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# RISING TIDE



Disaster officials inspect a flood-struck house in Srisoonthorn. Photo: Srisoonthorn Municipality

## MAYOR BATTLES REPEATED FLOODING IN SRISOONTHORN

**Natnaree Likidwatanasakun**  
reporter1@classactmedia.co.th

**S**risoonthorn Mayor Chalermphon Kertsap has blamed construction and development that obstructs natural water runoff as primary causes of recurring floods in the fast-developing area of Tambon Thepkasattri.

Mayor Chalermphon argued that, “The urbanisation on private land brings a negative result to the area of Tambon Thepkasattri, increased construction of buildings and households has obstructed water pathways.”

Heavy flooding in Srisoonthorn and

Thepkasattri on June 30 and July 1, inundated more than 740 households, directly affecting 1,468 people. Hundreds were forced to evacuate their homes.

“The initial challenges [from the June 30 flooding] have been resolved and significant progress is being made in addressing the underlying issues. However, further efforts are underway to resolve flooding at Khao Phra Thaeo and Baan Manik,” Mayor Chalermphon said.

While flash floods affect nearly everyone in the area, even in deploying works to widen canals to help increase their capacity to deal with

runoff, Mayor Chalermphon has encountered problems.

“Private landowners often refuse to cooperate when asked to allow public construction to solve the issue of flash floods. The municipality can only request their cooperation, as we lack the legal power to construct on private land,” he explained.

Mayor Chalermphon noted, “The income generated from Phuket significantly contributes to Thailand’s economy, but the maintenance and improvement of living standards in Phuket have not met expectations.

“Phuket is a second home for

foreign investors. If the government focuses on improving infrastructure, facilities and transportation, Phuket can become a top destination for foreign investors,” he said.

### CAUSES

The areas of repeated flooding, near Khao Phra Thaeo and in Baan Manik, are naturally prone to flooding, said Mayor Chalermphon, who grew up in the area.

“Baan Manik often experiences severe flooding, affecting Thepkasattri Rd, a major route from the airport,” he said...

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# News



**Pygmy killer whales rescued from stranding > p5**

## Beach drownings continue to rise

**Eakkapop Thongtub**  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Lifeguards at Patong Beach are continuing to urge people to obey red 'no swimming' flags and lifeguards' warnings after 53 people were rescued from rip currents in 29 incidents at Patong Beach alone in July.

Patong Surf Life Saving confirmed the tally of rescues through a post online last Friday (Aug 2).

The month of July was deadly for swimmers at Phuket beaches. A Hong Kong father drowned at Patong Beach and a Kazakh man died after being pulled from the surf at Karon in separate incidents last Wednesday (July 31).

In Patong, Pol Lt Col Phongpipat Khamchomphu, Deputy Inspector (Investigation) at Patong Police, was informed by staff at Patong Hospital that Che Ka Fai Andy, a 52-year-old Chinese national from Hong Kong, had died after being pulled from the water unconscious and responsive. He was pronounced dead at Patong Hospital at 12:38pm.

Mr Che's 15-year-old son, Che Ho Wa, told police that he and his father went swimming at Patong Beach at about 11am.

The pair entered the water where lifeguards had marked the area safe to swim with yellow-red flags. However,



Photo: Patong Surf Life Saving

they soon found themselves outside the safe swim zone, and in adjacent water marked with red- 'no swimming' flags. The son found himself some 50 metres from his father, who by this time was in obvious difficulty in the water.

Ho Wa tried to swim to help his father, but was unable to, prompting him to call for help.

A lifeguard recovered Mr Che and brought him back to the beach, but by this time he was unconscious and unresponsive. The lifeguards administered CPR until an emergency medical unit arrived. CPR was

continued while en route to Patong Hospital, but to no avail.

At Karon Beach that same day, a 57-year-old tourist Yevgeniy Sapogov from Kazakhstan died after being pulled from the water unconscious and unresponsive.

Mr Sapogov was rushed to Chalong Hospital, where he was pronounced dead on arrival. Pol Col Teerawat Yodtor, Deputy Superintendent (Investigation) at Karon Police, was informed of the death at 2:20pm.

Mr Sapogov had arrived in Phuket on holiday with his family of five.

He drowned on his family's first day on the island.

Mr Sapogov went swimming about halfway along the beach. He soon encountered difficulty and began drowning in the surf. He was brought ashore and administered CPR, and taken to Chalong Hospital, where he died en route, police reported.

### WARNINGS

Late last month, Viroon Chuasaman, Head Lifeguard at Surin-Bang Tao Beach, called for intensive campaigns to educate tourists of the dangers of rip currents and strong waves during the southwest monsoon to help reduce the number of people drowning at tourist-popular beaches.

Mr Viroon told *The Phuket News* that the current efforts of lifeguards to save tourists from drowning were merely addressing the problem's symptoms rather than its root cause and called upon the Tourism Authority of Thailand to actively promote the dangers of ignoring red flag warnings during the monsoon season.

Mr Viroon's call for better awareness among tourists of Phuket's dangerous surf followed five people drowning at Phuket beaches in less than two weeks in June.

Even after Mr Viroon's plea, a Chinese tourist disappeared in dangerous surf at Karon Beach on July 26. His body was found washed up

on rocks near Freedom Beach and brought ashore in front of hundreds of beachgoers at Kata on July 29.

Just days earlier, a 27-year-old Indian tourist drowned at Surin Beach on July 24 after becoming caught in a rip current during an early morning swim with friends.

### MORE THAN RESCUES

In addition to rescuing people from the water, during July Patong lifeguards also provided assistance to people in distress in a range of situations.

Lifeguards ejected two groups of people from entering the water at night for safety reasons, and provided assistance to people who were drunk or victims of theft, including one incident where a tourist was injured in a fight. They also saw to the safe return of a young boy who had become separated from his parents.

Three people were treated with first aid for injuries on the beach, while 11 people required first aid from 10 incidents in the water, in which four people were rushed to Patong Hospital.

One person required first aid from an accident while playing water sports, Patong Surf Life Saving reported.

Patong Surf Life Saving also continued its project to teach young local children the dangers of the surf.

## Mayor names construction blitz as key cause of repeated flooding

*Continued from page 1*

"The main klong [canal] through the area cannot hold prolonged rainfall, leading to water bursting into villages and overflowing into nearby roads and canals," he explained.

He added that urbanisation and the increasing rate of development has worsened the problem, with construction replacing fields and nature, creating barriers to water flow. With periods of intense rainfall, this contributes to flash floods, he said.

The cooperation between Srisoonthorn Municipality and private landowners has improved, "Temporary permits for construction are acceptable, but long-term permits present challenges. If investors do not agree to measures for water flow, alternative plans must be devised," Mayor Chalermphon said.

The municipality does not have the authority to refuse building permits on private land but can request cooperation. In urgent situations, the governor and town planning department can assist by reviewing construction plans and asking for cooperation within legal limits, he noted.

Bureaucratic delays and budget requirements complicate the process, he added.

### PREVENTION

During Prime Minister Srettha's visit to the Heroines Monument early last month, Mayor Chalermphon requested a budget to address the flooding problem in Baan Manik.

Prime Minister Srettha instructed him to draft a plan and budget for Cabinet approval, as plans exceeding B100 million require a vote from the House of Representatives, causing delays, Mayor Chalermphon explained.

Following PM Srettha's



Mayor Chalermphon explains the flooding problems to PM Srettha on July 5. Photo: PR Phuket

visit, the next day (July 6) Mayor Chalermphon along with Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat and officers from the Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning visited the flood area to draft the plan.

"We propose building a higher flood wall and deepening the canal. The solution includes constructing a high dam and a continuous wall along the canal to block floodwaters from entering villages," Mayor Chalermphon said.

"The plan involves an eight-kilometre wall along two

canals, from Baan Manik to Ao Sapam, behind Tha Ruea Shrine, with a budget of B263 million."

Mayor Chalermphon told *The Phuket News*, "I plan to meet with the Cabinet again in August to request additional funds for installing smart poles for flood warnings and approval from Cabinet."

The smart poles send signals of flooding and the water detector will be placed at the starting points of water flow, automatically sending messages to villagers in the risk areas before flooding occurs.

The ongoing plan will

be presented to the Cabinet to ensure people in the area can prepare and report any problems, he noted.

Mayor Chalermphon explained, "The next area that we have plans for is Baan Ya. The plan is to replace old, disorganised water drainage pipes with larger ones, from 60cm to 1.5 metres in diameter, and extend the network a further 300m, but the project requires cooperation from another municipality, adding complexity to the process."

Yet while the floodworks continues, Srisoonthorn Municipality will try to maintain pressure on developers to factor in potential flood risk in the construction plan, Mayor Chalermphon said.

"The future plan for control in increasing construction on private land is before any new construction begins. The municipality may request to review plans to assess potential impacts.

"This involves discussing with landowners and town planners, asking owners to inform the municipality before building, and consulting engineers to ensure compliance," he added.

However, if the building permit complies with all existing laws, the municipality has no choice but to approve the permit, Mayor Chalermphon noted.

All the municipality can do is request cooperation.

"When a municipality or government department requests cooperation, the well-being and needs of the community must come first," Mayor Chalermphon said.

"Please extend kindness and cooperation for the greater happiness of the majority. This is an act of compassion we ask for private landowners," he concluded.



# Heroines traffic hits crunch

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Thalang Traffic Police have warned motorists to brace for more disruptions at the Heroines Monument as work continues on moving the power poles alongside Thepkasattri Rd next week.

The power poles are being moved ahead of construction of the Heroines Underpass.

The period of work that began on Aug 1 had concluded, with no work on moving the power poles continuing on Monday (Aug 5), Thalang Traffic Police announced in a post online last Sunday night.

However, the work will resume from 9am to 4pm each day on Aug 13-14, with work along the southbound lanes from the Heroines Monument to Tha Ruea Shrine underway.

The work will then continue on the north side of the Heroines Monument from 9am to 4pm each day on Aug 15-17, with power poles being moved all the way up to the Thai Watsadu branch.

The same section of the north side of the monument will resume on Aug 26-28, Thalang Traffic Police warned.



Image: Thalang Traffic Police

"Please avoid the area while the work is underway," Thalang Traffic Police urged.

The work started well on Aug 1, with traffic police initially reporting that traffic flow was still moving relatively freely at the Heroines Monument on Aug 1. By that afternoon, however, Thalang Traffic Police advised motorists to factor in traffic delays to the travel time.

The heavy traffic continued, and Thalang Traffic Police

issued maps showing alternate routes to avoid the Heroines Monument roundabout.

In response to the heavy traffic, Thalang Traffic Police sectioned off one lane on the southbound side of the road for northbound traffic to use in the hope of easing congestion at the roundabout.

Meanwhile, the local branch of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket) has posted a report detailing the Heroines Underpass project to

come, with images featuring a blissful absence of traffic at the roundabout.

According to the report, the "Tha Ruea Intersection Underpass Project", with an initial construction budget of B2.38 billion, has officially begun.

The project requires the expropriation of 1,574 square metres of land, including 967sqm near the Robinson Lifestyle Thalang shopping mall and 607sqm near the

Southeast Asia Cathay Gems Phuket outlet on the southeast corner of the intersection.

The underpass will feature three lanes beneath the monument, with two lanes (each 3.25m wide) for outbound traffic and one lane (4.5m wide) for inbound traffic, said the report.

Above ground, the roundabout around the monument will have two lanes, each lane three metres wide, accompanied by footpaths ranging from 2.1 to 2.7m in width.

A new traffic light system will be installed, and the monument area will be elevated by approximately 90 centimetres, said the report.

"This design aims to create an elegant and safe environment for road users while providing convenient access for those wishing to pay homage to the monuments," the report noted.

The underpass will include pedestrian walks with entrances and exits at key locations, such as in front of the jewellery outlet and the Robinson mall. The pedestrian routes will include stairs and elevators to ensure accessibility for people of all ages.

An area for paying homage

to the Two Heroines will be partially open, situated at the same level as the underpass roof "to create an open and uncluttered landscape, promoting good visibility and the monument's elegance," the report continued.

Phuket Highways Office Chief Yuthana Pitak has emphasised that the project will significantly improve traffic and transportation efficiency, making travel more convenient and faster, the report said.

"The Phuket Highways District is expediting the relocation of public utilities, such as electricity and water, to clear the area for construction. The project includes the expansion of the road shoulder, with efforts underway to complete these tasks before the contractor begins work," Mr Yuttana explained.

The bidding process to select a construction contractor is being managed by the Department of Highways. The Phuket Highways District Office headed by Mr Yuttana is responsible for the project and coordinating the relocation of utilities and the road shoulder expansion to ensure smooth progress, the report concluded.

## Croc caught in Pa Khlok

A SALTWATER CROCODILE that evaded capture for five days in Pa Khlok has finally been caught.

The crocodile hunting operation team, led by Nikhom Suksawat from the Panya Farm Co Ltd Crocodile Capture Training and Academic Center in Nakhon Pathom, confirmed the capture early Monday morning (Aug 5).

A whole host of officials were present at the scene to share the news, including Prayut Rattanawan, Chief of the Phuket Provincial Fisheries Office, along with Pa Khlok Mayor Panya Samporat, Sakda Thawimuang, head of the fisheries management group; Thalang District Fisheries Office Chief Therdsak Mitwong.

The hunt for the crocodile began after security staff at the Mission Hills golf course spotted the reptile in a tin mine lagoon adjacent to the golf course on July 31.

Search efforts identified the reptile as a saltwater crocodile, approximately 1.5 metres in length, which was confirmed on Monday.



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

However, the crocodile evaded capture for days. In some parts of the lagoon the water is up to 10 metres deep, and visitors arriving to catch a glimpse of the croc could have been scaring the crocodile from coming ashore, which would have made its capture quicker and easier, Mr Nikhom explained last Friday.

In the meantime, the area was sealed off from all people except the crocodile hunting team, who were provided accommodation at the neighbouring golf course.

With the croc now in safe hands, officials have

confirmed the reptile will be transported to the crocodile to the Phang Nga Coastal Fisheries Research and Development Center in Thai Mueang District, Phang Nga.

While the arrangements were being made, the crocodile was temporarily housed at the Phuket Coastal Fisheries Research and Development Center in Pa Khlok.

Initially, the crocodile was to be isolated in a cement pond for a health check and breed identification. Afterwards, it was to be moved to a larger cement pond for further conditioning, Mr Nikhom explained.

Eakkapop Thongtub

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## CONTACT US

editor@classactmedia.co.th 076 612 550

**PURIYA BEAVAN**  
Editor**CHRIS HUSTED**  
Executive Editor  
084 307 7408  
executive@classactmedia.co.th**BEN TIREBUCK**  
News / Sport Editor  
061 806 8132  
editor3@classactmedia.co.th**CHUTHARAT 'UM' PLERIN**  
Thai Editor  
086 766 1615  
thai@classactmedia.co.th**NATNAREE 'MILD' LIKIDWATANASAKUN**  
Reporter / Translator  
062 295 3244  
reporter1@classactmedia.co.th**JASON BEAVAN**  
General Manager  
086 479 7471  
gm@classactmedia.co.th**SIRIPORN (NOK) SEANGMAS**  
Sales Support  
086 479 7470  
sales@classactmedia.co.th**NIRAVIT 'MOS' VORAVANITCHA**  
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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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WED AUGUST 14



High: +37°

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THU AUGUST 15



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Wind 4 m/s

## Dubai man arrested for motorbike hooning

CHERNG TALAY POLICE have been praised for taking action against a foreign man for riding a motorbike recklessly through the heart of Cherng Talay, starting with a wheelie while taking off from traffic lights right in front of Cherng Talay Police Station.

Cherng Talay Police posted a video of the man and his dangerous antics, identifying the man as from Dubai, UAE.

The video was captioned "Don't think it's cool (showing off) like this, you will be caught. Once arrested, your vehicle will be confiscated too... don't do it!!!!"

The incident occurred about 3:45pm on July 29, starting at the traffic lights near Cherng Talay Police Station.

The young motorcyclist was seen performing stunts that endangered the lives and safety of others on the road, Cherng Talay Police said.

The video showed Traffic Police quickly giving pursuit after the speeding foreigner, and finally catching up with him and his friends, also riding motorbikes.

The Dubai man was plainly caught riding a mo-



Screenshot: Cheryng Talay Police

torbike without wearing a helmet.

The video marked that such dangerous driving was punishable by up to three months in jail or a fine of up to B10,000.

Cherng Talay Police Chief Pol Col Weerapong Rakkhito emphasised the seriousness of the offence, stating, "Such an action is driving a motorcycle carelessly and without considering the safety of others. I appeal to motorists to use the road carefully and generously. Respecting traffic laws and the rights of others is crucial for reducing accidents."

Posting the video was part of a broader campaign by Cheryng Talay Police to promote safe driving and respect for traffic regulations, Pol Col Rakkhito said, while noting the limited resources of the police force and the importance of public cooperation in ensuring road safety. *Eakkapop Thongtub*

## Peeping tom caught out by angry mob in Pa Khlok

**Eakkapop Thongtub**  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Thalang Police have yet to confirm apprehending a man who was confronted by angry residents after he was caught spying on a girl taking a shower at her home in Pa Khlok.

The incident, which occurred at Ban Bang Rong on July 31, was made public by video posted online by Facebook user Teen Night.

The video, nearly four minutes long, explained that the man was surrounded by young men and confronted at 10:45pm.

A woman was also present, who explained that the man had been caught secretly watching her daughter take a shower.

After being spotted by the mother, who shouted for help, the man had fled. The group of young men pursued him and confronted him while his motorbike lay on the ground.

The man repeatedly denied he had spied on the daughter, and repeatedly asked the young men to calm down.

He told the men that he was riding home from seeing friends in Muang Mai to where he was staying in Kamala, a long way and a different direction from where he was caught.



Image: Supplied

At first the man said he had stopped to fill up his water bottle, and later said that said he had stopped to urinate.

While being confronted, one of the young men elbowed the man in the neck. Another man punched the accused in the head. Still the man did not flee, and repeatedly called for the men to calm down.

The man eventually did flee after another young man behind him landed a flying kick to the side of his head, and continued his attack.

Another video of the incident posted online showed police arriving at the scene.

In the compartment under the motorbike seat of the man who had fled were women's panties, condoms, a small jar of vaseline and a cucumber.

One of the posts online said that police were investigating the incident further and were working to track down the man.

Among the items under the motorbike seat was the man's wallet, including identification cards.

## Tourists assaulted in Patong

PATONG POLICE HAVE YET to confirm action taken against a motorbike taxi driver who assaulted two tourists from the United Arab Emirates in an incident in Soi Saen Sabai.

The assault occurred in front of the Hallo Massage shop resulting in injuries to the two tourists on July 29, police reported.

Officers were informed of the incident at about 10pm.

The tourists, named as 33-year-old Mohamed Abdulla Hassan Mirak Alblooshi and 25-year-old Abdullah Mohammed Ali Ibrahim, 25, were walking in front of the Hallo Massage shop when they were approached by a motorbike taxi driver.

The motorbike taxi driver honked his horn at the tourists to



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

move aside. As the tourists moved to the side of the road, the motorbike taxi driver parked his motorbike, approached them, and punched both victims. He then fled the scene on his motorbike.

Police later identified the motorbike taxi driver as Patthipat Phuengpisawong, 30, registered as living in Moo 6, Kathu.

"The victims reported the assault to the investigative officer, who is now working to track down and apprehend the suspect for prosecution", police reported. *Eakkapop Thongtub*

## Man dies on way to hospital

A 60-YEAR-OLD MAN PASSED away last week after fainting and falling off his bicycle while on his way to get medicine at Thalang Hospital.

Pol Capt Kraisorn Boonprasop of the Thalang Police received a call informing him that a man was unconscious beside the road at about 6:50am on July 30.

Pol Capt Kraisorn along with Pol Lt Sin Saijit and an EMS Advance Unit from Thalang Hospital, promptly arrived at the scene.

Upon arrival, they discovered the man, identified as Wisut Aekachai, a resident of Moo 1, Tambon Thepkasattri, unresponsive.

Despite immediate medical attention, Mr Wisut was pronounced dead at the scene. His body was found with abrasions under his chin and a non-life-threatening wound on his left knee.

According to Sanya Ekachai, Mr



Photo: Thalang Police

Wisut's brother, Mr Wisut had been suffering from chronic alcoholism, which often led to fainting spells. Every morning, Mr Wisut would ride his bicycle to Thalang Hospital for his regular injection.

Authorities, including investigators and doctors from Thalang Hospital, conducted an initial post-mortem examination at the scene, after which Mr Wisut's body was subsequently transported to Thalang Hospital, where a forensic doctor from Vachira Phuket Hospital will perform a more thorough examination to determine the exact cause of death. *Eakkapop Thongtub*



# Blackchin haul destroyed

**Eakkapop Thongtub**  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Concerned about blackchin tilapia fish becoming an invasive species in Phuket waters, some 20kg of the fish being sold at markets on the island have been destroyed amid fears that their eggs and spry might make it into the local ecosystem.

The issue was raised by local members of the environmental group Monsoon Garbage Thailand through a post on their Facebook page, noting the ecological damage the fish could do if the species began to populate in waters around Phuket.

The blackchin tilapia is a species of cichlid native to coastal west Africa, which has been introduced to Asia and North America, where it is now considered an invasive species.

Acting on their concerns, the Monsoon Garbage members in Phuket bought 20kg of the fish being sold at local markets and handed the catch over to Phuket MP Chalermpong Sangdee, who in turn delivered it to the Phuket Provincial Fisheries Office.

Phuket Fisheries Chief



Photo: Chalermpong Saengdee / Facebook

Prayot Rattanawan explained on July 29 that the decision was made to bury the fish to keep their remains away from any local waters.

"We were notified by MP Chalermpong that blackchin tilapia were being sold in Phuket. The concern is that live fish or fish with viable eggs could be accidentally released into local water bodies, causing ecological harm," Mr Prayot said.

"We decided to bury the fish to ensure they do not pose a risk to the ecosystem," he added.

The 20kg of fish had been

imported to Phuket by a vendor in Samut Sakhon, Mr Prayot noted.

MP Chalermpong echoed the concerns, emphasising the potential danger to Phuket's ecosystem.

"A social media group reported a vendor selling blackchin tilapia at B50 per kilogramme in Phuket. The Monsoon Garbage group purchased the fish and handed them over to us for destruction," he explained.

"We urge all vendors and residents not to import or consume blackchin tilapia in Phuket, as these fish could be-

come an invasive species and disrupt our local ecosystem. If these fish must be brought in, they should be processed, such as dried or salted, to eliminate any risk," he said.

The Fisheries Office and MP Chalermpong are also working with the Department of Fisheries to establish regulations to prevent the import of live or potentially harmful fish species into Phuket, he added.

The aim is to ensure that only processed fish products that pose no risk to the local environment are allowed, MP Chalermpong noted.

## Pygmy killer whales rescued from stranding

ONE SMALL KILLER whale has died and another remains in critical condition after becoming stranded in the mangrove forest area of Tha Le Bay, near Baan Ao Kung, Pa Khlok, on Phuket's east coast, last Saturday (Aug 3).

A group of six whales were discovered stranded in the area at about 3am. Local villagers quickly sprang into action to provide immediate care and assistance while waiting for the tide to rise. One of the whales did not survive the ordeal.

The stranded whales were identified as pygmy killer whales (*Feresa attenuata*), a species typically found in deep, warm waters between latitudes 40°N and 35°S.

The whales are rarely seen near shore unless the coastline is characterised by deep, clear waters. Previous instances of pygmy killer whale strandings have been reported in Thailand's Phetchaburi and Trang provinces.

It is believed that the group of whales may have become disoriented and separated from their pod or were driven ashore by strong waves. Among the six whales found, one was critically injured,



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

prompting immediate and urgent rescue efforts.

Therdsak Mitwong of the Thalang Fisheries Office and Kongkiat Kittiwattanawong, Director of the Marine Resources Research Center of the Upper Andaman Coast, arrived at the scene with a team from the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR).

The critically injured whale received emergency treatment, including glucose and saline, while the remaining five whales were observed swimming near the mangrove forest.

Rescue teams used boats to gently guide the whales away from the shore, ensuring their safe return to deeper waters.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Phuket data becomes part of 'human development project'

OFFICIALS HELD ON online meeting with representatives from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) last week as part of a human development project focused on the key social issues of sexual and reproductive health, reduction of gender-based violence and sexual abuse.

Phuket has been selected nationally as one of the pilot areas to use and develop the SoSafe platform as part of the Traffy Fondue Digital Innovation Group for Cities app. As part of this, the 'Life Cycle Digital Platform' will see in-depth data from subjects captured, analysed and shared with the UNFPA.

The UNFPA is a UN agency aimed at improving reproductive and maternal health worldwide.

The meeting at Provincial Hall, on Aug 1, was chaired by Phuket Vice Governor Narasak Saksomboon. Representing UNFPA Thailand was lead project consultant Pannin Sumanasetkul, while officials from the Ministry



Photo: PR Phuket

of Social Development and Human Security also joined the call.

Mr Pannin explained that the data captured via the Life Cycle Digital Platform prototype project will provide invaluable insight and help continue efforts to improve human development and target sexual violence and abuse.

He further explained that based on the results of data collected previously it was

found that it was necessary to expand the results to include other social issues in reporting incidents via the SoSafe platform, which is why the call with UNFPA Thailand took place.

The official report of the meeting by PR Phuket, however, made no mention of the specifics in relation to how a vulnerable subject can submit a case via the Traffy Fondue app.

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# Traders praise cannabis U-turn

Natnaree Likidwatanasakun  
reporter1@classactmedia.co.th

Poonwarit Wangpatravanich, President of Phuket Cannabis Association, has praised the government's latest announcement not to re-criminalise cannabis outright, saying the move will help preserve a multi-billion-baht industry.

He also agreed that more regulation was likely necessary, but not at the cost of killing the entire industry itself.

Thailand will work towards controlling the use of cannabis through legislation instead of re-listing it as a narcotic, Deputy Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul announced last week, signalling the latest policy U-turn on the issue.

In response, Mr Poonwarit told *The Phuket News*, "Making cannabis illegal again would have a huge impact. It would affect the whole industry related to cannabis: the retailers, suppliers and customers, including tourists."

"Our members at the Phuket Cannabis Association all agree with the government implementing any measures for better regulation in matters where they have genuine



Poonwarit Wangpatravanich, President of Phuket Cannabis Association. Photo: Supplied

concern, but not with making cannabis entirely illegal again," he said.

"They understand if the government can come out with a common sense answer and proper law enforcement that could bring both sides in the middle, but as long as they can continue their business. All our businesses support the economy and generate income, but re-criminalising is not the solution," Mr Poonwarit argued.

"The government can regulate how much cannabis people can buy during a specified period of time, they can make a law saying that only people with prescriptions are

allowed to be sold cannabis. They can do all this, and it would be okay. But what they should not do is make cannabis illegal again," he said.

## ONLY BENEFITS

So far there have only been clear benefits from decriminalising cannabis, Mr Poonwarit argued.

"People have had easier, cheaper access to medical treatments while the move has spurred the growth of an entire industry. Thailand is the only country where cannabis is legal. It is undeniable that Thailand has generated a huge amount of income in the past few years from the cannabis

market as well as encouraging more tourists to flow in Thailand," he said.

Cannabis has brought a positive impact on the economy, especially through tourism, and especially tourism to Phuket. An increase in tourism brings positive support for a whole range of sectors, including hotels and hospitality, transportation and restaurants, he noted.

"Also, cannabis-related tourism is year-round. It can be very helpful for Phuket's tourism industry during the 'low season', and help support the industry during the time of year when there are very few tourists," he explained.

In Phuket, there are currently 2,000 licensed cannabis shops, out of a total of 15,000 licensed shops across Thailand, Mr Poonwarit said.

"Recriminalising cannabis would affect the shops in Phuket, with many expected to close. The closures would result in the loss of around 6,000 to 8,000 jobs in Phuket and approximately 45,000 jobs in Thailand," he added.

"Although cannabis businesses do not currently pay any industry specific taxes, the potential loss in VAT revenue for the government is significant, estimated to be around B10 billion or more if a 7% VAT were applied," he continued.

The commercial real estate market in Phuket would also suffer due to the closure of over 2,000 shops, leading to increased vacancies, decreased property values and financial strain on related businesses such as suppliers and service providers, Mr Poonwarit noted.

Some government officials are claiming that decriminalising cannabis will have a negative effect on Thai youths, but they have yet to give any clear evidence or statistics of this, Mr Poonwarit also argued.

"Over the past two years while cannabis has been decriminalised, there have been very few cases of Thai youths being negatively affected, and very few reports of cannabis involved in instances of crime," he said.

## BACK AND FORTH

The government repeatedly reversing its stance on whether to re-criminalise cannabis has already had a negative impact, Mr Poonwarit pointed out.

"The whole process so far has had a huge negative impact on the image of the government and its ability to make clear laws, instead of changing its mind after it starts," he said.

"Right now the decriminalising, and re-criminalising, of cannabis is being used as a political tool, and so far the government has not given any clear reasons as to why they want to re-criminalise it."

"Changing the law like this will negatively affect investors' confidence in investing in the country. The loss of confidence in the law in Thailand could lead to loss of trustworthiness among international investors and affect international relations," he added.

## Job fair touts 2,000 vacancies

THE DEPARTMENT OF Employment, in collaboration with the Phuket Provincial Employment Office, Phuket Vocational College and JobKK.com hosted a labour meeting and job fair offering more than 2,000 job positions last Friday (Aug 2).

The event, held at The Pago Design Hotel and titled "People Creation, Job Creation, and Career Paths @ Phuket", attracted thousands of unemployed individuals eager to apply and interview directly with potential employers.

Siraphop Duangsodsri, Assistant Minister of the Ministry of Labor, presided over the opening ceremony. He was joined by Sibmuenchai Phothisin, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Employment, Phuket Vice Governor Adul Chuthong and various executives from the Ministry of Labor and the Employment Department.

The atmosphere at the event was vibrant, with job seekers engaging with 52 leading companies that set up recruitment booths. The event aimed to increase job



Photo: PR Phuket

opportunities, reduce unemployment, and address labour shortages in Phuket. More than 2,135 vacancies were made available, allowing employers and job seekers to connect directly.

In addition to job recruitment, the event provided attendees with valuable career information and educational resources. Participants had the opportunity to explore career paths, learn about independent careers, and receive career counselling. The event also featured virtual learning exhibitions, career path presentations in the tourism and service sectors, and essential skills lectures for the 'AI Everywhere' era.

Special groups, including students, the unemployed, people with disabilities and the elderly, were also included in the recruitment efforts and counselling services. Attendees could register for work abroad, take vocational and English tests and prepare for interviews.

The event also showcased and sold products from home workers, OTOP groups, disabled individuals, the elderly and prisoners. The Ministry of Commerce's Blue Flag Mobile Project was present, offering affordable products to stimulate the community economy and alleviate household expenses.

*The Phuket News*

## TAT targets 2.2mn Russian arrivals

THE RUSSIAN INBOUND MARKET should reach a new high of 2.2 million arrivals next year, thanks to the 60-day visa-free scheme, while the shortage of aircraft among Russian airlines would continue to hamper the market, according to the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT).

For 2025, the agency targets 7.5% revenue growth, with 39 million foreign tourists and 205 million domestic trips.

Siripakorn Cheawsamoot, TAT deputy governor for Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas, said the target of 2.2mn Russian tourists next year is based on the same growth rate recorded in 2024, which should increase the market to 1.9mn to 2mn.

The achievement this year would also exceed the levels recorded in 2019 and 2023, which both registered 1.48mn tourists.

During the first half, 920,989 Russian tourists arrived in Thailand, becoming the fifth largest group of foreign arrivals.

Mr Siripakorn said based on the first quarter report, their expenditure per trip tallied around B62,000.

In 2024, the market should generate revenue of B124 billion for Thailand's tourism industry.

He said two major Russian flag carriers – Aeroflot and S7 – operate regular flights to Bangkok and Phuket, tallying over 40 flights per week.

The agency is still holding discussions with airlines and tourism operators to increase both scheduled and chartered flights in the final quarter to capture soaring demand during high season for Russian tourists.

Even though Thai Airways has shown interest in resuming flights to Russia, at the moment there is no concrete plan to do so,



Photo: Achadtaya Chuenniran / Bangkok Post

said Mr Siripakorn.

Khanittha Phanworawat, director of TAT's Moscow office, said the aircraft shortage among commercial airlines and chartered operators remains a critical challenge for the market, as they're unable to lease new aircraft amid the Russia-Ukraine war.

Ms Khanittha said the majority of 61 long-range aircraft among all operators in Russia have been allocated to domestic routes and other rising destinations such as China, Vietnam and India.

The agency will focus on offering extended-stay travel packages to Russian tourists to increase their length of stay such as cultural and historical tours combined with wellness activities and beach destinations.

Other challenges include the ban on accepting Russian credit cards in Thailand, which discourages Russian tourists from spending at their destinations.

Therefore, most Russian tourists tend to prefer inclusive tour packages that cover all expenses including transport, accommodation and food.

However, there are now more operators offering currency exchange from rubles in major Thai cities, while some Russian visitors may opt to register new debit cards in other countries which can be used in Thailand. *Bangkok Post*



# Handout to proceed regardless of PM fate

## BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

The implementation of the B10,000 digital money handout scheme will not depend on Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin's fate, as it has already been declared in parliament and must be implemented no matter what, the government insisted last Sunday (Aug 4).

Mr Srettha's job is on the line, as he faces possible dismissal if the Constitutional Court rules that his decision to appoint ex-convict Pichit Chuenban as a PM's Office Minister in the last Cabinet reshuffle is a violation of the charter.

The motion to dismiss the prime minister was submitted by a group of 40 senators who said Pichit should not have even been considered for the position, given he had been convicted for contempt of court for attempting to bribe Supreme Court officials back in 2008, when he represented former PM Thaksin Shinawatra in a controversial land case.

Despite the possibility of dismissal, both Mr Srettha and PM's Office Minister Jiraporn Sindhuprai on Sunday rejected claims the policy will not be implemented if the court moves to dismiss Mr Srettha as PM on Aug 14.

Mr Srettha on Sunday advised the



Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin says he is confident ahead of the Aug 14 hearing which will decide his future. Photo: AFP

public not to fall for such rumours, saying no matter what the court decides on Aug 14, the digital handout scheme will continue as planned.

"Those who still have doubts over this stimulus programme should seek out further information through the 1111 hotline, instead of believing rumours which are circulating online right now," he said.

He said he had asked with the Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) to deal with the rising number of malicious rumours relating to the digital handout scheme.

Ms Jiraporn, who is also a deputy leader of the Pheu Thai Party, said the government is confident of Mr Srettha's chances of surviving the test, before reiterating the policy will be implemented, regardless of the court's decision.

She noted the motion to increase the budget for the current fiscal year by B122 billion to partially fund the scheme was approved by the House last week. "Honestly, Pheu Thai isn't preparing to find anyone to replace Mr Srettha," she said.

"All the party is focusing on now is implementing its policies, in particular the digital handout scheme, to help people deal with problems they are encountering."

In another development, Deputy Prime Minister and Commerce Minister Phumtham Wechayachai called off the registration of shops keen to take part in the digital handout scheme, which was set to begin on Monday. He said the government needs to focus on the registration of other eligible recipients for now.

## LGBTQIA2S+ traveller campaign launched

### BANGKOK

IMMIGRATION POLICE launched their "Welcome Pride by Immigration" campaign on Aug 1 to allay concerns among the LGBTQIA2S+ travellers who may look different from their passport photographs.

LGBTQIA2S+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and trans, queer and questioning, intersex, asexual or agender, and two-spirit.

Pol Maj Gen Choengron Rimpadee, commander of Immigration Division 2, said that many LGBTQIA2S+ people were worried about immigration checks due to discrepancies between their appearance and the photos or gender markers in their passports, which are often governed by the laws of their home countries.

"Some people may have undergone surgeries that altered their facial structures, leading to concerns during immigration checks," said the official who oversees



Pol Maj Gen Choengron attaches a campaign sticker at an immigration booth at Suvarnabhumi airport on Aug 1. Photo: Supplied

immigration at airports.

He assured travellers that immigration officers are ready to review alternative documents and medical records to verify their identity as the legitimate passport holders, despite any changes in their appearance.

Pol Maj Gen Choengron said that LGBTQIA2S+ travellers who have had their present appearances recorded by immigration authorities can easily navigate immigration checks, as the police already have access to their biometric data.

"Thailand welcomes travellers worldwide, regardless of gender," he added. *Bangkok Post*

## 'Penguin' sentenced over lese-majeste offence

### BANGKOK

A PROMINENT THAI PRO-DEMOCRACY activist has been sentenced to two years in prison for posting an insult below an upside-down picture of His Majesty the King on social media, a human rights lawyers' group said on July 31.

Parit Chiwarak, also known as "Penguin", was found guilty of infringing the country's stringent royal defamation, or lese-majeste, laws during youth-led pro-democracy protests in in 2020-21.

He expected to face a further 24 royal defamation charges, according to the Thai Lawyers for Human Rights (TLHR) group.

The 26-year-old activist, who was not in court in Bangkok, was one of the key figures leading the demonstrations which saw tens of thousands of people take to the streets with unprecedented calls for reform of the monarchy.

Parit was charged over comments posted on his Facebook page from July 28 to Aug 1, 2021. July 28 is the birthday of His Majesty the King.

Parit earlier claimed that his Facebook account had been hacked. The court rejected this argument, saying he had failed to later remove the offensive posts.

The Criminal Court initially handed down a sentence of three years, then reduced it to two years because he gave



Parit Chiwarak. Photo: Bangkok Post

useful testimony in the case.

The ruling was delivered in absentia. Parit has failed to show up at the court since June 25 and is widely believed to have fled the country.

The judge issued a bench warrant for his arrest. The statute of limitations in the case is 10 years.

Some of the world's strictest lese-majeste laws protect King Maha Vajiralongkorn and his close family, with each offence carrying a potential 15-year sentence.

Critics say the government has used the legislation to silence dissent. More than 270 people have been prosecuted for lese-majeste since 2020, according to TLHR.

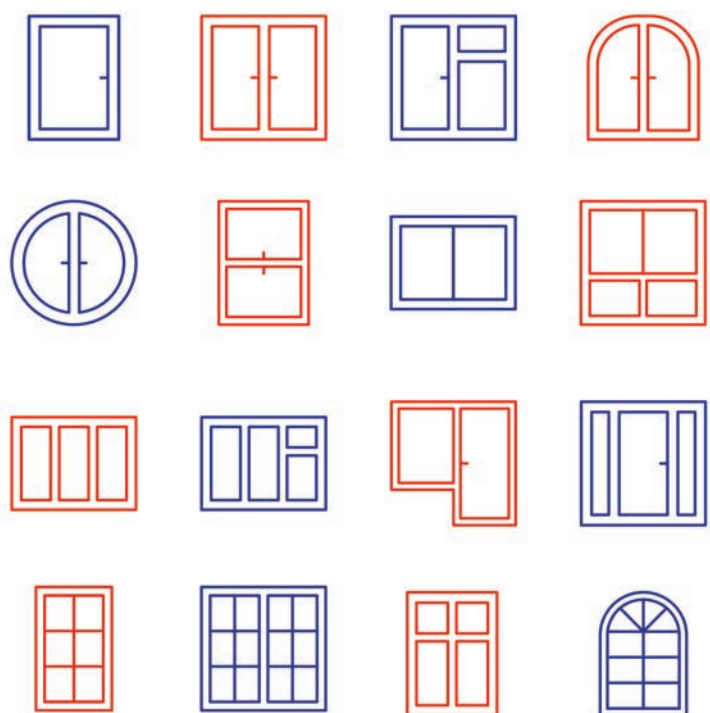
On May 14, rights activist Netiporn Sanae-sangkhom, also detained on royal defamation charges, died in custody while on hunger strike.

Netiporn had been held in pre-trial detention since January, charged over an incident that occurred during a royal motorcade protest in 2020.

— Additional reporting by the Bangkok Post



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# 'Fly me to the Moon' a rom-com landing

David Griffiths

The moon landing – did it happen or was it staged? It's hard to imagine that when I went to high school, okay a little longer ago than I care to admit, it was simply taught that the moon landing did happen. Today we find ourselves in a world where a growing number of people believe that what is considered a pivotal event in world history may have in fact been staged.

Well, while Greg Berlanti (*Love, Simon*) doesn't attempt to win over those who believe the landing was faked with his new film *Fly Me to the Moon* he does in fact offer up a suggestion of why some people feel that it really happened while others believe it was shot on a film set.

*Fly me to the Moon* tells the story of what happens when NASA launch director Cole Davis (Channing Tatum – *White House Down*) meets marketing specialist Kelly Jones (Scarlett Johansson – *The Avengers*) when she is brought on-board to make NASA more popular with both the public and the government in the lead-up to the mission to the moon.

At first Cole and his right-hand man Henry Smalls (Ray Ramano – *Everybody Loves Raymond*) are offended by the idea of what they conceive is commercialising NASA but they soon start to realise that it is needed in order to raise funds so that NASA can keep going with the mission.

But as Cole and Kelly start to become romantically involved their relationship is further tested when Kelly is suddenly confronted by the mysterious Moe Berkus (Woody Harrelson – *The Hunger Games*) who on behalf of the President tells her that she has to be involved in a 'film shoot' of a moon landing in case the mission fails.

She is reluctant to be involved, especially when she is told that she can't tell Cole about the task, but is



Image: IMDb

then blackmailed by Moe and has to proceed with her good friend, the flamboyant Lance Vespertine (Jim Rash – *The Way Way Back*), directing one of the most important shoots of all time.

What Berlanti and first-time feature screenwriter Rose Gilroy have delivered here is pretty much a romantic comedy with an historical twist, but this film goes a lot deeper than that. Most cinema audiences are used to romantic comedies with clichéd, undeveloped characters but that certainly isn't the case here. Gilroy has given these characters depth and even given Kelly a backstory with a twist that makes her completely vulnerable when Moe decides to blackmail her.

Some critics have been kind of harsh with their comments about Channing Tatum's performance in this film but they have missed one key thing – Tatum's lack of emotion in his role is not bad acting... it is him simply presenting a character that is no good at showing emotion – the way that his character has been written on the page. It's not a wooden acting

performance, it's an actor playing a socially awkward character.

Gilroy's screenplay is also full of truly comedic moments – not trying to spoil anything here, but the black cat springs straight to mind – that will genuinely make the audience chuckle. The screenplay also features truly beautiful moments, especially revolving around Cole's traumatic past. Like character development, true emotion in a romantic comedy is rare, but Gilroy and Berlanti manage to incorporate both into the film here and the result is a film that is truly beautiful and captures the time period remarkably well.

The cast also reacts well to the screenplay. Channing Tatum does what he is asked to bring to the screen in a surprisingly layered role while Scarlett Johansson captures the grace of many of the actresses of the '50s and '60s sensationally well.

Woody Harrelson seems to relish the opportunity to be able to over-act as he portrays the villain of the piece while credit must also be paid to Jim Rash, who often steals the scenes that he is in, Ray Ramano, who takes a break from a comedy with a straight-laced performance, and Anna Garcia whose under-stated performance is a real highlight.

*Fly me to the Moon* is one of the real surprises of 2024. It is beautifully charming with characters that you will actually find yourself loving and a witty screenplay that while comical does not make light of a true historical achievement.

4/5 Stars

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

## The September/October 2024 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 about your F & B outlet

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# The elegance of Black Ginger

Amy Bensema

**T**ruly one of the most iconic dining experiences in Phuket, the magic begins as soon as we arrive at Black Ginger. The pathway to the restaurant is lit by sultry blue lights which lead to a small pier with fire torches and a wooden raft that takes us to the other side.

Black Ginger is stunning. The restaurant is housed in a traditional Thai mansion set next to a lagoon and hugged by tropical foliage. The atmosphere is romantic, and as we choose a table outside, the wait staff saunter over with a smile and menus.

The restaurant is known for its signature dishes which inspire guests to take a savoury journey into the historical heart of Phuket. Helmed by Executive Sous Chef Piak, who has worked at the restaurant for 35 years, specialities include Thai classics such as Som Tam, Tom Yum and Phanaeng Curry. We order an assortment of dishes and admire the architecture as we wait.

Our dining experience starts with Kratong Thong, diced chicken with Thai spices and sweet corn woven into delicious golden baskets, and Yam Dok Dala Gai Sub, minced chicken with torched ginger flower and Thai herbs. Both starters are phenomenal and ignite our appetites. We also sample Tom Som Pla Sapparod Phuket, a Phuket



fish soup with tamarind, pineapple and elephant apple. I am not a fish or seafood person, but the flavours of this soup are so exquisite that I have another bowl.

Mains include Moo Hong, Phuket stewed pork belly with coriander roots, star anise, soy sauce and a cinnamon stick as well as Nuea Yang, grilled marinated wagyu beef with Thai herbs, and spicy chilli shallot sauce. We also dive into a heaping bowl of Massaman curry with beef. This has always been a favourite dish; here the peanut curry sauce is so rich and bold.

We also indulge in Bua Thor, a local speciality of crispy betel leaves with turmeric batter and prawns, Poh Piah Sod Phuket, spring rolls with crab claw meat, pork strips, garden veggies and a Penang dipping sauce, and Ow-Tao, delicate pan-fried Fine de Claire oyster with tapioca, taro, egg and crispy pork. Plamuk Phad Nam Dam, wok-fried squid with black ink and spring onion, rounds out the main courses of the meal. Each and every dish is absolutely exquisite in presentation and unmatched in flavour. The food at Black Ginger is exceptionally good.

For dessert, we have Black Ginger's signature Bua Loy Mar Praow Orn, rice flower dumplings in a creamy coconut milk with coconut meat, Oh Aiew, a refreshing Phuketian favourite that consists of banana gelatin perfumed by magnolia champaca flower syrup, and Indigo Signature Ice Cream, which is made from banana, coconut milk, lime juice and butterfly pea.

We've eaten so much and are absolutely stuffed, but there's no denying it has been an incredible evening.

Black Ginger is absolute perfection – the restaurant setting, the attention to detail, the demure service from the wait staff and the food. Such care and precision go into each and every dish, and the flavours and textures of each bite are a total taste sensation.

It's a fact that dinner at Black Ginger is one of the absolutely best dining experiences in Phuket.

Located at The Slate on Nai Yang Beach, Black Ginger serves dinner daily from 6pm-11pm. The dress code is smart casual, and due to the limited number of tables available, reservations are essential. Parking is available on-site.

*Price range: B800-1,200. Best to book a table Major credit cards accepted. Has smoking area. Free WiFi hotspot. Reservations: 076-327393. Website: <https://TheSlatePhuket.com/dining/black-ginger.html> Facebook: Black Ginger, The Slate. Instagram: BlackGingerExperience*



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POP QUIZ

- 1. What is Phuket's official mascot?
- 2. What does the acronym USB stand for?
- 3. Which city is the capital of Belarus?
- 4. Which city was the first in the world to have a population of over one million?
- 5. Gymnophobia is the fear of what?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Easy

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across

  - 1. Radiate
  - 5. Shots, for short
  - 9. Young pigeon
  - 14. Anatomical sacs
  - 15. Froth
  - 16. Rid
  - 17. Mae a powerful kick
  - 18. Mysterious letter
  - 19. High wave
  - 20. Possess without debt
  - 23. "Indeed"
  - 24. Suffix with ideal
  - 25. Pop-ups, e.g.
  - 28. Woodworking tool
  - 32. Insect killer
  - 35. Scrape
  - 37. Melt
  - 40. Absence of guilt
  - 42. Dominated
  - 43. Neck ache
  - 44. Abbr. before a number
  - 45. Pressure, in a way
  - 47. Family heads
  - 48. Wood-shaping tool
  - 50. Peke squeak
  - 52. Criminal's declaration
  - 61. Gold, in Roma
  - 62. Not say directly
- Down

  - 1. Come back
  - 2. \_\_\_ Mix
  - 3. Representation
  - 4. Chewy candy
  - 5. All over again
  - 6. Grimace
  - 7. Latino rock group
  - 8. Domsayer's sign
  - 9. Glasses
  - 10. Misgiving
  - 11. Egg on
  - 12. Must-see city for a tourist in India
  - 13. Miller, for one
  - 21. Soak up again
  - 22. Theoretical physicist
  - 25. English race place
  - 26. Dig
- 27. Get ready for something difficult or unpleasant
  - 29. Be crazy about
  - 30. Feather, zoologically
  - 31. City on the Ruhr
  - 32. Casual attire
  - 33. Bangladesh's capital, old name
  - 34. Journeys
  - 36. Pit contents
  - 38. Easy task, slangily
  - 39. The "p" in r.p.m.
  - 41. Type of oil
  - 46. Bivalve mollusk
  - 48. Grave
  - 49. Vaulted
  - 51. Squarely
  - 52. Makes lace
  - 53. Offended
  - 54. Great Lakes city
  - 55. Jerk
  - 56. Even
  - 57. Chant
  - 58. Oomph
  - 59. Wife in "Finnegans Wake"
  - 60. File

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) 'Nong Joong', a clawless lobster; 2) Nudity/nakedness; 3) Minsk; 4) Rome; 5) Nudity/nakedness

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14					15					16				
17					18					19				
20					21					22				
				23						24				
25	26	27		28		29	30	31			32	33	34	
35			36		37					38	39			
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42										43				
44					45					46		47		
				48	49					50		51		
52	53	54				55	56	57				58	59	60
61						62					63			
64						65					66			
67						68					69			

Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

3

percent of people change their bed sheets more frequently than once a week, according to a YouGov survey.

12

percent of Americans think that 'USB' is the acronym for a European country, a study has found.

3,860

kamikaze pilots died during World War II, but only 19% of kamikaze attacks managed to hit a ship.

300,000

condoms were procured by organisers of the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris in preparation for hosting 14,500 athletes in the Olympic village.

50 million

crabs are estimated to be living on Christmas Island – so many that special road crossings have been set up for the species.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Fluffy sunset at Kamala Beach. Photo by AlaLei

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

This week in history

Aug 9, 1173

Construction of the Leaning Tower of Pisa begins; it takes two centuries to complete.

Aug 10, 1519

Ferdinand Magellan's five ships set sail from Seville to circumnavigate the globe. The Basque second-in-command Juan Sebastián Elcano will complete the expedition after Magellan's death in the Philippines.

Aug 11, 1786

Date traditionally ascribed to Capt Francis Light establishing the British colony of Penang in Malaysia.

Aug 12, 1990

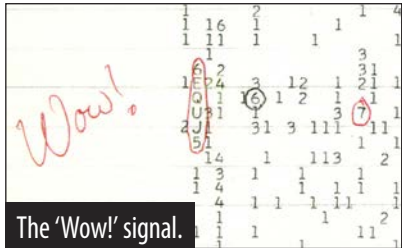
Sue, the largest and most complete Tyrannosaurus Rex skeleton found to date, is discovered by Sue Hendrickson in South Dakota.

Aug 13, 1961

East Germany closes the border between the eastern and western sectors of Berlin to thwart its inhabitants' attempts to escape to the West, and construction of the Berlin Wall is started.

Aug 14, 1885

Japan's first patent is issued to the inventor of a rust-proof paint.



Aug 15, 1977

The Big Ear, a radio telescope operated by Ohio State University as part of the SETI project, receives a radio signal from deep space. The event is named the "Wow! signal" from the notation made by a volunteer on the project.

Source: Wikipedia



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### Grow Boating Evening - September 2024

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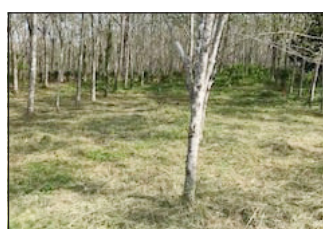
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## GROW BOATING EVENING - AUGUST 2024

A wonderful evening at the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar at Phuket Boat Lagoon. Great turnout on Friday, August 2. Thanks to the drinks sponsor South East Asia Pilot. The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary - 7th edition of the 'South East Asia Pilot' is available in print and online and is the cruising bible to South East Asia. A delicious buffet sponsored by the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar for all attendees and as always, all your favourite beverages were available from the bar. To check out the details of next month's event visit [facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket](https://facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket)





# Golden boy Leon shines in pool

## OLYMPICS

AFP

Leon Marchand won his fourth gold of the Paris Olympics with an emphatic victory in the 200 metre individual medley last Friday (Aug 2) in front of an ecstatic home crowd.

The Frenchman becomes the first male swimmer since American record-breaker Michael Phelps at Beijing 2008 to win four individual golds in a single Games.

Marchand won in 1 minute 54.06 seconds, the second-fastest time in history and an Olympic record, with Britain's Duncan Scott taking silver and China's Wang Shun bronze.

Marchand, 22, had already pocketed golds in the 200m butterfly and 200m breaststroke, along with the 400m individual medley, making him the clear favourite in the 200m race. Marchand is trained by Phelps' former coach, Bob Bowman, and the American was searching for superlatives to describe the week's work from his swimmer.

"It was just a complete success in terms of the way I see things. He's just 100% successful. I'm so very proud of him. It takes a lot to be perfect," he said.

Elsewhere, the United States broke the 4x100m mixed medley relay world record in the Olympic



Leon Marchand after his 200m individual medley win. Photo: AFP

final on Saturday (Aug 3).

Their team of Ryan Murphy, Nic Fink, Gretchen Walsh and Torri Huske touched in 3m 37.43s to narrowly better the mark set by Britain at the Tokyo Games, when the event was first added to the Olympic programme.

It was only the second world record in the pool in Paris after China's Pan Zhanle smashed the men's 100m freestyle best.

US legend Katie Ledecky powered to a fourth straight 800m freestyle title to secure her ninth career Olympic gold, equalling former

Soviet-era artistic gymnast Larisa Latynina as the most decorated woman Olympian in any sport.

The greatest distance swimmer the sport has seen, the 27-year-old had already won the 1500m and earned silver in the 4x200m freestyle relay and bronze in the 400m freestyle in Paris.

### SPORTING HISTORY

History was made on the track on Saturday as Julien Alfred from St. Lucia powered to a historic 100 metre Olympic gold, the first Games medal ever won by the Caribbean island.

Alfred conjured up a superb race in the Parisian rain to shock favorite Sha'Carri Richardson into silver with a time of 10.72 seconds in front of a raucous crowd at the Stade de France.

The 23-year-old was in tears of celebration after sealing a sensational win – she had never finished on the podium at a major outdoor championships prior to the final.

The drama continued on Sunday as Noah Lyles roared to victory in 9.79 seconds to claim gold in a dramatic men's 100m final.

Lyles won in the closest Olympic 100m finish in modern history as

just five thousandths of a second separated him from Jamaica's Kishane Thompson.

Both were given the rounded-up time of 9.79s but the American's name carried the all-important (.784) to Thompson's (.789.)

It made Lyles the first American, male or female, to win the event since Justin Gatlin took gold in the 2004 Athens Games.

"It's the one I wanted," said Lyles, whose winning time was a personal best. "It's the hard battle, it's the amazing opponents."

In gymnastics American great Simone Biles clinched her third gold in Paris after famously imploding in Tokyo with the debilitating mental block known as the "twisties", before 17-year-old Arena Nemour produced "the performance of her life" to claim the uneven bars title and become the first African to win an Olympic gymnastics medal of any colour.

Rhys McClenaghan captured Ireland's first-ever Olympic gymnastics medal with gold on the pommel horse, while Carlos Yulo from the Philippines snatched gold in the men's floor exercise on Saturday, before grabbing his second gold 24 hours later when he won on the vault.

It created Philippines sporting history as, prior to the 24-year-old Yulo's heroics in Paris, the country had only ever won one gold medal at the Olympics.

## Moriya wins Portland Classic

### GOLF

THAILAND'S MORIYA JUTANUGARN won her third career LPGA title last Sunday (Aug 4), going bogey-free for 71 holes to capture the Portland Classic by two strokes.

Moriya fired a six-under par 66 despite closing with her only bogey of the event to stand on 22-under 266 after 72 holes at Columbia Edgewater Country Club in Oregon, United States.

"Every win is special," Moriya said. "It has kind of been a long time since my last win."

It was the first individual triumph for Moriya since the 2018 LA Open, her other LPGA victory coming at the 2021 Great Lakes Bay Invitational pairs event with sister Ariya.

"I like to be in contention," Moriya said. "Today was nice. I feel like I haven't been in contention for a little while. It keeps you on your toes and it's exciting."

Sharing second on 268 were South Korea's An Na-rin, who aced the par-3 16<sup>th</sup>, American Angel Yin and Russia's Nataliya Guseva.

Moriya made birdies at the par-4 third, par-5 seventh and par-3 eighth holes and seized the lead by reeling off three birdies in a row at the par-5 12<sup>th</sup>, par-3 13<sup>th</sup> and par-4 14<sup>th</sup>.

After finding a bunker off the tee, she sank a clutch nine-foot par putt at the par-3 16<sup>th</sup> to stay bogey-free for the week and



Moriya with the trophy. Photo: AFP

keep her lead.

Moriya then made a five-foot birdie putt at 17, stretching her lead to three shots, and even though she missed an eight-foot par putt at 18, her lone bogey all-but sealed a win.

When Yin could not hole out from the fairway to force a playoff, the title belonged to Moriya, whose excited sister Ariya greeted her just off the 18<sup>th</sup> green.

"So excited and so proud of her because I know she been waiting for so long," Ariya said. "We won together in 2021 but she always say, 'I want to win by myself.'"

"She has really struggled and this year was really hard for her. This shows she is well deserving because she never gives up. No matter what happened, she always worked hard." AFP

## Vareeraya makes impressive Games debut

### OLYMPICS

YOUNG SKATEBOARDER Vareeraya Sukasem returned home to a warm welcome on July 30 after making an impressive debut at the Paris 2024 Olympics Games.

The 12-year-old, who became Thailand's youngest ever Olympian and was the country's flag bearer during the opening ceremony, competed in the women's street event on July 28.

Vareeraya, nicknamed ST, finished 17<sup>th</sup> in the preliminary round and did not qualify for the final but won over a lot of new admirers due to her brave performance in front of a packed Place de La Concorde in Paris.

"I am so excited. This is something new that I have never experienced before," said a beaming Vareeraya after receiving a bouquet of flowers from a fan upon her arrival at the airport with her mother Tulraya and American coach Kenny Reed.

"This is actually my first ever flower bouquet," she added.

"I didn't expect to have so many people today to give me encouragement. I would



Vareeraya (right) and her mother. Photo: Bangkok Post

like to thank everyone for the support."

Her mother Tulraya added, "I hope ST can inspire other Thai kids to start skateboarding. If she can do it, everyone can do it."

Having skateboarded for six years, Vareeraya owes her start to her mother, who encouraged her to pick up her first board. Her mother says that the sport's male dominance makes her daughter's success even more impressive.

Travelling around the world for skateboarding has been tiring at times for Vareeraya, but practising in various facilities with advanced, standardised equipment has significantly improved her

technique.

Reed has coached Vareeraya for the past three years at her local skate park in Hua Hin and has taken great pleasure in witnessing her evolution, particularly the remarkable improvement in her skills over the past year.

Following her first taste of Olympic action in Paris all eyes are now on Los Angeles in four years time.

"Competing at the Olympics has always been my dream," Vareeraya said. "I wanted to get a medal. But I will continue to improve, learning from all the great athletes, and practising new moves and tricks."

Bangkok Post



# Boom time in women's rugby



THE GLOBAL RUGBY COACH

While New Zealand retaining the women's 7s gold medal at the Paris Olympics might not raise too many eyebrows, Canada and the USA finishing second and third respectively might among some people.

Although improving, neither country were considered potential winners pre-tournament, with the likes of France, Great Britain, South Africa and Australia all more fancied.

It does illustrate the increasing surge in popularity of the 7s game among women, something largely attributable to the fact it is relatively simple to access and understand – find six other players and play two halves of seven minutes each, with interchange meaning all squad members can play in every game.

It is estimated that globally there are 2.7 million women actively involved in the game of rugby. For those players looking to find a club at a higher level, even professionally, then 7s tournaments are a viable pathway to demonstrate skills, with many players who play 15s adapting to the 7s model easily.

Fans are catching on to the expansion in women's sports too. The women's Six Nations in April saw a crowd of 58,498 watch England beat France at Twickenham.

When you have crowds of such size there is huge commercial potential, with sponsors competing for naming rights deals. Investment will accelerate growth.



The women's game is flourishing locally and globally. Photo: Supplied

Already top European rugby clubs are running women's and girls' squads. There is the international incentive to travel the world representing your country. For many young girls, being a 7s player can become a very lucrative career.

Here in Phuket, Pat Cotter, who has run the Phuket 10s and 11s for over 20 years, acknowledges the growth in female participation. In the last two years over 13 women's teams have entered Phuket-based tournaments, with several sides travelling from overseas.

"Over the years the skill level has improved, and the women and girls bring an uncomplicated joy to their involvement," observes Pat. "Playing numbers are increasing. One club on the Thai Malay border called Yala, who struggled for a while, have re-booted and

now have a largely Muslim team taking part, which is great."

To win the hard-nosed male spectator over is an achievement and a reflection of the quality of the on field performance in the women's game. This growth will continue across all levels of the game so don't be afraid to start a girls' team at your club. The numbers may be small to start with, but they will soon grow – after all, you only need 7 players to form a team and get started.

*The Global Rugby Coach, Mike Penistone, is a globally renowned professional rugby coach based in Phuket who is also an ambassador for the Asia Center Foundation, a charity for disadvantaged children. For more information visit: [www.rugbycoachingconsultancy.com](http://www.rugbycoachingconsultancy.com).*



Bastianini. Photo: AFP

## Bastianini wins British MotoGP

### MOTO GP

ITALIAN RIDER ENEA Bastianini completed the British MotoGP double for Ducati last Sunday (Aug 4) by winning the grand prix, while Jorge Martin of Spain reclaimed the championship lead.

Bastianini added to his sprint win on Saturday by racing past Martin inside the last two laps to claim victory, while the Spaniard finished second to move back above third-placed Francesco Bagnaia in the overall riders' championship.

Ducati-Pramac's Martin arrived at Silverstone 10 points behind Bagnaia, who won the last four grand prix, but second-placed finishes in the sprint and grand prix meant he leapfrogged the Italian back into the lead.

The difference between

the two was just one point by the time Sunday's main race rolled round and following Martin's second-place finish, he now leads the Ducati rider by three points.

Martin took the race lead on Sunday with nine laps remaining but was unable to hold off the surge of the irresistible Bastianini.

"As soon as I saw Enea was catching, I tried to keep it constant, to try to manage a bit for the end but he was much stronger today," said the 26-year-old from Madrid.

"Congrats to Enea because he was on another level."

It was a weekend to forget for Bagnaia after he crashed out of the sprint and then ceded the lead early in the grand prix race.

But his compatriot Bastianini will have fond memories of Silverstone 2024 after producing a stunning late run to sprint to the double. AFP

## Thailand finish runners-up in ASEAN Under-19 tournament

### FOOTBALL

HOSTS INDONESIA claimed their second ASEAN U19 Boys' Championship title after edging Thailand 1-0 in the final at the Gelora Bung Tomo Stadium in Surabaya on July 29.

Playing in front of more than 40,000 fans, the home team scored the only goal of the game in the 18<sup>th</sup> minute through Jens Raven.

Emerson Pereira rued a lapse on the part of the Thai defenders after the loss.

"We made an error, conceded the goal and, in the end, it proved costly," said the Brazilian coach.

"The players are dejected but we can be proud of our performance here – we made it to the final of the tournament."

The start to the final was sluggish, but it sprang to life when Thailand's Thanawut Phochai hit the post after finding himself one-to-one with the Indonesian goalkeeper in the 15<sup>th</sup> minute.

The home team were



Thailand's Thanawut Phochai. Photo: Bangkok Post

quick to respond as a corner kick fell just in the right spot for Raven to strike home from close range.

After conceding the goal, the Thais started mounting pressure on their opponents and Piyawat Petra missed a clear scoring opportunity, hitting the post from point-blank range in the 37<sup>th</sup> minute.

The Thais dominated the second half but were denied the equaliser when a Jirapol Saelio shot was warded off by an Indonesian defender 10 minutes from time.

Earlier in the day, Australia took the third place

in the competition this year after beating Malaysia 5-3 in a penalty shoot-out following a 1-1 tie at time.

Jake Najdovski from Australia was the top-scorer of the tournament while Ikran Algiffari from Indonesia was selected as the best goalkeeper and Dony Tri Pamungkas, also from Indonesia, was chosen as the best player.

Thailand still share the record for most ASEAN U19 titles with Australia. Both countries have won the tournament five times each.

*Bangkok Post*



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# Sport



**Lyles claims gold in men's 100m > p14**

## ON YOUR MARKS



## Excitement ahead of PPAO Mini Marthon

Officials and race organisers at the Aug 1 press conference to announce the PPAO Mini Marathon 2024. Photo: PPAO

### RUNNING

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

More than 1,000 people have already registered to take part in the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) Mini Marathon 2024 to be held on Koh Siray on Aug 25.

PPAO President Rewat Areerob declared registration for the annual run event open at a press event held at Central Phuket Floresta shopping mall on Aug 1.

Joining the event was Ratchadaporn Oin, Director of the Phuket Tourism and Sports Office, along with Thai Ironman triathlete Nathapat Sirimongkolpan and other esteemed guests.

Mr Rewat confirmed that the PPAO Mini Marathon 2024 will take place on Sunday, Aug 25, at

Sunrise Beach, Koh Siray, east of Phuket Town.

There are two race categories: the 6km run, which features men's and women's categories from under-19s to over-60, and the 10km run featuring men's categories from under-19 to over-65 and women's categories from under-19 to over-50.

Mr Rewat stated that the PPAO has consistently promoted exercise and healthcare for the people of Phuket and Thailand. He noted an increasing number of participants in running events and emphasised that taking part in such activities strengthens individuals both physically and mentally, contributing to a healthier society. The people of Phuket and Thailand are prepared to embrace changes, he added.

The running events aim to motivate the community to improve their health through sports. The PPAO is committed to using sports

to lead the community towards a stronger Phuket, both physically and mentally. The event will showcase a beautiful natural running route in Phuket Town at Sunrise Beach, Koh Siray, a picturesque tourist destination, Mr Rewat noted.

Holding this year's PPAO Mini Marathon at Sunrise Beach is also expected to boost tourism and create business opportunities in the area and for the island's sports industry, thereby supporting economic and social changes as more people prioritise health care, Mr Rewat said.

Ms Ratchadaporn highlighted that Phuket is a unique province that integrates various elements to drive a strong economy, impacting the stable living conditions of its residents.

"Organising diverse sports activities contributes to strengthening the local economy," she said.

She pointed out that sports activi-

ties are closely linked to the tourism industry and generate significant revenue for Phuket. "This revenue distribution benefits communities across the province, marking a success that can be elevated to the international stage," she added.

### LIMITED NUMBERS

While more than 1,000 people have already registered to take part in this year's event, the number of entries is limited to 3,000, Ms Ratchadaporn explained. People may still register at: <https://soft.events/run/ppao2024>, she added.

People may collect the Race Kit shirts and bibs at Phuket Central Festival between midday and 9pm from Aug 21-23 or on Saturday (Aug 24) at the race starting point at Sunrise Beach on Koh Siray from midday to 5pm.

Race day itself will start at Sunrise Beach at 4:30am, when athletes

can start marshalling at the Athlete Service Area at Sunrise Beach. Warm-up starts at 5:30am, followed by the Opening Ceremony at 5:45am.

Race start for the 10km run is at 6am, followed race start for the 6km run at 6:10am. The cut-off for race start for both distances is 8:30am.

The award ceremony will be held at 7:30am, with the event officially concluding at 9:30am.

The first 3,000 runners to cross the finish line will receive a participation medal. The first three to finish in each distance and age category will receive a Plaque.

Prize money for the 6km run is: 1<sup>st</sup> place B2,000; 2<sup>nd</sup> place B1,500; and 3<sup>rd</sup> place B1,000.

Prize money for the 10km run is: 1<sup>st</sup> place B2,500; 2<sup>nd</sup> place B2,000; and 3<sup>rd</sup> place B1,500.

Entry to any of the age categories in either the 6km or the 10km run is B200 per person.

## Kunlavut wins first Thai medal at Paris 2024 Olympics

### OLYMPICS

KUNLAVUT VITIDSARN WON Thailand's first medal at the Paris 2024 Olympics on Monday (Aug 5), despite losing in the final of the men's badminton singles finals.

Kunlavut was comfortably beaten by defending Olympic champion Denmark's Viktor Axelsen 21-11, 21-11 in 52 minutes at La Chapelle Arena in the French capital but there was much to celebrate – not only was Kunlavut's

silver medal the first for his country at this tournament but it was also the first-ever medal for Thailand in badminton at an Olympics, for male or female athletes.

"It's my first time at the Olympics and I got to the final, so I'm very happy," Kunlavut said afterwards.

The 23-year-old Thai shuttler, who was seeded eight to Axelsen's two, said the Dane was "very difficult to play against".

"Everything he does is very good, but for me it's OK," he said.

Kunlavut made a good start but Axelsen soon settled into his rhythm and built up a commanding lead in the first game, closing it out in 24 minutes.

Axelsen was again unstoppable in the second game, unleashing the full force of his 6ft 4in frame to rain down smashes.

After clinching the title, he grabbed a Danish flag and tore around the arena, parading in front of Denmark's King Frederik X who joined in the celebrations.

Kunlavut impressed on his way

to the final as he beat Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia 21-14, 21-15 in the semi-finals after a stunning upset against top-ranked Shi Yuqi of China in the quarter-finals.

Lee Zii Jia took bronze overall after beating India's Lakshya Sen 13-21, 21-16, 21-11.

Elsewhere, Thailand are guaranteed a second medal at Paris 2024 as, at time of press, boxer Janjaem Suwannapheng was set to face Imane Khelif of Algeria in the women's 66kg semi-final on Tuesday (Aug 6).



Photo: AFP

Two-time world championship medalist Janjaem defeated Busenaz Surmeneli of Turkey in her quarter-final match and is guaranteed at least a bronze medal.

In Olympic boxing, two bronze medals are awarded: one to each of the losing semi-finalists.

AFP