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Ekachai Decha, 37, a taxi driver for 'Ratsada VIP' at Ratsada Pier, denied the group were operating as a 'mafia'. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

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The man who stopped a passenger van and forced four tourists to take another 'approved' taxi at Ratsada Pier last week has emphatically denied that the taxi operators at the busy pier are "mafia".

Ekachai Decha, 37, admitted to physically preventing a passenger van with four tourists from departing the pier last Friday (Sept 2).

The four tourists, including three young women, had entered the passenger van only to have a man in a black shirt and jeans chase down the van and stand in front of it, prevent-

ing the van from leaving.

The man in the black shirt, Mr Ekachai, and the van driver, Chatrapon Misinpanitanon, 45, started arguing over who is allowed to pick up passengers at the pier.

Mr Ekachai argued that the van, which bears yellow licence plates, meaning that it is legally registered to operate as a commercial passenger vehicle, was not allowed.

The tourists were told to get out of the van and find another taxi. Wanting to avoid being caught in the argument, the tourists obliged.

Two video clips showing the incident unfold were posted online, sparking harsh criticism of Phuket

taxi drivers, with many comments calling them "mafia".

The word 'mafia' in particular rankled the taxi drivers. Mr Ekachai later told reporters that a representative of a ferry company at the pier had approached him and explained that a person inside the ferry terminal had heard the word "mafia" used in describing the incident.

The traveller had chosen to not use the taxi operators stationed at the pier because of the use of the term, Mr Ekachai explained.

"I would like to say that the port company does not have any mafia, but what comes out to inquire with the people who come to ask why they

have to slander us like this – we are not taxi mafia," Mr Ekachai said.

Some of the taxi drivers at the pier told reporters that the taxi group had been established so that local residents, notably those living in Moo 7 Ratsada "could make a living".

Mr Ekachai refuted the idea that the taxi drivers at the pier, operating under the name "Ratsada VIP Group", were "mafia" because they had their own seating area.

"Why don't you call the taxi drivers at the airport 'mafia'? It is a B2,000 fine for any taxi driver not belonging to that group being caught there," he said.

Mr Ekachai also raged against...

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Phuket pair lead inclusive sailing drive



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News



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Police hedge bets on taxi rights

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...independent taxi drivers who connect with customers through an app. “Especially if the fare quoted by the app is not legal,” he said.

Police called both Mr Ekachai and Mr Chatrapon to present themselves at Phuket City Police Station at 9:30am last Sunday (Sep 4). The two drivers were questioned by Phuket City Police Deputy Chief Inspector Capt Wichit Nokkeaw.

During questioning it was confirmed that the tourists had arranged for Mr Chatrapon to pick them up in a van through an app.

Adcha Buachan of the Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO) was also present, saying that the PLTO was investigating the claims online that the taxi drivers at Ratsada Pier were operating as a “mafia”.

However, Mr Adcha noted, “There may be legal action against the victim.”

“As for the provincial transport driver [Mr Ekachai], he came to see if such an act was an offense under the law, and how it was an offense to be called to take action according to the law,” he said.

“For the driver [Mr Ekachai], if it is found that he has committed an offence that has caused damage to another party, including the image of Phuket and the country, we will have to consider whether or not to suspend his license,” he added.

“As for the van used to pick up



Col Pichetpong (left) of the Tourist Police said both drivers were ‘in the right’. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

the tourists, it is properly registered [to operate as a commercial vehicle carrying passengers],” Mr Adcha confirmed.

Following the questioning of the drivers, police told the press that the incident was the result of yet another misunderstanding.

Pol Col Pichetpong Jangklaikom, Chief of the Tourist Police Region 3 branch, based in Phuket, said that both drivers were in the right.

The van driver, Mr Chatrapon,

had every right to pick up the tourists at the entrance to the pier, Col Pichetpong said.

The tourists had booked Mr Chatrapon as their taxi driver through an app, he confirmed.

Meanwhile, police had also deemed that Mr Ekachai was also “in the right”, as Mr Ekachai worked for “Ratsada VIP”, which had signed a concession with ferry operator Seatran.

The concession allowed Ratsada VIP to provide taxi services to

Seatran passengers disembarking at the pier. Mr Ekachai was of the understanding that meant Ratsada VIP had exclusive rights to all passengers exiting the pier area.

“The concession is fully legal and allowed under the regulations of the Land Transport Office,” he said.

At that time, officers had yet to track down the tourists themselves for their description of the events that transpired, Col Pichetpong added.

Col Pichetpong said that police

were continuing their investigation, and oddly added that despite police understanding that both drivers were “in the right”, legal action may yet be taken against either or both of the taxi drivers.

Mr Adcha of the PLTO had assured that following this latest incident taxi drivers from 40 taxi ranks, or “queues”, across Phuket will be brought in again to have the regulations explained to them, Col Pichetpong said.

Tourist Police and Phuket Provincial Police will be present for the talks, he added.

Col Pichetpong expressed that he understood the situation Phuket taxi drivers were in, with little to no work over the past two years.

However, he pointed out that now that tourists were returning, their behaviour was on show for the world to see, especially in the age of social media.

“We must be careful because of the use of social media. If there is an incident, there will be an effect,” he said.

The Phuket News was told that the tourists were quoted “about B400” to be taken from Ratsada Pier on the east side of the island to Patong, on the west coast.

It has yet to be publicly confirmed how much the tourists were required to pay by using the Ratsada VIP taxi they were forced to take instead.

Officials roll out assistance for victims of Thalang flash floods

PHUKET OFFICIALS led by Governor Narong Woonciew are expediting assistance to more than 800 people whose homes were directly affected by the flash floods that struck areas in Thalang last week.

More than 250mm of rainfall fell at Phuket International Airport and the surrounding area within a three-hour window early last Friday (Sept 2). Disaster officials were deployed as large areas of Thalang became swamped. Many homes were flooded, as were neighbourhood streets and even main roads in the area.

Officials needed to use boats to navigate flooded streets, cars were left standing in roof-high water and local residents were forced to seek safety on higher ground. At least 30 cars



Photo: PR Phuket

were recognised by insurance operators as damaged by the floods. Insurance claims for the damage were pending.

The Phuket Provincial Office of the Department of Disaster Prevention & Mitigation (DDPM-Phuket)

used pumps to help alleviate flooding in hard-hit areas, including Muang Mai, Nai Yang, Mai Khao and Sakhu, where Phuket airport is located.

The deluge saw the parking area for private jets at the airport flooded, forcing access

to that area of the airport to be suspended for safety, Airports of Thailand Phuket branch (AoT Phuket) reported.

The rains eased at about 9am. By that time Governor Narong was already on site to inspect the damage firsthand.

Within hours, much of the flood waters had dissipated, allowing motorists to slowly resume their journeys, while flights at the airport had resumed in full after a safety inspection of the runway, officials announced.

Airport representatives later assured that no scheduled flights were affected by the flooding.

AoT Phuket had 100 meals and 1,200 bottles of water delivered as quickly as possible to residents in the area affected by the flooding.

Governor Narong had a base of operations set up at Wat Nai Yang, from where more than 1,800 meals were delivered to people in need.

At the temple discussions were held with heads of local government agencies, disaster officials and community representatives as to how many people had been affected and

what help they needed.

In total, 372 households that are homes to 871 people were affected by the floods. The residents managed to move their belongings beyond reach of the floodwaters, but many of the homes suffered damage.

Officials were tasked with urgently determining what financial assistance can be made available to the residents.

Phuket Vice Governor Pichet Panapong visited the area again on Monday (Sept 5) to ensure that assistance was being provided to local residents affected, including the continuing provision of meals and help with restoring their homes so that local residents could safely return.

Additional reporting by Eakkapop Thongtub

Doctors probe post-jab fallout

Concerns raised after girl, 9, suffers mass hair loss after Pfizer jab

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Doctors are hoping to identify what has caused hair loss on a 9-year-old girl whose parents suspect may have been brought on by the girl's second COVID-19 vaccination.

Thalang District Chief Bancha Thanu-in and Thalang District Public Health Chief Sathaporn Wachasat lead a meeting at Baan Sakhu School on Aug 31 to meet the girl, Nong Gaew, and her parents Kajornpong and Jeeranan Kruea-in.

Joining the meeting were hospital staff and teachers.

Nong Gaew's mother, Ms Jeeranan, explained that the hair loss began after her daughter's second COVID vaccination, received at the vaccination station set up at Phuket airport, in July.

Nong Gaew suffered no adverse reactions to her first COVID vaccination in May, Ms Jeeranan noted.

Both COVID vaccinations received by Nong Gaew were of the Pfizer vaccine, she added.



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

"By the end of July, hair was falling out. No one in our family has shown signs of a reaction to a COVID vaccination and hair loss is not common in the family. Not hair loss like this," she said.

Nong Gaew had been taken to a specialist dermatologist and presented to hospital

doctors, but no answers had been forthcoming, Ms Jeeranan said.

"The dermatologist just said that it was a patchy hair loss," she noted.

"I don't know if this is about the vaccine or not, but normally everything with Nong Gaew is healthy," Ms

Jeeranan said.

Nong Gaew's father, Mr Kajornpong, explained that after Nong Gaew had received her second vaccination, most people in their home, including Nong Gaew, contracted COVID-19. All of them recovered safely. However, that is when the hair loss began.

Ms Jeeranan continued, "After recovering from COVID, her hair started falling out heavily. I'm very stressed right now. I feel pity that my daughter has to wear a hood to go to school."

Thalang District Chief Mr Bancha arranged for doctors at Thalang Hospital to treat Nong Gaew as a special case and do their utmost to identify the cause and take steps to prevent further hair loss.

"Let the doctors diagnose what is the cause and how to treat it," he said.

Thalang District Health Chief Dr Sathaporn said doctors at Thalang Hospital will make arrangements for Nong Gaew to see doctors at Vachira Phuket Hospital in Phuket Town, the main government hospital on the island.

Previous reports of hair loss as a result of receiving a COVID-19 vaccination have been either detracted from or dismissed by Phuket officials.

In November last year, a 41-year-old saleswoman at a motorcycle dealership in Phuket Town blamed her third COVID vaccination, a

"booster" jab of AstraZeneca, for severe hair loss.

The Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO) responded by saying that the woman, Mananya 'Ann' Phuekpoom, needed to consult with specific doctors who can run thorough tests to determine whether the vaccine was responsible.

Dr Salasak Loei Kul of the PPHO noted that the woman had been diagnosed with anemia which coincided with her receiving the three injections.

However, he added that further tests were necessary to determine the exact cause of her hair loss and that her case had been noted by the PPHO and is under investigation.

The result of the investigation was never made public.

The woman's plea for assistance followed Bodin Saeliang, 19, a first-year vocational school student in Phuket, claiming that his extreme hair loss started after he received his second injection of the Sinovac vaccine.

Mr Bodin went public with his claim just three days earlier, on Nov 17, 2021.

Man arrested over Saphan Hin shooting incident

POLICE HAVE ARRESTED a man wanted for attempted murder during a violent altercation at Saphan Hin on Aug 28.

Thitisak 'Tech' Dejcharoen, 25, was arrested at his home in Khuan Don District, Satun province, at about 11am on Aug 31, Wichit Police have confirmed.

Present to make the arrest were officers from Wichit Police in Phuket along with officers from Khuan Don Police and Satun Provincial Police.

Thitisak was taken into custody under an arrest warrant issued by Phuket Provincial Court on Aug 30.

He was been brought back to Wichit Police Station in Phuket for further questioning and to face charges of attempted murder, illegally carrying a firearm in public and illegally firing a firearm in a public area.

Thitisak explained to police that he drove his Honda Wave motorbike to meet Kamolchanok 'Miew' Suwanmosi, 33, in front of the waste incinerator at Saphan Hin at about 5:35pm on Aug 28.



Photo: Wichit Police

The two men argued. Kamolchanok accused Thitisak of stealing his scrap metal.

Kamolchanok pulled out a knife and attacked him, Thitisak said.

Thitisak suffered several knife injuries in the attack, before he pulled out his gun and fired it at Kamolchanok, he added.

When officers arrived at the scene that evening, they found Thitisak's motorbike lying on its side at the edge of the road.

Blood marks were found

on the road, and officers found four spent 11mm bullet casings at the scene.

Thitisak had already been taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital for treatment of stab wounds.

While officers were waiting to question Thitisak, he fled with the assistance of a male friend, police explained.

Officers have yet to locate Kamolchanok, who fled the scene after the gun was fired.

Eakkapop Thongtub

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Businesses reminded of human rights

The Phuket News
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Pitikan Sithidej of the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand was in Phuket last week to lead a seminar held to explain to local business operators the necessity of upholding human rights in business operations.

Among those present at the seminar, held at the Royal Phuket City Hotel in Phuket Town on Aug 29, were heads of local government agencies and senior management of local businesses, including hotel operators.

Phuket Vice Governor Anupap Rodkwan Yodrabam told the gathering that it was an honour for Phuket that Ms Pitikan had organised holding the seminar, called "Seminar to Promote Business and Human Rights for Business Organizations in Phuket Area".

V/Gov Anupap opened his remarks by describing Phuket as a modern, international world-class tourist destination where East meets West with its own unique culture and its own distinctive architecture, especially the examples of Sino-Portuguese architecture on the island.

"This will make tourists confident about their safety and confident in their decision to travel here," he said.

"So all sectors must help each



Photo: PR Phuket

other, because it is important for building confidence among foreign tourists and investors. This will benefit the economy in the future and make the tourism sector return fully with sustainability," he added.

According to V/Gov Anupap, holding the seminar on upholding fundamental human rights will help to achieve all those tourism and economic goals.

In fact, holding the seminar on human rights "will make the tourism and service industry of Phuket come back to recover as soon as possible as the destination of happiness to return smiles to Thai people again,"

he continued.

To National Human Rights Commissioner Ms Pitikan, the goal of the seminar was for business organisations in Phuket to build a society of respect for human rights.

"The objective is to create knowledge, an understanding, of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which is a responsible way for conducting business that respects human rights that are accepted at the international level," she said.

"Business organisations must protect all aspects of human rights and are responsible for protecting human rights under actions such

as non-discrimination policies and health and safety, as well as freedom of association and formation of trade unions," Ms Pitikan added.

"It also creates the opportunity to assess the situation through analysis of business enterprise data, including building a network of business and human rights cooperation in the Phuket area. This will create the power to effectively work in the promotion and protection of human rights in society," she said,

"It is imperative to create knowledge and understanding for the government and business sectors in order to create a society of respect for human rights," Ms Pitikan noted.

It was not explained why Phuket was designated the focal point for a seminar aimed at educating local officials and business operators about basic human rights, despite the fishing and construction industries on the island being nearly fully dependent on migrant labour.

Of note, according to reports by the Royal Thai Navy, it has been years since any wrongdoing has been found during random inspections of fishing vessels in the area.

Inspections of conditions among construction workers and the camps they live in are not published by local officials.

'Food poisoning' at Darasamuth blamed on dirty drinking water

AN INVESTIGATION INTO "food poisoning" of children at Darasamuth Phuket School last month has finally been traced to untreated drinking water.

The explanation came via a public statement issued by Dararat Pengpinit, Director of Darasamuth Phuket School, on Aug 31.

Ms Dararat explained that "some" students fell ill on Aug 19, suffering diarrhea and vomiting.

Samples were taken from food and drinking water available to children at the school and sent for laboratory testing.

"It turned out that Coliform bacteria was found in the water provided at nine station throughout the school," Ms Dararat said.

"The UV steriliser equipment used for disinfection had been damaged, resulting in unsterilised water supplied to schools, causing Coliform bacteria to contaminate the water," she explained.

Following advice and assistance from provincial public health officials, district public health officials, Wichit Municipality and the



Image: Phuket Info Center

Ban Laem Chan Subdistrict Health Promoting Hospital, the situation had been rectified to prevent further incidents, Ms Dararat said.

The water quality will continue to be monitored, she added.

On behalf of the school, Ms Dararat apologised for the incident.

"The school has taken action to fix it, and make improvements in strict accordance with the advice of the public health office. The company that was in charge of the water system in the school came in and replaced the UV steriliser lamps and inspected the water system in detail.

"Equipment was added to help improve water quality according to the standards as prescribed by the public health office," she said.

The Phuket News

Electrical fault sparks shop fire in Ratsada

NO PEOPLE WERE INJURED by a fire that engulfed the back of a small grocery shop in Baan Kuku, Ratsada, last Sunday night (Sept 4).

Firefighters were called to the shop, on Ruam Pattana Rd in Moo 3, Ratsada, at about 7:40pm.

Soon to arrive at the scene were Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew, Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) Vice President Tiwat Sidokbub and Maj Panukorn Wankaew of Phuket City Police Station.

Five fire trucks arrived to counter the blaze, which is believed to have started by a short circuit at the store. Power supply to the building was cut before firefighters attempted to douse the flames.

When officers arrived, they found the flames burning strongly and a large cloud of smoke billowing out of the building.

The fire was concentrated in a storage room where a lot of cardboard was kept at the back of the shop.

Joined to the back of the building was a single-storey wooden house where the shop owner lived.

Firefighters took about one hour to bring the fire under control, and managed to prevent the fire from spreading to any adjacent buildings,



Photo: PR Phuket

including the home and the two shop units joined to either side of the store.

The back of the grocery store was heavily damaged by the fire. The front of the shop suffered water damage.

Werayut Mannui was in the home with two friends when he heard what sounded like electrical wires combusting. Then sparks were seen falling into the storage room, which quickly caught fire.

He and his friends were unable to put the fire out, hence they called the fire department, he said.

His sister had the house built and he came to look after the shop in August last year, Mr Werayut added.

At time of press an estimate of the damage caused by the fire had yet to be determined. Police also had yet to confirm the cause of the fire, which officers said was still under investigation. The Phuket News

FantaSea to relaunch with B6.6bn expansion

The Phuket News
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Well-known Phuket tourism attraction Phuket FantaSea is set to re-open on Sept 20 with a B6.6 billion expansion covering more than 100 rai, CEO Kittikorn Kewkacha has announced.

The night theme park, located in Kamala, has been closed for more than two years since the tourism shutdown during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Phuket FantaSea will relaunch with a new theme park area called "Carnival Magic", Mr Kittikorn announced to the press on Sept 1.

"Based on the success of Phuket Fantasea, the world's largest cultural theme park, for the past 22 years, we are ready to continue to expand the business in a big way by launching the project 'Carnival Magic - The Magical Kingdom of Lights', the first and only Thai-style carnival theme park in the world," Mr Kittikorn said.

"It is an amusement park



Photo: PR Phuket

that holds the identity of a fun fair or temple-style carnival in Thailand. We are ready to create excitement with modern technology, combining Thai fun with world-class standards, located at Kamala Beach, Phuket," he said.

Decorated with more than 40 million lights, the "beautiful and spectacular Carnival Magic will be a unique and unique experience in the world", he added.

"By widely publicising [Carnival Magic] both do-

mestically and internationally through more than 1,000 partner tour agents, we have received excellent initial feedback," Mr Kittikorn said.

The park is forecast to attract about 2 million visitors by end of 2023, Mr Kittikorn said.

Visitors to the park are expected to comprise 70% foreign tourists and 30% Thai people, he added.

Foreign tourists are expected to hail from India, China, Europe, Australia and Middle East countries.

"At present, the tourism situation in Phuket is in the process of recovering, but it is growing, especially in terms of foreign tourists," Mr Kittikorn noted.

"According to information from the Ministry of Tourism & Sports office in Phuket, since the government relaxed the measures for entering the Kingdom, and cancelling the Test & Go system from May 1, it is predicted that throughout the year 2022 there will be about 5 million foreign tourists coming to Phuket, representing a 50% recovery compared with before the COVID-19 outbreak," he said.

"With the approaching high season of year-end tourism, Phuket will be even more bustling with tourists, so the opening of Carnival Magic is a great addition. It will help attract foreign spending, increase employment among local people and stimulate the circular economy in the country. It will help stimulate the tourism economy of Phuket and Thailand to grow brightly again," Mr Kittikorn concluded.



Photo: PR Phuket

Rains fail to dampen Baba Wedding Festival

MINISTER OF CULTURE Itthiphol Khunpluem was in Phuket last Saturday (Sept 3) to officiate the Baba Wedding Festival, which saw three couples marry in full costume and following local Peranakan traditions.

Despite heavy rains across the northern half of the island, the celebrants were blessed with no thundershowers as they completed the traditional parade through the streets of the Phuket Old Town area.

Joining the festivities yesterday were Culture Ministry Permanent Secretary Yupa Thawiwatthanakitworn and Phuket Vice Governor Amnuay Pinsuwan.

Mr Itthiphol highlighted

the "Wedding Baba Phuket" festival, as it has been branded this year, as a clear example of Thailand's "soft power" in attracting tourists and promoting Thai culture to the world.

The Wedding Baba Phuket festival is one of the 16 festivals and cultural events throughout Thailand that the Ministry of Culture directly supports, Mr Itthiphol said.

"It is an outstanding example of Thailand's soft power in the theme of the Sino-Portuguese architecture of the buildings and the local food and beautiful traditional costumes that are unique to Phuket," he said.

The Phuket News

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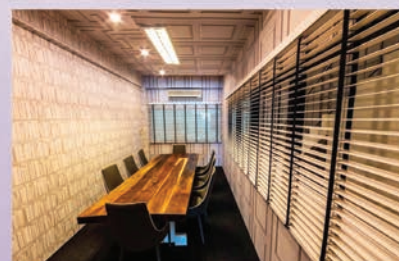
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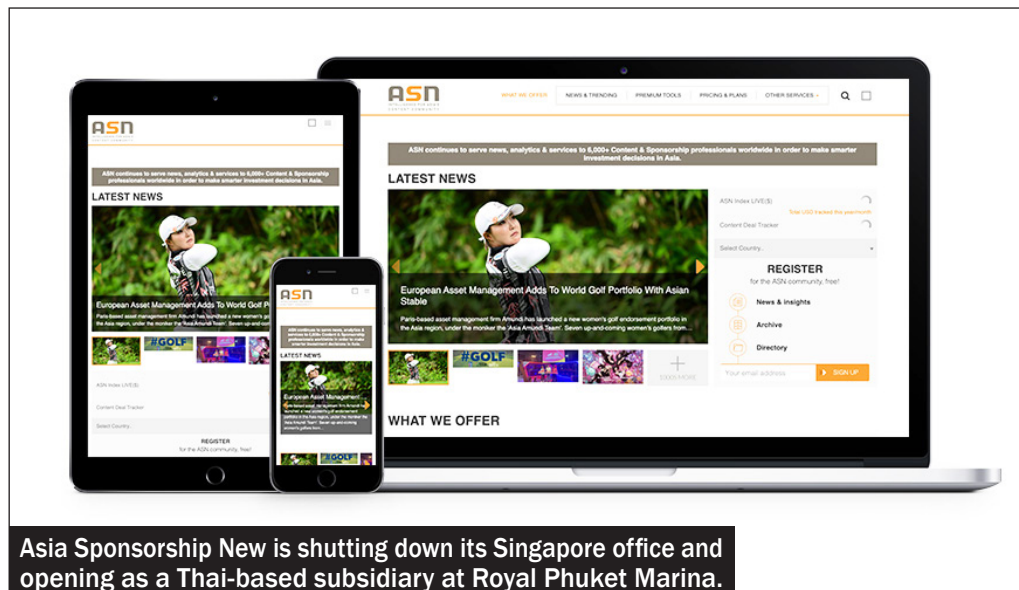
The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Asia Sponsorship News Co Ltd (ASNCL), now an independent subsidiary of Paul Poole (South East Asia) Co Ltd ("PP(SEA) CL"), will be shutting down its Singapore office and relocating to Phuket in move highlighting more tech-based firms moving to the island.

PP(SEA)CL is an independent marketing consultancy based in Bangkok, specialising in commercial sponsorship and partnership marketing, working with both rights holders and brands – acting as a catalyst by bringing them together and maximising the relationship.

"We have packaged, sold and managed sponsorship and partnership opportunities for a wide range of rights holders and worked with many of the world's leading brands to source and engage the right sponsorships and partnerships for them to maximise," explained Founder and Managing Director Paul Poole.

ASN has been instrumental in the continued success of the sponsorship industry in Asia through its unrivalled data set of over 250,000 commercial



Asia Sponsorship News is shutting down its Singapore office and opening as a Thai-based subsidiary at Royal Phuket Marina.

sponsorship and partnership marketing deals in Asia which has allowed sponsorship professionals to trade faster and more efficiently, in an environment of greater transparency, Mr Poole explained in a release.

"Founded in Singapore in 2007 by Ben Heyhoe Flint, ASN operates on a subscription-based model where subscribers gain access to the latest news, analytics and insights from the biggest players in the sponsorship industry. Over the years ASN has worked with the leading names in sports, media and entertainment across the buy-

side, agency and sell-side," Mr Poole added.

A new Thai-based company, Asia Sponsorship News Co Ltd (ASNCL), is being set up at Royal Phuket Marina to operate ASN under the aegis of PP(SEA)CL. ASNCL as a subsidiary of PP(SEA)CL will be run completely independently.

"We are extremely excited to start this new chapter under the ownership of PP(SEA)CL. Paul Poole has demonstrated a lifelong commitment to the sponsorship industry and we could not have found a better path forward," said ASN Founder Mr Flint, who will

stay on as an advisor.

James Hamshire, ASN's Business Development Director will stay on and be promoted to Managing Director, added, "This acquisition comes at a time when the sponsorship industry is resurging in Asia post-pandemic. We are confident of the continued success of ASN as an utterly independent provider of intelligence for those in the sports, media, and entertainment space in Asia."

"ASN has been a monumental force in the sponsorship industry in Asia in the past 15 years, providing invaluable insights to all

of us in this space. We are committed to continuing that important work and to remaining an important player in an ever-changing industry," Mr Poole noted.

The new office at Royal Phuket Marina is currently being fitted out and is scheduled to open on Oct 1, joining the likes of Booking.com, which has also opened offices at the world-class marina.

"The Top 10 sponsorship spenders in Thailand historically make up almost 30% of the total sponsorship investment in the Southeast Asian sponsorship market," Mr Poole noted.

Recognising the growing trend of 'digital nomads' working remotely, Mr Poole still highlighted, "Phuket is emerging as a haven for tech firms looking for a combination of nature and urban culture – especially Royal Phuket Marina on the island's east coast, which has been attracting high profile companies as of late."

Famous for its state-of-the-art marina, Royal Phuket Marina is a world-class lifestyle destination combining luxury waterfront living and attractive commercial real estate, he added.

The only marina on Phuket to have obtained the prestigious 5 Gold Anchor distinction, it is also a pioneer in sustainability, deploying the latest in solar technology to power its operations. Apart from the marina, it features restaurants, bars and an exhibition and conference hall boasting 2,000 square feet of indoor exhibition and conference space and 1,000 square feet of outdoor venue space, making it a perfect venue for MICE events.

"Phuket offers the perfect combination of a premier lifestyle destination along with stunning nature and great infrastructure. With dozens of flights connecting the island to nearby metropolises including Bangkok and Singapore daily, it is an attractive home for companies operating in the region," Mr Poole added.

Gulu Lalvani, Chairman of Royal Phuket Marina, welcomed the move. "We are pleased to see so many distinguished companies choosing Royal Phuket Marina as their home base. We strive to be an active player in promoting the best Phuket has to offer, whether it be world-class yachting, MICE or business opportunities," he said.



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Base wage hike to have little effect in Phuket

KITTICHAJ LEEELANANTAWONG, Vice President of the Federation of Thai Industries Phuket chapter, claims that the minimum wage rise to come into effect on Oct 1 will not affect Phuket business operators.

From Oct 1, the minimum wage will rise by B18, Boonchob Suthamansong, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, announced on Aug 26.

Minimum wages vary depending on the province. The highest current rate is B336 per day in Phuket and Chon Buri, while the lowest is B313 in the three southernmost provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala. The new rates will range from B328 to 354.

Mr Kittichai believes that business owners in Phuket will not be affected by the wage hike because service workers in Phuket are skilled labour that are in great demand, according to a report by state news agency NNT.

Mr Kittichai said he already pays B600-B1,200 a day at his Pornpichai Kanchang car service centre. He says the rates which he pays are appropriate "because the jobs require expertise and rare labour [skill sets], which cannot be paid according to the minimum wage".

"This makes the wage adjustment have no effect in any way, because service workers in Phuket are skilled labor that are in great demand," Mr Kittichai said.

Phakdi Rittisman, owner of the Sure Garden restaurant in Phuket Town, agreed.

"The wages for service workers in Phuket are already higher than the minimum wage,



Photo: NNT

which means the wage adjustment will not affect operators in the service sector," Mr Phakdi said.

However, Mr Phakdi does foresee the wage hike affecting other industries.

"Overall, I think that the increase in wages will affect entrepreneurs in other areas, such as the real estate and construction industries, because they are still in a period affected by the increase in raw material prices in the current economic conditions," he said.

Regardless, Mr Phakdi agrees with the increase in the minimum wage.

"This nationwide minimum wage adjustment will result in an increase in spending by workers, especially in light of the rising cost of living," he said.

"Meanwhile, the economic situation in Phuket will be better from being fully open [to tourism] after the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has now passed," he concluded.

The Phuket News

Prawit granted complete power as Prime Minister

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

The Cabinet has issued a resolution entrusting Deputy Prime Minister Prawit Wongsuwon with the full prime ministerial powers including authorising high-level appointments and passing budgetary decisions.

The move comes after Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha was ordered on Aug 24 to take a break by the Constitutional Court over a dispute concerning his eight-year tenure in the role.

Normally, an acting prime minister is not given such powers and must still consult with the prime minister first.

However, given the situation, it is now impractical for Gen Prawit to consult Gen Prayut, according to Deputy Prime Minister Wissanu Krea-ngam.

The government's legal expert said the Cabinet decided to pass a fresh resolution on Aug 31 authorising Prawit to approve appointments and make budget decisions, in addition to other prime ministerial powers.



Acting PM Prawit Wongsuwon has been granted full prime ministerial powers. Photo: Bangkok Post

The resolution also spelt out the line of succession among the deputy prime ministers. If Prawit, the most senior deputy prime minister, was unable to act as prime minister for any reason, he would be succeeded by Mr Wissanu, followed by Anutin Charnvirakul, Jurin Laksanawisit, Don Pramudwinai and Supattanapong Punmeechaow.

The opposition believes Prayut completed his maximum eight-year term, as stipulated by the constitution, on Aug 24. However, others argued he still has either two or five years

left to serve, depending on the interpretation of the charter.

Prawit chaired his first weekly Cabinet meeting as acting prime minister on Aug 30, insisting no Cabinet reshuffle is in the pipeline.

"Why change anything when what we have is still workable?" he said.

Opposition leader Cholnan Srikaew has pledged to keep a close watch on Prawit's performance as acting prime minister.

Dr Cholnan, who leads the main opposition Pheu Thai Party, said the House being disbanded without the organic

laws on the election of MPs and political parties in place first would create a vacuum with chaos likely to ensue if the government opted for an executive decree instead of the bills to manage a general election.

Meanwhile, the Constitutional Court held a special meeting yesterday (Sept 8) to examine statements given by Prayut and former charter drafters.

The court's president, Worawit Kangsasiatam, received separate statements from Prayut, Meechai Ruchapan, former chairman of the 2017 charter drafting committee, and Pakorn Nilprapun, former secretary to the committee.

The court's judges will review the statements and other evidence and consider whether any additional evidence and witnesses will still be needed. If the judges decide that the evidence and witnesses available are already sufficient, they can set the date for handing down a ruling.

Prayut's suspension is expected to last around a month while the court considers its final verdict.



Photo: Bangkok Post

Steeper fines put on hold for three months

BANGKOK

TRAFFIC POLICE WILL push back the enforcement of new traffic fines for three months, citing more time being needed to publicise the new fine rates.

Pol Gen Preecha Charoen-sahayanon, deputy director of the Traffic Operations Centre of the Royal Thai Police (RTP), revealed that the amended Land Traffic Act was endorsed on Monday (Sept 5), but before enforcement begins teams of officers will embark on a public awareness campaign.


"The new amended traffic law carries fines of up to B4,000 for running a red light or violating the speed limit but, during this transition period, officers will issue tickets of no more than B500 along with a warning that subsequent fines will be much steeper," he said.

The new penalties will usher in fines of between B1,000 and B4,000 for driving at speeds exceeding the legal limit, jumping red lights at intersections and failing to stop at a pedestrian crossing, he added.

Motorists convicted of drunk driving will face a jail term of up to one year and/or a fine of B5,000 to B20,000. If they repeat the offence within two years, they will face a jail term of up to two years and/or a fine of B50,000 to B100,000.

"Records of those convicted for drunk driving before Sept 5 will not be applicable to the new fine rates. The new regulations will only be imposed upon crimes and violations committed from Sept 5 onwards and fine rates will double for repeat offenders," added Pol Gen Preecha.

Bangkok Post



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Don't wait for 'The Invitation'

David Griffiths

Famous Australian screenwriter Ray Mooney once told one of his screenwriting classes that when it comes to writing a screenplay, the first 10 minutes must totally capture the viewer while the end of the film has to leave the audience fulfilled by wanting more. Brand-new horror/thriller 'The Invitation' is a classic example of how not adhering to one of those rules can totally drag down a film.

Directed by Jessica M. Thompson (The End), The Invitation begins with Evie (Nathalie Emmanuel – Game Of Thrones) living in New York City. Evie is still grieving the loss of her mother and begrudgingly works as a waitress – her real passion is to become a potter.

Her life is turned upside down when upon completing an online DNA test she is contacted by the sophisticated Oliver (Hugh Skinner – Les Miserables), whom she learns from is her cousin and that she is related to one of the wealthiest families in England.

He invites her to what he says will be 'the wedding of the year' in England and pays for her airfares. On arrival in the UK, Evie meets Walter (Thomas Doherty – High Fidelity), the owner of the luxurious mansion she is staying at.

However, while Evie and Walter begin to explore what may be between



Nathalie Emmanuel in 'The-Invitation' (2022). Image: IMDb

them it is also obvious that something is viciously attacking the waiting staff at the mansion and that the household is hiding a dark secret.

This is one film where it is recommended that you should not watch the trailer before watching the film. The way this film works best is if you have no idea what the 'horror' that the household is hiding is. Nobody can say that The Invitation is a bad film because for the most part it holds the audience's attention with suspense and intrigue.

Most audience members will find themselves drawn into the world that Evie finds herself in and for most of the film they will be trying to work out

what horror lurks in the bowels of the mansion. The reveal might be a bit of a shock for some, not if you've watched the trailer though, as it gives it away, and it is that moment that makes this a watchable film.

Sadly though it is after that reveal that the film seems to fall away. With so much suspense building the film before that the film's weak storyline is exposed for all to see once that intrigue is taken away. For the last quarter of the film it feels like Jessica M. Thompson and her screenwriter, Blair Butler (Hell Fest), lose control of the film. That last quarter just feels like Hollywood cliché after Hollywood cliché and while

you do still find yourself on edge as to what will happen to Evie, it was nowhere near as intense as it was for the first three-quarters of the film.

What the film does do well is deliver a great message about the treatment of wait staff and how most of society still sees those that wait for them as a lesser class of person but at the same time what it does badly is a weak fumbling effort to tie the film's plot into a classic piece of literature. That attempt is laughable and does nothing to improve the film at all.

Where The Invitation does come into its own though is with the performances of its leads. Nathalie Emmanuel shows throughout the film that she is an actress that is now more than capable of holding down the leading role in a film, while Thomas Doherty announces himself to the feature film world as an actor who can play both the romantic lead and the villain remarkably well. Off the back of The Invitation, it is easy to see that both are certainly stars on the rise.

The Invitation is certainly not the worst film of the film, but certainly be prepared for a film that has a less-than-satisfying finale.

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



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Rolling out jabs to strays

Soi Dog drives vaccinations at government shelter

Soi Dog Foundation

Soi Dog Foundation recently carried out its annual vaccination drive at the Phuket Stray Dog Shelter in Thalang – also known as the government dog pound.

A team of Soi Dog veterinarians, community outreach staff and rescue officers, alongside a representative from the Phuket Provincial Office of the Department of Livestock Development, came together to ensure all 735 resident dogs at the government-operated facility received vital vaccinations against six diseases, including rabies, distemper and parvovirus.

“Annual vaccinations of shelter dogs are a must and should be standard at every dog shelter,” said Dr Alicja Izydorczyk, Soi Dog’s International Director of Animal Welfare.

“Distemper and parvovirus are extremely contagious, and both are very common in Thailand, killing hundreds of thousands of dogs every year. If dogs in a shelter are not vaccinated regularly, there is a very high chance of an outbreak which can easily kill half of the shelter dog population.”

Soi Dog has been providing veterinary care for the dogs at the Phuket



All 735 dogs at the Phuket Stray Dog Shelter received a combination vaccine against six diseases, including rabies, distemper and parvovirus. Photo: Soi Dog Foundation

Stray Dog Shelter for over 15 years. In addition to the annual vaccination drive, the foundation sends veterinarians to the shelter on a weekly basis and community outreach staff on a daily basis to ensure that all dogs housed there are spayed/neutered, dewormed, protected against ticks and fleas and treated for any health issues, with the most common being dog bite wounds, fungal and other skin diseases, diarrhea and coughing.

Any dogs suffering from more severe conditions are transferred to the Soi Dog hospital in Mai Khao for further treatment.

All of this comes at a cost, and the

non-profit organisation allocates approximately B2 million every year to veterinary treatments and prophylaxis for the dogs at the shelter. Receiving no government funding, these costs are covered by kind donations from generous animal lovers around the world.

Caring for dogs at the Phuket Stray Dog Shelter is a major part of Soi Dog’s community outreach programme which exists to provide care and treatment for street dogs and cats within communities around Phuket.

Soi Dog’s three community outreach teams each consist of a veterinarian and veterinary support staff who travel around the island to provide prompt

medical treatment to animals who have been reported sick or injured. Among its many benefits, the programme helps ease the burden on Soi Dog’s ever-busy dog and cat hospitals. It also helps teach basic animal first aid to those who care for dogs and cats in the community through incidental learning and designated workshops.

“While Soi Dog cares for animals from all backgrounds, whether they’re living out on the streets or in facilities like the government dog pound, it is also the collective responsibility of the community to come together to help the animals of Phuket and beyond,” added Dr Alicja.



Caring for dogs at the government-operated facility is a major part of Soi Dog’s community outreach programme. Photo: Soi Dog Foundation



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POP QUIZ

- 1. Who is the Australian Prime Minister?
- 2. "It's not our fault" is the motto of which Californian town?
- 3. How long did it take Chinese authorities to locate and apprehend a BBC reporter in 2017 using their network of CCTV cameras and facial recognition technology?
- 4. Kill 'Em All is the name of which metal band's debut album?
- 5. Producing sounds of up to 230 decibels, what is the loudest animal on Earth?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Easy

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across

 - 1. Footnote note
 - 5. Go up
 - 9. Big blowout
 - 13. Bar ____
 - 14. Shipping weights
 - 16. Wrinkly fruit
 - 17. Conversation sparker
 - 20. "The Night of the ____"
 - 21. Dock
 - 22. "Holy moly!"
 - 23. Jousting one
 - 24. Served up a whopper
 - 26. Seafood selection
 - 27. Pitcher, of a sort
 - 30. Ultimatum word
 - 34. Adjust, as laces
 - 36. Armada
 - 37. Unappealing
 - 42. Roundish
 - 43. Salad oil holder
 - 44. Old Chinese money
 - 45. Destined
 - 47. Banquet
 - 50. 10 jiao
 - 52. Lustres
 - 55. Corroded
- Down

 - 1. Stir
 - 2. Dance
 - 3. Completely
 - 4. Remove lard
 - 5. ____ acid
 - 6. Monopoly token
 - 7. Mideast hot spot
 - 8. Astronomer's sighting
 - 9. Term of familiar address
 - 10. Bug-eyed
 - 11. Spiny shrub
 - 12. Scouting outing
 - 15. Done in
- 18. Compass reading
 - 19. Needle part
 - 25. Dutch pottery city
 - 28. Bad-mouth
 - 29. Big drawer?
 - 31. Affranchise
 - 32. "Didn't I tell you?"
 - 33. Flight board abbr.
 - 34. Turbulent
 - 35. Cricket wicket
 - 36. "Them"
 - 37. "As if!"
 - 38. Female gametes
 - 39. Turning point?
 - 40. Samovar
 - 41. Coups
 - 45. By chance
 - 46. The Muses, e.g.
 - 47. Boil
 - 48. Disentwine
 - 49. Biblical book
 - 51. Cable network
 - 53. "A likely story!"
 - 54. Overact
 - 55. First-rate
 - 56. Exactly
 - 57. Beige
 - 59. Zoo feature
 - 62. Ancient
 - 63. French vineyard

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

- 1) Anthony Albanese; 2) San Andreas; 3) Seven minutes; 4) Metallica; 5) The sperm whale

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		
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					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:

6	B	A	W	L	T	O	U	R	S	W	R	A	P			
12	O	L	I	O	A	T	S	E	A	H	E	R	E			
17	H	O	N	G	F	I	E	N	D	I	N	C	A			
23	R	E	G	I	S	F	O	R	T	H	E	M	O	O	N	
29					C	A	Y	S	R	U	N	S				
35	R	A	D	I	T	E	G	O	S	Y	N	C	S			
41	A	S	I	A	N	S	A	L	P	Y	E	A				
47	B	E	E	N	T	O	E	L	L	E	N	B	A	C	K	
53	B	A	T			U	S	A		G	I	L	L	I	E	
59	I	N	S	E	T	C	H	A		G	O	A	L	S		
65					N	A	S	H		B	A	H	T			
71	C	H	A	N	G	E	A	F	L	A	T	T	V	E	R	A
77	R	I	C	E		A	L	L	A	H		E	L	A	N	
83	O	K	R	A		R	O	U	T	E		R	E	V	E	
89	W	E	E	D		S	T	E	E	D		S	M	E	W	

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

1

quarter of the bones in the adult human body are in the feet (52 out of 206).

3.6

kilogrammes is how much dead skin a person sheds in one year.

56

percent of commercial pilots admit to having fallen asleep while in charge of a plane.

45,000

thunderstorms occur around the world every day (over 16 million every year).

1 billion

tonnes is how much a teaspoon of neutron star material would weigh on account of its extreme density.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Ao Yon between storms. Photo by Sutharat Khaodee

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

This week in history

September 9, 1939

U Ottama, national hero of Myanmar (then Burma) dies in prison after a hunger strike to protest Britain's colonial government.

September 10, 2008

The Large Hadron Collider at CERN, described as the biggest scientific experiment in history, is powered up in Geneva, Switzerland.

September 11, 2001

Al-Qaeda kill 2,996 people

in suicide attacks using four hijacked aircraft. Two crash into the World Trade Center in New York, a third into The Pentagon in Virginia and the fourth crashes into a field near Pennsylvania.

September 12, 1962

President Kennedy delivers his "We choose to go to the Moon" speech to persuade Americans to support the Apollo programme.

September 13, 1848

Vermont railroad worker



Photo: Michael Foran

Phineas Gage survives an iron rod 3.2cm in diameter being driven through his brain. The effects on his behaviour and

personality stimulate discussion of the nature of the brain.

September 14, 1985

The 13.5km-long Penang Bridge, connecting the island of Penang to mainland Malaysia, opens to traffic.

September 15, 1968

The Soviet 'Zond 5' spaceship is launched, becoming the first spacecraft to fly around the Moon and re-enter the Earth's atmosphere.

Source: Wikipedia

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WINDOW

ON PHUKET

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Panchaya with her trophy and medal at Suvarnabhumi airport on Aug 29. Photo: Bangkok Post

Panchaya to take part in World Championships

SNOOKER

PANCHAYA CHANNOI, who claimed the women's singles title at the World U21 Snooker Championships in Bucharest last month, was accorded a hero's welcome upon her return to Bangkok last Monday (Aug 29).

Suntorn Jarumon, president of the Billiard Sports Association of Thailand (BSAT), who was present at Suvarnabhumi airport, said that the BSAT would make every effort to help Panchaya, who is nicknamed "Mind", realise her true potential.

"I am sure that there is no shortage of talented snooker players in our country and Panchaya is a proof of that," said Suntorn.

"We will be sending her

to participate in the IBSF world 6-red championships in Kuala Lumpur in October."

The 14-year-old Panchaya defeated Indian cueist Anupama Ramachandran 4-1 in the title showdown in Hungary.

"I was up against a very good player – I had lost to her in the round-robin stage of the tournament," said Panchaya.

"I knew that I had to get better and fight to the best of my ability. I am happy that I won the title."

Ramachandran defeated Thailand's Ploychompoo Laokiatphong in the semi-finals, forcing the Thai star to settle for the bronze medal.

Thithipong Chulasak also returned home with a bronze medal after bowing out in the semi-finals of the men's U18 event. *Bangkok Post*

Mercedes rues lost victory

FORMULA ONE

Michael Lamonato
michael@boxofneutrals.com

Mercedes got within touching distance of an unlikely victory on Max Verstappen's home turf at the Dutch Grand Prix last Sunday (Sept 4), only for the reigning champion to ultimately claim victory.

On lap 60 of 72 Lewis Hamilton was passed by Verstappen for the race lead at the safety car restart, and as the Dutchman breezed into the distance, the Briton watched his slim victory hopes disappear with him.

He never really stood a chance once the safety car came out. Verstappen had a chance to pit for much fresher tyres, and when teammate George Russell did the same, there were no cars to shield Hamilton from the reigning world champion in a scenario eerily familiar to last year's Abu Dhabi title decider.

But this year the frustration wasn't borne of the anguish of a lost title. This was the pain of a man who'd just seen his best shot at a victory evaporate in an instant.

Mercedes has been off the



Hamilton was close but not close enough at the Dutch Grand Prix. Photo: AFP

pace all year. Sometimes the gap is small, as it was in Hungary where both Mercedes cars mastered the circumstances to finish on the podium. Other times it's enormous, like in Belgium last week, where they were two seconds off the pace in qualifying.

But at Zandvoort Mercedes was back among the frontrunners for the first time this season. The W13, its strengths and weaknesses perpetually evading the grasp of its engineers, rolled out of its garage and was immediately quick.

"It's like a mood swing," Hamilton said after qualifying

a close fourth. "It's like the characteristics of a human being. You don't know which side of the bed it's going to get out of."

The team backed the car to get out of the right side of the bed on Sunday and put all their chips on a one-stop strategy they knew could deliver them victory. Red Bull Racing, having lost some practice time to a gearbox problem on Friday, committed to make two stops.

The Mercedes car was flying, and by mid distance it was clear it had Verstappen under pressure. The Dutchman had to make one more stop and

was guaranteed to rejoin the track behind both Mercedes cars, forcing him to fight to the finish.

But a series of safety interventions neutralised the race, gifting Verstappen the lead and undermining what had been a sharp and punchy race for Hamilton, one that had been deserving of greater reward than fourth.

"It was finally there within our grasp," Hamilton said. "If this can be the same in the future races, we're going to be continuing to breathe down their necks and we're going to get that win."

Thai mixed doubles stars go big in Japan

BADMINTON

DECHAPOL PUAVARANUKROH and Sapsiree Taerattanachai claimed their third title of the year and 15th of their mixed doubles career after winning the US\$750,000 (B27.5 million) BWF Japan Open in Osaka on Sunday (Sept 4).

The Thai second seeds rallied to defeat third seeds Yuta Watanabe and Arisa Higashino of Japan 16-21, 23-21, 21-18 in the championship match of the World Tour Super 750 event at Maruzen Intec Arena Osaka.

It was their third title this year, following their victories at the German Open and the Singapore Open.

The Japanese held a 5-3 head-to-head record against the Thai duo ahead of the final, with their latest victory coming at the All England Open semi-finals in March.

However Dechapol and Sapsiree, who are currently No.1 in the world, got the better of their Asian rivals on their home soil, recovering after losing the first game to win the thrilling decider in an hour and 12 minutes.

Dechapol and Sapsiree took home the US\$55,000 winners cheque while Watanabe and Higashino received \$26,250.

"I would like to congratulate both Dechapol and Sapsiree for winning their third title of the year after regaining their No.1 status again in the past week," said Thai badminton chief Khunying Patama Leeswadtrakul.



Dechapol and Sapsiree with their gold medals and trophy. Photo: Supplied

"They did very well today, coping with all the pressure from the Japanese fans in the stadium and played so well that they eventually brought the title home."

Top seed Akane Yamaguchi of Japan beat third seed An Se-young of South Korea 21-9, 21-15 to capture the women's singles crown, just a week after retaining her world title in Tokyo.

In the men's singles competition, Japan's Kenta Nishimoto defeated fourth seed Chou Tien-chen of Taiwan 21-19, 21-23, 21-17.

Jeong Na-Eun and Kim Hye Jeong were crowned the women's doubles champions after they defeated fellow Koreans Baek Ha-Na and Lee Yu-Lim 23-21, 28-26.

In the men's doubles decider, China's Liang Weikeng and Wang Chang beat seventh seeds Kim Astrup and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen of Denmark 21-18, 13-21, 21-17.

Bangkok Post

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SCAN TO REGISTER

VAR under the spotlight

FOOTBALL

AFP

The organisation representing English football's top-flight referees effectively conceded on Sunday (Sept 4) that the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) decisions to disallow West Ham and Newcastle goals last weekend were wrong as it promised to "fully co-operate" with a Premier League review of the incidents.

The Professional Game Match Officials' (PGMOL) Board took the unusual step of "acknowledging" the specific controversies in a statement issued Sunday.

VAR decisions in matches are already reviewed by a five-strong independent panel made up of representatives of the Premier League and the PGMOL as well as three former players. Their findings are sent to the clubs concerned.

Such was the controversy generated when West Ham were denied a late equaliser at Stamford Bridge, and Newcastle a goal in their 0-0 draw with Crystal Palace, that the PGMOL has agreed to this additional layer of scrutiny.

"PGMOL acknowledge the incidents to disallow the goals in the Chelsea v West Ham and Newcastle v Crystal Palace fixtures," said a PGMOL statement.

"We will fully co-operate and collaborate with the Premier League and their request to review these two particular incidents, using the outcome as part of the ongoing assessment of weekly performances and the development of our



West Ham manager David Moyes (right) is left incredulous after a controversial VAR decision saw his team lose at Chelsea. Photo: AFP

match officials going forward."

West Ham manager David Moyes was furious after a controversial finish to his team's 2-1 loss at Chelsea where the Hammers' Maxwell Cornet had a late equaliser disallowed by VAR.

Match referee Andy Madley awarded the goal, having no issues regarding Jarrod Bowen's contact with Edouard Mendy after the Chelsea goalkeeper spilled the ball.

VAR, however, instructed Madley to review the incident on the pitchside monitors and the goal was chalked off.

"I'm amazed that VAR sent the referee for him to see it," said Moyes. "But I thought even if he goes to the TV there's no way he's overturning this, because this is a goal."

"It was a ridiculously bad decision."

Newcastle manager Eddie Howe was more restrained in his response to seeing an own goal by Tyrick Mitchell of Crystal Palace overturned.

Referee Michael Salisbury ruled it out for a foul by Joe Willock on goalkeeper Vicente Guaita but Howe said: "I didn't think it should have been disallowed, personally, I thought it was a foul or a push on Joe Willock in the build-up to the ball coming in."

"If anything, it's a penalty if it's not a goal, so I was very surprised with the outcome."

There were further VAR-related controversies in the matches involving Tottenham and Fulham, Manchester United and Arsenal and Brighton against Leicester, which further fuelled calls for a review.



Thailand players celebrate winning their sixth Asean title in January. Photo: Bangkok Post

Thailand, Indonesia in same Asean Championship group

FOOTBALL

DEFENDING ASEAN champions Thailand and last year's runners-up Indonesia have been drawn in Group A for the first round battles of this year's competition which has been renamed the Mitsubishi Electric Cup.

The War Elephants overwhelmed the Indonesians 6-2 over two legs in January to win Thailand's sixth title when the competition was played on a centralised basis in Singapore, a year later than scheduled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Philippines, Cambodia and the winners of a play-off between Brunei and Timor-Leste will join Thailand and Indonesia in Group A.

Vietnam, who claimed the top honours in 2008 and 2018, are the top seeds in Group

B, which also features 2010 champions Malaysia, four-time winners Singapore, Myanmar and Laos.

The competition will revert to a home-and-away format for the first time since 2018, with group matches beginning on Dec 23.

The top two nations in each of the five-team groups will advance to the semi-finals, which will be played over two legs before the final on Jan 12 and 15.

"Now that we know the teams in Group A, we will start charting our strategy to defend the title," said Thailand coach Mano Polking after the draw was made.

"We cannot underestimate any team, they are all good. And it's never easy to defend a title but we will be well prepared for the tournament."

Bangkok Post

Serena greatness will never be matched, says former coach

TENNIS

THE DEPARTURE OF SERENA Williams from tennis will leave a void in the sport that may never be completely filled, according to the coach who played a pivotal role in nurturing her talent more than 30 years ago.

The 40-year-old 23-time Grand Slam champion bowed out of the US Open last Friday (Sept 2) in what is widely expected to be the final singles tournament of her 27-year professional career.

For Rick Macci, the Florida-based coaching guru who oversaw the development of Williams and sister Venus in the early 1990s, Williams leaves a legacy that will never be beaten.

In the end, Serena fell just short of matching Margaret Court's all-time mark of 24 Grand Slam titles.

But for Macci, the totality of his former protegee's achievements, on and off the court, represents a more fundamental and lasting legacy than a mere tally of titles won.

"She's the greatest female tennis player ever to hold a racquet, and the greatest female athlete that we've seen," Macci said.

Macci believes Williams' array of technical talents and physical strengths, allied to her remarkable longevity and an indomitable spirit honed by her upbringing in Compton, made her unique.

"You're never going to see a player like



Serena Williams salutes the crowd after her US Open exit on Sept 2. Photo: AFP

Serena Williams again," said the 67-year-old.

"She checks every box – size, speed, quickness, strength, agility. She had muscles on muscles even at aged nine."

"Technically she hits the ball very clean. We moulded the best serve in the history of tennis. But at the end of the day it's that Compton street fight."

"Serena was like a pit bull. When she got a hold of you she wouldn't let go. And that's an amazing quality. She has no weaknesses."

In addition to Williams' 23 singles Grand Slams, part of an overall haul of 73 titles, she also added 14 doubles titles with sister Venus and four Olympic gold medals.

Macci also coached world number ones Andy Roddick, Jennifer Capriati and Maria Sharapova in a Hall-of-Fame career. AFP

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Sport



Critics argue VAR has gone too far > p15



DYNAMIC DUO

Inclusion sailing pair shine at World Champs

Tanat Upatasing (left) and Paul Merry in action at the Inclusion World Championship in Germany last month. Photo: Lars Wehrmann

PARA SAILING

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Thailand was represented for the first time on the international inclusion sailing stage recently and the Phuket-based team managed a highly credible eighth place finish in a world-class field of 25 teams.

The two-person sailing team of Tanat Upatasing (skipper) and Paul Merry (crew) competed at the Inclusion World Championship for Sailing 2022, held in Rostock, Germany, from Aug 24-28.

Competing under the Disabled Sailing Thailand (DST) banner as "IMCI Thailand", they went up against 25 other teams from six countries in

an 8-race series over 10 days using the SV14 sailing boat with a crew consisting of one able-bodied sailor and one para sailor.

Training from their base in Phuket at Royal Phuket Marina (RPM), this was the first international competition for the dynamic duo, and the first time Thailand has been represented at an inclusive sailing championship anywhere in the world.

Having got their series off to a strong start with a second place in the first race, a technical issue saw the team drop down the order. They went on to put together a strong second half of the series with a run of top-three finishes which helped them to finish eighth overall. Underscoring how close the competition was,

just 2.56 points separated fifth and eighth places.

"Being our first time competing, and competing against such a high level of sailing talent, we're happy with the result," said Tanat.

"We haven't had a lot of opportunities to race against others in Phuket but we are seeing more interest in sailing amongst Thais with disabilities and we aim to grow our DST team in Phuket.

"There are lots of positives we are taking away from the world championships. We can see where we need to improve, and at the same time we're keen to share our experience with others so we can all learn and grow inclusive sailing and para sailing in Thailand.

"I hope one day in the future we'll be celebrating

Thailand as world champions!"

PARALYMPIC GOAL

There is a big push to promote inclusive sailing in Thailand and Phuket specifically. Belgian expat Peter Jacobs, an experienced marine surveyor and boat builder, founded DST in 2015 to help grow the sport.

They now have three SV14 boats in Phuket and RPM have generously allocated one dock specifically for DST use where they have installed a crane which is used to lift para sailors in and out the boat and where a dedicated rescue boat is on hand.

Volunteers help operate the forklifts at the dock and help launch and clean the boats to ensure that any persons with disabilities can enjoy the freedom experienced in sailing

in a safe, fun environment.

The group have weekly 90-minute sailing expeditions on Fridays and Saturdays where crews of locals and expats head out just before high tide sets in to navigate around the channel from RPM and Cape Yamu.

It is hoped that continuing to raise awareness of para sailing can help get the sport reinstated at the 2028 Los Angeles Paralympic Games after it was dropped from the schedule in 2015 by the International Paralympic Committee.

The announcement caused widespread outcry at the time and spurred people like Peter into action to ensure everything possible was being done to reinstate the sport into the Paralympic schedule.

"In the last few years we have seen huge growth in

para sailing in Thailand," he told World Sailing in October last year.

"While beginners just a few years ago, Thai para sailors have since competed at world championships and have themselves become inspiration for a new generation of para sailors.

"We whole-heartedly support the reinstatement of sailing in the Paralympics and will continue to promote and grow inclusive sailing in Thailand."

The achievements and progress by the likes of Tanat and Paul in Germany are another positive step towards raising awareness of the sport and the community achieving its Paralympic goal.

For more information please visit: www.disabledsailingthailand.org

Return of the 'Heartbreak Hill' Mini-Marathon

FITNESS

IT HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED that the Accor Hotels 'Heartbreak Hill' 2022 Mini-Marathon will return for its 5th edition this month.

In addition to the 11km Mini-Marathon there is a 6km Fun Run with both activities taking place at Saphan Hin Park on Sunday, Sept 18.

Funds raised from the day will be used to help develop language facilities in local schools as per the Cooperation for Sustainable

Education Development Partnership School Project of Phuket Province memorandum of understanding (MoU).

The Fun Run has an application fee of B500 and the Mini Marathon a fee of B650 and special commemorative shirts and medals will be given to participants in both events.

Additionally, there is the option for a VIP application for either event costing B1,000 for which participants will be given a VIP shirt and medal on completing the event. A special discounted price of B300 is available for students.

The announcement was made on Aug 30 at a meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall overseen by Phuket Vice Governor Pichet Panaphong. He was joined by Chupong Kingkaew, Regional Director of Talent and Culture at Accor Group, together with associated executives from the hotel group.

This year's event will see the launch of a new running route from Saphan Hin through Phuket Town to Khao Rang and is once again carrying the slogan 'Melt Your Heart'. Associated hashtags include #mellyourheart #running-

toeatthewind #visittheoldtown and #uptokhaorang.

The event strives to help raise funds for children who lack educational opportunities in kindergartens and schools located near Accor hotels and resorts with a set target of no less than B1 million to be raised. It is hoped that more than 2,000 people will participate in the event.

The 'Heartbreak Hill' event was last held in Phuket in 2018 and organisers said they are delighted to welcome it back to the island after several years' absence.



Image: PR Phuket

Those interested in participating can do so via: <https://soft.events/run/hbh2022>

Alternatively, contact the Recruitment Coordinator, Sirawat Butterob, Human Resources Department of Grand Mercure Khao Lak Bangsak at Tel: 076-49-0998 or 081-3679-956.

The Phuket News