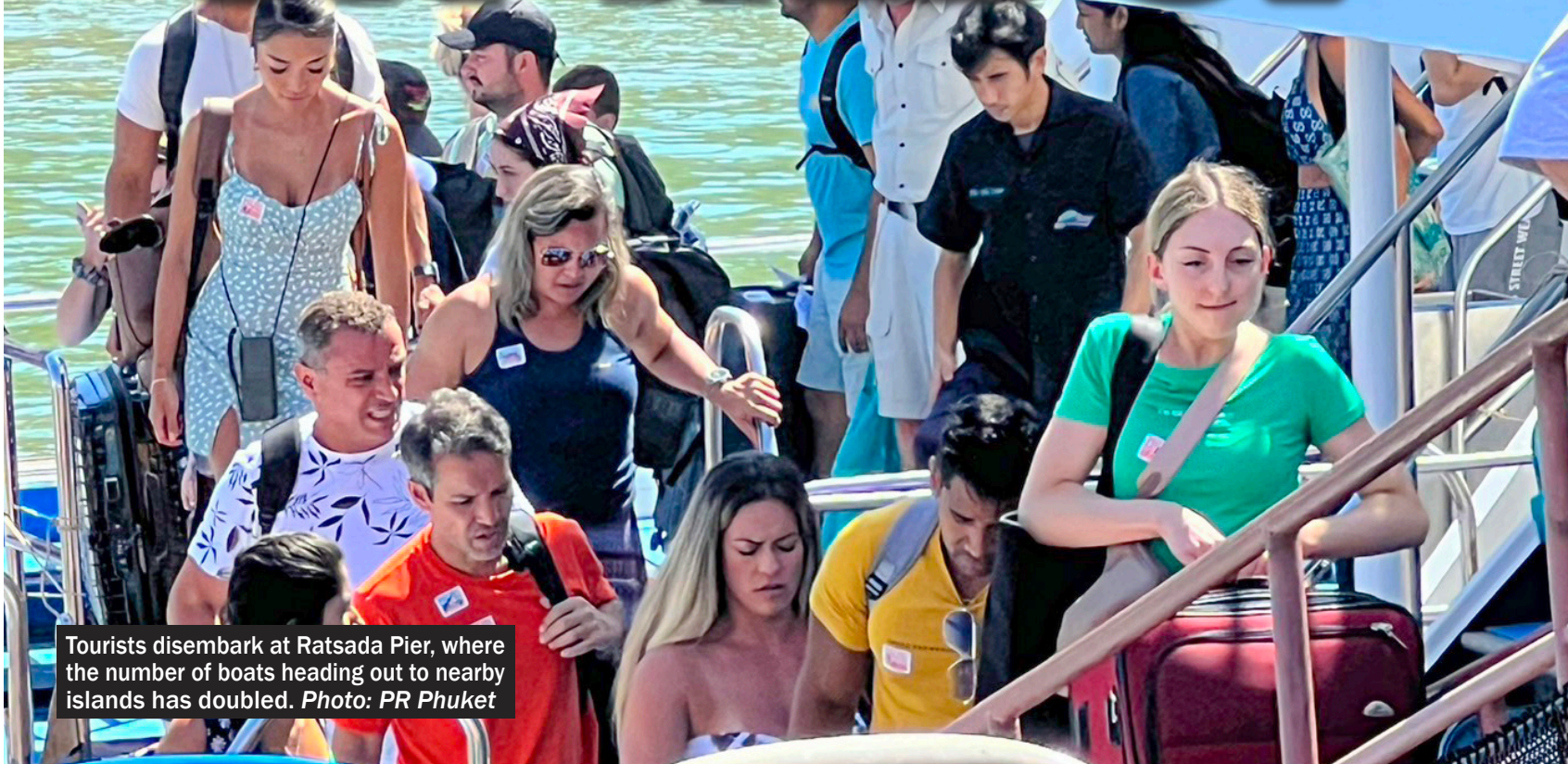


PATONG SUNBED, MASSAGE OPERATORS WRANGLE FOR BEACH TURF > PAGE 3

ON THE UP



Tourists disembark at Ratsada Pier, where the number of boats heading out to nearby islands has doubled. Photo: PR Phuket

INTERNATIONAL ARRIVALS VIA AIR HITS HIGH AS RUSSIANS LEAD REVIVAL

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Signs of Phuket's long-awaited tourism recovery are becoming evident with new record numbers of international arrivals being recorded for two consecutive weeks.

Last Saturday (Dec 3) saw a record number of international passenger arrivals at Phuket International Airport. The 10,870 registered arrivals beat the previous high of 10,476 recorded the previous Saturday (Nov 26) and brought the total of arrivals by air in the previous seven days to 77,308.

It was the highest number of ar-

rivals since the COVID-19 pandemic decimated the tourism sector on the island in early 2020, which saw international travel restrictions enforced in most countries globally.

Arrivals from Russia account for the highest number – since the start of November there have been, as of Monday (Dec 5), more than 78,054 arrivals from Russia in Phuket, many seeking to flee the tensions of the Russia-Ukraine war after Russia invaded in February.

This number of Russian arrivals dwarfs the second-highest total of 34,860 from India, during the same period.

Since the start of November there have been 16,865 arrivals from Australia, 16,852 from Singapore, 15,398 from the UK, 13,990 from Germany, 12,459 from Kazakhstan, 10,593 from Malaysia, 8,231 from the United States and 7,760 from South Korea.

MORE FLIGHTS

Some 3,000 international and 3,730 domestic flights – 6,730 in total – are expected to be serviced by Phuket airport in December, according to the flights schedule released by the Phuket branch of the Airports of Thailand corporation (AoT Phuket), which operates Phuket International

Airport.

The schedule for December lists 38 foreign air carriers which will perform 3,000 international return flights to Phuket from various cities around the globe.

The top-11 airlines to have the busiest schedule and most Phuket-bound flights in December include:

Qatar Airways – 70 flights per week from Doha, Bangkok;

Singapore Airlines – 56 flights from Singapore;

Go First Airlines – 52 flights from Bangalore, Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata;

Aeroflot Russian Airlines – 48 flights from Moscow, Krasnoyarsk,

NEWS PAGE 3

Chinese mafia businesses seized in probe



NEWS PAGE 8

Long-term shift for dealing with stray dogs



SPORT PAGE 16

BISP Soccer 7s shine as youth football returns



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News



**Cleaning up
Siray's high
tide trash > p5**

High hopes for tourism in 2023

Continued from page 1

...Vladivostok, Novosibirsk;
Scat Airlines – 44 flights
from Astana, Almaty, Taraz,
Shymkent;

Air Asia Berhad – 42
flights from Kuala Lumpur;

Azur Air – 40 flights from
Moscow, Saint Petersburg,
Khabarovsk, Novosibirsk,
Yekaterinburg, Ufa, Irkutsk,
Krasnoyarsk, Perm, Kazan;

Scot Tiger Airways – 32
flights from Singapore;

Etihad Airways – 28 flights
from Abu Dhabi, BKK;

Emirates Airlines – 28
flights from Dubai;

Indigo Airlines – 28 flights
from Mumbai, Delhi.

Russia tops the list in terms
of number of departure cities
for Phuket-bound aircrafts.
India and Kazakhstan share
the second place. All three
countries were in the top-10
for international arrivals to
Phuket in November with
Russia providing 63,357 visits,
India supplying 29,263 tour-
ists and Kazakhstan sending
10,659 travelers.

In the domestic market
Phuket airport expects to
service 3,730 flights by six
airlines, namely:

Thai AirAsia – 252 flights
per week from Bangkok,
Chiang Mai, Khon Kaen,
Udon Thani;



TAT Governor Yuthasak told global tourism leaders at the 22nd World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) Global Summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, last week that Thailand tourism arrivals were on track to recover to 80% of pre-COVID levels. Photo: TAT

Bangkok Airways – 169
flights from Bangkok, Samui,
Hat Yai, U-Tapao;

Thai Smile Airways – 154
flights from Bangkok;

Thai VietJet – 152 flights
from Bangkok, Chiang Mai,
Chiang Rai;

Nok Air – 56 flights from
Bangkok, Ubon Ratchathani,

Thai Lion Air – 42 flights
from Bangkok.

With all the flights per-
formed, the average number
of daily flights in December
will reach 217. In November,
the maximum number of daily

flights reached 219 on Nov 26
with the average being around
200 flights.

As for passengers, in No-
vember the airport welcomed
244,946 visitors arriving on
international flights, includ-
ing 2,382 Thais, according
to Phuket Immigration Of-
fice. Total arrivals to Phuket
for May-November reached
959,217 travelers.

These numbers include
all passengers who passed
through immigration control
on arrival at Phuket Inter-
national Airport, but do not

include those who passed
through immigration in Bang-
kok and then flew to Phuket
on domestic flights.

ON TARGET

Overall arrivals to Thailand for
Jan-Nov this year totaled 9.4
million people, according to
Yuthasak Supasorn, Governor
of the Tourism Authority of
Thailand (TAT).

Daily arrivals to Thailand
currently stand at 50,000-
60,000, Mr Yuthasak said on
Dec 2. This figure includes all
the entries through land border

crossings as well.

Phuket airport on average
welcomed 8,165 people on
direct flights from abroad in
November. The post-pandemic
record high of 10,467 arrivals
was recorded on Nov 26 when
the airport serviced 219 flights.

On the national scene, Ma-
laysia leads the way in terms
of arrivals having provided
1.5mn tourist and non-tourist
visits this year.

“But we are seeing a shift
in the number of long-distance
tourists like more Russians
coming to Thailand,” said Mr
Yuthasak.

“They escape the cold
weather to travel to Thailand,”
he added, explaining the surge
in arrivals from Russia which
started in late September when
Russians mobilised themselves
as a travelling nation.

RECOVERY UNDERWAY

Tipchalita Siritaweerat, Vice
President of Patong Beach
Hotel Association, last week
reported that the occupancy
rate in the Patong area was
set to be “more than 80-90%”
during the high season. The
number of room reservations
is long, until April 2023.

Meanwhile, Sasithorn
Kittitornkun, President of
the Krabi Tourism Business

Association, revealed that
occupancy at hotels in the
Krabi area was set to hold at
about 70-80% until the New
Year, especially in marine
tourism destinations such as
Ao Nang, Ao Railay, Klong
Muang, Koh Lanta and Koh
Phi Phi.

Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn,
the Minister of Tourism and
Sports, last week said that the
country expects over 10mn
foreign visits in 2022 and up
to 12mn if China opens its
borders and allows Chinese
nationals to travel to other
countries and return back
without too much trouble.

This has not happened so far.
TAT also plans to achieve
10mn international visitors in
2022, as Mr Yuthasak con-
firmed speaking at the 22nd
World Travel and Tourism
Council (WTTC) Global Sum-
mit in Saudi Arabia on Dec 1.

He noted that the world-
wide COVID-19 restrictions
created much pent up de-
mand for travel and, having
fully reopened from October,
Thailand is now seeing visitor
arrivals from markets around
the world rebound.

In 2023, the Kingdom of
Thailand is aiming for 80% of
pre-pandemic tourism revenue,
Mr Yuthasak revealed at the
summit.

‘Prab Rd’ officially opens, small vehicles allowed over Patong Hill

THE PRIVATELY BUILT
road up Patong Hill from
opposite Patong Go Kart on
Phra Baramree Rd in Kathu
to the Chao Por Seua Temple
 (“Tiger Temple”) at the top
of hill officially opened on
Monday (Dec 5).

The road opened to traf-
fic following a mass event
to plant trees along the
side of the road to honour
the late King Bhumibol
Adulyadej, whose birth-
day on Dec 5 95 years ago
was celebrated throughout
the country as ‘H.M. King
Bhumibol Adulyadej The
Great’s Birthday / National
Day / Father’s Day.’

The mass tree plant-
ing was also held to mark
World Soil Day, an annual
international day instituted
by the United Nations in
2022 to commemorate the
achievements of King Bhu-

mibol in the field of agriculture
development.

Present to lead the mass
tree-planting festivities was
Preechawude ‘Prab’ Keesin,
head of the Pisona Group
of companies in Patong and
Founder of the Patong Devel-
opment Foundation, which has
been overseeing construction
of the private road.

With Monday also cel-
ebrated as Father’s Day in
Thailand, Mr Preechawude
explained to reporters that the
opening of the road was also
held in honour of his father,
the late former long-serving
Mayor of Patong Pian Keesin.
A variety of activities were
being held in his honour, Mr
Preechawude said.

Of note, the saplings
planted along the roadside
were ‘Thong Urai’, or ‘golden
trumpet’ trees, renowned
throughout Thailand for their



Cars, pickups and passenger vans are now allowed westbound over Patong Hill, from Kathu to Patong. Photo: PR Phuket

perennial yellow blossoms,
with yellow being the auspi-
cious colour for the late King
Bhumibol, and for Father’s
Day.

Guests of honour for the
event included Kahtu District
Chief Siwat Rawarangkul and
Ms Phakarat Tamchu, Presi-
dent of Patong Development
Foundation.

Mr Siwat pointed out that
under a project by the Kathu
District Office, saplings of
Thong Urai were also planted

at Kamala Beach Public Park
at a similar event held that
same day (Monday).

The road, which has yet to
be designated an official name,
opened to traffic as part of the
“test phase” on Nov 29.

The road, which extends
some three kilometres long,
now features guardrails deco-
rated with safety reflectors. At
time of press it had yet to be
gifted a centre line.

The road was built across
private land donated for the

purpose of providing an alter-
native route over Patong Hill,
and built with donations from
local businesses and the public.

The new road is hoped to
alleviate congestion on Phra
Baramree Rd, the main road
over the Patong Hill, while
works continue to repair the
section of that road that col-
lapsed from a landslide in
mid-October.

The road is open to restrict-
ed traffic only, Mr Preechawude
explained on Nov 29, when
announcing that the road was
open as a “test phase”.

Only motorbikes and
‘small vehicles’ – namely cars,
pickup trucks and passenger
vans – were allowed to use the
road, Mr Preechawude said.

Heavy vehicles were not
permitted to use the road.

Meanwhile, officials have
announced that they expect
the main road over Patong

Hill (Phra Baramree Rd,
Route 4029), to open to all
vehicles, including buses, in
both directions by the end
of the month – if it remains
safe to do so.

Motorbikes and “small
vehicles” (cars, pickup
trucks and passenger vans)
are allowed to travel over
the hill and past the land-
slide site in both directions
between Patong and Kathu.

All other traffic must
access Patong via either
Kamala to the north of
Patong, or via Chalong-
Kata-Karon to the south
of Patong.

Phuket Vice Governor
Pichet Panapong last week
assured that safety will be
the top criteria in any deci-
sions made in allowing any
vehicles to use the main
road over Patong Hill.

The Phuket News

Chinese mafia companies hit

Eakkapop Thongtub
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Eight businesses in Phuket with over B170 million in total registered capital have been seized as part of an ongoing crackdown on Chinese mafia bosses in the country.

More than 100 officers from multiple local and national law-enforcement agencies arrived on the island on Nov 30 to enforce court search-and-seizure warrants at eight locations, Region 8 Police reported.

The businesses included a jewellery retail showroom, a real estate company, a bird's nest products operation, a clothing outlet, retail rubber products venture, a herbal medicines operation and even an internet installation services company.

All eight businesses were connected to Bangkok-based businessman Chaianat 'Tu-hao' Kornchayanant, who turned himself in last week after the Bangkok South Criminal Court issued a warrant for his arrest over his alleged involvement in the drug trade. Chainat denied the charges.

Details of the eight busi-



Raids on eight businesses in Phuket were conducted in search-and-seizure operations last week. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

nesses raided on Nov 30 were given as:

1. Ever Union Company Limited, registered on May 9, 2013, capital B20m, real estate rental business, located at 88/9 Moo 4, Wichit. Chaianat had 80,000 shares, Mrs Nudiporn Petchpanomporn had 75,000 shares, Ms Suchada Massis 25,000 shares and Mrs Watanaree Kornchayanant had 20,000 shares.

2. The City Center Company Limited, registered on May 16, 2019, capital B5mn, a real estate company, located at 88/8 Moo 4, Wichit. Chaianat had 30,000 shares, Mr Sithiphaiboon Kamnil and Miss Suchada Masmis had

10,000 shares each.

3. King Birds Nest Phuket Co Ltd, registered on 19 September 2011, capital B10mn, sells bird's nest and bird's nest products, located at 70/90 Moo 4, Wichit. Chaianat had 60,000 shares, Mrs Watanaree Kornchayanant had 30,000 shares and Mr Sithiphaiboon Kamnil had 10,000 shares.

4. Queen Legend Company Limited, registered on 30 July 2014, latest capital B30mn, business selling souvenirs, retail clothing, costume and body jewellery and all kinds of leather goods, located at 88/9 Moo 4, Wichit. Chaianat had 15,400 shares, Mrs Watanaree Kornchayanant 8,500 shares

and Mr Sithiphaiboon Kamnil 6,100 shares.

5. Modern Latex Company Limited, registered on March 1, 2012, capital B30mn, sells mattresses, pillows, bags made of rubber, located at 80/5 Moo 4, Wichit (1 person was found at the scene, Pathompong Kalara, Thai national, a resident of Moo 4, Wichit, only acting as manager/supervisor of the place, etc., and from the search did not find anything illegal). Chaianat had 180,000 shares, Mrs Watanaree Kornchayanant 60,000 shares and Mr Sithiphaiboon Kamnil 60,000 shares.

6. Modern Gems Phuket Company Limited, registered on December 22, 2011, capi-

tal B50mn, a jewellery retail store, located at 88/8 Moo 4, Wichit. Chaianat had 300,000 shares, Mr Sithiphaiboon Kamnil 150,000 shares and Mrs Watanaree Kornchayanant 50,000 shares.

7. Royal Park Phuket Co Ltd, registered on March 1, 2012, capital B20mn, operating as a business selling herbal medicines, located at 80/3 Moo 4, Wichit. Chaianat had 120,000 shares, Mrs Watanaree Kornchayanant 40,000 shares and Mr Sithiphaiboon Kamnil 40,000 shares.

8. Royal Internet Company Limited, registered on August 16, 2012, capital B2mn, wired and wireless internet service, located at 70/90 Moo 4, Wichit. Chaianat had 16,000 shares, Mr Zhao Zhe Zhao Zhe 3,900 shares and Mr Pisanu Pholcharoen 100 shares.

Region 8 Police declined to reveal any further details of the raids, saying that it was an ongoing investigation by national police divisions.

However, police did confirm that the raids were conducted with the intent of investigating breaches of Anti-Money Laundering Act B.E. 2542, among other related laws.

NATIONWIDE

The raids in Phuket came as police arrested another alleged triad boss during raids in Bangkok and seven other provinces on Nov 30, as the purge of Chinese gangs operating "grey businesses" in Thailand continued, reported the *Bangkok Post*.

Teams of police raided 34 locations in eight provinces – executing 12 search warrants in Bangkok, eight in Phuket, six in Samut Prakan, four in Chon Buri and one each in Prachuap Khiri Khan, Nakhon Sri Thammarat, Pathum Thani and Ayutthaya.

Deputy national police chief Pol Gen Surachate Hakparn and Deputy national police chief Pol Gen Torsak Sukvimol took officials to examine a private jet seized at Bo Fai airfield in Prachuap Khiri Khan. Gen Surachate said further investigation found that the jet was owned by Modern Latex Co in Phuket.

"Today we have seized more than B4 billion of assets. Now, accumulated assets seized are worth more than B5bnn. We will report the assets to the ONCB and Amlo for further action," said Gen Surachate.

Sunbed, massage operators in Patong Beach turf wrangle

KATHU DISTRICT CHIEF SIWAT Rawarangkul has stepped in over a disagreement between Patong Beach sunbed rental operators and beach massage masseuses arguing over which area on the sand is theirs to ply their trade.

The complaint by the masseuses who operate in "Zone 3" of Patong Beach, near the police box at the end of Bangla Rd, said encroachment by the adjacent sunbed rental operator had caused them to "suffer".

Mr Siwat called the parties to discuss the problem at a nearby restaurant on Dec 2, said an official report of the meeting.

Present for the talks were representatives from the Phuket Land Office along with the President of the "Patong Beach Umbrella Association" as well as some of the masseuses and even operators of local restaurants nearby.

The names of people present for the talks were not reported.

In total, 10% of the length of Patong Beach has been designated for local operators to provide beach services with the total area broken into five zones, Mr Siwat explained.

A surveyor from the Phuket Land Office had inspected the beach and checked the boundaries of all five zones on Nov 30 to ensure compliance. The surveyor had found that the beach massage operators involved in the dispute had encroached beyond their allocated area, he added.

The massage operators were asked to move their operations back into the confines of their allocated area, Mr Siwat said.

However, the beach massage operators said that the sunbed operators were now



Photo: Phuket Info Center

occupying the entire area of Zone 3, which covers 73 metres of prime beach for serving tourists. The sunbed rental operator had expanded the area used, taking over the area since 10am on Nov 2.

The official report of the meeting concluded with a confusing resolution to the conflict.

A "suitable spot" for massage operator service points was to be set up, but still located in the area, Zone 3, according to the official map of the zones. However, there was no mention that the sunbed operator was to vacate any of the area occupied since Nov 2.

"Let's join together to use only the area in the designated zone without conflict," the report said.

Patong Municipality is to provide tents "that are in beautiful condition and do not destroy the beauty of the beach scenery" for operators in all five zones to use. The tents were described as "temporary", meaning they can be removed from the beach each day.

Patong Municipality is also currently in the process of asking operators to comply with the specified regulations regarding providing beach services in the five zones, the report said. *The Phuket News*

Soul of Asia is closing after many years in Phuket as the leading art gallery in Thailand. Everything has to go. Come and make an offer.

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The Phuket News

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High: +31°

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Wind 11 m/s

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Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

WED DECEMBER 14



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

THU DECEMBER 15



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

Americans arrested for overstay

Eakkapop Thongtub
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Immigration officers from Phang Nga have arrested two Americans, both in their 60s, for overstaying their permits to remain in the country, with one American facing deportation for overstaying more than two years..

Michael Scott Drannan was arrested at his home in Moo 2, Thung Maphrao, in Thai Mueang District, Phang Nga, last Sunday (Dec 4), police announced on Monday (Dec 5).

Mr Drannan had overstayed his permit to remain in the country by 745 days, officers said.

Mr Drannan had arrived in 2020 before the COVID-19 tourism shutdown. His most recent permit to stay expired on Nov 18, 2020, officers explained.

He lived at his home, growing vegetables on a 30-rai plot with a Thai lady leaving the house to buy essentials for him. He had not left his home for two years, officers explained.

Mr Drannan was aware that he had broken Immigration requirements by not applying for an extension to his permit to stay, officers said.

Mr Drannan was taken into custody and charged with overstaying in the country. The length of the overstay now meant he faced deportation, officers noted.



Michael Drannan, 63, had overstayed his permit to stay by 745 days, officers said. Photo: Phang Nga Immigration

The other American arrested, Roderick Eugene Williams, also 63 years old and also a resident of Moo 2, Thung Maphrao, Thai Mueang District, Phang Nga, was taken into custody at a rented room in Moo 7, Rawai, last Sunday, officers continued.

Mr Williams had arrived in Phuket on Dec 1. His most recent extension to his permit to stay granted him permission to stay in the country until Nov 26, 2022, officers noted.

As he was arrested on Dec 4, Mr Williams had overstayed by eight days, officers said.

Mr Williams was taken to Chalong Police Station and charged.

Of note, a long-term Phuket expat involved Mr Williams' case told *The*

Phuket News that the Chalong Police officers who placed Mr Williams under arrest, under direction from Phang Nga Immigration, were a little confused as to why Mr Williams was being arrested, considering he had overstayed only eight days.

The Phuket News was told that Chalong Police granted Mr Williams release on B20,000 bail so he could leave detention at the police station for dietary reasons.

At last report, Mr Williams was expected to hear his case in court on Tuesday (Dec 6).

The arrests of the two Americans followed Investigation officers from Phuket Immigration arresting a 55-year-

old Filipino man for overstaying his visa in Phuket by a total of 252 days.

Lito Lopez was arrested at his home in Soi Namtok Kathu around 3pm on Dec 2 during a raid under the direction of Immigration Region 6 Superintendent Pol Maj Gen Praphansak Prasarnsuk, who was joined by Phuket Immigration Investigation Inspector-General Lt Col Anirut Pattarawiwat and fellow officers.

Lt Col Anirut revealed that the authorities had investigated reports of foreigners who had overstayed their allocated visa duration and had thus committed illegal acts in the Kingdom under Section 38 of the Immigration Act 1979.

He and his team were tipped off as to the specific whereabouts of Mr Lopez, which led to them undertaking the arrest at his home.

Officers confirmed that the last registered entry into Thailand in Mr Lopez's passport was via the Andaman Immigration Checkpoint in Ranong Province on Mar 4, 2020 on a 90-day non-immigrant visa which allowed him to remain in the country until June 1.

Officers confirmed that the valid period of permission allowing Mr Lopez to remain in the country had expired and he was taken to Kathu Police Station to face charges before being deported back to his homeland.

Police probe illegal loggers at Panwa

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS are investigating complaints from residents at Cape Panwa regarding the illegal felling of mangrove trees in their neighbourhood.

Several complaints were made via social media channels which prompted Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew to send a special operations group to inspect the area in Wchit last Saturday (Dec 3).

The group, led by Akara Suwatikol from the Phuket Provincial Protection agency, discovered an area where many trees had been illegally removed.

Mr Akara was joined at the site at Tang Khen Bay by officers from the Phuket Mangrove Resource Management Center and the Forest Protection and Preservation Division, Royal Thai Police officers and the local village chief from Ban Laem Panwa who were tasked with investigating the residents' complaints further.

After questioning several local residents it was revealed that there was a group of three to four people who had been cutting down the trees around 5pm on Nov 26. The



Photo: PR Phuket

trees were predominantly a species of Samae Talay wood.

Statements from local residents and the village chief were taken by investigating officers from the Wchit Police in regards to the offenders profiles, and while no people were immediately identified, Governor Narong urged that the perpetrators be identified and brought to justice as soon as possible.

Officers also urged anyone who sees illegal logging activity to report it immediately to police so they can investigate the matter.

The Phuket News

Two killed as pickup hits two 'saleng' head-on

TWO PEOPLE HAVE DIED AFTER a Ford Ranger pickup slammed into the motorbikes with sidecars they were driving on the Muang Mai-Pa Khlok Rd last week.

Capt Kornphoomphot Pongpaiboon of the Thalang Police said officers were informed of the accident, in Moo 9, Thepkrasattri, at 1:49pm on Nov 30.

Police along with rescue workers from Pa Khlok Municipality and Phuket Kusoldharm Foundation arrived at the scene to find a grey Ford Ranger pickup truck with heavy damage to its front.

At the side of the road were two motorbikes with sidecars (saleng). One had been destroyed by the impact.

The driver of one of the saleng, Somyot Sawasdee, 55, a resident of Moo 9, Pa Klok, was dead at the scene

The driver of the other saleng, Anuwat Aramrakseri, had suffered critical injuries. Mr Anuwat was rushed to Thalang Hospital, but later pronounced dead.

The driver of the Ford Ranger pickup, Thotsawan Bunyanit, 33, a resident of Phuket Town, told police he was driving from Baan Muang Mai to Pa Klok when the accident happened.



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

He was heading downhill when he realised that two saleng were driving toward him side by side on his side of the road.

It appeared that one of the saleng was trying to overtake the other while both were driving up the hill on the wrong side of the road, Mr Thotsawan said.

By the time he realised what was happening he was unable to avoid the collision, Mr Thotsawan added.

Police seized all three vehicles as evidence.

At last report, officers were continuing their investigation, and noted that they would review the dashcam footage from the Ford Ranger before proceeding with any legal action.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Koh Siray targeted over deluge of trash

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Atthaphon Charoenchansa, Director-General of the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR), was in Phuket in person last week to see firsthand the volume of trash that has inundated a village near the Phuket Fishing Port area in Ratsada.

The area was estimated to have accumulated more than 100 tonnes of trash

The trash problem at the village – a recurring issue for more than 20 years – gained Mr Atthaphon's attention after a social media post highlighting the volume of trash to be dealt with gained national traction online.

Coinciding with Mr Atthaphon's visit on Dec 1, Ratsada Mayor Nakin Yosaengrat organised municipality workers to arrive in numbers to conduct a 'Big Cleaning Day' in Mr Atthaphon's presence.

Despite most of the trash evidently being washed up by the tide, Mr Atthaphon



Photo: PR Phuket

thought it prudent to speak to the villagers about keeping their village clean. Most of the villagers are migrant Myanmar workers, pointed out a report of the visit by the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket).

Ratsada Municipality used to collect garbage from the site, but much of the waste in the village is from people dumping trash into sea water, the report admitted.

Regardless, the report said

“successfully solving [the problem] depends on the awareness of the residents as well.”

“In the past, the residents were unaware that wherever you throw away the trash, it causes the amount of waste to increase rapidly. After this, if they don't help each other take care, the authorities will have to enforce the law,” the report said.

Ratsada Municipality will hire a private company to remove the trash from the village, the report added.

“The next phase of solving the problem is that there will be control over the residence of foreign workers, because they are living together in a densely confined area,” the report concluded.

The report made no mention of bringing the issue to the attention of port authorities regulating Phuket's commercial fishing fleet, which continually operates nearby on land and in the waters nearby, or other residents and commercial operations further upstream.



Screenshot: TikTok / aofpna

Pod of orcas spotted near Similan islands

A GROUP ON A FISHING trip off Koh Tachai north of the Similan Islands, north of Phuket, were treated to a natural spectacle last Sunday (Dec 4) as four killer whales, or orcas, approached the boat and played in the water.

Kriangkrai Wongchan, 35, a resident of Phang Nga's Thai Mueang District, explained that he was leading five people on a chartered fishing trip to the area when the orcas presented themselves.

The party were about eight kilometres off Koh Tachai, outside the Similan Islands National Park, when

the killer whales arrived.

The four killer whales, about three metres in length, kept swimming and diving around the boat, Mr Kriangkrai said.

Concerned for the killer whales' safety, the group stopped fishing and Mr Kriangkrai moved the boat out of the area and returned to shore.

Wanting to share the experience, he posted a video of the killer whales' antics on TikTok under the name “aofpna”. The video received more than 55,000 “hearts” accompanied by more than 900 comments.

The Phuket News

Landowners step up for new Kathu-Srisoonthorn road

A CONSORTIUM OF private land owners have submitted a request to the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) to develop a new road across private land between Kathu and Srisoonthorn for public use.

Nimit Ekwanich submitted the request to PPAO President Rewat Areerob on Nov 28.

The road starts in Moo 4, Kathu, located between two old tin mine ponds and accessed by Soi Kathu 4, and connects to Moo 3 and Moo 7 in Srisoonthorn, a distance of about six kilometers, Mr Nimit said.

People have been using the route for many years, but developing the route into a proper road would bring much benefit to the island, Mr Nimit added.

“The private sector wants to expand transportation routes by having a new road between Kathu and Srisoonthorn to solve traffic problems, which in Phuket is a big problem that affects tourism due to the low num-

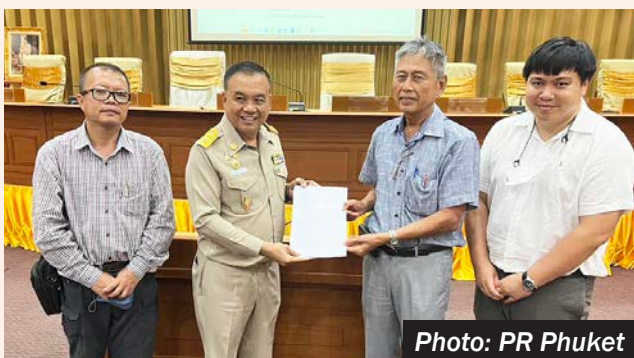


Photo: PR Phuket

ber of transportation routes,” he said.

“Land for construction of new roads is limited and expensive, while mobility and traffic safety are essential. For example, during the widespread floods in October, there were landslides and roads were cut off. People were unable to travel to other areas, resulting in significant damage to the provincial economy,” he added.

“Therefore, in order to prevent damage caused by natural disasters, it is appropriate to seek routes to connect all parts of the province as much as possible,” Mr Nimit said.

“Hoping to rely on such

projects from the state alone will not be able to achieve the results in the time that the people want due to insufficient state budgets, so a quick and feasible approach is that the private sector must be involved in supporting creating alternative routes as well,” he continued.

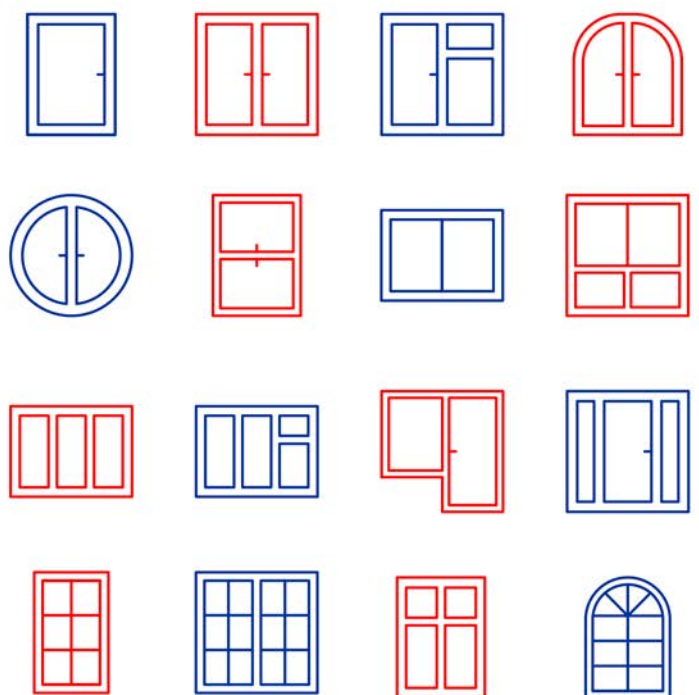
Mr Nimit's request asked for the PPAO to draft a Memorandum of Understanding under which the PPAO will manage the construction of the road.

The private sector, namely Sanguan Kulwanich, Kitti Saksaktawee and Nginao Ekwanich, will provide the land on which the road is to be built.

The Phuket News



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Phuket Expo bid moves forward

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Thailand has delivered its second presentation to the Bureau of International Exposition (BIE) in its bid to host the World Specialised Expo, branded under a campaign 'Phuket Expo 2028'.

The presentation was delivered at an event at Palais des congrès de Paris in France on Nov 28, with Phuket Youth Ambassador Ananda Lakkhana taking centre stage.

"Thailand reiterates its readiness to propose to host the Expo 2028 Phuket Thailand to BIE members," said an official report of the presentation, delivered to 170 countries during the event, which served as the 171st BIE General Assembly.

"Thailand has emphasised its readiness to bid as host of Thailand in all dimensions since the beginning. Confidence in the name of the Thai government was through a video presenting the Prime Minister's message, emphasising Thailand's readiness to become an international platform, ready to build cooperation to achieve



Phuket Youth Ambassador Ananda Lakkhana took centre stage at the Expo 2028 presentation bid in Paris on Nov 28. Photo: Phuket Info Center

the Sustainable Development Goals of Thailand and the United Nations (UNSDGs) in line with the BCG [Bio-Circular-Green economic] Model through holding Expo 2028 Phuket Thailand," the report said.

Wichawat Isaraphakdi, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and team leader of the bid, assured the BIE member countries that holding Phuket Expo 2028 would bring significant, concrete, benefits to the world community and "especially as a platform for change to create cooperation at the policy level and inspire the new generation."

The presentation empha-

sised to the BIE and member countries "Thailand's position in creating standardised indicators. quality of life living together in balance (Harmony Index) and driving the concept of sustainable care for the world through key campaigns, Planet Care Practice and Nature First Mindset, to lead consumption and sustainable production."

Also present was Chiruit Isarangkun Na Ayudhya, Director of the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB), a key proponent for Phuket hosting the Expo 2028.

Mr Chiruit emphasised the importance of holding the event under the concept

of "Future of Life: Living in Harmony, Sharing Prosperity", which reflects the policy and intention of the TCEB "by giving importance to issues that the world faces together in all dimensions, especially the issues of People, Planet and Prosperity, which are factors that will affect the creation of a sustainable future (Sustainable Living)."

Yossaphon Boonsom, a representative from the group of architects tasked with designing the main expo event area, presented how the event space was designed under the concept of "Flow of Nature", and to maintain as much green space as possible, "using

nature-friendly technology to develop the space."

The goal of the Specialized Expo is to be a Carbon Neutral Pilot Project, Mr Yossaphon said.

Phuket Youth Ambassador Ananda Lakkhana, 12 years old, was the youngest presenter at the event, representing the what officials called the "Future Generation", who "are aware of the problems of the world that arise and is represented in showing the power of the new generation to grow and ready to drive and build a global community together", said the report.

In closing, the official report of the presentation delivered the same blanket statement of confidence in Phuket's preparedness to host the event that is repeated with every report by state news agencies of the bid to host Expo 2028.

"Thailand believes that holding Expo 2028 Phuket Thailand in Phuket, which is a city ready to be a role model for sustainable living, will benefit all levels, emphasising. Thailand hosting this event will be the first time [the event would be held] in Southeast Asia and South Asia. It will

be a chance for participants to connect, with the dynamics of the region growing rapidly," the report said.

"And more importantly, if Thailand is chosen to host the Specialized Expo, Thailand will be a space for countries to present innovations driving society sustainably forward. It is a platform for cooperation and sharing between countries in all dimensions, especially the use of space after the event. to become a global health centre in accordance with the original development plan of the project and as approved by the Cabinet," the report concluded.

Not mentioned in the official report of the presentation was that Thailand stands to gain a B39.357 billion boost to its GDP by Phuket hosting the event, which is expected to create more than 110,000 jobs.

Further, the government expects a B9.512bn increase in income from tax collection due to the boost in economic activities the expo would bring, with TCEB Director Mr Chiruit earlier this year pointing out that the return on investment (ROI) on hosting the event was "as high as nine times".

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Nightclubs again seek extended opening hours

NIGHTCLUBS AND OTHER social venues are again asking the government to extend their opening hours until 4am, in a bid to boost business amid a recovering tourism sector.

The venues are currently required to close at 2am, but businesses in tourist hotspots expect extended hours to boost revenue by 20-30%.

Sanga Reuangwattanakun, President of the Khao San Road Business Association, said the request will be proposed by the Tourism and Sports minister at the Cabinet meeting this week.

He also said he agreed with the proposal to pilot the extension in certain zones, specifically Khao San Road, Soi Cowboy, and Soi Patpong in Bangkok. The new hours would also apply to Bangla walking street in Patong and other tourist hotspots in Krabi, Phang Nga, Samui and Pattaya.

Additionally, Mr Sanga said the measure would help



Image: NBT

facilitate efforts to tackle drunk driving, suggesting that checkpoints placed around these zones would encourage more people to take public transportation.

Similarly, the Patong Entertainment Association in Phuket has submitted formal requests to several agencies to extend operating hours, in order to better accommodate tourists in the area. It noted that the proposed hours will better meet the lifestyles of tourists from Europe, who usually

start visiting nightclubs at around 10-11pm.

The Thai Public Taxi Association meanwhile said it was willing to support and comply with the new regulation, as taxi drivers have been heavily affected by the pandemic. Many have adapted by refitting their cabins with partitions and serving patients during the pandemic, when the number of regular passengers was greatly diminished.

National News Bureau of Thailand

New driving licence point deductions from January

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

A points deduction system for traffic violations will begin on Jan 9 next year, with the loss of all points resulting in a 90-day suspension of drivers' licences, according to officials.

Every motorist will have 12 points to begin with but would gradually lose points for violating traffic rules or failing to pay traffic fines, national police chief Damrongsak Kittiprapas said last Thursday (Dec 1).

Violations that would cost points include breaking the speed limit, using a mobile phone while at the steering wheel, not wearing a motorcycle helmet, a parking ban violation, failure to let pedestrians walk on zebra crossings, and red-light jumping.

Running a red light or intentionally driving in the wrong direction – for example on a one-way street – will cause two points to be deducted, while illegal racing on a public street will lead to three points being cut.



The points deduction system will take effect for traffic violators starting from Jan 9, 2023. Photo: Apichart Jinakul

The maximum penalty of four points is tied to serious violations such as impaired driving.

Those who lose all their points will have their driving licences suspended for 90 days. If a driver's licence is suspended for a fourth time in three years, it could be terminated, Pol Gen Damrongsak said.

Chirute Visalachitra, Director-General of the Land Transport Department, said

points deductions were aimed at preventing motorists from repeating traffic violations and thus promoting road safety. The system would apply to all kinds of driving licences.

Deducted points would be automatically restored one year after being deducted, or when traffic violators have passed training sessions. The more hours one spends in training would mean more restored points, he said.

Motorists who have fewer

than six points or who have lost all their points can seek training, he said. They can join a maximum of two training sessions a year.

Meanwhile, Royal Thai Police spokesman Pol Maj Gen Achayon Kraithong confirmed on Monday (Dec 5) that police started issuing e-tickets for traffic violations in May this year using portable computers loaded with the Police Ticket Management (PTM) application.

With a portable computer, a traffic police officer can print out an e-ticket on seeing traffic law violations such as not wearing a safety helmet, using a mobile phone while driving and violating traffic signs.

An e-ticket contains information on the charge, the amount of the fine, the date and time of the traffic violation, the location, the vehicle's registration, the violator's driving licence, the name of the police officer who issues the ticket and his work unit.

The e-ticket also has a QR code for people to pay the fine via mobile banking and a QR code for them to check the ticket on a website.



Flood victims in Narathiwat. Photo: AFP

Flood victims to receive B6.6bn in relief aid

BANGKOK

THE CABINET HAS APPROVED a relief budget of B6.6 billion for more than a million families who are victims of this year's flood crisis.

Government spokesperson Anucha Burapachaisri said on Nov 29 that the fund would be disbursed to 1,046,460 families in Bangkok and 66 other provinces that were affected by floods during the rainy season from May 13 to Oct 28.

Mr Anucha explained the financial aid would be offered to families who meet one of three criteria.

First, they lived in a flooded area continuously for a period of one to seven days and their personal assets were damaged by the floodwater or their house and property were inundated for more than

seven days but not exceeding 30 days. These families will receive B5,000 each.

Second, families who lived in a flooded area for more than 30 consecutive days but not more than 60 days are each entitled to B7,000 in relief money.

Third, families who spend more than 60 consecutive days in a flooded area will be given B9,000.

Affected families must have documentary proof of residency in the flooded area and pass a background check by City Hall, their district office or the disaster committee in their respective districts if they live outside Bangkok.

The government will subsidise payment at the three levels and the relief aid would be a one-off payment remitted to the families' bank accounts from the Government Savings Bank. Bangkok Post

Three dead in repeat bombing at recent train derailment site

SONGKHLA

THREE RAILWAY WORKERS WERE killed and four colleagues injured when another bomb exploded on Tuesday morning (Dec 6) at the site of last Saturday's (Dec 3) railway bombing in Sadao district, officials said.

Local police were informed of the repeat explosion at 6:24am. It happened at the site where a freight train was derailed in the first attack, in tambon Tha Pho between Khlong Ngae and Padang Besar train stations.

Tuesday's impact killed three railway workers and slightly injured four colleagues while they were salvaging the damaged freight train. The bomb targeted a temporary salvage command post about 400 metres from Saturday's blast spot.

The slain workers were identified as Yingsak Chumtree, Phumphan Phetsuka and a Mr Nawarit. The injured were Nopadol Panma, Deeden Khongsom, Chatchai Nitchalanoont and Theerapong Nukhong.

The explosion came as the seven were collecting equipment, including gas cylinders, for the salvage operation.

The previous explosion badly damaged 20 of the freight train's cars, loaded with rubber sheets en route to Malaysia. Eleven of the 20 cars went off the tracks. The four train staff – two drivers, one technician and another staffer – were unhurt.



The aftermath of the first bomb. Photo: Assawin Pakkawan

The incident occurred as cargo train No.707 operating between Hat Yai and Padang Besar was approaching the Khlong Ngae railway station in village Moo 2 in tambon Tha Phor shortly after midday. The train derailed after a loud bang that sounded like a bomb blast occurred on the track.

A subsequent inspection of the scene by State Railway of Thailand officials and officers from security agencies found that the derailment was caused by a bomb blast, which left a crater about two metres deep. Authorities believed a home-made bomb was planted to target the train.

A number of powerful explosions have shaken the deep South in recent weeks, including the police flat explosion in Narathiwat province on Nov 22 and bomb attacks at petrol stations in Pattani province on Nov 16. Bangkok Post



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Sterilisation alone is not the cure

Anna Brown

Cooky Laksana, a veterinarian with the Rescue P.A.W.S. foundation located just south of Hua Hin, sterilises her 30th animal of the day. The same day, a local drops off an abandoned litter of puppies. “It can sometimes feel like an impossible task,” said Rescue P.A.W.S. Operations Manager Jacob Ivor Thomas.

The number of stray dogs in Thailand has significantly reduced over the past two decades due to mass sterilisation. However, according to the latest figures in 2018, there were still an estimated 750,000 dogs wandering the streets.

“It’s a multitude of reasons, and that’s why there isn’t one solution to the problem,” said Practice Manager Henna Pekko.

Many factors contribute to the overpopulation of stray animals in Thailand, including cultural differences, lack of government support and the overall education about pets, Ms Pekko said.

Rescue P.A.W.S. provides animal welfare through sterilisation. The organisation also looks after animals on the streets by providing food and medical care.

While the population of stray animals still remains large in Thailand, sterilisation has been effective in controlling the population. Locals have noticed fewer dogs on the streets over



Puppies for-sale sit in a cage at a market stand in the Chatuchak Weekend Market in Bangkok, the largest market in Thailand. Photo: Anna Brown

the past few years.

“I’ve had people who have been away for a year or two come back and say, ‘Wow, there’s so fewer dogs now, it’s amazing’. So it just shows there’s proof that what we do works,” said Rescue P.A.W.S. volunteer Ross Leslie.

However, Dr Sudson Sirivaidyapong, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Veterinary Science at Chulalongkorn University, notes that although sterilisation reduces the numbers, it cannot fix the overpopulation of stray dogs in Thailand.

There are three types of strays in Thailand: real strays with no owners or feeders; strays that are partially owned and fed by someone; and strays that are owned but roam free. It is culturally acceptable to allow pets to roam

freely in Thailand, but the relaxed pet ownership further contributes to the overpopulation of stray dogs, Dr Sudson explained.

This problem has led foundations and shelters across Thailand to tackle the issue, he added.

Dr Alicja Izydorczyk, Animal Welfare Director at Soi Dog Foundation, agrees. “Most owned dogs are actually free-roaming in Thailand, so they are adding to the problem of overpopulation,” she said.

Soi Dog Foundation, based in Phuket, works to improve animal welfare and end animal suffering in Thailand, and is well known for its central mission to sterilise and vaccinate animals under its Catch, Neuter, Vaccinate, Return programme (CNVR).

Soi Dog Foundation has CNVR mobile teams located in different areas of Thailand. Dr Izydorczyk said the team is able to sterilise 15,000 animals on average per month. The organisation has sterilised and vaccinated about 780,000 animals since 2003.

Although Dr Izydorczyk is mainly involved with the sterilisation program, she said CNVR is not the only approach to solving the overpopulation of stray dogs. “CNVR is helping us reduce the population, but if people keep on dumping dogs, as they do, you’re always kind of fighting against that tide of new dogs and they’re unsterilised dogs,” she said.

The culture and lack of education play major roles in the overpopulation of stray dogs, Dr Izydorczyk added. “It’s not like there are not enough vets in Thailand who are capable of spay and neuter... It’s more that there are so many dogs that people don’t spend money on, because they can’t afford it,” she said.

Many pet owners also do not want to pay to register their pets, Dr Sudson of Rescue P.A.W.S. noted.

The Thai Cabinet approved an amendment in 2018 that would have required pet owners to register their animals for B450. However, due to public outrage over the expenses pet registration would impose on Thai locals and rescue shelters, the law did not pass. There has been no further discourse from the Thai Cabinet regarding an updated proposal.

Dr Sudson believes that a pet registration programme is the best solution to controlling the stray population in Thailand. Registration through micro-chipping can benefit both the owner and the animal. “It’s not easy but if you don’t start, how can we solve this in the long run?” he said.

According to Dr Sudson’s research about the stray animal population in Thailand, people often are not sufficiently educated about pet ownership before getting a pet, which can lead to pet abandonment.

People don’t want to abandon animals, but they often do when they produce too many offspring, he said.

Meanwhile, market stands in Bangkok currently sell puppies and kittens with no adoption process or registration, allowing anyone to buy an animal at any time without any knowledge about pet ownership.

“In Thailand, we have a problem that people abandon their pet, because when they’re young, they look cute, so they like it,” Veterinarian Cooky said, agreeing that abandonment is a major reason why there is such an overpopulation of stray animals.

Dr Cooky has sterilised 60 dogs in one day before. Despite her expertise in sterilisation, she thinks education is one of the most important ways to prevent the overpopulation of stray animals. “Even if people don’t have much money, they can be educated,” she said.

Joley Neilan, English Teaching Coordinator at Rescue P.A.W.S., is tackling the education gap in the hope that attitudes can be changed. “I think it’s just a lack of education and having the wrong impression of why sterilisation is important,” she said.

The education team at Rescue P.A.W.S. visits schools in Thailand to teach children about pet ownership and safety around strays. “Just tackling each day as it comes with sterilisation and educating communities on the importance of vaccinations and sterilisations... I think it can really make a difference,” she said.

Dr Izydorczyk at Soi Dog said the Soi Dog Foundation is trying to expand their community outreach programme, which involves educating the public about responsible pet ownership.

There is an overpopulation of stray dogs and cats so long as the animals are seen as less valuable, she said. However, the problem is recognised only when the number of strays on the street rises. “Most people are very happy to have one or two or three dogs on the street, but not so happy to have 10,” she said.

While Soi Dog keeps animals that could not survive on the streets in its shelter, such as disabled or injured ones, the organisation returns the other animals to the streets after they have been sterilised and vaccinated.

“They’re always super happy to go back, and very often, there are people who are greeting them and happy to have them back as well,” Dr Izydorczyk said. “So the best thing that we can do is send them back home to their territories.”

While Soi Dog Foundation and Rescue P.A.W.S. hope to eventually have no homeless animals, their main goal is to reduce the population.

Dr Izydorczyk wants to make dogs seen as more valuable by the community; the relationship between humans and animals needs to be changed in Thailand, she said.

“If we change peoples’ minds and hearts and their attitudes toward the street dogs, then anything is possible,” she said.

Jazz festival back with a buzz



PHUKET MUSIC SCENE

Andy Tong Dee

Phuket's annual International Jazz festival used to take place every April outside Music Matters Jazz Bar in Chana Charoen Rd in Phuket Town until COVID struck. Started in 2012 by Filipino Jazz pianist Jeffery Sevilla, we saw Jazz musicians jetted in from the Philippines, Indonesia and even the far-off UK. Over a thousand Jazz lovers visited the festival in 2018 before it tragically had to stop as a result of the pandemic.

Born in Catarman on Samar Island in the Philippines, Jeffery first arrived here in 1996 and started off by scraping a living playing piano, living in a tiny attic in Chana Charoen Rd until he started Music Matters downstairs in 2000. I have happy memories of singing a little and learning to play Jazz drums there. Sadly, Music Matters did not survive the pandemic, and its popular Wednesday night Jazz jam is no more.

However, as Albert Einstein once wisely said, "In the midst of every crisis lies great opportunity," and Jeffery was not to be defeated. Jeffery moved the Jazz jam post-pandemic to Michelangelo's Bar in Takuapa Rd nearby. Held now on a Tuesday, it's better than ever and hosts what must be the best Jazz jam in Southern Thailand, but his



Blues and Soul live on stage at the Jazz Festival. Photo: Andy Tong Dee

dreams of relaunching the Jazz festival have been frustrated until now.

Jeffery originally chose KEP Restaurant near Chalong Pier, a cool seaside restaurant, for the festival's relaunch in a definite move up-market. However, the venue was changed to the Three Monkeys just before because of impending rain. While Jeffery somehow miraculously managed to keep the festival outside Music Matters free, post-pandemic finances meant it was necessary now to pay for entry. There is just not nearly so much money sloshing around Phuket as before COVID.

Happily, however, Jeffery had a lot of local talent to draw upon and his appeal for acts soon had 11 local bands involving over 40 musicians volunteering. Early acts on stage included The Naughty Band, young Tenly Mulder's Funky Band and Voodoo Daddy, with

Steve Gitz defining its raunchy sound with wonderfully gritty guitar.

Colin Hill sadly had to pull out because of band sickness, leaving Filipino Levi Aniversario to fill the 7pm slot with his all-Thai band, Blues and Soul. Perhaps the best male vocalist singing in English in Phuket, Levi provided a signature energetic performance, backed up with some fine saxophone from Thom Sax.

Next up was Jeffery Sevilla's own band, The Siam Band, with a small brass section and the solid bass of Filipino Dennis and wonderfully-fluid drumming of Serge Lamboley from France. Filipino Eric Soriano then played a short, soaring solo set with backing drum tracks and a multitude of guitar effects provided by his enormous pedal board, surely the largest on the island.

However, the band of the night just had to be Klaus Zimmermann's

Jazz-Roxx. I've watched their first performances at the Coconut Rawai's open mic nights, but this one confirmed my early opinion of them as Phuket's most exciting new and upcoming band. Klaus, Germany's answer to Joe Satriani or Steve Vai, played guitar, sometimes melodic, sometimes snarling, but always stunning. Not only that, he was backed up by two other first-rate soloists with Tom Nunan on sax and Ramil Media-Raw on keyboard. With rock solid bass and energetic drumming provided by Ukrainians Andrew Emilianov and Max Malyshev, this band could not fail to make an incendiary first major performance.

People by now were starting to leave for home, perhaps needing to take kids to school or go to work next day. It was left to Ramil Media-Raw's Islander Band and Irish Jazz singer Anita Williams to wind up a memorable evening.

I feel I should leave the last word to Jeffery who plans to hold a festival in April next year and maybe even again next November: "I'm so excited to be able to have the festival again, particularly as it now includes Blues. Jazz is a way of life for me, a part of my life, even a part of my personality."

So well done Jeffery – we're all looking forward to the next one next year!

Andy Tong Dee is a local expat, musician and live music enthusiast. You can find out more about Phuket's bands and venues at www.phuketmusicscene.com



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POP QUIZ

1. Most stars have planets – True or false?
2. Where was Elvis Presley born?
3. What was the first civilian supersonic plane in the world called?
4. What is generally considered to be the average human body temperature?
5. Which five countries share a border with Slovakia?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Easy

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

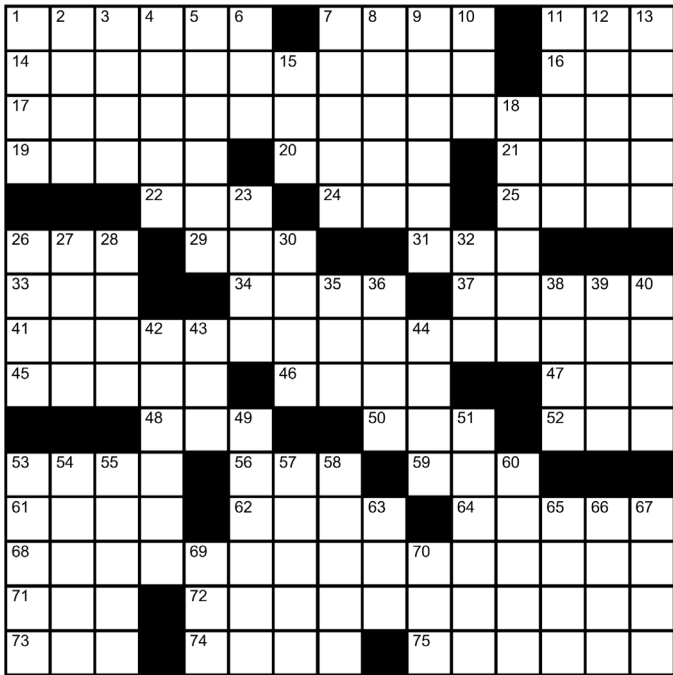
- Across

 1. Short-tailed lemurs
 7. Told all
 11. Pork place
 14. Parish dweller
 16. Not just any
 17. For surfers on the go
 19. Pen filler
 20. Sloth's home
 21. African flower
 22. Step follower
 24. Lapse
 25. Intelligence
 26. "The Office" network
 29. Soupçon
 31. Herd animal
 33. Neighbor of Ida.
 34. Teases
 37. Copper coins
 41. Family reunion fixtures
 45. Set right
 46. Break
 47. Education acronym
 48. Increase, with "up"
 50. Young sheep
 52. Cudjoe or Big Pine
 53. Puente ____
 56. "____ magic!"
 59. Quote from Homer
 61. Earth's crust
 62. Hack
- Down

 1. Pandora's boxful
 2. Ark builder
 3. Copy
 4. Marriage and others
 5. Certain crustacean
 6. Bit of a draft
 7. Sound asleep?
 8. Archer, at times
 9. Household linen
 10. Animal with curved horns
 11. Inscribed pillar
 12. Chuck
 13. Nods
 15. Make a scene?
 18. Blotto
 23. Buster
 26. Deli order
 27. Cup part
28. Transfer
 30. Pastoral cries
 32. Visa statement abbr.
 35. Clock standard: Abbr.
 36. ____-free
 38. Woods part
 39. Manitoba native
 40. Make out
 42. Sign up
 43. Online magazine
 44. Kind of page
 49. Prey
 51. More bloody
 53. English race place
 54. Jungle climber
 55. Small drum
 57. "____ Dreams" (Heart hit)
 58. Wise one
 60. Lacks, in brief
 63. A shot
 65. Dentist's request
 66. ____ War
 67. May event, for short
 69. Nigerian state
 70. Itinerary word

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) True (nearly all do); 2) Tupelo, Mississippi; 3) The Tupolev Tu-144; 4) 37.2°C; 5) Poland, Ukraine, Hungary, Austria, Czech Republic



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

1

in every 500 to 1,000 babies are born with an extra finger or toe.

25

percent of a male moose's energy in the summer months is expended growing antlers.

1,848

is the record amount of cups of tea made in one hour (by a team of 12 people).

200,000

US dollars a year is how much it costs Russia to preserve Lenin's body.

3

billion

cans of Play-Doh have been sold since its debut as a child's toy in 1956.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Magical Karon, early morning. Photo by Giulio Sterchele

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This week in history

December 9, 1979

The eradication of the smallpox virus is certified, making smallpox the first of only two diseases that have been driven to extinction (rinderpest in 2011 being the other).

December 10, 1932

After the Siamese revolution, Thailand transitions from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy with a prime minister as head of government.

December 11, 1934

Bill Wilson, co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, takes his last drink and enters detoxification treatment for the final time.

December 12, 2000

The United States Supreme Court releases its decision in Bush v. Gore, putting a stop to the vote recount in Florida and handing George W. Bush the 2000 presidential election.

December 13, 1972

Eugene Cernan and Harrison Schmitt begin the third and final "Moonwalk" of Apollo 17. To date, they are the last humans to set foot on the Moon.

December 14, 1941

World War II: Japan signs a treaty of alliance with Thailand. Shortly after, the Thai government declares war on the US and the UK.

December 15, 2001

The Leaning Tower of Pisa reopens after 11 years and US\$27 million spent to stabilise it without fixing its world-famous lean.

Source: Wikipedia



Photo: Arne Müsseler

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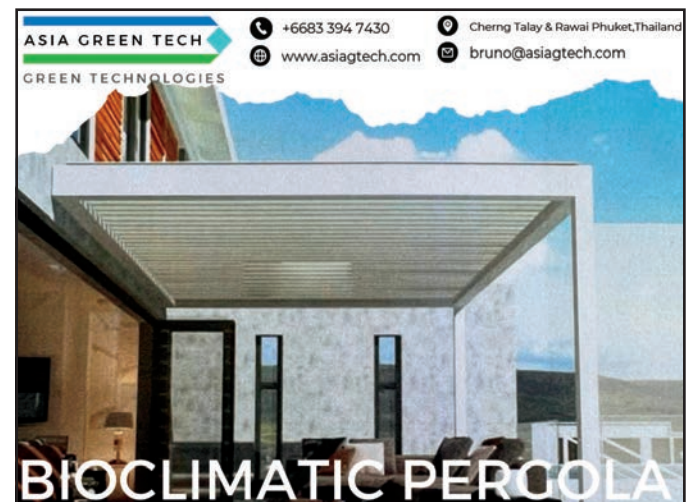
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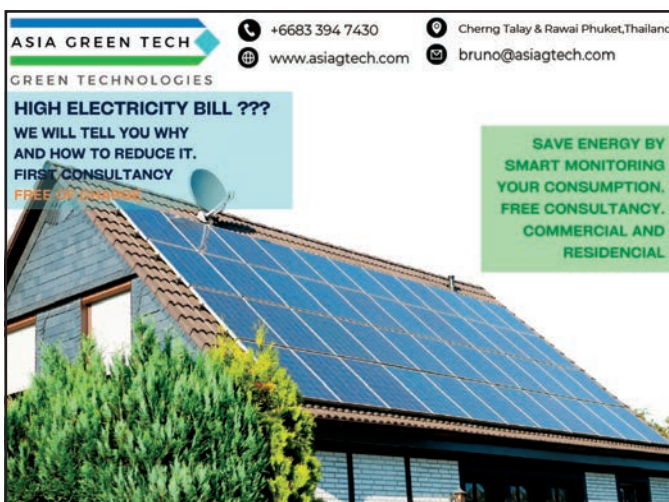
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KATA SEA BREEZE RESORT AWARDED ECO-FRIENDLY RESORT OF THE YEAR 2022

Kata Sea Breeze Resort, Kata Beach Phuket is very proud to announce that they received an 'Eco-Friendly Resort of the Year 2022' and that Matthew Hindmarch, who has headed AKSARA Collection for the past seven years, received the 'Hospitality Manager of the Year 2022' award from the 'Travel & Hospitality Awards' committee from the UK. Khun Supaporn Pattavoranee, Managing Director of AKSARA Collection SB, said, "We are honoured to receive these awards for the year 2022."

Travel & Hospitality awards is a global recognition programme for the travel industry recognising the very best hotels, tour operators, experience providers, spa & wellness facilities, restaurants, and technology and innovation companies. Travel awards are given based on the review of customer feedback alongside their own collected entry data. Nominees are then categorised and compared on a regional basis by an expert panel of judges.



GOMS DELIVERING SUPPORT

A delivery of food and assorted goods were donated to the Old People's Home at Pa Khlok on Wednesday, November 30 on behalf of GOMS (Grumpy Old Men's Society). Goods included were Ensure (food supplement), diaper pants, rice, canned fish, washing powder, assorted oils and cooking sauces, etc. It had been the first donation of goods for many years. Hopefully another donation in 2023 won't go astray. Many thanks to all the supporters of GOMS and the charities they support.



GROW BOATING PHUKET DECEMBER

Held at Phuket Boat Lagoon on Friday, December 2, with drinks sponsor for the evening being Paul Poole (South East Asia) Co., Ltd. - The Sponsorship Experts... an independent marketing consultancy based in Bangkok, Thailand, 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. There was a delicious finger food buffet sponsored by the Boardwalk Bistro for all attendees.



Sarit with his trophy. Photo: Paul Lakatos / Asian Tour

Supreme Sarit secures first Asian Tour title

GOLF

THAILAND'S SARIT SUWANNARUT secured his first Asian Tour golf title with a sweeping four-shot win at a weather-delayed BNI Indonesian Masters last Sunday (Dec 5).

The 24-year-old rising star bagged \$1.5 million (B52mn) in prize money after a last-round 68 at the Royale Jakarta Golf Club left him 20 under par and well clear of his rivals.

"I think I almost cried coming down the 18th," said Sarit.

"I can't put into words how I feel. So happy. I didn't feel the pressure that much, I was just enjoying my game. I have just enjoyed the whole week."

The tournament, which has become the flagship event of the Asian Tour, was delayed several times because of bad weather.

"It's been a really tough year. I had COVID at the start of the year, later I couldn't get a visa for Korea, and I was battling to keep my card at one point," said Sarit.

India's Anirban Lahiri, who won the tournament in 2014, finished second with a last-round 66 while Taiwan's Chan Shih-chang and Northern Ireland's Graeme McDowell both finished five back of Sarit to tie for third.

England's three-time champion Lee Westwood finished ninth after a round of 71. Defending champion Jazz Janewattananond from Thailand finished in joint 6th place.

The tournament has been part of the Asian tour since 2011 but was not held in the past two years because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bangkok Post

Kathu Half Marathon set to attract 2,500 runners

MARATHON

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

This coming Sunday (Dec 11) sees the 25th Kathu Half Marathon taking place with the chance to win prizes totaling more than B80,000.

Over 2,500 people from more than 15 countries are expected to participate in the various races over the course of the day, including a 2.5 kilometre health walk open to all ages, a 6km fun run, a 10km mini marathon and a 21km half marathon.

There are over 390 trophies up for grabs and an overall prize pot of B80,000. Additionally, the organisers announced there will be a special prize of B1,000 for any former winner of the race who can break his or her previous personal best record, plus prizes for the youngest and oldest winning runners and those participating in fancy dress.

The marathon was announced at a press conference held at at Limelight Avenue shopping center on Nov 22,



The press conference on Nov 22 announcing the race. Photo: PR Phuket

presided over by Kathu District Chief Siwat Rawarangkul.

Mr Siwat was joined by Kathu Mayor Chai-anan Suthikul, Kathu Police Chief Col Rungrit Ratanaphakdee, Phuket Tourism and Sports office Director Ratchadaporn Oin and the representative director of Vachira Phuket Hospital.

Mr Chai-anan said the marathon is a vitally important event as it allows the whole community to come

together while encouraging a healthier lifestyle for all. He also explained how the event was expected to help promote sports tourism and rejuvenise the local economy after the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, adding that the area was ready to host a number of events and festivals moving forward.

He further explained that Kathu is an area very suited to running competitions such as this weekend's half-marathon,

which he hopes will showcase the city as an appropriate venue to stage world-class level competitions in future which can attract world-class athletes.

Mr. Chai-anan also spoke about the "Kathu City Health Policy" which has seen the construction of running tracks and sports fields to encourage its residents to exercise and pursue a healthier lifestyle, pointing to Bang Wad Dam as just one example.

COVID cancels Chinese Grand Prix for fourth successive year

FORMULA ONE

F1 CHIEFS CANCELLED the China Grand Prix for a fourth straight year last Friday (Dec 2), citing continuing problems related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Formula 1 can confirm, following dialogue with the promoter and relevant authorities, that the 2023 Chinese Grand Prix will not take place due to the ongoing difficulties presented by the COVID-19 situation," read a statement on their website.

"Formula 1 is assessing alternative options to replace the slot on the 2023 calendar and will provide an update on this in due course."

The last time the race was staged in Shanghai was in 2019.

The decision came as cities across China further unwound COVID restrictions, loosening testing and quarantine rules in the wake of nationwide protests calling for an end to lockdowns and greater political



The last Grand Prix in China was in 2019. Photo: AFP

freedoms.

Anger over China's zero-COVID policy – which involves mass lockdowns, constant testing and quarantines even for people who are not infected – has sparked protests in major cities, including Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

Potential replacements are Portugal and Turkey

– though it will depend on financial factors.

Portugal hosted a Grand Prix at Portimao in 2020 and 2021. Istanbul Park last held a Grand Prix in 2021.

Even if China – which would have been the fourth race on the calendar – is not replaced, the campaign, at 23 rounds will be the longest ever. *AFP*

Jai Dee Regatta deemed a success despite challenging conditions

SAILING

EVEN WITH LESS-THAN-ideal wind conditions, this year's annual Jai Dee Regatta still made for a competitive and memorable sailing competition.

Organised by the Phuket Yacht Club (PYC), the three-day sailing event returned for the fourth year with Monohull and multihull yachts racing around Chalong Bay and the surrounding islands to the south of Phuket on Nov 26-28.

Although light breezes limited the amount of racing that could take place, the minimum required number were completed to meet this year's criteria.

On the first day of action the decision was made to call the racing off due to the lack of wind. Some built up tension from the participants resulted as the anticipated racing had to be abandoned.

Things picked up on Sunday as the competitors managed to get some wind in their sails and squeeze in two races, officially marking the start of the regatta competition.



Photo: Zerophuket.com

The third and final day of races took place on the Monday where, despite challenges from only a very slight breeze being present, entrants managed to finish one race before the winds died out.

"The competitors made the most of the occasion by enjoying the camaraderie along with good food and music back at the Phuket Yacht Club," commented Matt McGrath, PYC Race Director.

"Regardless of wind conditions, many old friends reunited and it was an occasion to celebrate," he added.

The multihulls saw some changes on the leader board,

keeping a healthy competitive spirit going, with James Haste's 'Bonza' securing a win on the final day.

However, this was not enough to overcome Dan Fiddock's 'Saffron' who had two 1st places on Race Day 2. George Edding's 'Blue Nose' secured 2nd place on Sunday, but had to settle for 3rd overall behind 'Bonza'.

In the monohull division Nils Dagenklow's 'Phoenix' overcame Torben Christiansen's 'Kinnon' to take the winning position after securing 3 wins across the 3 races, despite the challenging weather conditions. *Joanna Matlub*

All to play for as World Cup enters the business end

FOOTBALL

AFP

A brilliant double from Kylian Mbappe fired France into the World Cup quarter-finals last Sunday (Dec 4) as England romped past Senegal to set up a mouthwatering last-eight showdown with Les Bleus.

Paris Saint-Germain superstar Mbappe rifled home two blistering second-half strikes as France cruised to a 3-1 victory over Poland.

Veteran striker Olivier Giroud opened the scoring for the defending champions with his 52nd international goal to pass Thierry Henry as France's all-time leading scorer.

England turned on the style with a confident 3-0 victory over African champions Senegal, with goals from Jordan Henderson, Harry Kane and Bukayo Saka.

France and England will now face each other tomorrow (Dec 10) in a heavyweight quarter-final collision – only their third meeting at a World Cup tournament after previous encounters in 1966 and 1982.



Jude Bellingham (right) was once again the star of the show as England powered past Senegal to set up a quarter-final clash with France. Photo: AFP

France are bidding to become the first team to win successive World Cups since Brazil in 1958 and 1962 after winning Group D in Qatar.

With Mbappe in blistering form, few would bet against France completing their quest for a third World Cup crown to set alongside their titles in 1998 and 2018.

However, their route to the final now includes an increasingly confident England, who powered into the last eight with an impressive win.

Teenage midfielder Jude Bellingham, 19, was once again the star of the show for manager Gareth Southgate's side, producing another all-action display with an assist for Henderson's opener before a surging run to help set up a goal for Kane.

On Saturday Lionel Messi helped line up a quarter-final clash with the Netherlands with a goal and a classy performance in Argentina's unexpectedly nervy 2-1 win over Australia. Messi got Argentina roll-

ing on an emotional evening in front of massed ranks of boisterous fans with his 789th goal in his 1,000th career appearance, his first ever in a World Cup knockout tie.

The Netherlands were comfortable 3-1 winners against the USA on Saturday, with goals from Memphis Depay, Daley Blind and Denzel Dumfries. They play Argentina in their quarter-final this evening.

Croatia beat Japan on Monday as goalkeeper Dominik Livakovic saved three penalties in the shootout after the game ended 1-1.

Japan had already beaten European heavyweights Germany and Spain in Qatar and took the lead through Daizen Maeda before Ivan Perisic brought Croatia level in the 55th minute.

Croatia will face Brazil in the quarter-final after the Samba boys sent an ominous warning to their rivals with a 4-1 win over South Korea, with all their goals coming in a scintillating first-half display.

At time of press, the games between Spain and Morocco and Switzerland and Portugal had yet to be played.



Germany before the match against Japan. Photo: AFP

Wenger takes swipe at World Cup teams

FOOTBALL

ARSENE WENGER SAID last Sunday (Dec 4) that teams who focused on football rather than "political demonstrations" fared better in the opening round at the World Cup.

The former Arsenal manager is now working for FIFA as its head of global football development and made the remark unprompted during a press conference looking at trends during the now-concluded group stage in Qatar.

"When you go to a World Cup you know you must not lose the first game," said the 73-year-old, saying teams with World Cup experience such as holders France, Brazil and England won their opening matches.

Wenger then added: "And the teams as well who were mentally ready, who had the

mindset to focus on the competition and not on political demonstrations."

Germany's players covered their mouths for the team photo before their opening match against Japan on Nov 23 in protest at FIFA's refusal to allow the captains of seven European sides to wear rainbow-themed armbands.

The four-time champions lost the game 2-1 and eventually exited in the group stages.

This World Cup has been overshadowed by several controversies both on and off the pitch, especially when it comes to gay rights. Homosexuality is illegal in Qatar.

Germany captain Manuel Neuer was among the skipper who had planned to wear rainbow-themed armbands to promote diversity, but abandoned the initiative after FIFA threatened their teams with sporting sanctions. AFP

Fury forecasts 'biggest year of career' after defeating Chisora

BOXING

TYSON FURY SAID 2023 would be "the 'biggest year of my career'" as the Briton looks to unify boxing's fractured heavyweight division.

Fury, unbeaten as a professional, retained his WBC version of the title with a 10th round stoppage of Derek Chisora last Saturday (Dec 3) – the third time he has defeated his compatriot.

The 34-year-old Fury was in complete command from the opening bell, with large parts of the fight resembling a sparring session such was the dominance of the self-styled "Gypsy King".

Oleksandr Usyk, the holder of the IBF, WBA and WBO heavyweight titles, was among a crowd of nearly 60,000 on a bitterly cold night at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in north London.

"I'm ready and willing to take on Usyk whether it is in Saudi Arabia or back here in the United Kingdom," Fury told a post-fight



Fury (left) totally outclassed Chisora. Photo: AFP

press conference.

"Let's give the fans one champion, one name, one face. He's not an easy boxer to figure out, he's slick, a southpaw, moves well, coming in on good form and I look forward to the challenge."

"I want to fight real men, real challenges," said Fury. "In the heavyweight rankings you have number one, me, and then the next three – Usyk, [Joe] Joyce and Deontay Wilder."

Promoter Frank Warren added: "Both Usyk and Joyce are huge fights but the one I want to see for my satisfac-

tion is Usyk..."

"I want Tyson to get what he should be – recognised as the best heavyweight in the world."

But veteran US promoter Bob Arum, now working with Warren after being involved in some of heavyweight great Muhammad Ali's most celebrated bouts in the 1970s, had some words of warning for Fury as he referenced Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"Usyk is a Ukrainian and Ukrainians fight like no one else in the world, they are knocking the crap out of Russia," said Arum. AFP



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Quarter-final stage at World Cup > p15

THE SPECIAL RON

Kamala bowler bags hat-trick of successive championships

Ron (right) receives his trophy from tournament organiser Sammy with runner-up Aon (left). Photo: Robert Knight

BOWLS

Robert Knight

Ron Blackwood made history last Friday (Dec 2) when he became the first bowler to win three club tournaments in succession after he triumphed at the Kamala Lawn Bowls Club Championship.

Excitement and anticipation was high as a bumper field of 24 bowlers took part in the first "major" tournament of the year, with the lifting of COVID-related travel restrictions meaning many previously exiled bowlers returned to action.

For this competition a move was made away from the traditional out-of-the-hat draw and previous winners of competitions were seeded

as a trial. The seeds were selected on recent club form and success records in past major championships, a contentious decision that was questioned by some.

Four of the seeded players, Ron Blackwood, Glenn Collins, Ulf (Ue) Egerstaad and Dean Lambert, progressed to the quarter-finals, while Ulf "The Detective" Larsson, Carl Mesham, Dot Barker and current Phuket Open Champion Aon Sunnee knocked out the other four seeded players.

Two of the quarter-finals were one-sided affairs, with Ulf "The Detective" dispatching Glenn and Aon comprehensively outplaying Ue.

Tighter affairs occurred in the other two games, with Ron beating Dean 5-2 and Dot sneaking past Carl 7-6 after a

sudden death extra end.

This meant the only remaining seed in the semi-finals was two-time defending Club Champion Ron, with the other semi-final an all female affair between Aon and Dot, an impressive feat considering there were only five female players from the original total of 24.

Ulf went into his match against Ron short of competitive action and practice having only recently arrived back on the island and it showed as the latter ran out a comfortable winner 11-4 with one end to spare.

In the ladies match it was a tense affair going to the final end before Aon prevailed 7-5, with Dot also short of match practice having only recently returned to Phuket.

The final was now set be-

tween two reigning champions with perfect conditions as the green had sped up considerably in the heat – the jury was open as to who was favourite to emerge victorious.

Aon surged into an early 4-0 lead and it seemed the writing was on the wall for Ron although he then managed to score a maximum 4-pointer on end number 4 to take the lead.

As with quite a few bowlers throughout the tournament, Aon mistakenly failed to mitigate the damage on an opponent's end to a lesser count.

Ron took the next 3 ends to surge ahead 7-4 but Aon came storming back with a brilliant score of 3 meaning after 7 ends the score was level at 7-7, with all to play for.

It must be noted that Ron's

beverage count for the day was also on 7 although it was suspected the beverage in question wasn't a 7 Up!

He fought back with a 3-pointer on end 8 but with Aon scoring a point on end 9 heading into the final end it was 10-8 to Ron.

As the final end got underway thunder and lightning were seen and heard in the distance, leaving the watching crowd wondering if it were perhaps an omen and would Aon produce a storming finish.

However, it was not to be as Ron held his nerve and claimed the final end by 1 shot to emerge victorious with a final score of 11-8.

In doing so Ron became the first ever bowler to win any championship at the club three times in succession. A

new phrase was thus created as he declared it not a "three-peat" but a "three-Ron!"

Meanwhile, in the "Plate" competition for those who were eliminated in the first round, tournament organiser Ken "Sammy" Sampert beat Per Alhm 7-4, meaning a clean sweep of the trophies for Canada for the first time.

All in all it was a fine day of bowling played in a superbly sporting manner and it was great to be back out on the green again. Kudos to Sammy for organising and running the event.

Kamala Lawn Bowls Club is open six days a week. All equipment is provided and casual attire only is required. Private parties can be catered to. For more information contact the club on 095-2761587.

BISP Soccer 7s makes a successful comeback

FOOTBALL

WITH 97 TEAMS TAKING part in 361 games played across two days, in which 1,246 goals were scored with an average of 4 goals per game, we think it's safe to say the British International School, Phuket (BISP) Soccer 7s made a great comeback!

After three long years of waiting following cancellations brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the BISP Soccer 7s was back in full swing on the weekend Nov 25-26.

Teams from around the region gathered for two fully packed days of football. For many teams and players, this was their first experience with Soccer 7s and the reviews were highly positive, with many schools already planning their flights for next year's tournament.

The BISP community came together to show what it is capable of. Football, food, musical and aerial performances, and most importantly, laughter and joy filled the air. Add a sprinkle of rain and some mud and this tournament is definitely one that people will

remember.

With eight category trophies up for grabs the matches were heated with many going into penalty shootouts. At the end of the tournament, the following teams took home the trophies in their respective categories:

Boys Under 11: BISP Orange; Girls Under 11: Harrow International School, Bangkok; Boys Under 13: BISP Orange; Girls Under 13: Bangkok Patana School; Boys Under 15: BISP Orange; Girls Under 15: Dulwich College, Singapore; Boys Over 15: BISP Blue; Girls

Over 15: BISP Orange.

A huge congratulations to all the teams who took part and a sincere thank you to all the parents, volunteer coaches, BISP staff, local referees, vendors and enthusiastic spectators. An extra special thanks goes to all the dedicated players who took to the pitch this year and made the event so successful. Thank you also to the competition sponsors Angsana Laguna Phuket and Bumrungrad International Hospital for their support.

The full BISP Soccer 7s 2022 Tournament results and photos are



Back in action. Photo: BISP

available at the BISP website.

The BISP Soccer 7s is officially back and we are already looking forward to November 2023 for the next tournament (exact date yet to be confirmed). Muchanga Zebron