

CRACKDOWN ON ILLEGAL TAXIS LAUNCHED > PAGE 2

CUT DOWN



Police search Ms Wiri's motorbike to find the knife used in the attack. Photo: PR Phuket

TOUR AGENT FINED B500K, SUSPENDED 6 MONTHS OVER SLASHING TOURIST

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

A female tour agent in Kata who slashed a Chinese tourist with a knife will have her company fined the maximum B500,000 and her company's tourism business licence suspended for six months.

Confirmation of the punishment came at a meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall on Monday afternoon (Feb 6). The urgent meeting was called by Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew to deal with the matter after he learned of the incident earlier that day.

Present for the meeting were all three Phuket Vice Governors Amnuay Pinsuwan, Anupap Rodkwan Yodrabam and Danai Sunantarod.

Also present was a powerhouse of Phuket officials including Phuket Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Sermphan Sirikong, Phuket Immigration Police, Phuket Tourist Police, Tourism and Sports Phuket office Director Ratchadaporn Oin, Office of Tourism and Guides in the Southern Region 2 Registrar Nop-

padol Awutthampreecha and Phuket Tourist Association President Thanet Tantipiriyakit.

Governor Narong said that when he heard the news he called all parties to attend the meeting to ensure strict action was taken over the incident.

The incident finally came to provincial officials' notice on Monday, when Karon Police charged the female owner of the Blue Ocean Travel shop in Kata for using a knife to slash a Chinese tourist following an ongoing argument over refusing to provide a full refund for a tour that the Chinese man and his family did not go on.

The tour shop owner, identified by police as only "Ms Wiri", was charged for assault causing physical injury and carrying a weapon in a public place, Phuket Provincial Police confirmed in a statement issued on Monday.

Phuket Provincial Police said the statement was in response to a news report by small local channel Krabi TV News Online. However, the incident was reported by, among others, the much more popular news show

'News at Mor Chit Today' broadcast by the national TV station Channel 7.

Ms Wiri acknowledged the charges against her, but claimed she was acting in self-defense, said the police statement.

The claim of self-defence contradicts a video of the incident posted online by the tourist himself, Fang Liqiao, who uploaded the footage to TikTok. A copy of the video was posted on the Chinese social media platform Douyin, where the post received 2,684 likes and 1,290 comments.

The video shows Ms Wiri verbally abusing Mr Fang and making the effort to walk up to him and kick him. She then pulled out a folding knife and slashed at him. Mr Fang's left arm suffered a light cut after he raised his arm to protect himself.

Police explained in their statement that the attack was the result of an argument over Ms Wiri refusing to refund the full deposit paid for a tour to the Similan Islands that the Chinese family never got to enjoy due to a mix-up over which resort

the tourists were supposed to be picked up from.

CROSSED LINES

On Jan 29, Mr Fang bought a tour package from Blue Ocean Travel for his family of four to enjoy a trip to the Similan Islands, police explained.

At that time the family were staying at the Pamookkoo Resort in Kata. The family were supposed to be picked up at the resort to go on the trip on Jan 31. Mr Fang paid a deposit of B5,000 for the family of four to go on the trip. Of note, the receipt was marked, "No Refund".

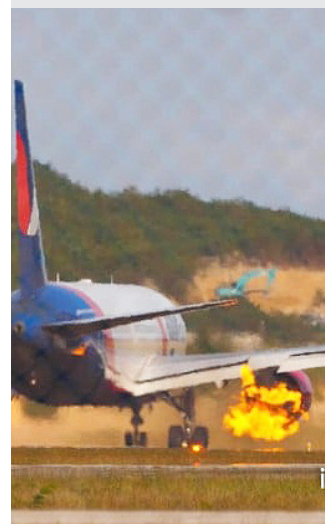
On Jan 30, Ms Wiri called Mr Fang and asked him to pay the outstanding amount for the trip. Mr Fang said he would pay the rest to the driver when the driver came to pick them up, police said.

At that time, Mr Fang explained that he and his family were now staying at the Chanalai Flora Resort, also in Kata.

Ms Wiri told police that on Jan 31 she asked the driver to pick the family up at Chanalai Flora Resort at about...

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Thai cadets set new Muay Thai world record



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Shuttered over violent attack

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...6am, but the driver could not find the tourists, so they missed the trip to the islands.
However, Mr Fang later showed police that on that morning he had made seven calls to contact the company, with no response. The company said later that the driver had gone to the wrong hotel, police reported.
Mr Fang finally managed to contact Ms Wiri that afternoon, and asked to be refunded his deposit. He arrived at the tour shop, accompanied by Tourist Police “to help negotiate”, police explained. However, the two could not reach an agreement.
Ms Wiri was willing to refund B3,400, but not the remaining B1,600 Mr Fang had paid as a deposit. She had already paid the national park entrance fee of B1,600 in advance, she explained.
Ms Wiri said she was inside her office on Feb 1 when Mr Fang returned with his family at about 10am and again asked for his full refund.



The small tour agency in Kata. Image: Radio Thailand Phuket

She claimed that the Chinese tourist was ‘raging’ and hit the office’s glass window. She also claimed that Mr Fang had punched her twice, one of the two times was in the face, she said.
They all went out of the office, and that was when Mr Fang began recording the

incident, Ms Wiri said.

In the video posted online, Mr Fang said the incident would be reported to the Chinese Embassy in Bangkok.
Col Pisit Sawadthavorn of the Phuket Tourist Police said that police will report the incident themselves to the Chinese Embassy.

“We will not wait for the embassy to contact us. We will bring the investigation result to them. Phuket is welcoming a lot of tourists nowadays. We have to be a good host,” Col Pisit said.
FORWARD ACTION
“All parties must help each

other to solve this problem because it affects the image of the country,” Governor Narong said on Monday.
“It is important that legal action is taken against the offender and that the province adheres to the law and gives fairness to all parties, looking to the law leads to the conclusion of law enforcement,” he added.
“The province [provincial government] is not neglecting anything that is happening, especially at this time. Phuket has a lot of tourists; problems may occur at any time. Therefore, each matter must be resolved immediately according to the law,” he said.
“This [case] will continue to be an example for other cases. The province [provincial government] has always emphasised being a good host for receiving guests, in order to help restore our economy, resulting in a better quality of life,” he added.
Mr Noppadon, Registrar of the Office of Tourism Business and Guide in the Southern Region 2, confirmed that the

tour agency will be fined the maximum B500,000 under the Tourism Business and Guide Act for behaviour that causes serious damage to “the morals and good culture of Thailand”.
The tour agency will also have its tourism business license suspended for the maximum six months, he added.
Phuket Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Sermphan on Monday pointed out that police had charged Ms Wiri. She was to be presented to Phuket Provincial Court on Tuesday (Feb 7).
“Carrying a weapon in public is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine only,” Maj Gen Sermphan said. “But assault causing physical injury is punishable by imprisonment of up to three months and a fine not exceeding B60,000, or both.”
Regardless, Governor Narong concluded the meeting by ordering all government agencies involved in the matter to strictly enforce the law.
Additional reporting by Eakkapop Thongtub

Protest by drivers spurs instant campaign against illegal taxis

MORE THAN 100 PHUKET taxi drivers massed in Phuket Provincial Hall last week to protest people using privately registered cars as illegal taxis. The drivers complained they were losing money to the illegal operators, and called for officials to ramp up efforts to curtail the illegal practice.
Phuket Vice Governor Anupap Rodkwan Yodrambam and Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO) Chief Adcha Buachan were present to welcome the drivers and receive their formal complaint on Feb 2.
Thinnakorn Chommueang, President of the Patong Taxi Operators Association, said local, legal, taxi drivers had suffered from illegal taxis on the island, “especially those operating through [phone] applications that are not yet certified,” he said.
“Therefore would like to demand that the provincial governor issue a provincial order to government agencies to deal with illegal ‘black taxis’, distinguishing cars that are allowed to operate through the application is proper,” he added.
Legal taxis operating through apps should be easily identifiable, just as vehicles registered with green-coloured licence plates are, Mr Thinnakorn said.

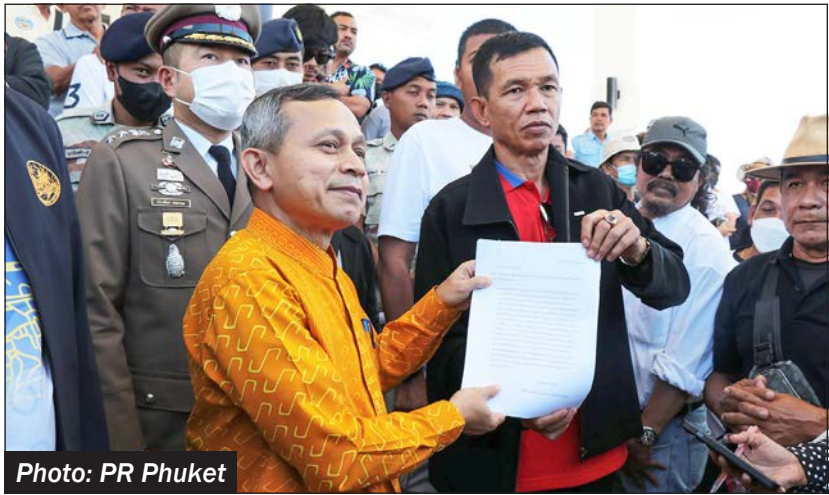


Photo: PR Phuket

“We also ask the governor to order the PLTO to suspend allowing any vehicles currently undergoing the process of being legally registered from being allowed to be used for work until the process has been completed,” he said.
Mr Thinnakorn also called for “decisive penalty measures” to be implemented as “correct action”. “Because if the fine is too low, the compensation made from operating illegally would be more than the fine,” he said.
“In addition, there must be strict and severe punishment measures for those who violate Phuket’s orders for bringing the wrong type of vehicle that has not been certified by the transport office to serve customers and

tourists,” Mr Thinnakorn continued.
To protect his colleagues’ interests, Mr Thinnakorn also called for the PLTO to suspend processing applications to have any new taxis legally registered, including vehicles brought in from other provinces where the car is already legally registered as a taxi.
For this, he also called for an immediate provincial order to be issued by the governor.
“This impacts ‘business operators’ [sic] who want to do the right thing. Therefore, we are calling for a ban on the registration of vehicles from other provinces. But if permission is granted, it must also be granted to people who come to apply for Phuket’s green licence registration,” Mr Thinnakorn said.

Oddly, however, no complaints have been made public about the PLTO refusing local people from being allowed to register their cars as ‘green plate’ taxis.
Vice Governor Anupap and PLTO Chief Adcha received the formal complaint and thanked Mr Thinnakorn and his fellow drivers for their efforts.
PLTO DEFENDS ACTION
Mr Adcha later held a small press conference to explain his office’s efforts so far in curtailing illegal taxi drivers on the island.
“Claims on social media that the PLTO has done nothing about this are true,” he said.
The PLTO has conducted intensive campaigns on social media warning people to not operate illegal taxis, he said.
“Further, from Sept 9, 2022 to Jan 31, 2023, we have acted on all 90 complaints received about this, with 33 cases resulting in fines, and [the remaining] 57 cases are still being processed,” Mr Adcha said.
“The PLTO will work with the Phuket Provincial Police to monitor and arrest illegal taxis and take strict legal action,” he added.
Mr Adcha invited people to report illegal taxis operating in their area by calling the taxi complaint hotline

1584, contacting the PLTO through its Line account @704jhnxb, through the PLTO Facebook page or by the Traffy Fondue application.
“The PLTO will investigate the facts and take further legal steps,” Mr Adcha assured.
ORDER ISSUED
In response to the protest, Vice Governor Anupap, “acting on behalf of the Governor of Phuket”, issued a formal notice ordering all government agencies to take action against illegal taxi drivers in Phuket.
The notice, marked “Regarding illegal use of private cars as taxis”, explained, “As there are people who bring illegal taxis to use for passenger pick-up services in the Phuket area, this is causing trouble for and affecting legal public transport operators and affecting the image of Phuket as a tourist city.”
The notice made it clear that operating private cars as taxis was illegal, and that the Phuket Provincial Police and the PLTO were to “consider” revoking the driver’s licence and the vehicle registration of repeat offenders “as punishment as required by law”.
Police and the PLTO were instructed to take active measures in the matter, the notice said.
The Phuket News

All safe after aborted takeoff

The Phuket News
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A retired expat with 50 years' experience in the aviation industry has suggested that an 'engine surge' was the most likely cause of the Incident that saw a fully loaded flight bound for Moscow abort takeoff at Phuket International Airport last Saturday (Feb 4).

Azur Air Flight ZF3774 was heading down the runway at about 5pm when flames and smoke were seen coming from the right engine. The pilot aborted takeoff, but with the aircraft already approaching takeoff speed, he had to brake heavily to bring the Boeing 767-300ER to a shuddering halt.

All 309 passengers and 12 cabin crew on board were safely evacuated from the aircraft. No people were reported injured in the incident.

The Phuket Info Center in its 'preliminary report' said that a fire started in one of the engines, which was followed by two "explosions", or at least the sound of two "explosions".

The pilot took quick action and activated the fire-suppression system, which cut



Photo: Igor@Zhorov.com via Phuket Info Center

the fuel supply to the engine.

"At the same time, the engine has already reached a certain speed. The pilot had to brake quickly, causing the brakes to heat up and smoke to rise from the wheels... Some of the tyres 'broke' [sic]," PIC reported.

The Special Affairs and Public Relations Division, Administration Department, at Phuket Airport, later confirmed that the braking system on the wheels on the right side of the aircraft had suffered damage.

It took about 40 minutes to move the aircraft off the

runway, and when the aircraft was on the taxiway it could not be moved further.

The aircraft blocking the taxiway obstructed other aircraft from taking off or landing while repairs were made to the aircraft.

The obstruction of the taxiway resulted in delays in aircraft arriving to land at the airport. Some aircraft were kept in holding patterns, some were flown to Krabi airport and Suvarnabhumi Airport. In total 16 airlines were affected, the Phuket airport announcement said.

The PIC had earlier re-

ported that 47 flights in total were affected by the delays.

Repairs made to the aircraft while sitting on the taxiway were completed at 00:10 Sunday (Feb 5), allowing the aircraft to be moved out of the taxiway at 00:30, Phuket airport noted in its announcement.

An investigation was underway into the cause of the incident, Phuket airport assured.

Retired German expat Reinhard Luksch, who lives in Rawai, told *The Phuket News* that an 'engine surge' was most likely the cause of

the engine trouble that resulted in the aborted takeoff.

Mr Luksch, from Müh-heim, Hessen, Germany, started his career as an Aircraft Engineer with Lufthansa Technik AG at Frankfurt International Airport. Through the following five decades he specialised in engine and component purchasing for major airlines.

He worked as a Technical Purchasing Agent, Technical Purchasing and Logistics Manager, then as Technical Contracts and Strategic Purchasing Manager for Swiss International Air Lines in Zurich and even as Manager at the Emirates Flight Training Academy and then Head of Technical Logistics at Etihad Airways in Dubai.

"Video Clips on the net show the right engine no. 2 being affected by 'surging' which caused abortion of the take off, which was definitely the right decision," Mr Luksch said.

"These surges can cause fireballs erupting from the engine in short frequencies causing the loss of power. Some noticeable bangs usually go along with this 'surging'," he added.

"Surging" is usually caused by malfunctioning engine bleed and/or compressor guide vane controls and related sensors/bleed valves... A low performing compressor might be also a reason," he said.

"These high power 'surges' can hurt the engine so badly that a change might be required, which may be recommended after high power surges," Mr Luksch noted.

"The full braking after the aborted takeoff is a consequence as the aircraft being fully loaded at high speed has to be brought to a complete stop on the remaining runway.

"When wheels get too hot they have some 'fuse plugs' installed which melt around 300°C to avoid the tyres exploding and causing even more damage... After such full braking action the brakes heat up very quickly and can even glow red by the heat and cause a fire around them.

"So the aircraft likely was affected by some flat tyres, which requires special jacks to lift the aircraft as the axles get too low due to the flat tyres... To arrange all this takes time after such an occurrence," Mr Luksch said.

Phuket election map redrawn

THE PHUKET OFFICE OF THE ELECTION Commission of Thailand (PEC, or ECT Phuket) last week called for feedback on three options for the redrawn boundaries of constituencies to be used in the next national election.

Phuket has been assigned three seats available for Members of Parliament in the next election. Previously, Phuket had only two MP seats available.

The three options presented are as follows:

OPTION 1

Zone 1 - 141,389 registered residents Muang District: Talad Yai and Talad Neua (Phuket Town), Ratsada, Koh Kaew

Zone 2 - 137,596 All other areas in Muang District, plus Tambon Kathu

Zone 3 - 138,906 Thalang District (whole district) plus all other areas in Kathu District except Tambon Kathu

OPTION 2

Zone 1 - 141,389 Muang District: Talad Yai and Talad Neua (Phuket Town), Ratsada, Koh Kaew

Zone 2 - 133,087 All other areas in Muang District, except Tambon Kathu

Zone 3 - 143,415 Thalang District (whole district), plus Tambon Kathu

OPTION 3

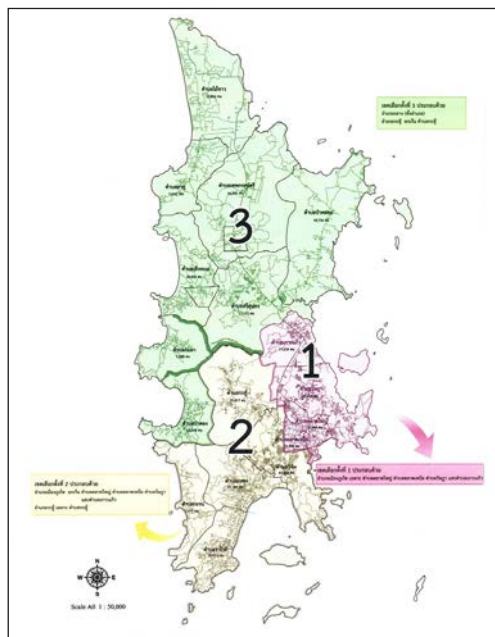
Zone 1 - 141,389 Talad Yai and Talad Neua (Phuket Town), Ratsada, Koh Kaew

Zone 2 - 130,184 Wichit, Tambon Kathu, Pa Khlok and Srisoonthorn

Zone 3 - 146,318

ALL OTHER AREAS

People have until the end of government



One of the three options presented by the Phuket office of the Election Commission of Thailand (PEC). Images: PEC

office hours on Monday (Feb 13) to submit their feedback.

Feedback forms are available at every municipality and local administration organisation (OrBorTor) on the island, Orapin Acheevasuk, Election Director of Phuket Province, said in a release on Feb 3.

People may submit their feed by post to writing to the Office of the Election Commission of Phuket Province at 23/7 Amphoe Rd, Tambon Talad Yai, Mueang Phuket District, Phuket Province 83000, or by fax to 076-35469 3 or email to phuket@ect.go.th, Ms Orapin noted.

The maps and definitions are posted on the PEC website, she added. *The Phuket News*

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FRI FEBRUARY 10



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

SAT FEBRUARY 11



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

SUN FEBRUARY 12



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

MON FEBRUARY 13



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

TUE FEBRUARY 14



High: +32°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

WED FEBRUARY 15



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

THU FEBRUARY 16



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

Corruption questioned in failed projects

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

A key Phuket government information office has shared posts online by a national anti-corruption network, calling into question major construction projects that have failed to materialise despite hundreds of millions of baht spent on them.

The Phuket Info Center shared the two posts by the “STRONG Anti-Corruption Thailand Club” over Jan 30-31.

The Phuket Info Center, originally launched as an official COVID-19 information service, is operated under the Phuket branch of the Ministry of Interior, namely under the Phuket Governor’s Office.

One of the posts highlighted a building at Phuket Rajabhat University, located north of Phuket Town, that remains unfinished despite construction starting 10 years ago and B495 million already being spent on the project.

The building, originally intended to provide a venue to hold teaching courses in hospitality, now sits abandoned. Construction began in 2013, with B199.6mn paid during the “first round”. More funds were



10 ปี 495 ล้าน สร้างทิ้ง

The building at Phuket Rajabhat University which remains incomplete, and unused, after more than 10 years and B495mn spent on it. Photo: ชมนม STRONG ผ่านทวิตประเทศไทย

dedicated to the project three more times, the post said.

In early 2016, B4.3mn was spent on hiring experts for a new design. At the end of 2016, another budget of B229.7mn was contributed to the project.

Last year a further B61.4mn was allocated to completing the building “and it is still not finished”, the post continued.

“After 10 years, there is still no sign that the construction has been completed. From investigation, it was found that in addition to the problem of changing the budget funds assigned along the way, there is still a problem

with land boundaries. Who does not survey the area well before starting the project?” the anti-corruption network questioned.

“It is considered to be acting incorrectly. [They] cannot claim that they do not know the area and the various regulations of the university, and are using the distance between the Council President and the Chancellor for mutual benefit,” the network said.

“This project must be transferred into the good hands of an inspection agency to carry out an intensive investigation, because in addition to losing the budget, we also lose

the opportunity that students in the Andaman zone can learn hotel business education, which is the main occupation in the area,” the network said.

The other project highlighted was B131mn that was supposed to be spent improving the Phuket Check Point, through which all vehicles travelling onto or off the island by road must pass.

“Recently, the network of the STRONG club in Phuket has been monitoring the abandoned ‘Andaman Safety Center Enhancement Project’, which was to build confidence among tourists in the area of Tha Chatchai Checkpoint in Mai Khao, Talang, Phuket,” the network said on its Facebook page.

“The budget was B131,490,000, divided into construction of a tourist checkpoint building worth B16mn, a front office building worth B14mn and B101mn on improving the area... The project started in 2016, with the contract specifying the work was to be completed by April 19, 2017, but after six years there is still no sign that it will be opened,” the network explained.

“It is a waste of space and a waste of budget funds that cannot be used again,” the network added.

Nigerians nabbed for overstay

OFFICERS FROM PHUKET Immigration and the Phuket Tourist Police have arrested four Nigerian men staying Chalong and Rawai for overstaying in the country for more than three years.

The men were arrested on Feb 3 through an operation led by Phuket Tourist Police Deputy Chief Lt Col Ekachai Siri.

Na Kenneth Chibuso, 34, was arrested at an unregistered rented room in Soi Palai, Moo 3, Chalong, after he was caught illegally staying in the country more than 1,207 days.

James Chinoniam Onmuny-immao, 30, was arrested by the roadside at the entrance of Soi Chao Fa 49, Chalong, after he was found to have illegally stayed in the country more than 1,469 days.

Oliver Abazi Uchechukwu (age not reported) was arrested along Sai Yuan Soi 9 in Moo 7, Rawai, after he was found to have stayed in the country more than 1,221 days.

Michael Arinze Ejigu, 31, was arrested (location not reported) after he was found illegally staying in the country more than 1,236 days.

All four were handed over to



Photo: Phuket Tourist Police

Royal Thai Police for legal action, Lt Col Ekachai reported.

The four were brought to the attention of officials by tip-offs from “good citizens”, Lt Col Ekachai said.

The men had used real estate agents to find locations where they could stay out of sight from the general public, such as at houses and rented rooms in dead-end streets, he said.

The men had other people go out shopping for them. They cooked and ate at home, he added.

The tip-offs followed people being concerned that the four men were involved in illegal activities, such as romance scams, Lt Col Ekachai said.

The Phuket News

Navy defends search efforts for missing crew

THE ROYAL THAI NAVY THIRD Area Command, based at Cape Panwa, last Sunday (Feb 5) defended its efforts to locate a fishing boat and three crew on board that had been missing for more than two weeks.

Local fishing boat Sor Sakulphet, measuring three metres wide and 10m long, departed Phuket Fishing Pier on Jan 19, Rear Admiral Arpakorn Yukongkaew, Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Navy Third Area Command 3, told the press last Sunday.

The boat had one Thai national, Rung Khamluewong, and two Myanmar nationals on board. The boat was heading out to fish about 120 nautical miles southwest of Phuket, Rear Admiral Arpakorn said.

Since then the boat had been out of contact, he added.

As of Monday (Feb 6), no person has confirmed seeing the boat or contacting any person on board for 18 days.

“It is expected that the boat may have had an engine failure, causing it to drift with the wind to the southwest,” Rear Admiral Arpakorn said.

The Third Area Command had dispatched Navy boats and aircraft to search the area, but so far without success.

The Navy’s Coast Guard Operations Unit 452 at La-ngu and Unit and



Photo: PR Phuket

491 at Koh Lipe, both in Satun province, had been alerted to the situation and coordinated their search efforts.

The network of fishing vessels in the area has also been asked to keep an eye out for the boat, Rear Admiral Arpakorn said.

On Monday, a maritime reconnaissance aircraft DO 228, which is capable of long-range flights, was to be dispatched to aid the search efforts.

“We will contact the military operations centres in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), Jakarta (Indonesia) and New Delhi (India) to assist in coordinating, investigating and finding out more, in case the boat ends up drifting into the territorial waters of those countries,” Rear Admiral Arpakorn said.

“The Royal Thai Navy Third Area Command will continue to monitor the situation,” he assured.

Any person with information that might lead to locating the missing boat were urged to contact the Third Area Command on the 24-hour hotline 076-391598. The Phuket News

Rotary Clubs rally for coral reef restoration

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Efforts by two chapters of the Rotary Club in Phuket will see 39 blocks of 3D printed concrete frames installed at an ailing reef off Koh Maithon, just over eight kilometres southeast of Cape Panwa, to help the corals thrive.

The Rotary Club of Patong Beach and the Rotary Club of Mining for Phuket on Feb 1 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to deliver the concrete frames to the Phuket Provincial Administration Organisation (PPAO).

The announcement was an all-star affair, attended by Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew and Apichai Ekwanakul, Deputy Director General of the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR), who is currently serving as Acting Director-General of the DMC.

Also present were Phuket Marine Office Director Natchapong Pranit, DMCR Marine Resource Conservation and Restoration Division Director Paitoon Panchaiyaphum and DMCR Region 10 Director Wissanu Janjai.

Also present representing the main sponsor of the project was Apirat Lee-laprit, Director of the 'CPAC Solution Center' in Phuket operated by Siam Cement Company Co Ltd (SCG).



Photo: PPAO

Signing the MoU on behalf of the Phuket Mining Rotary Club was President Sasawat Limpanich, and representing the Rotary Club of Patong Beach was President Puwanai 'Best' Wanamakok.

The project is being funded through the "Save Underwater World" project, with funds raised by the Rotary Clubs and SCG through a 'Lad Rak Lay' event at Central Floresta Phuket shopping mall in October last year.

Rewat Areerob, present as President of the PPAO, explained that the concrete frames will be delivered in three sets and deposited at the reef in a project starting on Feb 16.

The frames have been confirmed and approved by the DMCR to help coral larvae grow, and thus help ailing reefs to recover, Mr Rewat said.

"It is a material that can help corals

to grow naturally and also provides a habitat for a variety of marine fish at the site as well," he said.

"This mission is therefore a very important cooperation of all sectors to participate in the restoration of Phuket's coral reefs, which are marine and coastal resources that are important to the ecosystem and the integrity of the sea and a source of income in terms of tourism and People in Phuket who rely on fishing for an income," he added.

"It also promotes the image of sustainable tourism of Phuket," Mr Rewat said.

Following the MoU signing, the Phuket Mining Rotary Club in collaboration with the Phuket Non-Formal Private Schools Association gave away 30 helmets to students from schools in Phuket under the club's 'Save Roads Save Lives' project.

Officials ready for Valentine's day

THE MUEANG PHUKET District Office last week was already making special preparations for people getting married on Valentine's Day (Feb 14), including a gold giveaway and free photos for lucky couples.

Mueang Phuket District Chief Phairot Srilamul revealed details of the special arrangements at a meeting on Jan 31.

Mr Phairoj explained that the aim was for the District Office "to invite and campaign for men and women to legally register [their marriage], which creates warmth and stability for the family, and to maintain the rights and status of the people".

The project is also to "promote good relationships with the family institution, which is the solid foundation of Thai society, as well as promote tourism to Phuket as well," he added.

A check-in point where couples can have their photo taken will be set up and there will be a free food and beverage banquet, Mr Phairoj said.

Couples are invited to dress up for the occasion and wear outfits such as Thai fabric



Mueang Phuket District Chief Phairot Srilamul. Photo: PR Phuket

themes, Phuket native dress themes, couples' shirts themes, Hawaiian themes and sports themes, he added.

The first 100 couples will receive a souvenir marriage certificate holder, and the first 20 couples will receive a free one-night stay at an accommodation venue.

"And every couple will get the right to enter a lucky draw to win one saleung of gold [worth about B7,700], and many other prizes," Mr Phairoj said.

People are encouraged to book appointments for registering their marriage on Feb 14, Mr Phairoj added.

Applications for marriage registration on Valentine's Day are being accepted at the Mueang Phuket District Office during normal government office hours through to today (Feb 10). *The Phuket News*

Phuket air quality takes a hit

AIR QUALITY MONITORING CENTRES using data from Thailand's Pollution Control Department (PCD) last week reported unhealthy levels of PM2.5 particulates across Phuket on Jan 31-Feb 1,

The Air Pollution Real-time Air Quality Index (AQI) reported a red 'Unhealthy' PM2.5 reading of 151 for the south side of Phuket Town at 10am on Feb 1.

A warning of 'Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups' PM2.5 reading of 122 was reported for the north side of Phuket Town at the same time.

A similar warning of 'Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups' was reported for the Nai Harn area late on Jan 31. At 11am on Feb 1, air quality in Chalong marked a PM2.5 reading 134, also spurring an 'Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups' warning.

The readings posted are based on data provided by the Division of Air Quality Data of the Air Quality and Noise Management Bureau, which operates under the PCD.

Warnings for 'Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups' are marked with the advice, "Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is not likely to be affected. Active children and adults, and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion."

Similar readings and warnings were issued by the Switzerland-based air-quality monitoring centre 'IQ Air', which also cites that its reports are based on data from the PCD.

The Environment and Pollution Control Office 15 in Phuket did not recognise any deterioration in air quality across Phuket over the two days. The PCD has previously repeatedly dismissed reports from outside agencies



Image: aqicn.org

regarding Phuket's air quality.

A Phuket-based environmental officer, who specifically asked not to be named, told *The Phuket News* in 2021, "Do not believe what is seen on the visual website from somewhere else [sic] about Thailand's air quality... For the right information we advise all people, both Thai and foreigners in Thailand, to download the app Air4Thai, which is operated under the Pollution Control Department of Thailand."

However, The Phuket News confirmed a light haze across the island over the two days, corroborated by people across the island.

The Air4Thai app was launched by the PCD in 2019 following reports by independent air-quality monitoring agencies gaining traction. The agency never said it was to counter reports from outside sources, but the information presented by the app is directly controlled by the PCD.

Air4Thai on Feb 1 gave a "Green" reading for Phuket's air quality, but did mark an increase in PM2.5 readings in the preceding days.

Meanwhile, the Phuket PCD office stepped up its announcements for people to avoid any burn-offs.

The light haze over Phuket finally cleared in the days following the unhealthy air reports.

The Phuket News

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Patong Tunnel bids underway

The Phuket News

editor@classactmedia.co.th

Companies bidding to complete the B17 billion Patong Tunnel have until 3pm, April 7 to formally enter their bids, Surachet Laopoolsuk, Governor of the Expressway Authority of Thailand (EXAT), has confirmed.

Mr Surachet confirmed the deadline at a 'Pre-Bid meeting' held at the EXAT headquarters in Bangkok on Jan 31.

Companies had from Dec 26 to Jan 25 to enter their formal expression of interest in the project. Doing so cost each company B200,00 apiece.

Continuing to submit their bid proposals throughout the five stages of the process will cost each company B20,000 each time, Mr Surachet explained after the meeting.

Each bidder must place a B300mn security deposit while the bidding process is underway, he added.

Thirteen companies were confirmed to have submitted their formal expression of interest in the bidding to construct the 3.98-km expressway:

- Sino-Thai Engineering and Construction Public Company Limited (STEC)
- China Harbor Engineering Co., Ltd.
- Italian-Thai Development Public Company Limited (ITD)
- Unique Engineering and Construction Public Company Limited (UNIQ)
- Bangkok Expressway and Metro Public Company Limited (BEM)
- BTS Group Holdings Plc. (BTS)
- Nawarat Pattanakarn Public Company Limited



Image: PMDU

- Right Tunneling Public Company Limited (RTCO)
- CH. Karnchang Public Company Limited
- Don Muang Tollway Public Company Limited (Don Mueang Tollway)
- Egis Group (France)
- SRBG Bridge Engineering (China)
- China Railway Construction (Thailand) Co., Ltd.

Each bidder must be a single legal Thai juristic person registered in Thailand for at least three years from the date of submission of the proposal. or will be multiple juristic persons combined which must have at least one Thai juristic person and must be registered for not less than three years on the date of proposal submission.

The "Thai juristic person" also must have not less than 35% controlling interest in the group, and the "Thai juristic person" must hold

a stake of not less than 51% in the actual company leading the bid.

The bidder must have registered capital of at least B1.1 billion on the contract signing date in order to assure the project will be completed, Mr Surachet explained.

The winning bidder is expected to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with EXAT in December, he added.

THE PROJECT

The four-lane expressway will connect the eastern part of the island to Patong Beach by running from Phra Metta Rd in Patong to Tambon Kathu.

The road will be elevated from Phisit Goranee Rd in Patong to the Nakkerd Hills, a distance of 900 metres. The tunnel itself will be 1.85km long.

After passing through the hills, there will be an elevated road, a distance of 1.23km, ending at an intersection with Highway 4029

(Phra Baramee Rd) in Kathu.

There will be two entrances and exits at Phra Metta Rd and at the intersection of Highway 4029, and a toll booth in Kathu.

The total project budget is B17.811bn, consisting of land ownership and building compensation costs of approximately B5.792bn, already approved by Cabinet.

Construction costs are expected to total B8.662bn, and construction supervision costs to cost approximately B215mn, and operating and maintenance costs are forecast to cost approximately B3.142bn, Mr Surachet noted.

THE TERMS

The expressway will be built under a public-private partnership (PPP) model, with land expropriation handled by the government.

Construction is expected to begin in 2024 and be completed by 2027.

Under the contract, the government is responsible for land ownership, while the private sector is responsible for detailed design and construction (including work control costs) and operations and maintenance (Operation and Maintenance: O&M), EXAT explained in their report of the meeting.

The operator must cede all ownership and operating rights to the government after 35 years under the 'Build-Operate-Transfer' model. The 35-year period will begin on the date the EXAT issues the notice for the contractor to proceed with construction.

Phase 1 of the project is deemed the 'Design and Construction' period, which will be not more than four

years from the date EXAT issues its 'Notice to Proceed', followed by Phase 2, the 'Operations and Maintenance' period.

Total duration of both Phase 1 and Phase 2 will be not more than 35 years.

Estimated traffic volume when the road and tunnel opens is expected to be about 71,000 vehicles per day (36,000 cars/day, 35,000 motorcycles/day).

Financial return NPV is expected to be B1.734bn. The Equity IRR Target is 8.50% and the B/C Ratio 1.12x, EXAT noted in its report.

The total 'Payback Period' is expected to be 21 years.

"This project is economically appropriate. The economic rate of return (EIRR) is 20.44%," the EXAT report said.

"The goal of the Kathu-Patong Expressway Project is to connect the route from Kathu to Patong Beach and facilitate travel for local people and tourists, and help to promote tourism to Phuket," Mr Surachet said.

"The project will be able to help alleviate traffic problems and reduce accidents on Highway 4029 [the road over Patong Hill], as well as being used as an evacuation route in the event of a disaster," he added.

"The construction of this project is expected during 2023-2027 and will be able to open for service in time for the Specialized Expo 2028 which is scheduled to be held from March to June 2028," he noted.

As part of the bidding process, companies are invited to have their representatives join a formal inspection visit to the site, in Phuket, today (Feb 10), Mr Surachet noted.

Phuket hotel market to recover by year's end

AT THE END OF 2022, the number of hotel rooms in Phuket totaled 44,024, up 1.1% year-on-year (YoY), and hotels currently under construction will add just over 2,000 new rooms to the market by 2025, Carlos Martinez, Director of Research and Consultancy, Knight Frank Thailand, has revealed.

Mr Martinez's confirmation in the growth of the hotel room supply came in the 'Phuket Hotel Market Recap 2022' released last week.

Looking back, Mr Martinez explained that Phuket welcomed 1.6 million foreign arrivals in 2022, a significant rebound from only 184,000 arrivals in 2021.

The 778% YoY growth in the number of foreign visitors is the result of, firstly, the bilateral travel agreements with certain market feeders such as India, Malaysia and

Vietnam during the first half of 2022, and, secondly and more importantly, the complete lift of pandemic-related travel restrictions in October 2022 that fueled the number of travelers to the island, Mr Martinez explained.

International visitation to Phuket in 2022 was led by tourists from Malaysia, India and Russia, which have traditionally underpinned Phuket's tourist industry. However, arrivals from China, the most important source market, remained at their lowest to just a few thousand visitors as strict anti-pandemic measures inhibited outbound and inbound trips.

"Despite a substantial increase, the number of foreign tourists to Phuket in 2022 still represented 30% of the pre-COVID level in 2019, yet is expected to continue to accelerate as China ended its zero-COVID policy in January 2023, and air connectivity with international markets improves

in 2023," Mr Martinez said.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

In 2022, the number of foreign visitors increased significantly, especially during the second half of the year on the back of the full reopening of Thai borders. Growth in foreign visitors pushed up hotel occupancy to 47% in 2022, increasing 39 percentage points YoY from 8% in 2021, Knight Frank noted in its report.

The average Daily Rate (ADR) rose by 48% YoY from B2,686 in 2021 to B3,974 in 2022, resulting in a considerably improved RevPAR (revenue per available room) of B1,885 from its record low of B208 in 2021.

"The luxury and upscale hotel market performed a particularly strong recovery given their reliance on foreign guests," Mr Martinez said.

Four hotels opened in Phuket, adding 485 rooms

to Phuket's hotel market in 2022. New notable openings include Noku Phuket (91 keys), a villa hotel resort in the upper segment located on a hillside away from the beach, and three hotels in the midscale segment including Glow Mira Karon Beach (154 keys), Jonox Phuket Karon Hotel (121 keys) and Grace Patong Hotel (119 keys), all located on the southwest side of the island.

"At the end of 2022, the number of hotel rooms in Phuket totaled 44,024, up 1.1% YoY. Hotels under construction will add just over 2,000 new rooms to the market by 2025," Mr Martinez noted.

Accor is the largest hotel group in Phuket, operating 4,410 rooms across 22 properties, followed by Marriott with 2,977 rooms, and Wyndham with 1,808 rooms.

In terms of areas, Patong beach remains the area with the largest supply of hotel keys (36%), followed by Karon

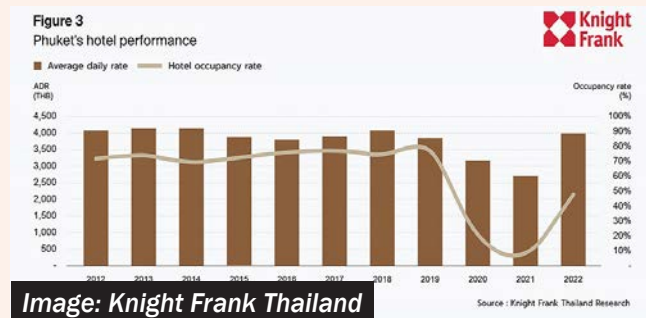


Image: Knight Frank Thailand

(18%), Kata (12%), Nai Yang (8%), Bang Tao (8%), and Kamala (7%), all located on the west side of the island.

OUTLOOK

"Phuket's tourism industry underwent an unprecedented period of growth between 2009 to 2019, underpinned by a strong number of foreign inbound arrivals, which reached a record 5.3 million in 2019," Mr Martinez explained.

"This period of foreign tourism represented a compounded annual growth rate of 16.4%, but the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic considerably dampened demand in 2020 and 2021.

"We are optimistic about

the continuation of a quick and robust bounce back from the pandemic, with foreign tourism playing a major role over 2023 on the back of pent-up demand, and the returning of Chinese tourists to Phuket," Mr Martinez predicted.

"A number of factors may stand in the way of a full recovery in 2023, such as the speed of Chinese tourists returning, and the normalisation of the cost of flight tickets. With all, in the most optimistic scenario, Phuket's tourism market will be near pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2023," he said.

The Phuket News

Over 100 cops caught in illegal visa controversy

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

More than 100 immigration officers are suspected of involvement in the illegal issuing of visas for Chinese investors in so-called grey businesses, Immigration Bureau (IB) commissioner Pol Lt Gen Pakphumpipat Sajjaphan said on Monday (Feb 6).

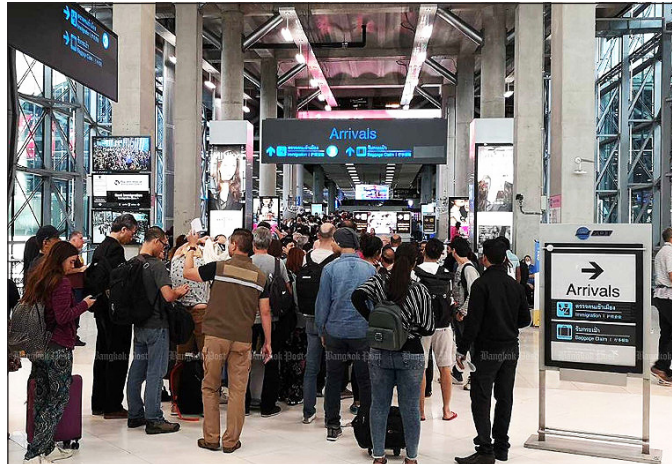
Pol Lt Gen Pakphumpipat said they would be charged with malfeasance and demanding and taking benefits in return for illegal services.

Among the 110 police suspects, there are three police generals and a mix of officers of every rank.

In addition to criminal charges, they would be investigated for serious disciplinary offences, Pol Lt Gen Pakphumpipat said.

He said he expected the investigation report would be completed and forwarded to the national police chief, Pol Gen Damrongsak Kittiprapas.

Deputy national police chief Pol Gen Surachate Hak-



Visitors at Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok await visa processing. Photo: Bangkok Post

parn, who is overseeing the investigation into the case, said he would present the investigation report to the national police chief this week.

The 110 IB officers were reported to have committed criminal conspiracy by setting up firms that process visa applications for foreigners, especially for Chinese nationals who travel to Thailand with a tourist visa but go on to get non-immigration visas without meeting the necessary business or volunteer criteria, he said.

Pol Gen Surachate said these policemen had forged

signatures of provincial governors and permitted photo identification for visa applicants during the pandemic even though the law requires applicants to report in person.

According to the investigation, most cases have been found in the northern and northeastern regions. Pol Gen Surachate said that the crimes had been ongoing from mid-2020 to 2022.

Many applicants submitted documents regarding their stay issued by language schools or volunteer foundations as a ploy to extend their visa.

EXTORTION CHARGES

Monday's announcement came after it was confirmed on Feb 2 that six policemen at Huai Khwang station face charges of taking bribes in connection with alleged extortion of a Taiwanese actress's group at a checkpoint on Jan 4.

The charges carry a potential sentence of life imprisonment and a fine of up to B400,000 under Section 149 of the Criminal Code's provisions on bribery.

Another senior sergeant major who was assigned to the same checkpoint was spared from the bribery charges because he was responding to another incident at the time.

Earlier the law enforcers were charged with dereliction of duty for failing to take legal action against the group's illegal possession of vapourisers.

The bribery charges were laid after a Singaporean man told reporters that he paid B27,000 to the officers for the freedom of his group, which included Taiwanese actress Charlene An, from the checkpoint where police found his vaping devices.



Photo: NNT

Thailand's corruption ranking improves

BANGKOK

ACCORDING TO THE 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index by Transparency International, Thailand's corruption standing improved by 9 places to 101st out of 180 countries, compared to 110th in 2021.

National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) Secretary-General Niwatchai Kasemmongkol said last Saturday (Feb 4) that Thailand scored 36 points, an increase from 35 points in the previous year.

Denmark topped the list as the world's best performer with a score of 90 points, followed by Finland and New Zealand with 87 points each.

Singapore was the best-performing Asian country, ranked 4th globally with 83 points.

According to Mr Niwatchai, Thailand also received higher scores in last year's assessments from the IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook and the World Economic Forum, increasing from 39 to 43 and 42 to 45 points, respectively.

Niwatchai stated that the Thai government has taken a more serious approach to deal with bribery by reforming its project approval system by scrapping bureaucratic red tape and reducing official discretion.

The NACC has also developed information technology and communication systems to support anti-corruption efforts, such as its agency case monitoring system, as well as promoting public participation to aid in efforts to combat corruption in the country.

NNT

National Parks and Wildlife chief sacked amid corruption investigation

BANGKOK

THE DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) chief Rutchada Suriyakul Na Ayutya was dismissed from the role last Friday (Feb 3).

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment's permanent secretary Jatuporn Buruspat revealed that the dismissal paves the way for a transparent investigation into accusations against Mr Rutchada.

Mr Jatuporn said the ministry realised that a thorough investigation is likely to be a lengthy process due to a large number of people having been requested for testimony.

"What the ministry has done is based on civil service regulations. Mr Rutchada ceased to be a state official when the order was made on Feb 3. The investigation is to ensure transparency and fairness to all stakeholders. We want the public to be updated and regain trust in our organisation," he said.

Mr Jatuporn added that the committee would collect and assess any additional information and reach a consensus based on fairness.

Talerngsak Petchsuwan, the ministry's deputy permanent secretary who is heading the investigative committee, said 50 state officials had been questioned so far.

When this stage is completed, he will invite Mr Rutchada to hear the verdict.

Mr Rutchada can subsequently lodge an appeal with the Administrative Court if he so wishes.

He was arrested on Dec 27 at his office



Rutchada: Faces long probe. Photo: Bangkok Post

on suspicion of demanding or taking bribes from subordinates and malfeasance.

A total of B4.9 million in cash was found in his safe during the arrest, which was made following a tip-off from Chaiwat Limlikitsorn, the department's director of the 9th regional conservative areas management office.

Names of forest officials appeared on envelopes stuffed with cash found in his office.

To boost public confidence in the department, Environment Minister Varawut Silpaarcha moved Mr Rutchada to an inactive post and appointed the chief of the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources, Attaporn Charoenchansa, as a stand-in.

Mr Attaporn immediately set up a full-scale inquiry and moved at least two other state officials to inactive posts following allegations of their involvement in the affair.

Bangkok Post



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Shyamalan rediscovers tense-thriller mode

David Griffiths

Has there ever been a Hollywood director who has been as hit or miss as M. Night Shyamalan? When he is at his best his films are great – films such as *'The Sixth Sense'*, *'Signs'* and *'Split'* are always going to live on as cult favourites. But oh boy, when this guy is off his game, things can get mental – anybody remember the abysmal mess that was *'The Last Airbender'*?

With a mind like that, heading into a cinema to watch a Shyamalan movie is like blindly reaching into a mixed lolly bag – you never really know what you are going to get until you taste it. Well, put those fears to the back of your mind with his latest film because *Knock at the Cabin* needs to be added to his list of hits.

This slow-burn thriller begins with every parent's worst nightmare. Young Wen (newcomer Kristen Cui) is innocently collecting grasshoppers when she is approached by the man-mountain that is Leonard (Dave Bautista – *Guardians of the Galaxy*), who seems harmless enough but it is easy to tell that he has sinister plans afoot.

When fear takes over Wen runs inside to her two fathers – Eric (Jonathan Groff – *Frozen*) and Andrew (Ben Aldridge – *Our Girl*). That sparks a dangerous game of cat and mouse between the happy family and a group of intruders made up of Leonard, a



Nikki Amuka-Bird, Dave Bautista and Abby Quinn in *Knock at the Cabin* (2023). Image: IMDb

seemingly caring nurse Sabrina (Nikki Amuka-Bird – *Old*), an overly helpful cook Ardiane (Abby Quinn – *After The Wedding*) and the aggressive Redmond (Rupert Grint – the *Harry Potter* franchise).

If that sounds like a plot that raises questions it is because that is exactly what it does. There is something kind of brilliant about Shyamalan and the team's screenplay here. The plot itself has many twists and turns and the result is a film where you never know what is going to happen next.

The strange thing about the film is that you don't know who is in the right, either. On one hand you have a happy family who seem to be the victim of a

home invasion. But then when the story starts to simmer and settle, you begin to see that perhaps the intruders have the moral high ground – but of course that all comes down to whether or not they are telling the truth.

There aren't many directors that could have pulled off this film in the way that Shyamalan does. The intense script also brings out the best in the film's cast. Young Kristen Cui is sensational throughout the film making it hard to believe that this is her first time on screen while around her the major players take their game to a whole new level.

There have been recent discussions online between Hollywood directors

about just how good Dave Bautista has become as an actor and if there were any naysayers out there doubting those claims then this is the film that will silence them. Bautista here is called upon to play a character that is physically menacing, dangerous yet seems to have a heart of gold. A tricky role to pull off, but somehow Bautista manages to do it, and despite some of the predicaments that Leonard finds himself in the audience will still have a soft spot for him.

This might also be the year where cinema audiences start to praise Ben Aldridge. He is great here as a father pushed to the edge and audiences will soon get to see his emotionally charged performance in *Spoiler Alert*. This under-rated actor is set to become a household name very, very quickly.

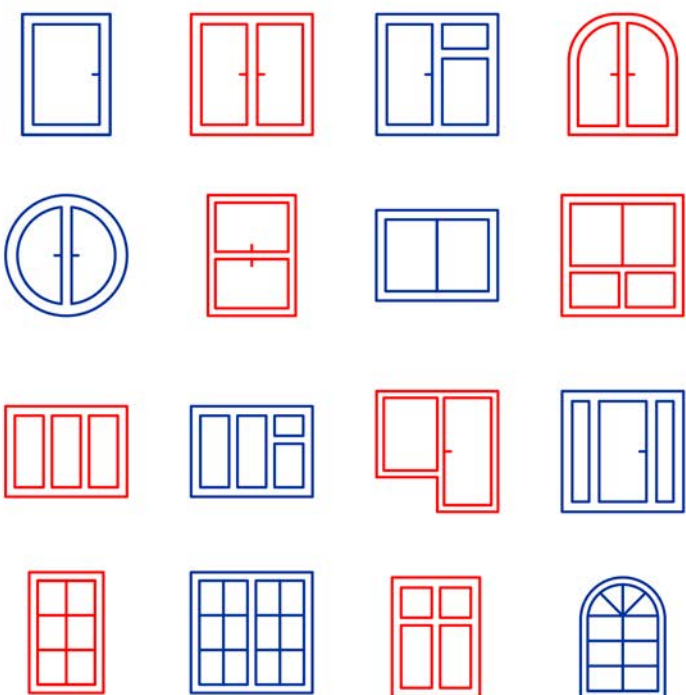
Knock at the Cabin is a great reminder of the amazing feats that M. Night Shyamalan is capable of as a director. His directional skills, a stunning screenplay and the hard-hitting film score take the audience back to a time when Hollywood thrillers really knew how to bring suspense to the screen – this may well be one of the big surprises of 2023.

Knock at the Cabin is currently screening in Phuket and is rated '15'.
4/5 Stars

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



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Time to take the Thai alternative?



PHUKET MUSIC SCENE

Andy Tong Dee

Musicians who have worked here a while have told me that it's getting harder for bands playing Western cover songs to find gigs. Why might this be? Is it because there are too many bands? Not enough tourists perhaps? Maybe there is another reason...

I was in a Thai bar recently, enjoying some excellent Thai music, when the singer suddenly said, "The next one is for the Falang!" The band then launched off into *Hotel California* recorded by The Eagles in 1976. I closed my eyes and groaned. This was the last song on earth I wanted to hear.

There were a few other Westerners there, but all were a lot younger than me, and they too seemed unimpressed. I was 18 in 1976 and not an Eagles fan, and I have heard this song done to death in Phuket for 12 years now. Okay, it was a Thai country music bar, but if she really wanted to entertain those young Western tourists, she really should have chosen a song more up to date.

You see, I rarely hear a Western song played here from after 1990, so maybe the problem is that today's younger visitors and expats are being turned off by the songs being played. Why? Well, studies have shown that it's the music we enjoyed while



Odd's Blues Team playing in the walking street.

teenagers that sticks with us forever. We're rarely stuck entirely in our teenage past, but how we love to hear the songs which remind us of our happy, carefree days when we were young.

So, if this is true, what songs might Western audiences here prefer to hear bands play? From what decade would they be from? Just the 60s and 70s? But Western live music in Phuket is already almost entirely cover songs from before 1990, which would only resonate with those over 50. So how about playing some from the 1990s and after? How about catering for the two forgotten generations under 50?

As bands here almost invariably play Western songs written before 1990, they might think there is no competition, that customers have nowhere else to go. But

there is competition. Many are drifting off to bars with DJs instead.

And can you blame them? Do 30- or 40-somethings really want to listen to covers of Bill Withers, Bob Dylan, CCR or Beatles songs? How about playing some music from their teenage years – Bush, Elastica, Garbage, The Foo Fighters or The Killers? Time is not on the side of those musicians and venues reluctant to change. The longer such live Western music stays frozen in the pre-1990 past, the greater the threat to it as years go by.

DJs here are already catering for a wider international audience, cleverly integrating samples of Russian Techno and Indian Bollywood songs into their sets for example. Because of such ingenuity, such DJs can have a far broader international appeal and they cost far

less than a five-piece band.

Then there's another growing threat to bands playing western music – Thai pop music. I have noticed that Thai bands playing Western songs are increasingly including Thai songs in their set, songs that are well received. Let's face it, people don't travel halfway around the world to eat fish and chips and listen to Van Morrison covers. Maybe it's only a matter of time before we see a Thai venue on Bangla Rd playing Isan dance music to bring the punters in. I'm 100% sure it would be a massive success.

So bands playing Western songs here now face three growing challenges: from demographics, DJs and Thai pop music. Customers are already going elsewhere. I now go to Thai live music venues and festivals far more often because I know I won't hear the same old, tired, worn-out, done-to-death, pre-1990 Western cover songs there.

Maybe you, too, are interested in joining me in taking the Thai alternative. If so, I'd firmly recommend you check out 'Ther' on the Seahorse (Nimit) traffic circle and Sure Pub on Kra Rd in Phuket Town for exciting Thai pop, and maybe Baan Krua Nok in Kathu by the Patong Hill road intersection for excellent Thai country music.

Maybe I'll see you there too, but whatever you do, *DON'T* request Hotel California!

Andy Tong Dee is a local expat and musician. Find out more about Phuket bars playing Thai and Western music at his website www.phuketmusicscene.com.



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POP QUIZ

1. Which American state shares its name with a former Soviet Republic?
2. YouTube was bought for US\$1.65 billion, in 2006, by which company?
3. What is the UK prime minister's official country residence in Buckinghamshire called?
4. How many feet are in a fathom?
5. What was Victoria's last name before she married David Beckham?

Answers below, centre

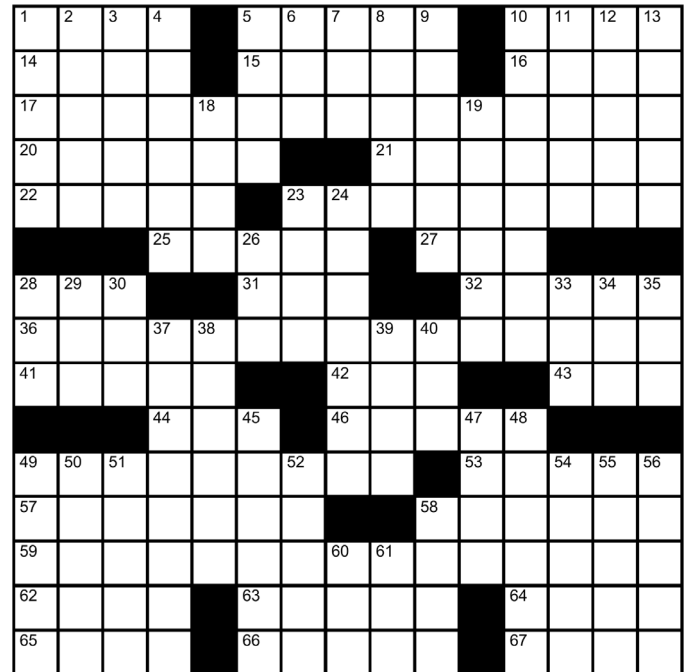
SUDOKU

Easy

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Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across
1. Pour
 5. Deep sleep
 10. Sandwich filler
 14. Uttar Pradesh city
 15. Harden
 16. Poet laureate of 1692
 17. Disastrous financial transactions?
 20. Student, at times
 21. Large land mass
 22. Tip
 23. Medicinal plants
 25. Movie robot
 27. Honshu honorific
 28. Special ____
 31. Legal ____
 32. At no point
 36. Grab a tress of one's hair vehemently?
 41. Dickens lad
 42. "Yikes!"
 43. Contents of some bags
 44. Cruise
 46. Union member
 49. Ordinance type
 53. Rose family herbs
 57. Obama, Bush and Clinton
 58. Ornamental shrub
 59. Too-large mammary glands?
- Down
1. Delicacies
 2. Protected bird
 3. Expunge
 4. Single-____ ship
 5. Incidental, as an issue
 6. Bit of binary code
 7. Afghan monetary unit
 8. Upper floor feature
 9. Theater offerings
 10. Tamis or zaru
 11. Indian coin
 12. Ordered a pizza, perhaps
 13. They have flat tops
 18. Chemnitz mister
 19. Off the mark
 23. Number following a Henry
 24. Deal with
 26. Klutz
28. The Little Giant
29. Nail site
30. Make tracks?
33. Port vessel
34. Vane dir.
35. Recommended food amount, for short
37. Ballpark figure
38. Squares things
39. Boundary line
40. Calypso cousin
45. Finite
47. Perfume brand by Dana
48. Very
49. French clerical titles
50. Bellini opera
51. Front wheel alignment
52. Progeny
54. Senior
55. Great-____
56. Porto ____ , a Madeira island
58. With talent
60. Pay dirt
61. Substantially



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

1

in 5 women buy Valentine's gifts for themselves.

20

baby girls in the US were named 'Kindle' in 2013.

6,000

cell phones, 3,500 digital cameras and 18,000 hats are handed in to 'Lost and Found' at Walt Disney World each year.

40 million

Americans have tattoos, and 17% of those people are figuring out how to get them removed.

10 billion

doughnuts are consumed by Americans every year.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Happy baby in a bicycle basket, Bang Tao. Photo by Billy Gibson

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

This week in history

February 10, 1258

Baghdad falls to the Mongols, and the Abbasid Caliphate is destroyed.

February 11, 1990

Nelson Mandela is released from Victor Verster Prison outside Cape Town, South Africa after 27 years as a political prisoner.

February 12, 1954

British tea maker Lyons's "LEO" (Lyons Electronic Office I) produces a payroll report. It is the first time in history an electronic computer is used in business.

February 13, 1981

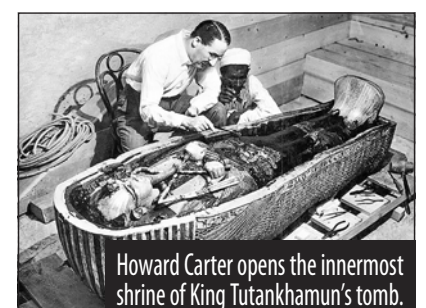
A series of sewer explosions destroys more than two miles of streets in Louisville, Kentucky.

February 14, 1779

Capt James Cook is killed by Native Hawaiians near Kealahou on the island of Hawaii.

February 15, 2013

A meteor explodes over Chelyabinsk, Russia, injuring 1,500 people as a shock wave blows out windows and rocks buildings.



Howard Carter opens the innermost shrine of King Tutankhamun's tomb.

February 16, 1923

Howard Carter unseals the burial chamber of Pharaoh Tutankhamun.
Source: Wikipedia

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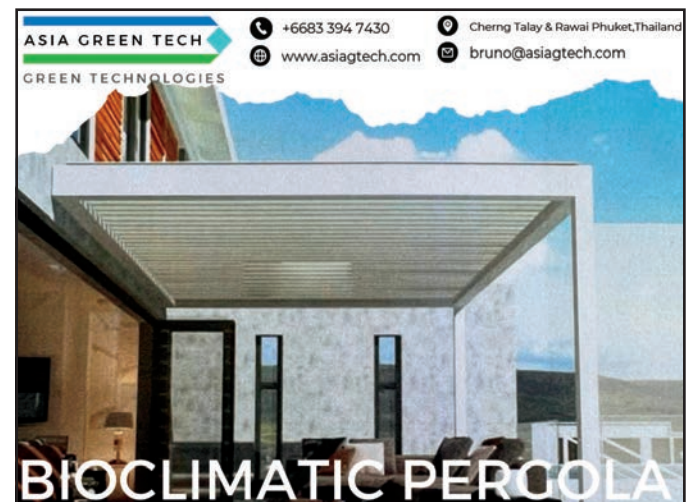
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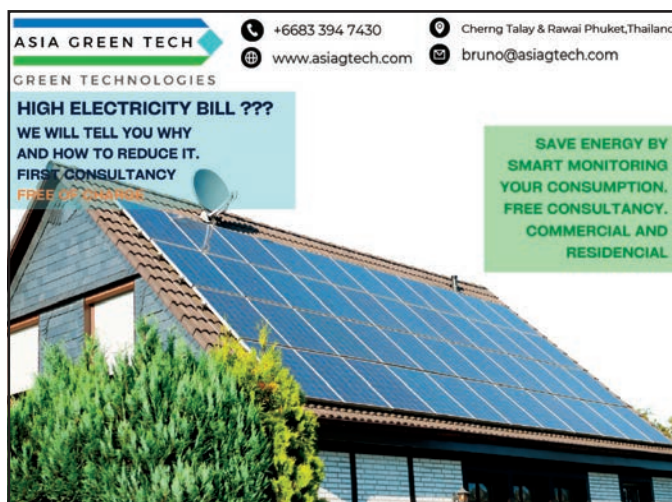
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FRI

10 FEB



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Friday Mussels Night

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SUN

12 FEB



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Sunday Roast

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

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14 FEB

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Monday BBQ Night

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

WED

15 FEB



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Wednesday BBQ Night

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URGENT

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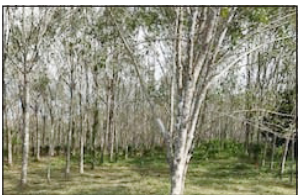
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THIRSTY THURSDAY BY TRAVEL DAILY

A great night of travel industry networking held at Courtyard by Marriott Phuket Town on Thursday, February 2. Looking forward to the next one to be held in the coming months.



GROW BOATING NETWORKING EVENT

A huge thanks to the drinks sponsors for sponsoring the February 3 evening – Phuket Marine Guide, PMG and Limestone Adventures i and to the food sponsors Boardwalk Bistro and Bar and The Hardstand.

The next get together is on Friday, March 3 at the Royal Phuket Marina where the food Sponsor will be Isola Restaurant.

EU relinquish Pryder Cup hold

BOWLS

Robert Knight

A Rest of the World (ROW) team made up of a number of nationalities finally managed to break the stronghold of their European (EU) counterparts as the latter suffered their own Friday the 13th nightmare at the latest “Pryder” Cup held at the Kamala Lawn Bowls Club.

The 10th anniversary edition of the competition was held on Friday, Jan 13th, drawing a record 26 players and leaving organisers facing a challenge in arranging groupings, pairings and lanes in order to meet competition requirements.

Further complicating matters were a series of late entries and late withdrawals although organisers rallied to establish the two teams, with the competition rules stipulating one point for a win, half point for a draw and no points for a loss.

Despite having won the previous five editions of the competition, the EU team went into the competition as serious underdogs, with the ROW lineup boasting more regular bowlers and former multiple



The triumphant Rest of the World team with the Pryder Cup trophy. Photo: Robert Knight

champions from the club's recent major competitions. However, it was ultimately whoever turned up on the day with their A-game that was likely to triumph.

The ROW knew they needed 12 points from the 23 matches to triumph, while the EU team knew that, as current holders of the cup,

even a 11.5-11.5 draw would be enough to retain their title.

In usual fashion, the captains chose their pairings groups and lanes in secret before the action on the green got underway.

The EU team started terribly, only gaining half a point from the first round of triples and fours to trail 0.5

to 3.5. The EU fours team in particular were unable to cope with the vociferous enthusiasm and skill of the all female Thai quartet of Aon, Nid Noi, Wan and Jaow.

Then, hoping the pairs rounds would help them claw back the deficit, the EU decided to field three strong pairs in the first stage, only for the

tactic to backfire dramatically as all three lost to leave the overall score at 0.5 to 6.5.

MARITAL BLISS

Better was to come for the EU team in the second stage of the doubles as they managed to reduce the deficit slightly to 2.5 against 7.5. Of note was the fact that both sides picked husband and wife pairs, with EU's Dean and Kath and ROW's Sammy and Aon winning their respective contests, proving that marital bliss translates to positive results on the green!

Moving on to the crucial round of 13 singles matches there was still hope that the EU could salvage something overall although it was relatively short-lived the feared strength of the ROW team came to the fore to forge an 11-4 lead after the first five matches. This meant that only one point was required from the remaining eight singles' encounters to secure the cup.

For the EU it was fair to say that nothing short of a miracle was needed in order to retain the cup and it ultimately proved a bridge too far as the ROW turned the screw in the second round of singles

to move into an unassailable 15-5 lead. It resulted in the largest winning margin since the competition's inception, meaning not only victory but a total annihilation of the despondent EU team, with the celebrations of the ROW lasting long into the night.

Stand out players on the day were, unsurprisingly, all from the ROW team. Wan, Nid Noi and Ray “Rocket” Austin all recorded perfect 3-0 wins, as did veterans George Sasanow and Derek “Dr Rock” Chalmers.

Even though the ROW team were strong favourites they were well marshalled by their captain Ken “Sammy” Sampert whose tactics, groupings and lane selections, which had often been a failing of previous ROW captains, were pivotal to the victory.

The next “major” tournament at Kamala Lawn Bowls Club is the Phuket Open Pairs Championship today (Feb 10).

Kamala Lawn Bowls Club is open six days a week. All equipment is provided and large parties can be gladly catered for. For further information please contact the club on 094-8987476 or 099-1307255.

Doubles glory for Thai sisters

BADMINTON

THAI SISTERS BENYAPA and Nuntakarn Aimsaard delighted home fans by winning the US\$210,000 (B7 million) BWF Princess Sirivannavari Thailand Masters at Nimibutr Stadium last Sunday (Feb 5).

The second-seeded pair defeated Baek Ha-Na and Lee So-Hee of South Korea 21-6, 21-11 in just 33 minutes in the women's doubles final.

Benyapa and Nuntakarn, who were finalists at the season-ending World Tour Finals 2022, were the only Thai players competing for a title at the Super 300 event.

They took home the royally awarded trophy and the \$16,590 winners' cheque. It was the sisters' fourth World Tour title and second Super 300 crown.

Benyapa, 20, and Nuntakarn, 23, had a breakthrough season last year when they landed three titles including the India Open (Super 500), the Vietnam Open (Super 100) and the Hylo Open (Super 300).



Benyapa (left) and Nuntakarn. Photo: Bangkok Post

They were also runners-up at the Korea Open (Super 500) and the Australian Open (Super 300).

Fourth seeds Leo Rolly Carnando and Daniel Marthin of Indonesia won the men's doubles, defeating Su Ching-heng and Ye Hongwei of Taiwan.

Feng Yanzhe and Huang Dongping of China over-

came Seo Seung-Jae and Chae Yu-Jung of South Korea to capture the mixed doubles title.

In the final of the men's singles contest, Lin Chun-yi of Taiwan upset fourth seed Angus Ng Ka Long of Hong Kong and the women's singles title went to world no.18 Zhang Yiman of China.

Bangkok Post

Thai cadets set new Muay Thai world record

MUAY THAI

THOUSANDS OF THAI army cadets, university students and a handful of volunteers performed a record-breaking Muay Thai “wai khru” ceremony on Monday (Feb 6), all under the watchful eyes of six massive statues of former kings.

The sunset gathering in Hua Hin, part of a Muay Thai Festival in the seaside resort town, broke the previous Guinness World Record of 250 by having 3,660 participants simultaneously performing the traditional pre-match dance of respect for their coach.

The sun had baked the sheets of concrete hot as the barefoot performers – organised by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), the Royal Thai Army, and the culture and sport ministries – filed onto the parade ground at Rajabhakti Park in front of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha.

Dressed in red uniforms with white Mongkhon headbands, as well as white Muay Kard Chuek ropes – the hemp wrappings fighters wore before gloves – the phalanx of men moved in near perfect unison to the directions of famed Muay Thai fighter Sombat



Muay Thai fighters perform the record-breaking Wai Khru ceremony. Photo: AFP

“Buakaw” Banchamek.

“Congratulations, you're officially amazing,” said the official Guinness adjudicator, confirming the record had been broken.

“I feel really proud,” said 27-year-old performer Phukrit Purimchaithanat, adding he and his fellow-cadets were glad they had pulled it off after months of preparations.

A mix of bemused locals and tourists passing through the popular resort watched the spectacle from a few rickety metal bleachers, gathering

around the sides of the fenced area as a loudspeaker blared.

“It's stunning, it's crazy, also in front of the kings and everything,” said Hua Hin resident Siena Cruz, 32, as she enjoyed the show with friends.

“The visual is something connected to the tradition,” she said, noting how integral the pre-match ritual was to the sport.

“To be part of another bit of history for Thailand, it's bragging rights,” she said of the Guinness record. AFP

Citizens Kaned by Harry the Spurs record-breaker

FOOTBALL

AFP

Harry Kane said becoming Tottenham's all-time record scorer was a "magical moment" as his 267th goal for the club sealed a 1-0 win against Manchester City last Sunday (Feb 5) that severely damaged the Citizens' bid to retain the Premier League title.

Kane's historic first-half strike at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium took him past Jimmy Greaves into sole possession of the hallowed record.

Greaves had held the milestone since 1970 before Kane moved level with him in his previous appearance against Fulham on Jan 23.

Kane's landmark moment also made him only the third player to score 200 Premier League goals after Alan Shearer (260) and Wayne Rooney (208).

"It is hard to put into words. It is just a magical moment. I was so desperate to do it with a win as well," Kane said.



Harry Kane celebrates his goal against Manchester City which made him the club's all time record goalscorer. Photo: AFP

"To do it in front of the home fans was a moment I will never forget."

It has been an unforgettable period for Kane, who drew level with Rooney as England's joint record scorer on 53 goals when he netted against France at the World Cup in December.

However, Kane's remarkable goal feats seemed a distant dream during a difficult start to his career that featured several failed loan spells before he finally emerged as a star.

Greaves, who died aged 81 in 2021, is regarded as one of

the most natural goalscorers in football history.

For Kane to be alongside such a legendary player is a tribute to his predatory instincts and his perseverance.

'NO EXCUSE'

Arsenal's shock 1-0 defeat at struggling Everton on Saturday had given City renewed hope they could overhaul the leaders but Kane's 19th goal in all competitions this season leaves second-placed City trailing five points behind the Gunners, who have a game in hand and host Pep

Guardiola's men in a crucial clash on Feb 15.

Elsewhere, Manchester United continued their fine form with a hard-fought 2-1 win against Crystal Palace which keeps Erik Ten Haag's team in third place, just three points behind rivals City.

Everton boosted their bid to avoid relegation in new manager Sean Dyche's first game in charge with the shock win over table-topping Gunners while Merseyside rivals Liverpool crashed to a 0-3 defeat at Wolves which left bemused manager Jurgen Klopp saying, "I cannot explain it. There is no excuse for it."

Newcastle were held 1-1 at home by West Ham, the first goal conceded by the Magpies in 574 minutes of Premier League action dating back to November.

Elsewhere, Brighton beat Bournemouth 1-0, Brentford defeated Southampton 3-0, Leicester won 4-2 at Aston Villa and Nottingham Forest beat Leeds United 1-0, who announced on Monday they had sacked manager Jesse Marsch following the defeat.

Man City charged with rule breaches

FOOTBALL



Photo: AFP

MANCHESTER CITY could be docked points or even expelled from the Premier League after the English champions were charged with more than 100 breaches of financial rules on Monday (Feb 6).

The Premier League has referred City to an independent commission over the alleged rule breaches between 2009/10 and 2017/18 – a period in which the club took their first steps towards becoming English football's dominant force.

City, who last month topped the Deloitte money league of the world's richest clubs, said they were surprised by the charges and insisted there was "irrefutable" evidence that supports their case.

In a statement, the Premier League said the alleged breaches relate to the reporting of accurate financial information, the submission of details of manager and player pay information, a club's responsibility to

adhere to UEFA's Financial Fair Play (FFP) regulations and to the league's own profitability and sustainability regulations.

City are also alleged to have breached rules requiring them to cooperate and assist with the Premier League's investigations.

Premier League rule W.51 covers the sanctioning powers available to commissions should alleged breaches of league rules be found proven.

These range from a reprimand, through to the deduction of points up to a recommendation to the league to expel a club from the competition.

The commission has the power to make such sanctions conditional on defined actions being taken within a fixed time period, and respondents have a right of appeal. AFP

Away day joy for trio of teams as Six Nations gets underway

RUGBY

THE 2023 SIX NATIONS STARTED with a trio of away wins as defending champions France were pushed all the way by Italy after Scotland had spoilt England's first match under Steve Borthwick and Ireland wrecked Warren Gatland's Wales homecoming.

The scale of the challenge facing Gatland in his second stint as Wales boss was emphasised by a 34-10 loss to world number-one ranked Ireland in Cardiff last Saturday (Feb 4).

It was his heaviest home defeat in the Championship as Wales coach, with Ireland already 27-3 ahead by half-time.

It was a stark reminder that there was no quick fix to reviving Wales after their struggles under sacked former coach Wayne Pivac.

Also on Saturday, Scotland were able to come from eight points down early in the second half to defeat England 29-23 at Twickenham and record their third successive Calcutta Cup win in a fixture that had so long proved their undoing.

The first of Scotland wing Duhan van der Merwe's two tries, a stunning solo effort, is sure to become a YouTube favourite, while a huge defensive effort, with captain Jamie Ritchie leading the way at the ruck, was also a key aspect of the victory.



Scotland's Duhan van der Merwe scores against England. Photo: AFP

Few would have given much for Italy's chances against reigning Grand Slam champions France before kick-off in Rome on Sunday.

Come full time and 2023 World Cup hosts France had extended their unbeaten streak to 14 matches but only after an almighty scare in a 29-24 victory at the Stadio Olimpico, with Italy full-back Ange Capuozzo scoring a try in a game where the visitors were forced into conceding numerous penalties.

For so long Italy have been the whipping boys of the Six Nations. But having ended their 36-match losing streak in the Championship with victory away to Wales last season, they served further notice of their progress with a first victory over Australia in November.

Italy have yet to beat England but, on this evidence, the Azzurri will fancy their chances of ending that unwanted record at Twickenham this weekend. AFP

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Sport



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WARRIORS COME OUT TO PLAY



Patong Warriors' opener Shakiel Raja played a key role in his team registering their first points of the T20 league season last Sunday (Feb 5). Photo: Thanawat Phumipraphat

CRICKET

Curt Livermore

The Patong Warriors registered their first points of the T20 league season as they saw brushed aside Kashmiri Cricket Club (KCC) with ease in the scorching afternoon sun at the Alan Cooke Ground (ACG) last Sunday (Feb 5).

In the second match of the day, Andaman Cricket Club (ACC) then moved to the top of the table after a resounding 56-run victory over the Patong Penguins.

KCC batted first in their match against the Warriors, with both sides desperately seeking their first points of the season. A disastrous start ensued for the batting side however as they were reduced to 18-5 inside the 6

over power-play, with captain Imtiyaz Mushtaq (10) the only batter to hit double figures.

With the threat of his team been rolled, Iqbal Malik (51) was next in at number 7 and the KCC man produced an exceptional counter-attacking performance that included 9 boundaries. With little support from the other end, however, it meant that when Malik was the final wicket to fall in the 15th over KCC had mustered a measly 93 all out.

In reply, a solid opening 32-run partnership between Shakiel Raja (14) and Mughal (20) got Warriors off to a steady start before one-man-army Malik removed both openers in the 5th over. Any thoughts of a KCC miracle comeback were quickly quashed, however, as Yasir (14) and Adele Ali (28) finished the job in the 11th over

to claim a 7-wicket victory.

ACC and the Penguins took to the field in the afternoon, with both sides looking to build on their winning starts the previous week. After winning the toss, Penguins' skipper Curt Livermore looked to restrict the runs in bowling first although openers Jagsir Brar (33) and Rishi Sadarangani (39) made full use of the power-play to gain the upper hand before the returning Michael Flowers made the key breakthrough in the 6th over to dismiss Jagsir with score 65-1.

Simon Wetherell then had both Rishi and Ashan Fonseka (1) caught at long-on by Flowers, before Mayur Deuskar (4) was run out and Wetherell combined with Anthony Van Blerk to stump Gourav Kumar (8).

With the score 108-5 after

12 overs, Manish Sadarangani (56) and Dinesh Varma (22*) put their team back on top with a 71-run stand before Livermore belatedly held onto a catch to remove Manish in the 19th as Flowers claimed his second scalp of the day. A late cameo from former Penguin Sajal Guar (7*) pushed the score up to an impressive 190/6 from the allotted 20 overs.

BIG SCALP

Things couldn't have started any worse in the Penguins' run chase as a mix up between openers Wetherell and Adam Drew (24) in the first innings saw the former run out without facing a ball.

Fortunately for the batting side, the ambidextrous McMillan (23) got the innings going before Gaur had him caught at square leg

in the 4th over.

A 58-run partnership between Craig Morgan (44) and Drew brought up the team 100 before the latter retired hurt in the 12th over. With his side behind the required run-rate, Morgan looked to up the ante in the 15th and seemed to have hit yet another 6 only for Shivam Sachdeva to settle underneath the ball on the square-leg rope to take an exceptional catch to remove the Penguins' danger-man, Jagsir Brar claiming the big scalp.

With Penguins still requiring 76 from just 6 overs remaining, each batter would have little time to settle at the crease before playing their shots. Unfortunately for the Penguins this triggered an untimely collapse as the scoreboard pressure proved too much as just a mere 19

runs were added for the loss of the remaining 6 wickets as the batting side fell well short of the 191 run target.

Man of the match went to Manish Sadarangani for his 56 from 38 balls faced, while Jagsir Brar's all round performance of 33 with the bat as well as 2-22 with the ball stood out whilst ACC captain Rishi's brutal 39 from 18 balls faced helped his side set up a winning total for his side.

Morgan's 44 from 23 balls faced and Wetherell's 3-17 performances stood out in defeat.

This Sunday (Feb 12) sees Andaman and Warriors look to continue their form in the morning game (10:30am) before the Penguins and KCC look to bounce back from defeats in the afternoon encounter at 1:30pm.

Blue Tree Phuket launches 'I Did It' series for youngsters

TRIATHLON

JAN 28 SAW BLUE TREE PHUKET organise the first race of the "I Did It" series 2023, an initiative that strives to encourage the younger generation to get active and enjoy sports through a series of events throughout the year.

Blue Tree is passionate about health and sports and the "I Did It" series of events this year provides a good grounding for youngsters to pursue their sporting dreams.

The six-series children's triath-



Photo: Blue Tree Phuket

lon offers a fun, safe and inclusive environment for children between the ages of 5-17 to race and develop those fundamental triathlon skills of swimming, biking and running.

The first race of the "I Did It"

series 2023 was divided into five separate age groups: 5-9 years old, 10-11 years old, 12-13 years old, 14-15 years old and 16-17 years old and run with distances from 600 metres to 3 kilometres, depending

on the age group.

All children who finished in the top three places in each category receives a trophy and all children who completed the race received a finisher T-shirt and a complimentary day pass to Blue Tree Lagoon.

The "I Did It" series 2023 is a six-series kids triathlon consisting of swimming, cycling and running events throughout the year. The expert health and sports coaches at Blue Tree Phuket will help the young participants evolve from total beginners into competent triathletes.

The second "I Did It" series

2023, race is a mountain bike race, which will take place on Saturday, June 10, 2023. Further scheduled events include a duathlon race on Aug 19, a swim race on Sept 16, an aquathlon race on Oct 14, with the Phoenix Triathlon Race rounding off the series on Nov 18.

Interested youngsters can apply to participate now. For more information, please call 096-6528090 or 092-1352662. Similarly please follow all news and activities relating to the 2023 "I Did It" series at www.blue-tree.fun and via the Blue Tree Phuket Facebook page. *The Phuket News*