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AUTONOMY



Apinan Phuekphong, Chairman of the Senate standing committee on decentralisation, at the meeting in Phuket. Photo: PR Phuket

PHUKET PUSHES FOR 'SPECIAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT' STATUS

The Phuket News
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A Senate standing committee on decentralisation arrived in Phuket late last month to hear yet again why Phuket not only wants to be, but must be, granted special local administration status in order to address the critical issues that are plaguing the island.

The visit came as Phuket continues to struggle with poor infrastructure development, despite a plethora of promises and press releases from the Bangkok-based central government that they are catering to the island's needs.

Korn Chatikavanij, an Oxford graduate and a former finance minister, while in Phuket last weekend expressed strong support

for Phuket to transition into a special local government organisation.

"I agree 100% that Phuket should become a special local government organisation. The people here are ready to manage their own province and use the budget for local development," Mr Korn told *The Phuket News*.

"Phuket has the geography, the economy and the readiness to govern itself – just like the Bangkok model, which elects its own governor," he explained.

"Relying on policies from the central government creates delays and negligence. Those far from the local issues don't understand them the way people here do. A special local government structure would allow Phuket to elect its own

leaders and control a budget to directly address local problems," he continued.

"Currently, Phuket generates the highest income among provinces, yet it cannot fully use the taxes it collects. Most of that revenue goes to the central government to support other provinces. That's understandable, but it's also time to seriously discuss how much Phuket should retain to fund its own development," he said.

"Issues like waste management, flooding, traffic and public transport have gone unresolved for years. Even expanding the airport, building water sources and medical facilities often relies on the private sector.

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, it was the people of Phuket

who proposed the Phuket Sandbox model – proving how capable the private sector of this province is. But without political power and budget control, ideas can't be fully implemented," Mr Korn noted.

"Becoming a special local government organisation would unlock Phuket's ability to solve its own problems and move faster. I believe in Phuket's potential, its unity and the shared understanding of what's best for the province," he said.

"If Phuket develops, Thailand benefits. Tourism income from here is distributed nationwide. Giving Phuket more power to decide how that income is spent will lead to better, more efficient outcomes – not just for Phuket, but for the whole country," he concluded.

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Patient dies as taxi blocks an ambulance



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Heading off the island for some peace & quiet



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All set for the Laguna Phuket Marathon 2025



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News



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Pushing for greater autonomy

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HOPE

Phuket's private sector is renewing calls for the island to gain special local government status, warning that without structural reform, future development will remain stalled.

Bhummikitti Ruktaengam, former President of the Phuket Tourist Association and now President of the Sustainable Tourism Development Foundation, says decentralisation is essential to unlock Phuket's potential and that continuing under the current system offers "even less hope".

Mr Bhummikitti told *The Phuket News* the idea has long been backed by Phuket's private sector for decades. "Most of the private sector in Phuket have proposed it all along," he said.

The proposed shift to a special local government organisation, a designation that would grant Phuket greater autonomy in financial and administrative matters.

"Phuket should be able to use the budget it receives from the central government more effectively," he said.

"Right now, the existing service mechanisms simply don't work. The current system needs to change in two key areas: management and money," he explained.

"However, both of those areas still require central

government approval. That's the difficulty," he added.

"We can't move or progress anything without submitting requests for both money and management," he noted.

Mr Bhummikitti noted that such a change would not guarantee that Phuket would resolve all its issues, but emphasised that the current system is clearly holding the island back.

"I can't say becoming a special local government organisation will solve everything, but continuing with the current system will definitely make it harder for Phuket to move forward," he said.

One major issue, he explained, is the inefficiency caused by limited local budgets and overdependence on central government decisions.

"Sometimes it takes too long to wait for approvals from Bangkok, and the local needs are not always aligned with what ministries see as important," he said.

He pointed to infrastructure projects as an example. "What locals need might not be what the Phuket Highway Office prioritises. But they have the budget and the authority, so they go ahead – even if the project doesn't meet local needs."

While it is still unclear whether Phuket will be better to become a special local government, and if so, who would lead it, what



Kongsak Khoopongsakorn. Photo: PR Phuket

system would be used to select the governor and how it would be managed, he noted.

Nonetheless, Mr Bhummikitti emphasised that without a new system in place, Phuket's future development remains at risk. "If Phuket continues to be managed in the same way, it will be really difficult," he concluded.

DRAFT FOR FUTURE

Kongsak Khoopongsakorn, President of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce, presented a proposal to a visiting Senate subcommittee calling for Phuket to be granted special local government status.

The Senate delegation, led by Apinan Phuekphong, Fourth Vice Chairman of the Committee on Local Administration and Chairman of the Subcommittee, visited Phuket to study local governance and listen to proposals for reform.

Mr Kongsak highlighted Phuket's long-standing

desire for enhanced self-management, citing limitations in the current system regarding budget allocation and administrative powers.

"Phuket should be able to use its income and budget more effectively, rather than relying on slow and restrictive central government processes," he said.

He stressed the need for change through a governance model similar to Bangkok, where a locally elected governor has the power and resources to implement projects in line with local needs.

"Special local government means decentralising power, allowing Phuket to elect a governor who can manage money and push forward projects that truly benefit the island," he said.

Mr Kongsak noted that the private sector has long worked on drafting proposals for Phuket's special status, including contributions from the People's Party [the draft started since the Move Forward Party expanded]

and a new draft developed in cooperation with academics, private organisations and current Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat.

Previous attempts to push the draft into Parliament, however, failed due to political resistance or changes in government during Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha's tenure.

"We now aim to resubmit it. This time, the private sector plans to gather at least 10,000 signatures to support the initiative, demonstrating strong public backing," Mr Kongsak said.

"Even if the draft does not pass, having it debated in Parliament is already progress. Some political parties already support decentralisation and believe provinces that are ready, like Phuket, should move forward," he added.

He emphasised that decentralisation would allow Phuket to retain a greater share of its tax revenue.

"Phuket generates approximately B18 billion in tax revenue each year, yet receives only about B8 billion in return, or only 40% that we get each year," he noted.

"If we were allocated just 20% more, which is an additional B3bn to B4bn, we could invest in critical infrastructure like light rail and road networks without having to rely on central government approval," he said.

Mr Kongsak also cited past crises, like the 2004 tsunami and the COVID-19 pandemic, as examples of the inefficiency of waiting for central government intervention.

"Every time there's a problem, we wait months for help. We need a system that lets us act immediately," he said.

He acknowledged concerns about local elections and potential issues like vote-buying, but maintained that empowering local voters to choose capable leaders based on policy rather than popularity would lead to better outcomes.

"I think it's something we need to take a chance on and learn about. The new generation understands this issue and knows that the same old leaders doing things the same old way won't get their support anymore," he added.

Additionally, Mr Kongsak called for a more unified administrative system, arguing that municipalities should operate under the governor's authority to prevent scattered and inconsistent local development.

"We have been stuck with the same system for decades. It's time for Phuket to move forward with a new model that gives us the authority to solve our own problems," he concluded.

NACC cracks down on corruption at Similans, Phi Phi

THE NATIONAL ANTI-Corruption Commission (NACC) has stepped up efforts to tackle corruption in marine national parks, joining forces with special task forces to monitor E-Ticket revenue systems and investigate alleged misconduct by park officials and private operators at the Similans and the Phi Phi Islands.

Earlier this week, Suwat Saowarat, Director of the NACC Phuket office, along with regional anti-corruption officials, led inspections at Similan Islands National Park.

The team, including Suchart Kruakitanon and Thawichat Nilkan, Assistant Secretary-Generals of the NACC Region 8

and 9 respectively, reviewed park revenue collection practices and listened to concerns from park officers and local business operators.

The visit included on-site checks at Koh Si and Koh Paet, focusing on ensuring transparency in E-Ticket usage and preventing bribery.

A workshop followed, addressing issues related to illegal benefits in national park administration. Representatives from the Office of the Public Sector Anti-Corruption Commission (PACC), Similan park officials and private tour operators discussed flaws in the E-Ticket system, park revenue loopholes, and the urgent need for better



Photo: NACC Phuket

enforcement, said an official report of the visit.

Meanwhile, in a separate but related development, Member of Parliament Chalermpong Saengdee raised serious concerns about alleged favoritism and corruption at the Hat Noppharat Thara-Mu Ko Phi Phi National Park.

He cited a public complaint

involving a woman – identified only as 'Ms N' – allegedly operating a tour business without paying the national park entrance fee due to her personal ties with park officials.

MP Chalermpong stressed that Phi Phi Island is public land, and no private business should be exempt from contributing tourism revenue back to the state. He called on authorities to urgently investigate, suggesting the incident may reflect long-standing systemic corruption within national parks in the southern islands.

"These issues are not new," he said. "But now that the previous E-Ticket system has been cancelled and scrutiny is rising,

it's time to ensure that no official or private party benefits unfairly from public natural resources."

In response to "concerns" over corruption through the previous E-Ticket system, six marine national parks will launch a new E-Ticket system in October.

A press conference was held on Apr 30 to present preliminary findings from the Similan Islands inspection, attended by local media, anti-corruption networks and members of the public.

At the public event, officials emphasised their continued commitment to transparency, fair tourism practices and restoring public confidence in Thailand's protected marine areas.

The Phuket News

Park chief warns of alcohol ban

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Siriwat Suebsai, Chief of Sirinat National Park, has warned all park-goers that the ban on consuming alcohol within national parks applies in Phuket.

Park officers will strictly enforce the ban on both the sale and consumption of alcohol within its boundaries, Mr Siriwat told *The Phuket News*.

The warning follows the incident on Apr 26 that saw a speedboat operator fined B10,000 and banned from Hat Noppharat Thara-Mu Ko Phi Phi National Park after Russian tourists were caught drinking alcohol and smoking while swimming in the park's protected waters at Ao Pileh at Koh Phi Phi Ley.

While the speedboat operator was fined and banned from re-entering the park, officials have not been able to track down the Russian tourists involved, Mr Siriwat said.

Following the Phi Phi incident, the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) confirmed the incident violated national park laws, and that the incident had prompted stricter enforcement and a warning to all tour operators.



Photo: Thitikan Thitipruethikul

"It is illegal under the National Park Act B.E. 2562 (2019), Section 20, and the National Park Department Regulations B.E. 2563 (2020), which strictly prohibit the sale and consumption of alcohol within national park areas," Mr Siriwat warned, urging tourists not to consume alcohol in any part of Sirinat National Park in Phuket.

"Anyone caught drinking in the national park area will first receive a warning. If they are aware of the rule but continue to drink, they will be fined," he said.

"The standard fine is B5,000 for the first time, B20,000 for the second time and B100,000 for the third time," he added.

"The park covers a vast area and is difficult to patrol, especially as several zones border private land and we have limited staff available to monitor the area. Regardless, anyone we find consuming alcohol in the Sirinat area, I will ensure they are fined according to the law.

"In cases involving criminal offenses, violators may be banned from entering the park. These cases are handed over to the police, and being charged can make it harder for offenders to visit other national parks in the future," Mr Siriwat warned.

"This also applies to boat, shop and restaurant operators who violate the law, they will have their business licences revoked

and be permanently banned from operating within national park areas," he said.

BOUNDARIES

"The reason we issue a warning first is because the boundary lines in some areas can be unclear," Mr Siriwat explained.

"The challenge we face is that parts of the park border private property, and tourists who drink on private land often end up crossing into protected areas. Sirinat National Park encompasses five beaches: Sai Kaeo, Mai Khao, Nai Yang, Nai Thon and Layan beaches, as well as one island, Koh Waeo.

"Still, Sirinat National Park has officers regularly patrolling, and we've stepped up our efforts to prevent such incidents across various beaches," he noted.

"It's acceptable for visitors to consume alcohol at nearby restaurants, but not on the beach within the national park area," Mr Siriwat clarified.

ENFORCEMENT

A recent crackdown at Mai Khao Beach on Apr 24 saw multiple agencies conduct a joint inspection to assess activities and monitor potential violations of national park regulations, he explained.

The inspection was led by Lt Col Phongsakorn Itsamut, Deputy Director of the Phuket branch of the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC), joined by Phuket MP Thitikan Thitipruethikul and Thalang District Chief Siwat Rawangkun, along with Mai Khao village headman and representatives from the Mai Khao Tambon Administrative Organisation (OrBorTor).

Mr Siriwat also deployed personnel from Sirinat National Park, Forest Protection Unit 1 (Thalang) and Tha Chatchai Police to inspect the Mai Khao area.

The inspection identified 13 establishments operating as food and beverage stalls, souvenir shops, Thai massage providers, car rental businesses and tour service offices in Moo 3, Mai Khao.

"The inspection team at first sought to demolish a shop found selling alcohol and operating within the boundaries of Sirinat National Park," Mr Siriwat explained.

"However, by using GPS equipment, the inspection team confirmed that the shops were outside both the national forest reserve and the boundaries of Sirinat National Park," he noted.

Taxi blocks ambulance, patient dies

A TAXI DRIVER HAS been charged with obstructing an emergency vehicle and violating the rights of a patient after allegedly blocking an ambulance in Kamala, leading to the death of a 62-year-old man.

The incident occurred on Apr 26, Pol Lt Col Suchart Chumphusang confirmed to *The Phuket News*.

The patient, who had a history of heart disease, collapsed at a durian plantation in Kamala. Relatives quickly contacted Patong Hospital, which dispatched an emergency team around 8:15am, reported MCOT news.

After picking up the patient, the ambulance was heading towards Phuket Town for urgent treatment when it was obstructed by a 'green plate' taxi driving slowly in the far-left lane.

The taxi swerved to avoid a parked car and ended up blocking the ambulance, and the driver refused to get out of the way.



Screenshot: MCOT

Witnesses said the taxi failed to move aside despite the ambulance's siren sounding.

"The ambulance had its siren on full blast, but the taxi refused to move. The road was very narrow. If he had moved quickly, they might have been able to save his life," one witness said.

Emergency responders performed CPR in the ambulance, but the man was pronounced dead at about 8:45am.

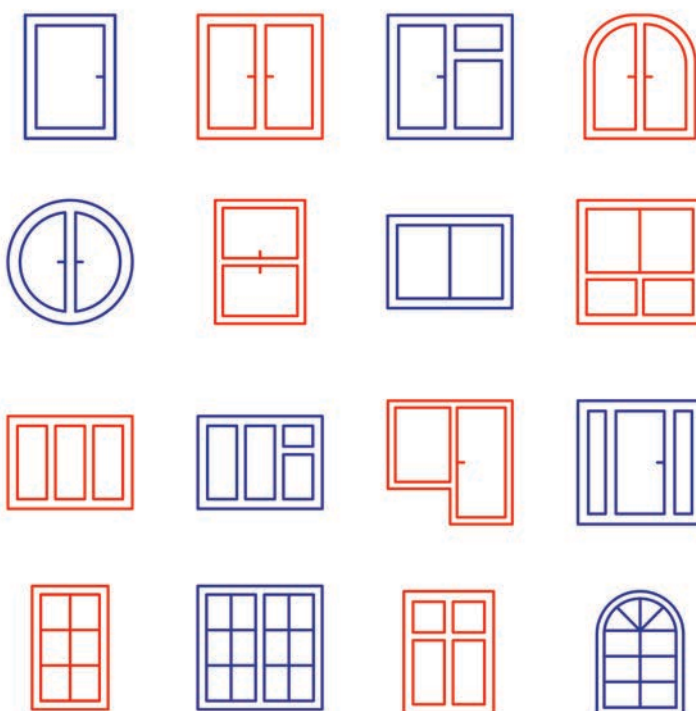
Patong Police and hospital authorities later reviewed CCTV footage and the taxi driver was called in for questioning on Apr 28.

The taxi driver was initially charged with obstructing an emergency vehicle and violating the rights of a patient, police confirmed.

Police said further charges could be considered depending on the outcome of the investigation. *The Phuket News*



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Ping pong bombs in youth gang spat

CHALONG POLICE HAVE arrested several youths involved in a gang attack that saw rival gang members chase each other on motorbikes and one gang throwing ping pong bombs at a rival on Wiset Rd, Rawai.

CCTV footage of the attack marked the incident occurring at 00:20am on Apr 26, with more than 20 youths on at least 10 motorbikes travelling along Wiset Rd together.

The first members of the gang were chasing another youth on a motorbike, who made a rapid u-turn on the divided road and sped off in the opposite direction.

While he was making his getaway, however, several ping pong bombs were thrown at him, one narrowly missing its target.

Videos of the incident shared online spurred police into action.

Officers from Chalong Police station arrested three suspects involved in the attack at a location on Soi Thanuthep in Moo 8, Chalong on Apr 29.

The three suspects, all from Phuket, were named as: Chanaphon 'X' Nuankaew, 18, from Moo 3, Wichit,



Screenshot: Rawai Municipality CCTV

accused of "possessing explosives that the registrar cannot issue a license for"; Suphakiat Boonheng, 20, from Moo 3, Ratsada, accused of "possessing ammunition without permission from the registrar"; and Phirawat Kingkaew, 17, from Moo 3, Wichit, accused of "possessing explosives that the registrar cannot issue a license for".

Chalong Police confirmed that all three are in custody and facing legal proceedings.

Of note, however, photos provided by Chalong Police showed six youths arrested.

The youths were pictured separately in front of a variety of weapons seized including ping bomb bombs and shotgun cartridges, usually used as ammunition to be fired from an illegal home-made firearm.

One of the youths was caught with a home-made machete. *Eakkapop Thongtub*

Ukrainian woman tags, trashes condo

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A landlord has filed a formal complaint with police after a Ukrainian tourist left a rented condominium unit badly damaged and failed to vacate the property after the lease expired.

A representative of the condo owner, Praphaphan Meesomboon, arrived at Wichit Police Station on May 1 to press charges against the tenant, Ukrainian national Anastasia Fidanian, over property damage and failure to leave the premises on time.

The case drew widespread attention after photos of the unit, at Centrio Condominium located just south of the Darasamut Intersection, circulated on social media, showing walls and ceilings covered in drawings and messages in English.

The photos were shared online by condo owner Ms Praphaphan, along with comments of disbelief.

According to a report filed with Pol Lt Wacharakorn Suwan, Deputy Inspector of



Photo: Praphaphan Meesomboon

Wichit Police, the room had been rented to Ms Fidanian under a one-year lease from Apr 15, 2024, to Apr 15, 2025.

However, when the contract expired, the tenant did not move out and continued to occupy the unit beyond the agreed date.

It was not until Apr 29, around 3pm, that the tenant messaged to say she had vacated the room and left the key in a trash bin.

The caretaker for the condo, accompanied by a friend, the condominium's security guard, and a locksmith, inspected the property and was reportedly shocked by the extent of the damage.

The caretaker stated that all electrical appliances in the unit were destroyed and the interior was defaced with writing and illustrations. The estimated cost of repairs and locksmith services was approximately B350,000.

Police are now investigating the matter. Legal action is expected to proceed against the former tenant.

However, the complaint filed with police gave no explanation as to why the former tenant, Ms Fidanian, had spray painted on one wall of the condo the number '32.000' and the word 'Swindler'.

Australian dies after fall down hotel stairs

A 59-YEAR-OLD AUSTRALIAN tourist has died after falling down a stairwell at a hotel in Patong early on May 1, with police attributing the fall to alcohol intoxication.

Police and rescue workers arrived at the scene, a hotel on Rat Uthit 200 Pi Rd near the end of Soi Bangla, to find the man found unconscious and lying face down with serious head injuries. Blood was visible at the scene.

Emergency responders from Kusoldharm Foundation Phuket and Patong Hospital attempted CPR and rushed him to hospital, but he was later pronounced dead.

Police believe the Australian, from Cottesloe, Western Australia, fell after losing his balance while



Photo: Kusoldharm Foundation Phuket

climbing the stairs to the third floor.

According to police, the man had returned to the hotel with his wife shortly after 1am following a night out drinking. Witnesses said the couple had passed the hotel reception before a loud noise was heard moments later.

The wife told investigators that her husband appeared unsteady on his

feet and fell backward down the stairs from the second floor as they returned to their room.

Officers interviewed hotel staff and are reviewing CCTV footage to confirm the events leading up to the fall.

Although no foul play was suspected, officers were continuing their investigation, police said.

Eakkapop Thongtub



Photo: Kusoldharm Foundation Phuket

Tourist falls from parasail onto jet-ski

A FOREIGN TOURIST was injured after falling from a parasail and crashing into a jet-ski at Patong Beach on Apr 29.

Emergency responders from the Patong branch of Kusoldharm Foundation Phuket were called to the beach at 2:19pm after being informed of the incident by the Narendra 1669 Center.

Rescue workers rushed to the scene, behind the Bangla Police Box, to find the injured man,

identified as Mohammad Irfaan Badat, 26.

He was conscious but suffered a serious injury to his right leg, believed to be the result of the impact.

Rescue workers provided immediate first aid before transporting him to Patong Hospital for further treatment.

Patong Police and other authorities have yet to announce any investigation into the cause of the incident.

Eakkapop Thongtub

British consul joins Bangla night tour

The Phuket News
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Phuket Tourist Police welcomed British consular representatives to a tour of Bangla Rd, Patong, on Apr 28 as part of a joint effort to strengthen tourist safety in one of Thailand's busiest holiday destinations.

The visit saw senior officers from the Tourist Police Division 2, including Pol Col Naraphon Wattanakorathavi, Pol Lt Col Bannapong Kaengrian, Pol Lt Col. Ekkachai Siri and Pol Lt Col. Dusit Wanbaworn.

The high-level officers welcomed to Bangla Rd British Consul Joanne Finnamore-Crorkin and Vice Consul Dimas Haristopan Saragih, along with British Honorary Consul in Phuket Chantal Fernandes and Assistant Consul Phannis Khanthakun.

The delegation met to discuss safety measures for foreign visitors and toured



Photo: Phuket Tourist Police

the bustling street, one of Phuket's busiest nightlife hubs. Officers briefed the consular officials on ongoing patrol efforts, which include shifts supported by foreign volunteers and coordination with local police, municipal staff and community networks.

The community-based approach involves a wide safety net, with trained volunteers including convenience store employees and civilian guards playing an active role, Phuket Tourist Police explained in their report.

Most have undergone training under the Tourist Police's 'Strong Tourism

Community' initiative, aimed at creating a safer environment for tourists across Phuket, the report added.

The inspection followed British Ambassador to Thailand Mark Gooding meeting with Phuket Governor Sophon Suwanarat earlier on Apr 28.

The meeting addressed broader cooperation between the UK and Thailand, particularly in promoting sustainable tourism, supporting health tourism initiatives and improving tourist safety.

During the meeting Ambassador Gooding urged Thai authorities to continue reminding tourists returning

to the UK that cannabis remains strictly illegal in the United Kingdom.

SOUTHERN TOUR

The visit to Phuket is part of the British Embassy holding its '170th Outreach Roadshow and British Fair' in southern Thailand to mark the 170th anniversary of bilateral relations between the United Kingdom and Thailand.

Led by Ambassador Gooding, along with agriculture and commercial counsellors, the roadshow aims to highlight collaboration between the two countries under the theme 'Our Shared World: Environment, Wildlife, Marine, Nature, Climate, Agriculture and Sustainable Tourism'.

The roadshow began in Phuket on Apr 28 and continued through Krabi the next day. Events continued in Surat Thani on Apr 30 as part of the embassy's nationwide year-long celebration.



Her Royal Highness Princess Ubolratana.
Photo: To Be Number One

Princess Ubolratana to hold island visit

PHUKET OFFICIALS are preparing for the visit of Her Royal Highness Princess Ubolratana Rajakanya Sirivadhana Barnavadi, who will travel to Phuket on June 6 to follow up on youth development projects and officially open the 'To Be Number One Friend Center' at Phuket Rajabhat University.

Governor Sophon Suwanarat chaired a meeting at the Phuket Provincial Hall on May 1 to prepare for the royal visit.

The meeting brought together key agencies including the Phuket Provincial Police; the Royal Thai Navy Third Area Command, which is based at Cape Panwa; and the Phuket branch of the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC), along with other relevant sectors.

The Princess's visit aims to support and encourage ongoing efforts under the 'To

Be Number One' project, which promotes drug prevention and youth empowerment.

In preparation, Phuket provincial officials have formed a special reception committee under Provincial Order No. 4148/2025.

The committee is divided into several sub-groups, each tasked with overseeing different aspects of the visit.

These include planning for activities, accommodation, safety, healthcare, logistics, royal gifts, food and public relations.

Their joint objective is to ensure a smooth, secure and respectful reception for Her Royal Highness, said an official report of the meeting.

The 'To Be Number One Friend Center' will serve as a supportive space for young people, helping to reinforce the Princess's long-standing commitment to youth development across Thailand. *The Phuket News*

Governor honours eight for 'good deeds'

PHUKET GOVERNOR SOPHON Suwanarat has presented certificates of honour to eight individuals who demonstrated outstanding acts of courage and compassion throughout 2024.

The awards ceremony, held at Phuket Provincial Hall on Apr 28, coincided with the 4th meeting of the Phuket Provincial Committee and Department Heads for 2025. Governor Sophon presided over the ceremony, praising the honourees for their selflessness and dedication to helping others.

The initiative stems from the Ministry of Interior's designation of Apr 1 as the 'Day of Honouring Good Citizens', a day set aside each year to recognise those who have performed brave or generous acts, often risking injury or worse, in the service of others.

Monchai Sae-lao, Director of the Phuket Provincial Ombudsman Center, explained that eight individuals from Phuket were nominated under the Ministry of Interior's Good Citizen Promotion and Welfare Fund regulations, and all were approved for recognition.

The honourees were selected for demonstrating morality, ethics and an unwavering commitment to society without expecting anything in return, Mr Monchai said.

The recipients and their contributions include:

- Mr Tharatip Thamrong, Specialist Professional Nurse, Chalong Hospital – assisted victims of motorcycle accidents.

- Ms Chulalak Limluecha, Professional Nurse, Thalang Hospital – assisted victims of motorcycle accidents.



Photo: PR Phuket

- Mr Kittithat Maitrijit, Professional Nurse, Vachira Phuket Hospital – helped foreign passengers who lost consciousness before and during a flight.

- Ms Wannop Maitrijit, Professional Nurse, Vachira Phuket Hospital – assisted in aiding unconscious foreign passengers.

- Lt Ratchakon Paenduang, Public Health Officer, Vachira Phuket Hospital – aided two motorcycle accident victims and a drowning tourist.

- Ms Runnapa Phromphiban, Patient Care Officer, Vachira Phuket Hospital – helped victims of a pickup truck accident.

- Sgt Charuphol Limpisuth, Assistant Electrician, Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) – assisted a breathless patient at Wat Charoen Samanakit and ensured their safe transport to hospital.

- Ms Suwannee Sinto, Professional Nurse, Vachira Phuket Hospital – assisted victims of a pickup truck accident (certificate received on her behalf).

Governor Sophon praised the recipients for setting an inspiring example of civic virtue and encouraged all citizens to follow their lead by showing kindness and courage in their communities. *The Phuket News*

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ADVERTORIAL

"More than a real estate brand, we are a way of life. At Sansiri, we believe design transcends residential aesthetics. We go above and beyond to create meaningful lifestyle experiences, for everyone to discover beauty across all dimensions of life." — SANSIRI

SANSIRI, Thailand's most trusted full-service real estate developers with over 40 years' heritage, in its ongoing efforts as a 'Global Lifestyle Brand' evolves beyond residential design into fashion and curated lifestyle experiences, underscoring its reputation for Design Excellence with the launch of a debut summer collection titled 'SANSIRI PHUKET + VINN PATARARIN' through a partnership with the distinguished Thai fashion house VINN PATARARIN. The exclusive limited-edition apparel and lifestyle pieces made their debut at The Society Cherngtalay-Bangtao, where tribute to Phuket's heritage the gathering of diverse communities in a Modern Thai architectural setting. This showcase reflects Sansiri's distinctive



identity as it harmonises design leadership with lifestyle and fashion while capturing Phuket's soft power essence of World-Class Destination: captivating vivid island experience – seascapes, pristine beaches, distinctive heritage and international appeal, embodied in a "Mystic Sunset" concept.

This debut collaboration with internationally acclaimed Thai design house VINN PATARARIN, fresh from a New York Fashion Week 2025 showcase, launched with a runway event at The Society, a venue that CONNECTS fashion personalities from Bangkok and Phuket while

INSPIRING creative energy and new ideas as it positions itself as a global lifestyle destination. The initiative harnesses Phuket's soft power as a World-Class Destination, offering unique Phuket to both Thai and international visitors through the mediums of fashion and art. It embodies Sansiri and The Society vision of cultivating a community where individuals connect through Lifestyle, Music, Arts and Culture, alongside curated collectible interior design and rare art pieces from across the world. The collection perfectly encapsulates Sansiri's vision as a design authority with global reach.

The design concept draws upon Phuket's quintessential elements, such as the dazzling play of sunlight upon seawater, vibrant summer hues, and diverse marine life. This aesthetic vision aligns perfectly with The Society's CONNECT + INSPIRE philosophy, reflecting its status as an inclusive destination that welcomes people of all ages, pet enthusiasts, and creative voices that continually energise this distinctive space.

SANSIRI PHUKET + VINN PATARARIN features two exclusive limited-edition collections designed to bring sophistication to every travel experience, from beachside lounging to sailing adventures and coastal gatherings. The offering includes a versatile unisex apparel line designed for easy mix and match styling daily, featuring 15 signature looks available exclusively from the runway in a See Now, Buy Now format. Customers can take their personal style to the next level through curated lifestyle accessories including distinctive headwear, premium t-shirts, elegant scarves, and beach mats, which are available only at The Society,

Phuket's must-visit social space in the Cherngtalay-Bangtao district.

The Society, a tribute to Phuket's heritage expressed through fashion and the gathering of diverse communities in a Modern Thai architectural setting, offers the perfect space to showcase standout design pieces. Highlights include The Cocoon by Louis Vuitton from the exclusive Objets Nomades collection by acclaimed designers Fernando and Humberto Campana, alongside the iconic Amanta armchairs by Mario Bellini for C&B Italia 1960s. Together, they bring a touch of mid-century sophistication to the space.

As a design leader and creator of landmark residences in Thailand for over 40 years, Sansiri brings its expertise and deeply embedded design DNA to The Society. The project's exterior architecture and landscape were designed by the team of world-renowned designer Edward Tuttle. Each space is conceived to foster creativity, inspiration, and meaningful connection.

Follow on IG, Facebook and LINE OA: @thesocietyth

First 'Business Awards 2025' Honours Local Entrepreneurs Across 18 Categories

ADVERTORIAL

PHUKET, THAILAND (AP)—The inaugural Phuket Business Awards 2025 ceremony, held on April 26, 2025, at the Shaman restaurant in Phuket, brought together more than 150 entrepreneurs and investors. Hill Club director Yulia Brukhanova organised the event, recognising business achievements across 18 categories.

Representatives from various business sectors attended the ceremony, including real estate, hospitality, education and transportation services. Both established entrepreneurs and newcomers to the market received awards.

"I sincerely believe that Phuket needs such an award to inspire and recognise the achievements of the best of the best. This award is dedicated to people who shape the island's business, cultural and social environment," Brukhanova said in her speech. Brukhanova is the founder of the international event agency Art Bogema.

Among the winners was Maksim Spiridonov, who



received the "Entrepreneur of the Year" award, and IBG Property, under the leadership of Farukh Parpiyev, recognised as the "Leader in Resort Real Estate". Shaman Family Group was awarded the "Best Concert Venue and Cultural Space".

Zhanet Tyurina, CEO of Maikhao Dream Villa Resort & Spa, won in the "Ambassador of Luxury Hospitality" category. Alexander Davydovsky received the "Phuket Business Veteran" award. Ex24pro received the "Trusted Brand" title.

Jason Beavan represented the international community and was recognised in the "International

Media in Phuket" category. The "Best Transportation Rental Service" title was awarded to Religion, a company founded by Sergey Skorupa and Maksim Korolev.

Le Gourmet restaurant, managed by Daniil and Maria Mikhailov, was named "Restaurant Breakthrough of the Year". Natalia Arbi Yamaletdinova and her company ARBI Exchange received the "Most Creative Growth of the Year" award.

In the educational sector, Little Lions International Kindergarten, founded by Frederick Sear and Stanislav Kuvaev, was recognised as the "Best International Kindergarten". Maksim Kurtov's

Treasure Island agency was declared the leader in the tourism sector.

Alyona Chkhe was named Exporter of the Year, while VISALAND, led by Tatiana Ovchinnikova, was recognised as the "Best Visa and Immigration Service". Yaroslav Putilov was noted in the "Networking Person" category, and Alexey Pankov received the title of "Business Mindset Transformation Coach".

SHE Beauty Salon, under Yulia Batishcheva's leadership, was named "Best Beauty Salon", while Timofey Biryukov (Siam Luxury Adventure) was recognised as the "Youngest Entrepreneur" of the year.

The evening program featured a red carpet, fashion show, charity auction, networking game zone by Game Phuket, light and laser show, and a performance by Tamerlan Sidinkov. The charity auction raised 45,000 baht (approximately \$1,300) for the "Be Kind" foundation. After the main ceremony, an after-party was held at OPERA karaoke.

The second day of the event, April 27, was dedicated to networking at a new spa complex on Bang Tao Beach, where entrepreneurs established business contacts casually.

Hill Club, which co-organised and was the general partner of the award, annually conducts more than 300 educational events for entrepreneurs in Phuket.

"The Phuket Business Awards is not just an opportunity to recognise the best, but a chance to become part of something bigger. We are waiting for new heroes who will inspire development," Brukhanova said.

The organisers have already opened applications for participation in the Phuket Business Awards 2026. Applications can be submitted on the official award website.

In addition to the main winners, Denis Dudarev (Double D Project), Yulia Volodina (BUBBL-baths) and the Padel Bay team were also recognised at the ceremony.

Brukhanova, who has organised more than 1,000 events worldwide, also serves as the director of Hill Club, which brings together entrepreneurs and investors in Phuket.

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Telegram: @phuket_awards

Investigation into building collapse too slow, says PM

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

The investigation into the collapsed State Audit Office (SAO) tower is unacceptably slow, despite officials saying it would be unusually fast, according to Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra.

In her monthly “Empowering Thais” programme last Sunday (May 4), the Prime Minister said that the Department of Public Works and Town & City Planning required 90 days to conclude the investigation. The department said that the 90-day timeframe was quick compared with the normal timeframe for such a probe, which would be two years.

However, the Prime Minister said that from her point of view, the 90-day period was too long and the government should already have figured out the main cause of the building collapse.

“I think it takes too long. How come Thailand has no answers on the big issue of



Work continues at the site of the collapsed State Audit Office building in Bangkok. Photo: Bangkok Post

the building collapse and the high fatalities?” she asked.

“As a human being, I cannot accept the fact that there [have been no answers],” the Prime Minister said, adding that the Department of Public Works and Town & City Planning in addition to four other organisations were conducting their own investigation and simulations to determine the cause of the collapse and they would later compare their findings in order to decide on the most likely cause.

VICTIMS

The new 30-storey SAO tower, which was under

construction in the Chatuchak district of Bangkok, collapsed on Mar 28 when a 7.7-magnitude earthquake hit Myanmar.

Bangkok deputy governor Tavida Kamolvej said on Monday the removal of the rubble had now reached the basement of the tower and the official number of victims had risen to 109.

Forensic police confirmed that of the 109 victims 63 bodies had been identified as 46 Thais, 15 from Myanmar, one Cambodian and one from Laos.

Rescuers retrieved 13 more bodies from the

debris last Friday (May 2) using heavy machinery in Zone D, with some additional remains and small body parts detected, totalling 41 cases in the area, Suriyachai Rawiwan, director of the Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Office, said.

He explained efforts to access Zone C have been hampered due to a height of four metres and concerns about the stability of the building structure. It is suspected that the third-floor walkway collapsed into a deeper area below, which may contain more victims.

Amid investigations into the 30-storey building’s elevator, which is believed to be a potential starting point for the collapse, Mr Suriyachai said engineers will be assessing the walls and elevator shafts for evidence. The lift shafts’ walls of the B2.1 billion tower are significantly thinner than those built in other, comparable buildings, according to investigators.

Pita vows comeback to be ‘best prime minister’

KHON KAEN

PITA LIMJAROENRAT has confirmed he will be returning from a political ban which still has nine years to run to “be the best prime minister of Thailand.”

“I am on a journey across the country to accumulate knowledge,” the leader of the now-defunct Move Forward Party (MFP) told supporters last Sunday (May 4).

Mr Pita is on a campaign trail to woo voters for candidates of the People’s Party running for elections for municipality mayors and council members in Khon Kaen and other provinces scheduled for May 11 after the party only won one in Lamphun province in February.

In Khon Kaen, Benjamaporn Srilaboot of the People’s Party faces four other contestants – independents or representatives of local political parties, but all affiliated with national parties.

Mr Pita expected a win in Khon Kaen, anticipating support in urban areas



Pita (centre) in Khon Kaen on May 4. Photo: Bangkok Post

where the People’s Party has a strong base, including young voters who are students at Khon Kaen University.

He is serving a 10-year ban from politics and MFP was ordered to shut down by the Constitutional Court last August for purportedly jeopardising the constitutional monarchy and national security.

Nine other MFP executive members were also barred from politics for 10 years.

MFP won the general election in 2023 but failed to form a coalition government, paving the way for Pheu Thai to administer the country after the Thaksin Shinawatra-backed party canvassed enough MPs.

Bangkok Post

Anutin ‘not blacklisted by ISOC’

BANGKOK

THE ROYAL THAI ARMY has denied claims that Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Anutin Charnvirakul is blacklisted by the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) for exploiting the monarchy for political gain.

Army spokesman Maj Gen Winthai Suvaree dismissed the allegation as baseless and misleading, saying on May 4 that Anutin’s name appeared in an internal intelligence report not in a negative context, but rather in a manner supportive of the monarchy.

“The claim that Mr Anutin is on a blacklist for misusing the monarchy is simply untrue,” said Maj Gen Winthai.

“In fact, the document mentions him in a positive light, citing his statement from August 2024 that he would not support any party or individual advocating amendments to Section 112 of the Criminal Code.”

The controversy erupted after a parliamentary security commission meeting on May 1 revealed the existence of an ISOC document categorising individuals allegedly benefiting from royal references.

The list reportedly included high-profile figures such as



Anutin. Photo: Bangkok Post

Bhumjaithai Party leader Anutin, former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra and Phayao MP Capt Thammanat Prompao, who serves as an adviser to the Kla Tham Party, alongside groups accused of opposing the monarchy, including the People’s Party Facebook page.

Maj Gen Winthai confirmed the document’s authenticity but stressed it had been misused and misinterpreted.

“Certain individuals leaked and circulated the report without proper context, leading to misunderstanding both of the individuals named and of Isoc itself,” he said.

Anutin, who also serves as a deputy director of ISOC, expressed disbelief at the accusations.

“I’ve never used the monarchy for personal or political gain – not even in thought. I’ve always acted with utmost loyalty,” he said, adding he intends to formally request the document to verify its contents.

The Bhumjaithai Party leader also took to Facebook, calling for responsible journalism and criticising those who circulated what he described as a “careless and groundless” report.

He reiterated his lifelong devotion to the monarchy, citing past royal honours and personal expressions of loyalty.

The issue has sparked broader scrutiny of ISOC’s internal intelligence practices. People’s Party MP Rangsiman Rome, chair of the House Committee on National Security, raised concerns over politically charged information being circulated among agencies without oversight, adding that ISOC had confirmed the authenticity of the document and there were no disputes over its validity.

However, ISOC denies that the content reflects errors by its personnel. Mr Rangsiman said the repeated errors were not mere mistakes but deliberate actions aimed at political defamation.

The army spokesman admitted ISOC’s intelligence division had produced the document as part of the army’s public relations strategy targeting influencers and journalists who follow the military’s work. Bangkok Post

Endangered tiger spotted again in southern Thailand

YALA

WILDLIFE AUTHORITIES have confirmed a rare sighting of the endangered Malayan tiger (*Panthera tigris jacksoni*) in Bang Lang National Park, marking another major milestone in the country’s conservation efforts.

The sighting was captured by camera traps installed by park rangers as part of a long-term wildlife monitoring programme. The park covers an area of 163,125 rai in three districts of Bannang Sata, Than To and Betong.

This is the second time that the elusive predator has been recorded in the area, following its first confirmed appearance in 2023, Chalerm Phoommai, Director of the Wildlife Conservation Office, said on Sunday (May 4). The Malayan tiger seen two years ago was nicknamed ‘Bang Lang 01’.

Malayan tigers are a subspecies found only in the southern forests of Thailand and on the Malaysian Peninsula. They differ from the more commonly known Indochinese



Photo: Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation

tiger (*Panthera tigris corbetti*), which inhabits the central and western forest regions of Thailand.

“This discovery highlights the ecological richness of Bang Lang National Park and Hala Bala Wildlife Sanctuary in Yala,” said Mr. Chalerm. “These areas are vital habitat corridors that link protected forests across the Thai-Malaysian border.”

The detection is part of the ongoing SMART Patrol project – a quality ranger patrol and data-gathering system aimed at monitoring threats and supporting ecosystem protection. In addition to the tiger, the park’s camera traps have recorded several other rare species including elephants, gaur and tapirs. Bangkok Post

Phuket raises the bar: Lighthouse International School receives Alberta accreditation

A Game-Changing Milestone in International Education for Southern Phuket

PRESS RELEASE

Phuket's reputation as a global destination has taken a significant stride forward, not only as a tropical paradise but also as a hub for world-class education. Lighthouse International School has received accreditation by the Government of Alberta, Canada, for the 2025-2026 academic year. This historic achievement elevates Lighthouse to the ranks of the region's most prominent international schools, making it the first Alberta-accredited institution not only in Phuket but in all of Thailand.

This accreditation is more than just a certificate; it represents a transformation. It enables students at Lighthouse's active and expanding Rawai campus to graduate with an Alberta High School Diploma, one of the world's most prestigious academic credentials. This high school diploma, which is recognized by leading institutions and colleges in North America, Europe, Asia, and beyond, has the same utility and prestige as the International Baccalaureate (IB) and A-Level programs. It provides students with a smooth transition into higher education and helps them stand out in a competitive global landscape.

The Alberta curriculum is delivered through Lighthouse's purpose-built, ten-rai campus, which includes a cutting-edge science laboratory, a media and innovation center, and collaborative learning spaces. It emphasizes inquiry, critical thinking, and real-world applications. Students learn to think deeply, solve complicated problems, and confidently articulate their ideas rather than simply memorizing facts.

As part of the esteemed Hive Group, a distin-



guished network of leading international schools that includes the Canadian International Schools in Macau, Guangzhou, and Phnom Penh. Together, these institutions are recognized for their academic excellence and innovative, forward-thinking approaches to education.

This year, 100% of Grade 12 students from CIS Guangzhou were accepted into top 100 universities worldwide, a testament to the group's commitment to high standards and student success.

As a member of the Hive Group, Lighthouse benefits from the ongoing support of a global team of educators and curriculum specialists, ensuring that international best practices are integrated into every aspect of teaching and learning at the school.

Lighthouse International School is also a Cambridge International School, allowing students to follow a dual academic route by combining an Alberta high school diploma with Cambridge's IGCSE and A-Level awards. This adaptable and personalized strategy enables students to customize their learning experience based on their strengths, interests, and future academic ambitions.

Beyond academics, Lighthouse helps each learner reach their greatest potential. It offers comprehensive programs in business, entrepreneurship, public speak-

ing, AI, STEM, and project-based learning. Students are encouraged to take the initiative, generate innovative ideas, and work constructively with their peers. These experiences improve academic performance while also developing leadership, creativity, and emotional intelligence.

"As a father of six children in the school, I want them to excel academically – but also desire for them to be truly prepared for life," said Mr. Daniel, the director and CEO. "Every teacher we hire is someone I wholeheartedly trust to teach my own children. The well-being of our students is at the heart of every decision we make – from the classroom to the leadership team. At Lighthouse, we believe in preparing students not just for university, but for a life of purpose, success, and integrity – whether that's pursuing higher education, meaningful work, or opening their own business."

This accreditation marks a watershed event in Phuket education history. As more families migrate to the island, drawn by its safety, lifestyle, and opportunities, the demand for high-quality international education has never been higher. Lighthouse International School is rising to meet this demand, establishing a new standard for regional excellence and opportunity.

For families seeking more than just academics, for those who value a nurturing, inclusive community with small class sizes, that prioritizes well-being alongside achievement, Lighthouse International School is a beacon of light. Its world-class facilities, dual-diploma offerings, and proven track record of success are helping shape the next generation of global leaders.

Discover what is possible for your child.

For additional information on enrollment opportunities and visits, visit www.lighthousephuket.com or call the admissions team on WhatsApp at 096-346-9393.



The June/July 2025 hard copy issue goes to print very soon

Distributed in resorts/hotels lobbies, in a high number of restaurants and coffee shops, plus inserted in one issue of *The Phuket News* each month, it is a great way to Talk to Phuket.

Want to be in it?

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Beat a retreat from the heat



BLAZING SADDLES

Baz Daniel

baz_gunner2000@yahoo.com

I was feeling frazzled of brow and lazy of cycling leg as Phuket's annual super-hot season started to take its toll, draining my motivation to get up at an ever-earlier hour in order to avoid the scorching heat and morning rush-hour mayhem of the island's roads.

But one of the great advantages of Phuket's location is that on our doorstep lies a treasure trove of quiet, relaxed cycling locales in gloriously enlivening environments. Without doubt one of the finest and nearest such 'escapes' from the island's hot season cauldron is Thai Mueang Beach and National Park located just 30 minutes' drive north of the Sarasin Bridge along Highway 4.

With my Italian road bike safely bound onto the car's bike rack, it was there that I set off for last week for a little off-island heat escape.

While Thai Mueang is close to Phuket geographically, it's a million miles away in terms of pace of life, friendly welcoming people and opportunities for beguiling stress-free cycling that this enticing cocktail offers.

Am I alone in feeling an almost tangible exhalation of relief as the charming portals of the (old) Sarasin Bridge release me from Phuket's frenzied grasp and the REAL Thailand begins to emerge? After just a few kilometres, everything starts to slow down, frenzied drivers seem to become more relaxed and if you stop for fuel, or at a store, the famed Thai 'Smilometer' seems to ramp up in frequency and sincerity.

Certainly, as I drove into the little town of Thai Mueang (don't blink or you'll miss it!) the feeling of returning to REAL Thailand was palpable. Delivery



Baz and his bike out and about. Photo: Supplied

vans lazed insouciantly outside grocery stores, their drivers chatting over shared ciggies, oblivious to any traffic congestion that might ensue. Madame Noodle-Cart trundled her slothful way through town, bawling out her menu through a megaphone, while soi dogs napped on the road's warm tarmac, oblivious to the slow-moving entourage of vehicles crawling past centimetres from their snouts!

It's a step back in time and a step up in sanity and relaxation for sure and lifting my road bike off the bike rack made the transition feel all the more real.

I'd planned my ride starting at 5pm out along Thai Mueang's iconic Turtle Beach through the National Park and out six kilometres to the abandoned tin mining lake and workings at the northern end of the Park. It was a perfect ride with the Andaman Sea gently susurrating along the endless sandy beach on

my left, an almost continuous shady canopy of vaulting Casuarina trees above me and the beguiling spine of forested hills on the horizon away to my right. The ride is flat, well shaded and almost devoid of distractions other than a few other cyclists and the occasional soi dog sleeping in the middle of the empty road.

At the National Park gate, I was waved through (no charge!) and cycled the six clicks to the northern extremity of the ride. Here a fabulous viewpoint looks north along the stunning beachscape toward Tap Lamu – with tree-clad headlands rearing up in the distance above the crashing surf.

Silently brooding and massive stand pieces of rusting, tin-mining machinery like ghostly sentinels in the forest, by the weed-filled lagoon. I stretched, then plunged into the waves of the deserted beach for a relaxing muscle-stretching swim followed by a long walk on the endless sands to dry off.

I cycled back to the Thai Mueang Resort (Tel: 076-571151) where I'd booked an air-conditioned cottage two minutes from the beach for B500 a night. After showering and changing I cycled five minutes along the beach road to George's (Tel: 081-7871790) charming little ramshackle restaurant, right on the beach. Here, a lovely world of bric-a-brac elegance welcomes you with sand-between-the-toes ambience, plus incredibly affordable prices. The Thai and Italian cuisine are excellent and will cost you around B300 for a meal and a drink.

Sitting under the palms at George's and watching a new crescent moon rising over the Andaman, I felt a million miles away from the mayhem, price-gouging and torrid heat of Phuket, which in reality were only 30 minutes' drive south.

'Bicycling' Baz Daniel has been penning his Blazing Saddles column, chronicling his cycling adventures in Phuket and beyond, since 2013.



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RESIDENTIAL

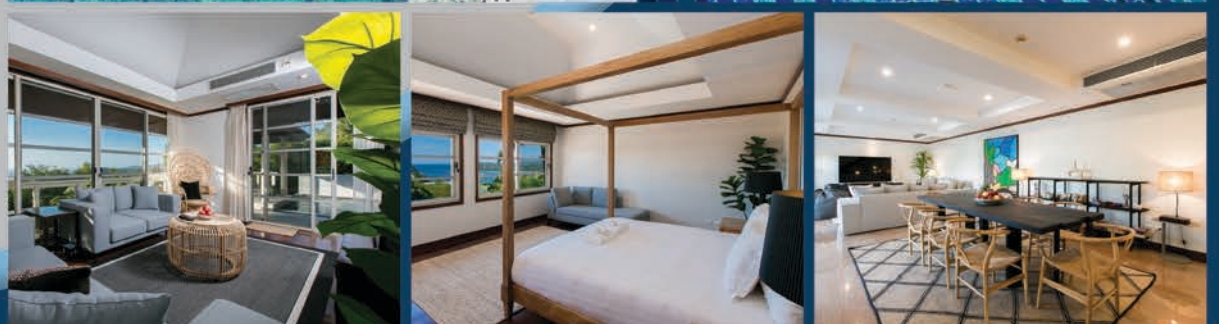
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POP QUIZ

1. In which year did famed adventurer Ernest Shackleton first leave for Antarctica?
2. What is a traditional Japanese parasol made from washi paper and bamboo called?
3. Which ocean has been found to be the saltiest ocean in the world?
4. Which Asian country has a snow leopard as its national animal?
5. Philosopher and writer Jeremy Bentham, 1748-1832, is associated with which school of thought?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Hard

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

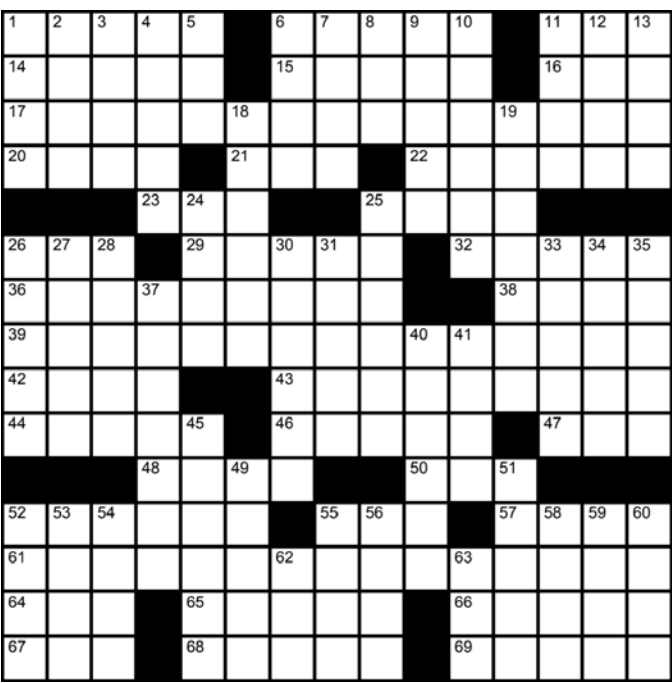
- Across

 1. Burnett
 6. Tiny openings
 11. Mud bath locale
 14. Swears
 15. Aquarium fish
 16. Euripides play
 17. Simon and Garfunkel classic
 20. Kind of socks
 21. Bolt down
 22. "American Idol," for one
 23. Increase, with "up"
 25. Look-see
 26. French collagist
 29. Food fish
 32. Saudi Arabian money
 36. At an easy pace
 38. Bit of dust
 39. Noiseless
 42. ___ de force
 43. Pregnancy part
 44. Pitches
 46. Shoestrings
 47. Cow chow
 48. Facility
 50. Catch red-handed
 52. Not wholesale
 55. Groundskeeper's
- supply

 57. Derby
 61. 1982 Streep flick
 64. Moving option
 65. Codeine source
 66. Literally, "for this"
 67. Thickness
 68. Tears
 69. Dilly

Down

 1. Wine holder
 2. Shakespeare, the Bard of ___
 3. Debauchee
 4. Dog tag datum
 5. Kind of trip
 6. Ancient gathering place
 7. Hit the road
 8. "___ De-Lovely"
 9. Hackneyed
 10. Food tray
 11. Trigonometry function
 12. Somewhat, in music
 13. From the top
 18. Exacting
 19. Inuits
24. Needle holder
 25. Purging medicine
 26. Winged
 27. Plant more seeds
 28. Provoke
 30. See 28-Down
 31. "The Nutcracker" lead
 33. Sonic ___
 34. Bewildered
 35. Distrustful
 37. Dreamlike
 40. Pecuniary punishment
 41. Tableland
 45. Popeye, e.g.
 49. Inclination
 51. Modern ___
 52. Invitation letters
 53. List ender
 54. Wee
 55. Poker variety
 56. Resistance units
 58. Turkish title
 59. Some candy, to a Brit
 60. Carve in stone
 62. Flipper
 63. Catch a few Zs



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

14

countries in the world share a border with China

1632

is the year construction began on the Taj Mahal

5,895

metres is the height of Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa

30,000

degrees Celcius is the temperature of the air immediately surrounding a bolt of lightning – that's 5 times hotter than the surface of the Sun.

300,000

US dollars in research and three months is what it took for scientists to create a lab-grown burger patty.

Source: *Uberfacts*

ISLAND VIEW

Patong sunset from 50 Pi Road. Photo by Roy Falconer

Got an unusual or particularly beautiful picture of Phuket? Email it to editor3@classactmedia.co.th

This week in history

May 9, 1901
Australia opens its first national parliament in Melbourne.

May 10, 1503
Christopher Columbus visits the Cayman Islands and names them Las Tortugas after the numerous turtles there.

May 11, 330
Constantine the Great dedicates the much-expanded and rebuilt city of Byzantium, changing its name to New

Photo: Wikipedia

May 12, 2008
An 8.0 magnitude earthquake occurs in Sichuan, China, killing over 69,000 people.

May 13, 1950
The inaugural Formula One World Championship race

Rome and declaring it the new capital of the Eastern Roman Empire.

takes place at Silverstone, UK.

May 14, 1796
Edward Jenner administers the first smallpox inoculation.

May 15, 1905
The city of Las Vegas is founded in Nevada, United States.

Source: *Wikipedia*

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FRI

9
MAY



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 - 2nd Friday every month

Phuket Business Networking - May 2025

Make sure to bring lots of business cards, as getting to know each other is what PBN is all about. A small entry fee, THB 500 per person, that includes the first 3 drinks and a light buffet. Location - Oasis Bar, Koh Kaew, starting 5pm. Register your attendance here - facebook.com/phuketbusinessnetworking or call Jason - 086 479 7471.

SUN

11
MAY



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12PM – 9PM: All you can eat Sunday Roast Buffet Beef, Pork & Capon chicken – Cauliflower, Broccoli, Peas, Carrots, Fried mushrooms, Grilled Tomatoes – Yorkshire pudding – Roasted Potatoes, Mashed Potatoes – Gravy, Mushroom sauce, Horse raddish, Mint Sauce. We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 350 baht P.P. Kids under 12 years old: 195 baht P.P. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/shakersphuket Oliver, Shakers restaurant 98/18 Vises Road, Rawai 83130, 081 891 4381



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 SUNDAY 11 MAY 2025
 JUNKYARD THEATRE BYPASS ROAD (NEAR IKEA)
 2:30 PM ONWARDS

Phuket Eco Market

Phuket's FIRST Eco Market is Coming Soon! We're officially launching the first Phuket Eco Market at Junkyard Theatre on 11 May 2025 – a one-of-a-kind event bringing together sustainable shopping, fun activities, great food and eco-inspiration under one roof! Sunday 11 May 2025 Junkyard Theatre, Bypass Road (Near IKEA) From 2:30PM onwards Free Entry for All! Are you a vendor of recycled, handmade, eco-friendly or secondhand goods? Want to run a workshop, activity or offer a wellness session? Let's build Phuket's most vibrant eco community together – be part of the change. Message us on +66 (0) 966 396 252 (Josh) or email support@thelitterclub.org to get involved!

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MON

12
MAY



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Monday BBQ Night

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WED

14
MAY



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Wednesday BBQ Night

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

WED

21
MAY



Updates on Phuket Real Estate for Developers, Brokers and Industry Professionals
 Date: Starting Time: Wednesday From: 13 PM Onwards Venue:

Updates on Phuket Real Estate for Developers, Brokers and Industry Professionals

Updates on Phuket Real Estate for Developers, Brokers and Industry Professionals You will have invaluable information on the most updated and most comprehensive survey of Phuket real estate markets as well as dialogue with real estate leaders in Phuket for great insights. It will be a great opportunity for constructive networking. To register visit - trebs.ac.th/e/231

THU

22
MAY




Skål Goes Parisian – A Night of Style & Connections

Our host of the month of May, Marie Berthe, extends a warm invitation to all Skalleagues for an evening of French flair & Island Charm at the Hilton Garden Inn Bangtao, Phuket. Registration from 6pm. Members B1,200 - Non-Members B1,600. Bookings - contact@skalphuket.org

FRI

23
MAY



Collective Art Exhibition
 23 - 28 MAY 2025
 Location: Phuket Cultural Centre, Rajabhat University
 Grand Opening: 23rd May, 4:30 PM - 7 PM
 Featuring Performance by CAPA

Collective Art Exhibition

HeadStart International School, Phuket is thrilled to announce the opening of our expanded GCSE and A-Level Art Exhibition at the Phuket Cultural Centre, Rajabhat University. This special exhibition showcases the hard work, creativity and dedication of our talented students over the past two years. It's an exciting opportunity to witness the artistic achievements of our young artists in a professional setting. Join us for the Grand Opening Ceremony on Friday, May 23 from 4:30pm to 7pm, where you'll enjoy live music performances by our Performing Arts students. The exhibition is open to the public, so feel free to visit at your convenience and explore the incredible work our students have created! For more details - headstartphuket.com

SAT

24
MAY



Move for love move for pride

Get ready to shake it out and splash your love energy for the world to see! Join us for Zumba Phuket 2025: Move for Love, Move for Pride, Dance for your heart. Dance together at the very first edition! Registration opens at 5pm at the King Carl Gustav Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Bangkok Hospital Phuket. Dress Code: Bright, Colorful, and Unstoppable! Early Bird THB 399, Walk-in THB 499. For more details - Facebook: Zumba Phuket

FRI

30
MAY



AustCham Joint Chambers Phuket Sundowners

AustCham Thailand, in collaboration with Australian Alumni, AMCHAM, BCCT, Belgian-Luxembourg/Thai Chamber, CanCham Thailand, FTCC, GTCC, NTCC, Phuket Chamber of Commerce and Thai-Swedish Chamber, will host the Joint Chambers Phuket Sundowners from 18.00 - 21.00 hrs., at Le Méridien Phuket Beach Resort. Join us for a wonderful night of making new connections and catching up with familiar faces in the Australian-Thai business community in Phuket. 650 THB for AustCham members, partner Chambers' members, and Australian Alumni Members, 1,200 THB for non-members. To book contact - office@austchamthailand.com

SAT

31
MAY



GIVE IT UP FOR MUSIC AND HELPING CHILDREN
 SATURDAY, 31 MAY

Give It Up For Music And Helping Children

Rotary Club of Patong Beach invite you to their White Dinner Gala on May 31 at the ballroom at SAii Laguna Phuket. Starting at 7pm with welcome drinks followed by an awesome buffet with assorted beverages until 11pm. Proceeds go to the RCOBP service projects for children. Tickets - THB 2,500 per person, reservations required. For bookings please contact Claudia on rotaryhelpthechildren@gmail.com

FRI

6
JUNE



Grow Boating Evening - June 2025

We look forward to seeing you at the June event at Boardwalk Bistro and Bar at Phuket Boat Lagoon from 5pm. Drinks sponsorship for the evening is available. There will be a delicious buffet sponsored by the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar for all attendees. Come and join in the fun, everyone is welcome and there is no entry fee. Find us at facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket/



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NATALIE GLEBOVA CELEBRATED THE LAUNCH OF HER TRANSFORMATIONAL NEW BOOK “TEMPLE OF LOVE” WITH A SACRED RITUAL EVENT AT MADRE TIERRA, PHUKET

On the powerful energy of the new moon, Miss Universe 2005, author, and inner beauty coach, Natalie Glebova officially launched her highly anticipated book *Temple of Love: A Pilgrimage to the Heart* — a soulful guide to returning to the deepest truth within: pure, divine love. To mark this milestone, Natalie hosted a sacred evening of connection and celebration on Apr 27 at a local apothecary shop – Madre Tierra in Phuket, Thailand — a curated journey of heart-opening rituals, including a ceremonial cacao circle, ecstatic dance and immersive sound bath. This multidimensional experience was designed to reflect the essence of the book in releasing what no longer serves, reclaiming authentic power and tuning into the higher frequency of love. "Temple of Love is more than a book — it is a spiritual initiation," says Natalie. "It's a guide for those who are ready to stop living from fear and start living from the heart — with authenticity, tenderness and inner power." The book weaves together personal stories, symbolic wisdom, and powerful practices to help readers reconnect with their true selves. With themes of surrender, self-worth, spiritual alignment and emotional healing, *Temple of Love* is a companion for anyone navigating transformation and longing to live with more depth and radiance. For more information about Natalie and *Temple of Love*, see social media links: IG: @natalieglebova FB: <https://www.facebook.com/MissUniverse2005/>



GROW BOATING EVENING - MAY 2025

A small but enthusiastic group joined this month's Grow Boating evening held at Royal Phuket Marina on Friday, May 2. A delicious buffet was sponsored by Isola Restaurant for all attendees and drinks sponsored by Royal Phuket Marina. Come and join the fun next month, everyone is welcome. For more details visit - facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket

'Phuket Recreation Games' underway

ALL SPORTS

A MULTI-SPORT EVENT designed to encourage local residents to pursue a healthier lifestyle is underway in Phuket.

The "Phuket Mass Sports and Recreation Games" sees competitors take part in 12 different sports, including track and field athletics, badminton, petanque, ballroom dancing, woodball, Thai chess, aerobics, Muay Thai, takraw, karaoke, aerobic line dancing, golf and gate-ball.

The multi-sports competition kicked-off on Apr 25 and runs until May 11 at the 4,000-seat gymnasium at Saphan Hin Sports Center in Phuket Town.

Thammarat Wongcharoenyos, president of the Sports Association of Phuket, oversaw the opening ceremony at the gymnasium where he was joined by: Rewat Areerob, President of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO); Ratchadaporn Oin, Director of the Phuket Tourism and



Photo: Sports Association of Phuket

Sports Office; Thanawut Petchchara, Director of the Sports Authority of Thailand and Phuket office; and selected representatives from media.

Mr Thammarat explained the event is being organised by the Phuket Tourism and Sports Office in collaboration with the Phuket Sports Network Club, with budget support from the Department of Physical Education and the PPAO.

In addition to encouraging local residents to become active and adopt a healthier lifestyle, the competition will also determine which elderly athletes will be selected to compete at the 17th National Elderly Sports and Recreation Competition 2025, scheduled for June 17-21 in Nakhon Ratchasima.

The Phuket News

McLaren one-two in Miami

FORMULA ONE

AFP

Oscar Piastri made it a hat-trick of wins with victory in the Miami Grand Prix last Sunday (May 4) as McLaren enjoyed a one-two on the podium to continue their dominant Formula One season.

Australian Piastri finished 4.6 seconds ahead of British team-mate Lando Norris with George Russell of Mercedes finishing third but 37.6s behind.

The victory was the third in a row for Piastri after his wins in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia and his fourth in the six races so far this season.

With Norris pipping Piastri in Saturday's sprint race, McLaren picked up maximum points from the weekend and Piastri heads out of Miami with a 16 point lead over his team-mate.

Four-time world champion Max Verstappen, who started on pole, finished in fourth place with Alex Albon of Williams fifth and 18-year-old Italian Kimi Antonelli of Mercedes in sixth.

"I was aware enough to avoid Max in turn one, and from then I knew I had a good pace advantage," Piastri said.

"The car was incredible today. The hard stint I was struggling a little bit, so there are some things to work on. Got to keep learning, but very happy to be leaving Miami on top.



Oscar Piastri hops out of his car after winning the 2025 Miami F1 Grand Prix. Photo: AFP

"Two years ago here we were the slowest team, I think we got lapped twice. Here, we just won the race by 35 seconds," he added.

Piastri, who started at fourth on the grid, grabbed the lead on lap 14 when Verstappen took the inside line but was too late on the brakes and went wide, not to get a sniff of the lead again.

Norris went on the hunt for Verstappen but by the time he got ahead, after some jousting on lap 17, Piastri had opened up a nine-second lead.

"It's never the best feeling (to be second) but the team has done an amazing job, so I can't fault them at all," said Norris.

It was another disappointing day for Ferrari, with Charles Leclerc

finishing seventh and Lewis Hamilton a place behind.

Hamilton, in his first season with the Italian team, expressed frustration with his team's tactics several times during the race, especially after he was instructed to let Leclerc pass him.

The Briton had himself been allowed in front of Leclerc but was unable to take advantage of that position with his team-mate closing the gap.

Some of Hamilton's comments to his team were cutting, but he played down the exchanges.

Carlos Sainz faced a steward investigation after his aggressive attempt to overtake Hamilton on the final corner resulted in a clash of wheels.

MMA to make Asian Games debut next year in Japan

MMA

MIXED MARTIAL ARTS (MMA) will make its Asian Games debut next year when Japan hosts the continent's premier sporting event.

Cricket was also formally approved for inclusion at the Games during a meeting in host city Nagoya on Apr 28 – despite doubts about where exactly the sport will take place.

"MMA will feature six events in its Asian Games debut and be classed as a discipline under combat sports," the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) said.

As many as 15,000 athletes could compete at the Sept 19 to Oct 4 Games in Nagoya and the wider Aichi prefecture next year – more participants than the Olympics.

The OCA said that cricket will be played somewhere in Aichi but it is unclear where because there is currently no venue in the prefecture for the sport.

T20 cricket was played at the COVID-delayed Asian

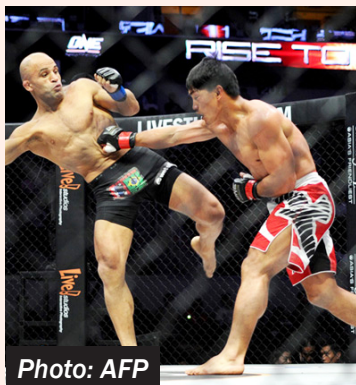


Photo: AFP

Games in China in 2023 and will return to the Olympic programme in Los Angeles in 2028.

In December, Aichi governor Hideaki Omura said the build-up to the Asian Games was going smoothly.

His remarks came after Japanese media said the OCA was not happy with preparations and had accused local organisers of not sticking to the host city contract.

Reports said the OCA had demanded improvements in several areas, including accommodation and transport for athletes and teams.

Next year will be the 20th edition of the Asian Games.

AFP

Suryavanshi, aged 14, dubbed 'Indian cricket's next superstar'

CRICKET

TEENAGER VAIBHAV SURYAVANSHI has been touted as "Indian cricket's next superstar" after the 14-year-old's IPL century off 35 balls shattered batting records.

Left-handed opener Suryavanshi became the youngest player to hit a Twenty20 hundred in Rajasthan Royals' thumping eight-wicket win over Gujarat Titans on Apr 28.

"It is like a dream," he said.

Suryavanshi, in his only third Indian Premier League match, scored the second fastest century in competition history, second only to Chris Gayle's 30-ball ton in 2013.

Nicknamed "Boss Baby", Suryavanshi has drawn instant comparisons with West Indies great Gayle who styled himself as the "Universe Boss".

Suryavanshi, who made headlines when bought by Rajasthan for US\$130,500 (B4.3 million) after a bidding war at the November auction when aged 13, has been fearless in the face of seasoned opponents.

He announced himself on debut earlier last month by launching his first ball in the IPL for six off



Suryavanshi celebrates his century. Photo: AFP

experienced India pace bowler Shardul Thakur as on his way to a quickfire 34 off 20 balls.

Nine days later in Jaipur, Suryavanshi destroyed a bowling attack containing India's Mohammed Siraj, Ishant Sharma and Washington Sundar, shredding reputations as he hit 94 of his 101 runs in boundaries – 11 sixes and seven fours.

'CARNAGE'

"Vaibhav's fearless approach, bat speed, picking the length early, and transferring the energy behind the ball was the recipe behind a fabulous innings", India cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar wrote on social media. "Well played!"

Suryavanshi took 28 in one over off veteran quick Sharma on his way to a 17-ball fifty.

He then gave Afghanistan pace bowler Karim Janat a debut to forget, blasting 30 runs – three sixes and three fours – off his first IPL over.

Rajasthan head coach Rahul Dravid, who has a broken leg, still managed to get out of his wheelchair to celebrate when Suryavanshi hit a six off Afghanistan spin wizard Rashid Khan to bring up his century.

India's 1983 World Cup-winning batsman Kris Srikkanth lauded the teenager's "composure, class and courage" beyond his years, adding "Indian cricket's next superstar is here".

India's T20 skipper and Mumbai Indians batsman Suryakumar Yadav said it had been "carnage of an innings" and "absolutely insane!"

Suryavanshi, who can also bowl spin, comes from India's poorest state, Bihar.

He made his domestic debut aged only 12 in the Ranji Trophy in January 2024, then was selected for India's under-19 squad against a touring Australia team.

He promptly hit a 58-ball century – the second fastest ton in youth Tests after England's Moeen Ali in 2005.

AFP

Chelsea eyeing Champions League

FOOTBALL

AFP

Chelsea improved their chances of qualifying for the Champions League with a vital 3-1 victory as Liverpool suffered a Premier League title hangover last Sunday (May 4).

Enzo Fernandez's early strike at Stamford Bridge gave Enzo Maresca's side the lead before Jarell Quansah's second half own goal and Cole Palmer's stoppage-time penalty condemned the champions to only their third league defeat this season.

While lacklustre Liverpool had little to play for after winning a record-equalling 20th English crown with a 5-1 rout of Tottenham the previous weekend, Chelsea had every incentive to secure a priceless three points.

Hoping to return to the Champions League via a top five finish, the Blues sit in fifth place, level on points with fourth-placed Newcastle who drew 1-1 at Brighton earlier on Sunday, while Nottingham Forest are one point behind in sixth place following their 1-1 draw with Crystal Palace.

Third-placed Manchester City are only one point clear of Chelsea and, with three games left, the top five battle is set for a thrilling finale. City beat Wolves 1-0 on Friday thanks to a Kevin De Bruyne goal.

Bournemouth recorded their first ever away win over Arsenal, with



Chelsea's Cole Palmer (left) shakes off Liverpool's Curtis Jones. Photo: AFP

goals from Dean Huijsen and Evanilson securing a famous 2-1 win and leaving the second-placed Gunners requiring six points to guarantee Champions League qualification for next season via a top five finish in the league.

Elsewhere, Aston Villa are back in the hunt to finish in the top five thanks to Yuri Tielemans' 12th minute header at Villa Park ensuring a 1-0 win against Fulham.

However, Manchester United's miserable season continues as their winless league run reached six games after a 4-3 defeat at Brentford, while Tottenham drew 1-1 draw at West Ham. The results leave United and Spurs in 15th and 16th place in the table respectively.

Southampton wasted a chance to avoid a share of the lowest points total in Premier League history as Jamie Vardy's 199th Leicester goal inspired a 2-0 win at the King Power Stadium, while relegated Ipswich fought back from two goals down to draw 2-2 in Everton's penultimate match at Goodison Park.

Meanwhile, Leeds United and Burnley both confirmed their return to the top flight last weekend, with Leeds winning 2-1 at Plymouth to win the title and Scott Parker's team beating Millwall 3-1 to secure second place.

Frank Lampard's Coventry City, Bristol City, Sheffield United and Sunderland will face-off in the play-offs to determine the third team to secure promotion.



Buriram players celebrate. Photo: Supplied

Buriram seals 10th title

FOOTBALL

BURIRAM UNITED HAVE claimed their 10th Thai League 1 title and fourth in a row after thumping relegated Nongbua Pitchaya 7-0 in the last match of the season at Chang Arena on Apr 30.

Title rivals Bangkok United staged a stirring second-half comeback to win 4-2 at PT Prachuap but had to settle for a runners-up spot, finishing one point behind the Thunder Castle, who ended the season on 70 from 30 games.

It was the first title of the season for the quadruple-chasing Buriram, who are still involved in the FA Cup, League Cup and ASEAN Club Championship (Shopee Cup).

It was a huge pay day for Buriram, who aside from picking up a B10-

million cheque for winning the league, reportedly earned another B11mn from ticket sales and souvenirs on the last day of the season alone.

Runners-up Bangkok United received B3mn, third-placed BG Pathum B1.5mn, fourth-placed Ratchaburi B800,000 and Port, who took the fifth place, B700,000 respectively.

Meanwhile Buriram club chairman Newin Chidchob responded to critics who claimed his team were favoured by schedule postponement.

"My team played by the rules. In all Cup tournaments, the AFC Champions League and Shopee Cup, it is an agreement between two clubs. If the other team do not want to postpone a match, then it won't happen," said Newin.

Bangkok Post

Springboks, Black Ferns win Rugby World Sevens men's, women's titles

RUGBY SEVENS

SOUTH AFRICA'S MEN AND NEW Zealand's women captured the Rugby Sevens World Championship 2025 titles last Sunday (May 4) in Los Angeles.

The Springbok Sevens defeated Spain 19-5 in the men's final while New Zealand's Black Ferns – who had already claimed the sevens series title – added to their trophy haul with a 31-7 victory over Australia in the women's final.

The season-ending LA event was staged at Dignity Health Sports Park, which will host rugby sevens at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

The Black Ferns, the reigning Olympic champions, had sealed first place in the women's regular season standings with a victory at Singapore in April.

Argentina – which had clinched the men's World Sevens Series standings with victories in Perth, Vancouver and Hong Kong – fell to Spain 29-5 in the semi-finals, where South Africa dispatched New Zealand 31-5.

In the men's final, Selvyn Davids scored a try in the fifth minute and Ronald Brown converted to lift South Africa ahead 7-0 at half-time.

Spain's Pol Pla answered with a try in the 10th minute but Juan Ramos missed the conversion kick to keep the Springboks ahead.

Mfundo Ndhlovu answered with a try



South Africa celebrate. Photo: AFP

for South Africa and Tristan Leyds converted for a 14-5 lead.

In the women's final, Jorja Miller scored in the second minute for New Zealand and Michaela Brake added another try in the sixth, Risi Pouri-Lane's conversion making it 12-0 at half-time for the Black Ferns.

Mackenzie Davis answered with her sixth try of the event for Australia in the eighth minute and Ruby Nicholas added the conversion, but the Kiwis answered on Pouri-Lane's try and conversion in the 10th minute for a 19-7 edge.

Mahina Paul added a try in the 11th minute for the Black Ferns with Pouri-Lane converting and Sarah Hirini added a try in the 13th minute to create the final margin.

In the women's semi-finals, Australia routed Canada 33-7 and New Zealand ousted the United States 34-7. AFP

War Elephants to face India in June 'Tier 1' friendly game

FOOTBALL

FIFA HAS CONFIRMED that Thailand's friendly with India on June 4 will be an International 'A' or 'Tier 1' match with both sides earning world ranking points according to the result of the game.

The match with India will be a warm-up for the War Elephants ahead of their Jun 10 AFC Asian Cup qualifier against Turkmenistan.

Thailand are in Group D of the qualifying tournament for the 2027 finals in Saudi Arabia. The two other teams in the pool are Sri Lanka, whom the War Elephants have already beaten 1-0, and Taiwan.

The winners of the six groups will join the 18 countries who have already qualified for the finals.

The Football Association of Thailand (FAT) confirmed that it had



The War Elephants. Photo: Bangkok Post

received a letter from FIFA, confirming the status of the friendly game with India.

According to FIFA rules, international friendly matches between national teams can contribute to the world ranking points, but they are usually weighted less than competitive matches like World Cup qualifiers, finals or other major competitions.

While friendlies are

considered non-competitive, those deemed Grade A by FIFA do affect a team's ranking. Moreover, referees for all Grade A matches are assigned by FIFA.

Thailand are currently ranked 99th in the world while India are in 127th place.

The venue and time for both matches will be announced in due course, an FAT official confirmed.

Bangkok Post

Sport

editor3@classactmedia.co.th



McLaren on top at Miami F1 GP > p14



The Phuket Andaman FC team ahead of the final game of last season against FC Yala on Mar 29, which Phuket won 1-0 to avoid relegation from Thai League 3 South. Photo: Supplied

FOOTBALL

Simon Causton

The dramatic, last-gasp survival of Phuket Andaman FC in Thai League 3 South now feels like a cruel mirage shimmering over a landscape of deepening crisis.

While Puttipong's late penalty against FC Yala on Mar 29 offered a fleeting moment of ecstasy, the underlying rot under the continued and increasingly detached ownership of Higher Sports threatens to consume the club entirely. The victory, it appears, was not a turning point, but a temporary reprieve for an institution teetering on the brink.

As previously chronicled, the season was a chaotic tapestry of managerial upheaval and on-field inconsistency. The January defeat to PT Satun FC in their temporary Phang Nga home laid bare the persistent issues plaguing the club: a lack of clear tactical direction, questionable player fitness and a palpable disconnect.

However, the situation has since deteriorated alarmingly, revealing a level of mismanagement that stretches far beyond the pitch.

The human cost of Higher Sports' tenure is now starkly apparent. Reports indicate that the majority of the club's dedicated staff are owed up to three months' wages, a scandalous indictment of the ownership's disregard for their employees' well-being. The grim reality is that many are struggling to afford basic necessities, their livelihoods sacrificed at the altar of apparent financial ineptitude. This is not merely poor administration; it is a fundamental failure of responsibility.

In the face of this escalating crisis, the silence from the club's hierarchy is deafening. The 'president', Russ Horsley, has seemingly retreated into a void, his only recent utterances a series of fantastical claims made during a podcast interview. These unsubstantiated pronouncements, in stark contrast to the lived

realities of unpaid staff and players, only serve to further erode any remaining trust in the ownership. The fact that players, the very heart of the team, are still owed significant sums is a damning indictment of the rank mismanagement at the highest level.

WHIMSICAL

Adding to the air of unreality are whimsical claims of impending international funding. These promises, perpetually deferred with the familiar refrain of "mañana", have become a cruel joke for those bearing the brunt of the club's financial woes.

Similarly, fantastical stories of an international academy and trial leagues appear increasingly far-fetched for a club with no discernible funds, no permanent coach, a depleted and out-of-contract playing squad and no fixed abode beyond the temporary and distant Phang Nga stadium.

The very legitimacy of the club's future participation in Thai football is now under serious

scrutiny. Questions are reportedly pending regarding their registration with the Football Association of Thailand (FAT), with several crucial pieces of documentation allegedly still missing. This administrative negligence could have severe consequences, potentially jeopardising their league status regardless of their on-field survival.

Perhaps the most worrying revelation is the alleged illegal employment of various foreign staff members over the past season. Reports suggest that individuals were working under false pretenses, utilising tourist visas or education visas that explicitly do not permit gainful employment. This not only exposes the club to potential legal repercussions but also raises serious ethical questions about their treatment of employees, both local and international.

The great escape against Yala now appears to be nothing more than a fleeting moment of relief in a rapidly unfolding catastrophe. The underlying issues of

financial instability, absentee and seemingly delusional leadership and now allegations of illegal employment paint a picture of a club teetering on the brink of collapse.

For the loyal fans who endured the arduous journey to Phang Nga, and for the dedicated staff who continue to suffer in silence, the question remains: how much longer can this charade continue?

The silence from the owners is not just neglect; it is a betrayal of the very people who form the heart and soul of Phuket Andaman FC. Unless there is a swift and radical change in ownership and a commitment to transparency and ethical management, the dramatic survival of last season will be remembered not as a rebirth, but as the final, desperate gasp of a club tragically mismanaged into oblivion.

The beautiful game deserves better than this ongoing saga of broken promises and shattered livelihoods.

Dates set for 19th annual Laguna Phuket Marathon

MARATHON

ORGANISERS HAVE CONFIRMED they expect over 8,000 athletes from more than 50 countries to descend on Phuket during the weekend of June 13-15 for the 19th annual Laguna Phuket Marathon.

Presented by Supersports and accredited by the AIMS (Association of International Marathons and Distance Races), the award-winning marathon's course passes through the stunning beaches of Nai Yang, Layan and Bang Tao while also taking runners through local villages and lush tropical landscapes.

The popular two day format sees the 2-kilometre kids run, 5km and 10km take place on Saturday (June 14) afternoon and evening as part of the 'Run Sunset' theme, with the Half Marathon (21.0975km), Marathon Relay (42.195km) and Marathon (42.195km) taking place the following morning under the 'Run Sunrise' theme.

This year also sees a new category for athletes over the age of 70 in what organisers are describing as a means of encouraging more elderly members of the community to get involved and enhance their fitness levels.

Experienced medical teams will be on hand throughout the course on both days as will regular water stations to ensure athletes can stay hydrated in the hot and humid conditions.

To kick-off the event there will be a lifestyle-themed weekend night market taking place on Friday (June 13) at Laguna Beach where an array of stalls will be offering locally-produced goods such as handicraft items as well as extensive food and beverage options.

This year's event also continues the theme of giving back to society via the Laguna

Phuket Foundation and Children First Fund (CFF Children's Fund), which will see funds raised from the weekend contributing to providing food and key essentials to 400 orphans and needy children from four selected shelters on the island.

"Phuket is proud to once again proud to host such a world-class event as the Laguna Phuket Marathon," Phuket Governor Sophan Suwannarat said at the official press conference to announce the event on Apr 29.

"The event highlights the island's infrastructure and ability to serve as a major international



Photo: Sports Association of Phuket

sports hub while further demonstrating its standing as a popular tourist destination," he added.

Paul Wilson, Managing Director of Laguna Phuket, added that this year's event is even more diverse and inclusive than ever by broadening the race scope to incorporate elder participants who will compete alongside professional runners, first-time athletes and entire families.

Registration is now open via www.facebook.com/phuketmarathon/.

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