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# GRABBED



Tourists take a Grab Taxi from Phuket airport last Friday (Sept 1). Photo: Sukunya Sairaya

## GRAB TAXI BECOMES FIRST TAXI APP ALLOWED AT PHUKET AIRPORT

**Sukunya Sairaya**  
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In a move that opens the door to tourists finally being allowed to choose which taxis to use to and from Phuket International Airport, Grab Taxi last Friday (Sept 1) became the first taxi app service to be allowed to pick up tourists from the island's key tourism portal.

Present for the occasion was Airports of Thailand (AoT) President Dr Kerati Kijmanawat "to inspect the readiness of taxi services provided through the Grab application".

"Service quality, convenience and safety are of utmost importance," he said.

Also present was Monchai Tanode,

General Manager of Phuket International Airport under the Phuket branch of Airports of Thailand (AoT Phuket), joined by Phuket Vice Governor Amnuay Pinsuwan, Sakhu Police Chief Pol Col Salan Tantitsakul and Kornpitak Asawarujan, head of the Transport Division at Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO).

"The popularity of ride-sharing applications among both Thai and international tourists has been growing. Previously, due to the absence of taxi app services, passengers sometimes faced inconvenience and unfavourable situations, having to walk about 500 metres to and from Phuket airport [in order to use taxis ordered via mobile phone apps.]," Dr Kerati admitted.

"Weather conditions, whether hot

or rainy, added to the challenges. Therefore, AoT aims to be a provider of quality airport services," he said.

Grab Taxi is just the first to be approved to serve passengers at the airport, Dr Kerati noted.

More taxi app services are under review for approval, he added.

"AoT has held meetings and discussions regarding safety standards and procedures. In addition to passenger convenience, ensuring passenger safety is paramount. Ride-sharing app operators are required to submit commitments, and AoT will establish safety standards for passenger pick-up and drop-off," he said.

Every vehicle registered as an app taxi intending to pick up passengers at the airport will undergo

scrutiny to prevent any fraudulent or unauthorised activities, such as taking passengers to unwanted locations or tours, Dr Kerati assured.

"AoT is open to all ride-sharing applications to participate. We confirm our willingness to engage with every app, for them to register and to collaborate together to establish a passenger pick-up and drop-off system. We treat all providers equally in this regard," Dr Kerati said.

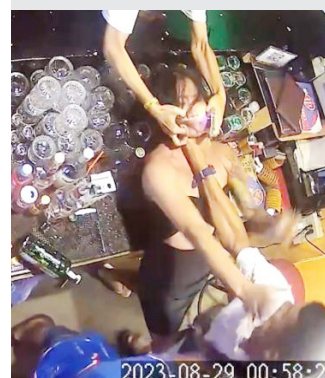
Three other ride-sharing apps have expressed interest and submitted commitments: Asia Cab, Hello Phuket and the AirAsia 'Super' app.

"Negotiations with them are ongoing, and they are expected to be operational soon. Other taxi app providers have not yet submitted...

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**No charges for assault on bar hostess in Rawai**



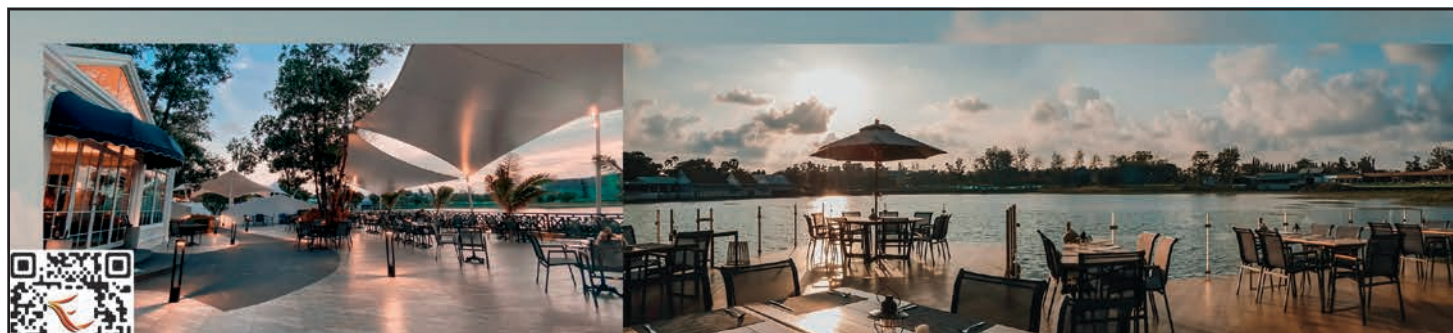
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**Tasty morsels aplenty at Open Kitchen**



**SPORT** PAGE 16

**Local athletes on medal trail at National Games**



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## News



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Photo: Phuket Info Center

## Beach debris probe underway

THE KARON MAYOR has confirmed that officials are still trying to identify the debris that washed ashore at Karon Beach last week.

The debris, first spotted by a lifeguard on patrol and pulled up onto the beach with the aid of tourists on Aug 30, was first believed to be from an aircraft.

An Indian tourist at the beach identified markings on the debris as writing in an Indian language, fuelling speculation that the debris is related to the Indian space programme.

Mayor Jadet offered more caution. "The debris is presently being held at Karon Police Station, awaiting investigation by relevant authorities," he said.

"The responsible parties for investigating this debris cannot be definitively identified, given its uncertain nature. We are unsure of its exact purpose. However,

it is possible that it might be a buoy, as there is no presence of other electronic components, only a wire," Mayor Jadet said.

"Nevertheless, we must await confirmation from the designated officials," Mayor Jadet added.

The debris, initially estimated to weigh over 100kg, has been confirmed to be made of fibreglass, features several fittings and a blue wire connecting several of the components.

Tourists passing by have taken a keen interest in the discovery, with many snapping selfies near the debris.

Meanwhile, more debris was found washed ashore at Biang Niang Beach in Takua Pa District, Phang Nga, north of Phuket, and another large piece of debris seemingly from the same origin was found washed ashore at Kata Noi Beach last Saturday (Sept 2).

*Eakkapop Thongtub*

# Airport taxis reel as Grab forges ahead

*Continued from page 1*  
...commitments," Dr Kerati explained.

App taxis will not be allowed to wait for passengers on airport grounds. Vehicles will only be permitted to pick up and drop off passengers within the designated areas. At the launch last Friday, the designated zone located between the international and domestic terminals was decorated with banners specifically welcoming Grab Taxi drivers.

Dr Kerati pointed out the Phuket airport currently serves about 40,000 passengers a day, with about half of those being international travellers.

"Considering these figures, there is a necessity for public transportation vehicles. Approximately 20% of these passengers use taxi apps, which means vehicles are needed to serve about 8,000 passengers arriving and departing from Phuket Airport each day," he said.

"Previously, passengers may not have experienced the level of convenience they deserved, but the inclusion of ride-sharing app options will significantly enhance the comfort and convenience for tourists," he added.

Phuket Airport GM Mr Monchai noted, "Grab will have designated representatives overseeing the pick-up and drop-off points through the app to ensure that the



AoT President Dr Kerati Kijmanawat. Photo: Sukunya Sairaya

taxis entering these areas are genuinely affiliated with Grab.

"There will be dedicated staff at these points, and if other apps are introduced in the future, additional areas will be allocated for them," he added.

PLTO official Mr Kornpitak confirmed that only vehicles and drivers registered with the PLTO as providing taxi services via an app will be allowed to serve the airport.

The drivers must charge only the fees set out by the Ministry of Transport, as shared by Phuket MP Somchart late last month. The drivers are not allowed to charge passengers any extra fees.

The taxis themselves must feature stickers created by the Ministry of Transport on the front and rear of the vehicle, Mr Kornpitak said.

An additional sticker provided specifically by the PLTO must also be affixed to the

vehicle alongside the others, he added.

### LIMO TALKS

Mr Monchai confirmed that discussions with the 'airport limousine' taxi groups were to take place to address concerns regarding how the introduction of ride-sharing apps may impact their income and operating expenses.

For decades, two taxi co-operatives have each paid AoT millions of baht for the exclusive right to serve passengers at Phuket airport: Phuket Airport Limousine and Business Service Co-Operative Ltd and and Phuket Mai Khao Sakhu Co Ltd.

The multi-year concessions expired in June, and the two co-operatives have been continuing under a four-month extension that expires next month, Mr Monchai said.

Future arrangements will be clarified at a later date, Mr

Monchai said, noting that about 500 'limousine' taxis operate at the airport.

Worrawit Srisakukammeet, Village Chief (Phu Yai Baan) of Moo 6 in Mai Khao and representatives of other local taxi drivers in the area met with AoT President Dr Kerati to present their "recommendations" for allowing Grab taxis to serve the airport.

The drivers said they wanted to ensure that Grab taxis and their drivers provided passengers the same standard of service as required under the concessions that now appear to be in the process of being phased out.

The drivers said the Grab taxis must meet the standards as the current limousine taxis used. The taxis should have a minimum engine size of 2,000cc and should carry comprehensive insurance for passenger safety.

Also of note, under the previous concessions issued by AoT, all vehicles used to provide taxi services at the airport were not allowed to be more than five years old.

In a point not clarified, the drivers also proposed that AoT consider adjusting the concession fees to align with potential changes in income.

In response, AoT acknowledged the recommendations and stated that they would consider them in the next steps of the process.

# Navy Commander-in-Chief bids farewell in Phuket

ADMIRAL CHERNGCHAI Chomchoengphaet, Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Navy, visited the Royal Thai Navy Third Area Command at Cape Panwa last week as he continued his tour of Naval bases to say farewell ahead of his retirement.

Joining Adm Cherngchai on his visit to Phuket Aug 30 was his wife, Ms Chatuporn, President of the Naval Wives Association, and senior officers of the Navy.

Present to welcome Adm Cherngchai was Vice Admiral Arpakorn Yukongkaew, Commander of the Royal Thai Navy Third Area Command, and a formal assembly of Phuket Navy personnel.

According to an official report of the visit, Adm Cherngchai praised

the efforts of Navy personnel stationed along the southern Andaman coast, "which is considered to be very important in protecting and maintaining the independence and sovereignty of the nation, strengthening stability and helping to alleviate suffering for the people in the area".

Adm Cherngchai recounted the efforts by Navy personnel in the South by helping seal the border during the COVID-19 pandemic, thus "preventing COVID-19 from being brought into the country by illegal immigrants". He also praised their efforts in the 'Phuket Sandbox' scheme.

Of note, Adm Cherngchai was Commander of the Third Area Command in Phuket during the pandemic. He has also served as



Photo: PR Phuket

Deputy Director of Thai Maritime Enforcement Command Center (also referred to as THAI-MECC), a special unit established to specifically respond to illegal migration.

To that end, Adm Cherngchai yesterday also praised the efforts of the 'Third Regional Maritime Enforcement Command Center' (THAI-MECC 3) for its efforts in

controlling the border in Ranong and people fleeing Myanmar.

Adm Cherngchai also praised local Navy personnel for "facilitating and providing humanitarian assistance to irregular migrants in the Indian Ocean," a function performed by the Royal Thai Navy never publicly recognised or reported by the Royal Thai Navy,

Adm Cherngchai also highlighted two cases in June 2021 involving the Navy in "the prevention and suppression of the illegal act of smuggling of goods and drugs entering the country by sea".

One case resulted in more than 800 kilograms of drugs, including heroin and crystal meth (ice) in the area of the Thai-Malaysian sea border in Satun Province. The haul,

the largest on the Andaman coast, was estimated to be worth more than B500 million.

The other case involved a raid and seizure of a tax-evasion smuggling operation in Trang province that resulted in a fine of more than B600 million.

Adm Cherngchai, who has held the post of Commander-in-Chief for one year, continued his praise, and urged Navy personnel "to perform their duties as in the past, with honesty perseverance Taking advantage of the Navy as the base To jointly strengthen and develop the Navy to be prosperous and stable forever".

Although Adm Cherngchai is to retire from his service with the Royal Thai Navy, he currently remains listed as an active serving member of the Thai Senate. *The Phuket News*

# Hostess attacked over bar bill

## Police confirm no charges against Kamnan's brother for assault

**Eakkapop Thongtub**  
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Police have confirmed that no charges have been brought against a man and his female partner for physical assault amid a row over a bar bill in Rawai. During the incident, the man had grabbed a female bar staffer and struck her on the back of her neck with a vodka bottle. He then placed his hands around the staffer's throat and started choking her before he was pulled away.

The incident came to public attention last Friday (Sept 1), when local news Facebook group Hot Jung Phuket (So Cruel, Phuket) posted a video of the altercation and a video of the woman who runs the bar, Itthichaiya Kamcheeram, 36, originally from Bangkok, explaining the complaint she filed with police.

Ms Itthichaiya, who runs the Inspire Bar on Wiset Rd in Rawai, said she feared for her safety and that of her staff, as the man involved in the incident claimed to be the brother of a Subdistrict Chief



Image: CCTV screenshot

(Kamnan).

The incident began when the man entered the bar at about 10:30pm on Aug 28, Ms Itthichaiya said.

The man had entered the bar with his female partner. He was a regular, and several other people had entered the bar with him, but sat at dif-

ferent tables.

Just five minutes before the bar was to close at 1am, the man, who Ms Itthichaiya did not name, was presented with a bill for B6,220. The man flatly refused to pay.

Ms Itthichaiya pointed out that the bill did not include paying for a broken chair.

The total bill was for B7,000. Apparently, the man joked that if he paid for the chair, he would not have to pay for the rest of the bill.

An argument over the bill ensued, and escalated, with the man taking exception to a name his female partner was called, sparking his as-

sault on Ms Itthichaiya. The man's female partner joined the affray, grabbing at Ms Itthichaiya's face while her head was pinned on the bar.

The man had grabbed a vodka bottle and seemed intent to hit her on the head with this. However, in the struggle, and with another person trying to hold his arm back, the man managed to hit Ms Itthichaiya on the back of the neck, luckily not heavily.

Ms Itthichaiya continued to struggle to keep her assailant at bay, but he forced her upright and pushed against the wall behind the bar and clasped his hands around her neck and started choking her.

The man was eventually subdued by other people in the bar, and police soon arrived, less than two minutes after being informed of the incident.

The entire incident was recorded on CCTV in the bar.

Police at the scene told Ms Itthichaiya to have the assault victim obtain a medical report detailing the injuries sustained in the assault and to file a formal complaint

with police, which she did at Chalong Police Station the next day.

The complaint was received by Chalong Police Deputy Chief Pol Lt Col Wiri-yaphong Srinuanpan.

"I'm afraid because there's a person with influence involved, but I want to clarify that I did nothing wrong. I simply gave them the bill for what they ordered, doing my job honestly without any attempt at cheating," Ms Itthichaiya said.

"I don't have any evidence against them because they personally ordered various drinks and items. I didn't manipulate the bill. I want the authorities to know that I'm an honest worker and I'm still working there, but I fear possible consequences in the future," Ms Itthichaiya said.

Officers at Chalong Police Station on Monday (Sept 4) declined to formally comment on the incident.

One of the officers who did speak with *The Phuket News* said, "There have been no charges pressed. There is no reason to."

## Police silent on tuk-tuk shooting

PATONG POLICE THIS week remained silent on the tracing and arrest of a local tuk-tuk driver who allegedly shot a rival in the stomach during a street conflict near the entrance to Bangla Rd in the early hours of last Sunday (Sept 3).

Patong Police were alerted to the shooting on Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd, near the entrance to Bangla Rd and approximately 700 metres from Patong Police Station, at about 12:45am.

By the time officers arrived at the scene, the suspected shooter had already left in his pink tuk-tuk with license plates FK 523 (ForKhor 523), heading south. He was later identified as Kosit Phromphiwat, 36 years old.

Still at the scene was the victim, another tuk-tuk driver identified by Patong Police as Phongsak Pengporu, 42 years old. The man had been shot once in the right side of his abdomen and once in his left thigh.

After searching the area, Patong Police officers found three .38-calibre bullet casings and one bullet. The other two bullets were believed to still be in Mr Phongsak.

Photos from the scene show a police officer inspect-



A tuk-tuk driver was shot in the stomach on Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd, approximately 700 metres away from Patong Police Station. Photo: Patong Police Station

ing a red tuk-tuk with bullet holes in the windshield and in the driver's side window.

As of 1:30pm last Sunday (Sept 3), Phuket officials had not released any information about Mr Phongsak's condition. Phuket rescue workers, who arrived at the scene after the shooting and briefly reported the incident at 7:40am, did not provide any details about the severity of the in-

juries sustained.

Nothing has been reported regarding the results of the police's efforts in tracking down Mr Kosit or the cause of the conflict between the two drivers of tourist-oriented public transport in Phuket's renowned tourism city.

No report of this incident is available on Patong Police Station's page on Facebook.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Teen tourist drowns at Nai Yang

PHUKET TOURIST POLICE have confirmed that the body found washed ashore at Nai Yang Beach last Sunday (Sept 3) was that of Dmitriy Rochsha, an 18-year-old tourist from Kazakhstan who was declared missing after disappearing in the sea at Nai Yang two days earlier.

A lifeguard found Mr Rochsha's body and alerted Sakhu Police at around 7:50am. He reported finding the body "in front of Sakhu Police Station, about 1 km from where the man disappeared."

Mr Rochsha's body was taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital for post-mortem examination. According to Sakhu Police, there were no visible marks indicating a struggle or any violent death.

Mr Rochsha was believed to have drowned when he went swimming in the sea amid adverse weather last Friday (Sept 1) evening. The man was on the beach with a group of friends, all of whom were safe.

The time Mr Rochsha was last seen was not reported, but Phuket Tourist Police were notified of him



The body of Dmitriy Rochsha, 18, was found on Nai Yang beach last Sunday (Sept 3). Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

being reported as a missing person at about 7:30pm. Authorities explained in a brief notice posted online at 9:31pm that he may have drowned in the sea amid rough weather conditions.

Mr Rochsha's disappearance at the beach came amid a weather advisory issued by the Thai Meteorological Department (TMD) Southwestern Meteorologi-

cal Center (Phuket Met), warning of strong wind and waves for Phuket and five other provinces on the Andaman coast.

Mr Rochsha was initially reported by Phuket Tourist Police as a "missing Russian", meaning he was a Russian-speaking foreigner. Officials later clarified that he was a national of Kazakhstan. *The Phuket News*

The Phuket News

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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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High: +31°

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MON SEPTEMBER 11



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Wind 4 m/s

TUE SEPTEMBER 12



High: +32°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

WED SEPTEMBER 13



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

THU SEPTEMBER 14



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

## Australian tourist dies in jump from airport carpark

A 50-YEAR-OLD Australian tourist has died after jumping from the sixth floor of the airport car parking building, Capt Suphon

Muangkhai of the Sakhu Police was called to the airport at about 8:55pm on Aug 29. He was joined by Sakhu Police Chief Col Salan Santisatsanakul along with Lt Col Kraisor Chomchuen and Pol Lt Boonchai Charoenhattakij.

The body of the Australian man was found on the ground near the motorcycle parking area. His body was taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital.

Police said that from their investigation they had confirmed that the Australian man went to the sixth floor of the building, walked up to the balcony, and jumped.

Police said the man had arrived in Phuket on April 11 on Jetstar Flight JQ-0017. He left on Apr 23 via Jetstar Flight JQ-0018. He then returned to Phuket on Aug 24 on Jetstar Flight JQ-0017.

As of the night of Aug 29, police said they were working with the Australian Embassy in order to inform the man's family of his death.

However, the man's family learned through a post on a Thai-language Phuket news media site, clearly reporting him to be Australian national Justin Beasley, 50.

The family had posted a notice on a local Phuket Facebook group, saying they were concerned about Mr Beasley's welfare, as he had not been heard from in days. He was last known to be staying on Nanai Rd, Patong.

*If you or someone you know needs help or feels sad, you can call the Samaritans Society of Thailand Hotline at 02-113-6789.*



Photo: Sakhu Police

## Anti-graft panel reviews Highways project budgets

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

In a bid to enhance transparency and curb corruption, Phuket Highways Office Chief Yutthana Phitak was called on by the 'Phuket Good Governance Committee' (PGGC) on Aug 30 to detail his office's major projects.

Spearheaded by PGGC Vice President Peerapit Ongcharoen, the committee is actively engaging in monitoring various projects slated for completion during the fiscal year 2023, reported the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department.

Collaborating closely with Mr Yutthana, the PGGC's efforts were aimed to ensure efficient execution while emphasising fiscal responsibility, said the report.

As such, Mr Yutthana gave details for four major projects underway under budgets amounting to B155 million, as follows:

1. Intelligent Traffic Management System: A budget of B50mn has been allocated for the initial phase of this project. It involves the deployment of advanced cameras to gauge traffic volume and subsequently formulate an intelligent traffic management system. Launched in April, the project was awarded to Better World Traffic Co Ltd and is slated for completion on Sept 18.

Of note, the Phuket Highways Office publicly posts on its web-



Screenshot: via PR Phuket

site details of all its procurement expenses, even for regular, recurring expenses as little as B396.

For the B50mn project, details provided explained that the project entails intelligent traffic lights at 12 locations along Route 402 (in Phuket, Thepkrasattri Rd) from Khok Kloi to Muang Phuket, and their connection to an 'Intelligent Traffic Management System'. The actual amount awarded to the contract was B47,239,900, covering taxes and all other expenses.

2. Enhanced Traffic Efficiency: The project, budgeted at B38.5mn, seeks to optimise traffic flow and reduce travel time, ultimately minimising accidents across Phuket. The plan includes the implementation of a robust control system that integrates secondary roads into the broader travel network. The contract was awarded to 4M Intertrade CO LTD with a bid of B38,409,900,

and the project is scheduled for completion by Sept 22.

3. Smart Lighting Control: With an investment of B25mn, this initiative focuses on installing an intelligent lighting control and notification system. This technology will efficiently manage public lighting along secondary routes leading to popular tourist destinations within Phuket.

Better World Traffic Co Ltd was awarded the contract with a bid of B24,987,900, and the project is expected to be complete by Sept 18.

4. Darasamut Underpass Tunnel Restoration: Allocating B1.889mn, this project is geared towards overhauling the water pump system within the Darasamut Underpass Tunnel.

As reported following repeated flooding of the underpass last month, Grundfos Thailand was contracted to carry out the installation of the new pump.

## Phang Nga Vice Governor found dead of suspected heart attack

THALERNGSAK NUCHPRA-phan, a Vice Governor of Phang Nga Province, was found dead of suspected heart attack in a Patong hotel room last Sunday (Sept 3).

According to his secretary, Mr Thalerngsak, 51, checked into the hotel about 2pm last Saturday (Sept 2), with plans to attend an event at Jungceylon Department Store at 5:30pm and have dinner at the Chao Le restaurant in the hotel around 7:30pm. However, it was later learned that he did not leave his room that night.

Concerns grew when his driver tried to contact Mr Thalerngsak at about 9:30am last Sunday, but received no response.

Around 12:30pm, the driver and hotel staff entered the room and



Thalerngsak Nuchpraphan, a Vice Governor of Phang Nga Province.

found him unresponsive on the bed.

Patong Police reported that their initial investigation suggested that the likely cause of death was a sudden cardiac arrest, possibly related to a congenital heart condition. Mr Thalerngsak had a history of hypertension and high cholesterol.

Regardless, a post-mortem examination will be conducted to confirm the cause of the death.

*Eakkapop Thongtub*

## Overstaying foreigner faces blacklist

A FOREIGN MAN WAS ARRESTED by Immigration Police at Phuket International Airport last week and now faces being blacklisted according to the 'Good Guys In, Bad Guys Out' policy.

The unnamed man was apprehended at the international departure hall on Aug 30, although officials did not provide further details regarding the circumstances of the arrest. The man's name and nationality were not disclosed.

The suspect was taken to Sakhu Police Station and charged accordingly. Under Immigration Bureau regulations, the fine for overstay is B500 a day but not more than B20,000.

Under the 'Good Guys In, Bad Guys Out' policy, which was implemented in 2016, foreigners arrested for overstaying any duration face deportation and being blacklisted from re-entering the country for at least five years.



A foreign man was arrested for overstaying his visa in Phuket on Aug 30. Photo: Phuket Immigration Checkpoint

Foreigners who voluntarily surrender to officials for overstaying receive a "more lenient" punishment. Foreigners who surrender for overstay of more than 90 days face deportation and being blacklisted from re-entering the country for at least one year.

There is no blacklisting for re-entry for periods of overstaying less than 90 days if the foreigner surrenders voluntarily.

*The Phuket News*

the Phuket news

# Patong anger rises over unfinished drainworks

The Phuket News  
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Residents of Patong are becoming increasingly frustrated as the closure of a section of Phra Metta Rd, which runs behind Jungceylon shopping mall, goes beyond its initially planned reopening date.

The road has been inaccessible for over two months due to the construction of a sand trap (SP1) by Patong Municipality's Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning, a project that began on June 20.

By contract, the project was to be completed on Aug 27.

The most recent update regarding the sand trap came from Patong Mayor Chalerm-sak Maneesri on Aug 18. He revisited the site to inspect the works continuing last Friday (Sept 1), but made no official comment of the project.

The project has encountered an unforeseen delay, leading to frustrations within the local community. Social media platforms have been



Photo: Patong Municipality

flooded with questions about the reasons for the extended closure and the resulting disruptions.

To shed light on the situation, *The Phuket News* reached out to Patong Municipality, seeking an explanation for the prolonged road closure

and the inconveniences that have followed. Unfortunately, no official statement has been provided so far, leaving residents and commuters in a state of uncertainty.

To navigate around the ongoing road closure, southbound commuters are advised

to make a left turn onto Soi Banzan, followed by a right turn onto Nanai Road to continue their journey. Similarly, those entering Patong from the south are encouraged to take a left or right turn at the roundabout located at the town's southern end to avoid the affected area entirely.

For northbound traffic, alternative routes have been suggested. Motorists can choose to turn left onto Prachanukroh Rd and continue north along Thawee Wong Rd (also known as Patong Beach Road). Alternatively, taking a right turn onto Nanai Rd, followed by a left onto Soi Banzan and another right onto Phra Metta Rd, allows travelers to proceed northbound.

As an unnamed Patong resident pointed out, "The extended closure of this major road has led to significant traffic congestion in the Patong area, especially during peak morning and evening hours."

The local community anxiously awaits updates from authorities as they cope with the ongoing inconvenience caused by the extended closure.



Photo: DMCR

## Beachgoers warned of stinging 'blue dragons'

THE DEPARTMENT OF Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR) has warned beachgoers of venomous 'blue dragon' sea slugs washing ashore Phuket beaches.

The warning, posted on Aug 31, followed reports by local marine environmental group Monsoon Garbage and renowned Thai environmentalist Dr Thon Thamrongnawasawat, a lecturer with the Faculty of Fisheries at Kasetsart University.

The 'blue dragon' sea slugs were found washed ashore at Karon Beach. Officers from the DMCR's Research Center of the Upper Andaman Sea arrived to confirm the species as *Glaucus atlanticus*, a type of nudibranch.

The specimens of *Glaucus atlanticus* found washed ashore at Karon were Blue glaucus.

Although no people at the beach had been stung by the sea creatures, which grow to

four to six centimetres long, the officers urged people to not touch them.

The sea slug stores stinging nematocysts from the siphonophores within its own tissues as defence against predators. Humans handling the slug may receive a very painful and potentially dangerous sting, the officers warned.

Lifeguards were asked to keep an eye out for more blue dragons washing ashore and to warn people at the beach.

In his post, Dr Thon said the sea slugs, which float upside down by using the surface tension to stay afloat, were most likely blown ashore by the prevailing southwest monsoon.

The DMCR reported that officers along the coast had been informed of the arrival of the blue dragons and were to continue to monitor the situation.

*The Phuket News*

## Hotels, malls join blood donation effort

SOME 20 LOCAL BUSINESSES have joined forces with the Phuket chapter of the Thai Red Cross in September supporting the Phuket Regional Blood Bank's (Phuket RBC) campaign to replenish the much-needed blood reserves in Phuket.

People of all walks of life are invited to donate blood at any of the mobile blood donation stations to be set up across the island during the month. Vachira Phuket Hospital will hold its own other locations as part of its own campaign.

Phuket RBC will set up 20 mobile blood donation points at various locations island-wide in September. The remaining schedule for the month is as follows:

Sept 9 – 9am-3pm – Phuket Rajabhat University,

Sept 12 – 9.30am-2pm – British International School Phuket,

Sept 12 – 1pm-4pm – JW Marriott Resort and Spa, Mai Khao,

Sept 14 – 9am-3pm – Paradise Group, Surin,

Sept 19 – 9am-2pm – Bank of Ayudhaya, Phuket Town,

Sept 19 – noon-6pm – UWCT International School,

Sept 21 – 10am-3pm – SAii Laguna Phuket,



Phuket Blood Donation Drive on Aug 8. Photo: Novosti Phuket

Sept 21 – 1pm-5pm – Bangkok Hospital Phuket,

Sept 23 – 2pm-6pm – Lotus's Bypass Rd,

Sept 26 – 2pm-6pm – Robinson Lifestyle Thalang,

Sept 26 – 1pm-4pm – Bangkok Hospital Siriroj,

Sept 28 – noon-6pm – Central Floresta, Parking G Level,

Sept 28 – 1pm-4pm – Blue Tree Phuket,

Sept 29 – 9am-3pm – Rawai Park,

Sept 29 – 1pm-4pm – Diamond Cliff Patong.

Vachira Phuket Hospital will hold its own mobile blood donation drives, as follows:

Sept 8 – 10am-3pm – Phuket City Municipality,

Sept 11 – 1pm-4pm – Plookpanya Municipal School,

Sept 12 – 10am-3pm – Kathu District Office,

Sept 13 – 10am-3pm – Karon Municipality,

Sept 14 – 10am-3pm – Cherg Talay Municipality,

Sept 18 – 10am-3pm – Holiday Inn Patong,

Sept 19 – 10am-3pm – Phuket Technological College,

Sept 20 – 10am-3pm – Chalong Municipality,

Sept 21 – 10am-3pm – Marriott Merlion Beach,

Sept 22 – 10am-3pm – The Senses Resort,

Sept 27 – 10am-3pm – Thalang PEA,

Sept 28 – 10am-3pm – Phuket PEA.

All donors were welcome but special focus is given to Rh negative blood. Phuket is constantly in short supply of Rh-negative blood stocks as it is not common among Asians but critically needed for providing help to foreigners.

People can donate blood every day, including weekends and public holidays, at the Blood Bank on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Vachira Phuket Hospital and at the Phuket RBC in Phuket Town. *The Phuket News*

## Rain fails to dampen spirits at Hungry Ghost Parade

DESPITE HEAVY DOWNPOURS, hundreds of local residents gathered in Phuket Old Town for the first Por Tor Parade last Friday (Sept 1), one of the festival's highlights. A second parade was held last Sunday (Sept 3).

The festival's main event was preceded by a cultural show on stage at Queen Sirikit Park on Thalang Rd. For foreign attendees, English commentary was provided.

At around 11:40am, Phuket City Mayor Saroj Angkanapilas officially launched the parade, which proceeded from the Golden Dragon Statue to the Central Market on Ranong Rd.

The celebrations continued at the Central Market with traditional rituals to honour Por Tor Kong and an abundance of food for both the spirits of the ancestors and their living descendants.

A small incident occurred at the Por Tor Kong Shrine on Takua Thung Rd where the a strong gust of wind damaged several structures installed for the



The Por Tor parade last Sunday. Photo: PR Phuket

festivities. Workers promptly conducted necessary works and made sure nothing would happen at the location at the time of ceremonies.

The Por Tor Festival, also known as the "Hungry Ghosts Festival," is held in the seventh lunar month of the Chinese calendar. It is believed that during this time, the gates of Hell open, allowing spirits to wander the Earth and revisit homes.

Throughout the festival, people bring food and

decorated fruits to offer to the God of the Demons, Por Tor Kong, for him to pass along to the spirits.

An essential offering for the festival is a red turtle-shaped cake called Ang Ku, which comes in various sizes and is made from wheat flour and sugar.

Turtles symbolise longevity for many Chinese, and consuming Ang Ku cakes is believed to bring good fortune and joy.

*The Phuket News*

# All eyes on Chinese market

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

**T**hapanee Kiatphaiboon officially took the helm as the new Governor of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) last Friday (Sept 1) with a clear focus on boosting Chinese tourist arrivals as one of the short-term actions needed to be taken.

By Monday (Sept 4), Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin had announced that Chinese tourists would be allowed visa-free entry to Thailand, starting Oct 1.

As she embraced her new role as TAT Governor, Ms Thapanee's first mission took her to the inauguration of the Tourist Police Headquarters on Sept 1.

Three hours later, Ms Thapanee was signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the integration of tourist information flows from the Department of Consular Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Department of Tourism of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MOTS) and the Tourism Authority of Thailand.

In a statement on her personal Facebook page, Ms



New TAT Governor Thapanee Kiatphaiboon.  
Photo: Thapanee Kiatphaiboon / Facebook

Thapanee shared, "TAT will be responsible for setting up a VPSS E-VISA Pre-Scan System that can help screen and verify information related to those who initially want to travel to Thailand. It is aimed at facilitating the process of obtaining a visa through our electronic visa system (e-Visa) for Chinese tourists."

"This will help promote and encourage more Chinese tourists to decide to travel to Thailand. This is in line with the goal of generating income

from tourism to further revive the country's economy," Ms Thapanee said.

## FREE VISA PLAN

For weeks before PM Srettha's announcement on Monday, the Thai government had been mulling offering free visas to Chinese tourists to rev up demand.

The TAT estimates the government's plan to issue free visas to visitors from China will add 700,000 arrivals during the high season.

TAT Governor Ms Thapanee said last Friday that 350,000 to 400,000 Chinese visit Thailand per month, with the tally for the first eight months this year at 2.1 million.

Thailand was visited by about 3% of all outbound tourists from mainland China, representing the largest share among foreign destinations. This figure does not include visitors from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, said Ms Thapanee.

She said Chinese tourists on average spent B40,000 per trip.

During the first half of 2023, 40.3mn Chinese tourists travelled abroad and 93% of them chose short-haul destinations.

Chuwit Sirivejkul, TAT regional director of marketing for East Asia, said the free visa policy should be implemented within the first two weeks of September so operators can promote their packages for China's national holiday in October.

He said this long holiday is usually a peak period and generates even more traffic than the New Year holiday.

The TAT, Consular Affairs Department and Tourism Department signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) last Friday to establish a system that allows inbound tourist data to synchronise between each organisation, though the Immigration Bureau has already voiced concerns that free visas for Chinese arrivals could cause more problems with the arrival of Chinese crime syndicates (see page 7).

Ruj Thammongkol, Director-General of the Consular

Affairs Department, said the system would help reduce the approval time required for tourist visas, especially for Chinese tourists travelling in large tour groups.

The system automatically verifies a visitor's information by using application programming interface linkage technology through TAT's Visa Pre-Screening System. It can cross-check Chinese government data to ensure the tourist actually purchased a flight ticket or tour package.

Thai travel agents that partner with a Chinese tour company must add each tourist's information and itinerary details to the Tourism Department's job order system. The e-visa system can verify the traveller's details automatically via the shared system.

In the best case scenario, visas can be approved in three working days, down from seven days at present. A test run of the system is continuing through next week and it is expected to be fully operational later this month.

As of Tuesday (Sept 5), regarding the free visa plan, the Consular Affairs Department was still awaiting an official announcement.

## Price checks for Por Tor Festival

OFFICERS FROM THE Phuket Provincial Commerce Office are conducting checks among retailers for evidence of price gouging amid a spike in demand for products used in observing the Por Tor Festival.

The Por Tor Festival, a major cultural festival among ethnic Chinese across the island, and especially in Phuket Town, began on Aug 28 and will continue through to Sept 14.

Two retailers inspected on Aug 30 were Phuket Grocery in Phuket Town and the wholesale rice distributor Namsaeng Rice Trading Ltd.

Pathumphon Yamkerd, Chief of the Trade Economic Supervision and Development Group at the Phuket Provincial Commercial Office, led officials to conduct checks at both locations.

The officials reported finding no evidence of hoarding products, a practice which leads to artificially inflated prices, and found that prices of all products were displayed clearly and accurately in compliance with the law.

Tawich Bunprasert,



Photo: PR Phuket

Manager of Phuket Grocery, said there was ample stock of the products currently in high demand for the festival.

"Therefore, the prices can remain unchanged," he said.

"Please be assured that there will be no opportunity to increase product prices due to increased consumer demand during the festival. and certainly will not affect consumers," Mr Tawich said.

The Phuket Provincial Commerce Office noted that business operators must clearly display prices, and urged "people should not panic and hoard more products than necessary".

"Due to the current situation, it is found that product prices are still within the normal range," the office said in its report of the checks.

The Phuket News

## Warning over household debt surge

THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND Social Development Council (NESDC) warns that Thailand's household debt is continuing to increase, with close monitoring required for auto loans and debt from savings cooperatives.

NESDC Secretary-General Danucha Pichayanon said during a press conference on the country's social outlook for the second quarter of 2023 that household debt amounted to B15.9 trillion in the first quarter of the year, an increase of 3.6%, accelerating slightly from 3.5% in the previous quarter, while the ratio of household debt to GDP stood at 90.6%, decreasing slightly from the previous quarter.

Mr Danucha said most of the growth in household debt in the first quarter came from the purchase of real estate and personal loans, up by 5% and 5.3%, respectively, when compared to the previous quarter.

As for the overall debt serviceability of households, non-performing loans (NPLs) were worth B144 billion at the end of March this year, equivalent to an NPL ratio of 2.68%, accelerating from 2.62% in the fourth quarter of 2022.

However, there are alarming household debt issues which should be addressed.

Firstly, bad debt and the risk of bad debt in auto loans are likely to continue to increase. In the first quarter of 2023, NPLs from auto loans increased by 30.3% from the same period last year while the proportion of special mention loans to total loans also continued to increase.

Secondly, the demand for loans from savings cooperatives for personal use and repayment of existing debts continued to grow with loans to cooperatives totalling B940 billion, of which 50% are non-productive loans.



Mr Danucha said there are alarming household debt issues which should be addressed. Photo: NNT

Apart from the provision of financial literacy on borrowing, finance and debt management by the Finance Ministry, the survey found financial literacy and access to financial services for Thai people in 2022 had decreased compared to 2020.

In the second quarter of this year, employment tallied 39.7 million, an increase of 1.7% from the same period last year due to a 2.5% expansion of employment in non-agricultural sectors. Hotels and restaurants saw an increase of 11.7% in employment due to the recovery of the domestic economy and the increase in the number of international tourist arrivals. Likewise, the construction sector saw an increase of 6.0% while the manufacturing, wholesale and retail, transportation and storage sectors increased by 0.3%, 0.5% and 1.1%, respectively.

On the other hand, employment in the agricultural sector contracted from 2022 by 0.2%, partly due to drought.

The unemployment rate stood at 1.06%, equivalent to 430,000 people, compared with 1.05% in the preceding quarter, and was lower than the 1.37% rate in the same quarter of 2022. Bangkok Post

# Free China tourist visas raise crime concerns

**BANGKOK**  
Bangkok Post

A free-visa travel privilege for Chinese visitors proposed by new Prime Minister Srettha Thavasin could lead to more transnational crime, according to the Immigration Bureau (IB).

The policy championed by Mr Srettha is set for launch on Oct 1 to attract more Chinese visitors, who previously made up most tourist arrivals. Despite the easing of COVID-19, the number of Chinese visitors has not made a strong rebound.

Adith Chairattananon, honorary secretary-general of the Association of Thai Travel Agents (Atta), said earlier that many Chinese are not in the mood to travel overseas in light of the economic pressure and the weak yuan though it might not be a critical concern as the baht has also weakened.

Negative images of Thailand are circulating on Chinese social media, particularly regarding safety, which makes them reluctant to travel, Mr Adith said.



Designated immigration lanes for Chinese passport holders are being sought, says the Immigration Bureau. Photo: Bangkok Post

The Atta has also noted many Chinese travel companies have yet to recover due to a lack of workers and higher operating costs, unlike big firms that can rapidly adjust their businesses.

The plan to offer the free visas has divided opinions as Mr Srettha is reportedly discussing the issue with security and related agencies. Some tourism-related businesses are concerned that greater ease of entry would unleash an influx of Chinese criminals.

IB chief Pol Lt Gen Pakphumpipat Sajjanan said on Monday (Sept 4) that an

offer of a free visa could create a loophole through which operators of call centre gangs, illegal businesses and other transnational crimes could slip into the country.

He said the IB's workload would multiply trying to catch such elements once they have entered the country.

The planned policy, it is feared, would also worsen congestion at immigration counters. But Pol Lt Gen Pakphumpipat said the bureau was ready to follow a free-visa policy.

The IB would need to prepare measures to alleviate

airport crowding due to the expected spike in Chinese visitors. For instance, all immigration check-in counters must be fully opened during peak arrival hours.

The IB was looking to designate dedicated immigration lanes for Chinese passport holders. Pol Lt Gen Pakphumpipat added the IB unsuccessfully asked the Airports of Thailand to allocate more space for immigration checkpoints at international airports.

This came after the IB arrested at least 20 Chinese nationals smuggled into the country from Cambodia over the last few months while en route to Myanmar to work for call-centre gangs.

Questioning revealed they were working for Chinese operated gangs and were transferring their centre of operations to Myanmar.

IB deputy commissioner Pol Maj Gen Phanthana explained that the smuggling by Chinese gangs of their compatriots and people from Southeast Asia to work in illegal enterprises was a ongoing problem.

## New Cabinet receives royal endorsement

**BANGKOK**

HIS MAJESTY THE KING Maha Vajiralongkorn has formally endorsed members of the new Cabinet, as nominated by Prime Minister Srettha Thavasin.

The new Cabinet list, which was published in the Royal Gazette last Saturday (2 Sep), included 34 members as part of the coalition government.

Prime Minister Srettha will also serve as finance minister in the Cabinet lineup.

Other positions of note include: Phumtham Wechayachai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce; Somsak Thepsutin, Deputy Prime Minister; Panpree Phahitthanukorn, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister; Anutin Charnvirakul, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior; Pol Gen Patcharawat Wongsuwan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Natural Resources and Environment; Pirapan Salirathaviphak, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy; Puangpet Chunla-iad, Minister to the Prime Minister's Office; Suthin Klungsang, Minister of Defense; and Kritsada Chinawicharana, Deputy Minister of Finance.



Photo: NNT

At time of press, the Cabinet was scheduled to be granted an audience with His Majesty the King to be sworn in on Tuesday (Sept 5) and was expected to announce its policy statement in Parliament within this week. The first official Cabinet meeting is expected to convene on Sept 11.

Mr Srettha is meanwhile scheduled to leave the country on Sept 19 to attend the 78<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the United Nations in New York.

The Prime Minister confirmed that he and other Cabinet members will attend high level meetings of the 78<sup>th</sup> Session, which take place from Sept 18-26. NNT

Additional reporting by The Phuket News

## Thaksin's lawyer mulls parole bid

**BANGKOK**

JAILED FORMER PRIME MINISTER, Thaksin Shinawatra, is still suffering fatigue and is now seeking the possibility of another parole bid, his lawyer Winyat Chartmontree said on Monday (Sept 4).

After 15 years of self-exile abroad, Thaksin, 74, has received treatment at the Police General Hospital's premium ward since Aug 23 after suffering from chest pain, hypertension and low blood oxygen saturation while in the Bangkok Remand Prison.

The Supreme Court previously ordered Thaksin to serve eight years, but he received a royal pardon on Sept 1, which made him eligible for just one year of detention, according to a notice published in the Royal Gazette.

Mr Winyat said that Thaksin still has fatigue but is communicable. A daily medical assessment is still needed, so his return to prison is uncertain.

"I am now considering seeking Thaksin's general parole," Mr Winyat said, citing his severe illness and seniority as prime reasons.

Mr Winyat said general parole can be granted if the detainee's condition meets the criteria in the Correction Act or the Ministry Notification related to the matter.

However, it is up to the results of the discussion between the Justice Ministry and the Department of Correction (DoC) regarding such matters.

Mr Winyat added that there is room for




Thaksin: Return to prison 'uncertain'. Photo: Bangkok Post

Thaksin to achieve both general parole and probation, including the use of an electronic monitoring (EM) device.

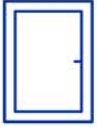





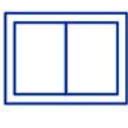
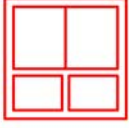
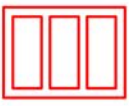



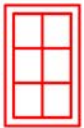



"As a lawyer, if [Thaksin]'s condition meets all criteria and exceptions, I will do my best to protect his rights as a prisoner," Mr Winyat said.




If Thaksin receives parole, he said that he cannot answer where Thaksin will live in detention, as it is a decision his family will make.

Mr Winyat also said that Thaksin has the right to seek a royal pardon given on royal holidays; however, it is up to his detention level to dictate if he is eligible for the next royal pardon. Bangkok Post



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# Plants entering joint ventures





# Mouth watering bites at Open Kitchen

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

Surrounded by a lush green garden in the heart of Laguna Phuket in Cherng Talay, Open Kitchen is a farmer-style eatery with a healthy concept, focusing on serving mindful cuisine using fresh local produce that not only boosts physical strength but is also very pleasing to your taste buds.

The options of dining are many – take your pick: alfresco, indoors or picnic style, all offering a bright and breezy atmosphere, perfect spaces to sit and chill the day away. Lots of fresh sea air with the view of the lagoon, while feasting on nutritious dishes, is simply ideal for a good relaxing day.

My dining companion and I selected

to sit at the outdoor area, taking full advantage of a classic sunny Phuket afternoon. While we were deciding on the food, we started with a Saat Wheatgrass Shot and Saat Apple Cider Vinegar Shot, along with an ice cold glass of fresh cold-pressed fruit juice, from a local supplier in Rawai.

All the fresh air and sunshine had both of us a little hungry, and of course we ordered too much. Starting with a huge block of focaccia, served with a selection of dips: Mezze, Hummus, Noush and Chorizo. The bread was served with crispy homemade sun-dried banana.

Next, the Roasted Tomato Caprese appeared, served with rockets, pesto paste, and vinegar – very light and refreshing. This was followed by the Pork Terrine Piccalilli, served with a home-crafted mustard pickle and mixed pickled vegetables, topped with a soft

poached egg and sprinkled with rocket leaves. The taste was well balanced between the rich taste of the egg, the terrine and refreshing vegetables.

And on to the Beetroot Cured Salmon, served on a bed of brown toast, pesto paste, and rocket leaves, every bite full of flavors. Another tasty main dish was an interesting Baked Harissa Cauliflower. The baked cauliflower was well seasoned with mild flavoured harissa and topped with hummus and roasted garlic, sprinkled with sunflower seeds, with a rocket salad on the side.

The desserts are a feast of the eyes and full of taste and nutrition. The Open Kitchen Super Bowl consists of a variety of exotic local fruits and grains that mix nicely. Don't forget to pour in a healthy measure of the organic wildflower honey to sweeten up the dish.

The Coconut Buckwheat Pancake was cooked to perfection. Puffy pancakes, soaked in honey and served with fruits and whipping cream. What a perfect combination.

Open Kitchen offers homemade products as well as healthy products from the local community that you can purchase to take back home. The restaurant is located across from Cassia Phuket, with plenty of parking. Don't forget to bring your four-legged friend, as Open Kitchen is pet-friendly. There is a picnic spot available plus a retail market that offers fresh products from the farm.

Open from 7am til late, every day. 'Twilight Tunes' from 6pm to midnight every Saturday. Reservations: 076-530686. Website: [www.openkitchen-phuket.com](http://www.openkitchen-phuket.com) Facebook: [OpenKitchenThailand](https://www.facebook.com/OpenKitchenThailand)



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POP QUIZ

- 1. What was Renaissance artist Michelangelo's family name?
- 2. In which part of the body would you find the sartorius muscle, sometimes called 'the tailor's muscle'?
- 3. In 1852, Elisha Otis invented a safety device for which type of transportation?
- 4. What is the Japanese name for Japan?
- 5. Which stock market, the second-largest exchange in the world, is located at One Liberty Plaza, New York?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Easy

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

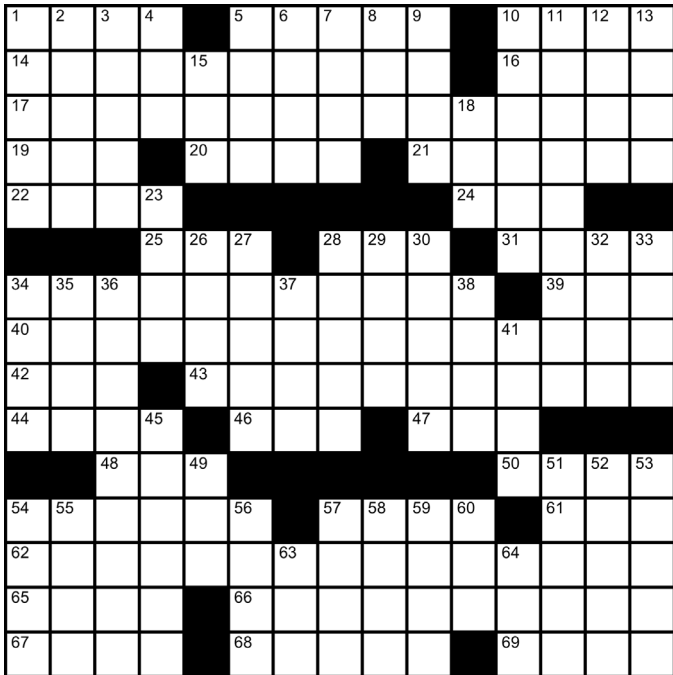
- Across

  - 1. Strip
  - 5. Relevant fact
  - 10. Kind of game
  - 14. Triangle part
  - 16. Bubbly drink
  - 17. One version starred Alastair Sim
  - 19. Island ring?
  - 20. Barely gets, with "out"
  - 21. Chipmunk
  - 22. Turner and others
  - 24. Bad-mouth
  - 25. Big pooch
  - 28. Firms: Abbr.
  - 31. Interruption
  - 34. Death duties
  - 39. Geologic time period
  - 40. Warner Brothers film with the voice of Tom Hanks
  - 42. Cloak-and-dagger org.
  - 43. Makes powerful
  - 44. Do damage to
  - 46. Freshly painted
  - 47. Mudhole
  - 48. Drain
  - 50. Barber's motion
  - 54. Compadres
  - 57. Lives
- Down

  - 1. Commandment word
  - 2. Secondary school in France
  - 3. Ladybug's prey
  - 4. Lookout point
  - 5. Secretary, e.g.
  - 6. Some chips, maybe
  - 7. Rolands rival
  - 8. Olympics chant
  - 9. Go well together
  - 10. Greenish yellow
  - 11. Place for notes
  - 12. Balm ingredient
  - 13. Where Bill met Hillary
  - 15. One up, e.g.
  - 18. Heel
  - 23. Certain hockey shot
  - 26. Looking down from
- 27. Not on deck
  - 28. Sticking point?
  - 29. Farm team
  - 30. Canonical hours
  - 32. Highlands tongue
  - 33. Physics calculation
  - 34. Fix firmly
  - 35. Islam denomination
  - 36. Blasts
  - 37. Poet laureate of 1700
  - 38. Kind of curl
  - 41. Some stingers
  - 45. Grub
  - 49. Neighbor of Ger.
  - 51. "Forget it!"
  - 52. Angered
  - 53. Nosy one
  - 54. Cracked open
  - 55. Venus de \_\_\_\_
  - 56. Backside
  - 57. Picture problem
  - 58. Pandora's boxful
  - 59. Dog in "Beetle Bailey"
  - 60. Wolf or devil preceder
  - 63. Mountain out of a molehill
  - 64. 'Fore

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

- 1) Buonarroti; 2) Thigh or upper leg; 3) Vertical lift, or elevator; 4) Nippon or Hihon; 5) Nasdaq



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

C A R O L S L I T S S P A A V O W S T E T R A I O N S O U N D S O F S I L E N C E K N E E E A T T V S H O W R E V F E E K A R P T E N C H R I Y A L L E I S U R E L Y M O T E A S Q U I E T A S A M O U S E T O U R T R I M E S T E R E W E R S L A C E S H A Y E A S E N A B R E A I L S O D F R A C E S T I L L O F T H E N I G H T V A N O P I U M A D H O C P L Y R E N D S P E A C H	7 6 9 5 2 1 8 4 3 1 4 5 7 3 8 2 9 6 2 3 8 9 4 6 5 7 1 9 5 6 2 8 7 1 3 4 4 1 2 3 9 5 7 6 8 3 8 7 6 1 4 9 2 5 5 9 3 1 6 2 4 8 7 8 2 1 4 7 3 6 5 9 6 7 4 8 5 9 3 1 2
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GOT YOUR NUMBER

5

US dollars is all some cybercriminals ask for in order to carry out a DDoS (Denial-of-service) attack on a computer system.

95

percent of avocados eaten in the US are Hass avocados, and they're all descendants of one mother tree in Southern California.

92,000

kilos of cocaine was produced in Colombia in 1992 alone, according to UN estimates.

160,000

US dollars was the average annual salary of store managers at 'In-N-Out' burger franchises in 2018.

2.3 million

parts are used to make a Boeing 787 Dreamliner.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



The charm of Sarasin Bridge. Photo by Mila Pashina

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

**Sept 8, 1504**  
Michelangelo's 'David' is unveiled in Piazza della Signoria in Florence.

**Sept 9, 1947**  
First case of a computer bug being found: A moth lodges in a relay of a Harvard Mark II computer at Harvard University.

**Sept 10, 1960**  
At the Summer Olympics in

Rome, Abebe Bikila becomes the first sub-Saharan African to win a gold medal, winning the marathon in bare feet.

**Sept 11, 1609**  
Henry Hudson discovers Manhattan Island and the indigenous people living there.

**Sept 12, 490 BC**  
Battle of Marathon: The conventionally accepted date for the Battle of Marathon. The



'David' by Michelangelo. Photo by Jörg Bittner Unna

Athenians and their Plataean allies defeat the first Persian invasion force of Greece.

**Sept 13, 1971**  
Chairman Mao Zedong's second in command and successor Marshal Lin Biao flees the People's Republic of China after the failure of an alleged coup. His plane crashes in Mongolia, killing all onboard.

**Sept 14, 1752**  
The British Empire adopts the Gregorian calendar, skipping 11 days (the previous day was Sept 2). Source: Wikipedia

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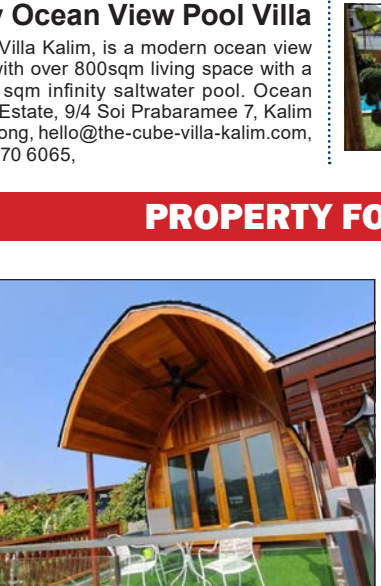
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## GROW BOATING NETWORKING EVENING - AUGUST

A wet and windy evening last Friday (Sept 1) did not dampen the spirits of all that attended another great event, held at Isola Restaurant at Royal Phuket Marina. Thanks to Isola for the great treats and RPM for the drinks. Looking forward to the next evening next month.



## SKÅL INTERNATIONAL PHUKET DINNER - AUGUST

A fun and enjoyable networking dinner, held at Hilton Garden Inn Phuket Bang Tao on Aug 31. Starting with al fresco drinks at the Rooftop Lounge & Terrace around the swimming pool, then downstairs for dinner at the bright and airy Garden Grille. Over 40 members and guests tucked into a feast of international and local dishes, plus a live BBQ station. For more information on Skål International Phuket and future events, visit them at [facebook.com/SkalPhuket](https://facebook.com/SkalPhuket)



# Five-star City, Spurs lead the way as season breaks

## FOOTBALL

AFP

Erling Haaland and Son Heung-min both fired hat-tricks as Manchester City and Tottenham maintained their fine starts to the season by thrashing Fulham 5-1 and Burnley 5-2 respectively last Saturday (Sept 2).

City are two points clear at the top of the table going into the international break as the only side with four wins from four games, but were again good enough for the victory without ever hitting top gear.

“Every year is like this at this club. We start a bit late and a bit sloppy because we play right until the last game [of the previous season] because we are the best club,” said Haaland. “We will only get better and better from here.”

The home side had not had a shot on target until Julian Alvarez turned home Haaland’s cross to open the scoring on 31 minutes.

Fulham responded immediately through Tim Ream before Nathan Ake’s header was controversially allowed to



Spurs captain Son Heung-min completes his hat-trick in the 5-2 win against Burnley. Photo: AFP

stand despite Manuel Akanji, who was in an offside position, jumping over the ball.

Spurs climbed to second after their sparkling start under Ange Postecoglou continued and captain Son was at the heart of things throughout.

“I’m the captain, but I have great players around me,” said Son, who was handed the armband when Harry Kane departed for Bayern Munich.

“My job is really easy and

I try to be an example, try to smile and try to take responsibility on and off the pitch.”

Liverpool brushed aside Aston Villa 3-0 to climb to third in the table with Mohamed Salah among the goalscorers days after the club turned down a transfer deadline day offer of £150 million (B6.7 billion) from Saudi Arabian Pro League club Al-Ittihad.

An own-goal from Matty Cash and Dominik Szoboszlay’s first goal for the Reds completed the scoring.

West Ham sit fourth after a 2-1 win at Luton while Arsenal are a place below after overcoming Manchester United 3-1, with two injury time goals from Declan Rice and Gabriel Jesus securing the win.

However, Chelsea’s huge investment in the transfer market is still to reap reward as the Blues lost 1-0 at home to Nottingham Forest courtesy of substitute Anthony Elanga’s strike, while Newcastle have now lost three consecutive games after 18-year-old Evan Ferguson’s hat-trick gave Brighton an impressive 3-1 win at the Amex.

Bournemouth were denied their first win under Andoni Iraola as Bryan Mbuemo snatched a 2-2 draw for Brentford, while Crystal Palace compounded Wolves’ woes with a 3-2 win.

Sheffield United and Everton both secured their first point of the season after a 2-2 draw in the lunchtime kick-off on Saturday that left the teams in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> place in the table respectively.



## Surf’s up at Kalim Beach

### SURFING

KEEN SURFERS AND FANS of the sport will be heading to Kalim this weekend (Sept 8-10) to participate in and watch the ‘Kalim Reef Surfers Contest 2023’.

The competition is being organised by Patong Municipality in collaboration with the Kalim Reef Surfer Surfing Club, the Patong Surf Club, the Phuket Surfing Club and the Surfing Baan Kalim Community, and will run from today (Sept 8) until Sunday (Sept 10).

Organisers explained there will be five different categories of competition open to the general public, namely: men’s short board, open to all male competitors without any age limit; men’s long board, open to all male competitors without any age limit; women’s long board, open to all female

competitors without any age limit; a junior division open to males under the age of 14; and a junior division open to females under the age of 14.

Cash prizes and trophies will be up for grabs for the top three finishers in each category and the competition will take place daily between 7am and 4:30pm.

A stand has been built for spectators at Kalim Beach to enable fans of the sport to enjoy the action, which promises to be very entertaining given the recent heavy weather which has created significant swells and waves suitable for good competition.

Organisers have not made any mention of potential postponement of the competition in the event of particularly heavy weather.

More information can be found at [www.kalimreefsurfers.com](http://www.kalimreefsurfers.com). *The Phuket News*

## BISP swimmers make waves on the international stage

### SWIMMING

THE SUMMER HOLIDAY THAT just ended was anything but a break for British International School, Phuket (BISP) students Jaidee and Duana who showcased their talent and dedication by competing at several prestigious national and international swimming events.

Following an impressive performance at the Thai National Swimming Championships in April, Jaidee continued his rigorous training throughout the summer to prepare for the Swiss Nationals in mid-July.

His hard work paid off as he qualified for multiple events, including the 200-metre and 400m freestyle, 200m individual medley (IM), and the 100m and 200m breaststroke.

In these challenging competitions, Jaidee secured impressive top positions, earning second place in the 200m freestyle, 200m IM and 100m breaststroke, as well as a commendable third place in the 400m freestyle.

His accomplishments reflect his dedication and skill, making the BISP community incredibly proud. To further enhance his training, Jaidee had the opportunity to train with Coach James Goddard at Wellington College in Bangkok for three weeks, an invaluable experience that will undoubtedly contribute to his future success.

Meanwhile, BISP Year 12 student Duana, representing Nepal, made waves at the World Championships, held between



All the hard work has paid off for young swimming sensation Jaidee. Photo: BISP

July 14 - 30 in Fukuoka, Japan.

She competed fiercely in the 100 and 200-metre freestyle events, demonstrating her remarkable skills and determination on the global stage.

Additionally, Duana celebrated remarkable achievements at the Nepalese National Games, where she secured an impressive six gold medals and set a new national record in the 50-metre breaststroke event.

Her exceptional performance earned her the highest World Aquatics Federation (FINA) points and the overall trophy, highlighting her talent as a true swimming sensation.

The achievements of both Jaidee and Duana serve as an inspiration to the school community, a BISP representative said. “We eagerly anticipate their future successes as they continue to represent BISP and their respective nations on the international swimming stage,” they added.

Both Jaidee and Duana are now back in training and gearing up for their upcoming respective competitions. *The Phuket News*



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# Sport



All cool in the pool for BISP stars > p15

## PHUKET PRIDE



### Local athletes shine at National Games

A collage of the athletes and their medals. Image: Sports Association of Phuket

#### NATIONAL GAMES

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Athletes representing Phuket have emerged with great credit at the 48<sup>th</sup> National Games in Kanchanaburi after securing an overall 40-medal haul.

The event, also known as the 'Kanchanaburi Games', was held Aug 14-29 and witnessed the spirited participation of 19,429 athletes and officials across 59 different sports, resulting in a grand total of 746 gold medals awarded.

President of the Phuket Sports Association, Thammawat Wongcharoenyot, proudly lauded the achievements of the Phuket team and their impressive efforts which constituted a medal tally of 10 golds, 12 silvers and 18 bronze.

This ensured Phuket secured a credible 21<sup>st</sup> position on the national leaderboard and an admirable fifth place finish within the southern region provinces.

The gold medal winners from Phuket included: Louise Landgraf in the women's singles golf; Pikanet Sukyik in the men's individual kata karate; Monsicha Tararattanakul in the women's individual kata karate; Komkrit Kiednin in the men's 62kg newaza nogi jiu-jitsu; Watcharin Dasai in the men's 60kg bodybuilding; Thacharat Pimonpan in the women's wushu; Saifa Kruepanit, who won three gold medals in the male wushu, and the men's taekwondo team consisting of Shin Saito, Nathaphum Chidchiow, Katsana Suanaksorn, Piyawat Saowalaksanankan and Phongsathorn.

Among the silver medal winners were: Korkot Wichitnavee in the karate-do dance category; Rakpol Pholput in the newaza nogi jiu-jitsu 84kg weight class; Nuttawat Wathakanon in the men's 54kg weight class taekwondo; Komkrit Kiednin in the men's 56kg jiu-jitsu weight class and Noah Acira Andreassen in the men's 62kg weight class.

Among the bronze medal winners were: Nana Madkla in the women's

jiu-jitsu handle lock class in the 63kg weight category and Phakawadee Thammarat in the 48kg class of the same event; Natchaya Fuengnawakit in the women's taekwondo 46kg; and Ketiva Praipruk, Yokmanee Boonrit and Sarinporn Praipruk in the women's poomsae freestyle taekwondo.

Expressing gratitude, Mr Thammawat extended his congratulations to the Phuket athletes, acknowledging their relentless dedication and remarkable performances.

He attributed their triumph to the invaluable support of trainers, parents and sponsors who played an instrumental role in the team's overall success.

Bangkok secured top position with an impressive haul of 128 gold medals, followed closely by Kanchanaburi province with 108 golds. Chonburi province clinched third place with 42 gold medals, while Nakhon Si Thammarat province and Chiang Mai province secured 37 and 30 gold medals respectively to solidify their standings.

#### EMERGING TALENT

The opening ceremony of the competition was inaugurated by Pipat Ratchakitprakarn, Minister of Tourism and Sports at the Kanchanaburi Central Stadium. Joining Mr Pipat were Dr Kongsak Yodmanee, Governor of the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT), Lieutenant Thosaphol Chaikomin, Governor of Kanchanaburi Province, and selected dignitaries.

Mr Thammawat and Damrong Chaisena, Director of the SAT Phuket Office, were present as official representatives of Phuket province.

Following a speech by Mr Pipat there were a series of live performances, the highlight of which was a sequence entitled "Moving Together, Maitri, Sports, Friendship, Sustainability" which saw four separate elaborate performances showcasing Thai culture and history, the landscape, ethnicity of people and sustainability.

A parade of 77 athletes from provinces all over the country then marched through the stadium before a torch lighting ceremony was held

to officially mark the start of the competition.

The closing ceremony on Aug 29 was overseen by Aran Boonchai, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, who presented a plaque of honour to the Governor of Kanchanaburi Province, Lieutenant Thosaphol Chaikomin.

Mr Aran declared the Games as an overwhelming success that demonstrated the best in emerging sports talent throughout the country. Furthermore, the success of the event extended beyond the realm of sports, providing Kanchanaburi Province with an economic boost to the tune of over B1 billion, he explained.

A parade by all athletes was then conducted before a series of live cultural and musical performances entertained the crowd.

The flag of the national sports competition was then handed over to the representatives from Chanthaburi Province, which will host the 49<sup>th</sup> edition of the tournament next year.

## Vagabonds aim for tour de force at Southern 7s rugby tournament

#### RUGBY

PHUKET VAGABONDS RFC and Vagabonds Junior Academy will make history when they both compete for the first time at the same tournament this weekend.

Both teams will make the short trip to compete at the annual Thailand Rugby Union (TRU) Southern 7s tomorrow (Sept 9) and Sunday at the Phang Nga Province Stadium.

Fielding teams in the Mixed Under 12s, Boys Under 14s, and former Open Mens title holders, the Vagabonds are sure to feature as a powerhouse



The travelling Vagabonds Junior Academy team. Photo: Neil Quail

throughout the competition. The Vagabonds Junior Academy team also bring pedigree going into the tournament, having claimed first place in last year's 2022 Krabi Cup.

The Vagabonds Open Mens team will travel with a strong squad, bringing a mixture of fleet-footed youth and hard running experience. Spectators should keep an eye out

for key performances from regular stand-outs Dan Ashburn and Paul Rothwell, in addition to the up and coming Ben Williams and young flyer Daniil Komandir.

From the Academy teams, expectation is high for a strong first Thailand tournament from Arthur Pinel, formerly of Singapore Irish Rugby Club and the electrifying pace of Asia Center Foundation (ACF) prodigy Jirasak 'Sun' Panoi.

Spectators are welcome and encouraged to support their local Phuket club, with the stadium just one-hour's drive from Phuket.

A special thanks goes to all of

the Vagabonds and Vagabonds Academy sponsors, in particular Phuket's Finest Properties, Asia Center Foundation, OG Fightwear and Tarn Tara Spa for assisting in sending the junior teams to compete in this Thailand Rugby Union official tournament.

First and second placed teams in the Southern Divisions will be invited to compete in the National 7s tournament in the coming weeks.

If interested in playing rugby or learning more about the Junior Academy please visit the Phuket Vagabonds Rugby, Phuket Vagabonds Rugby or ACG Phuket Facebook pages.

Anthony Van Sleeuwen