

**FLIGHTS DELAYED FOR RUNWAY EMERGENCY REPAIRS > PAGE 3**

## VISA JAM



The Phuket Immigration Office has so far remained silent on the extent of the visa scams, which amount to B3 million and are resulting in foreigners facing expulsion from the country. Photo: The Phuket News

## EXPATS CAUGHT UP IN VISA SCAMS FACE BEING FORCED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY

**The Phuket News**  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Victims of visa scams whose permits to stay have expired more than 90 days will be asked to leave the country, according to one of the people who attended a meeting at Phuket Immigration last Friday (July 1).

More than 100 foreigners have been caught out by the scams, with two companies in Phuket having formal complaints filed against them by victims: Phuket Siam Corporation Company in Koh Kaew and Asia Titan

Group on Thepanusorn Rd in Wichit.

A group of the victims were called to a meeting at the main Phuket Immigration Office in Phuket Town so officers could “hear their problems” and explain solutions, one of the attendees told *The Phuket News*.

“If the victim is under 90 days overstay and they have had their passport returned [from the relevant visa company], they must first file a police report. If the payment was made to Siam Corp, then the police report must be filed in Phuket Town. If the payment was made to the Titan Group, then the report must be

filed with Wichit Police,” the group representative explained.

“Then they must take the police report to Phuket Immigration and pay the B500 per day fine, up to the maximum B20,000 for overstay,” she continued.

“They will be given a two-month COVID visa according to their last stamp. This can only be done before July 25 as COVID visa extensions will no longer be issued thereafter,” she added.

“They will not have to travel to cross a border. They will not have any problems with their status when they

renew their visa next time.”

However, victims who have not had their passport returned by the visa company will not have the same conditions applied.

“We were told that if you do not have your passport, they cannot put your status on hold even though you have made the reports to both police and immigration,” the representative said.

The explanation given was that without a passport in hand, immigration officers had no passport into which they could enter a stamp.

Foreigners stuck without a passport...

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

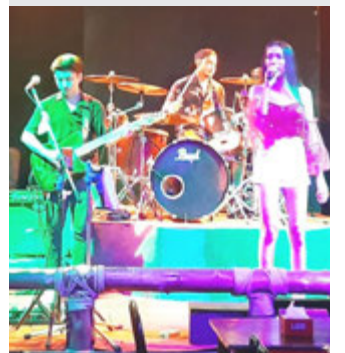
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Thailand Pass entry quietly draws to a close



**LIFE** PAGE 9

Andy Tong Dee gets rocking to Thai music



**SPORT** PAGE 16

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**PATRICK**  
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# News



**Warning shot for Patong motorbike taxi drivers > p5**

## Crew rescued as large waves sink cargo boat

A CAPTAIN AND SEVEN crewmen on a cargo boat were rescued near Koh Khai on Monday (July 4) after their boat sank in heavy seas while heading for Phi Phi Island.

Sophiya Wattanasong notified Marine Police at 2:30pm that her vessel *Andaman Smooth* 999 was in distress and taking on water.

Marine Police dispatched a rescue boat, and other commercial boats in the area joined the search for the vessel.

The boat was found taking on water near the Koh Khai islands at 3:50pm. Cargo was scattered beside the ship amid strong waves, with the seven captain and crew still on board.

The seven were brought safely onto Marine Police boat TR 331 before the *Andaman Smooth* sank, with cargo still on board.

Suree Rattanasong, manager of Unity Co Ltd, which operated the *Andaman Smooth* 999, said the boat departed Unity Pier in Krabi at 12:30pm.

At that time the weather was calm and safe for the boat to leave port, he said.

After about 20 minutes, the operator lost contact with



Photo: Krabi Marine Police

the boat and contacted the authorities and called other boats in the area to render assistance..

After the rescue it was learned that the *Andaman Smooth* had encountered large waves, causing structural damage to its bow, leading to the boat taking on water. The crew were unable to make repairs to prevent the large volume of water pouring into the boat, which eventually sank.

Mr Suree said it was too early to give a defined value for the cargo and boat lost to the sea, but were together easily worth several million baht.

The boat sinking on Tuesday came on the anniversary of the sinking of the *Phoenix* tour boat on July 5, 2018. The *Phoenix* capsized and sank in storm conditions southeast of Phuket, killing 47 Chinese tourists. *Eakkapop Thongtub*

## Storm waves surge, swamp coastal roads

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Traffic police early this week urged motorists to drive with caution, especially on coastal roads along beachfronts after two roads were swamped by large waves pushing debris across the road surface last Sunday (July 3).

Officers were called to the beachfront road in Kalim, north of Patong, on Monday (July 4) to clear the road of excess water and debris after large waves battered the shore there.

At the northern end of the island, officers were called to clear excess water and debris from the northbound section of Thepkrasattri Rd passing along the Sai Kaew beachfront just before the bridge heading off-island.

Traffic Police at Tha Chatchai eventually redirected off-island traffic away from the shorefront road at Sai Kaew as a safety precaution.

After passing through the Phuket Checkpoint, ve-



Storm waves surged onto the road heading off-island at Sai Kaew Beach, in Mai Khao. Photo: Tha Chatchai Police

hicles heading to Phang Nga were redirected to loop back and make their way to the Srisoonthorn Bridge by using the road usually dedicated to on-island traffic only.

Police urged motorists to drive slowly and exercise caution. Traffic cones were placed to separate traffic flow and officers were on duty to direct motorists.

The heavy rain on Monday morning caused long tailbacks at many locations across the

island. Traffic over Patong Hill early in the morning was nearly at a standstill.

Chief Administrative Officer of the Phuket Provincial Office (Palad) Somprat Prab-songkhram late last Sunday issued an order for all disaster officials on the island to monitor the situation in their respective areas and be on alert to take action where necessary.

The Thai Meteorological Department (TMD) on

Monday re-issued its weather warning for strong wind-waves in the upper Andaman Sea, with waves averaging two to three metres in height, reaching up to three metres in thundershower areas.

The weather warning was later re-issued, extended through to Wednesday this week (July 6).

All ships should proceed with caution and keep clear thundershowers, the warning noted.

"Small boats in the upper Andaman Sea should keep ashore until July 6," the warning added.

Previous weather advisories issued over last weekend warned of heavy downpours across the Gulf of Thailand and across the Eastern, North-eastern and even Northern regions of Thailand, attributed to fallout from Typhoon Chaba, which at that time was lashing the coast of Southern China.

People were warned to beware thunderstorms, strong winds, heavy to very heavy rain and accumulated rain which may cause flash floods.

## Expulsion, blacklisting penalties for overstay now back in effect

Continued from page 1

...because the visa company had failed to return them must apply for a new passport, immigration officers advised.

Foreigners who have applied for a new passport – and have already filed a police report – will not be arrested while on the streets, the representative said the group was told.

Any victims without their passport returned who do not have enough time to apply and be issued a new passport will have to leave the country. Immigration officers advised the foreigners to obtain an Emergency Travel Document from their embassy in order to leave the country.

"They will fall into the 90-day overstay and face the current reality [law] that their names will be entered into the immigration system that they have overstayed and face a one-year blacklist of entering back into Thailand," the representative said.

Even those who have had their passport returned, without the visa extension as promised by the visa companies, and have overstayed by 90 or more days will also see no mercy.

"Everyone who has overstayed 90 or more days will have to pay the

**PHUKET IMMIGRATION HELP CENTER**

Phuket Immigration opens channels to receive complaints for foreigners residing in Phuket and affected by Broker/Visa Renewal Agent.

Foreigners can make a complaint or make an appointment at the hotline number: 0864077763 or 076221905 ext. 110.

By preparing the following documents

1. Passport or copy of passport
2. Evidence of action against the company/agent about visa
3. Evidence of legal proceedings such as documents, reports, etc. (if any)
4. Other related information

**0864077763**  
**076221905 ext 110** **HOTLINE**

B20,000 fine and will need to leave Thailand," the representative said.

"They will be blacklisted for one year. If they want to join the lawsuit against the company they must first make the police report, then find someone to represent them in court and be prepared to leave Thailand.

"No time frame has been given before they have to leave Thailand. I assume that according to Thai law they need to leave the same day you pay your overstay," she added.

### PUBLIC SILENCE

At time of press, Phuket Immigration and its superintendent Col Thanet

Sukchai had yet to give any public statements or give any advice or explanations to victims about what penalties they may face.

The move to enforce the expulsion from Thailand and blacklist penalties for 90-day overstay is the first time they have been reintroduced since they were suspended during the COVID pandemic, when travel out of Thailand was nigh impossible.

The meeting at the main Phuket Immigration Office in Phuket Town last Friday came after Phuket Immigration issued its sole public notice recognising the situation.

The notice urged any foreigners af-

ected by a visa broker or visa renewal agency, by taking their passports, and their money, but failing to have their visa stays extended on their behalf to contact the Phuket Immigration Help Center at 086-4077763 or 076-221905 ext 10.

The notice asked foreigners to have the following documents prepared before contacting the Help Center:

Passport or copy of passport  
Evidence of action against the company/agent about the visa  
Evidence of legal proceedings such as documents, reports etc (if any)  
Other related information

"Foreigners may file a formal complaint through the hotline or make an appointment to receive assistance," the notice read.

While the scale of the problem has been largely ignored while being played out on social media channels in English, the news of the widespread scam has made its way into mainstream Thai-language news.

Of note, ThaiPBS in their report marked that money defrauded from foreigners by the visa companies by not providing the solicited service amounted to as much as B3 million.

### STALLING

Phuket City Police Chief Col Sarawut Chuprasit last week vowed to prosecute visa agents who have deceived tourists.

However, as of last Friday (July 1), representatives from the Siam Corp visa company had yet to present themselves at Phuket City Police Station.

Victims were told last Friday that police had to first request the company representatives to present themselves. If the request were ignored, police could then issue a summons for representatives to present themselves. If the summons were ignored, police could then move to have arrest warrants issued.

The delay in action is contributing to the problem, the group representative told *The Phuket News*.

"Many of the victims are still under 90 days' overstay. They should be able to sort their problems out and become legal again. But without their passports... [that cannot be done]," she said.

"Despite that over 100 people have filed police reports, the process has not been expedited, so many people who have not had their passports returned have no way of getting them back," she said.



# Easing of Thailand Pass blanked

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket officials have yet to recognise the first international tourists to arrive in Phuket without having to register through the Thailand Pass system or be required to have US\$10,000 COVID insurance, despite an instant uptick in the number of arrivals recorded on July 1.

Phuket Immigration marked a noticeable increase in the number of international arrivals on July 1, the first day of the new eased entry measures that are hoped to help Phuket's tourism industry recover.

Immigration officers at the airport reported 4,824 arrivals on July 1. Previously for weeks the number hovered in the mid- to high-3,000s, dipping to the 2,000s once a week and spiking into the low-4,000s once a week.

The new entry measures for foreigners entering the country came into effect last Saturday. Tourists are no longer required to register through the Thailand Pass system and no longer required to have US\$10,000 COVID insurance.



Officials were happy to mark the last tourist to arrive under the Thailand Pass scheme (pictured), but not show the public how the first tourists without a Thailand Pass were welcomed. Photo: HKT Quarantine

However, international arrivals must present evidence of vaccination for COVID-19, or present negative results from a professionally administered antigen test (ATK) performed within 72 hours of departure.

Airports of Thailand (AoT) staff at Phuket International Airport on July 1 reported the first arrivals under the new relaxed entry measures

in a post that was taken down within hours of being posted.

The post, marked as issued by the Special Affairs and Public Relations Division at the Phuket Airport Administration Department, noted that Phuket airport General Manager Monchai Tanode and accompanying staff were on hand to welcome the arrivals. The post included photos

showing the staff warmly welcoming the tourists.

AoT Phuket explained that officials were also on hand to randomly spot-check arrivals for proof of vaccination for COVID-19 or testing negative by ATK within 72 hours of departure, as required under the new entry measures.

"If a passenger is not vaccinated or has not received the

vaccine as scheduled, [officers] will perform an ATK examination for passengers. and if found that the said passenger is infected will proceed for the airline to return immediately," the post said.

A press conference was to be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the domestic terminal building at the airport at 2:50pm, the post noted. However, no report of that presentation has been released.

Instead, AoT Phuket last Saturday noted an inspection of the airport by Phuket Vice Governor Pichet Panapong to confirm the airport's "readiness" to receive a delegation of representatives from the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) later this month as part of Thailand's bid for Phuket to host World Specialised Expo in 2028.

At last report by Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew, the BIE delegation is not to arrive in Phuket until July 25.

However, health officials stationed at the airport through a post online marked the last person to be cleared to enter Phuket under the Thailand Pass requirements.

The tourist, unnamed in the post, was marked as the

"3,492<sup>nd</sup> passenger" to be processed by authorities under the Thailand Pass system "before closing the mission of Thailand Pass at 24.00 on June 30, 2022."

The health officials defended the Thailand Pass registration and authorisation process. "Blamed on occasions for not being able to respond to people all over the place, but Thailand Pass has done its best when the country needs some tools to help screen safe travelers for the safety of the people of the country and for the balance of life," the post said.

"Nothing is perfect in a crisis. In an emergency we just to come together and think and work together so we can move forward," the health officials continued.

"Thailand Pass may not create the kind of smile that you like, like the Thai girls volleyball team or Thepbiphuriphol, but we are happy that Thailand Pass has come to be part of the operation at the international infectious disease control checkpoints and will develop to be useful in the future.

"We will miss you 'Thailand Pass'," the officials said.

## Flights delayed, diverted as runway gets emergency repairs

ALL FLIGHTS AT PHUKET INTERNATIONAL Airport were suspended last Sunday afternoon (July 3) while emergency repairs were made to the runway.

Pilots first reported at around 12:40pm that a section of the runway where aircraft land was damaged, explained Pakin Sirichan of Airports of Thailand (AoT) Phuket.

All flights were suspended while an inspection was carried out, and confirmed that a patch of runway covering 10 metres by four metres had been damaged.

The suspension left five flights in a holding pattern waiting to land, Mr Pakin said.

The runway was then closed from 1pm-1:30pm while emergency repairs were made, after which the five flights were allowed to land, he added.

However, the runway was closed again from 5pm to 7pm as it needed more comprehensive repairs to allow normal operations to resume, Mr Pakin explained.

Pilots of all inbound flights and flight operators at Phuket airport were informed of the temporary closure ahead of time to allow any changes in flight schedules, he added.

Phuket airport General Manager Monchai Tanode later confirmed that 22 flights in total were affected. *The Phuket News* was informed that some flights were diverted to Krabi.

Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew arrived at the airport in the evening to be



The repairs resulted in suspended flights, and long waits for passengers. Photo: AoT Phuket

briefed on the situation.

Many flights had been delayed, leaving many passengers to wait patiently at the airport.

Normal operations at the airport resumed at about 7:20pm, but by that time the flights that had been delayed had to be scheduled to take off or land while allowing the other flights scheduled for throughout the night to continue. Some passengers had to wait hours.

Governor Narong expressed his appreciation of how the situation was handled.

"After being informed, a Vice Governor came down first and then I came down to help," Governor Narong said.

"The staff had resolved the problem excellently. It must be appreciated when an abnormality is found and the problem is resolved immediately," he added.

"I would like to commend all operators," Governor Narong said.

Eakkapop Thongtub

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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

www.foreca.com

FRI JULY 8



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

SAT JULY 9



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

SUN JULY 10



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

MON JULY 11



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

TUE JULY 12



High: +32°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

WED JULY 13



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

THU JULY 14



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

## Water rescue drill targets tourist safety

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Rescue services and emergency response teams conducted a mass water-rescue exercise at Boat Lagoon Marina in Koh Kaew last week as part of the national police commander's instructions to prepare for an influx of tourists.

The exercise, held on June 29, was organised by Region 8 Police, with Region 8 Police Deputy Commander Maj Gen Saksira Puak-am overseeing the operations, and Phuket City Police Chief Col Sarawut Chuprasit playing the role of incident commander.

Maj Gen Saksira explained the the mass-rescue drill was being held under instructions of national police chief Pol Gen Suwat Jangyodsuk, who had ordered all officers to ready themselves to respond to a variety of security and safety incidents that may affect tourists.

The exercise simulated a tour boat capsizing in the canal near the marina, and the required rescue of "victims" in the water.

Not mentioned in the official reports was that training came six days before the fourth anniversary of the *Phoenix* tour boat disaster, which saw the *Phoenix* tour boat overturn

and sink in storm conditions south of Phuket. The disaster, on July 5, 2018, killed 47 Chinese tourists.

The exercise last week rehearsed a co-ordinated response to the incident involving Marine Police, officers from the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) Phuket office and the Region 18 office, as well as the Marine Department, rescue and emergency medical teams (EMTs)

from local major hospitals and rescue workers from the Kusoldharm Foundation.

"This exercise is for preparing to accommodate tourists from the full opening of the country and to build confidence among people and tourists [sic]," Maj Gen Saksira said.

"Phuket Province is a destination for many tourists because there are popular water attractions, both

beaches and islands. Therefore, we are holding an emergency response drill in the event of a water accident," he said.

"This is to prepare and raise the standard of crime prevention and suppression operations to take care of people, both Thai and foreign tourists, and to enhance the potential of the good image of tourism in Phuket and Thailand," he added.



Photo: PR Phuket



CCTV showed Mr Connell walking along the top of the poolside wall, which was also the side of the building, before he slipped and fell. Image: Supplied

## Tourist dies in resort rooftop fall

A 19-YEAR-OLD AUSTRALIAN man from Canberra has died after falling from the sixth floor of a resort in Patong.

Police were called to the scene, a resort next to a restaurant located at 245 Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd, at 5:50pm on June 29.

Patong Police Chief of Investigation Lt Col Kokiatt Boonplod arrived with fellow officers to find the body of the young man protruding through the roof of a restaurant next door to the resort.

The man was identified as Joshua James Connell, 19, from Canberra.

A friend travelling with Mr Connell and staying at the same resort, said the pair had checked into the resort on June 28.

Police questioned the friend, and confirmed they are continuing their investigation into the young man's death.

It was later revealed that Mr Connell had fallen from the sixth-floor rooftop pool area after he slipped while walking along a wall at the side of the swimming pool which also served as the side of the building.

Police have not released any further comment on the incident.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Ghost-driving on main road lands man only B500 fine

POLICE HAVE FINED A MAN B500 for driving his car in the wrong direction along a busy section of Thepkrasattri Rd in Koh Kaew.

Police confirmed the fine after tracking down the man, whose name was not released to the public.

The man, "Mr A", 35, was approached by Phuket City Police officers at his home (area undisclosed) on June 28, said a report of his arrest.

Police were made aware of Mr A's driving antics just one day earlier, on June 27, after a clip was posted online showing his yellow Mitsubishi Lancer driving in the wrong direction along the southbound lanes of Thepkrasattri Rd at about 3:30pm.

He drove along the wrong side of the road for about 200 metres until the U-turn at Baan Sapam, where he crossed the lanes in order to move to the correct side of the road for the direction he was travelling.

"Subsequently, Pol Lt Col Thanapisit Muangchan, Deputy Commander (Inspector) of Phuket City Police Station, along with others conducted an in-depth investigation," said the police release.

Mr A was taken to Phuket City Police Station and fined B500 for his



Police tracked down the man after a video clip posted online showed him driving down the wrong side of Thepkrasattri Rd.

traffic violation.

Mr A assured officers that he would not violate traffic rules again and said that he regretted this incident, said the police report.

Phuket City Police Col Sarawut Chuprasit said "he did not hesitate" after being informed of the incident and had ordered officers to track down the car through its licence plate.

"There are many cars on the road, so respecting traffic rules is important, because it makes it safer for people and tourists [sic]," Col Sarawut said.

Eakkapop Thongtub



# Patong motorbike taxi riders told to be polite

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Patong Police Chief Col Sujin Nilabadee last week called in Patong motorbike taxi drivers to make sure they understood they must be legally registered taxi drivers, and called on them to be polite, helpful hosts.

The reminder of what was expected of motorbike taxi drivers came at a meeting held at Patong Police Station on June 28.

The meeting was called following concern expressed by Phuket Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Sermphan Sirikong, said an announcement released by Patong Police.

The aim was for public motorcycle operators to “build a good image and be a good host”, the announcement said.

Concerns about people being deceived by call centre gangs and the need to behave in a manner that supports the bid to host the Specialized Expo 2028, were also given as reasons for holding the meeting.



Photo: Patong Police

Patong Police Deputy Superintendent (Investigation) Lt Col Phum Semworanon read out the requirements.

Top of the list was, “Let there be no quarrel or injure each other because Patong is a top tourist destination of Phuket.”

That point follows one motorbike taxi driver being involved in a fight with five tuk-tuk drivers on the Patong beach road on June 18.

Patong Police later reported that the drivers had resolved their differences, despite the fight starting over a customer.

The second point was for motorbike taxi drivers to beware call centre gangs, which had “caused people to lose a lot of their assets from being deceived.”

“Please be careful and don’t be fooled,” Lt Col Phum said.

All motorbike taxi drivers were to be aware of – and comply with – the requirements of being legally registered, and were to abide by the required dress code.

Operators of motorbike taxi queues, called “win” in Thai, are to compile complete, accurate and up to date re-

cords of all their drivers.

“Also, taxi queues must not affect traffic conditions or infringe on rights or affect the interests of the public, such as parking on the sidewalk, obstructing traffic, etc,” Lt Col Phum said.

All motorbike taxi operators were asked to acknowledge and be ready to comply with the requirements set out at the meeting.

The motorbike taxi drivers were also warned that their licences may be revoked if they breached any of the conditions.

# Parking spat ends with tyres slashed

A DISPUTE OVER A MAN parking too close to another car in front of a restaurant on the Kalim beachfront ended with one man’s tyres slashed.

Patong Police over the weekend reported that the incident happened in front of Sontum Yum Pao restaurant at about 5:24pm on June 21.

Police were informed of the incident and ordered to track down the perpetrator, said the report.

The two were brought to Patong Police Station to resolve their differences, the report noted.

Neither of the two men involved in the dispute were named in the police report.

The “injured person” had parked his Bangkok-registered white Mitsubishi sedan in the parking area in front of the restaurant, but the “perpetrator” quickly confronted him over parking too close.

The “perpetrator” said he was unable to back his car out of his parking space without scratching the other man’s car.

An argument ensued, ending with the man with the white Mitsubishi sedan walking into the restaurant to enjoy his meal.



Photo: Patong Police

The other man, however, walked off only to return with a knife and slash the tyres on the car.

After being called to present themselves at Patong Police Station, the two had resolved their differences amicably, said the police report.

The “injured party” had agreed to receive B1,000 as compensation for damages to his tyres.

The man did not want to pursue legal action, the police report said.

The report cited Phuket Provincial Police Chief Maj Gen Sermphan Sirikong as ordering the report to be issued so people were aware of what had happened.

He also called on people in the Patong area to “be good hosts” in order to “maintain the image of Patong as a tourism destination”.

The Phuket News

## Underwater tremors rattle off Nicobar

LOCAL DISASTER OFFICIALS ARE keeping close watch on a series of underwater earthquakes that saw 17 tremors strike some 530 kilometres northwest of Phuket within 24 hours on Monday-Thursday (July 4-5).

The Phuket Info Center, operated by the Phuket office of the Ministry of Interior, reported the series of submarine earthquakes, noting reports by the non-government Phuket Earthquake Monitoring and Surveillance Center, which also goes by the name ‘Phuket SOS’.

The series began with a 4.7-magnitude earthquake at a depth of 10km off the coast of the Nicobar Islands, about 540km northwest of Phuket, at 12:35pm Monday.

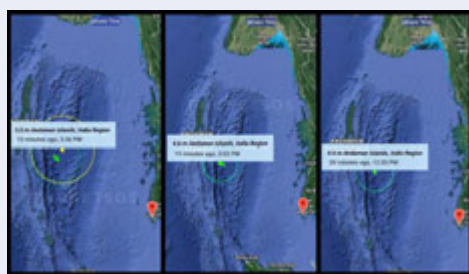
The next earthquake, with a magnitude of 4.9, also struck at a depth of 10km off the coast of the Nicobar Islands, about 550km northwest of Phuket, at 3:02pm.

PhuketSOS reported 15 more tremors from then through to 9:34am Tuesday, with most of the underwater earthquakes registered 4.5-5.1M in strength, occurring mostly at a depth of 10km, and all occurring within 510-560km of Phuket.

At time of press the National Disaster Warning Center (NDWC) had yet to make any statements on the underwater tremors.

The reporting of the underwater earthquakes by the Phuket Info Center came while both tsunami-warning buoys under the care of the NDWC are offline.

Thailand’s Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) announced last month that it had launched an



In total 17 underwater earthquakes struck off the Nicobar Islands on Monday-Tuesday (July 4-5). Images: PhuketSOS

operation to recover one of the tsunami-warning buoys, Station 23461, located some 340km northwest of Phuket after it stopped transmitting data.

The other buoy that the DDPM operates as part of a multinational tsunami-warning array set up in the Indian Ocean has been recovered, reported state news agency NBT, citing DDPM officials.

The second buoy stopped transmitting data in October last year. However the DDPM decided to wait until the scheduled mission to replace or repair the buoy every two years was dispatched to take any action in recovering it.

“The DDPM said both buoys will be replaced with newer ones, with installation to take place in November amid more favorable weather conditions,” the NBT report said.

The DDPM in its report assured that Thailand was still protected by a tsunami-warning system as the two buoys were only part of the Indian Ocean tsunami-alert network. The Phuket News

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# Tourism revival stumbles on

## Lack of flights, rising fuel costs blamed for tepid tourism response

Bangkok Post

Insufficient inbound international flights and surging airfares are challenging the recovery arc for the Thai tourism industry as the country pins its hopes on the upcoming high season in its quest to welcome 10 million tourists this year, according to the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT).

TAT Governor Yuthasak Supasorn said the number of international flights stands at only 30% of the pre-pandemic level. He said to help revive the whole industry, the country should have at least 55% of the airline seat capacity recorded prior to the pandemic, which could happen during the fourth quarter as Korean Air and Air Canada have confirmed their schedules for non-stop services.

Air Canada plans to commence its first direct route from Vancouver to Bangkok with four flights a week using Boeing 787 jets from Dec 1, 2022 until Apr 17, 2023. Korean Air made a commitment to the TAT during its recent visit to Seoul that it would



Foreign visitors queue to check in for their flights at Suvarnabhumi airport. Photo: Somchai Poomlard / Bangkok Post

resume flights to Thailand in the fourth quarter.

However, many airlines are reluctant to expand their routes or increase frequencies as several global uncertainties threaten profit prospects, including hefty operational

costs caused by soaring fuel prices as well as the longer flying time required to avoid the skies above the Russian-Ukraine combat zone.

"Tourists face higher travel costs, particularly from inflation and airfares, which have

increased by 20-40%. The TAT is working with airlines, both scheduled and chartered services, to roll out joint promotions to help offset those costs. However, for Europe's summer season in August, it might be too late to prepare

any stimulus packages," said Mr Yuthasak.

Hotel operators indicated the average occupancy rate should reach 55% to benefit the whole supply chain, but the current flow of tourists is not strong enough to persuade

more hotels to reopen and bring back their employees.

According to the Tourism Council of Thailand (TCT), the average occupancy rate in Thailand stands at 34%, while 80% of properties have revenue of less than 50% of the level recorded before the pandemic.

Chamnan Srisawat, president of the TCT, said a labour shortage could be a major hindrance during the upcoming high season if arrivals do reach government targets.

He said hotels that need to recruit more workers will find hiring difficult if offering similar wages as before, given inflation, the likelihood of a higher minimum wage this year, and the insecurity of hospitality jobs.

Mr Chamnan said companies and the TAT are joining to offer a "Booster Shot" project along with the Centre for Economic Situation Administration, aiming to create a million jobs in the tourism sector this year by offering airline seats and room nights in smaller hotels with discount prices.

## PM 'upbeat' over tourist numbers

PRIME MINISTER Prayut Chan-o-cha is upbeat after hearing the Kingdom is expected to welcome over 9 million inbound international visitors and generate B1.27 trillion by the end of the year, said government spokesman Thanakorn Wangboonkongchana.

The premier has been informed of a turnaround in arrival numbers since the beginning of the year when the COVID-19 pandemic began to ease.

From January to June 28, 1.9mn visitors arrived in Thailand, generating B114 billion. Top arrivals by air include nationals from India, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam and the United States. Malaysian, Lao, Cambodian, Vietnamese and Chinese nationals are among the top land-border arrivals.

The cancellation of the Thailand Pass requirement has revitalised cross-border trade, with the number of foreign travellers entering through border passes bouncing back to the highest levels in two years.

For example, the Sadao border pass in Songkhla has



Prayut: Spring in his step. Photo: Bangkok Post

recorded a jump in immigration check-ins by Malaysian and Singaporean nationals at about 5,000 per day. The border pass is expected to welcome more than 100,000 foreign visitors this month.

The Tourism and Sports Ministry says about 2.7mn foreign visitors will travel to Thailand from this month until the end of September.

In the last quarter, about 4.5mn foreign visitors are expected to arrive in the Kingdom, meaning a total of 9.3mn foreign arrivals expected this year. In total, tourism revenue this year is likely to top B1.27trn.

Mr Thanakorn said the Rao Tiew Duay Kan (We

Travel Together) scheme, now extended to the end of October, remains popular.

The promotion offers 1.5mn additional room nights to stimulate local tourism.

Mr Thanakorn said earlier the scheme's extension would be funded by a budget leftover amount estimated at B5.5bn as of May 30. Of that figure, the government is expected to spend B5.1bn to fund the extended scheme.

The spokesman warned that tourism businesses joining the scheme must not mark up the prices of their accommodation, entertainment services and meals.

Bangkok Post

## Ready for BIE inspection for Phuket Expo 2028 bid, urges Governor

PHUKET GOVERNOR NARONG Woonciew has called for all government agencies on the island to ready for an inspection visit by representatives of the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) later this month as part of Thailand's bid for Phuket to host World Specialised Expo in 2028.

The message was first delivered at a meeting at the new Phuket Provincial Hall on Tha Kraeng Rd in Phuket Town on June 28, then delivered again later that same day at a meeting at the old Provincial Hall on Narisorn Rd.

The need for the preparations follows formally presenting its bid to the BIE in Paris late last month, Governor Narong explained.

The bid was presented by a delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, who also serves as the Minister of Public Health. Supporting the bid is the Ministry of Public Health and the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB), said Governor Narong, who also joined the delegation.

The BIE team will perform an inspection of the proposed site of the main convention centre to be used to host the expo, Governor Narong added.

The site, an area of 141 rai 2 ngan 64 square wah in Mai Khao, is to have a "world-class International Health and Wellness Center" operated by Vachira Phuket Hospital, the main government hospital on the island, he said.

"The preparation of the location must be carried out to support the in-depth survey activities of the BIE committee in Phuket on July 25-29," Governor Narong pointed out.

"This is to ensure that all sectors are ready to present themselves as hosts of the



Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew delivering his message on June 28. Photo: PR Phuket

Specialised Expo 2028 in Phuket and ensure that the event proceeds smoothly according to the intended objectives," he added.

"The BIE committee who will come to inspect the area must be most impressed and see the readiness of Phuket to host Expo 2028," he said.

"The private sector is willing to support the province in all matters. Currently, there is a public relations campaign for establishments and hotels, and local residents have been informed of the proposal to host such a world-class event in order for the public to have knowledge and understanding of the bid.

"The BIE committee will ask questions, and we need to be able to answer the committee's questions," Governor Narong explained.

A 'RUN FOR PHUKET EXPO2028' event will be held to promote Phuket's bid to host the expo, he added.

Also discussed was the current state of the road construction project along Route 4027 through Pa Khlok, and the project to improve the road connecting Baan Para to Muang Mai. The Phuket News



# COVID spike 'no surprise' after country reopens

## BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

The number of new COVID-19 infections has picked up and is expected to continue rising in the next 10 weeks particularly in Bangkok and other provinces which are expecting an influx of tourists, health authorities warned on Monday (July 4).

A rise has already been observed and is projected to continue, even though the new peak is unlikely to be anywhere near the previous high when the Omicron variant dominated coronavirus cases in Thailand, said Dr Chakarat Pittayawonganon, director of the Bureau of Epidemiology.

"Higher vaccination rates are slowing the rise in new infections which is predicted to peak in September when about 4,000 new cases are expected per day," he said.

The latest relaxation of most COVID-19 restrictions, starting last Friday (July 1), has been seen as the key factor in the growing number



Dr Chakarat Pitayawonganon gives a COVID-19 situation overview on Monday (July 4). Photo: Bangkok Post

of new cases, Dr Chakarat explained.

Additionally, the BA.4 and BA.5 sub-variants are expected to soon become dominant in Thailand as well.

It was found that 78.3% of new cases diagnosed in random tests on foreigners were of the BA.4 and BA.5 sub-variants, while only about 50.3% of the new cases among Thais were found to be caused by the new strains.

However, while vaccinations followed up with booster shots of existing COVID-19 vaccines may not be effective

in preventing the spread of these new sub-variants, it is hoped that the severity of symptoms will still be diminished.

A low percentage of COVID-19 deaths has been reported in the UK and the US where 73% and 67% respectively of the population is well vaccinated with booster shots, while a higher percentage of deaths is being observed in South Africa where only 32% of the population is vaccinated.

Nevertheless, France still has a high rate of COVID-19 deaths despite its high vac-

cination coverage of up to 78% of the population, Dr Chakarat warned.

"In Thailand, the cumulative number of COVID-19 patients suffering lung infections rose from 630 to 677 this week, which corresponded with the increase in cases," he said.

"Most of the new clusters were reported in Bangkok, the surrounding provinces, provinces that are the country's main tourist destinations or in the southern border areas."

COVID-19 prevention measures, including face-mask wearing and social distancing, are still highly recommended among at-risk groups, advised Dr Chakarat.

Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul insisted the country's healthcare system is ready to cope with this expected increase in the weeks to come and urged people to get the proper booster shot.

"Thailand is capable of taking care of new COVID-19 patients and will do whatever it takes to continue to steer the economy without harming risking public health," Anutin said.



## Former deputy minister gets the death penalty

## BANGKOK

THE APPEALS COURT sentenced a former deputy minister of commerce to death last Friday (July 1) for the murder of a judge's brother.

The death penalty, instead of life imprisonment as earlier imposed, went to Banyin Tangpakorn, 58, who was earlier found guilty of murdering Veerachai Sakuntaprasert, the elder brother of judge Panida Sakuntaprasert.

On Feb 4, 2020, Ms Panida was assigned to the share-transfer case involving Banyin and billionaire contractor Chuwong Saetang when the Criminal Court sentenced Banyin to eight years for document forgery.

Banyin had been at the wheel when Chuwong died in a car accident shortly after the B266 million share-transfer was completed in 2015, which

later left police suspecting foul play.

Fearing for her safety while on the case, Ms Panida asked her brother to meet her every day after work. In early February 2020, three to four men kidnapped Veerachai from in front of the court and pressured Ms Panida to dismiss the case. Veerachai's bruised body was later found in a river in Nakhon Sawan.

A suspect was caught, who claimed Banyin was behind the plot. Banyin was later arrested and handed down life imprisonment in December 2020 for his confession in the murder case.

Banyin was a former two-time Pheu Thai MP for Nakhon Sawan and a list MP for Matchima Party earlier. In 2000, he served as a deputy minister of commerce in the Samak Sundaravej and Somchai Wongsawat administrations. *Bangkok Post*



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# Despicably good family fun

David Griffiths

Chances are if you are a parent you have heard of the Minions, those cute little yellow creatures that rarely say things that the average human can understand – except of course unless that word is “BANAN-AS!!!”

It is hard to believe that these cute little guys have been in our lives for 12 years now. Of course they first appeared in *Despicable Me* way back 2010 and since then have appeared in two more *Despicable Me* films as well as their own spin-off feature film and a number of shorts. The one thing that cinema audiences have always been guaranteed across all of those films is that they have been funny and entertaining for the whole family.

Now the Minions and their criminal overlord Gru (Steve Carrell – *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*) return in *Minions: The Rise of Gru*. This time around directors Kyle Balda (*The Lorax*), Brad Ableson (*Minions: Holiday Special*) and Jonathan del Val (*The Secret Life of Pets 2*) take fans right back to show how Gru and his team of Minions not only first met but how their journey towards world domination started.

The film goes back to a pre-teen Gru that idolises a group of super-villains led by the notorious Belle Bottom (Tara-ji P. Henson – *Hidden Figures*) and hopes to become a villain himself one



day. His dreams seem to be coming true when a vacancy opens up within The Vicious 6 and Gru is selected for a job interview with them. However, at the interview he learns that the vacancy has been because of the disappearance of his favourite member, Wild Knuckles (Alan Arkin – *Argo*). Not only that but Belle Bottom and the remaining super-villains laugh at him for being a child.

Determined to prove that he is a villain Gru steals a valuable, ancient Chinese artefact while the villains are distracted. His plan is to take it back in a few days to show his worth to Belle

Bottom. However, that plan fails when one of the overzealous Minions loses the artefact, which means once the group hunts down Gru, his life is at risk. Soon the Minions find themselves on a journey to not only find the stone but to save Gru's life.

Just like the other films that have built up the Minions' world, the first thing that hits you with this film is just how much fun it is. The screenwriting team, comprising Brian Lynch (*Puss In Boots*) and Matthew Fogel (*The Lego Movie 2*), has made sure that this is the perfect family film; it appeals to both

parents and children alike.

The key to that working is the fact that not only is the film set in the 1970s but it contains the same kind of humour and storyline that generations of animation fans have enjoyed.

Likewise, it doesn't do anything too fancy with the plot. True fans will also notice that so many jigsaw pieces from right across the series fall into place with this film. From Gru first meeting Dr Nefario (Russell Brand – *Arthur*) through to Gru first hiring the Minions, all is revealed and explained this time around.

The other thing that makes *Minions: The Rise of Gru* so special to watch is that all of the characters are voiced by an avalanche of stars that include Jean-Claude Van Damme, Michelle Yeoh, Dolph Lundgren, Lucy Lawless, Danny Trejo, RZA and Julie Andrews.

If you are looking for the perfect film for the entire family then go no further than *Minions: The Rise of Gru*. This is a very special animated film that will be lapped up by fans of the franchise and is an absolute must see.

*Minions: The Rise of Gru* is currently screening in Phuket and is rated 'G'.

4/5 Stars

David Griffiths has been working as a film and music reviewer for over 20 years. That time has seen him work in radio, television and in print. You can follow him at [www.facebook.com/subcultureentertainmentaus](https://www.facebook.com/subcultureentertainmentaus)

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# Rocking in Phuket, Thai style



## PHUKET MUSIC SCENE

Andy Tong Dee

I'm sometimes asked about the best places to go to listen to Thai music, to which I reply, "What kind of Thai music?" For, as in Western music, there is a variety of genres including pop, country, protest, rock, Isan and Northern music.

If you want to hear Thai country music, the best place to go is Baan Krua Nok, just meters from the major intersection in Kathu on the way to Patong Hill. Here they have an excellent house band playing country favourites with great passion. If you get bored, another venue playing Thai pop is located just opposite.

As for Thai protest songs, try and find The Factory. If you want a taste of real rural Thailand, this is the place to go. This tiny ramshackled Thai bar is tucked in next to the Phuket Leather Shop on Phuket Rd in Phuket Town and is run by its owner, Khun Aek. There's no point in getting there before 9:30pm as that's when people will start drifting in to play their Carabao songs (Thailand's equivalent to Bob Dylan). This is very much an open mic venue, so you might even find me there knocking out Woody Guthrie numbers and 'The Times They are A-Changing!' Friday and Saturday nights are best.



Live music at Somtam Saep Gern in Chalong.

As for noisier Thai pop, There is a very popular Thai music venue on the Seahorse traffic circle a half-kilometre east of Robinson Department Store in Phuket Town. It was pretty moribund until a few years ago when it was refurbished under new management.

The fun starts early, at 6:30pm with DJ Khun Bee playing warm-up tunes before the first band takes the stage at 7:30pm, playing Thai and Western pop. Occasionally, bands with a national following play here as well as at 'Ploenchit', an even noisier venue about 200 metres away. Ploenchit moved there a few years ago from the old town (now

found online as 'เพลินจิต x Phuket'). You will find some similar, smaller and equally-deafening venues nearby.

If you're looking for a different and quieter style of music, there is the Sure Pub, again in Phuket Town. It's down by the canal on the Takuapa Rd a few hundred metres south of the Baan Suzuki motorcycle showroom. This caters to lovers of 'Phleng phuea chiwit' (Songs of Life). This is a genre of Thai folk music strongly influenced by Western folk and rock music. The excellent four-piece house band plays from around 8:30pm onwards. No need for ear plugs here.

I can also firmly recommend

the Dibuka and Night and Day restaurants opposite each other on Dibuk Rd, Phuket Town. They are great for small Thai ensembles and bands and they are also good places to eat. Here they play Thai pop, but far less noisily than venues around the Seahorse traffic circle. You'll also find a couple of small music venues popular with Thai youngsters just around the corner near the Standard Chartered Bank clocktower.

If you are in Chalong, why not try out Somtam Saep Gern, a venue much like the Thai pop venues around the Seahorse traffic circle. It's about 500m from the Chalong Circle on the right on the way to Kata. They have live bands all week. Ear plugs required.

Finally, if in Rawai, check out The Sunshine Bar a third of the way down the beach road. It's not a live music venue, but it's still one of my regular hangouts and great fun if you get there early about 7pm. It's then the staff do formation dancing to Isan dance music and a little singing too. Climb the pole in the middle and ring the bell and you'll get a stimulating free Thai beverage. Now that's a bonus!

*Andy Tong Dee is a local expat, musician and live music enthusiast. You can find out more about Phuket's bands and venues at [www.phuketmusicscene.com](http://www.phuketmusicscene.com).*

*Andy would like to thank local Thai music enthusiast Simon Godwin for his help in researching this article.*



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### POP QUIZ

- What height is the grass on the tennis courts at Wimbledon cut to?
- Can pigs swim?
- What percentage of the London Underground is actually underground?
- What is the boiling point of alcohol?
- What is Paul McCartney's middle name?

Answers below, centre

### SUDOKU

Easy

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

### Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

- Stylish, in the 60's
- Asian area
- Rapture
- Hidden winner, \_\_\_ in the hole
- Get too many
- Lode load
- Wizard of Oz footwear
- African flower
- Encounterer
- Card game
- Footnote abbr.
- Live
- Airs
- Drudge
- Bust
- Pan type
- Field of play
- Flowering plant
- Cheer starter
- Flock
- Principle of life, in Hinduism
- Fancy neckwear
- Military Order, for short
- Overcoats
- Darth Veda's side
- Cool one's heels
- Destructive pest

Down

- Rattle
- Eyepiece
- Fillet
- In place of
- Blvd.
- Saxophonist, Joshua
- Leprechaun land local
- Fully fit
- Legal action
- Create an email
- "Mud"
- "Catch-22" pilot
- Go word
- Vote of support
- Before the finals
- In a consistent manner
- Eustacian area related
- Poi source

- Cosmetics company
- Advance
- Elaborate display
- Bummed
- Spots
- Nor partner
- Agave rug fiber
- Bee \_\_\_
- M\_\_\_: Chinese owned area
- Craft
- Meadow
- Granola cereal
- Goatees
- Familiarize
- Off course
- Wee hour
- Periodical publications
- Surveyor's work
- Without purpose
- Commuter line
- Squeeze (out)
- "Cool" amount
- Call off
- Biddy
- Swamp

### Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

(1) 8 millimetres; (2) Pigs are excellent swimmers; (3) 45%; (4) 78°C (173°F); (5) Paul. His first name is actually James.

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

### Solutions to last week's puzzles:

1 8 millimetres; 2 Pigs are excellent swimmers; 3 45%; 4 78°C (173°F); 5 Paul. His first name is actually James.

### GOT YOUR NUMBER

**3**

of the four smokestacks on the *Titanic* worked. The fourth (furthest aft) was added for symmetry.

**40**

percent of people in Vietnam have the last name 'Nguyen', making it nearly impossible for them to trace their heritage beyond a generation or two.

**168**

errors were found in the film *Armageddon* by NASA who ask managers to spot them as part of their training.

**29,218**

US dollars is the top prize in the Sri Lankan version of the TV game show 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire'?

**5.5 million**

Polish people, one-sixth of the population at the time, signed a card in 1926 as a gift to the US to celebrate 150 years of their independence.

Source: *Uberfacts*

### ISLAND VIEW

Tranquil Palm Beach at Koh Yao Yai. Photo by Olga Kozulina

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

### This week in history

**July 8, 1947**  
Reports are broadcast that a UFO crash landed in Roswell, New Mexico, in what became known as the Roswell UFO incident.

**July 9, 2011**  
South Sudan gains independence and secedes from Sudan. 98.83% of South Sudan voted for independence in the referendum in January of the same year (of the 97.58% of the population that voted).

**July 10, 1913**  
The temperature in Death Valley, California, hits 56.7°C (134.1°F), the highest temperature ever recorded on Earth.

**July 11, 1960**  
*To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee is first published, in the United States. The novel has since been translated into 40 languages and sold more than 30 million copies worldwide.

The Rolling Stones, 1965.

**July 12, 1962**  
The Rolling Stones perform their first concert, at London's Marquee Club. Now 60 years later, the band is still performing.

**July 13, 1863**  
In New York City, opponents of conscription begin three days of rioting, one of the most violent uprisings in US history.

**July 14, 1789**  
Citizens of Paris storm the Bastille – King Louis XVI's state prison – signalling the start of the French Revolution.

Source: *Wikipedia*



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**5**  
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**Grow Boating Evening**

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## GROW BOATING NETWORKING EVENING - JULY 01

This month's networking event was held straight after the AGM of the Thai Yachting Business Association (TYBA) and was held at the Isola Restaurant at the Royal Phuket Marina, which sponsored the drinks and food. Look forward to seeing you all again on Aug 5. Follow Grow Boating Phuket on Facebook for updates.

# WINDOW ON PHUKET

**The August/September 2022**  
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# Sainz win marred by horror crash

## FORMULA ONE

Michael Lamonato  
michael@boxofneutrals.com

Carlos Sainz won a chaotic British Grand Prix last Sunday (July 3) to record his maiden Formula 1 victory in a race marred by a horror rollover crash on the first lap.

Max Verstappen had jumped pole-sitter Sainz off the line, but the Dutchman enjoyed only a few corners in the lead before the race was suspended due to a six-car smash at the first turn.

Zhou Guanyu had been rolled upside down by contact with the out-of-control George Russell, who had been tipped into a spin when he accidentally cut across a surging Pierre Gasly.

The Chinese driver skidded the gravel trap along his roll hoop and was pitched into the air at the asphalt apron near the wall, launching his car over the tyre barrier and into the catch fencing designed to protect spectators from debris.

His car thudded to the ground in the narrow space between the back of the tyre wall and the fence, where he had to be extricated by the medical team after a long delay. He was released from the medical centre miraculously uninjured before the end of the race.

Further back, Sebastian Vettel



Ferrari's Carlos Sainz celebrates his victory at the British Grand Prix. Photo: Ben Stansall / AFP

rear-ended Alex Albon as the Thai driver slowed for the accident, sending his Williams into the concrete pit wall and spinning across the track, where he collected Yuki Tsunoda and Esteban Ocon.

Albon was helicoptered to hospital for precautionary checks but was released on Sunday evening.

The race was red flagged, and only Zhou, Albon and Russell were unable to return to the pit lane – Russell had stopped on track to help with Zhou's extrication, but the marshals had collected his car

anyway assuming he was out of the race – and the grand prix resumed in qualifying order because too little of the first lap had been completed before the stoppage.

**NEUTRALISED STRATEGY**  
This time Sainz wasn't to be beaten off the line, and a robust defence against Verstappen, squeezing him onto the first-turn apex to cost him momentum, won him the lead.

Verstappen's victory gambit didn't last the race, with severe floor damage after running over some

debris badly curtailing his pace.

Now behind Sainz was his teammate, Charles Leclerc, who was pressuring his team to let him through. Eventually Ferrari acquiesced, but not until after the pit stop, costing Leclerc precious time to Lewis Hamilton, who was charging in his updated Mercedes and looked set for victory.

The Briton had fresher tyres at the end of the race and was just two seconds behind the Ferrari pair with 13 laps to go when the safety car was called for Ocon's stopped

Alpine, neutralising his strategy.

Ferrari curiously left Leclerc out in the lead on old hard tyres but pitted Sainz for fresh softs, and Hamilton and Sergio Perez behind him did likewise. It left Leclerc defenceless at the restart, and Sainz barged back into the lead with fresh rubber and into a lead he would never come under threat of relinquishing.

"What a day," Sainz said. "Winning my first F1 GP and with Scuderia Ferrari in front of this amazing crowd, at one of my favourite tracks, Silverstone, is literally amazing."

Hamilton didn't have the same blockbuster pace on softs as he expected, and he spent much of the rest of the race in a spectacular wheel-to-wheel duel with Leclerc and Perez, including a memorable double pass on both out of Club, the final corner. He was repassed by Village, this time with Perez taking second place, and had to wait another lap before he could get the job done on Leclerc around the fast Stowe corner.

By then Perez had built himself a decisive buffer, completing an impressive comeback from 17<sup>th</sup> thanks to an early pit stop to repair some damage, to hold 2<sup>nd</sup> place ahead of home-crowd favourite Hamilton in the Mercedes.

"I gave it everything today," Hamilton said. "We've made a step closer to [Red Bull Racing and Ferrari], so we've got to keep pushing."

## Premier League clubs given green light to apply for safe standing

### FOOTBALL

PREMIER LEAGUE clubs have been told they can apply to use safe standing areas from the start of the 2022-23 season.

Chelsea, Manchester City, Manchester United and Tottenham took part in a safe standing pilot in the second half of last season, which proved a success.

The British government has now given the green light for all clubs in the Premier League and Championship to request a safe standing license if they wish.

"Thanks to a robust trial, thorough evidence and modern engineering, we are now ready to allow standing once again in our grounds," UK Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said on Monday (July 4).

"We are not reintroducing terraces and only clubs which meet strict safety criteria will be permitted."

It will mark the end of



Photo: AFP

a blanket ban on standing in the top two tiers of English football which has been in place for more than 25 years.

Clubs had been required to provide all-seated accommodation since August 1994 in the wake of the 1989 Hillsborough disaster, where 97 Liverpool fans were killed in crushing on over-crowded terraces before an FA Cup semi-final against Nottingham Forest.

"Based upon what I have experienced and we have learnt through the pilot programme, safe standing is set to deliver an electric atmosphere at our football stadiums," Sports Minister Nigel Huddleston said on Monday.

AFP

## Best yet to come as Salah signs new Liverpool deal

### FOOTBALL

JURGEN KLOPP SAID MOHAMED Salah's best years are still ahead of him after the Liverpool star ended speculation over his future by signing a new contract last Friday (July 1).

Salah's new deal will reportedly make him the club's highest paid player of all-time on £350,000 (B15 million) a week until 2025.

The 30-year-old had entered the final year of his previous contract with talks stalling over his wage demands.

But tying Salah down to a new deal was key to Liverpool's hopes of continued success under Klopp. In five years at Anfield, the Egypt forward has scored 156 goals in 254 appearances.

"I have no doubt Mo's best years are still to come. And that's saying something, because the first five seasons here have been the stuff of legend," Klopp told Liverpool's website.

Since joining from Roma in 2017, Salah has become a fundamental part of reestablishing Klopp's men as serial contenders for domestic and European success.

He scored in the 2019 Champions League final victory over Tottenham and was the club's top scorer when they won the Premier League for the first time in 30 years in 2020.

Salah has more trophies in his sights after finally putting pen to paper.

"I feel great and excited to win trophies with the club. It's a happy day



Mohamed Salah has committed his future to Liverpool. Photo: AFP

for everyone," he said.

Last season Salah was crowned Premier League player of the year by both players and football writers after scoring 31 goals that took Klopp's men to the brink of a historic quadruple.

They won the League Cup and FA Cup, but missed out on the Premier League title by a point to Manchester City and lost the Champions League final 1-0 to Real Madrid.

Elsewhere, Manchester City have confirmed the signing of England midfielder Calvin Phillips.

The 26-year-old joins from Leeds United for a fee of £45 million and is expected to fill the void created by long-serving Brazilian Fernandinho, who left at the end of last season.

One player leaving The Etihad is Brazilian forward Gabriel Jesus who it was confirmed had signed for Arsenal on Monday for a fee of £45 million.

Jesus, who scored 95 goals in 236 appearances for City, decided to leave the Premier League champions in search of more regular first-team action.

Meanwhile, free agent Christian Eriksen has agreed to join Manchester United on a three-year deal. The Dane played the second half of last season at Brentford after suffering a cardiac arrest playing for his country in June 2021.

However, it seems unlikely Cristiano Ronaldo will be a teammate next season after the Portuguese superstar confirmed he wishes to leave the club, citing family issues as his reason. AFP



# Ratchanok ends drought with Malaysia Open win

## BADMINTON

Bangkok Post

Ratchanok Intanon claimed her first title in two years after winning the US\$675,000 (B23,285,715) Malaysia Open in Kuala Lumpur on Sunday (July 3).

The Thai eighth seed, who also won the tournament in 2016, defeated Tokyo Olympic champion Chen Yufei of China 21-15, 13-21, 21-16 in 65 minutes to win the BWF World Tour Super 750 event at Axiata Arena in the Malaysian capital.

The 26-year-old took home the \$47,250 (B1,630,000) winner's cheque while Chen received \$22,950 (B791,000).

Ratchanok, who won her last title at the Indonesia Masters in 2020, received a congratulatory message from Thai badminton chief Khunying Patama Leeswadtrakul.

"I would like to congratulate May [Ratchanok's nickname] for winning the Malaysia Open title. This time she beat reigning Olympic champion Chen Yufei, the



Ratchanok Intanon poses with her gold medal after her victory against China's Chen Yufei in the women's singles final on Sunday (July 3). Photo: AFP

fourth-ranked player in the world, who has won 15 times in their 17 meetings," she said.

"This time May is in great shape both physically and mentally. She did very well today, especially in the third game.

"She finally was able to beat Chen in the title match after losing to her in three finals [the 2019 Toyota Thailand Open, 2019 Hong Kong Open and the 2022 Indonesia Masters]."

Chen last beat Ratchanok in the final of the US\$360,000 Indonesia Masters in Jakarta on June 12.

The Thai star then suffered a shock 21-15, 16-21, 20-22 loss to Denmark's Line Hojmark Kjaersfeldt in the Indonesia Open Championship on June 16.

Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Sapsiree Taerattanachai were unable to complete a double for Thailand after the mixed doubles pair went down

to arch-rivals Zheng Siwei and Huang Yaqing of China 13-21, 18-21 in the title match.

The men's singles title went to top seed Viktor Axelsen after an easy 21-4, 21-7 win over second seed Kento Momota of Japan in the final.

It was the third straight title for the 28-year-old world number one, who won the Indonesia Masters and the Indonesia Open in Jakarta last month. The Dane also won the All England Open title earlier this year.

The tournament marked the first time Momota has played in Malaysia since he was involved in a car crash there two years ago, which sent his career into free fall.

Apriyani Rahayu and Siti Fadia Silva Ramadhanti of Indonesia took the women's doubles crown with a 21-18, 12-21, 21-19 victory over Zhang Shuxian and Zheng Yu of China.

Second seeds Takuro Hoki and Yugo Kobayashi of Japan were the men's doubles winners, beating sixth seeds Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Rian Adrianto of Indonesia 24-22, 16-21, 21-9.



The Thai team after their loss to Italy on Sunday (July 3). Photo: Volleyball Association of Thailand Facebook

## Women spikers squeeze through to FIVB finals

### VOLLEYBALL

DESPITE LOSING THEIR last match in the final week of the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) Nations League in Bulgaria, Thailand's women have still managed to progress to the finals in Turkey next week.

The Thais lost to Italy 25-20, 25-14, 25-14 in Sofia on Sunday (July 3) to conclude the tournament with a record of one win and three consecutive defeats.

They had previously beat South Korea and lost to the Dominican Republic and Brazil before the encounter with Italy.

"Italy were a stronger team. They sent their best players to the match," Thailand coach Danai Sriwatcharameth-

akul said after the game.

Chatchu-on Moksri led the Thai squad with 10 points, followed by Pimpichaya Kokram with eight.

The Thai spikers ended the qualifying rounds with five wins and seven losses. But they still advanced to the finals after the USA beat Germany 3-1 (25-17, 25-13, 13-25, 25-22) later on Sunday in Calgary, Canada, according to the Volleyball Association of Thailand.

Only the top seven teams, along with hosts Turkey, will play in the finals in Ankara, which starts on Wednesday and runs until Sunday (July 13-17).

Thailand are scheduled to play hosts Turkey in the first quarter-final match on Wednesday (July 13).

Bangkok Post

## Thailand to host 'Air Sea Land' Sports Tourism Festival in south

### ALL SPORTS

THAILAND IS SET TO HOLD AN "Air Sea Land Southern International Sports Tourism Festival" this year in a bid to stimulate the economy of seven provinces in the South of the country.

At a press conference held in Bangkok last Friday (July 1), Tourism and Sports Minister Pipat Ratchakitprakan confirmed that B177 million has been allocated for the project, which is expected to generate more than 10-fold in revenue.

The festival will be held in the southern provinces of Phuket, Songkhla, Satun, Phatthalung, Krabi, Phang Nga and Surat Thani. Sports to be contested include surfing, jet skiing, beach volleyball, football, pencak silat, triathlon, motorcross, adventure racing and e-sports, among others.

Kongsak Yodmanee, Governor of the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT), confirmed that his organisation contributed the majority of the budget to fund the project and it had been liaising closely with the seven local authorities to plan the event in line with international competition standards.

Mr Kongsak also confirmed that the festival will provide each province opportunity to showcase locally sourced and made products and speciality cuisine and beverages while promoting local customs and traditions which will help generate revenue



Photo: The Sports Association of Phuket

and stimulate the respective economies.

Mr Pipat explained that the festival was in line with a national sports tourism strategy established by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha to help drive the economies of provinces around the Andaman Sea and Gulf of Thailand who have been so badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent loss of tourism.

Dr Supranee Guptasa, National Sports Development Fund Manager, said that sports has a unique way of connecting people and that the festival should therefore prove to be successful. It will ensure revenue is generated from travel, accommodation, food and beverage which will benefit the seven local provinces accordingly, she added.

The festival will be promoted by the Tourism Authority Thailand although, at time of press, no specific dates had been set for when it will take place.

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# Sport



**Ratchanok has that winning feeling > p15**

## REGATTA'S BACK!

### Heavy weather fails to dampen spirits as Phuket Raceweek returns



Sailing action returned with Phuket Raceweek last weekend. Photo: Phuket Raceweek

#### SAILING

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Despite inclement weather forcing the final day to be cancelled, the 19<sup>th</sup> Phuket Raceweek held last weekend (July 1-4) was declared a resounding success by all involved, with 200 sailors from 20 countries sailing in 20 boats, divided over six classes.

After perfect conditions for the first three days of the regatta, the weather gods were not so kind on Monday (July 4) when heavy storms forced racing to be curtailed.

However, Principal Race Officer Simon James was still able to schedule six races for

every class, two on each day, so the skippers were allowed to drop their worst performance on the water.

Ray Roberts' *Team Hollywood* landed back in Thailand with a bang, capturing the four-boat IRC Zero class with some nifty sailing and manoeuvring on the water. James Bury and Craig Nicholls' *Alright* came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the class, with Garry Holt's *Let's Get it On* placed 3<sup>rd</sup> and the Douglas/Kettlebey *Ramrod* settling for 4<sup>th</sup>. All four boats were crewed by sailors from Australia who flew up specifically for the occasion.

*Alright* then took top prize in the IRC 1 class. Garry Holt, who bought *Jessandra II* just before the regatta and renamed it *Let's Get it On*, sailed to a

2<sup>nd</sup> place finish. *Ramrod* had trouble with its sails and never really got on track, taking 3<sup>rd</sup> overall in the three-boat class.

The OMR MR Racing Multiclass saw Joel Berg helm Dan Fidock's *Extreme 40 Parabellum* to win each race, drawing the admiration of everyone involved. Warwick Downes' *Bonza* placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the class, followed by Alan Carwardine's *Saffron* and Glywn Rowlands' *Twister 2*.

Alan and Asia Catamarans were also very kind enough to sponsor the third day's racing and prize-giving ceremony.

John Newnham's *Twin Sharks* captured the four-boat Firefly 850 Sport boat class, edging out rival Hans Rahmann's *Voodoo* with Ray Waldron's *Surf Patrol* and

George Eddings' *Blue Nose* coming in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> place respectively.

#### TIGHT BATTLE

The IRC Cruising division was the tightest battle in the regatta as *APW Endeavour of Whitby* and *Phoenix* finished tied atop the leader board with seven points each.

As per tiebreak protocol, *APW Endeavour of Whitby* was named winner courtesy of her highest placed finish in the last race.

Toshiro Furuta's Japanese crew on *Sakura* came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the class, followed by Kirill Stashevsky's *Agata*. Fred Haes' *Venture* finished 5<sup>th</sup>, and *Kantus Bride*, the only all-Thai entry, helmed by Kampon Sutara, was 6<sup>th</sup>.

Tristan Hamilton's *Pulse Grey* swept every race (six in a row) to take the *Pulse 600* class, with Paul "Flatty" Baker skippering *Pulse Yellow*, close behind.

The founders of Phuket Raceweek, Andy Dowden and Grenville Fordham, presented digital and printed versions of their chart book *Southeast Asia Pilot* to the class winners on day three.

They established the regatta in July 2004 as there was no other regional sailing during the summer to take advantage of the good winds brought on by the prevailing southwest monsoon.

The closing party was staged at the host Cape Panwa Hotel with guest of honour Navy 3 Area Command Vice

Admiral Sompong Nakthong on hand to present the final series awards.

A big thank you must go out to Master of Ceremonies Wicky Sundrum for overseeing the opening and closing night festivities, while James Haste did the honours on race days one and three.

Finally, tremendous credit goes to organisers Byron and Rung Jones and the Cape Panwa Hotel staff for executing the regatta so well, especially as approval for the event was only granted at the start of May, leaving them just eight weeks to prepare.

With the luxury of much more notice, Byron has set June 28 - July 2, 2023 as the dates for the 20<sup>th</sup> Phuket Raceweek Regatta.

## Thai athlete walks into history books in Finland

#### ATHLETICS

FORMER NATIONAL TEAM athlete Thanaporn Asawawongcharoen has made history by becoming the first Thai in almost half a century to win a medal at the World Masters Athletics Championships.

Thanaporn won a silver medal in the women's 10,000 metre walking event in the 40-45-year age category last Wednesday (June 29) at the championships being held in Tampere, Finland.

The 44-year-old Thai finished with a time of 1 hour 1 minute and 3 seconds to claim second place behind Spain's Isabel Perez Belloch

who clocked a time of 55m 48s. Heidi Ahvenus of Finland finished third with a time of 1h 2m 43s.

With her podium finish Thanaporn became the first Thai athlete, male or female, to secure a medal at the championships, which have been running since 1975.

The medal success was all the sweeter for Thanaporn as she had to overcome numerous obstacles ahead of the competition which threatened to hinder her performance.

She explained that on arriving at the airport in Finland the luggage belonging to several members of the Thai team was declared lost, including baggage that contained kit and her running shoes.

"It meant we had to rush out to acquire new footwear immediately prior to the event," Thanaporn said on her Facebook page.

"There was no appropriate place to try on and test the new shoes before the race. One particular pair had never even been used before by an athlete in a walking race and were therefore unsuitable," she added.

On the day immediately prior to the event, Thanaporn had a severe migraine that she attributed to the long journey, lack of rest and the stress of having to source new shoes.

"All the stress from the lost luggage situation meant I did not eat or prepare properly," she said. "I managed to eat some bread and rice

and drink some juice but it wasn't the usual preparation for me prior to a big event."

However, despite all the numerous pre-race obstacles, Thanaporn was able to lift her spirits and performance to secure a historic finish on the day of the race.

"The result came from self-confidence as, when you are on the track, you just have to fight to the end, no matter the circumstance," she said after the race.

"I consider it a major life experience and am very proud of what I achieved," she added.

The biennial championships are for track and field athletes aged between 35-80 years. It is open to



All smiles from Thanaporn. Photo: Sports Association Phuket

all male and female athletes and does not require any qualification standards aside from the athletes must be members of their respective national organisation. This year's championships in Tampere runs from June 29 - July 10. *The Phuket News*