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# LIMIT LIFT



MNRE officers inspect a site in the hills. INSET: The 'cream'-coloured area is where building above 80 metres is now allowed. Photo/Image: MNRE Phuket

## PHUKET'S 80-METRE BUILDING RESTRICTION REPEALED

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A Cabinet resolution now allows construction above the 80-metre limit in Phuket, which is likely to see a surge in single-building development in the hills across the island, with a windfall for owners of land on high ground.

The Cabinet last month approved a rezoning proposal by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE), which now allows development in 'Zone 6' of Phuket up to 140m above sea level.

'Zone 6' covers all areas across the island except coastal areas, the protected hills of the Nakkerd Range and densely populated areas

such as Phuket Town. The rest of the island is now open to construction above 80m above sea level, but below 140m, with some further restrictions.

The Cabinet resolution was published in the *Government Gazette*, on Dec 13 (Volume 141, Special Section 342), and came into effect on Dec 14, 2024.

"The lifting of this restriction will have an immediate effect on projects that have undeveloped land located above 80m," Natthakrit Phonphet, Deputy Director of the MNRE Phuket office, told *The Phuket News*.

"The announcement replaces the one from 2017, which expired, so [the provisions] needed to be drafted and amended to be appropriately adapted to the present," he explained.

The lifting of the 80m limit follows years of public hearings along with discussions with the private sector, and landowners, Mr Natthakrit noted.

"Especially those who hold land title deeds that are on high ground, where they previously could not build," he said.

According to Rakkiat Deetphin, a police specialist at DPT Phuket, the main rationale behind allowing construction above 80m was "fairness".

"There are thousands of people who own plots in areas affected by the new provisions. These individuals pay taxes on their land, but while the law prohibited any construction they said their rights were being violated. They could own the land, but the state did not

allow them to build on or use it," he said.

"Compare Phuket to other provinces that do not have elevation restrictions on construction. Other than Phuket, only Koh Samui has a limit of no construction above 120m above sea level," he added.

### THE RULES

The new provisions include some restrictions, Mr Natthakrit noted.

For construction to be allowed, the title deed for the land must be issued before 2017, and only single structures may be built.

"The building must not exceed six metres in height and the building cannot cover more than 90 square metres of ground. Most importantly, 70% of the land plot...

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Four killed in accidents over New Year



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Ganesh temple brings blessings to Rawai Beach



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UFC legend Silva a big hit at local gym



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## News



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# Construction allowed up to 140m

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...must be left open [as a green space],” Mr Natthakrit also explained.

“It is not possible to cover the plot with construction; 70% of the open area must be planted with trees. At least half of it cannot be covered with concrete,” he added.

Even if all the basic requirements are met, not all areas will be approved for construction if it poses a risk of flood or landslide, Mr Natthakrit assured,

“Not everyone can build,” he said.

“Any construction must have an impact assessment by the Phuket Provincial Office of the Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning (DPT Phuket), whether the issue is about landslides or green space in the city,” Mr Natthakrit continued.

“The law clearly states that the construction must be a single building with a covered area not exceeding 90sqm and an empty space for green space. Also it must be a single structure. Buildings cannot be built next to each other, or as villas or resorts that are not single houses or single buildings. Those are prohibited,” Mr Natthakrit emphasised.



A site is cleared to make way for a new development on high ground. Photo: MNRE

## MARKET IMPACT

The value of properties above 80m is expected to rise significantly as they become eligible for new development opportunities, said Maetapong Upatising, President of the Phuket Real Estate Association (P-REA).

The market price has already been affected by the announcement. In Patong, land values are already reaching up to B150-200 million, while slightly out of town, values range from B6-8mn, depending on demand, Mr Maetapong said.

“I understand [the new provisions] well and I must say that the P-REA saw this draft before it was brought into effect,” Mr Maetapong told *The Phuket News*.

“The change also benefits luxury hotels and housing developments that own land in higher elevations. With the ability to expand and link their properties to existing infrastructure, developers can now explore more extensive projects,” he said.

“The new announcement not only increases the height from sea level, but also includes the environmental COP (Code of Practice) that determines what must be in place and how steep the slope is,” he added.

“Higher areas, like mountains, can now attract more interest. However, there are limitations on construction. Additionally, most titled land in these areas may face challenges when it comes to building a hotel,” he said.

For Mr Maetapong, the new provisions do provide sustainable urban development. The problem is developers who already do not follow the law, he said.

“For me, I still see it as a positive effect on sustainable urban development, but we do see worksites today that are not in accordance with the law, and these people [the developers] do not take much responsibility [for their actions],” he said.

“It is a job for local government and officials to have proper enforcement and maintain a balanced landscape,” Mr Maetapong said.

“Additionally, DPT Phuket regulations are being revised to align with this law, introducing factors like Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and Building Coverage Ratio (BCR) to ensure sustainable development in Phuket,” he noted.

## SAFETY

DPT Phuket Director Pakorn Waraphasakun told *The Phuket News* that safety was a key priority in determining whether construction will be allowed on a plot above 80m.

“Development on Phuket’s hillsides raises issues such as potential landslides, flooding and increased runoff, which could

have significant environmental impacts,” Mr Pakorn said.

“These risks need careful management to ensure sustainable development... Our role may be in terms of building construction and forest area care, and the height determination in other matters must be in accordance with the law,” he added.

“We know that many more houses will be built, but what is worrying is the potential for disasters. In reality, the risk will definitely increase,” he said.

“I can only recommend that every new house built includes slope protection. Some people may feel that it is expensive, but it is for long-term protection,” Mr Pakorn said.

## CAUTION

Kongsak Koophongsakorn, President of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce, declined to comment on the new provisions. Instead, Mr Kongsak announced a seminar titled ‘Unlocking 80-Meter Development Height: Crisis or Opportunity?’ to be held at the Royal Phuket City Hotel on Jan 23.

Leading Phuket figures have previously warned against allowing rampant development that risks deforestation of Phuket’s hills.

## Facebook shuts down Patong Police reports

THE OFFICIAL FACEBOOK page of the Patong Police was temporarily suspended last Friday (Jan 3) after Facebook deemed that the posts being made violated “Community Standards”.

The administrator of the page, Khun Pae, told *The Phuket News* on Monday (Jan 6) that he had been informed that the suspension would be for five days.

He expected the page to be back online by Tuesday or Wednesday (Jan 7-8).

“We just update cases we handle every day as usual, but when I opened the page on Friday, they said our content violates rights,” Khun Pae said.

The suspension was enacted as Facebook deemed that the content published violated rights and included violent content.



Patong Police Station. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub / file

Most recently Patong Police have been posting a continual stream of reports confirming how many people had been caught and fined for drunk driving in Patong – thus highlighting a key safety initiative being taken seriously by Patong Police officers.

“The page will be reactivated soon, and we will continue to provide updates on the same page,” Khun Pae assured.

Of note, *The Phuket News* last year repeatedly experienced the same issues with posts being removed from Facebook. One post was removed because it was marked as spam, simply because it linked to a story by *The Phuket News* about visa-free travel to Thailand.

Natnaree  
Likidwatanasakun

## ‘Stressed’ elephant kills Spanish tourist

A 22-YEAR-OLD SPANISH tourist died after being attacked by an elephant she was bathing on Koh Yao Yai, east of Phuket, last Friday (Jan 3).

Blanca Ojanguren García was washing the animal at the Koh Yao Elephant Care Centre on Koh Yao Yai when it sank its tusk in her, later leading to her death.

Experts told the *Clarín* newspaper that the elephant had likely become stressed due to the pressure of living and interacting with tourists outside its ecosystem.

Washing elephants and bathing with them are popular activities for tourists in Thailand.

The Department of National Parks estimates that more than 4,000 wild elephants live in its sanctuaries, parks and nature reserves and there are a similar number of domesticated elephants,



Blanca Ojanguren García. Photo: Federación Hípica de Castilla y León

which are mostly used in tourist shows.

The World Animal Protection organisation estimates there are 2,798 elephants held in tourism venues across the country.

The non-profit has previously warned the animals are often kept in isolation, and made to perform tricks and activities that are unnatural.

The group has also said so-called ‘trainers’ often use cruel, punishment-based training, including hitting them with sticks or sharp metal objects.

Initial reports cited a staff member saying that Ms

García was bathing the elephant when she passed in front of the animal and it “stuck a tusk in her”, causing her injuries.

Later reports said she was struck by the elephant’s trunk, with one reader of *The Phuket News* pointing out that none of the elephants at the sanctuary had tusks.

Ms García was from Valladolid in northwest Spain and had been studying law and international relations at the University of Navarra, where she was a member of the security and defence club.

Ms García was living in Taiwan on the Erasmus academic exchange programme and had visited Thailand as a tourist.

She was at the elephant sanctuary with her boyfriend, an infantry cadet from Oviedo, who was present at the time of the attack. *Bangkok Post*



# New Year road accidents kill four

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According to Phuket officials, the official 10-day road and marine safety campaign for New Year 2025 concluded at midnight last Sunday night (Jan 5) with Phuket suffering four deaths and 71 people admitted to hospital for injuries sustained in 74 accidents across the island during the 10 days.

The tally was reported on Monday (Jan 6) at the final meeting of the 'Road and Marine Accident Prevention and Reduction Operation Centre' at the Phuket Provincial Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Office (DDPM Phuket).

Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat chaired the meeting. Also present were DDPM Phuket Chief Sapon Thongsai; Pol Col Jirasak Siemsak, Deputy Commander of the Provincial Police; and Suphalak Damrongchuea, Deputy Director of the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO).

According to the report, the final 24-hour period of the campaign last Sunday (Jan 5) saw two accidents in Muang Phuket District with two people injured, one accident in Kathu District (which includes Patong and



Photo: PR Phuket

Kamala) with one person injured, and one accident in Thalang District with one person injured.

The four deaths were tallied in a separate area of the DDPM report posted separately online, marking one road death each on Dec 27, Dec 28, Dec 30 and Jan 4.

Of importance, the tally presented on Monday with the concluding report of the campaign finally agreed with the death count reported by other agencies, including national road safety agency ThaiRSC.

However, as of Monday ThaiRSC reported 269 people injured in road accidents in Thalang District since the start of the year, with a further 123 people injured in Muang District and 103 people injured Kathu – giving a total of 504 people injured in road accidents in

Phuket since Jan 1.

In comparison, Phuket officials overseeing the safety campaign instead reported just 71 people injured since Dec 27.

Of note, DDPM Phuket generated the report presented to the 'Road and Marine Accident Prevention and Reduction Operation Centre' each day during the campaign, and the final tally for the 10 days presented today.

However, throughout the campaign DDPM Phuket at the same time also reported more accurate figures as reported by ThaiRSC in DDPM Phuket's own separate, standard daily report publicly posted online.

No reason for the discrepancies between DDPM Phuket's own two reports over the 10 days has been provided.

According to the final report

for the 10-day campaign, one person died and 12 were injured in Thalang District, one person died and 17 were injured in Kathu District while two people died in road accidents and 42 people were injured in Muang District (which includes Wichit, Chalong, Karon, Kata and Rawai).

The final report for the campaign marked that of the 71 people injured during the 10 days, 51 were Thais and nine were Myanmar nationals.

Three Russians and two US nationals were admitted to hospital for injuries sustained in road accidents during the same 10 days, with one citizen each from China, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, France and Ireland.

The DDPM Phuket reports throughout, and after, the campaign have not given any details of the circumstances of the accidents involving foreigners, or reported their current medical condition.

Governor Sophon on Monday continued the policy statements regarding "enhanced safety measures" rolled out for the campaign, including:

**Traffic Control:** Checkpoints and traffic monitors targeted violations, including speeding, drunk driving, and failure to use safety equipment.

**Travel Safety:** Officials

facilitated smooth traffic flow and monitored bus stations to ensure safe travel for residents and tourists.

**Vehicle and Driver Checks:** Public transportation drivers were required to adhere to set working hours, while vehicles were inspected for safety compliance.

**Capacity Planning:** Additional buses and service vehicles were deployed to meet heightened travel demands.

**Public Awareness:** Drivers were urged to prepare their vehicles, monitor travel conditions, and rest adequately before driving.

Governor Sophon underscored the critical role of collaboration in reducing accidents.

"Reducing accidents does not depend on any one agency, but it is something that everyone must seriously and continuously cooperate with to create true road safety," he stated.

He urged government agencies and the public to reflect on lessons from this year's efforts to enhance future measures, aiming for safer travel for residents and tourists alike.

With four deaths already recorded in for first six days of the year, Phuket is already on track to least match the 145 deaths resulting from road accidents throughout 2024.

## Three candidates contest PPAO presidential election

JUST THREE CANDIDATES have registered to contest the position of President of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) in the election to be held on Feb 1.

Orapin Achiwasuk, Director of the Phuket Provincial Office of the Election Commission of Thailand (ECT Phuket), announced details of the candidates at a PPAO offices in Phuket Town on Jan 4.

Joining her were a host of officials, including Akkrawat Sirithanthanakorn, Director of the PPAO Election Commission.

Former PPAO President Rewat Areerob, 58, a resident of Moo 2, Rawai, representing the Phuket Yatdai Party, has been assigned No 1 on the ballot, Ms Orapin confirmed.

Lertsak Leenanitikul, 48, a resident of Moo 4, Koh Kaew, representing the People's Party (formerly the



The three PPAO Presidential candidates, from left: Lertsak Leenanitikul, Rewat Areerob and Srithep Udomlap. Photos: ECT Phuket

Move Forward Party), has been assigned No 2 on the ballot.

Srithep Udomlap, 48, a resident of Moo 5, Kathu, is the third candidate, registered as representing the Thai Pakdee party.

The announcement saw the public posting of the applications of all candidates to contest seats in the PPAO election, to be held on the same day as elections for all other Provincial Administrative Organisations (PAOs) across the country on Feb 1.

The applications posted constituted the finalised list of eligible

candidates who will run for the election, Mr Akkrawat confirmed.

In accordance with election law in Thailand, there will be a 24-ban on the sale of alcohol throughout the country for the election.

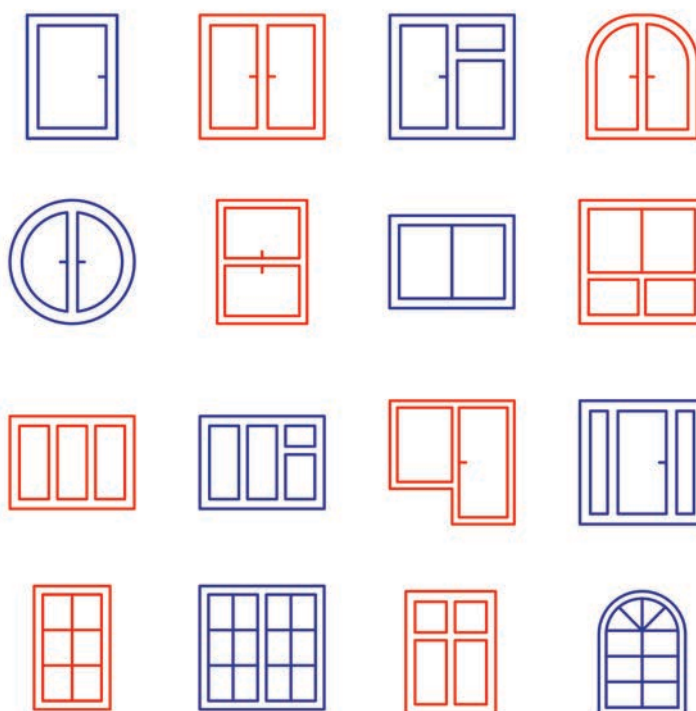
The ban will be in effect from 6pm the day before the election (Friday, Jan 31) through to 6pm the day of the election (Saturday, Feb 1).

The ban applies to all people in the country. Those caught violating the ban can face a fine of up to B10,000 or even up to six months in jail, or both.

The Phuket News



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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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Wind 11 m/s

SAT JANUARY 11

High: +36°  
Low: +28°

Wind 11 m/s

SUN JANUARY 12

High: +35°  
Low: +28°

Wind 11 m/s

MON JANUARY 13

High: +35°  
Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

TUE JANUARY 14

High: +35°  
Low: +28°

Wind 4 m/s

WED JANUARY 15

High: +37°  
Low: +28°

Wind 4 m/s

THU JANUARY 16

High: +36°  
Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

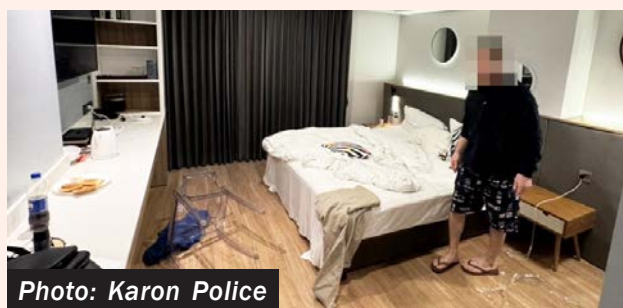


Photo: Karon Police

## Russian tourist reports violent hotel room robbery

A RUSSIAN TOURIST has reported a violent robbery at a hotel in Karon late last Sunday night (Jan 5).

Pol Lt Col ML Sanya Suksawat, Deputy Chief of Investigation at Karon Police, confirmed that officers received a report at 3:22am Monday (Jan 6).

The victim, 31-year-old Russian tourist Zelimkhan Iusupov told police that earlier in the night, at about 11pm, an unidentified foreign man forced his way into his room at the hotel, located near the Kata Night Market.

According to Mr Iusupov, the assailant physically assaulted and threatened him before tying him up.

The attacker then made a phone call, connecting Mr Iusupov to

another foreign man. During the call, the second individual allegedly demanded US\$20,000 in cash, threatening to kill Mr Iusupov if he did not comply.

Fearing for his life, Mr Iusupov indicated to the intruder that the money was in his bag. The assailant then searched the room, taking an estimated US\$700 in cash before fleeing the scene.

After the assailant had left, Mr Iusupov managed to free himself and reported the crime to the police.

At last report police were investigating the incident and working to identify the suspect.

Authorities have urged anyone with information about the case to come forward to assist in the ongoing investigation.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Violent attack on women spurs fury

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A man has gone to social media to appeal for justice after a brutal assault on his girlfriend and his mother in Srisoonthorn. CCTV footage of the incident, which occurred around 3am on Dec 26, was released to the media by a family member seeking accountability.

According to Mr A (name withheld), 27, the ordeal began when his mother and his girlfriend, Ms Bow (name withheld), 29, returned home from a local restaurant. Outside the residence, five men were drinking beer and began shouting insults. When Mr A's mother confronted them, the group turned violent.

The men attacked the mother, punching her in the head and slamming her to the ground until she lost consciousness.

The violence did not stop there. When Ms Bow tried to intervene, pleading with the attackers, one of the men, described as wearing a blue shirt, struck her in the face multiple

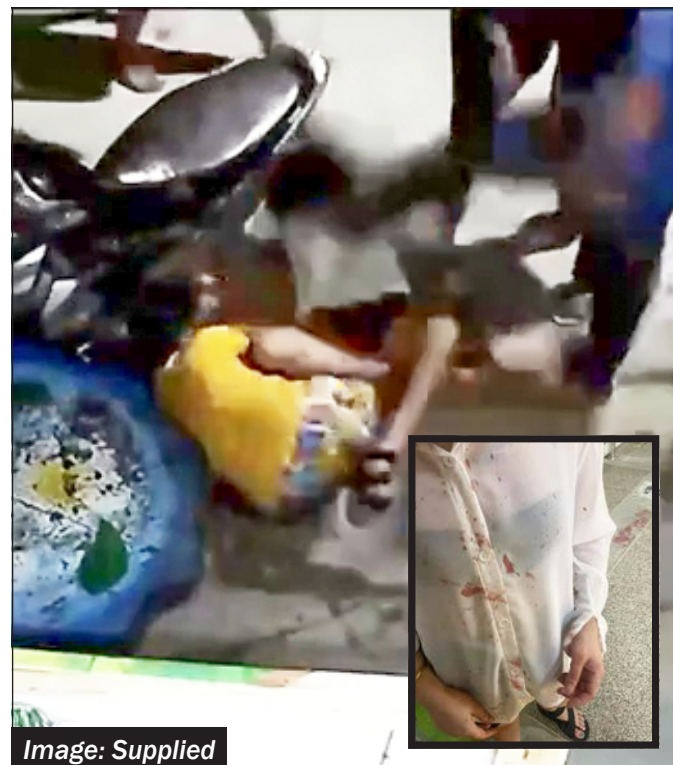


Image: Supplied

times. When she fell to the ground he then kicked full in the face with force, leaving her severely injured.

Neighbours who heard the commotion rushed to the scene, helping the victims and transporting them to Thalang Hospital. Mr A's mother sustained a head injury and remains shaken but conscious. Ms Bow suffered multiple bruises to

her face, knees and head.

A police complaint was filed at Thalang Police Station, but the family has not been informed of any progress in the investigation or any arrests made.

The lack of swift action has sparked outrage, with Mr A calling for justice through the media. "This kind of violence, especially against women, cannot be tolerated," he stated.

## Body of foreign tourist found floating off Patong Beach

POLICE WERE LEFT investigating the death of a foreign tourist whose body was found off Patong Beach on Jan 3.

Patong Police were called to the scene, near Dolphin Square, at about 10am.

According to the initial report by police, Traiphop Buakhai, operating a parasail speedboat, was the first to spot the body floating face down in the water. He immediately notified lifeguards, who brought the deceased to shore.

The body of the tourist, whose identity has not yet been disclosed, was taken to hospital for medical examination, police reported.

At last report, officers were conducting further investigations to determine the circumstances



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

leading to the death, initially reported as a drowning.

In their brief report, Patong Police commended lifeguards and police patrol units for their prompt response.

Meanwhile, police urged tourists to remain cautious while engaging in water activities and to heed safety advisories.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Man found hanged at Rawai Beach

THE BODY OF A 22-YEAR-old man originally from Ubon Ratchathani Province was discovered hanged from a tree on the Rawai beachfront early on Jan 2.

Chalong Police were notified of the discovery by a concerned citizen at 7:07am.

Pol Lt Col Khanaen Samrak of the Chalong Police soon arrived, joined by rescue workers from Rawai Municipality and the Phuket Kusoldharm Foundation, and a forensic doctor from Vachira Phuket Hospital.

The body was identified as that of Jakkaphat Sooksil, 22, from Det Udom District in Ubon Ratchathani. His identity was confirmed through his Thai ID card found in a bag nearby.

According to police, Mr Jakkaphat had been residing at a housing estate in Chalong, where he lived with relatives. He was employed as the caretaker of a Thai massage shop in Rawai.



Photo: Chalong Police

The circumstances surrounding Mr Jakkaphat's death are currently under investigation. Police have yet to confirm whether foul play is suspected.

If you or anyone you know is in need of emotional support and counselling, please contact the Samaritans of Thailand at their hotline 02-1136789 (English & Thai) or the Thai Mental Health Hotline at 1323 (Thai). Eakkapop Thongtub



# Lucky prizes drawn at 'Good Things' fair

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Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat led the lucky prize draw at the 'Phuket Good Things' fair at Saphan Hin on Monday night (Jan 6), with the top prize being a brand-new Toyota Fortuner.

Thousands gathered for the annual event, with many hoping their tickets had the winning numbers in the annual draw, which helps to raise funds for local community projects carried out by the Phuket branch of the Red Cross Society of Thailand.

The winning numbers and prizes were:

1<sup>st</sup> Prize: Toyota Fortuner – Ticket number 41027

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize: Honda City SV – Ticket number 31666

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize: Two Honda PCX motorcycles – Ticket numbers 14682 and 73850

4<sup>th</sup> Prize: Three Samsung Galaxy S24 phones – Ticket numbers 27353, 43919, and 42263

5<sup>th</sup> Prize: Seven iPads – Ticket numbers 43632, 14319, 59611, 48469, 19600, 81348, and 27840

6<sup>th</sup> Prize: 80 rice cookers for tickets ending in the last three digits '466'

Winners of the 2025 Phuket Red



Photo: PR Phuket

Cross Charity Lottery can claim their prizes from Jan 7 to Feb 20. Prizes can be collected at the Phuket Red Cross Office, located at 38/34 Rattanakosin 200 Years Rd in Phuket Town. Office hours are Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm, excluding public holidays. Winners with further inquiries were advised to contact the office at 076-211766.

Meanwhile, the 'Good Things' fair was unlucky for some. Phuket City Police arrested a woman for selling fake lottery tickets at the fair last week.

Kritporn Butlo, 45, was apprehended by police at around 12:30am on Jan 2 near the fair's central stage area.

Officers found her in possession of nine fake government lottery tickets,

B1,540 in cash believed to be proceeds from the sale of the counterfeit tickets, and a shoulder bag used to carry the tickets.

Police charged Ms Kritporn with using or claiming forged official documents, citing the fake lottery tickets as evidence of the crime.

She was taken to the Phuket City Police Station for questioning and to face charges, Phuket City Police confirmed.

Regardless, the 'Phuket Good Things' fair has become a beloved tradition, drawing locals and tourists alike to celebrate and contribute to the island's well-being. This year's event continued to showcase the strong community spirit that makes Phuket such a special place.

## Phuket starts New Year with blessings

LEADING PHUKET officials ushered in the New Year with a traditional alms-giving ceremony on Jan 1. Held in front of the Phuket branch of the Government Savings Bank on Phang Nga Rd in Phuket Town, the event drew senior officials, local government leaders and residents from across the province.

The ceremony began at 6am with offerings of food to monks, followed by a Buddhist ritual and dry food alms-giving from the people. Presiding over the event was Phuket Vice Governor Samawit Suphanphai, joined by Phra Khru Wisutkitiya-phon, Abbot of Wat Kitti Sangkharam (Wat Kata) and Advisor to the Sangha Chief of Phuket Province.

In his New Year's address, Vice Governor Samawit emphasised the importance of unity and love among the people of Phuket. He expressed his commitment to driving the province toward greater prosperity and extended heartfelt wishes for happiness and success in the year ahead.



Photo: PR Phuket

Phuket Town Mayor Saroj Angkanapilas also addressed the crowd, extending his blessings and reaffirming the municipality's dedication to improving residents' quality of life.

"Phuket City Municipality will continue striving to make our city a creative hub, blending our unique culture with technological advancements," he said.

The event highlighted the collective spirit and aspirations of the people of Phuket, who are determined to make the province an even more livable and prosperous community in 2025, said an official report of the event.

The Phuket News

## Ao Po Pier inspection to boost marine safety

PHUKET VICE GOVERNOR RONNARONG Tipsiri led an inspection at Ao Po Pier in Pa Khlok on Jan 2 as part of the campaign to boost marine safety and bolster tourist confidence during the bustling New Year.

Accompanied by officials from government and private sectors, Vice Governor Ronnarong reviewed safety measures and progress in developing the pier into a 'Smart Pier' with advanced services and management systems.

The initiative, overseen by the Phuket Marine Office and Phuket Patcharee Tour Co Ltd includes integrating data across agencies and leveraging customer analytics to improve operations. The pier now offers a One-Stop Service system, streamlining processes for both tourists and operators.

During the inspection, the team assessed the readiness of the pier's facilities, including boats at the pier, safety equipment such as fire extinguishers and radio communication systems. Vice Governor Ronnarong stressed the importance of adhering to stringent safety protocols, especially during the New Year festival, a peak travel season.

"The safety of our waterways is paramount, particularly as we welcome more tourists during this festive period. Maintaining high safety standards and




Photo: PR Phuket

quality services will solidify Phuket's reputation as a world-class tourist destination," Mr Ronnarong said.


The inspection received strong cooperation from operators, with many foreign tourists using the pier to visit popular destinations such as Phang Nga Bay and nearby islands.

In addition to basic safety measures, Chaian Rapuephon, Managing Director of Phuket Patcharee Tour Co Ltd, provided updates on the water airport project near Ao Po Pier. Currently undergoing environmental impact assessments and flight route planning, the project aims to establish a seaplane route at Koh Naka. Once completed, it is expected to further promote marine tourism in the region. *The Phuket News*



PHUKET'S QUALITY TILE BOUTIQUE

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## Brics welcomes Thailand as newest partner nation

THAILAND HAS BECOME a partner country of Brics starting on Jan 1, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).

The government was informed of the news by Russia, this year's chair of the economic bloc.

Brics, a bloc of nine major emerging economies, comprises: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, Egypt and Ethiopia.

Recently, the bloc accepted 13 'partners': Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam and Indonesia, all in south-east Asia; along with Algeria, Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Turkey, Uganda and Uzbekistan.

"Thailand's partnership with Brics builds on its longstanding cooperation with the group, which began in 2017 when Thailand joined the Brics Plus mechanism. This partnership offers significant opportunities to strengthen economic ties with Brics member countries — emerging markets and developing countries with high growth potential," according to an MFA statement.



Narendra Modi, Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping at the Brics summit in Kazan, on Oct. 23. Photo: AFP

Key areas of collaboration include trade, investment, and tourism. In addition, the partnership fosters people-to-people ties between Thailand and other Brics members and partners.

Thailand has also expressed its readiness to serve as a bridge builder between Brics and other regional groupings, such as Asean, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Asia Cooperation Dialogue, and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation, the MFA said.

Previously, Foreign Affairs Minister Maris Sangiampongsa has said that Thailand expects to become a full Brics member sometime in the future.

*Bangkok Post*

# Economic growth target faces risks

*Bangkok Post*

Growth in Thailand's tourism and export sectors, together with government investments, will likely help spur the economy this year, according to the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC). However, whether or not the country can achieve 3% GDP growth this year, a goal set by the government, still remains to be seen, it says.

As of Dec 29 last year, Thailand had welcomed 35 million international tourists, which is very close to the government's 2024 target, NESDC Secretary-General Danucha Pichayan said.

When compared with figures from 2023, international tourists spent slightly more in 2024, he added.

For this year, the government is aiming to attract even more visitors to



Danucha Pichayan, secretary-general of Thailand's National Economic and Social Development Council. Photo: NESDC

Thailand, he said. New measures to improve passenger convenience at airports nationwide should help further support growth in the tourism sector.

Growth in the tourism sector this year will only be slightly higher than that of last year, he said. The country's actual tourism situation is very close to that before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Expected growth in exports along with more government investments

this year will likely help contribute to the overall economic growth rate as well, he said.

Asked if the government's 3% growth target will likely be achieved, Mr Danucha said that the government based this target on the country's capacity, and there are still several risk factors, particularly from outside the country.

These negative factors, especially ones concerning

the international trade situation, will be constantly monitored so the government knows how they would impact the country, he said.

Asked about the implementation of the third phase of the government's digital wallet handout, Mr Danucha said he couldn't say much about the scheme, adding that the permanent secretary for finance should have more information on the matter.

## Foreigners keen on Phuket's range of luxury options

PHUKET'S LUXURY PROPERTY market is soaring to unprecedented heights, emerging as a top trend for 2025. The surge started in 2022 and reached new peaks last year, showing no signs of slowing, report key developers.

Pasu Liptapanlop, executive director of SET-listed developer Proud Real Estate, said the Phuket property market, particularly the upper-end segment, remains very robust, with demand continuing to grow.

"Supply is substantial and so is demand," he said. "Around 60-70% of buyers are from overseas, including Russia, Israel and the Middle East, while 30-40% are local buyers, comprising residents from Bangkok and expats in Phuket."

Fuelled by an influx of foreign buyers, particularly Russians, the island's blend of tropical climate, upscale lifestyle and lucrative investment opportunities continues to drive demand, according to developers.

Developers said for many Russians, Phuket represents a safe haven and an escape from conflict in Russia, offering both a secure investment and a tranquil retreat amidst global turbulence.

Developers on the island believe it can rival global luxury hubs such as Miami and Dubai based on its exceptional value and distinct cultural charm that captivates discerning buyers.

Luxury properties on Phuket are primarily clustered along the west coast, where proximity to international schools, world-class medical facilities, luxury retail



The exterior view of Banyan Tree Vaya Phuket. Phuket's luxury property market is skyrocketing and shows no signs of slowing. Photo: Kiattipong Panchee / Bangkok Post

outlets and private marinas enhances their appeal.

Phuket's property market has repeatedly shattered records in recent years, with the villa segment emerging as a standout performer.

Buyers are drawn to Phuket for a variety of reasons. Sophisticated young professionals seek modern living spaces that promise both luxury and attractive rental yields.

Families, especially expatriates, are captivated by the island's safe and upscale environment, complete with essential amenities.

For wealthy individuals, Phuket serves as both a personal sanctuary and a legacy investment, offering stable returns in a dynamic market, according to developers.

Popular locations such as Bang Tao and Cherng Talay remain top choices for their vibrant communities and beachside amenities. *Bangkok Post*

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# Calls for new path to peace in Deep South

## BANGKOK

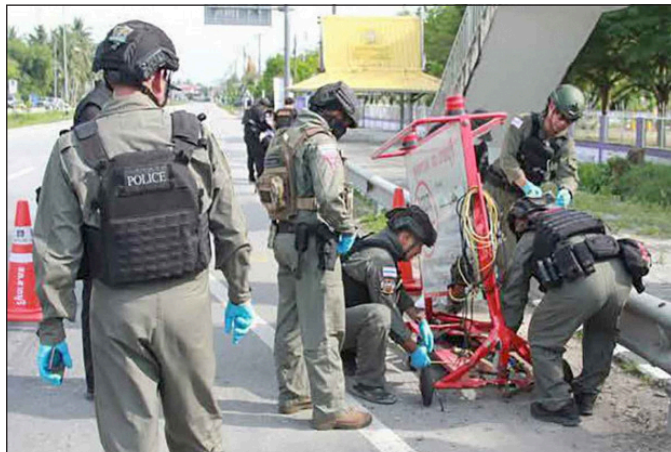
Bangkok Post

Deputy Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai has called for a thorough review of strategies aimed at resolving the decades-long insurgency in the deep South.

Chairing the Emergency Situation Administration Committee's first meeting of 2025 on Monday (Jan 6), Mr Phumtham, who is also the defence minister, announced the decision to lift the state of emergency in Yaha district of Yala province, reducing the number of districts under the law from 33 to 17.

However, he questioned whether the Thai government is on the right path to achieving peace in the region and urged a reassessment of the approach as the conflict has yet to ease despite having lasted for over 20 years.

Mr Phumtham directed relevant agencies to come



Bomb experts examine a police checkpoint after it was bombed in Tambon Troh Bon of Sai Buri district, Pattani, last Friday (Jan 3). Photo: Bangkok Post

up with actionable solutions within a month, emphasising that only when clear strategies are adopted will the new head of Thailand's peace talk team be appointed.

He expressed optimism about Malaysia's involvement in the peace process, saying that former Thai prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who is now the adviser on ASEAN affairs to Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, is expected to play a significant

role in fostering collaboration.

"Thaksin's presence could help bring stability to the Thai-Malaysian border and promote economic development in the region," Mr Phumtham said on Monday.

Mr Phumtham also acknowledged ongoing difficulties, including scepticism from locals in the region. He emphasised the importance of winning public trust, saying, "If we focus on what benefits the

majority, people will welcome our efforts."

The peace process is further complicated by disagreements over the framework for negotiations. While a Joint Comprehensive Plan Towards Peace (JCPP) was initially agreed upon, subsequent opposition from the BRN has stalled progress.

Mr Phumtham stressed the importance of engaging credible representatives from all sides in discussion and praised Malaysia's appointment of Datuk Mohd Rabin Bin Basir as the facilitator for talks between Thailand and the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN), the main separatist group.

Mr Mohd Rabin has shown flexibility and determination to produce meaningful outcomes, according to Thai negotiators.

Thailand has yet to select a new negotiation team due to the recency of Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra's appointment, Mr Phumtham concluded.

## Holiday death toll hits 436 on nation's roads

### BANGKOK

A TOTAL OF 436 people died and a further 2,376 were injured in 2,467 traffic accidents across Thailand from Dec 27 to Jan 5, the 10-day period the government considered the high-risk New Year holiday travel period.

Deputy Interior Minister Songsak Thongsri said that the number of traffic accidents and injured people was lower than in the same period last year, but fatalities rose.

The southern province of Surat Thani recorded the highest number of accidents, 89, and of injured, 100. Bangkok had the most fatalities, 26. Samut Songkhram, Trat and Yala were free of road fatalities during the period.

On the final day of the campaign alone (Sunday, Jan 5) there were 139 traffic accidents, 128 injured people and 29 deaths on roads across



Photo: Bangkok Post

the country. Speeding was the most common cause, Mr Songsak said, while motorcycles were involved in 83% of the accidents.

Suriya Singhakamol, director-general of the Probation Department, said that during the ten days, courts presided over 7,306 cases of drink-driving, 342 cases of drug-abusing drivers, four cases of reckless driving and two speeding cases, with the offenders put on probation.

Bangkok had the most drink-driving cases, 605, followed by 441 in Chiang Mai and 395 in Nonthaburi, he said.

Electronic monitoring devices were attached to 41 drink-drivers and three motorists who took drugs, he added. Bangkok Post

## Schools to determine student hairstyles after regulation change

### BANGKOK

THAILAND'S MINISTRY OF EDUCATION has revoked the regulation concerning hairstyles for students in public schools, a government official has confirmed.

Each school may now set its own hairstyle policies as deemed appropriate, explained Ministry of Education spokesman Siripong Angkasakulkiat last Saturday (Jan 4).

Mr Siripong said that the revocation was announced in the Royal Gazette last year and schools nationwide have been sent written declarations of the decision.

The letters emphasised the need to gather opinions from individuals, including teachers, students and parents and to seek approval from the school board or school management committee before setting clear hairstyle guidelines, Mr Siripong explained.

"The ministry reiterates the 2020 regulation on student hairstyles was officially revoked on Jan 16, last year," he said.

"Therefore, ear-length hairstyles or three-sided shaved hairstyles will no longer be considered standard student hairstyles.

"There are no longer any stipulations regarding the length or style of students' hair. Decisions on hairstyles and dress codes should depend on each school," he added.

Schools are encouraged to provide platforms for students to discuss the best solutions in a constructive manner, Mr Siripong said.



High school students show a petition they forwarded to the Administrative Court in 2020 seeking to scrap the regulation that authorises schools to set their own rules regarding students' hairstyles. Photo: Bangkok Post

He further explained that Education Minister Permpoon Chidchob is focusing on students' rights, particularly in providing support and advice on student welfare through the Semapithak Centre, where officials work to modify student behaviour through various measures.

There is no restriction on their freedom at the centre, he said, adding the measures aim to promote proper behaviour, granting students freedom within a framework that prevents harm to themselves or leads to societal impacts.

The ministry believes all schools have rules to ensure harmonious coexistence.

Despite differing opinions, policies should provide students with opportunities, maintain respect and reduce bullying, Mr Siripong said.

"Discipline is important, but it must go hand in hand with human rights," he said.

Bangkok Post

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**The Phuket News**  
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**Jan 14: 10:00-15:00** – Muang  
Thalang School



**Jan 31: 10:00-15:00** – Thavorn Palm  
Beach Resort, Karon

- Ensure you are in good health.
- Get enough sleep the night before.

| <div>  <div> <b>หน่วยบริการโรคไต วันที่ 18-31 มกราคม 2568</b><br/> <b>ในจังหวัดภูเก็ต แห่งๆ และกรณี</b> </div> </div> |                  |  |  |
|--|------------------|--|--|
| วันที่   | เวลา             | สถานที่  |  |
| ๑ 18 ม.ค. 68   | 14.00 - 18.00 น. | ศูนย์การแพทย์โรคไต สาธารณสุข (หน้า) โรงพยาบาล ๑.ภูเก็ต |  |
| ๑ 20 ม.ค. 68   | 09.30 - 13.00 น. | โรงพยาบาลศูนย์และโรงพยาบาล (หน้า) โรงพยาบาล ๑.ภูเก็ต   |  |
| ๑ 21 ม.ค. 68   | 10.00 - 15.00 น. | ศูนย์การแพทย์โรคไต สาธารณสุข (หน้า) โรงพยาบาล ๑.ภูเก็ต |  |
|  | 12.00 - 18.00 น. | ศูนย์การแพทย์โรคไต สาธารณสุข (หน้า) โรงพยาบาล ๑.ภูเก็ต |  |
| ๒ 22 ม.ค. 68   | 09.00 - 12.00 น. | โรงพยาบาลศูนย์และโรงพยาบาล (หน้า) โรงพยาบาล ๑.ภูเก็ต   |  |
|  | 13.30 - 16.00 น. | โรงพยาบาลศูนย์และโรงพยาบาล (หน้า) โรงพยาบาล ๑.ภูเก็ต   |  |
| ๒ 23 ม.ค. 68   | 12.00 - 18.00 น. | ศูนย์การแพทย์โรคไต สาธารณสุข (หน้า) โรงพยาบาล ๑.ภูเก็ต |  |
|  | 11.00 - 15.00 น. | โรงพยาบาลศูนย์และโรงพยาบาล (หน้า) โรงพยาบาล ๑.ภูเก็ต   |  |
| ๓ 24 ม.ค. 68   | 09.00 - 12.00 น. | ศูนย์การแพทย์โรคไต สาธารณสุข (หน้า) โรงพยาบาล ๑.ภูเก็ต |  |
| ๓ 27 ม.ค. 68   | 09.30 - 13.00 น. | โรงพยาบาลศูนย์และโรงพยาบาล (หน้า) โรงพยาบาล ๑.ภูเก็ต   |  |
| ๓ 28 ม.ค. 68   | 12.00 - 18.00 น. | ศูนย์การแพทย์โรคไต สาธารณสุข (หน้า) โรงพยาบาล ๑.ภูเก็ต |  |
|  | 12.00 - 18.00 น. | ศูนย์การแพทย์โรคไต สาธารณสุข (หน้า) โรงพยาบาล ๑.ภูเก็ต |  |
| ๓ 29 ม.ค. 68   | 12.00 - 18.00 น. | ศูนย์การแพทย์โรคไต สาธารณสุข (หน้า) โรงพยาบาล ๑.ภูเก็ต |  |
|  | 12.00 - 18.00 น. | ศูนย์การแพทย์โรคไต สาธารณสุข (หน้า) โรงพยาบาล ๑.ภูเก็ต |  |
| ๓ 30 ม.ค. 68   | 09.30 - 13.00 น. | โรงพยาบาลศูนย์และโรงพยาบาล (หน้า) โรงพยาบาล ๑.ภูเก็ต   |  |
|  | 09.30 - 13.00 น. | โรงพยาบาลศูนย์และโรงพยาบาล (หน้า) โรงพยาบาล ๑.ภูเก็ต   |  |
| ๓ 31 ม.ค. 68   | 12.00 - 18.00 น. | ศูนย์การแพทย์โรคไต สาธารณสุข (หน้า) โรงพยาบาล ๑.ภูเก็ต |  |
|  | 12.00 - 18.00 น. | ศูนย์การแพทย์โรคไต สาธารณสุข (หน้า) โรงพยาบาล ๑.ภูเก็ต |  |

- No alcohol consumption 24 hours prior to donation.
- Have a healthy, low-fat meal at least three hours before donating.
- Do not donate blood while taking antibiotics to ensure good quality blood.
- Drink plenty of water before arriving to donate blood.

**When making a donation, people are advised:**

- Bring your ID card to verify your identity each time you donate.
- Complete the registration form upon arrival.
- Undergo a brief health check, including blood pressure and haemoglobin level assessment, and a short meeting with a doctor.
- The actual blood donation process takes less than 7 minutes.
- Enjoy a snack and rest for a few minutes post-donation.
- Drink 3-4 glasses of water.

People can also donate blood directly at the Phuket Regional Blood Centre, located at 38/193 Rattanakosin 200 Pi Rd in Talad Neua, Phuket Town.

**The centre is open:**

Monday, Wednesday, Friday – 8:30am  
to 4:30pm

Tuesday, Thursday – 8:30am to 8pm  
Saturday, Sunday, Public Holidays –

9am to 3pm

*For more information contact the PRBC:*

- Phone: 076-251178

- Mobile: 081-9588854

- Facebook: *Phuket Red Cross Blood Donation Center*

- LINE: @rdi1296r

*The Blood Bank on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the outpatient building at Vachira Phuket Hospital, on Yaowarat Rd in Phuket Town, is listed as “always open” For more information: Tel: 076-361234 ext 1287; or visit Facebook: ธนาคารเลือด รพ. วชิรภูเก็ต (Vachira Phuket Hospital Blood Bank)*



# New beginnings in Rawai

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

As people across Phuket were readying for the New Year, Hindus on the island celebrated the grand opening of the Lord Shrimant Ganpati Bappa Davalai in Rawai, dedicated to Ganesha, one of the best-known and most worshipped deities in the Hindu pantheon. Ganesha, also spelled Ganesh, and also known as Ganapati, Vinayaka, Lambodara and Pillaiyar, is the Supreme God in the Ganapatya sect. His depictions are found throughout India. Hindu denominations worship him regardless of affiliations. Devotion to Ganesha is widely diffused and extends to Jains and Buddhists and beyond India.

The Lord Shrimant Ganpati Bappa Davalai temple, located near Rawai Park with the auspicious address 99, 9 Soi Rouyphad, Rawai, was bestowed its grand opening with a ceremony on Dec 28.

Devotees and notable invited guests, all dressed in traditional Hindu costume, followed as the Ganesha icon was carried down the narrow street and installed at the temple amid prayers and blessings.

The opening event was presided over by Papatsorn Meepa, Executive of Phuket Nine Co Ltd, and Wachira Permsuriya, chief administrator of the temple. Distinguished guests present for the occasion included Sunilji Rasane, President of the Shrimant Dagdushrth Halwai Ganpati Trust in Pune, India; Rahulji Maniklao Chavan, Managing Director of Suvanaya Bank, Pune; and Rajeshkumarji Sakla of the Siddhivinayak Network.

From Bangkok, notable attendees included Chuan Takaru, President of the Indian Association of Thailand, and his wife, Ms Worinporn; along with Somsong Sajjabhimuk, Vice President of the Indian Association of Thailand; Sutham Sajjabhimuk, former President

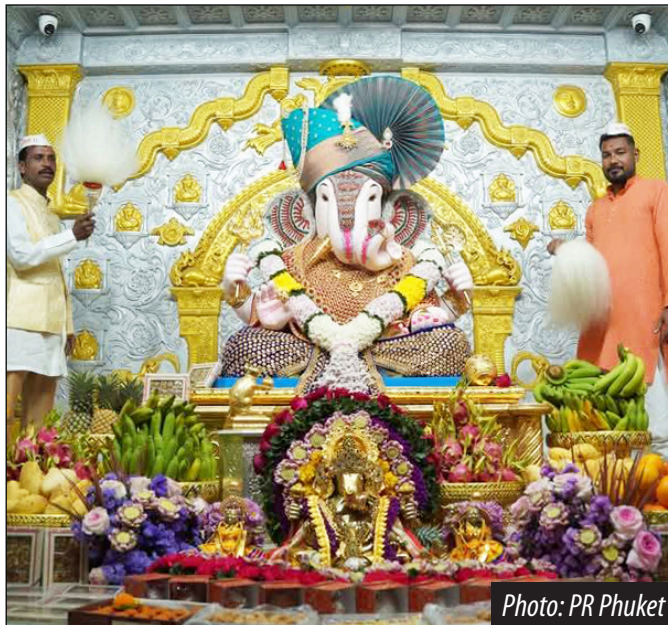


Photo: PR Phuket

of the Indian Chamber of Commerce in Thailand.

Also present were Rewat Areerob, former President of the Phuket Provincial Administration Organisation (PPAO) and Wirintra Paphakityotphat, head of the Tourism Council of Thailand (TCT) Region 11 branch, which represents Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi.

A highlight of the event was the Maha Aarti Fire Ceremony, led by an Indian Brahmin team, where devotees gathered to seek blessings from Lord Ganesha. Attendees also marveled at the temple's intricate design and sanctified idols, praying for prosperity and well-being.

The temple offers Indian-style Ganesha offerings for devotees, along with Indian clothing available for purchase, with all proceeds supporting charitable causes.

With its vibrant cultural significance, the Sri Manta Ganesh Temple promises to be a spiritual hub for both locals and visitors to Phuket. The temple is proclaimed to be the only such temple in Thailand, second only to the Dagadusheth Halwai Ganapati temple in Pune, India, a deeply revered temple visited by more than 100,000 pilgrims every year.

Devotees of the Dagadusheth temple include celebrities and chief ministers of Maharashtra who visit during the annual 10-day Ganeshotsav festival. The Dagadusheth temple celebrated 132 years of its Ganapati festival in 2024.

The Hindu festival Ganesh Chaturthi celebrates the birthday of Ganesha as the God of New Beginnings, the Remover of Obstacles and the God of Wisdom and Intelligence, and is observed in India and elsewhere throughout Asia, and around the world.

The festival falls between Aug 22 and Sept 20 every year, and is marked with the installation of Ganesha's 'murtis' (devotional representations of a deity) privately in homes and publicly on elaborate pandals (temporary stages).

Observances include chanting of Vedic hymns and Hindu texts, such as prayers and fasting. Offerings and prasada from the daily prayers are distributed from the pandal to the community, including traditional sweets such as modak as it is believed to be a favourite of Ganesha.

The festival ends on its 10<sup>th</sup> day, when the 'murti' is carried in a public procession with music and group chanting, then immersed in a nearby body of water such as a river or sea, called visarjana on the day of Ananta Chaturdashi.

The Lord Shrimant Ganpati Bappa Davalai is open for worship daily from 7am to 8pm. Visitors are reminded that there is to be no photography inside the temple and no shorts or black clothing are to be worn at the temple.



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POP QUIZ

1. What was the former name of New York?

2. Which country was formerly called Ceylon?

3. Which city was the capital of Australia from 1901 to 1927?

4. Which country sent its navy around the world to fight the Japanese in 1904?

5. Which household pet was domesticated by Indigenous people in South America more than 3,000 years ago as a source of food?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Medium

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across

1. Exertion

6. Breeze

10. Poker variety

14. Polytheistic religion

15. Sobriquet for Haydn

16. Alcoholic beverage

17. Doughy

18. Made immortal

20. He won "The Bet"

22. Feathered stole

23. Recessions of disease

24. Book collector's suffix

27. Fortune teller

31. Lord's home's keeper

34. Bye word

39. The boy next door?

41. "Silas Marner" author

42. Stretch of grass

43. Crop up

44. Choice word

45. Secretes

49. Crackerjack

52. One of Elaine's bosses
59. Grammatical cases

60. Began

61. Teen affliction

62. Tattered clothes

63. Drenches

64. Common flag symbol

65. Different

66. Artist Max
- Down

1. Booty

2. Hip

3. Cave sound

4. Bitter

5. Argentine dance

6. Designer demand

7. Cold war winner

8. Goons

9. To a degree

10. Golf event

11. Ornamental cup

12. Sight parts

13. Darth to Luke

19. Roll-call call

21. Top scout

24. Pinnacle

25. Clinch

26. Fungi features
28. German river

29. Zoroastrian

30. Impertinent ones

32. Even if, briefly

33. Down

34. "Got it!"

35. Racer Wheldon

36. OPEC member

37. Taro variety

38. Customer

40. Traction aid

43. Shoot for, with "to"

45. Give the heave-ho

46. Heavenly gift

47. Less friendly

48. "Sesame Street" watcher

50. Cut out

51. Blunder

53. Locket shape

54. Gamepieces

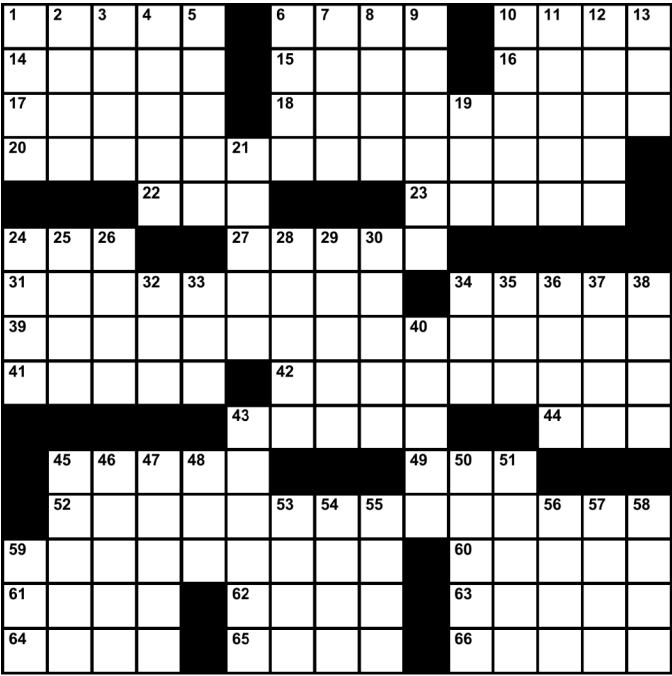
55. To be, to Brutus

56. Express regret

57. Grills

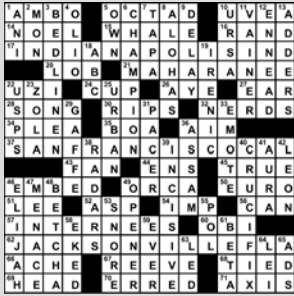
58. Cozy home

59. Driver's need



Visit: [www.ilovecrosswords.com](http://www.ilovecrosswords.com)

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) New Amsterdam; 2) Sri Lanka; 3) Melbourne; 4) Russia; 5) Guinea pigs (They are still a popular dish today.)

GOT YOUR NUMBER

6

times is how much more likely men are to be struck by lightning than women

10

dollars in your pocket and no debt makes you wealthier than 15% of American households.

45

years is how long a restaurant in Bangkok has been cooking and serving its "perpetual soup".

98

percent of the atoms in your body are replaced every year.

1,350

is roughly how many volcanoes are currently active around the world

940 million

kilometres (about 584mn miles) is how far the Earth travels to complete one orbit of the Sun in one year.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW

New Year erupts, seen from Kata Noi. Photo by Rick Nuffer

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

This week in history

**Jan 10, 49 BC**  
Julius Caesar crosses the Rubicon river, in northeastern Italy, just south of Ravenna, signalling the start of civil war.

**Jan 11, 532 AD**  
Nika riots in Constantinople: A quarrel between supporters ("fans") of different chariot teams – the Blues and the Greens – in the Hippodrome escalates into violence. Nearly half of Constantinople is burned or destroyed and tens of thousands of people are killed in one week of unrest.

**Jan 12, 1554**  
Bayinnaung, who would go on to assemble the largest empire in the history of Southeast Asia, is crowned King of Burma.

**Jan 13, 2018**  
A false emergency alert warning of an impending

**Emergency Alert**  
BALLISTIC MISSILE THREAT INBOUND TO HAWAII. SEEK IMMEDIATE SHELTER. THIS IS NOT A DRILL.

The Hawaii false missile alert in 2018.

missile strike in Hawaii causes widespread panic in the state.

**Jan 14, 1967**  
Counterculture 1960s: The Human Be-In takes place in San Francisco, California's

Golden Gate Park, launching the Summer of Love.

**Jan 15, 2001**  
Wikipedia, a free wiki content encyclopedia, goes online.

**Jan 16, 2003**  
The Space Shuttle Columbia takes off for mission STS-107 which would be its final one. Columbia disintegrated 16 days later on re-entry.

Source: Wikipedia



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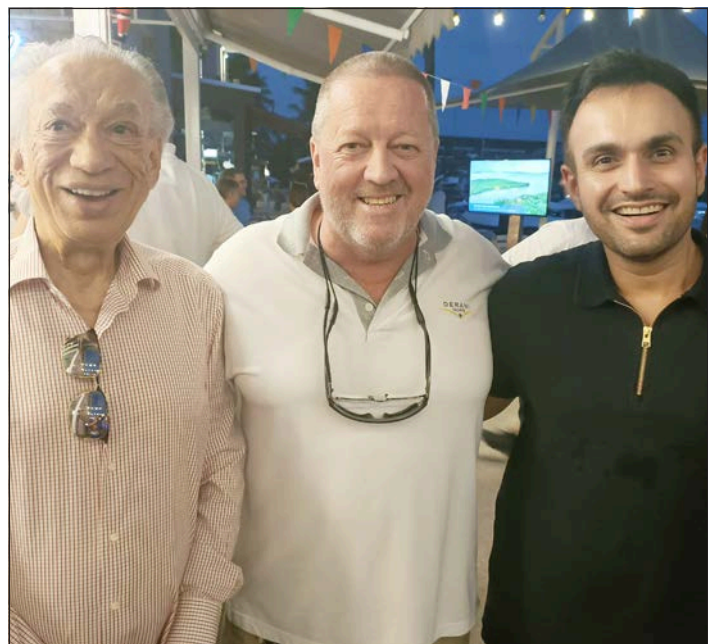
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## GROW BOATING EVENING - JANUARY 2025

The first Grow Boating Evening of this year was held at the Isola restaurant at the Royal Phuket Marina on Friday, Jan 3. Thanks to the drinks sponsor Drake Marine and to Isola Restaurant for providing a delicious buffet. Come and join in the fun next month and every month on the first Friday, everyone is welcome. More info at [www.facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket](https://www.facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket)



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January/February 2025 issue

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# The sporting year ahead

## ALL SPORTS

AFP

There may be no Olympics, Paralympics or World Cup in 2025 but the sporting calendar is still steeped in high quality tournaments. Here are five major events that are taking place in the year ahead:

### Club World Cup, United States, June 14 - July 13

Since its first edition in 2000, the Club World Cup has struggled to raise global interest, prompting FIFA to turn the 2025 edition into a 32-club football jamboree to be held in the US in June and July.

Critics cite player welfare and further fixture congestion while FIFA points to global expansion of the club game. Undoubtedly it will generate a significant amount of cash for the interested parties.

On the field, it may provide a last chance to see Inter Miami's Lionel Messi, 37, in a top club competition while holders Manchester City, Barcelona, five-time winners Real Madrid, Inter Milan and Bayern Munich lead Europe's 12-team charge.

### Women's Rugby World Cup, England, Aug 22 - Sept 27

When New Zealand edged



New Zealand will be looking to defend their title at the Womens' Rugby World Cup later this year. Photo: AFP

England 34-31 to win the 2021 edition, the Eden Park crowd numbered 42,579 – a new record for the women's game that marked its increasing popularity.

That was subsequently smashed when 58,498 rolled into Twickenham for England's Six Nations game against France in 2023 but that record is likely to tumble again when Twickenham hosts the 2025 World Cup final on Sept 27.

This 10<sup>th</sup> edition is the biggest

and most ambitious so far as it goes from 12 to 16 teams. At the end of it, New Zealand and England, who have contested the last two finals, will likely be the teams to beat once more.

Undoubtedly the global profile will be helped if the United States sevens star Ilona Maher does a reverse Antoine Dupont and books herself a place in the squad. With over 4 million social media followers, Maher is going to be one of the faces of

rugby for some years to come.

### World Athletics, Tokyo, Japan, Sept 13-21

Coming a year after the high of the Olympic Games there is always the danger that the World Athletics Championships will be a touch flat But the venue and the competition suggest the 2025 edition will be anything but.

Tokyo had the terrible misfortune to host the COVID Olympics, postponed to 2021, where the athletes competed in front of empty stands. This time the National Stadium should be rammed to enjoy the rivalries and talents that blossomed in Paris.

There will be plenty of eyes on Dutch marathon runner Sifan Hassan and Botswanan sprinter Letsile Tebogo, who were crowned as the World Athletes of the Year for 2024, but also for rising stars Sembo Almayew, the Ethiopian steeplechaser, and Italian triple-jumper Mattia Furlani.

### Ryder Cup, Farmingdale, USA, Sept 26-28

Anyone doubting the popularity of the biennial USA v Europe team golf event need only look at the speed with which the tickets, priced at US\$750 (B26,000) per day, sold out to realise the Ryder

Cup is still up there as one of the biggest sports events on the planet.

The Europeans won back the trophy at the last battle in Italy in 2023 but the Americans will be buoyed as always by a rumbustious home crowd at the Black Course at Bethpage State Park on Long Island, just outside New York City.

The US team may also be encouraged by the introduction of payments while Rory McIlroy says the Europeans would be glad to pay to play.

### The Ashes, Australia, Nov 21-Jan 8, 2026

A cricket rivalry which began in 1877 turns a new page with a five-Test series in Australia, including a day-night Test at the Gabba in Brisbane.

England haven't won Down Under since Andrew Strauss's team won 3-1 in 2010-11 since when they have played 15 Tests in Australia, losing 13 and drawing two.

So home advantage is definitely in favour of the Aussies but this will be the first sight of 'Bazball' in Australia and a defining moment for England captain Ben Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum and if Mark Wood and Jofra Archer are fit, it may be tighter for the Aussies than they expected.

## Nabati blasts 'crazy' ONE 170 shakeup

### MMA

KIAMRAN NABATI HAS blasted a "crazy" shakeup to ONE 170 which has seen him not just lose his fight but also be left out of the picture for a new ONE Championship interim title.

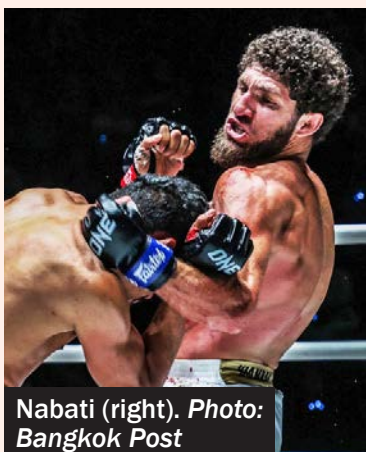
The 30-year-old Russian was originally booked to face Nabil Anane on Jan 24 at Impact Arena in Bangkok.

But a knee injury to bantamweight Muay Thai champ Superlek Kiatmoo9 sparked a massive reshuffle at the top of the card over the last 48 hours.

Superlek was set to defend his belt against Nico Carrillo, but the Scottish fighter will now face Nabil for an interim belt – with Nabati's status up in the air.

The winner will go on to face Superlek in a title unification match at ONE 172 in Japan on March 23.

The news – announced in a shock Instagram post by ONE – was shared by Nabati, accompanied by the caption "this is crazy".



Nabati (right). Photo: Bangkok Post

"I was 100 percent ready for this fight," the No 3-ranked Nabati added. "Moreover, I believe that I was the one who deserved to come on as a replacement. I am higher in the rankings than Nabil, I give the audience spectacular fights, I do not spare myself in the ring.

"If someone is ready to take the belt on short notice, it is me," he added.

Nabati could yet land a fight on the numbered event, with former title challenger Felipe Lobo announcing he has signed a bout agreement – with the dates aligning for ONE 170.

Bangkok Post

## UFC legend visits Phuket gym

### MMA

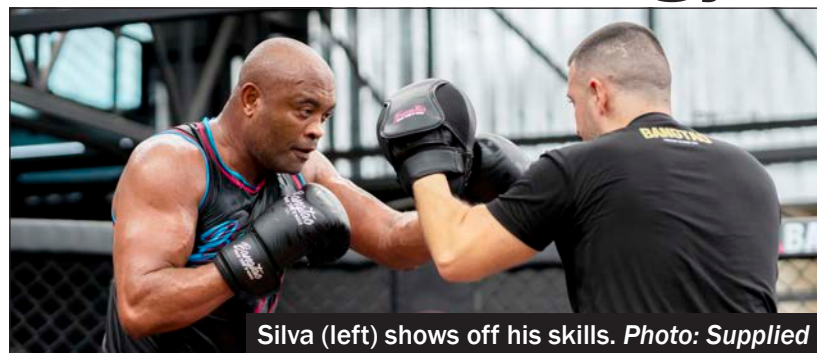
ULTIMATE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP (UFC) legend Anderson "The Spider" Silva, one of the greatest strikers in MMA history, visited Bangtao Muay Thai & MMA gym in Phuket for a two-day event recently that left a lasting impression on fighters and fans alike.

The former UFC Middleweight Champion's trip marked his first time in Thailand, the birthplace of Muay Thai, and he took the opportunity to reflect on how the sport influenced his fight career.

During the Q&A session on Dec 26, Silva shared insights into his martial arts journey. Although he began training in Taekwondo in Brazil, he transitioned to Muay Thai at the age of seven. Silva noted that Muay Thai at the time was completely different from the traditional Thai style, describing it as a hybrid more akin to kickboxing with some elements of knees and elbows.

Despite the differences, however, he proudly emphasised his connection to the Muay Thai community, stating, "I represent the Muay Thai community" where the sport has been a part of his journey.

Silva, who boasts a remarkable



Silva (left) shows off his skills. Photo: Supplied

46-fight record over 23 years in professional MMA, retired with a career record of 34 wins and 11 losses. His farewell fight took place in June 2024 in São Paulo, Brazil, against Chael Sonnen, a rival with whom he shared a long history.

Silva reflected on their rivalry, acknowledging the role trash talk plays in the sport but emphasising the importance of mental control. "It's a mental game," Silva said. "When you don't understand the strategy [of the] game, you start [at a] loss."

Despite their heated exchanges, Silva expressed his deep respect for Sonnen. "Chael is my friend, I think Chael and I helped the sport to become the next level," he explained. Ultimately, they both helped each other become better fighters, which is "the magic of the sport".

The first day of Silva's visit included the Q&A session, fol-

lowed by a quick photo op and an open workout session, where he demonstrated his striking techniques with Bangtao's head coaches, Ajarn Wat (Muay Thai), George Hickman (MMA) and Conor McBride (Boxing).

On the second day, Silva hosted an exclusive seminar focused on his signature striking techniques, where participants had the rare opportunity to learn from one of the sport's most accomplished fighters as he shared invaluable knowledge and tips on striking.

Silva's visit to Bangtao Muay Thai & MMA gym was not just an opportunity for fans and fighters to meet a legend, but also a chance to learn from his vast experience. His appreciation for Muay Thai, combined with his passion for the sport, made the event a truly special occasion for everyone involved.

Catherine Ly



# Man Utd find form to halt 'Pool

## FOOTBALL

AFP

Manchester United rallied to snap a four-game losing streak and slow Liverpool's romp towards the Premier League title in a thrilling 2-2 draw at Anfield last Sunday (Jan 5).

Liverpool move six points clear at the top of the table, with a game in hand to come, over second-placed Arsenal.

But this was an opportunity lost for Arne Slot's men after they came from behind to lead 2-1 through Cody Gakpo and Mohamed Salah's penalty.

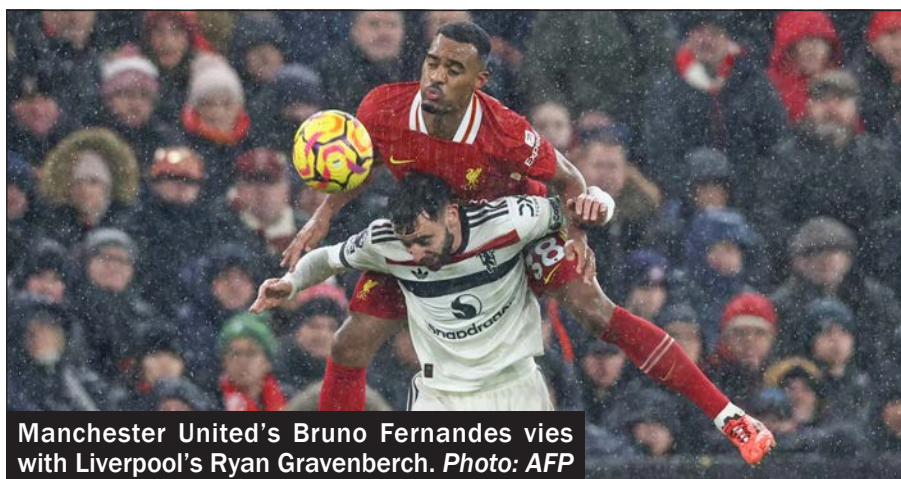
"Of course it feels for us like two points dropped," said Slot afterwards.

United broke their six-year goal drought at Anfield to open the scoring in spectacular fashion through Lisandro Martinez and got the point a much-improved performance deserved when Amad Diallo levelled on 80 minutes.

A point edges United up to 13<sup>th</sup> in the table and seven clear of the relegation zone but captain Bruno Fernandes was left perplexed.

"I'm pretty upset. If we show this level at Liverpool, first in the league, why can't we do this everywhere? It frustrates me," he said.

Arsenal blew the chance to make up significant ground on Liverpool with a frustrating 1-1 draw at Brighton.



Manchester United's Bruno Fernandes vies with Liverpool's Ryan Gravenberch. Photo: AFP

Seventeen-year-old Ethan Nwaneri, in for the injured Bukayo Saka, scored a first-half goal to put the Gunners on course for a vital three points.

But after being felled by an accidental headbutt from William Saliba, stand-in Seagulls captain Joao Pedro fired home from the spot in the 61<sup>st</sup> minute.

"We are really disappointed with the decision that leads to the goal because I have never seen something like this in my life," Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said afterwards.

Nottingham Forest are in third level on points with Arsenal following a comprehensive 3-0 win at Wolves on Monday, with Morgan Gibbs-White, Chris Wood and Taiwo Awoniyi on the scoresheet.

In-form Newcastle inflicted another painful defeat on Ange Postecoglou's struggling Tottenham as

goals from Anthony Gordon and Alexander Isak secured a 2-1 win and lifted them to fifth spot, which may yet prove enough to secure a place in the Champions League next season.

Manchester City pummelled West Ham 4-1 with Erling Haaland scoring twice, suggesting to manager Pep Guardiola that they are back on track after a horror run of one victory in 13 games in all competitions.

Enzo Maresca's Chelsea, who were breathing down Liverpool's necks just two weeks ago but have taken just two points from four games over the festive period, drew with Crystal Palace 1-1 while Aston Villa defeated Leicester City 2-1.

Brentford recorded their first league win on the road this season, smashing hapless Southampton 5-0, as Bournemouth beat Everton 1-0 and Fulham were held to a 2-2 draw by Ipswich Town at Craven Cottage.

# Chiang Rai retain provincial golf title

## GOLF

THE FIFTH ANNUAL edition of the inter-province "Ryder Cup Golf Tournament" took place on Dec 21 at the Santiburi Country Club Golf Course in Chiang Rai, with the host team retaining their trophy.

The good-natured inter-provincial golf tournament takes place each year between amateur teams representing Chiang Rai and Phuket provinces.

Teams are made up largely by local officials and government representatives, with the host venue alternating each year.

This year saw the action head north as the home team, led by Chiang Rai deputy Governor Prasong Lao-on, managed to outperform their southern rivals to retain the trophy they won last year on Phuket soil.

The Phuket team included Thammarat Wongcharoenyos, head of the Phuket Sports Association and a member of the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT) board, who was

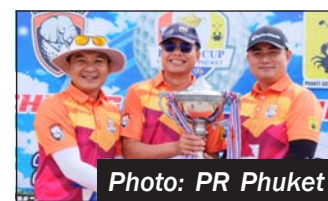


Photo: PR Phuket

joined by: Pol Col Aknit Danpitaksan, deputy commander of the Phuket Provincial Police who also serves as president of the Phuket Golf Association; Boonjuan Phanit, assistant judge of the Region 8 Court of Appeals; as well as selected officials.

The annual competition was first held on Jan 8, 2022 to develop good relations between the two provinces while promoting the sports industry in Thailand.

Each time the event is held there are also a range of corporate social responsibility (CSR) themed initiatives that take place and which this year saw sports equipment and money donated to support Children's Day activities for five selected schools in Chiang Rai Province, with a particular focus on developing young golf talent in the region. *The Phuket News*

# War Elephants downed by Vietnam in ASEAN final

## FOOTBALL

VIETNAM WON THE 2024 MITSUBISHI Electric ASEAN Championship in dramatic style last Sunday (Jan 5) after a 3-2 victory against Thailand in the second leg of the final in Bangkok.

The win came after Kim Sang-sik's side had defeated the defending champions 2-1 in the final's first leg in Viet Tri three days previous (Jan 2) to seal a 5-3 aggregate victory.

A second-half brace from Brazil-born Nguyen Xuan Son handed Vietnam a slight advantage in front of a full house crowd at Viet Tri Stadium in the first leg.

However, the Golden Star Warriors left it late in Bangkok, needing an 82nd minute own goal from Thailand's Pansa Hemviboon and a stoppage time effort from Nguyen Hai Long to secure the win.

This came after Pham Tuan Hai had given his side the lead in the 8<sup>th</sup> minute after the Thai defence failed to deal with Pham Xuan Manh's free kick into the penalty area.

The home side levelled on 28 minutes when Ben Davis capitalised on Doan Ngoc Tan's error to bend a strike past Nguyen Dinh Trieu into the bottom corner.

The War Elephants took the lead through a sumptuous 25-yard strike from



Vietnam's Tuan Hai (No.10) celebrates his goal. Photo: Supplied

Supachok Sarachat in the 64<sup>th</sup> minute before Weerathep Pomphun was sent off 10 minutes later for a second bookable offence following a cynical foul on Vu Van Thanh.

It proved to be the game's turning point as substitute Nguyen Quang Hai fed Tuan Hai whose shot took a deflection to beat goalkeeper Patiwat Khammai.

The War Elephants rallied and hit the crossbar late on through Suphanan Bureerat as the defending champions fought for extra time.

However, with the Thais chasing the game, Hai Long's stoppage time effort from long range ensured his team were assured victory.

The aggregate win marked the third time in Vietnam's history that they have won the regional championship and the first time since 2018. It also saw them avenge defeat against the War Elephants in the previous final in 2022.

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