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TOO MUCH

SAY NO TO NEBU HOTEL IN PASAK

Photo: Natnaree Likidwatanasakun

NEBU RESORT IN CHERNG TALAY FACES STIFF RESISTANCE

Natnaree Likidwatanasakun
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Local residents in the Pasak Soi 6 area of Cherg Talay have ramped up efforts to prevent a seven-storey hotel, the 'Nebu Resort Bangtao', from being built in the residential neighbourhood, a development highly criticised for bringing tourist traffic to small streets far too small to accommodate it, and threatening the quiet life in the area.

Local residents recently staged a protest at the offices of the Cherg Talay Tambon Administration Organisation (OrBorTor), which is responsible for allowing the project to continue.

Phuket MP Thitikan Thitipruethikul has even brought the issue to the attention of officials in Bangkok and submitted a formal complaint letter to Parliament.

The residents' plight has also been picked up by national Thai news platforms.

Steve Dixon, a prominent voice expressing concerns about the project, last week led a group of local residents in opposing the construction following the approval of the hotel's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report.

Natthakrit Phonphet, Deputy Director of the Phuket office of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE Phuket), confirmed to *The Phuket News* that the Nebu project has passed its EIA, which has been handed over to Cherg Talay OrBorTor, despite local residents living in the immediate area strongly protesting against the construction.

"The developer was confident that construction of the project would soon begin and receive

approval from the OrBorTor," Mr Dixon said.

However, Mr Dixon said that when he called Cherg Talay OrBorTor, he was told that the construction was still on hold and no permission had been granted to Nebu for construction yet. Regardless, preparations at the site for construction to begin have been gaining momentum in the past few weeks.

Vague responses and blank denials from Cherg Talay OrBorTor about the Nebu project are not unusual, as already experienced by *The Phuket News* when questioning local officials about the project.

The project was initially approved during the time that MaAnn Samran was Chief of Cherg Talay OrBorTor. MaAnn last year was sentenced to two

year's jail without the option of parole on corruption charges for a different project he approved to be built in the Cherg Talay area.

At last report, MaAnn, along with three other officials, stood accused by the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) of providing illegal and forged documents for the construction of yet another resort project in the Bang Tao area.

Regardless, since Manoch Panchalad has taken up the position as Chief of Cherg Talay OrBorTor, the behaviour of local officials regarding the Nebu project continues.

When Mr Dixon asked Cherg Talay OrBorTor about the approval status of the Nebu resort, he was told that the OrBorTor had not yet granted permission for the project, as it is "currently awaiting further...

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EV buses arrive to replace iconic 'Pho Thong'



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Young Loic wins 'bronze' global art award



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War Elephants look to defend ASEAN title



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News



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Islamic Ethics Training Center officially opens

H.E. WAN MUHAMMAD Noor Matha, member of parliament and speaker of the House of Representatives, was in Phuket last Saturday (Nov 30) to oversee the official opening of the Phuket Islamic Ethics Training Center building in Thalang by the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organization (PPAO).

Mr Wan presided over the opening ceremony and was joined by: Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat; PPAO President Rewat Areerob; Pol Lt Col Komon Dumlak, President of the Phuket Islamic Committee; as well along with executive members of the PPAO Council, selected heads of government agencies, PPAO representatives, imams, mosque committee members and members of the public.

Mr Rewat explained how a budget had been allocated back in 2019 to help build the facility which will provide local and national Islamic religious learnings whilst also organising meetings, training, seminars and various activities for the public, including children.

Mr Rewat further explained that the religious



Photo: PR Phuket

teachings will cover the creation and cultivation of Thai consciousness, the preservation of traditions, good history, morality and ethics, particularly for children, which will help contribute to a sustainable development of quality of life.

The Phuket Islamic Ethics Training Center is a three-storey reinforced concrete building with an architectural style dome roof near to the Phuket Central Mosque, Mr Rewat confirmed.

The facility has a total usable area of 2,940 square meters, divided into three floors: the 1st floor consists of a parking lot, a restaurant and a dining hall; the 2nd floor is a large meeting room with 500 seats and an audiovisual control room; and the 3rd floor is a multipurpose hall, including a small meeting room with 60 seats, a prayer room, a reception room and an audiovisual control room.

The Phuket News

Protest over Nebu hotel presented to Parliament

Continued from page 1

...extensions or adjustments”.

“If no objections are raised within 45 days, permission may be granted,” Mr Dixon was told, despite the obvious and well supported opposition to the project by local residents.

MP Thitikan explained in his report to Parliament, that despite concerns raised about the impact the resort, comprising 89 rooms, would have on the local community and without a construction permit or clear approval from the Or-BorTor, the project was still proceeding.

Mr Thitikan emphasised the project faces significant infrastructure challenges.

“The entrance and exit roads are only three to four metres wide, making them unsuitable for construction vehicles. Also, the area is prone to flooding during heavy rains, worsening accessibility issues,” he said.

“From my field visit, I saw the road is too narrow. If a hotel is built, cars will not be able to pass each



Phuket MP Thitikan Thitipruethikul presents the residents' plight to Parliament. Photo: Thitikan Thitipruethikul

other. If construction is carried out, there will be cement mixer trucks entering and exiting all the time. There will be various construction worker camps, which will affect the people in the area for quite a long time and will cause a loss of privacy. The residential area is not suitable for building any hotels,” MP Thitikan noted.

“There is also a rooftop bar planned for the top of the hotel, which is in a residential area. Building a hotel in this area may cause more problems,” MP Thitikan said.

“Before the project began, the EIA was conducted in 2019,” he pointed out. “Therefore, we would like to ask the government agencies to conduct a new EIA because the environment has changed significantly.”

UNACCEPTABLE

Tim Tkachuk, one of the local residents, urged Cherng Talay OrBorTor to carefully consider the construction project and conduct a genuine EIA to ask the actual opinions of the people in the area.

“Local residents have raised objections due to

unclear project details, potential environmental and traffic impacts and a lack of proper consultation during the EIA process,” Mr Tkachuk said.

“What was originally proposed was a seven-story, 112-room hotel, which then changed to an 89-unit mixed-use building, but residents remain uninformed about progress,” he added.

“Moreover, the MNRE claimed that the local residents agreed with the project. However, this assertion has been repeatedly questioned and we have repeatedly requested evidence to support their claim, but it was never provided,” he said.

Mr Tkachuk also pointed out that the OrBorTor plans to construct a road over the grassy area at the end of Soi 8, extending it to connect with Soi 4.

“The plan involves clearing the grass to allow more cars to pass through and this will only lead to increased traffic in the area,” he said.

Officials target food waste management

AUTHORITIES HAVE confirmed the introduction of a new food waste management program which they say targets a daily reduction of 15 tonnes of waste as part of its effort to become a low-carbon destination.

The initiative is part of the island’s goal of becoming a low-carbon destination, says Janthima Duangsai, director of the Environmental and Pollution Control Office of the Pollution Control Department, who explained last Saturday (Nov 30) that approximately 1,100 tonnes of waste is generated daily in the province.

The pilot project will run until the end of April 2025, focusing on the three districts of Muang, Kathu and Thalang and is

funded by the Environmental Fund under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

Ms Janthima explained the project will see a food waste data survey conducted, as well as the development of a platform for managing food waste and surplus food, promotion of food distribution systems, repurposing of food waste and the provision of materials and equipment to enhance waste management efficiency.

She further explained how of the daily waste collected for disposal in Phuket 50% comprises food waste; due to its high moisture content, food waste reduces the efficiency of the Phuket waste incinerator, which has a capacity of 700 tonnes per day.

Fresh markets have been cited as main source of food waste, followed by hotels, large retail stores, hospitals, restaurants, education outlets, religious institutions, small retail stores and households.

“We need cooperation from all sectors to reduce food waste as we strive to transform Phuket into a low-carbon, environmentally friendly city,” Ms Janthima said.

Her comments came after Minister of Tourism and Sports Sorawong Thienthong visited Phuket on Nov 24 to officially launch the ‘Phuket Old Town Carbon Neutrality 2030’ project, aiming to position the historic area as an international model for sustainable tourism.

Approximately nine million people visited

Phuket in the period between January and September this year, with the numbers expected to increase heavily during the impending high season, which will also, naturally, create more waste and a further burden on waste management services.

The prepare for this, Phuket City Municipality is expediting landfill management at the Phuket Provincial Waste Disposal Center at Saphan Hin in anticipation of the expected surge in waste volumes during the high season.

The announcement of the food waste management initiative came after it was confirmed that the island’s only public incinerator will shut down for one month for intensive overhaul maintenance.

The 30-day closure,



Photo: Phuket City Municipality

from Dec 20 through to Jan 20 next year, will mean at least 42,000 tonnes of trash will be directed to recently opened sites at the Saphan Hin landfill while the incinerator is offline.

Phuket Vice Governor Thiraphong Chuaychu explained that the Ministry of Interior has approved funding for a second incinerator, while a location for a third incinerator is being finalised.

“Increasing the number

of incinerators will significantly improve the province’s capacity to manage daily waste,” he stated, while also highlighting plans to convert some food waste into fertiliser and recycle used oil for biofuel.

“We call on all sectors to work together to reduce the waste entering incinerators. This will enhance Phuket’s image as a sustainable province,” he said. *The Phuket News*

PPAO launches EV buses

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) officially launched a trial of electric (EV) buses on Monday (Dec 2), marking a significant step toward modernising the island's public transportation system.

The ceremony, held at the old provincial hall on Narisorn Rd in Phuket Town, which now serves as the main offices of the PPAO, was presided over by Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat, alongside PPAO President Rewat Areerob, local government officials and community leaders.

Governor Sophon expressed gratitude to the PPAO for spearheading the EV bus initiative, describing it as a transformative move for Phuket's public transportation.

"This project demonstrates the PPAO's dedication to promoting clean technology and sustainable development," he said. "It supports our vision of a Smart City, enhances tourism, and positively impacts Phuket's image on the global stage."

The EV bus initiative aims to address key urban challenges, including traffic congestion and air pollution, while enhancing



Photo: PPAO

public transportation services for residents, students, elderly individuals, disabled passengers, and tourists, Governor Sophon said.

"By adopting environmentally friendly electric vehicles, the project aligns with global trends in sustainable urban mobility and reflects Phuket's commitment to becoming a greener and more tourist-friendly destination," he added.

PPAO President Mr Rewat emphasised the critical role of tourism in Phuket's economy, highlighting the need for a public transportation system to support the island's growth.

"Phuket is a globally renowned tourist city and a vital contributor to Thailand's economy. With its rapid growth, traffic congestion has become a pressing issue," Mr Rewat said.

"The EV bus project represents a forward-thinking solution, providing modern, efficient and safe transportation while reducing environmental impact. It's a step toward enhancing Phuket's appeal as a Smart City," he added.

As part of the trial, three air-conditioned electric buses with 21 seats each operated along the Saphan Hin – Central Phuket route, which is slated to become 'Line 1' of the service.

Residents, students, the elderly and disabled individuals were invited to experience the new service firsthand before its official launch. All the new EV buses have wheelchair access.

The PPAO has secured in total 24 new EV buses to replace the iconic pink buses, known locally as 'Pho Thong'.

The buses will serve three routes. While 'Line 1' will

operated to and from Saphan Hin and the Central Phuket shopping mall, 'Line 2' will operate between Chalong Pier and the main SuperCheap branch in Ratsada. 'Line 3' will operate between Rassada Pier and the Andamanda Water Park in Kathu.

"All three routes have been adjusted to be more accessible to tourist attractions, piers, schools, communities, shopping areas, and the Old Town area to meet the needs of all groups of users, including Phuket residents and tourists, Thais and foreigners," Mr Rewat said.

The air-conditioned electric buses promise comfort, speed and cost efficiency, and aim to reduce the number of private cars on the road, alleviate traffic problems and improve Phuket's overall transportation infrastructure," Mr Rewat added.

The fare on the new VE buses is B15 per person, for both Thai and foreigners.

Students, the elderly, disabled persons and monks all ride for free. "Registration for students, the elderly, the disabled and monks will open soon," the PPAO said in its announcement.

While no budget figures for the new buses were announced at the 'test run' on Monday, the

PPAO confirmed in August last year that B156 million had been allocated from its 2023 budget to buy 24 air-conditioned electric vehicle ("EV") buses to serve public routes.

CONNECTIONS

Longstanding proponent of EV buses in Phuket, 'Phuket Smart Bus', continues to enjoy growing popularity with its latest service, operating between the old bus station 'Phuket Bus Terminal 1', on Phang Nga Rd in Phuket Town, and Patong.

The operator, Phuket City Development Co Ltd (PKCD), has now launched day-pass tickets for students and regular passengers on both the Phuket Town – Patong route (Route 2) and the original Phuket Airport – Rawai route (Route 1), along the west coast, through Patong.

Route 1 stops at Phuket Airport, Cherng Talay, Surin Beach, Kamala, Patong, Karon, Kata, Promthep Cape and Rawai Beach.

Route 2 stops at Phuket Bus Terminal 1, Bangkok Hospital Phuket, Chillva Market, Lotus's Samkong (on the bypass road), Andamanda Phuket Waterpark, Kathu Fresh Market, Makro Patong, Malin Plaza and Patong Beach.

Governor proposes monorail to quell island's traffic woes

GOVERNOR SOPHON Suwannarat has proposed the idea of constructing a monorail in an effort to combat the increasingly challenging traffic conditions being experienced across the island.

Governor Sophon was speaking after an official press conference last Friday (Nov 29) at Provincial Hall that was focused on promoting the image of tourism and associated policies in Phuket.

One notion the Governor had discussed with several private sector organisations was the idea of constructing a monorail to help alleviate traffic woes.

This would be instead of the previously proposed light rail system which, Governor Sophon explained, has been under consideration for a long time but is still unclear and yet to proceed.

A monorail system could be a much better solution and is something he plans to propose to Suriya Juangroongruangkit, Minister of Transport, he added.



Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat. Photo: Chutharat Plerin

"We want to solve traffic problems and we need to be more decisive," the Governor said. "We are discussing with the private sector and will revert to the Ministry of Transport in due course."

"There are also other matters such as introducing an AI system to control traffic lights, which is a priority for the Ministry of Transport. However, this is unlikely to happen immediately as it needs to be thoroughly studied first."

"The private sector can help with investment but the Transport Ministry needs to assess whether this is something they are prepared to embrace or not," he explained.

"Times change, as do demands and we need to be

flexible and explore all options," he said, while referencing the Ekkamai BTS skytrain station on the Sukhumvit line in Bangkok.

"We also need to determine why the light rail project has not proceeded, despite talks ongoing for a long time."

"I personally think that monorails are easier to build. They don't have to expropriate land and they are much more cost effective. There is an easier flow as there are no traffic lights and they would be preferable to the trams used in the light rail system which could cause further congestion on limited and narrow sections of road across the island," the Governor said.

Traffic has become a major issue island-wide, with heavy congestion and significant jams experienced on a daily basis, especially in the popular tourist areas such as Cherng Talay, Bang Tao, Patong and Karon, with heavy construction continuing plainly adding to traffic woes.

The Phuket News

Senate committee reviews efforts to fight corruption

THE SENATE COMMITTEE on Independent Organisations visited Phuket last week to review the province's anti-corruption initiatives and discuss strategies for sustainable development.

The meeting, held at Phuket Provincial Hall on Nov 26, was led by Pol Maj Gen Chatchawan Saengphet, Chairman of the Committee. Leading the Phuket representatives was Phuket Vice Governor Ronnarong Thippasiri.

Officials provided an overview of ongoing efforts to combat corruption and address risks in areas such as procurement and the management of natural resources, said an official report of the meeting.

Participants included representatives from government agencies, the private sector, civil society, and the media. Among them were the Phuket Provincial Public Sector Anti-Corruption



Photo: PR Phuket

Commission, Region 8 Public Sector Anti-Corruption Commission, and the Phuket Provincial Police, along with representatives from all 19 local administrative organisations in Phuket, as well as the Phuket Anti-Corruption Sufficiency Economy Club.

Mr Ronnarong outlined the unique challenges facing Phuket, a province with a population exceeding 1.25 million, including more than 800,000 tourists and unregistered residents. He emphasised that Phuket's economy relies heavily on tourism, which contributes 92.9% of its income, generating over B380 billion annually – ranking it second nationwide, outside Bangkok.

Phuket's development strategy is built on collaboration across all sectors, under the framework 'private sector leads, government sector supports, civil society sector fulfills', Mr Ronnarong said.

Pol Maj Gen Chatchawan praised Phuket's potential and its decentralized approach to governance, which fosters collaboration and citizen participation, the official report said.

He highlighted the importance of involving children and youth in anti-corruption efforts to promote long-term cultural change.

"Phuket is a model of readiness in the fight against corruption and misconduct."

"Its collaborative efforts show promise in sustaining transparency and enhancing confidence among visitors," he said without giving specific details. The Phuket News

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PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

www.foreca.com

FRI DECEMBER 6

High: +36°
Low: +29°
Wind 11 m/s

SAT DECEMBER 7

High: +36°
Low: +28°
Wind 11 m/s

SUN DECEMBER 8

High: +35°
Low: +28°
Wind 11 m/s

MON DECEMBER 9

High: +35°
Low: +27°
Wind 4 m/s

TUE DECEMBER 10

High: +35°
Low: +28°
Wind 4 m/s

WED DECEMBER 11

High: +37°
Low: +28°
Wind 4 m/s

THU DECEMBER 12

High: +36°
Low: +27°
Wind 4 m/s

'Red Hat' robber arrested after phone shop heist

AN ARMED ROBBERY at a mobile phone shop at Ao Makham last week ended in swift justice as police apprehended the suspect hours after the crime.

Police were called to the shop, PK Telecom near the oil depot on Sakdidet Rd, at about 12:50pm on Nov 27.

Officers arrived to find shop staffer 'Ms Kaew', 31, in a state of distress. Ms Kaew explained that a man, later identified as Ranchanthorn Ngamthonkit, 29, entered the shop brandishing a gun.

The suspect, wearing a gray hoodie, blue jeans, a red cap and red flip-flops, threatened her and demanded she open the safe. Fearing for her safety, Ms Kaew handed over B26,050 in cash.

The suspect then fled on a white-and-black Honda Click motorbike without a license plate. He was last seen heading along Sakdidet Rd.

Police reviewed CCTV footage and tracked down Ranchanthorn. At about 9:30pm,



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

police located and arrested Ranchanthorn at a Shabu restaurant near a Lotus's store in Wichit, where he worked as a chef.

During questioning, Ranchanthorn confessed to the robbery, citing financial difficulties and a need to pay off car installments as his motive.

A subsequent search of the suspect's residence in Soi Santisuk saw police recover the clothes worn during the robbery and the Smith & Wesson revolver used to commit the robbery.

Police took Ranchanon back to the mobile phone shop to reenact his crime as part of the investigation.

Police confirmed that Ranchanthorn remained in custody and was facing charges of armed robbery.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Australian Ambassador spotlights tourist safety

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Australian Ambassador to Thailand Dr Angela McDonald was in Phuket last week to meet with Phuket Vice Governor Ronnarong Thipsiri to discuss economic, political and safety issues, emphasizing the importance of strong ties between Australia and Phuket.

Amb McDonald discussed cooperation between Australian and local government roles, focusing on tourist safety and our people-to-people links between Thailand and Australia.

The meeting, held at the Phuket Provincial Governor's Reception Room on Nov 28, was hosted by Vice Governor Ronnarong, alongside key officials, including Phuket Provincial Police Commander Pol Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum and Sopon Thongsai, Chief of the Phuket Provincial Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Office (DDPM Phuket).

Amb McDonald expressed her gratitude to



Photo: PR Phuket

Phuket's authorities for their efforts in ensuring the safety and well-being of tourists, said an official report of the meeting.

Highlighting that over 600,000 Australian tourists visited Thailand this year, with many choosing Phuket as a destination, she praised the collaboration between local agencies and Australia.

"Phuket's proactive measures have greatly contributed to making our work easier. Thank you for prioritising the safety and experience of visitors," Amb McDonald said, noted the report.

Vice Governor Ronnarong underscored the province's dedication to maintaining safety and fostering a positive experience for all tourists. He noted that Australian

visitors rank among the top five international groups visiting Phuket and reaffirmed the province's commitment to safeguarding both residents and tourists, said the report.

Pol Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum highlighted the importance of following local traffic laws to ensure safety, especially for tourists renting vehicles. He emphasised the need for proper licensing, helmet use, adherence to speed limits and avoiding drinking and driving.

Turning to disaster preparedness, DDPM Phuket Chief Mr Sophon shared updates on Phuket's recent launch of a ship to deploy two tsunami warning buoys in the Andaman Sea and Indian Ocean to enhance regional disaster response capabilities.

Teen arrested with guns

WICHIT POLICE ARRESTED a teenager and seized two unregistered firearms following a disturbance and near altercation in Saphan Hin last Saturday night (Nov 30).

Police were called to the area at 10:20pm following reports of a group of teenagers causing trouble near a dormitory in Soi 4, Moo 1, Wichit.

Officers arrived to find a group of teenagers gathered around a Honda HR-V parked outside the dormitory.

When police identified themselves, the group fled. Officers pursued them, managing to apprehend one individual.

During the chase, another suspect abandoned two modified, unregistered firearms and ammunition near the car before escaping.



Photo: Wichit Police

The car's driver fled in a different direction.

The teen arrested was taken to Wichit Police Station and charged with "jointly possessing firearms and ammunition without permission" and "carrying firearms in a public area without justifiable reason".

The seized weapons and ammunition were collected as evidence.

Police are searching for the other two suspects with the intent of pressing charges.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Body of woman washes ashore

EARLY MORNING EXERCISERS at Saphan Hin Public Park were left stunned when they discovered the body of a woman washed ashore at the tip of Saphan Hin Cape last Friday (Nov 29).

Police were called to the scene at 6:30am. Officers arrived to find a small crowd of onlookers had gathered around the body.

The deceased, a woman believed to be about 40 years old, was of Thai or Asian appearance, police noted.

She was found wearing a blue floral dress and black pants. Her upper body was exposed, and police estimated she had been dead for less than 24 hours.

The body was discovered by a local resident exercising along the shore. According to the witness, the corpse appeared to have been carried ashore by the waves, becoming lodged against rocks in the shallow waters.

Fearing the strong tides could



Photo: Phuket City Police

carry the body back out to sea, the individual immediately called the police.

Officers have begun checking for reports of missing persons in the area as part of their investigation. The body has been transferred to a forensic doctor for an autopsy to determine the cause of death.

At this stage, police cannot confirm whether this was a case of foul play or an accident, officers noted.

Police are continuing their investigation into the woman's death. Eakkapop Thongtub

Racha reef revival underway

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR) has continued its annual campaign to help restore coral reefs at the tourist-popular Koh Racha Yai, south of Phuket, with more 3D-printed 'coral larvae islands' installed in the area last Saturday (Nov 30).

Together with the regular partner Siam Cement Group (SCG), the DMCR this year was supported by Thai fishing conglomerate Thai Union Group, along with the Earth Agenda Foundation and volunteer divers.

The launch event was attended by key stakeholders, including DMCR Director-General Pinsak Suraswadi, and executives from Thai Union Group and SCG.

Among those joining Mr Pinsak for the occasion were Chana Phumi, Assistant General Manager of Sustainability Management at SCG PCL; Thiraphong Chansiri, CEO of Thai Union PCL; and Dr Nantarika Chansue, President of the Earth Agenda Foundation.

Under the 'Rak Talay' project, the organisations delivered coral structures designed with 3D printing technology that mimics natural coral formations,



Photo: DMCR

providing an ideal habitat for coral larvae to settle and grow, Mr Pinsak explained.

Coral reefs in the area have faced significant deterioration due to natural disasters, annual coral bleaching events, and damage from human activities such as anchoring and trampling, he added.

"Without restoration efforts, these impacts threaten marine biodiversity and the long-term sustainability of diving tourism, which is vital to the region's economy," Mr Pinsak noted.

The 3D-printed coral bases are a sustainable solution, blending seamlessly with the underwater environment and creating an immediate habitat for marine life. The structures also facilitate the attachment of coral larvae, accelerating natural reef recovery

in areas where sandy seabeds have replaced coral bases, he said.

This project builds on earlier efforts initiated in 2020, during which SCG introduced 3D-printed coral structures to Koh Racha Yai. The technology, which uses environmentally friendly mortar, is designed to replicate the natural appearance of coral and enhance the underwater scenery without disrupting the marine environment, explained an official report of the event.

Thai Union Group, through its effort to promote sustainable seafood practices, has supported the project for two consecutive years. The initiative aligns with the company's commitment to preserving marine biodiversity and fostering sustainable development, the report continued.

"This collaboration not only restores coral reefs but also strengthens biodiversity, balances the marine ecosystem, and fosters cooperation among government agencies, private organisations, and educational institutions," said Adam Brennan, Group Director of Sustainable Development at Thai Union Group.

MAYA MOORINGS

The Royal Thai Navy Third Area Command, based at Cape Panwa, has joined efforts to further protect Maya Bay by installing more mooring buoys in the area.

Vice Admiral Suwat Donsakul, Commander of the Third Naval Area Command and Director of the Thai Maritime Enforcement Command Center (Thai-MECC) Region 3 branch, led an event on Nov 25 that saw the installation of mooring buoys and 'fish egg buoys', and the collection of underwater garbage at the world-famous bay.

The environmental conservation initiative is part of the 'Unity in Loyalty to Protect the Clean Thai Sea' project, organised in honor of His Majesty the King's 6th cycle birthday anniversary celebrated on July 28, noted an official report of the event.

The project was a collaborative effort by the Khao Yai Na-

tional Park Protection Foundation, the Plant Genetic Conservation Foundation under Royal Initiative, the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, and the Royal Thai Navy, the report noted.

The activity took place aboard the offshore patrol vessel 'Tor 111' and was attended by Gen Surayud Chulanont, President of the Privy Council and Chairman of the Khao Yai National Park Protection Foundation, who was the guest of honour and presided over the ceremony.

The initiative aims to protect marine ecosystems around Maya Bay, a world-renowned tourist destination. The laying mooring buoys is to prevent anchor damage to coral reefs by providing designated anchorage points for boats, while the installation of 'fish egg buoys' is to support the local marine ecosystem and breeding grounds of marine life to promote biodiversity. The garbage collection removed debris from the seabed to maintain the underwater environment.

"This project reflects our commitment to protecting the sea, preserving its natural beauty, and ensuring its sustainability for future generations," V/Adm Suwat said.

Suan Luang to get B2.1mn community medical centre

PHUKET TOWN MAYOR SAROJ Angkanaphilas has announced that work is underway to build a 'Phuket Care Center' at Chalermprakiat Rama IX Park (Suan Luang) to provide healthcare for the elderly, bedridden patients and those seeking alternative medical treatments.

Mayor Saroj announced the project, to cost B2.126 million, on Nov 27.

The aim is to provide comprehensive, quality medical services in a single location, Mayor Saroj said.

"Preliminary groundwork, including area adjustments and procurement, are already underway. Actual construction of the facility is scheduled to begin in early 2025 and is expected to be completed by the end of next year," he said.

Mayor Saroj explained that the centre will be divided into three main sections, each addressing specific health care needs:

1. Elderly Care and Rehabilitation:
 - Dedicated to bedridden patients and those recovering from illness.
 - Equipped with 20-50 beds to support elderly residents from the Tambon Talat Nuea and Tambon Talat Yai areas.
2. Dialysis Center:
 - Aimed at addressing the growing number of kidney disease patients.
 - Designed to reduce the travel burden for patients who currently need to visit hospitals for treatment.



Photo: Phuket City Municipality

3. Alternative and Traditional Medicine Center:

- Focused on physical therapy and traditional Thai medicine.
- Provides rehabilitation and wellness services aligned with culturally significant treatment practices.

The 'Phuket Care Center' represents a significant step forward in enhancing the quality of life for all residents, Mayor Saroj said.

"Our goal is to ensure that everyone in Phuket City Municipality has access to quality, efficient, and standardised medical services. This facility is a testament to our commitment to equitable health care and improving the lives of people of all ages," he said.

The centralised facility will allow residents to access a wide range of health services conveniently in one location, aligning with the municipality's broader mission to promote well-being and inclusivity, he added. *The Phuket News*



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THAI seeks boost by capital injection

THE MINISTRY OF Finance plans to seek Cabinet approval for a capital injection for Thai Airways International.

Following the capital injection, the ministry's shareholding in the airline will not exceed 50%, ensuring the company does not revert to a state enterprise, as it was in the past, said Tibordee Wattanakul, Director-General of the State Enterprise Policy Office (Sepa).

The capital injection is part of the airline's plan to allow existing shareholders to subscribe to new shares, and for creditors including the ministry to convert debt to equity, as part of its four-year capital restructuring exercise.

The ministry currently holds 47.9% of the shares in the national carrier.

After converting debt to equity and injecting new capital, the ministry, Vayupak Fund and Government Savings Bank (GSB) would collectively hold around 40% of THAI shares.

The reduced shareholding reflects expectations that THAI will be successful in



Photo: Paul Schmid / Wikimedia

raising up to B44 billion, if all new shares on offer to existing shareholders are taken up.

The Vayupak Fund's capital injection will be determined by the state-owned asset management company, while the bank's participation depends on its board, Mr Tibordee said.

He said the capital injections would ensure the shareholding proportion does not exceed the threshold that would reclassify Thai Airways as a state enterprise, and likely would remain around 40%.

To qualify as a state enterprise, government shareholding must be at least 50%.

The airline expects to exit rehabilitation by February 2025 and resume trading on the Stock Exchange of Thailand by May.

Bangkok Post

Govt plans to host 'Grand' travel year

Bangkok Post

The government is gearing up for its 'Amazing Thailand Grand Tourism and Sports Year 2025', with events and special privileges planned to attract more visitors.

Under the initiative, the government aims to see more than 40 million foreign visitors arrive next year, generating B3.4 trillion in revenue, reports the *Bangkok Post*.

Transport Minister Suriya Jungrungreangkit, who also serves as chairman of the national tourism policy committee, said the government has assigned importance to the sector as it contributes significantly to economic growth by generating both income and employment.

The government has designated the year as 'Amazing Thailand Grand Tourism and Sports Year 2025' and laid on a series of special events to attract more tourists, he said before



Tourists visit Wat Arun Ratchawaram Ratchawaramahawihan. Photo: Bangkok Post

chairing a meeting of the committee on Nov 26.

After the meeting, Mr Suriya said that it had been agreed that five campaigns called Grand Festivity, Grand Moment, Grand Privilege, Grand Invitation and Grand Celebration would be launched to support the initiative.

The Tourism and Sports Ministry will be responsible for working out the details of the campaigns and submitting them to the cabinet for approval, said Mr Suriya, also a deputy prime minister.

The ministry will also unveil full details of Amazing Thailand Grand Tourism and Sports Year 2025 next month, including measures to support airlines, hotels, online travel agencies and visa privileges, Mr Suriya said.

A calendar featuring all the major tourism events and festivals will also be made available to enable tourists to plan their travel in Thailand in advance, the minister said.

Mr Suriya emphasised the need for relevant agencies to work together to

ensure foreign visitors' safety during their stay in Thailand and boost the country's positive image.

According to the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, the campaign will incorporate events such as the MotoGP races in February and March and the Songkran festival in April.

To achieve a target of B3.4trn in tourism revenue for 2025, Thailand is investing in infrastructure and improving visa processes, including a pan-Asean common visa policy, the ministry said.

According to the ministry, from Jan 1 to Nov 24, Thailand welcomed 31,313,787 foreign tourists spending approximately B1.46trn.

Chinese tourists made up the largest number of foreign arrivals at 6,096,010, followed by 4,443,173 tourists from Malaysia, 1,868,802 from India, 1,647,328 from South Korea and 1,455,398 from Russia.

Tourism talks aim to remove hurdles

THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM and Sports is planning a discussion with representatives of four groups – shopping malls, foreign ambassadors, online travel agents and hoteliers – about how to remove obstacles in the tourism sector.

As the government has declared 2025 the 'Grand Tourism and Sports Year', the ministry wants to enhance tourism performance, said deputy minister Jakkaphon Tangsutthitham.

The ministry will start by gathering information from key stakeholders to formulate short-, medium- and long-term plans to improve the industry, he added.

Mr Jakkaphon said one ministry policy is to revise the Hotel Act to enable unregistered accommodations to be registered, which would improve safety for tourists, promote fair competition among operators, and lift the overall quality of hospitality services.

Mr Jakkaphon also said the ministry is studying how to ease some fixed criteria and motivate more operators to register under the new regulations.

For mall operators, revised tax refund measures for shoppers could help lift tourism.

Ministry discussions with foreign ambassadors will focus on flight expansion, including coordination with airports on arranging slots for new flights.

Mr Jakkaphon said the ministry hopes the government will continue the visa-free scheme for eligible nations that is set to expire at the end of this year.



Tourists flock to the Uttamanusorn Bridge in Songkhla. Photo: Piyarach Chongcharoen / Bangkok Post

It also wants to emphasise development of man-made attractions as it attempts to make Thailand a global event hub, he added.

Thienprasit Chaiyapatranun, President of the Thai Hotels Association (THA), said safety standards would be elevated if unregistered accommodation operators can be encouraged to register, because they would have to submit daily booking records to the Interior Ministry, similar to licensed hotels.

Registration would also allow hotel operators to apply for sustainability certification, catering to rising demand for sustainable tourism, said Mr Thienprasit. He said the government should regulate online travel agents (OTAs), as some European countries have already eliminated price parity rules on these platforms.

These rules ban hotels from freely managing their own pricing strategies as owners are required to sign deals with OTAs to sell at the same or a higher rate, he explained. *Bangkok Post*

Anti-nominee battle plan drawn up

THE GOVERNMENT IS intensifying efforts to crack down on the use of Thai nominees by foreigners in five high-risk business sectors by 2026: tourism, real estate, logistics, warehousing and agricultural product trade.

Deputy Commerce Minister Napintorn Srisunpang said a subcommittee on nominee business prevention and suppression held a second meeting on Nov 27 with related agencies to discuss measures to investigate and pursue legal action against companies suspected of using Thai nominees.

The meeting approved plans for the short, medium and long term to be proposed to the Committee on Foreign Product and Business Compliance chaired by Commerce Minister Pichai Naripthaphan, aiming for approval on Dec 9.

The subcommittee has coordinated with the Anti-Money Laundering Office (Amlo) to expedite legal amendments incorporating nominee-related offences as a basis for seizing and freezing the



Photo: Bangkok Post / file

assets of offenders in order to mitigate economic damage to the country, said Mr Napintorn.

A resolution was passed for the Department of Business Development (DBD) to establish a centre dedicated to handling complaints related to nominee activities.

Mr Napintorn said the campaign to prevent foreign businesses from using Thai nominees would take 21 months, starting from September this year.

In the short term, he said, related agencies would use existing laws to intensively monitor, investigate and interrogate juristic persons suspected of using nominees in the five targeted business sectors.

The target areas for inspection vary depending on the type of business, aiming to streamline operations and improve efficiency. For tourism and

real estate, inspections will focus on key tourist provinces, such as Greater Bangkok, Phuket, Chon Buri, Surat Thani and Chiang Mai.

For the agricultural product trade, inspections will focus on provinces known for tropical fruit production, particularly Rayong, Chanthaburi and Trat in eastern Thailand, and certain southern provinces.

Authorities have identified cases of foreign nationals leasing land to grow tropical fruit, despite legal restrictions allowing leases of no more than 30 years and prohibiting the sale of such land, said Mr Napintorn.

For logistics, inspections will focus on land transport services in border provinces in the North and Northeast.

"The greatest concerns are tourism, real estate and logistics given their high economic value," he said. "Authorities started following this plan in September and hope to eliminate nominee activities in 21 months, by mid-2026," said Mr Naiphaphan.

Bangkok Post

National disaster HQ planned

BANGKOK
Bangkok Post

The government has announced plans to establish a national disaster management centre to tackle emergencies amid the ongoing flood crisis which has devastated many parts of the lower South.

Speaking to the media on Monday (Dec 2), government spokesman Jirayu Houngsub emphasised that the government has been proactive in addressing the flood situation in southern provinces.

Mr Jirayu's announcement came while deflecting criticism that Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra is avoiding touring the flooded areas in the South.

The government explained that the Cabinet ministers had been away on a mobile meeting in Chiang Mai at the height of the southern floods.

According to Mr Jirayu, Ms Paetongtarn is looking to formulate the disaster management model adopted for dealing with earlier floods in the North to address the current situation in the southern region in the short, medium and long term.

Mr Jirayu added the premier plans to establish a national-level commission overseeing a national disaster management centre to enhance state responses to natural disasters, including floods, droughts and other emergencies.



Heavy downpours and floods in Yala. Photo: Bangkok Post

He also said this week's Cabinet meeting on Tuesday (Dec 3) would discuss a visit by the premier to the southern provinces affected by floods.

However, the spokesman noted floodwater has receded in many areas and that a visit by the prime minister had both its "pros and cons". He did not elaborate.

"Whether Ms Paetongtarn tours flooded areas or not is not the main issue. What is important is that the prime minister has been directing anti-flood measures consistently wherever she may be," he said.

Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Phumtham Wechayachai confirmed that critical repairs to roads and transport routes previously damaged by floods have been completed, and Ms Paetongtarn has raised an emergency budget for six flood-battered southern provinces to B70 million from B20mn each.

"My husband is from the South. I

deeply care for the people there," Mr Phumtham quoted her as saying.

At time of press a total of 19 people had lost their lives from the worst floods in decades in the southern region. According to the latest data released by the Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Department on Monday, more than 640,000 households have been affected across the region.

The floods have claimed seven lives in Pattani, five in Songkhla, four in Yala, two in Narathiwat and one in Phatthalung.

A heavy landslide hit areas around the Betong municipal office in Yala on Sunday (Dec 1) after days of persistent rain. No one was injured.

Many roads across the southern provinces affected by the floods have been closed and motorists have been advised to check for updated information from the provinces and Highways Department for safety reasons.

Largest call centre scam boss arrested

SA KAEO
POLICE ARRESTED a Chinese man suspected of heading Thailand's largest call scam facility near the border with Cambodia on Monday (Dec 2).



Demin Wen (right). Photo: Bangkok Post

Pol Maj Gen Montree Theskan, commander of the Crime Suppression Division, said Demin Wen, 35, was arrested on a road leading to Cambodia in Ban Non Sao Ae village of tambon Phan Suek in Sa Kaeo's Aranyaprathet district.

According to the commander, Demin was suspected of acquiring a large number of SIM boxes, SIM cards and related equipment that were installed at many rented houses in Chiang Mai province and used to facilitate call scam centres.

Police recently raided the houses in the northern province and arrested his Thai wife who was allegedly assigned to supervise the houses. At

that time, police found 642 SIM boxes, 590,000 SIM cards, 72 computers and 1,455 mobile phones.

During the previous raids, the Chinese man drove from Chiang Mai to Nakhon Sawan province where he abandoned his vehicle and caught a bus to Bangkok.

His Chinese wife Yin Xiaoying allegedly arranged for his further escape from Bangkok to Sa Kaeo which borders Cambodia.

Demin told police that he did not know that his Thai wife had been arrested and he only planned to visit the Rong Kluea market in Sa Kaeo.

Police apprehended his 37-year-old Chinese wife at Suvarnabhumi airport last Sunday (Dec 1). Bangkok Post

Government urges Thai fishing crew release

BANGKOK

THAILAND HAS URGED THE Myanmar ambassador to push for the immediate release of the four Thai citizens who, at time of press, were currently detained in the neighbouring country after their boat came under fire from Myanmar navy ships off the coast of Ranong last week.

On Monday (Dec 2), the director-general of the Department of East Asian Affairs, Piyapak Sricharoen, met with the Myanmar ambassador to Thailand, U Chit Swe, who expressed his regrets over the incident, Foreign Affairs Minister Maris Sangiampongsa confirmed.

Mr Maris said the Myanmar ambassador agreed to raise the issue with the government in Nay Pyi Taw, before adding the government is doing all it can to secure the release of the Thai fishing crew.

He also said he had sent a private text message calling for a transparent investigation to his counterpart, Than Swe - who is also a deputy prime minister - who responded by affirming his support for a full probe into the incident.

One fisherman drowned after jumping into the sea during the incident, which happened when Thai boats strayed six to seven kilometres into Myanmar waters last Saturday (Nov 30). A total of 31 crew members, including four Thai citizens, were detained in Myanmar.

One Thai national and one Myanmar



Photo: Bangkok Post

citizen were being treated at a hospital in southwestern Ranong province, navy officials said.

Fishery officials in Ranong have issued a warning for all vessels in coastal waters to take precautions when fishing near the Thai-Myanmar border.

The incident highlights ongoing disputes over illegal fishing and maritime boundaries in the Andaman Sea, off the southern point of the 2,400-kilometre land border Thailand shares with Myanmar.

Defence Minister Phumtham Wechayachai said on Monday the local border coordination committee from the two countries had launched talks to solve the problem.

Mr Phumtham, who is also a deputy prime minister, said that all further actions should follow diplomatic protocols before affirming that the Thai military is fully committed to addressing the issue.

The vessels are fishing boats and not armed, which meant the excessive action was not justified, he said. Bangkok Post

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Young Loïc paints the world

Natnaree Likidwatanasakun
reporter1@classactmedia.co.th

Eight-year-old Phuket artist Loïc Tim has taken the spotlight again, this time by winning a bronze prize at the 'XI World Competition for Children's Drawings' in Sofia, Bulgaria. Loïc was one of 19 'Bronze Prize' winners in the international competition, hosted by the Little Zograf Foundation, which this year attracted 7,000 submissions from 80 countries.

Loïc's piece, 'Adventure Out', features a camel leaving the house to journey through a desert in search of a flower, and can see flowers on the cactus' reflections. Loïc's imaginative storytelling and ability to bring his visions to life, was credited for the Phuket youngster being awarded the prize, which will also be featured at the Thailand Biennale international contemporary art festival to be held in Phuket in 2025-2026.

"For me, it conveys the beauty of the species of the East in a captivating way," Ivana Kostadinova, Manager of the little Zograf foundation, told *The Phuket News*.

"Loïc demonstrates remarkable technical skills and a mastery of various techniques, which is rare for someone his age. He uses a beautiful harmony of colours and shows impressive talent, especially in painting on a large scale is something many children under 10 years old find challenging," she added,

GROWING

Loïc made his first submission for the World Competition for Children's Drawings at the age of 4, when won a Bronze Prize for his entry, 'The Galaxy of Space'. His entry was among 6,000 entries from over 50 countries, under the theme Green Planet.



Loïc with his prize-winning 'Adventure Out'.

By that time Loïc had already won a major prize at the XVI International Wildlife Festival 'Golden Turtle' photo contest held in Moscow for his photo 'Starfish to be Rescued', taken at Nai Harn Beach. The stunning image was awarded third place in the nomination 'Nature through the eyes of children'. Loïc was just 4 years old when he took that photo.

Loïc's mother, Nicole, explained, "For Loïc, art is a gateway to exploring the world, connecting cultures, and expressing ideas."

Each of Loïc artworks carries its own story, as Loïc himself titles them, reflecting his deep thought process and creativity, she added.

Nicole and her husband organise trips to cultural and art exploration like Bulgaria, Singapore, and Hong Kong have been helpful in expanding his creativity.

"During the trip, we had the privilege of meeting the renowned Bulgarian artist Nikolay Yanakiev at his exhibition, which left a lasting impression on us," Nicole said.

"The capital city of Sofia is stunning, but when we ventured into the rural areas, we noticed a simpler,

less materialistic way of life that felt reminiscent of earlier times. This gave Loïc a glimpse into how people lived in the past," Nicole added.

"Bulgaria felt like a time machine," Loïc chimed in.

"I took him on a tour of modern cities like Singapore and Hong Kong," Nicole continued. "These experiences helped him gain a deeper understanding of the contrast between historical and contemporary lifestyles and art styles."

"We deeply appreciate all the awards Loïc has received so far, as each one holds significant meaning. When it comes to competitions, I always give Loïc the choice. I always ask him, 'What do you think about this topic?'"

But winning or losing isn't the priority, Nicole noted. "Participating in world competitions helps him explore themes and topics that hold meaning. It also strengthens the bond between us as we discuss and share ideas about the subject matter," she said.

"The most important part of these experiences is meeting people who recognise and support Loïc's art. This support validates the significance of his work and encourages him to continue creating."

"We have been fortunate to connect with many wonderful people through this journey, including consular representatives, the Phuket Governor, the press and ambassadors. It's been an enriching experience for life."

"I encourage children to join world-renowned competitions, not for the prizes but for the opportunity to understand diverse topics and embrace challenges. These events help children see how artists from around the world interpret the same themes from different perspectives and encourage the sharing and exchange of ideas," Nicole concluded.

Follow Loïc's journey on Facebook and Instagram at: loictimart



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Colin Farrell unmasks true 'Penguin'



Colin Farrell in 'The Penguin'. Image: IMDb

David Griffiths

When Matt Reeves' film 'The Batman' hit cinemas screens in 2022, not only were people impressed by the performance of Robert Pattinson as 'The Caped Crusader', but they were also stunned by Colin Farrell portraying the villainous Oz (aka 'The Penguin') in such a way many thought he possibly should have had more success at Awards time.

With the release date of The Batman Part II being pushed back repeatedly, someone had the bright idea of what would happen if after the events of the film Oz continued his rise in Gotham's underworld in a Sopranos' style television series – the result is The Penguin, which now has all episodes available on HBO Go.

The Phuket News was recently lucky enough to be part of the official press conference for The Penguin during which time Farrell was extremely open about what it has been like bringing one of the most iconic comic book villains to life on the screen.

"Oh God, I just get inspired by everything, man. I know that's a lukewarm answer but it's the truth, you know," says Farrell when he is asked whether or not any actor's past performances as DC villains inspired him in the role.

"Heath's performance of the Joker is incomparable, you know, God. We actually... Me and the kids were watching The Dark Knight last week, and he's just extraordinary, it [Heath Ledger's performance] hasn't aged a day, it's just pure magic every time you watch it. He's so dangerous, he's so insane and funny and charming and threatening, and every little – Lauren, you were talking about details – every little nuance of Heath's performance is just so beautiful. And yet, somehow, he doesn't just... I mean, he commands your attention, but he doesn't just take up the whole space, he allows all the other actors, he allows Maggie, and obviously Christian as Bruce Wayne, he allows them all to have their space. He's extraordinary in it so, yeah, no.

"But I, yeah, I just get inspired by... I just love films," he continues. "And I loved what Danny DeVito did in Burton's films, I loved it, it was so tasty, love it still. And we go back to it as well, here, in this house, we go back to that film. And I love what Burgess Meredith did in Batman '66. And I've yet to know we have the eight era out, and this is all said and done for now, I'm going to get in and start watching Gotham because I just... I've said it before, because I've heard Robin Lord Taylor is astonishing in Gotham."

Like Heath Ledger did with The Joker, Colin Farrell just seems to meld to become one with Oz in The Penguin, and Farrell says it was an enjoyable experience to be able play a character so intensely.

"It was fun," he says laughing. "It was just all part of the journey of exploration. Yeah, it was just a lot of walking around my hotel room limping about. And I have a dialect coach I worked with for seven or eight projects now over the years by the name of Jessica Drake, and she was extraordinary. I worked with her for about two months before The Batman film. She has a library of accents, different dialects from all over the world, from Hungarian accents, people speaking English in South African accents, English, Irish, every part of America. So, we just listened to a pile of tapes, all kinds of based around the New York area, and yeah, focused in on this one gentleman who was the manager of an apartment block in - in the Bronx in the seventies, I think, and we just listened to him. It was an interview, a scratch tape interview on a stoop in the Bronx in the late seventies, and he became kind of my guide track.

"So, that was it," he says after reflecting for a moment. "It was just, you know, just putting the different pieces of the puzzle together and so by the time we did the first makeup test, which I think was three of four months before we started shooting The Batman film, when we did that, yeah, it was... the accent was kind of there, and the walk was kind of there. It got accentuated, you know. I didn't walk much in the film, I was - I was in the nightclub, and then I was sitting down having a scene with the Bat, and then I was sitting in the car for that car chase, and then I was tied up with Gordon, Lieutenant Gordon, and Batman for that interrogation scene, but I didn't get to really waddle so much in the film. But yeah, it was fun, the whole thing, putting it together, was fun.

"And working with costume was extraordinary. Helen Huang, who did the costumes on our show, was just extraordinary. She had a really tough job, Helen, because she had to take the template of the film, and obviously the show explores a different aspect, you know, the film is in the upper echelons of society more and the show is down in the gutter, but she had to kind of marry those two worlds and also create just a monopoly of different looks and designs, and Helen was astonishing. So, yeah, it was amazing puzzle to be a part of."

With the press conference about to end – Farrell is asked one final question – did he expect Oz as a character and The Penguin as a television series to be so well received by Batman fans right around the world?

"I knew lots of people, like coming from the material and coming from the mythology of Gotham and Batman and how well that film did, and you know, the world of comic books, whether it's DC or MCU, I mean, you know, there's a slew of energy around these worlds and the people are going to find it," he says.

"I did not expect the response to be what it seems to have been, which is really touching, actually, it really is. Like, myself and Christian text about, it's rare, man, it doesn't happen. We're both acting for a couple of decades now, at least, and I've never had an experience like this where the response... And because it goes out over eight weeks, it's like the anchor drops more every week, so...

"And I love films, and in two hours of being in a cinema, or at home, a film can penetrate my very soul, it can stay with me, it can change me, and performances can change me, and how it will change me, but there's something

about this rolling out over eight weeks as well that the anchor every week has just dropped a little bit deeper it seems into people. And the response has been extraordinary, man, I'm just super grateful to do something that we loved to do, that we had such an amazing time creating and that people really seem to be taking to it. It's... Yeah, it's cool."

Whether The Penguin is picked up for a second season is something that is yet to be decided but if you haven't done so already – go and check it out on HBO Go.

David Griffiths has been working as a film journalist for over 25 years. That time has seen him work in radio, television and in print. He currently hosts a film podcast called The Popcorn Conspiracy. He is also a Rotten Tomatoes accredited reviewer and is an alternate judge for the Golden Globes Awards. You can follow him at Facebook: SubcultureEntertainmentAus

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POP QUIZ

1. Acrophobia is the fear of what?
2. In The Simpsons, which nearby town does Springfield have a fierce rivalry with?
3. On which date did Russia invade Ukraine?
4. Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo and Thomas Bangalter are better known by what name?
5. What does a person with objectophilia suffer?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Hard

	9			6				
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1		4	7	3				
		8		9			1	
			6				5	

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across
1. Second in a series

5. Abounding in locks

11. Build (on)

14. Ancient greetings

15. Make fizzy

16. Single-stranded molecules

17. Leaving quickly

20. Open, in a way

21. Composer Erik

22. First-rate

24. Water carrier

28. Not wild

31. Bond

36. Easter lead-in

37. Treats for Rover

38. Means

39. Dull

40. Makes a war maneuver

43. Easily tamed bird

44. Shoelace tips

45. Sleeveless garment

46. Perfect rating

47. Metal ball

48. First known asteroid

49. Ice cream flavor

51. Henry VIII's sixth

53. Fighting force

58. "Rock the ____"

62. Take off, in a way
66. Frequently, in poetry

67. Henry Clay, for one

68. Emanation

69. Play-____

70. Ease

71. "____ quam videri" (North Carolina's motto)
- Down
1. Hindu Mr.

2. Flat

3. Blue shade

4. Floor

5. Japanese verse form

6. Gas station abbr.

7. Extended periods

8. Gilbert of "Roseanne"

9. Proofer's mark

10. Cycle maker

11. Form of "to be"

12. Kind of test

13. "Can't Help Lovin' ____ Man"

18. Frigid

19. Like roses

23. Island nation north of Fiji

25. Lady killer

26. Body
27. Assignations

28. 1976 uprising site

29. Reaction product of three identical molecules

30. Adjust

32. Certain post

33. Together

34. Sounds of reproof

35. Sonnet ending

38. Mythical craft

41. Apply gently

42. Footwear protector

48. Jam

50. B____ Raton

52. ____ squash

54. Roll call misser

55. Bell the cat

56. Certain weaves

57. New newts

59. Anatomies

60. Famous ____

61. Epitaph starter

62. Bacillus shape

63. Pie in the sky?

64. Kind of power

65. Seafood delicacy

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) Heights; 2) Shelbyville; 3) February 24, 2022; 4) Daff Punk; 5) A sexual attraction to buildings

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	10		11	12	13
14					15							16		
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62	63	64						65						
66				67							68			
69				70							71			

Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

5

movies made by Steven Spielberg have each made more than US\$500 million, after adjusting for inflation.

7

minutes is all it takes for the average person to fall asleep.

80

percent of a human body can be digested by maggots within one week.

18,000

years is how old a deep-sea sponge from the species Monorhaphis chuni can live.

2

billion

US dollars of mayonnaise is consumed in the US each year.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Evening clouds. Photo by Marco Capriz

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

This week in history

Dec 6, 1240

Mongol invasion of Rus': Kyev under Daniel of Galicia (Daniel Romanovich) and his 'Voivode', Dmytro, falls to the Mongols under Batu Khan.

Dec 7, 1703

The Great Storm of 1703, the greatest windstorm ever recorded in the southern part of Great Britain, makes landfall. Winds gust up to 120mph, and 9,000 people die.

Dec 8, 1660

A woman (either Margaret Hughes or Anne Marshall) appears on an English public stage for the first time, in the role of Desdemona in a production of Shakespeare's play 'Othello'.

Dec 9, 1937

Battle of Nanking: Japanese troops under the command of Lt Gen Asaka Yasuhiko launch an assault on the Chinese city of Nanjing (Nanking).



First page of the Thai Constitution of 1932.

Dec 10, 1932

Thailand becomes a constitutional monarchy. King Prajadhipok (Rama VII) signs what was called "the Permanent Constitution of the Kingdom of Siam". So far Thailand has had 20 versions of its Constitution brought into effect.

Dec 11, 1998

Thai Airways Flight 261 crashes near Surat Thani Airport, killing 101. The pilot flying the Airbus A310-300 is thought to have suffered spatial disorientation.

Dec 12, 1098

First Crusade: Siege of Ma'arrat al-Numan: Crusaders breach the town's walls and massacre about 20,000 inhabitants. After finding themselves with insufficient food, they reportedly resort to cannibalism. Source: Wikipedia

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 The map of PHUKET English 中文 Русский

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FRI

6

DEC

SAT

7

DEC

MON

9

DEC

WED

11

DEC



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7 SATURDAY DECEMBER

KICK OFF 04:30 PM

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SOUTH RUGBY

Charity Rugby Bash

Join us for an exciting afternoon of rugby as the Phuket Vagabonds Rugby Club hosts a (anything but) friendly match between teammates on Saturday, at the Alan Cooke Ground (ACG)! Kick-off is at 4:30 pm with social drinks going further into Sunday. All funds raised from the raffle will go toward supporting a child we sponsor through the Asia Center Foundation (ACF) asiacenterfoundation.org a charity in Phuket dedicated to helping disadvantaged kids, as well as christmas gifts for the kids in the Phuket Vagabonds Academy and ACF Rugby Programme. Bring friends, family, and fans along to enjoy the game, support a meaningful cause, and kick off the holiday season with us! Rugby@phuketvagabonds.com



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Monday BBQ Night

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



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Wednesday BBQ Night

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We look forward to seeing you at the Grow Boating Evening at the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar from 5pm. We are delighted to announce that our drinks sponsor for the evening will be Paul Poole (South East Asia) Co., Ltd. an independent marketing consultancy based in Bangkok, Thailand specializing in commercial sponsorship. For more details see paulpoole.co.th There will be a delicious buffet sponsored by the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar for all attendees. Find us on facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket/



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SUN

8

DEC



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10

DEC



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12

DEC



Skal Phuket's Year-End Celebration

Join us for the final Skal dinner of the year as we gather to celebrate an incredible 2024 at the beautiful Courtyard by Marriott Phuket Town. Hosted by our esteemed member Pamela Ong, this special evening promises an atmosphere of camaraderie, delicious food, and opportunities to connect with fellow tourism professionals. More info - facebook.com/SkalPhuket



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The Phuket News - Talking to Phuket

Dechapol and Supissara celebrate another title

BADMINTON

MIXED DOUBLES players Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Supissara Paewsampran claimed their second title after winning the US\$210,000 (B7.2 million) BWF Syed Modi India International 2024 last Sunday (Dec 1).

In only their fifth tournament, sixth seeds Dechapol and Supissara rallied to defeat fifth seeds Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto of India 18-21, 21-14, 21-8 in the 52-minute title showdown of the World Tour Super 300 event at the Babu Banarasi Das badminton academy in Lucknow.

They won their first title at the Kumamoto Masters Japan 2024 a couple of weeks ago.

It was the 27-year-old Dechapol's fourth World Tour title of the year and 20th overall and second for Supissara, 25.

Dechapol and Supissara began their new partnership at the Arctic Open in Finland in October, reaching the second round.

Dechapol won 18 World Tour titles with former



Dechapol (left) and Supissara. Photo: Supplied

playing partner Sapsiree Taerattanachai. They last played together at the Paris Olympic Games in August.

Sapsiree is now playing with Supak Jomkoh, Supissara's old partner.

India's Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand Pullela captured the women's doubles title after beating Bao Lijing and Li Qian of China, while China's Huang Di and Liu Yang beat Pruthvi Krishnamurthy Roy and Sai Pratheek K of India to win the men's doubles.

Pusarla V Sindhu of India claimed her first title of the year after she defeated China's Wu Luoyu in the women's singles, as another home favourite Lakshya Sen won men's singles final when he defeated fourth seed Jia Heng Jason Teh of Singapore.

Bangkok Post

Verstappen on top in Qatar

FORMULA ONE

Michael Lamonato
michael@boxofneutrals.com

Max Verstappen won the Qatar Grand Prix last Sunday (Dec 1) after Lando Norris was controversially taken out of the running by a heavy-handed penalty for ignoring yellow flags.

Verstappen got the perfect getaway from second on the grid to pip pole-getter George Russell into the first turn. Norris, starting third, swept beneath both, but the McLaren driver conceded the lead to the Dutchman rather than risk trying to cling to his outside at turn 2.

From second place Norris pushed the reigning champion hard, the two never separated by more than two seconds as they made a break from the chasing pack.

But the race unravelled not through strategy or an overtake by a wing mirror peeling itself free from Thai driver Alex Albon's Williams.

The freelancing piece of bodywork landed in the middle of pit straight and presented as an obvious hazard to oncoming cars as they hit 320-kilometres per hour before the braking zone.

Curiously race control opted against a safety car or virtual safety car to clean the track, choosing instead to use double yellow flags to caution drivers approaching the debris.



Verstappen celebrates. Photo: AFP

Norris, however, missed the flags and sped through the caution zone at full throttle – as detected by an eagle-eyed Verstappen, who noted how much closer the Briton was to his gearbox as they exited the first turn.

The matter was escalated to the stewards, and on lap 40 of 57 Norris was slapped with a draconian 10-second stop-go penalty, requiring him to enter the pit lane and stop in his pit box for 10 seconds without work being undertaken before rejoining the race, which dumped him from victory contention to the back of the pack.

With Norris out of the picture, Verstappen was unencumbered in cruising to his ninth victory of the season and first as a four-time champion.

"It was a very good race," he said. "It's been a while in the dry to be this

competitive, and I'm very proud of everyone within the team."

Into the void left by Norris slipped Charles Leclerc to help Ferrari close the gap to McLaren to just 21 points in the constructors standings, while Oscar Piastri of McLaren finished in third place.

Russell finished fourth, with Pierre Gasly in fifth behind him scoring a vital 10 points for Alpine, meaning they are now five points clear of Haas in the lucrative battle for sixth in the constructors standings.

Carlos Sainz managed sixth after a puncture, Fernando Alonso finished a strong seventh, while Zhou Guanyu scored his and his Sauber's team first points of the season with a gritty eighth place finish.

Kevin Magnussen was ninth for Haas in his penultimate grand prix, with Norris taking 10th spot.

Phuket sports chief elected to national SAT board

ALL SPORTS

THAMMARAT WONGCHAROENYOS, President of the Phuket Provincial Sports Association, has been elected to the board of the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT).

The announcement was made at an official ceremony at the Chalermprakiat Building in Bangkok last Saturday (Nov 30) where it was confirmed Mr Thammarat had received 14 votes and was therefore elected to head the category of provincial sports associations representatives.

Wanida Phansa-ard, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, oversaw the ceremony and was joined by: Meechai Inwood, Deputy Governor of SAT Administration; Preecha Lalun, Deputy Governor of SAT Sports Excellence and Sports Science; Surasak Ketchantuek, Deputy Governor of SAT Sports Promotion; Somcharoen Mingkhamlert, Director of the SAT Governor's Office; and Kongpop Phothisuwan, Director of Regional Sports.

Additionally, Associate Professor Chanchai Sukswan, President of the Jujitsu Sports Association of Thailand, was elected as a SAT board member at the same ceremony.



Thammarat (left) at the ceremony. Photo: PR Phuket

A post-election celebration was held once the announcements had been finalised where all attendees congratulated both Mr Thammarat and Mr Chanchai on their respective appointments.

Mr Thammarat's appointment came after he was recently re-elected to serve as the president of the Sports Association of Phuket.

He has lived in Phuket for over 30 years and worked at the Sports Association for the last 10 years, committing himself diligently to, in his own words, developing the sports industry in Phuket to be strong, stable and progressive. *The Phuket News*

UFC makes knockout return to Macau

MMA

THE ULTIMATE FIGHTING Championship (UFC) made its highly anticipated return to Macau on Nov 23 after more than a decade-long hiatus and it did not disappoint.

The event delivered a sensational night of fights, showcasing the best of mixed martial arts talent from all corners of the globe in front of an excited crowd. Several of the athletes are either based in Phuket or have trained previously at renowned local gyms such as Bangtao Muay Thai and MMA and Tiger Muay Thai.

The night kicked off with a solid performance from Brazilian lightweight Nikolas Motta, who faced China's Maheshate Hayisaer in an exciting lightweight bout. Motta, coming off a successful training camp at Bangtao Muay Thai & MMA gym, put on a masterful display of striking and defense, earning a unanimous decision victory.

Chinese light heavyweight Zhang Mingyang, aka "The Mountain Tiger," who had finished off his fight camp training with the team at



Petr Yan on his way to victory against Deiveson Figueiredo. Photo: Supplied

Bangtao Muay Thai and MMA gym then delivered a devastating performance to finish off Ozzy Diaz in under three minutes.

New Zealand's Carlos Ulberg, with UFC lightweight and coach Brad Riddell from Bangtao Muay Thai & MMA gym in his corner, defeated Volkan Oezdemir in a pivotal light heavyweight clash, extending his impressive win streak to seven consecutive victories.

China's Yan Xiaonan then dominated Jessica Ricci for the victory before Russia's Petr Yan, a fighter who has made Phuket his second home while training at Tiger Muay Thai gym, took on Brazil's Deiveson Figueiredo in a bantamweight showdown.

Yan earned a unanimous decision victory, proving once again that he is one of the top bantamweights in the division. His performance was a

testament to his hard work at Tiger Muay Thai gym, where he has spent countless hours sharpening his striking and preparing for high-level competition.

One of the most jaw-dropping moments of the night came from "Doctor Sleep" Shi Ming, who scored an outstanding head kick knockout in the third round against Xiaocan Feng. The impact of the strike was so powerful that Feng was immediately taken to hospital for precautionary reasons, thankfully later confirmed to be in stable condition.

For her efforts, Shi Ming earned the "Road to UFC" women's strawweight tournament crown, her UFC contract, as well as a well-deserved 'Fight of the Night' bonus.

As the final bell rang and the night came to a close, it was clear that UFC's return to Macau had been a massive success and an unforgettable event for both the fighters and fans. The quality of the fights, the intensity of the crowd and the overall energy of the event proved that Macau is ready to become a regular stop on the UFC's global tour.

Catherine Ly

Man City's slump continues

FOOTBALL

AFP

Liverpool piled on the misery for Manchester City as the Premier League leaders beat the troubled champions 2-0 at Anfield last Sunday (Dec 1) to move nine points clear of second-placed Arsenal, who thrashed West Ham 5-2.

Cody Gakpo's first-half opener and Mohamed Salah's late penalty dealt another blow to reeling City, who are languishing 11 points behind Liverpool in fifth place.

City have lost four successive top-flight games for the first time since 2008, making them the first Premier League champions to endure such a dismal run the season after claiming the title.

They have clawed back significant deficits to win the Premier League during Pep Guardiola's tenure as manager, but they have never managed to lift the title after being behind by more than 10 points and their seven-game winless run ranks as Guardiola's longest barren streak in his glittering managerial career.

Just weeks after he signed a new two-year contract, Liverpool fans taunted Guardiola with chants of "you're getting sacked in the morning", prompting a defiant response from the Spaniard, who held up six fingers to illustrate the number of titles he has won with City.



Pep Guardiola is looking for answers. Photo: AFP

On Saturday, Arsenal were 4-0 ahead after just 36 minutes at The London Stadium thanks to Gabriel Magalhaes, Leandro Trossard, Kai Havertz and a Martin Odegaard penalty, before Bukayo Saka added the fifth in the second half.

"We are back to our best form. We look fluid and dynamic we are all enjoying football right now," said Saka afterwards.

Meanwhile, Manchester United boss Ruben Amorim earned his first league win with a 4-0 rout of Everton, thanks to doubles from Marcus Rashford and Joshua Zirkzee.

At Stamford Bridge, Chelsea extended their unbeaten run in all competitions to six games with a 3-0 win against Aston Villa, whose dismal winless streak reached eight matches.

Enzo Maresca's men look capable of securing Champions League qualification after a third successive win in the space of eight days moved

them level on points with second-placed Arsenal.

Nicolas Jackson and Enzo Fernandez scored in the first half before Cole Palmer struck in the closing stages.

Seventh-placed Tottenham's top-four hopes were dented by a 1-1 draw against 10-man Fulham, while Crystal Palace edged out of the relegation zone on goal difference thanks to late drama in a 1-1 draw against Newcastle.

Elsewhere Justin Kluivert made history when he scored the first ever Premier League hat-trick of penalties in Bournemouth's 4-2 win at Wolves.

Brentford continued their stunning home form to thrash Leicester 4-1 in front of the Foxes' in-coming manager Ruud van Nistelrooy, while Chris Wood's emphatically struck penalty was enough to get Nottingham Forest back to winning ways and leave Ipswich still in the bottom three.

Star-studded War Elephants squad targets title defence

FOOTBALL

SUPACHOK SARACHAT and his brother Suphanat Mueanta have been named in the 26-player squad for the upcoming AFF Mitsubishi Electric Cup, coach Masatada Ishii confirmed on Nov 26.

Supachok, of Consadole Sapporo in Japan's J-League, and Suphanat join the likes of Ekanit Panya, Jonathan Khemdee, Teerasak Poeiphimai and Nicholas Mickelson as Thailand's Japanese coach Ishii named a strong squad for the Dec 8-Jan 5 ASEAN tournament.

Bangkok United defender Kritsada Nontarat has received his first national call-up, while Uthai Thani's James Beresford and his clubmate Benjamin James Davis are returning to the national team after their debuts during last year's King's Cup tournament.

Peeradol Chamratsamee was confirmed as the new War Elephants captain for the tournament by the Football Association of Thailand (FAT) on Monday (Dec 2).



Thailand coach Masatada Ishii. Photo: Bangkok Post

Bangkok United midfielder Weerathep Pomphan and Supachok Sarachart were named as deputy captains.

The players officially reported for the training camp at Novotel Future Park Rangsit on Monday and the team is scheduled to leave for Vietnam for the first match with Timor Leste today (Dec 6).

Defending champions Thailand have won the ASEAN tournament seven times.

The War Elephants will kick off their campaign against Timor Leste at Vietnam's Hang Day Stadium on Sunday (Dec 8). The other teams in Group A are Malaysia, Singapore and Cambodia.

Vietnam, Indonesia, Laos, Philippines and Myanmar are the teams that make up Group B.

Bangkok Post

Thailand Serpents head to inaugural AFL Asia Cup

AFL

FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, ONLY local talent from across Asia will have a chance to represent their country playing Australian Rules Football (AFL) at the officially-sanctioned inaugural Asia Cup in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, this weekend (Dec 6-8).

The tournament rules state that players must be nationals of the country they play for and cannot have played the game in Australia during their formative years.

Representing Thailand will be the Thailand Serpents, the first all Thai men and women's national AFL teams.

The men's team is made up predominately of members of the Thailand Tigers Communities United by Sport (CUBS) program, including Thailand Tigers duo Mani Saunders and Rut Ngarmariyakul, while the Phuket Power is represented by defender Tan Theampipo.

The women's team, led by 'Tiger Mother' Nongcran 'Tud' Saunders and Irravadee 'Dee' Makris, comprises a number of code jumping new recruits drawn to the dynamism of AFL and club culture of the Tigers, who collectively suggest a bright future at not only the Asia Cup but for the women's game in Thailand in general.



Since 2016 the Thailand Tigers have been working in partnership with the Duang Prateep Foundation to provide support for education, employment pathways and the development of life skills and confidence through AFL and involvement with the club.

The chance to represent their country at the Asia Cup on their first international trip is an incredible opportunity and pays tribute to the success of the grassroots program which has played a crucial role in mentoring and guiding these young men and women on and off the field while strengthening the foundations for future growth of the game in Thailand.

Sending 36 players and support staff to Vietnam requires significant resources and the Serpents' journey to the Asia Cup would not be possible without the generous support of our sponsors, including AustraliaVisas-Thailand.com, Traffio, The Flower Chic and Nexus Dynamics. Simon Wetherell

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