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## THE RETURN



Passengers arrive on the inaugural Hi Fly flight from Bangkok as more flights to Phuket are launched. Photo: AoT Phuket

## HOPE FLOATS AS COVID ENTRY MEASURES DROPPED, TOURISM ARRIVALS SPIKE

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

**K**ey tourism figures are hoping that a spike in international arrivals on Oct 1 – when the country reverted back to pre-COVID entry requirements for visitors – is not just a blip on Phuket's tourism radar, but instead signalling the beginning of a slow trend of recovery for the island's tourism industry.

According to the Phuket Immigration office based at the airport, 5,924 foreign arrivals entered the country through Phuket airport on Oct 1 – the most in a single day since the tourism shutdown began in 2020.

However, last Sunday (Oct 2) saw the number of international arrivals drop to 5,696, with the number falling again on Monday (Oct 3) to 4,223.

Regardless, neither the Phuket Sandbox nor the Test & Go entry schemes ever resulted in the number of international arrivals at Phuket airport in a day exceeding 5,000.

Both schemes were highly touted as effective in helping Phuket's tourism industry, which was battered by the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic over the past two years. Current estimates report that only half of the number of tourism-related businesses that were open in 2019 have since reopened.

Tourism & Sports Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn, speaking at the Jui Tui Shrine in Phuket Town on Monday, maintained that the goal was for Thailand to generate a total income of B2.4 trillion through tourism in 2023.

More than 1,025,162 visitors had travelled to Phuket since July 1, 2021, Mr Phiphat said.

Local hoteliers share Mr Phiphat's enthusiasm, and are looking forward to achieving a return of tourism to some 80% of pre-COVID levels by the end-of-year tourism peak season in Phuket (see page 6).

Local events such as the Phuket Vegetarian Festival, which drew to a

close on Tuesday night (Oct 4), were helping Phuket's tourism recovery greatly, said Nanthasiri Ronnasiri, chief of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Phuket office, on Monday.

Ms Nanthasiri before the festival estimated that about 100,000 Thais and 80,000 foreigners were expected to join the festival over the nine days, from Sept 26-Oct 4. She later confirmed that the festival was estimated to help generate B3.4 billion for the island's economy.

In total 900 domestic flights and over 500 international flights arrived in Phuket during the nine-day festival, she noted, adding that visitors from...

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# News



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## Tourism revival hoped by year's end

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...Malaysia and Singapore provided the much-needed boost during the period.

Mr Phiphat on Monday also reminded the public that he was still pushing for Phuket to become a province to allow entertainment venues to remain open until 4am.

"If it can be implemented, it will generate an additional B100 million a month, and if Phuket is selected to host the World Specialized Expo in 2028, it will generate more than B50 billion in circulation [for the economy]," he said.

"The target number of foreign tourists for 2023 is set at 20 million, while we are still expecting Thais to make 160 million domestic trips during the year, which will generate a total income of B2.4trn. That is a recovery of 80% of the year 2019, before the COVID-19 epidemic," Mr Phiphat said.

### VISA BOOST

The TAT on Oct 1 issued a release highlighting the potential impact of the rollback of the COVID-19 measures and the extended periods of stay now granted to tourists arriving on selected short-stay visas primarily used by tourists to enter the country.

"As of today [Oct 1] international travellers to Thailand will no longer be required to show proof of vaccination or ATK test results, and a longer length of stay will be on offer,



Tourism Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn at the Jui Tui Shrine in Phuket Town on Monday (Oct 3). Photo: NNT

signalling the completion of the kingdom's full reopening to international tourism," said the release.

"Effective from today through until 31 March, 2023, the period of stay in Thailand will be extended to 45 days (from 30 days) for tourists from countries/territories entitled for visa exemption, and to 30 days (from 15 days) for those eligible for a Visa on Arrival (VOA)," the release added.

TAT Governor Yuthasak Supasorn said, "Now, with the kingdom fully reopened, international visitor arrivals are on the rise, international events and local festivals are being held, and major international and regional airlines are resuming flights from countries around the world."

Thai Airways International (THAI) in its recently announced 2022-2023 winter schedule (Oct 30, 2022 – Mar 25, 2023) is operating flights on

34 European, Australian, and Asian routes with increased frequencies on selected routes, the release added.

The THAI winter schedule includes daily flights between Bangkok and London, Paris, Zurich, Frankfurt, Copenhagen, Sydney, Melbourne, Tokyo, Osaka, Fukuoka, Manila, Seoul, Taipei, Hong Kong, Singapore, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, New Delhi, Mumbai, Dhaka, and Karachi.

"On the event scene, as the host of APEC 2022, a number of APEC meetings are taking place in Thailand, most recently the SME Ministerial Meeting (SMM), from 5-10 September, 2022, in Phuket. The 11<sup>th</sup> APEC Tourism Ministerial Meeting and the 60<sup>th</sup> APEC Tourism Working Group Meeting took place from 14-20 August, 2022, in Bangkok. Next, the APEC Finance Ministers' Meeting (FMM) is scheduled from 19-21 October, 2022, and the

high-profile APEC Economic Leaders' Week (AELW) is from 14-19 November, 2022," said the TAT release.

### MAYA BAY

Not noted in the TAT release but announced by the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) on Oct 1 was that world-famous Maya Bay had now reopened to visits by tourists.

The reopening, effective Oct 1, followed the bay being closed during the usual shutdown during the southwest monsoon season (May-Oct). The number of visitors allowed to access the bay remains limited, as it was before the seasonal closure.

The notice announcing the reopening also reminded people that preservation of the natural beauty of the area was a top priority. Tourists are still not allowed to play in

the water at the conservation-protected bay.

### THAI CHANA AXED

The requirement for all people, including tourists, to use Thai Chana, the Thai government COVID-19 tracking app, has been cancelled following an order issued by the Ministry of Public Health.

The announcement was made by the Department of Disease Control under the Ministry of Public Health late on Oct 1, with the news relayed by the Phuket Info Center, operated by the Phuket Governor's Office.

According to a report by the national Government House news, Ratchada Thanadirek, Deputy Spokesperson for the Prime Minister's Office, explained that cancellation of the Thai Chana requirement was part of the rolling back of nearly all COVID-19 requirements in the country.

"All data in the system will be destroyed, according to information security standards while the Department of Consular Affairs under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will cancel the review of documents related to COVID-19, such as vaccination certificates, and test results for COVID-19 for travelers entering Thailand," Ms Ratchada said.

"Currently, COVID-19 has been reduced [in classification] to a communicable disease requiring surveillance. However,

the government continues to closely monitor the spread of the virus," she said.

"Booster vaccinations are still necessary because it greatly reduces the risk of severe symptoms, especially in the elderly. Therefore, I would like people to receive complete vaccination," Ms Ratchada continued.

"Also, maintaining social distance and wearing a mask when in crowded places is still important to prevent infection," she added.

While the requirement to wear face masks has been lifted in general, face masks must still be worn on public transport and in cinemas, and any other areas where large groups of people are in close proximity with each other.

### DAILY REPORTS CANNED

Meanwhile, the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO) last night also confirmed that with COVID-19 now reclassified as a communicable disease, in accordance with instructions from the Ministry of Public Health, the PPHO will no longer be issuing its daily report of new COVID-19 infections on the island.

The last report by the PPHO marked seven infections confirmed by RT-PCR tests and a further 64 infections confirmed by antigen test kits (ATKs) on Sept 30.

## Officials fine, suspend licence of victim of taxi intimidation

A WOMAN GRAB TAXI DRIVER who was threatened, intimidated and whose car was damaged by an angry taxi queue driver in front of Cafe del Mar in Kamla last Saturday night (Oct 1) has been fined B2,000 and suspended for 30 days for using an "unauthorised" application for providing taxi services.

Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Sermphan Sirikong announced the news on Monday (Oct 3).

The taxi driver who damaged her car in the incident, Wilas Soison, 41, has also been suspended from operating a taxi for 30 days, Maj Gen Sermphan said.

Of note, a report by the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket) explained the news as such that the "Phuket Governor", Narong Woonciew, unnamed in the report, had announced the news, saying that it was the decision of the Phuket Provincial Land Transport



Police at the scene in Kamla last Saturday night (Oct 1). Photo: PR Phuket

Office (PLTO).

The punishments followed Mr Wilas refusing to take a passenger from in front of the popular night venue to Patong for less than B400. The passenger ordered a taxi from JustGrab instead.

The woman Grab taxi driver, named as Ms Narumon (family name withheld), arrived in front of the venue in a red MG sedan at 9:40pm, Phuket Provincial Police explained in a statement issued earlier.

After she made a U-turn to pick up the passengers, Mr Wilas and two to three companions approached her car, with Mr Wilas standing in front of the car to prevent Ms Narumon from leaving.

During the "confrontation", as police called it, Mr Wilas struck Ms Narumon's car, causing dents and scratches, the police statement confirmed.

Mr Wilas told reporters on Sunday that he did not hit the car. "I was only

defending myself," he said, claiming that the damage was from the car hitting him.

"Phuket Provincial Land Transport Office officials and related agencies summoned both parties to investigate and take legal action, with the Grab driver fined for using the wrong application. It is an unauthorised application," Maj Gen Sermphan said.

Not explained on Monday was that from June 13 JustGrab in Phuket has been restricted to providing taxi services within two zones only: Phuket Town, and Patong-Karon.

JustGrab is not to provide taxi services outside those areas.

"Passengers can book JustGrab to pick-up and drop-off within Old Town, Patong & Karon only," the JustGrab website explains (see image gallery above for service area maps).

Maj Gen Sermphan and the police statement confirmed that Mr Wilas "agreed" to pay B5,000 for the dam-

age to Ms Narumon's car.

"It appears that the PLTO has used the powers under Section 21 of the Motor Vehicle Act to fine the amount of B2,000 for using the wrong type of car," Maj Gen Sermphan said.

"Mr Wilas is also guilty of destroying public peace on roads or highways, threatening, insulting, harassing or disturbing drivers or passengers under Section 54(4) of the Motor Vehicle Act, and has his driver's license suspended for 30 days," he added.

"I would like to ask everyone of any occupation that they must operate properly according to the prescribed laws. The Phuket Provincial Police will strictly and resolutely deal with those who violate the law to ensure fairness in society and to create peace in order to create a good image in tourism for Phuket and to build confidence for people and tourists," Maj Gen Sermphan said. *The Phuket News*

# Challenging airport taxi rights

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An independent taxi van driver working through the Bolt app has challenged the ban on independent drivers from picking up passengers at Phuket International Airport – a mandate controlled by Airports of Thailand (AoT).

The driver, Suriya Thongsamak, has also refused to pay the fine for attempting to pick up tourists from the airport, which he was not allowed to do on Sept 28.

Mr Suriya went public with his challenge with videos posted online on Sept 29, calling for officials to clarify whether or not independent taxi drivers can pick up tourists from the airport.

The current rules set out by AoT is that independent taxi drivers can drop passengers off at the airport – but not pick them up, even if the tourists themselves order the taxi through an app.

The current rules are not published anywhere in written form, and are only an “understanding” relayed by word of mouth without any written



The driver, Suriya Thongsamak, is calling for officials to make the rule clear about whether or not independent taxi drivers ordered through taxi apps can pick up passengers from the airport. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

confirmation from AoT.

Mr Suriya's posts gained much attention online. In his posts, Mr Surya called on the Phuket Governor to intervene in the matter.

“Is this a world-class tourist city? In the past, the province has always had a policy that tourists can use the [taxi] service through the app. Is it really usable?” Mr Suriya posed.

Mr Suriya explained to reporters that he had accepted an order via the Bolt app placed by two foreign tourists. The tourists asked to be picked up at the airport at 7pm and taken to Kata.

Mr Suriya arrived at the airport and waited for the tourists, a young couple, who entered his van after exiting the arrivals hall.

However, two security guards approached his van, preventing him from driving away. One of the security guards opened the door to the van and told the tourists to get out. The van was not allowed to pick up tourists at the airport, the couple were told.

Mr Suriya was then escorted to where a poster in

Thai language nearby explained that only approved taxi drivers were permitted to serve passengers at the airport. Drivers caught breaking the rule would be prosecuted and expelled from the airport grounds, the poster said.

The security guard explained the terms so that Mr Suriya understood.

Meanwhile, the tourists, unsatisfied with their experience and refusing to use the AoT-controlled taxi service at the airport, dragged their luggage to the main road in front of the airport and hailed a taxi from there.

Mr Suriya was then taken to Sakhu Police Station, located just south of the airport, where he refused to pay the fine for non-AoT-approved taxi drivers picking up passengers at the airport.

“At first the officer did not want to press any fine,” Mr Suriya said.

“The standard fine is B2,000, but the officer asked me to pay just B300 instead. I still refused,” he added.

Mr Suriya explained that his van is fully legally registered for hire to carry passengers and he has the

requisite licence to operate a taxi vehicle.

“I didn't hold up a sign or call out to get customers at the airport. I received my booking from the app. The customer has a clear identity, so I went to go get it,” he added.

“I want to fight for the rules to be the same for taxi operators so it is the same for everyone, and so everyone knows what taxis are operating at the airport. How wrong is that?” Mr Suriya said.

Adcha Buachan, Chief of the Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO), told reporters that the issue was not a matter for his office to intervene with.

The driver, Mr Suriya, has the correct taxi driver's licence and his van is properly legally registered to be used as a taxi. That was the end of the PLTO's concern, he said.

“The problem that has arisen in this case has already been submitted to the ministry [Ministry of Transport]. The ministry has already set a policy that the airport authority is the one who together with the Department of Highways organises [which taxis may operate at the airport].” Mr Adcha said.

## AoT claims airport security as reason for ‘approved’ taxi drivers

AIRPORTS OF THAILAND Phuket branch (AoT Phuket), which operates Phuket International Airport, issued a statement claiming airport security as the reason for the need to allow only “approved” taxi drivers at the airport.

“Phuket Airport clarified the case of social media publishing photos of staff inviting guests to get out of the car because of breaking the rules. Phuket Airport is a controlled aircraft zone. Such an act is an offense under the Ministerial Regulation No. 2 (1985),” the statement said.

“On September 28, at 6:50pm Phuket Airport Center (CCTV) was informed by a bus ticket salesman that a van had come to pick up passengers at Gate 1, the arrival platform, at the domestic terminal of Phuket airport, via a service call through an application.

“Phuket Airport would like to clarify that Phuket Airport is a controlled aircraft area. Therefore, such an act is an offense under Ministerial Regulation No. 2 (1985) issued under the Airports Authority of Thailand Act B.E,” the statement “clarified”.



An ‘approved’ taxi waits in a disabled parking zone at Phuket airport. Photo: PR Phuket

Any person who performs any of three acts may be deemed as guilty of unlawful exploitation of the airport as a government facility, the statement said.

Of note, Airports of Thailand (AoT) is not a government agency or a private company. It is a state enterprise.

The statement was not issued under the name of any authority at the airport, despite Monchai Tanode currently serving as General Manager at Phuket International Airport as an employee of Airports of Thailand (AoT).

People are not allowed to announce or advertise their service with a sound device, a signboard or any other means at the airport.

People are not allowed to transport goods into the restricted airport area (any

airport area) unless permitted by measures prescribed by Airports of Thailand Public Company Limited (AOT) and Ministerial Regulation No. 14 B.E. 2543 issued under the Airports Authority of Thailand Act B.E.

People are not allowed to solicit aircraft passengers or others to use vehicles or any other services that are not authorised by the competent official, the statement said.

“The objective is to track important information or complaints for outside services because Phuket Airport has a registration system and a database of records of drivers of public service vehicles licensed to operate at Phuket Airport's domestic and international terminals in order to inform and publicise [this information] to passengers and stakeholders.

“In this regard, Airports of Thailand Public Company Limited (AOT) attaches great importance to the security measures of all six airports, especially issues that affect the safety of passengers and the confidence of the country's tourism,” the statement concluded. *The Phuket News*



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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

SUN OCTOBER 9



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

MON OCTOBER 10



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

TUE OCTOBER 11



High: +32°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

WED OCTOBER 12



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

THU OCTOBER 13



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

## Monkeypox rears its head

The Phuket News  
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Two more cases of monkeypox in Phuket have been confirmed, bringing the total number of cases identified in the country to 10, Department of Disease Control (DDC) Director-General Opas Karnkwinpong said on Sept 30.

Dr Opas announced the news late Sept 30. The Phuket Info Center relayed the announcement on Oct 1.

One of the cases was a 37-year-old Thai woman. Her occupation was given as a "service worker".

The woman developed a fever, sore throat and muscle pain on Sept 16. The next day she bought medicine to treat her symptoms, Dr Opas said.

The woman told DDC officers that she had close contact with a 54-year-old German man on Sept 17. She later noticed a rash on her buttocks and blisters on other areas of her body, he said.

The woman, now concerned for her condition, presented herself at a hospital for treatment. The woman explained that he had not had close contact with any person other than the German man. She had not been in contact with anyone she knew to have a rash or blisters, she said.

She also had not travelled abroad during the 21 days before she started experiencing signs of infection, Dr



Department of Disease Control (DDC) Director-General Opas Karnkwinpong. Photo: via Phuket Info Center

Opas said.

The hospital doctors sent samples for laboratory tests, which on Sept 26, nine days after the woman started exhibiting signs of infection, confirmed the woman had contracted monkeypox, he added.

A team of DDC officers from the Ministry of Public Health Region 11 branch in Nakhon Si Thammarat were dispatched to investigate the infection, assisted by officers from

the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO) and "local hospitals", Dr Opas said.

The German later also tested positive for monkeypox, he added.

Dr Opas, speaking five days after the woman had been confirmed as infected, did not confirm at which hospital the woman had presented herself or the general area where she lived or worked.

He also gave no details of when

or where the German man had tested positive.

Despite an incessant monkeypox-awareness campaign for months by national health figures, relayed daily by local government agencies, neither the DDC nor the PPHO publicly revealed any confirmation that any person had been infected with monkeypox in Phuket in the five days after the woman was confirmed as infected.

## Swedish man pulled to safety before flames engulf wreck

A 46-YEAR-OLD SWEDISH man was helped out of his crashed MG sedan just in time before the car became engulfed in flames in Cherng Talay last Sunday afternoon (Oct 2).

Police were called to the scene, at the entrance to Pasak Soi 1, at about 3:30pm.

Officers arrived to find a silver MG5 slammed into a signpost. The car was already ablaze.

The driver, Christoffer Mattias Hans Ottosson, 46, had already been helped out of the car by local resident Phan Faikaew, 53, who witnessed the incident.

Mr Ottosson had reportedly suffered a broken right arm and minor injuries in the accident. He had already been taken to Thalang Hospital for treatment.

Mr Phan told police that the car was travelling towards Baan Don when it struck two other smaller signs posted alongside the road



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

before slamming into the larger, more steadfast, signpost for a local resort.

The fire started underneath the car, Mr Phan said.

Unable to quickly find a fire extinguisher, he decided to help Mr Ottosson out of the car as quickly as he could.

Traffic along the road was closed while firefighters took 20 minutes to extinguish the flames.

Lt Col Worawut Sensob, Deputy Inspector General of the Cherng Talay Police, said officers were continuing their investigation into the accident.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Fist fight over food delivery

PHUKET PROVINCIAL POLICE today responded to calls for action made online after it was reported that a fist fight had broken out over a food delivery in Chalong.

In a statement released on Sept 27, Phuket Provincial Police noted that Phuket Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Sermphan Sirikong had become aware of the incident and ordered the Superintendent of Chalong Police Station to investigate and report the facts.

The incident occurred at about 8:30am on Sept 24, the statement said.

Mr Sorasak (family name withheld) had ordered food to be delivered through an online service.

From the app, Mr Sorasak knew the delivery driver was "Mr Adisak" (family name also withheld).

However, during delivery "there was an error in the transmission location coordinates", the police report said.

When Mr Adisak finally arrived at the location where Mr Sorasak actually was, "negotiations" started over extra payment for the delivery.

That's when the fight started, and



Friendly again at the police station after the fight. Photo: Phuket Provincial police

the two men needed to be separated from each other, the report said.

Both men agreed to meet at Chalong Police Station on Sept 26 and resolve their differences.

Mr Adisak and Mr Sorsak were each charged with physically assaulting another person, and each were fined B1,000, the report confirmed.

Both cases, No. 554/2565 and 555/2522, were now considered closed, the statement concluded.

The Phuket News

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# Buildings razed at Layan Beach

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Heavy machinery was brought to Layan Beach last week to knock down the last remaining illegal beachfront buildings on some 178 rai of state land, altogether estimated to be worth over B10 billion.

The Department of Special Investigations (DSI) originally served eviction notices in 2017 after the Supreme Court ruled that the occupiers were illegally encroaching on state land. Several 'final warnings' had been made since then, with the last eviction notice served on Sept 12, 2022.

The encroachers were ordered to vacate the plots by Sept 30 or else officials would remove their buildings for them. Contrary to the previous warnings, this time officials were serious.

Traiyaarit Temhiwong, Director-General of the DSI, arrived in Phuket to witness in person the beginning of the demolition on Sept 30. He was accompanied by Phuket Governor Narong Woonciw, Vice Governor Anuphap Rodkwan Yodrabam and a slew of officials from local government agencies as well as the Office of the Auditor-General.

Speaking on the case, Director of Phuket Legal Execution Office Paween Kumar said that the own-



Officials began demolishing buildings on Layan Beach last week, executing the Supreme Court ruling of 2017. Photo: Thalang District Office

ers of the buildings had been given time to remove their property from the state land voluntarily.

"The eviction notices were posted on Sept 12, 2022, ordering the occupiers to vacate the land within 15 days. The notices said we would be coming to check the area on Sept 30, and we came in accordance with the notices to de-

molish [the illegal buildings]. There are four separate sub-cases in this case and six separate plaintiffs who tried to appeal but lost in court," Mr Paween said.

It was announced that the demolition would be finished within Sept 30. Any people found doing business or living on the land after that will be charged with trespassing.

to oversee the demolition process.

"The authorities are entering the demolition process. He came in person as an observer to encourage the officers doing their job to recover valuable natural resources," Mr Traiyaarit said.

"If the average price of the land is B1 million per square wah and the area in total is 178 rai, the value of the land to be returned to the nation is about B50bn. It is the property of the nation as a whole and should not belong to anyone seeking illegal benefits from these 178 rai," he added.

Mr Traiyaarit emphasised that the DSI "accepts all the special cases", just as its name presupposes.

"Here is a backhoe demolishing a building right now. The structure is built with a lot of concrete, but no piling makes the demolition very easy. I think in about a month there will be a beautiful clean beach here," Mr Traiyaarit said.

"The local Government will organise everything for people to use this land together for the joint benefit of the community and the society. I believe that the strong integration of law enforcement efforts as well as the cooperation and strength of all the relevant agencies guarantee nobody dares to encroach on this land [again]. If it happens, serious legal action will be taken then," Mr Traiyaarit added.

## Bangla touts questioned over attack on American

POLICE HAVE BROUGHT in four touts who work on Bangla Rd for questioning over an American tourist beaten heavily and needing hospital attention early on Sept 28.

The four touts, who stand on Bangla Rd soliciting passers-by to enjoy the services of their venues, were questioned by Patong Police, with Tourist Police officers present.

Lt Col Kittisak Sommat, Chief of Investigation at Patong Police Station explained that in reporting the incident to the embassy officials, Ms Mukhieva said that they were attacked by four wearing uniforms who had robbed them of B8,000.

Patong Police have yet to reveal any further details about the attack, which was first reported on Sept 28.

The American man injured in the attack has been identified as Rakkan Gassim Algassim, 35, from Pennsylvania. He was accompanied by Russian national Alena Mukhieva, 24.



Rescue workers render assistance on Bangla Rd.

Mr Algassim was attacked about halfway along Bangla Rd in front of a bar that was closed at the time of the attack. Police were first alerted to the incident at 3:30am.

A bar staffer who arrived at the scene soon after the attack said that the incident involved Mr Algassim fighting with another foreigner. She provided no further details about any other people involved in the incident.

The staffer, who asked not to be named, said that Mr Algassim refused help from people who came to render assistance, and held tightly onto a black bag he

was carrying.

With Mr Algassim refusing help, Ms Mukhieva said she was going to order a taxi to pick them up.

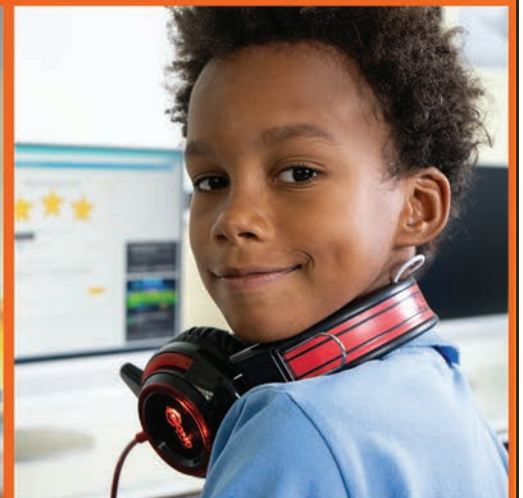
On hearing this, the staffer said she decided to call Kusoldharm Foundation rescue workers to arrive and provide assistance.

It is not clear whether any police were in the area when the attack happened.

Mr Algassim suffered multiple cuts and bruises to his face in the attack. He also suffered a deep laceration to the middle finger on his left hand which required medical treatment at Patong Hospital.

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# Hotels upbeat on prospects

## Expectation of high festive season tourism without mass markets

Bangkok Post

The festive season in the final quarter is expected to bring hotel bookings in Phuket that match pre-COVID levels, but not every hospitality segment will reap benefits, according to the Phuket Hotels Association.

Bjorn Courage, president of the association, said the average occupancy rate is picking up for November and December as well as the first quarter next year, driven by individual travellers, group meetings and MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions).

He said even though its main markets like China and Russia haven't rebounded, the Indian market still has strong growth along with the Middle East, Israel and Singapore.

Strong performance in the first and second quarters this year came from the momentum carried from the reopening initiative called the Phuket Sandbox in July last year, when competitors remained closed.

Meanwhile, Phuket is a destination that travellers can fly to directly from many cities.

However, bookings in the third quarter have been slower compared to the first half as many other des-



Mr Courage pointed out that Phuket is a destination that travellers can fly to directly from many cities. Photo: Bangkok Post

tinations have opened up.

According to STR Global, which collected data from international hotel chains in Phuket, the occupancy rate is under 50% at the moment.

He said since there were less chartered flights to Phuket, hotels relying on groups are still having a hard time, in contrast to four- and five-star hotels that could do better

than others.

Speaking at PHIST5 – the fifth annual event featuring hoteliers and stakeholders in Asia to discuss sustainability – Mr Courage said the island also has to face the most critical challenge, which is a labour shortage during the upcoming high season.

Many employees left the province for better jobs after their

salaries were cut and had a lower service charge, which used to form a big part of their income.

"A lot of people are still waiting to make sure Phuket is going to be consistent after this," he said. "I do not believe that most hotels will go back to the number of staff they used to have."

Mr Courage suggested hotels save expenses by upskilling staff,

training them to be more productive and efficient during the same working hours.

They also have to attract new talent, such as by holding job fairs at universities and should try to reconnect with former employees to lure them back.

### MORE BALANCE

Phuket relied on international visitors as the main target before the pandemic.

Mr Courage said the good part of the viral situation is that many local tourists visited the island more often.

Prior to COVID-19, they mostly opted for overseas destinations instead of travelling to Phuket.

"Hopefully, in the future, people are going to make a combination, they may go overseas, but also travel domestically," said Mr Courage.

Thailand might heavily rely on inbound tourism, but domestic tourism can help Phuket in particular as they can travel regardless of the season.

Despite challenging factors, he expected a successful high season this year because the island is ready to welcome guests, especially those who have not travelled for a long time.

## TCEB highlights local Veg Fest culinary expertise for MICE

PHUKET GOVERNOR NARONG WOONCIW last week joined a special event organised by the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) to promote the culinary talents on the island, in the hope of attracting more MICE events (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions) to Phuket.

The event, officially called the "PHUKET VEGETARIAN FESTIVAL 2022 Gastronomy Chef's Table", was held near the Dragon Statue area in Queen Sirikit Park in Phuket Town on Sept 27.

As explained at a press launch for the event last month, the plan is to make the occasion a "Flagship Event" during the annual Phuket Vegetarian Festival.

The goal is to increase the value of local ingredients and promote the outstanding food science of Phuket, Governor Narong said.

Joining Governor Narong was Pattanachai Singhavara, Director of the TCEB Southern Regional Office, along with a host other "VIPs", including Phuket Tourist Association President Thanet Tantiphiriyakit; Federation of Thai Industries (FTI) Southern Andaman Coast chapter Chairman Chernporn Kanchanasaya; FTI Phuket Province Chairman Charin Thamrongkiatkul; and Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) Deputy President Thiwat Seedokkub.

The event saw a healthy vegetarian selection of dishes presented by Chef Mond and Chef Korn of 'Chef's Table' fame, and Mixologist 'WynROYD Restaurant' [sic].

The Chefs presented six dishes in total, with the final dish being dessert. They also created a drink.



Photo: PR Phuket

Among the creations presented were the drink "Damask Rose / Katom Longan Kombucha", with Dish 1 called "Panipuri Banana Stalk Yellow Curry with White Turmeric and Lobak Spring Rolls alongside Smoked Jelly Mushrooms with Tamarind Sweet Soy Sauce".

Dish 2 was "Beetroot with Rice Crackers and Tamarind Dripping", and Dish 3 was "Smoked Pumpkin with Pumpkin Puree, Pumpkin Crumble, Pickled Pumpkin, Snow Pumpkin and Curry".

Dish 4 was presented as "UmamiClarify Tomato Sea grapes with Kafir Lime Strawberry Shrub and Nammon Tonic".

The final main dish, Dish 5, was "Smoked Eggplant with Kale, Chinese Black Olive, Shitake Shio Koji Sauce and Rice".

Desert, presented as Dish 6, was a dish called "Banana Bananana".

"The event is to help attract more tourists and business travelers to travel to Phuket, or hold a seminar or other various activities in Phuket," Governor Narong said.

"This will help drive the economy and help entrepreneurs in Phuket to increase their income, especially cash flow, and create more jobs," he added. *The Phuket News*

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# It's back to business for Prayut after court ruling

## BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

The Constitutional Court ruled last Friday (Sept 30) that Prayut Chan-o-cha has not reached his eight-year tenure as prime minister.

The majority vote decision explained Gen Prayut's term in office started on April 6, 2017, when the current charter was promulgated, rather than when he assumed office following the 2014 coup he orchestrated.

The case began in mid-August when the Constitutional Court accepted a petition signed by 171 MPs from the opposition bloc who believed Prayut's term started on Aug 24, 2014, when he first became prime minister.

According to Section 158 of the constitution, the maximum term of a prime minister is eight years, whether or not the terms are consecutive.

As a result of the ruling, Prayut could potentially stay in office until 2025, provided he agrees to run for re-election by parliament after the next



The Constitutional Court ruled in Prayut's favour, enabling him to carry on in the role as prime minister. Photo: Bangkok Post

general election which is expected to take place in the first half of next year.

It remains to be seen, however, whether he will seek re-election as, if successful, he would only have about two years left in office.

Prayut returned to work as prime minister on Monday (Oct 3), with his first task being to chair a teleconference on the flood situation with provincial governors at the Interior Ministry.

He pushed back the weekly Cabinet meeting to Wednesday

to allow time for him to visit people and provinces affected by recent severe flooding, in the northeastern provinces of Ubon Ratchathani and Khon Kaen especially.

Prayut said he had been briefed on the situation by the Interior Ministry, which oversees the National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Centre, adding that several agencies are analysing weather conditions and forecasts for the coming days and weeks to plan in advance for potential rain.

Prayut provided assur-

ances that his visit to flood-hit provinces would not add to the burden of those involved in flood relief operations but did stress the need to ensure the structural integrity of dams and reservoirs.

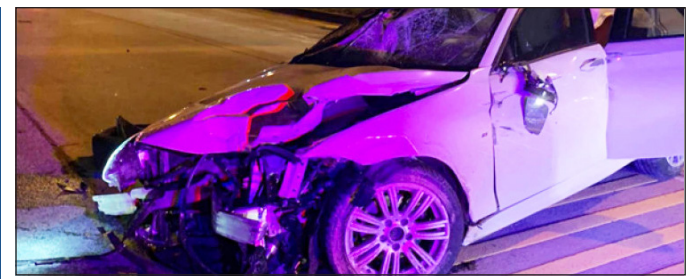
There must also be enough water and food for people at evacuation centres as well as for livestock during the flooding, he said.

Prayut said he has also been monitoring the flood situation in Bangkok while stressing that agencies should coordinate efforts to deal with flooding rather than get into conflict.

"Everything is already in the flood relief plan. I only emphasised it and gave moral support to governors and those in provinces hit by floods," he said.

However, the prime minister avoided answering questions about the recent court ruling in his favour.

"The future is the future," he said on Monday. He also declined to answer when asked about a possible House dissolution and about his political successor.



The wrecked BMW. Photo: Prasit Tangprasert

## Boy, 15, drives through red light, kills new grad

### NAKHON RATCHASIMA

ALLEGED RECKLESS driving by a 15-year-old boy has put an end to the life of a newly-graduated student engineer.

Thanaphol Kaewmoon, 24, was riding a motorcycle from his office in Suranaree University of Technology in Nakhon Ratchasima back to his room last Friday (Sept 30) when the incident happened.

He was hit by a BMW sedan, driven by the boy, that ran a red light at an intersection by the campus at 10pm.

Thanaphol died instantly at the scene due to the massive impact of the crash.

Rangsan Wongsawan, who taught Thanaphol at the faculty of telecommunication engineering, said his student worked part-time at

the university hospital while he prepared to pursue his master's degree.

Thanaphol had graduated with honours, his teacher added.

The name of the young driver of the BMW was withheld as he was underage.

Pol Lt Col Paisarn Panrew said the boy would be charged with careless driving leading to death, running a red light and driving without a licence.

The driver was speeding and had not stopped at a red light when his BMW collided with the motorbike driven by Thanaphol, the officer said.

The driver stayed at the scene, waiting for police to arrive.

Rak Kaewmoon, the father of the victim, said he would pursue legal action to the limit after watching the horrifying clips of the accident.

Bangkok Post

## Face mask rule remains for public transport and cinema patrons

### BANGKOK

WEARING FACE MASKS ON PUBLIC transport and in cinemas is still mandatory, the Department of Health has said.

The announcement was made at a press conference to clarify sanitation and environmental health standards after the reclassification of the COVID-19 virus, which was eased from a dangerous communicable disease to a communicable disease under surveillance last Saturday (Oct 1).

Topics addressed included concerns about higher-risk businesses and whether the Thai Stop COVID-19 2 Plus platform would remain in place.

Dr Aekkachai Piansriwatchara, a deputy director of the Department of Health, said the cleaning of common contact points and workplace screenings will still be required to ensure public safety despite the easing of most measures.

That said, the department will moderate the measures applied to some higher-risk businesses while the aforementioned platform will be retained as those firms are required to follow the Public Health Act and Communicable Diseases Act.

The department still mandates that people wear face masks and respect social distancing rules as much as possible when using public transport or visiting the cinema, due to the density of people packed closely together, Dr Aekkachai said.



Face masks on public transport remain for now. Photo: Bangkok Post

He added that people's lives will improve due to better health awareness when compared to before the pandemic.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education have announced a new set of control measures for schools and universities, stating that school closures may no longer be necessary after the coronavirus' reclassification.

Education Minister Trinuch Thienthong said on Monday (Oct 3) that the ministry had revoked three notifications on the pandemic in schools after the reclassification of the virus.

However, schools are still considered higher risk as group activities are inevitable, said Miss Trinuch.

"Some regulations, such as wearing a face mask in a closed area and organising classes, are still needed," she said.

"However, since the pandemic situation in Thailand is now considered manageable, school closures are not necessary, and classroom activities are going to be situationally adjusted instead of closed if COVID-infected students or teachers are identified." Bangkok Post

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# HeadStart's Graduating Class of 2022



## Every Graduating Class is Special

The 43 students who comprise the Class of 2022 are a particularly special group of students for a number of reasons.

Firstly, they are known as the 'Babies of HeadStart'; nine of this group joined the school at or before the age of three, half of them joined before Year One and nearly all of them journeyed through Secondary together. As a Year Group they truly embody the spirit of HeadStart and we could not be more proud of the fine young people they have become.

Secondly, this particularly diverse group, hailing from 18 countries, have applied to and secured offers from all over the world, genuinely having the pick of the bunch, as they chose their universities after receiving their results.

Finally, each year we see students at HeadStart raising the bar and this group has certainly made their mark. We have our very first Cambridge undergraduate! But our success doesn't stop there. Whether they followed a pure A-Level or BTEC route or chose a mixed model,

our students have achieved the results needed for their studies at top universities in Thailand, UK and The Netherlands with a smattering in other European countries and the USA.

A large number of these students are entering the world of science as they embark on their studies in Medicine, Chemistry, Physics, Natural Science, Biotechnology, Psychological & Behavioural Sciences, Cyber Security & Forensics, Computer Science and Engineering. We have social scientists off to study Political Science, International Relations, Economics, Law, Intercultural Studies and Languages. A few students are venturing into the world of Fashion, Art and Culinary Arts, while others have chosen to pursue degrees in Business Management, Accounting & Business and Finance, as well as some who would like to enter hospitality and aviation through degrees in Tourism, Hotel Management, Air Transport & Commercial Pilot Training. We've also had a number of students who decided to give themselves a year to work and time to think about what they really want to do. All of them have shown incredible courage this year as they submitted

approximately 144 applications between them, studied hard to achieve the grades they required, made their final choices and left their homes as young adults, whether to study or work.

At HeadStart we offer bespoke and tailored college counselling, through our UPrep programme; helping each student to find the right university which matches their individual talents and aspirations. Our highest globally ranked universities this year are Cambridge University (#3 in the world), Manchester University (#27 in the world) and Science Po (#2 in the world for Political Science). Our students have secured places in Russell Group Universities and those which sit in the top 200 of the QS rankings including: York, Reading, Eindhoven, Groningen, Twente and Utrecht. And, those in the top 250 in QS rankings including: Chulalongkorn, Maastricht and University of Amsterdam. Many other top Thai universities have also been chosen including Mahidol, King Mongkut's University of Technology and Thammasat.

**Ms Indu Bedi,**  
**Deputy Head of Secondary (Sixth Form)**

## 2022 Academic Results

The summer of 2022 marked the first full set of external examinations sat by a Year 11 or Year 13 cohort at HeadStart in three years, since the Covid-19 pandemic began. So the question is: How did they do? Were the students and the school out of touch with what is required to succeed in such a high pressure environment? Well, as it turns out, the answer is: Not at all!

The results were truly amazing and are a testament to the hard work the students have put in over the last few years under incredibly challenging circumstances.

At IGCSE an incredible 39% of students obtained an A\* or A grade, in BTECs 39% of students obtained a Distinction or above and at A Level, 36% of grades were

A\* or A with a 100% pass rate at both IGCSE & BTEC. This is a phenomenal set of results that sets the bar very high for our new Year 11 and 13 students!

In IGCSEs; Drama and French as a Foreign Language lead the way with 100% of entries graded A\* or A. There were nine subjects that had over 50% A\* or A which includes Chemistry, History, English Literature and Physics, the last of which saw 80% of students obtain an A\* in what is widely considered to be one of the most challenging subjects.

In AS Levels; History led the way, with 75% of students obtaining an A grade, while BTEC Performing Arts stole the limelight with 50% of students obtaining a Distinction Star--the highest award possible in BTEC.

In A Levels; students in Art and Design and French

managed to obtain 100% A\* or A. There were also incredible performances from English Literature and Physics; which both saw 60% of students obtain an A\* or A.

The Year 13 BTEC students also impressed and our Performing Arts students all obtained a Distinction Star, closely followed by BTEC Sport where 67% of students obtained a Distinction or higher.

Although the final grades are what make headlines on results day, the true inspiration has come from those students who pushed themselves to succeed during times of struggle, and those who worked hard to obtain results far beyond what they thought possible.

**Mr Tim Davidson,**  
**Deputy Head of Secondary (Academic)**



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# How's your mental health?

Milla Budiarto

**W**hen was the last time you had your physical health check-up? What about your mental health check-up? How do you look after your mental well-being? More importantly, are you aware of your own mental health wellness?

As defined by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act. The state of our mental health influences our perception, how we cope with our day-to-day stressors, how we make decisions, how we interact with others, and how we shape the community we live in.

However, we often overlook the importance of taking care of our mental well-being, without realising that mental health is also an integral component of our overall health. The mind-body connection is inseparable; a healthy mind stimulates our body to work better, and a healthy body boosts our mental wellness. Our overall well-being can only be achieved if and when the mind and the body work in sync.

## Mental health care in Phuket

One of the many things the pandemic has made clear is the state, and fragility, of our mental health. The urgent need for affordable mental health care services and easily accessible support systems cannot be overstated. The question is, does Phuket have the adequate resources to fulfil this need?

Posts in Phuket expat groups on Facebook show time and time again the same question asked, "Where can I find an English-speaking psychologist/psychiatrist/therapist on the island?" Based on the responses given, it appears that the options are severely limited.



Photo: Stormseeker / Unsplash

Though online counselling services are aplenty, more viable options for face-to-face counselling are still necessary.

## Bridging the gap

It's okay to not be okay. It takes courage and strength for one to open up and be vulnerable, and seek professional help to overcome mental health struggles. Nobody should suffer alone and in silence. We, as a community, could do more to help. And we should.

Having a support network such as self-help groups can be essential to the healing journey. This is why I started a women's peer support group for emotional and mental health in January 2022. The support group meets consistently every other Saturday at 10:30am for two hours at Endless Summer, a concept store and coffee shop in Phuket Town. Thai and expat women from Bang Tao to Nai Harn coming together

to support one another in a safe space, bonded by shared experiences and grievances, is a powerful healing experience.

I also created a Facebook group called Mental Health Phuket to further build a supportive community in Phuket and nearby provinces. The reception from the people has been hugely positive and it's extremely encouraging to see a community coming together for a common cause.

To raise awareness on mental health and celebrate World Mental Health Day (Oct 10), a donation-based Mental Health Talk will be held on Sunday, Oct 9 from 2-5pm at HOMA in Samkong with 100% of the donations collected handed to the women's peer support group. Additionally, HOMA, an ally of the women's support group, will also give away a 35% discount code (applicable for standard rate rooms only) to all who attend the event.

Four guest speakers in the event will give a 30-minute talk followed by a Q&A at the end. Mike Miller, a certified clinical trauma professional and founder of Yatra Centre, will discuss trauma: what happened, what continues to happen and what we can do about it. Sofia Isabel Guerreiro Pablo, a parental coach and psychologist, will speak about self-love, self-care, inner power, inner strength, and the power of connection and unity. Kseniia Mochalova, a certified yoga therapist, meditation guide and hypnotherapist, will explain the power of the mind. Last but not least, Kristina Ronnquist will share her personal experience living through trauma, loss, domestic violence, addiction and recovery, and the ways these things influenced her decision to become a social worker.

Space for the event is limited. To reserve a spot, email [phuketwomengroup@gmail.com](mailto:phuketwomengroup@gmail.com). Let's talk about mental health and start the conversation!



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## POP QUIZ

1. What does "captcha" stand for?
2. Yerevan is the capital of which country?
3. In which province was the Thailand MotoGP recently held?
4. Stuart Leslie Goddard is the real name of which British singer?
5. For what percent of their lives do cats sleep?

Answers below, centre

## SUDOKU

Medium

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

## Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

1. Guitar attachment
6. \_\_\_ cut
10. Lund or Cavet
13. It often contains a seasonal reference
14. Son of Rebekah
15. Notice
16. Philosophical belief
19. Bearded beast
20. It'll never fly
21. Attitude on the job
30. Coin with 12 stars on it
31. Court contest
32. \_\_\_ Getz ("Lethal Weapon 2" role for Joe Pesci)
33. Come again
35. Cape
36. Race unit
37. Red ink amount
40. Hot pot
42. Astern
45. Certain typeface
47. Saw
51. \_\_\_ maison (indoors): Fr.
52. Dessert toppers
55. Rajah's mate
56. Dedication to improving man's welfare
59. It has moles: Abbr.
60. Carbonium, e.g.

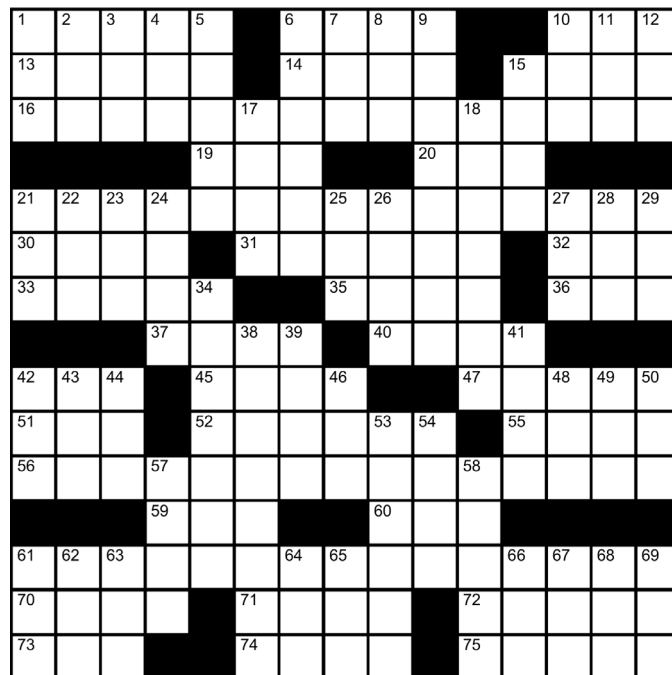
61. Personal appeal
70. Mouselike animal
71. Frown
72. Heart single
73. "\_\_\_ Time transfigured me": Yeats
74. Cartoon bear
75. Striplings

Down

1. Cow or sow
2. Custom
3. Swindle, slangily
4. Archaeological site in Mexico
5. Rid of sin
6. Addle
7. Full of: Suffix
8. Blanched
9. Certain musician
10. Kind of particle
11. Good times
12. Sock hop locale
15. Jewish month
17. Research facility: Abbr.
18. Put together
21. The "p" in r.p.m.
22. Bewail
23. Mythical monster
24. Unfair?
25. B & B
26. Half of binary code
27. Down
28. Yellow, for one
29. Floor cleaner
34. Deciduous trees
38. In a convivial manner
39. Open, as an envelope
41. Previsé
42. "Won-der-ful!"
43. Bird \_\_\_
44. Flat hat
46. Kind of test
48. Clavell's "\_\_\_-Pan"
49. Starfleet Academy grad.
50. Headlight setting
53. African talisman
54. Municipality in France
57. Height
58. Concerning
61. Hail, to Caesar
62. NATO member
63. French Guiana's Royale, e.g.
64. Jersey call
65. Calendar abbr.
66. Piece of pipe
67. Elvis Presley's "\_\_\_ Lost You"
68. Capitol Hill V.I.P.: Abbr.
69. "\_\_\_ Miniver"

## Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) Completely Automated Public Turing test to tell Computers and Humans Apart; 2) Armenia; 3) Burt Reynolds; 4) Adam Ant; 5) 70%



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

## Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

## GOT YOUR NUMBER

**0.01**

percent of all living things on Earth are humans – who have, in turn, destroyed 83% of wild mammals and 50% of plants.

**85**

percent of the things we worry about never happen, according to psychologists at the University of California, Riverside.

**3,000**

herbal cigarettes were smoked by Cillian Murphy in the filming of 'Peaky Blinders'.

**177,147**

is how many ways there are to tie a tie, according to mathematicians.

**1**

**million**

is how many skin cells are shed by the average human every day.

Source: *Uberfacts*

## ISLAND VIEW



Nai Harn Beach. Photo by Klaus Zimmermann

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

## This week in history

**October 7, 1916**

Georgia Tech defeats Cumberland University 222–0 in the most lopsided college football game in American history.

**October 8, 1967**

Guerrilla leader Che Guevara is captured in Bolivia. He is executed the next day for attempting to incite a revolution in Bolivia.

**October 9, 1970**

The Khmer Republic is proclaimed in Cambodia. The new constitution is adopted in 1972.

**October 10, 1780**

The Great Hurricane of 1780 kills 20,000–30,000 in the Caribbean, making it the deadliest Atlantic hurricane in recorded history.

**October 11, 1968**

NASA launches Apollo 7,



Che Guevara (left) and Fidel Castro in 1961. Photo: Alberto Korda

the first successful manned Apollo mission.

**October 12, 1810**

The citizens of Munich hold the first Oktoberfest, initially a public celebration of the wedding between Crown Prince Ludwig and Princess Therese.

**October 13, 1792**

In Washington, D.C., the cornerstone of the United States Executive Mansion (known as the White House since 1818) is laid. Source: *Wikipedia*

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FRI

7 OCT



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SUN

9 OCT



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10 OCT



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TUE

11 OCT



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WED

12 OCT



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THU

20 OCT



### Joint Chambers Phuket Sundowners hosted by AustCham

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# Where to **eat** in **PHUKET**

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Benyapa (left) and Nuntakarn. Photo: Bangkok Post

## Thai sisters reign at Vietnam Open

### BADMINTON

BENYAPA AIMSAAARD and Nuntakarn Aimsaard claimed the women's doubles title at the US\$75,000 (B2.8 million) BWF Vietnam Open on Sunday (Oct 2).

The top-seeded Thai pair defeated second seeds Febriana Dwipuji Kusuma and Amalia Cahaya Pratiwi of Indonesia 21-16, 27-25 in the 53-minute final of the World Super 100 event at Nguyen Du Stadium in Ho Chi Minh City.

It was the Aimsaard sisters' second title of the year, for which they received a \$5,925 winner's cheque. They won the India Open 2022 and were runners-up at the Korea Open 2022, both of which are World Tour Super 500 events.

"I would like to congratulate both Benyapa and Nuntakarn Aimsaard for winning the Vietnam Open," said Thai badminton chief Khunying Patama Leeswadtrakul.

"They are improving all the time and I believe this win will boost their confidence for future tournaments," she added.

The Thai shuttlers will soon be competing in three more tournaments, starting with the Denmark Open – a World Tour Super 750 event – from Oct 18-23; the French Open – a World Tour Super 750 event – from Oct 25-30 and the Hylo Open – a World Tour Super 300 event – from Nov 1-6.

The national junior players will also compete in the BWF World Junior Championships in Spain. The team event will take place from Oct 17-22, followed by individual events from Oct 24-30. *Bangkok Post*

# Title on hold for Mad Max after Singapore stumble

### FORMULA ONE

Michael Lamonato  
michael@boxofneutrals.com

What goes around comes around. Max Verstappen might do well to reflect on that maxim after turning in his worst performance of the season at the Singapore Grand Prix last Sunday (Oct 2) and squandering his first chance to seal the drivers championship.

F1's weekend in Marina Bay was chaotic and unpredictable. Typically hot and humid conditions welcomed the drivers on Friday, but Saturday was almost completely washed out by torrential rain, sweeping away with it the chance for anyone to build any kind of rhythm around a track that demands confidence in the face of the risk of a serious crash.

It didn't seem to trouble Verstappen, who was out to extend his unbroken run of victories to six.

He powered through his lack of practice time to make himself favourite to take pole on the still-damp track on Saturday night, but just as he was set to post what would have been the session's quickest time, he was called into pit lane by his team.



A dejected Max Verstappen leaves the circuit after a forgettable race in Singapore last Sunday (Oct 2). Photo: AFP

The Dutchman's car had been underfuelled. He didn't have enough to complete the lap and provide a sample to the regulator after the session.

It left him eighth on the grid while title challenger Charles Leclerc took pole.

Verstappen's weekend went from bad to worse from the moment the lights went out. A botched start – his car went into anti-stall – dropped him down to 12<sup>th</sup>, leaving him furious with anger.

He embarked on a typically feisty fightback, but he undid his own good work in a hasty attempt to pass Lando Norris

immediately after a late safety car intervention, when his tyres were too cold. The lack of pressure meant he bottomed out over a bump and locked up, sending him into the run-off zone and badly damaging his tyres.

He was forced to pit a second time, which sent him to the back of the pack and forced him to fight back up the order all over again, eventually rescuing seventh.

It was a strangely scrappy weekend and the equal worst finish of the year for a driver who's been the benchmark for so much of this season.

Maybe it's the single-mindedness needed to crush the competition in the way he's done this year, or perhaps it's just the unfamiliarity of the struggle after such a relatively smooth-running season.

Either way, some in the team must be wondering why one mistake on Saturday seemed to count for more than several on Sunday.

But this weekend it's likely to pale into insignificance anyway, with a second chance to sew up the title at the Japanese Grand Prix.

## Oliveira wins rain-hit Thai MotoGP as title race tightens

### MOTO GP

MIGUEL OLIVEIRA DELIVERED A wet-weather masterclass to win the Thai MotoGP at the Chang International Circuit in Buriram last Sunday (Oct 2), but world champion Fabio Quartararo finished 17<sup>th</sup> and saw his lead at the top slashed to two points.

Portugal's KTM rider Oliveira took the chequered flag ahead of Australia's Jack Miller, with title contender Francesco Bagnaia of Italy third.

He is now just two points behind Yamaha's Quartararo in the standings with three races left.

It was a nightmare day for France's Quartararo and Spain's Aleix Espargaro – third in the title chase – hardly had a great time either.

He came 11<sup>th</sup> on his Aprilia in the first MotoGP in Thailand since 2019 and is 20 points off Quartararo.

The race was delayed for almost an hour because of heavy rain over the Buriram circuit and it played out in treacherous conditions.

Spanish six-time MotoGP world champion Marc Marquez – who has won twice previously in Thailand – showed he is back to near full fitness, placing fifth behind flying Frenchman Johann Zarco.

Italian rookie Marco Bezzecchi clinched his first MotoGP pole position on Saturday but could only manage a 16<sup>th</sup> placing.



Miguel Oliveira on his way to victory in Buriram last Sunday (Oct 2). Photo: AFP

In the Moto2 race, heavy rain initially cut the race down from 24 laps to 16 with commentators later likening the start and finish line to a lake.

There was no fairy tale finish for Thai hero Somkiat Chantira – who started the race in pole for the first time – crashing early in the torrential conditions after notching up a two-second lead.

At lap eight, race officials brought out the red flag. Moves to restart with a five-lap dash were delayed with a second red flag as rain bucketed down.

Race officials were forced to cancel the restart and allocate half points because two-thirds of the race distance wasn't reached – Italy's Tony Arbolino was awarded the event.

MotoGP next moves to Australia's Phillip Island before heading to Malaysia and wrapping up in Valencia, Spain. *AFP*



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# City turn on the six appeal in derby romp over United

## FOOTBALL

Bangkok Post

Erling Haaland and Phil Foden scored hat-tricks as Manchester City thrashed Manchester United 6-3 to move to within a point of Premier League leaders Arsenal last Sunday (Oct 2).

United needed Antony's strike and a late Anthony Martial double to save them from a record defeat in the Manchester derby as they remain in sixth, nine points off the top.

City could have scored many more than the four they managed in a blistering first-half performance that swept away any doubts caused by an inconsistent start to the season from Pep Guardiola's men.

Haaland has now scored hat-tricks in each of his last three Premier League home games to take his tally as a City player to 17 in 10 competitive games for the English champions.

"What Erling is doing, he has done in Norway, Austria, Germany. That is the reality," said Guardiola.



Hat-trick heroes Erling Haaland (left) and Phil Foden celebrate the win last Sunday (Oct 2). Photo: AFP

"So he came and realised my mates run like animals so he has to do it too. And of course the quality we have alongside him helps him to score goals."

Meanwhile, Arsenal underlined their credentials as genuine Premier League title contenders with a 3-1 win over arch rivals Tottenham on Saturday.

Mikel Arteta's side made it seven wins from eight league games thanks to goals from Thomas Partey, Gabriel Jesus

and Granit Xhaka, while Harry Kane scored from the penalty spot in reply.

Ending Tottenham's 13-match unbeaten run in the league was a significant statement of intent from the hosts.

"They were phenomenal. We went for it and we created great energy in the stadium and deserved to win the game," Arteta said.

At Selhurst Park, Chelsea left it late to give Graham Potter his first win in his

second match since arriving from Brighton to replace the sacked Thomas Tuchel.

Chelsea suffered a nightmare start on seven minutes as Odsonne Edouard fired into the top corner.

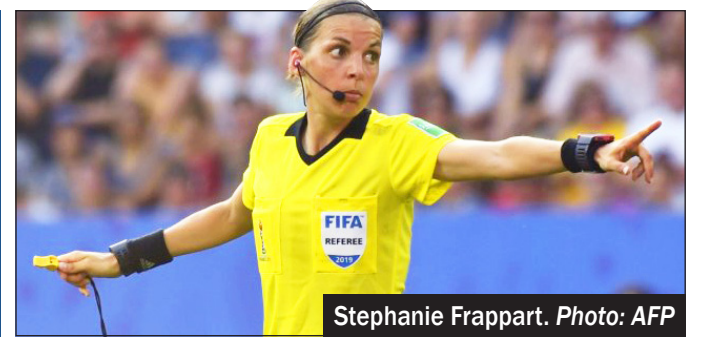
However, a strike from Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and a stoppage-time goal from Conor Gallagher, who spent last season on loan at Palace, won it for Chelsea.

Potter's replacement at Brighton, Roberto De Zerbi, enjoyed a memorable introduction to the Premier League at Anfield as his side crafted a 3-3 draw.

Spluttering Liverpool are 11 points off the top and manager Jurgen Klopp said: "We could have won but would we have deserved it? I'm not sure."

"Confidence is a little flower and when someone stamps on it, it's really difficult."

Elsewhere, Newcastle beat Fulham 4-1, Everton won 2-1 at Southampton, Leeds and Aston Villa drew 0-0, as did Bournemouth and Brentford while Wolves lost 0-2 at West Ham, which saw manager Bruno Lage lose his job after only 15 months in the role.



Stephanie Frappart. Photo: AFP

## Women referees at Qatar World Cup a 'strong sign'

### FOOTBALL

THE PRESENCE OF THREE female referees at the World Cup in Qatar will send "a strong sign", said one of those women selected last Thursday (Sept 29).

"It's a strong sign from FIFA and the authorities to have women referees in that country. I'm not a feminist spokesperson, but if this can make things happen..." said trailblazing French referee Stephanie Frappart.

The 38-year-old is one of 36 referees selected for the Nov 20-Dec 18 tournament being staged in the conservative Gulf state.

Rwandan Salima Mukananga and Yoshimi Yamashita of Japan are the other two women officials to be chosen.

Asked about the choice of energy-rich Qatar to host

the World Cup despite it being regularly criticised over human rights and the place of women in its society, Frappart acknowledged that "sport often plays a role".

"I am not the decision-maker of the host of the World Cup. The authorities have made their choice," she said.

Frappart has set numerous landmarks in her career – she was the first female referee to officiate the men's UEFA Super Cup in 2019, in the Champions League in 2020 and in the French Cup final in May.

Under the region's common guardianship system, women remain tied to a male guardian, usually their father, brother, grandfather, uncle or husband.

They need his authorisation to make a number of decisions such as getting married, studying or travelling abroad and taking up certain jobs. AFP

## Blue Tree Phuket set to host Spartan APAC Championship

### FITNESS

BLUE TREE PHUKET WILL HOST the "Spartan APAC Championship" on the weekend of Nov 26-27, with more than 5,000 Thai and foreign athletes anticipated to participate.

The announcement was made at a press conference jointly organised by the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) and Phuket Province at Blue Tree Phuket on Sept 28.

Founded in 2007, Spartan Race is a series of obstacle races of varying distance and difficulty ranging from 3 miles to marathon distances. It is said to be the world's largest obstacle and endurance race and events are held regularly in cities worldwide.

The Phuket event will include activities such as off-road running, mud wading, zip-lining, net climbing and wall climbing. The competition will be divided into four categories: Super distance 10km including 25 obstacles, Sprint distance 5km including 20 obstacles, Spartan Kids distance up to 3km and Hurricane Heat team competition.

Phuket Vice Governor Pichet Panapong said at the press conference that with expansive grounds of over 500 rai and unique facilities catering for sports, lifestyle and entertainment, Blue Tree Phuket offers the perfect destination to host such an event.

Anupap Vejvanichsanong, Vice President of the Phuket Provincial Administration



Eager competitors at the press conference. Photo: Blue Tree Phuket / Facebook

Organisation (PPAO, or OrBorJor) stated that comprehensive preparations would be made to ensure the event is an overwhelming success. He explained that collaboration with the Phuket Tourism Association and other related agencies would ensure that visiting athletes and their guests are fully catered for while here.

Paolo Randone, Deputy Managing Director of Blue Tree Phuket, explained that the event will be divided into six main zones: Zone 1 as the hospitality area; Zone 2 for race pack collections; Zone 3 to host the Spartan Expo and Oasis Cafe; Zone 4 for "Beat on the Beach" Festival which will see well-known national and international artists and DJs performing at a concert on the evening of Nov 26; Zone 5 will host the Spartan Premium Lounge and Zone 6 the Spartan Obstacle Festival.

Further information can be accessed via the Spartan Thailand Facebook page or website at [www.spartan.com](http://www.spartan.com).

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# Sport



**Verstappen**  
F1 title party  
delayed > p14

# ROLE MODEL

## Local MMA instructor showing his students the way

Alexis proudly shows off his medal haul at the US Open Judo Championship in July. Photo: Alexis Plantard



### MMA

Ben Tirebuck  
editor3@classactmedia.co.th

To lead by example is a mantra typified perfectly by Phuket-based Mixed Martial Arts instructor Alexis Plantard, who is charting the way for his legion of students at The Dojo at Blue Tree Phuket.

Encouraging and guiding others through behaviour instead of words and inspiring to emulate action is something Alexis has certainly been doing in abundance of late.

French national Alexis is a fourth dan black belt in Judo and Jiu-Jitsu with 28 years' experience practising martial arts who has won numerous accolades over the years. He established The Dojo at Blue Tree in Cherrng Talay at the

start of 2020 and, under his stewardship, the pupils there have flourished.

In August 2021, a selection of pupils from The Dojo won an incredible 31 medals at two provincial tournaments held in Phuket. Last month, eight cadet and pre-cadet students participated at the National Jiu-Jitsu Championships where they amassed a total of 22 medals and secured the trophy for best national team.

Student Kenneth Thongsong, already selected to represent Thailand, competed at the World Judo Championships in Bosnia on Aug 26. He was defeated in the second round by Puchly Thomas of France, who eventually finished fifth, but it was an invaluable learning curve for the youngster.

However, it is fair to say that the students' progress

would not be possible without the guidance of Alexis, someone who very much leads by example.

On the weekend of Sept 24-26, he won the bronze medal in the men's 90kg weight class at the Chiang Rai Thailand International Judo Championship, an impressive achievement given there were over 200 participants from 10 countries involved. After the Southeast Asian Games, it is considered the biggest regional tournament of its kind.

This came off the back of several tournaments Alexis had contested where he achieved impressive results. On the weekend of Sept 8-11 he finished in 9th position in the men's 90kg at the Krakow World Championships in Poland, where almost 850 athletes from 60 countries competed.

On Sept 17 Alexis won a silver medal in the men's 90kg at the Kazakh Kuresi Wrestling World Cup in Romania. With athletes from over 40 nations involved, Alexis beat competitors from Italy and Romania en route to the final showdown where he lost out to his opponent from Kazakhstan.

The following day at the Uzbek Kurash Wrestling Grand Prix, also held in Romania, Alexis finished in 5th place in the men's open weight category, losing in the quarter-final to eventual silver medalist Dieudonné Dolassem from Cameroon, who had previously competed at the 2012 Olympic Games.

The US Open Judo Championship in July saw Alexis win 10 of his 13 contests to claim gold in the men's 90kg class, bronze in the open

weight category and gold in the team event for Europe. The tournament is the largest of its kind held in North America.

Next up is the Laos International Judo Championships on Oct 15-16, the National Judo Cup in Bangkok on Oct 22-23 and the World Kurash Wrestling Championship in Pune, India on Nov 27.

He is clearly a commendable role model to his students. Whereas doing one's best while striving to develop a strong team of students and champions is his core focus, Alexis is quick to point to the underlying objectives of The Dojo and the martial arts taught there.

"The moral code of martial arts is to teach kids how to become a good person," he says.

"It's not about actually get-

ting a black belt but more so about how to conduct oneself with honour and respect under the code of a black belt."

This was evident after his loss to Dieudonné Dolassem in Romania, a tough, experienced opponent who carried 10kg more weight than Alexis.

"I may not have got the result I wanted but the respect he paid me afterwards was fantastic," commented Alexis. The two then shared a meal and discussed their bout.

"We may fight like warriors but it is a gentleman's sport contested with a robust moral code and high regard for honour and respect between its athletes," he added.

Alexis is very much a man who leads by example and his students at the Dojo Blue Tree Phuket are in very safe, capable hands moving forward.

## Phuket hosts WBC Nai Khanom Tom Belt showdown

### MUAY THAI

FANS OF MUAY THAI WITNESSED a sensational event at the Angsana Resort in Phuket on Sept 26th as part of the PHIST5 initiative.

Hosted by Tim Fisher and Revolution Promotions, in association with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and the Phuket Hotel Associations, the evening leveraged Thailand's most iconic combat sport as the entertainment centrepiece.

Muay Thai fighters from Australia, Brazil, Thailand and the US competed on the night for the right

to take home the unique accolade that is the WBC Nai Khanom Tom belt, a strap that is partly woven in the foothills of Northern Thailand by the wonderful people at the prestigious Mae Fah Luang Foundation.

A full house was treated to a rousing event showcasing the epitome of human fighting spirit. The card began with two fights between youngsters in the sport as Bunlangfai defeated Charnchai Revolution in the first bout and Lek Revolution overcame Petchkiansa in the second.

Next up, Lamec Silva from Revolution Muay Thai beat Yodyang Nam courtesy of a first-round knockout to secure a WBC Muay



Photo: Helen Tran

Thai Nai Khanom belt on what was his 50th fight win.

The second fight between Yodpayak from Revolution and Max Cruz from the US was a thrilling five-round encounter. Yodpayak, an Om Noi and Lumpinee Stadium champion, emerged the winner to secure the Nai Khanom Tom belt.

In the final battle between Australia's Cruz Briggs and America's Henry Lee, roaring crowds saw a stunning second-round knockout by Cruz. A massive congratulations to Cruz on becoming the first Australian to hold this title.

Post event, Revolution Promotions extended their deepest appreciation and congratulated all fighters on the night, big and small, on their incredible performances.

The promoter also expressed their gratitude to WBC, TAT and the Phuket Hotel Associations for coming together to make this magical event possible.

The evening's fight card followed

an event organised by PHIST5 which brought together the hotel industry and its stakeholders to discuss environmental sustainability and community benefit. A series of discussions and analysis from leading sustainability experts focused on how COVID-19 has impacted the tourism industry and how it now navigates challenges moving forward.

PHIST5 is an ongoing special event collaboration between the Phuket Hotels Association, Greenview and C9 Hotelworks, with support from the American Chamber of Commerce Thailand, QUO, Creative Concept AV and Delivering Asia Communications.

Linda Ngo