seniority among the four job contenders.

Born in Phetchaburi in 1964, he obtained a bachelor's degree in political science from Thammasat



Pol Gen Torsak Sukvimol. Photo: Bangkok Post

University and started his career as an employee at Caltex Oil Thailand Co.

He then enrolled for a training course in law, political science and public administration, which entitled him to be appointed as a police officer.

He began his police career in 1997 as a deputy inspector at a radio patrol unit under the Patrol and Special Operations Division, known as the 191 Police.

He was later transferred to the CSD and then the Tourist Police Bureau before returning to the CSD.

He served as commander of the Police Royal Guards 904 Division before becoming a deputy chief and then chief of the Central Investigation Bureau (CIB).

Bangkok Post

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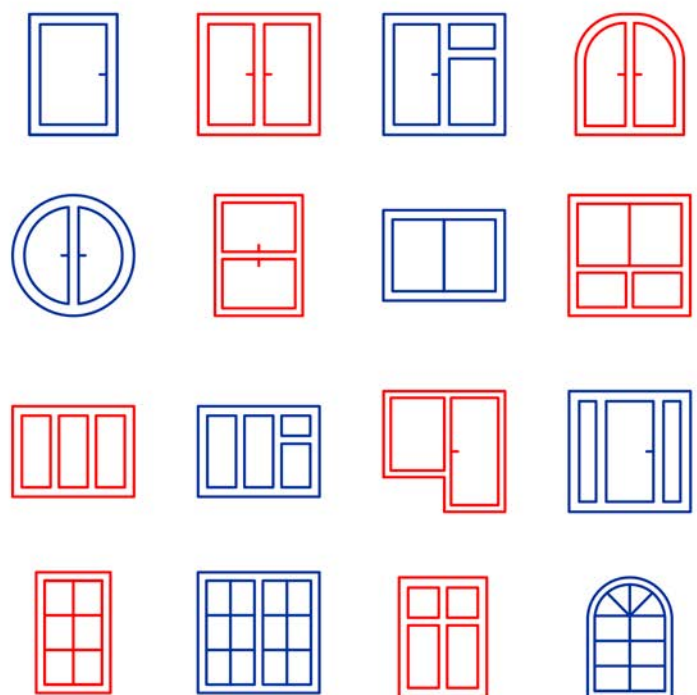


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Getting ahead of 'The Creator'

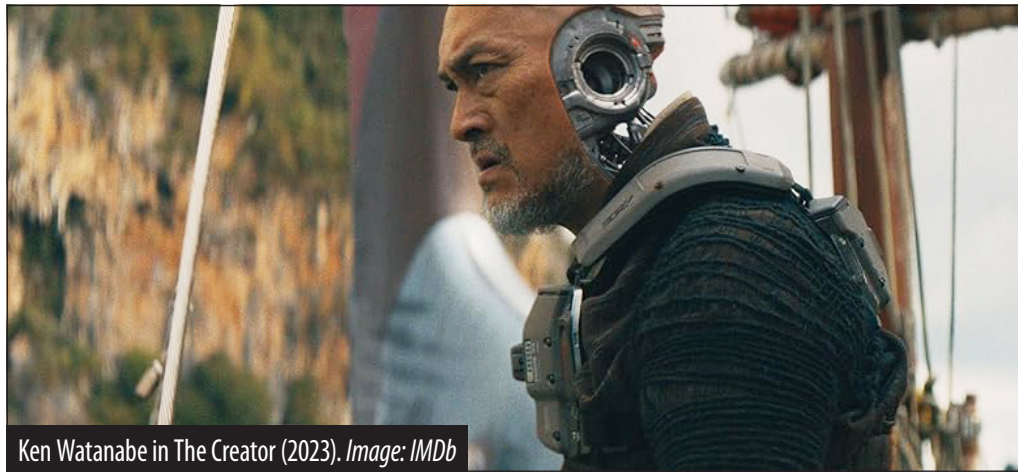
David Griffiths

When it comes to modern-day filmmakers, director Gareth Edwards is one of the best. His debut feature film 'Monsters' was an underrated cult classic. Since then he has branched into directing in two of the biggest franchises in cinematic history as he helmed 2014's 'Godzilla' and then entered the Star Wars universe with 'Rogue One'. Some hardcore fans have even said that 'Rogue One' is the best of the modern-day Stars Wars films.

Now with *The Creator* film lovers once again get to see Edwards work on an original story and premise that he has created himself. If Edwards is to announce himself as a filmmaker that deserves to be mentioned alongside the likes of the greats like Spielberg, Lucas, etc then it is films like this that must stand the test of time.

With *The Creator*, Edwards takes us into the future and shows what life on Earth looks like in 2065. The USA has been left devastated after an atomic bomb was detonated in Los Angeles by the AIs that were created to help humanity.

That sees the world at war as the US tries to hunt down every living AI, including those in New Asia – an area of the world that refuses to end its relationship with AI technology. In retaliation, the US has developed 'Nomad' – a specially designed missile launching



ship that has been decimating AI bases across the globe.

Finding himself in the middle of the war is Joshua (John David Washington – *Tenet*), who went undercover in New Asia to find a man who is considered to be the leader of the AIs – a man rumoured to have built what many refer to as 'The Creator'.

While on that mission Joshua met and fell in love with an AI creator, Maya (Gemma Chan – *Eternals*), whom he believes was killed alongside their unborn child in a US Army-led raid. Five years later however he is told by Colonel Howell (Allison Janney – *The Way, Way Back*) that Maya is still alive and is at 'the Base', where it is believed that *The Creator* is held. Once again Joshua is pulled into a war where neither side seems ready to yield.

As we have come to expect from Edwards as a filmmaker, *The Creator*

looks like a blockbuster but still manages to bring compassion and emotion to both the plot and the characters. The fact that *The Creator* can go from being an all-out battlefield war film one moment to a scene with touching moments between Joshua and Alphie (newcomer Madeleine Yuna Voyles) attests to just how far Edwards has come as a filmmaker.

The film does touch on some deep themes and there are moments when some strong messages are delivered, such as soldiers running out of a ship and gunning down monks without hesitation, but there are other moments when it feels like this film lacks the hard edge that it needed to really deliver its message about humanity during war.

Likewise while there are so many things to love about this film, the characterisation and the cinematography

of Greig Fraser (*Dune*) and Oren Sofer (*Fixation*) to name just two, the one thing that will keep hitting you while watching the film is just how similar this film feels to *Avatar* at times. Not just because it shares similar themes but also some of the characters at hand feel very familiar.

When it comes to the acting stakes however, in *The Creator* it is John David Washington and Madeleine Yuna Voyles. Voyles has a sneaky chance of receiving an Oscar nomination, as her role of Alphie would be challenging for actors of any age... and she delivers in what is her first film.

The Creator may not be the perfect film, but its plot is thought-provoking and engaging. The film also looks slick as it calls upon the look of films like *The Killing Fields* and *Good Morning Vietnam* while bringing in a strong science-fiction element. Once again Gareth Edwards shows why nobody can film a 'war' film the way he does and he continues the magical journey that he is taking film lovers on with him.

The Creator is currently screening in Phuket and is rated 15.

3.5/5 Stars

David Griffiths has been working as a film and music reviewer for over 20 years. That time has seen him work in radio, television and in print. He is also an accredited reviewer for Rotten Tomatoes. You can follow him at www.facebook.com/subcultureentertainmentaus

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145 October-November 2023
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- ★ กิจกรรมในจังหวัดภูเก็ต
- ★ บ้านและการตกแต่งภายใน
- ★ ที่เที่ยวและที่พักภูเก็ต
- ★ อาหาร ร้านอาหารและโปรโมชั่น
- ★ ท่องเที่ยวภูเก็ต
- ★ เกร็ดความรู้กฎหมายไทย

WINDOW ON PHUKET

October/November 2023 issue

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Opening the door to mental health

Milla Budiarto

Mental health is a universal human right. That is the theme for this year's World Mental Health Day. Observed annually on Oct 10, this day serves as a reminder for us to reflect on our own mental fitness, reach out to those who may be struggling, and open the conversation surrounding mental well-being. What community initiative will you be taking part in to promote mental health this year?

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) 2022 World Mental Health Report 'Transforming Mental Health for All', one in eight people, or approximately 970 million people around the world are living with a mental disorder, with anxiety and depressive disorders the most common mental health conditions. Roughly 301mn and 280mn people are grappling with anxiety and depression, respectively.

Though the numbers are staggering, many are still struggling in silence and in isolation, fearing judgement, embarrassment and ostracisation. This stigma often prevents them from seeking any help and getting the proper care they need and deserve. Although we still live in a society where physical health is often prioritised over mental health, there has been a steady shift in perspective surrounding mental health concerns post COVID-19.

There's no health without mental health

The state of our mental health is not a static one, it exists on a complex and dynamic continuum, fluctuating throughout our lives from periods of optimal mental health to challenging states of mental anguish.

The first step to nourishing our mental health is to recognise how we feel and communicate it with others. Talking about any emotional struggles can open the door to opportunities for further support, self-care and ultimately healing. With every conversation, we break down the barriers and challenge the stigma surround-



Guest Speaker Aylssa Cowell at 'Mental Health Talk 2' last December. Photo: Carey Shoemaker

ing mental health a little bit more. By openly sharing our mental health journeys, we contribute to the normalisation of these conversations and encourage those around us to be more compassionate and empathetic towards one another.

To open the conversation on mental health in Phuket during World Mental Health Day last October, I organised a donation-based Mental Health Talk, co-sponsored by HOMA, as a fundraising campaign for Phuket Women's Peer Support Group for Emotional and Mental Health. This donation-based peer support group meets every first and third Saturday of the month at Safe Space Phuket, a community space provider and organiser for self-improvement events and activities promoting mental well-being in Phuket Town. Additionally, a donation-based men's peer support group meeting just started this July and meets every second and fourth Saturday of the month.

Then a second donation-based Mental Health Talk was held last December at HeadStart International School. The school kindly provided the venue to support this community initiative. Three guest speakers with diverse backgrounds participated in the event. Kyle Daniels, a high-performance life coach and founder of

Coached Success, spoke about the importance of resilience in helping us overcome life's difficulties. Aylssa Cowell, a counsellor from 7north Therapy, shared the four ways of dealing with everyday stressors by implementing dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT) skills. And Celine Fontaine, a coach and breathwork practitioner, guided some breathwork techniques for mental focus, relaxation and improved general well-being.

A call to action

This year, Safe Space Phuket will be hosting a two-day series of mental health awareness events this weekend (Saturday-Sunday, Oct 7-8). The free events are open to anyone who is interested in better understanding themselves and their mental health. Safe Space Phuket welcomes any type of event sponsorship from the local community and organisations. For more details, email safespacephuket@gmail.com

The Mental Health Talk will be held from 2-6pm on Saturday (Oct 7), featuring four guest speakers. Wilton Atkins, a mental performance coach from Mental Skills NZ, will share the tools to assess our current situation and implement a tried-and-true coaching framework to create change in our lives. Amy Pothong and Tom Bell, a licensed professional counsellor and a licensed clinical social worker, respectively, from Golden Leaf Counseling Services Phuket, will lead guided discussions on overcoming addiction and affairs prevention. Then Aylssa Cowell, a counsellor and director of Seven North Co Ltd, will help identify the signs and symptoms that someone isn't okay and what to do next.

On Sunday (Oct 8), a Pop-Up Mental Health Therapy will take place between 12-8pm, offering a free 20-minute consultation session with five qualified mental health professionals to allow people to try out therapy or find out if it is right for them.

So, what role will you take in shaping Phuket's mental health landscape towards a more mentally healthy community?



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POP QUIZ

1. Which part of the brain regulates emotion?
2. In which city would you find the famous Lotus Temple?
3. Famed Hollywood actor Yul Brynner was from which country?
4. Who sang the 1990 club classic 'Groove is in the Heart'?
5. Original American colonist William Bradford was the first to call the passengers of the Mayflower what?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

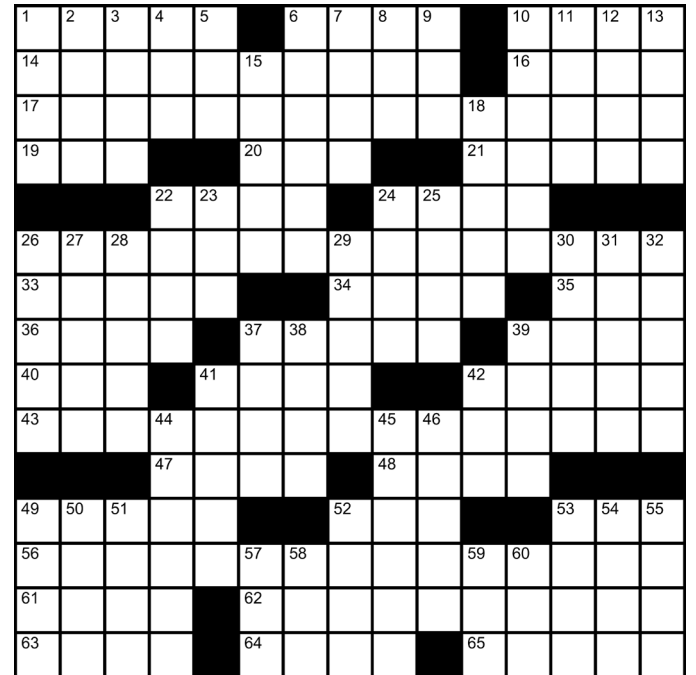
Medium

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		5			7			
	4	6			8	9		
	3	8		2				

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across**
1. Out of place
 6. Hardly thrilling
 10. Fit as a fiddle
 14. Food wrap
 16. Organic compound
 17. They were introduced by Sohmer & Co. in 1884
 19. "___ Miniver"
 20. One of the Clantons
 21. Be bombastic
 22. Stalk
 24. A dog's age
 26. Folk instruments
 33. Rane's wrap
 34. Microprocessor type
 35. Dorothy Parker quality
 36. Pen pals?
 37. Hike
 39. Glazier's item
 40. Grp. involved in "the Troubles"
 41. "Two Years Before the Mast" writer
 42. Elite
 43. They're in the key of G
 47. Sacred
 48. Snake-like fish
 49. Category of
- Down**
1. SALT subject
 2. At hand
 3. Priestly garb
 4. Layer
 5. Dress (up)
 6. Hindu path to salvation
 7. Pool division
 8. Not to mention
 9. Cool, once
 10. Kidnap victim
 11. "The King and I" role
 12. Cabbage
 13. Besides that
 15. Letters
 18. Charged, in a way
 22. Shades
 23. Apply
 24. Auspices
 25. Bounce
 26. Jellied garnish
- 27. Where "Aida" premiered**
28. Club publication
 29. Dalmatian, e.g.
 30. Anticipate
 31. Dentist's direction
 32. Editorial directives
 37. False god
 38. Just
 39. See 8-Down
 41. Legal right
 42. The whole enchilada
 44. Excite
 45. Body of work
 46. Malodorous
 49. Look out for, maybe
 50. Bat's home
 51. Soprano's song, maybe
 52. Get better
 53. "Cleopatra" backdrop
 54. Contents of some cartridges
 55. "Hey, over here!"
 57. Kimono closer
 58. Doze
 59. Be shy
 60. Time delay

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:
1) The limbic system; 2) New Delhi; 3) Russia (born in Vladivostok); 4) Dee-Lite; 5) Pilgrims



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

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

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

1.26

seconds is approximately how long it takes for a ray of moonlight to reach the Earth's surface.

5

different parts of your brain are used to understand and laugh at a joke.

30

different Batman logos have been used since 1940.

521

years is the half-life of DNA, which means that genetic material can't be recovered from dinosaurs, and 'Jurassic Park' is impossible.

5.5 million

years ago, the Mediterranean Sea went completely dry.

Source: *Uberfacts*

ISLAND VIEW



Palai sunrise rainbow. Photo by Sutharat Khaodee

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

This week in history

Oct 6, 1976

Massacre of students gathering at Thammasat University in Bangkok to protest the return of ex-dictator Thanom, by a coalition of right-wing paramilitary and government forces, triggering the return of the military to government.

Oct 7, 1959

U.S.S.R. probe Luna 3 transmits the first ever photographs of the far side of the Moon.

Oct 8, 1978

Australia's Ken Warby sets

the current world water speed record of 317.6mph (511km/h) at Blowering Dam, Australia. There have only been two official attempts to break Ken Warby's record, both attempts resulted in the death of the driver.

Oct 9, 1967

A day after being captured, Marxist revolutionary Ernesto 'Che' Guevara is executed for attempting to incite a revolution in Bolivia.

Oct 10, 1897

German chemist Felix Hoff-



'Che' Guevara, 1960.

mann discovers an improved way of synthesising acetylsalicylic acid, better

known as aspirin.

Oct 11, 1972

A race riot occurs on the US Navy aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk off the coast of Vietnam during Operation Linebacker.

Oct 12, 1810

First Oktoberfest: The Bavarian royalty invites the citizens of Munich to join the celebration of the marriage of Crown Prince Ludwig of Bavaria to Princess Therese von Sachsen-Hildburghausen.

Source: *Wikipedia*

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Prawns & Squids, salad buffet and veggies, Choice of potatoes, cold and hot sauces, Bread, Buns & garlic bread. We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 395 baht P.P. Kids under 12 years old: 195 baht P.P. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/shakersphuket Oliver, Shakers restaurant 98/18 Vises Road, Rawai 83130, 081 891 4381

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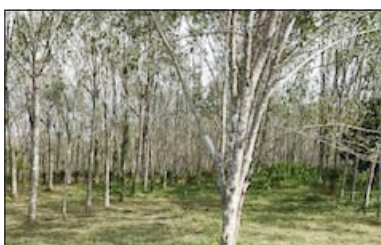
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Europe's players celebrate. Photo: AFP

Europe regain Ryder Cup

GOLF

EUROPE REGAINED THE Ryder Cup from a battling United States last Sunday (Oct 1), wrapping up a 16.5-11.5 victory despite a belated American singles charge.

The USA remain without a win on European soil since 1993 while neither team have lifted the trophy away from home in 11 years.

With Europe needing half a point to get over the line, Tommy Fleetwood struck his drive into the heart of the green and calmly stroked in his eagle putt to beat Rickie Fowler and ensure Europe a seventh consecutive home victory.

"Proud of everybody that's been involved this week and just proud that I'm one of the people that gets to play a role in what we came here to do,"

said the Englishman.

US captain Zach Johnson took responsibility for the loss.

"The defeat is on me, I made some poor decisions and I will reflect. Those 12 guys played so hard and fought for our country," he said.

Rory McIlroy and Viktor Hovland led the way with early victories in the Rome sunshine and Jon Rahm also snatched half a point from Scottie Scheffler on the 18th green.

Luke Donald's Europe started the final day four points from lifting the trophy they lost in a record-breaking 19-9 thrashing at Whistling Straits two years ago.

"It was stressful as the US put up a fight today so hats off to them. But I am so proud of my 12 guys. We formed a bond from day one and they gave me everything," said Donald.

AFP

Qualification still up for grabs

RUGBY

AFP

South Africa all but sealed a spot in the World Cup quarter-finals with a 49-18 victory over Tonga in Marseille last Sunday (Oct 1), although there is a slim mathematical chance they still might not even make the knock-out phases.

The Springboks ran in seven tries to Tonga's three to nab a crucial bonus point to leave them atop Pool B on 15 points.

The two teams who will advance to the quarter-finals will be decided when the world's number one ranked team Ireland – who beat the Boks last week – take on Scotland, ranked fifth, in Paris tomorrow (Oct 7).

A win for Ireland would see them finish in top spot and South Africa as runners-up.

However, should Scotland beat Ireland by a margin of 21 points or more, with both teams scoring four tries to earn an attacking bonus point, that would mean all three teams would finish pool play on 15 points.

That permutation would see the Scots topping the group on points difference ahead of Ireland, in second spot thanks to their better head-to-head record against the Boks, in third.

"The reality is that where we are currently, I think between ourselves, Ireland and Scotland everybody can still miss out on the quarter-final," said Boks coach Jacques Nienaber.



South Africa's flanker Marco van Staden scores in the win against Tonga. Photo: AFP

"We'll have to wait. The pool will only be decided on Saturday."

Meanwhile, Australia coach Eddie Jones said he was preparing his team for the quarter-finals following their 34-14 victory over Portugal last Saturday (Sept 30) that kept their faint hopes of progress alive.

The Wallabies ran in five tries – three when Portugal had a man in the sin-bin – on their way to only their second victory of this tournament in France.

Defeats to Fiji and Wales – the latter by a record score – has left them knowing that progress is out of their hands.

If Fiji take any points against Portugal on Sunday, Australia will be out.

"We're still alive. That was the aim of the day," said Jones.

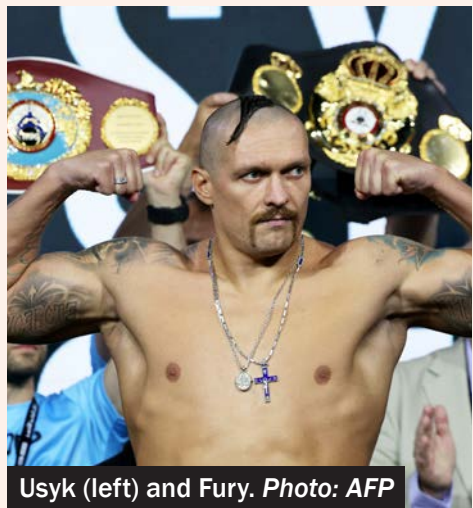
"We're anticipating we'll be in the quarter-finals. We'll see on Sunday night. Portugal played with plenty of spirit tonight so you never know."

Fiji were below par but came from behind to beat Georgia 17-12 last Saturday (Sept 30).

In last Saturday's late game, Scotland were rampant in a hopelessly one-sided 84-0 bonus-point win against Romania to set up the Pool B showdown against Ireland tomorrow.

Argentina set up a winner-takes-all match against Japan tomorrow for a place in the quarter-finals with a 59-5 defeat of Chile.

The winners of the Pumas' match with Japan are likely to face Wales in the last eight.



Usyk (left) and Fury. Photo: AFP



Fury to face Usyk in undisputed heavyweight title showdown

BOXING

TYSON FURY WILL take on Oleksandr Usyk in a historic undisputed heavyweight showdown in Saudi Arabia, promoters announced last Friday (Sept 29).

The date of the contest, which will take place in Riyadh, has not yet been announced, though reports suggest Dec 23 is the target date.

Ukraine's Usyk holds the WBA, WBO and IBF heavyweight belts, while Britain's

Fury is the reigning WBC heavyweight champion.

The winner of the bout will become the first undisputed heavyweight champion of the four-belt era.

"This is the biggest fight that could possibly be made in our sport," said Fury's promoter Frank Warren.

"The heavyweights always spark the imagination of the fans, and I have no doubt this will be the biggest boxing event of the century."

Lennox Lewis is the last recognised undisputed champion in the division 23 years ago.

Neither fighter has been beaten in their professional careers. Fury has won 33 fights with one draw since turning professional in 2008 and Usyk has won all 21 of his bouts.

Fury, 35, is due to fight former UFC world heavyweight champion Francis Ngannou on Oct 28 in Riyadh, when his WBC title will not be on the line.

"I do what I say. I say what I do. Undisputed. This is the Gypsy King era," Fury posted on Instagram. "You can't rabbit run anymore Usyk." AFP

Vagabonds in bruising Bangkok showdown

RUGBY

FOLLOWING RELATIVE SUCCESS AT the Southern Sevens in Phang Nga recently, Phuket Vagabonds were humbled with hard-learned lessons meted out by a clinical Bangkok Bangers team and a 33-point loss without reply on Sept 16.

A hardy group of Vagabonds made their way to Bangkok for a rare 15-a-side encounter against Southeast Asia rugby heavyweights, the Bangkok Bangers, and it didn't take long for the home side to stamp their superior awareness and cohesion on the game, successfully pinning the tenacious, but shell-shocked Vagabonds in their red zone for much of the first half.

Whilst the Vagabonds went toe-to-toe in the physicality stakes, they often found themselves on the wrong side of the offside line and subsequently reeling back from the referee's whistle.

Despite some committed defense, space soon began to appear from the weight of possession and the points began to mount, with the Bangers running in four first half tries as the visitors struggled to gain possession and territory.

The second half saw improvement from the Vagabonds, stringing together multiple phases and attacking the Bangers try line more frequently. However, despite a clear line break from loose forward Ben Williams they were unable to convert the pressure into points.

Again, the Banger's big-game, experienced forwards were able to turn over the ball at the breakdown far too often with the Vagabonds lacking urgency in securing their own rucks. Their continued committed defense, however,



Photo: Anthony Van Sleeuwen

limited the opposition to just one try in the second half from a quick penalty tap.

Despite the mounting scoreline, the Vagabonds were commendable in their unyielding efforts and never dropped their heads or capitulated, playing to the final whistle. There were lessons well learned from technical penalties and the lift in quality opposition. Whilst it is cliché to say, the boys will be better for the hit out!

The Phuket Vagabonds would like to extend a very special thanks to the Lanna Lions and Pattaya Panthers who both committed additional team members to ensure the Vagabonds could travel with a competitive squad. Their commitment could not be faulted and their attendance was most appreciated.

An additional thank you goes out to the Bangkok Bangers for providing the opportunity and we look forward to a return match in Phuket in the coming months.

For Phuket's rugby enthusiasts, the Phuket Vagabonds train Wednesday nights and Saturday mornings at the Alan Cooke Ground in Thalang, with age groups ranging from under 12s to opens and academy classes for younger age groups.

For more information please visit www.phuketvagabonds.com. Anthony Van Sleeuwen

Man City shocked by Wolves

FOOTBALL

AFP

Manchester City's perfect start to the Premier League season came undone in a shock 2-1 loss to Wolves last Saturday (Sept 30).

City had won the opening six games of their title defence as they aim to become the first side to ever claim four consecutive English top-flight titles.

By contrast, Wolves had taken just four points from their first six games, but stunned the champions at Molineux.

Ruben Dias' own goal put the home side in front only for City to respond through Julian Alvarez.

Wolves, though, were a constant threat on the counter-attack and got their reward when Hwang Hee-chan swept home 25 minutes from time.

Meanwhile, Liverpool missed the chance to go top as they were reduced to nine men in a hugely controversial 2-1 defeat at Tottenham.

Curtis Jones was shown a contentious straight red card in the 26th minute before Son Heung-min put Spurs in front.

Liverpool's Luis Diaz then had a goal wrongly disallowed by VAR. The refereeing body PGMOL issued a statement after the game conceding the goal should have stood, attributing the decision to "a significant human error."

Liverpool's 10 men hit back when Cody Gakpo levelled in first-half stoppage time before they were reduced to nine men as Diogo Jota was shown two



Manchester City's Erling Haaland (centre) challenges Wolves' goalkeeper Jose Sa. Photo: AFP

quickfire yellow cards.

Yet the visitors held out until the 96th minute when Joel Matip turned Pedro Porro's cross into his own net.

Tottenham moved above Liverpool into second, one point behind City, as they remain unbeaten in the Premier League under Ange Postecoglou.

Arsenal moved up to third as Mikel Arteta's men eased to a 4-0 victory at Bournemouth although Manchester United slumped to another damaging defeat as Crystal Palace won 1-0 at Old Trafford.

United are now off to their worst ever Premier League start to pile more pressure on Erik ten Hag. The defeat sees United slip to 10th in the table.

Elsewhere, Ollie Watkins bagged a hat-trick as Aston Villa thrashed Brighton

6-1. In doing so, Watkins became the first Villa player in 47 years to score two hat-tricks in one season.

The win edges Villa ahead of the Seagulls into fifth on goal difference.

Luton secured their first ever Premier League win with a 2-1 victory at Everton, a result that sees the Hatters climb out of the relegation zone.

Sheffield United remain bottom after the Blades were beaten 2-0 at West Ham while Nottingham Forest and Brentford drew 1-1.

Beleaguered Chelsea secured a much needed boost when they beat Fulham 2-0 on Monday, with goals from Armando Broja and Mykhailo Mudryk, his first for the club since his £62 million (£2.7 billion) transfer in January.



Issara Sritaro. Photo: Bangkok Post

War Elephants' Asian Games run ends at last 16 stage

ASIAN GAMES

Seyedhossein Hosseini.

THAILAND'S RUN IN THE men's football competition of the Hangzhou Asian Games ended on Sept 27 with a 2-0 defeat at the hands of Iran.

It was always going to be tall order for the Thais against Iran, one of the title favourites in the tournament, which is mainly restricted to players aged under 23 years.

A costly error by goalkeeper Nopphon Lakhonphon in the 15th minute gave the Iranians their first goal. Nopphon found striker Amirarsalan Motahhari with a clearance and the ball bounced back into the net.

The Thais went on the attack after conceding the goal and saw Purachet Thodsanit shoot ball over the bar.

As the two sides traded attacks, Kittisak Phutchan was denied by Iran goalkeeper

However, Thai defender Nopphon conceded a penalty in the 81st minute, which was converted by Yasin Salmani to seal the win.

"It was the goalkeeping error that took the match away from us. Such things happen in football, but it was an avoidable mistake," said Thailand U23 team coach Issara Sritaro.

"We must admit that we weren't ready for an event of this magnitude and most importantly the team lacked balance.

"We need to have a frank talk about how we are going to prepare ourselves for the future assignments.

"As far as I am concerned, I don't blame the players. There is no need to feel sorry about anything because everyone tried his best."

Bangkok Post

Thai athletes in takraw, golf, sailing among medalists at Asian Games

ASIAN GAMES

THAILAND CONTINUED THEIR dominance in sepak takraw at the Asian Games last Friday (Sept 29), making a clean sweep of gold medals in the men's and women's team regu events.

The Thai men comfortably defeated Southeast Asian rivals Malaysia 2-0 in the final.

Thailand have now won seven successive gold medals in the men's team regu competition since 1998, while Malaysia have been crowned champions only once, at the inaugural tournament in 1990.

Earlier, the Thai women defeated South Korea 2-0, their fourth consecutive gold medal and sixth overall in the women's team regu event.

On Sunday (Oct 1) Arphichaya Yubol won gold in the women's individual golf. Her four-under round also sealed gold for the Thai women's team on a 34-under 542 aggregate, six clear of South Korea.

The men's team took the silver medal after finishing on 51-under 813.

Thailand claimed two gold medals in sailing as 16-year-old Weka Bhanubandh won the boy's dinghy ILCA4 event and Noppasorn Khunboonjan, 17, triumphed in the girl's dinghy ILCA4 event.

Elsewhere, windsurfers Natthaphong Phonoppharat and Siripon Kaewduangngam added two silver medals after finishing second in the men's and women's RS:X events respectively.

Teenage sprinter Puripol Boonson captured the silver medal at the men's 100 metres in athletics, while Komet Sukprasert claimed



Thailand in action against South Korea during the women's sepak takraw team regu final. Photo: AFP

silver in cycling BMX racing.

The Thai women's badminton team won bronze after losing to eventual champions South Korea 3-1 in the semi-final, while the Thai men's tennis doubles team also secured a bronze medal.

In boxing, Thailand's Chuthamat Raksat won a bronze medal in the women's 50kg, which also earned her a ticket to the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Thai weightlifter Thanyathon Sukcharoen won bronze in the women's 49kg class, lifting 90kg in snatch and 109kg in clean and jerk for a total of 199kg, while shooters Isarapa Imprasertsuk, Sutiya Jiewchaloemmit and Nutchaya Sutarporn finished third in the women's skeet team to win bronze.

In eSports, Thailand beat Vietnam 2-0 in 'Dream Three Kingdoms 2' to win bronze, before Teedech 'TD Keane' Songsaisakul beat compatriot Varanan 'JUBJUB' Phatanasak in the final of EA Sports FC Online to win gold for Thailand. Bangkok Post

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Sport



Asian Games medals for Thais > p15

RETURN OF THE SPARTANS

FITNESS

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The hugely popular Spartan Race series is returning to Phuket shores bigger and better than ever before, organisers confirmed last Friday (Sept 29).

Spartan Race Thailand is partnering with Blue Tree Phuket and RUNRIO to host the 'Phuket Spartan Trifecta & APAC Championship Weekend 2023' on Nov 25-26, when Spartans who thrive on challenges will be able to push themselves and earn their medals with pride.

The announcement was made at an official press conference at Central Festival in Kathu, where organisers said they anticipate over 10,000 athletes and followers from over 30 countries will attend the event next month, which is estimated to generate in excess of B300 million for the local economy.

Blue Tree Phuket and nearby areas in Cherno Talay will host the



Photo: Phuket Info Center

two-day event which will incorporate five separate competition categories: the 21-kilometre Beast, including 30 obstacles; the 10km Super, including 25 obstacles; the 5km Sprint, including 20 obstacles; the 3.2km Spartan Kids; and the Hurricane Heat team competition.

Founded in 2007, Spartan Race is a series of obstacle races of varying

distance and difficulty ranging from 4.8km to marathon distances, with obstacles such as off-road running, mud wading, zip-lining, net climbing and wall climbing. It is said to be the world's largest obstacle and endurance race and events are held regularly in cities worldwide.

This year's event in Phuket follows on from the inaugural event

staged at the same venue last year, which proved a great success. However, this year's edition will see almost double the number of participants and observers, with the former contending with an expanded and more difficult course, organisers said.

"As the main sponsor of this event Blue Tree Phuket is 100% ready and cannot wait to welcome competition athletes and followers," Johan Wallen, General Manager of Blue Tree Phuket said at Friday's press conference.

TCEB Deputy Director Phuriphan Bunnag said the event will help to reinforce Thailand's position as a leader in hosting mega-events and renowned world festivals.

"Spartan is a hugely popular worldwide event, licensed from the United States with a huge fanbase across the world," said Mr Phuriphan.

"We believe that this competition is a fantastic opportunity that will elevate Phuket towards its goal of becoming a world-class sports city through events that can create a sustainable economic, social and

environmental legacy."

Bunperm Inthanapasath, Executive Director of Spartan Race Thailand and Vietnam and an executive of the RUNRIO group of companies, also had praise for Phuket as the host city, citing the diverse range of natural elements such as sea, mountains, forests and roads that are ideal for the challenges the event incorporates.

"RUNRIO have seen an opportunity in Phuket to build on last year's event and create even greater value," he said. "The Spartan Race World Series is a global phenomenon with over 1.5 million participants and Phuket is an important part of the series," he added.

The event is being organised by Spartan Race Thailand in collaboration with Blue Tree Phuket, Run Rio Thailand, the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) and the Sports Authority of Thailand (TAT). For more information on the event and cost of entry, visit the Spartan Race Thailand website or Facebook page.



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