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RED CARDS



The new 'red' and 'yellow' card system was announced as already in effect last week. Photo: PR Phuket

TWO 'YELLOW' CARDS FOR MINOR OFFENCES WILL SEE 'BAD FOREIGNERS' DEPORTED

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Pol Maj Gen Praphansak Prasansuk, Commander of the Immigration Region 6 Office, has announced a new system of 'yellow cards' and 'red cards' for foreigners caught breaking the law in Phuket.

The system, announced at a press event on Mar 1, will see foreigners found guilty of two minor 'yellow card' offences deported from the country.

Under the system, a foreigner will be designated a 'yellow card' for a first offence. The foreigner will be issued a formal warning and the relevant embassy will be notified, Maj Gen Praphansak said.

After the foreigner completed

the current stay and left the country, the foreigner may be denied permission to stay in Thailand for the next visit on the basis that the foreigner had conducted an unlawful act that "caused trouble and behaved [in a way] that is a threat to society", Maj Gen Praphansak said.

If a foreigner is found guilty of a second offence during the same period of stay, the foreigner will have the permit to stay in Thailand revoked and will be sent back to their home country, Maj Gen Praphansak confirmed.

However, Maj Gen Praphansak did not define exactly what level of or type of crime or "unlawful act" would be considered for a first or second offence.

Of note, the types of offences

mentioned at the press conference focussed on traffic violations such as not wearing a helmet while riding a motorbike, not having the correct driver's licence and dangerous driving.

LOCAL UNDERSTANDING
Phuket Immigration Chief Col Thanet Sukchai later explained to *The Phuket News* that foreigners will be given a 'yellow card' warning for minor offences. The relevant embassy will be notified and once the foreigner is found committing the offence twice, a red card will be given.

"A yellow card is a warning. A foreigner who receives one can still stay in Thailand. But after the two yellow cards, there will be a red card, and the foreigner's visa will be revoked and the person will be

deported," Col Thanet said..

Red cards will be issued for crimes of a serious nature, Col Thanet continued.

However, Col Thanet was unable to further clarify breaking specifically which laws would constitute a 'yellow card' or a red card offence.

"The actions need to be considered case by case and the main standard of consideration is maintaining the peace in public areas," he said

"For example, with the foreign motorcyclists in Patong who rode the bikes, made loud noises and disturbed people in many ways, all of the motorcyclists have already received yellow cards," he continued.

"We have just started the project so we have to look into the offences case by case. In any case, if we see...

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...that it causes trouble to society, we will give them an official warning. The standard is that whatever affects the peace of living of local people as well as other tourists is prohibited," he explained.

"Phuket is Thailand's first and only province with this regulation. Once a foreigner is designated a yellow card, the foreigner can remain in Phuket until the current stay is complete or choose to travel or move to other provinces," Col Thanet noted.

"Those who receive a red card can return to Thailand and Phuket, but this will be relevant to the offences they committed. However, it would be 'more difficult' [sic] for them if the immigration officer at the airport finds the record of a red card in the system," he said.

Col Thanet did not explain what "more difficult" would entail, including whether the foreigner would be refused entry at the airport.

"The purpose of creating the yellow and red cards is to strengthen the laws in Phuket and to warn foreigners if their behaviour causes trouble to society," he said.

Col Thanet did not clarify whether a court verdict was necessary for a card to be issued, or whether a law-enforcement officer pressing a minor charge was sufficient.

He did say that some burden of proof would be required.

"The behaviour needs to be



Police last week tracked down and charged yet another tourist who was among a group on motorbikes causing a public nuisance and driving dangerously on the streets of Patong. Photo: Patong Police

proven whether it really was disturbing the public," he said.

"The Immigration Bureau is authorised to allow the length of stay for each visa considering the behaviour in the record, so the yellow card and red card system will help make foreigners respect Thai law more," Col Thanet said.

"Immigration must offer services and accommodate foreigners while also maintaining the security of society. We have to balance the two sides," he said.

According to Col Thanet, Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew supports the initiative.

"From social topics that foreigners behave inappropriately and disrespect Thai law, the law enforcement must be done concretely to make Phuket safe by designating yellow and red

cards to foreigners to behave well and not cause trouble to others," Col Thanet cited the Governor as saying.

"The previous operation already suppressed 20 trouble-maker foreign motorcyclists. Three of them were designated with yellow cards and the rest have already flown back to their home countries. Phuket Immigration has also filed the case with their embassy," he said.

Col Thanet last week travelled to Bangkok to ask Pol Lt Gen Pakpoompipat Sajjapan, Commissioner of the Immigration Bureau nationwide, to make the 'red card' system introduced in Phuket national. At time of press, the results of that meeting had yet to become public.

USUAL ARRESTS

The press conference last week

proudly announced the arrests of foreigners caught breaking the law under the 'Phuket Crime - Free' campaign.

Present for the event were a host of high ranking officials from local government offices, including from the local transport, labour and even education offices. Phuket Vice Governor Anupap Rodkwan Yodrambam was present as the leading provincial administration figure.

Phuket Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Sermphan Sirikong was also present, but oddly not even named as present by an official report of the event.

The press conference focussed on highlighting what action police had taken against foreigners, assuring that the arrest of such foreigners was of paramount importance to the safety of people on the island and for the preservation of Phuket as a world-class tourism destination.

While scant on details, it was confirmed that a "foreign man" had been arrested on an "Interpol red notice" as he was wanted by the French authorities. Only a day earlier did immigration police announce the arrest of a Swedish man in Phuket wanted on a Red Notice for the production of narcotics "in a foreign country", but no immigration officers have confirmed whether the two cases were actually the same one.

Also touted was the arrests of two Russian suspects for a robbery involving cryptocurrency, and the

arrest of French nationals for reckless driving, driving without a helmet and driving without the correct driver's licence needed for operating a vehicle in Thailand.

The latter group of arrests, described as "involving foreign tourists joining groups of motorcycles in Patong", was branded as "causing annoyance and behaviour that is a threat to society".

Phuket Immigration, Patong Police and Phuket Tourist Police had arrested French foreigners involved in the above, and they had arrested a foreigner for "stealing a Thai job".

Tracking down and arresting a "gang" of Mongolians stealing from tourists in Patong, namely by pickpocketing, was also worthy of mention at the high-powered press conference.

Apparently the landlord of where the Mongolians were staying was issued a formal warning, "admonishing him to strictly comply with the law", but which law the landlord had broken was not explained.

Phuket Immigration Chief Col Thanet called on all people to report illegal activities perpetrated by foreigners.

"The Phuket Provincial Immigration Office has set a standard for conducting screening inspections and the suppression and arrest of foreigners who commit crimes... If anyone sees or knows of wrongdoing [by foreigners], please report it to the Phuket Immigration Office," he said.

Chalong-Patong road still dirt, but open

THE ROAD OVER THE hills from Chalong to Patong remains crushed rock, but is already in use by people looking to enjoy the road, Tiwat Seedokbuab, Deputy President of Phuket Provincial Administration Organisation (PPAO), has confirmed.

"Actually, the road with crushed rock is completed. There are now a lot of people using the route already," Mr Tiwat told *The Phuket News*.

"However, while there are a lot of tourists using the road, we are concerned about those who are not used to the route, as the gradient of the road on the way up and down is quite steep," he said.

Road engineers surveyed the gradient of the road on Feb 22 to determine which sections should be covered with concrete to make using the road safer, Mr Tiwat said.

The areas identified in need of improvement to make it safer for drivers comprised

500 metres of road on the Chalong side and about one kilometre on the Patong side, he noted.

The sections of road range from six to eight metres wide, he added.

"In case of rain, the slopes can be dangerous for drivers. Our engineers have already measured how long and wide sections of road with steep slopes will be turned into concrete roads and they are designing it. We chose concrete because it is durable from water erosion during the rainy season," he said.

"Paving the road on the steep slopes does not have to wait for approval from Phuket Provincial Office of the Royal Forest Department, though that is usually the case, as it is necessary for the safety of drivers," he added.

"After the engineers have completed their designs of the steep sections of road, they will evaluate the budget for

each of them. This will be a separate budget from the previous project to make the route," Mr Tiwat explained.

"Chalong Municipality and Patong Municipality will both have to file their requests to the PPAO for the budget to improve the steep sections of road in their areas. We have had a meeting about this already and we will look into how much each of them can support the construction cost and how much the PPAO will support the budget," he said.

However, permission from the Phuket Provincial Forestry Office is required for the PPAO to pave a flat section of the road that crosses Royal Forest Department land with asphalt, Mr Tiwat said.

"We cannot make the whole route paved just yet as we are waiting for Phuket Forestry Office approval, but the request has been filed.

"After approval has been granted, we are also planning

to install street lights along the route for safety during nighttime," he said.

Mr Tiwat noted that the road not only serves as an alternative route to and from Patong, but is also an attraction for tourists in itself.

"A lot of people are using this route during the day now, and we can see that many tourists are interested in this route because of its beautiful view and fresh breeze.

"There are also plenty of runners exercising around the area," he said.

CHANGING LANES

The Chalong-Patong road traverses steep hills for a total length of 3.5km, from behind the Klong Kata reservoir in Chalong to 50 Pi Rd in Patong. Before the current ongoing roadworks, which began Oct 24 last year, the road was little more than a dirt track.

Attempts to have the track officially designated to become



Photo: PPAO

a permanent road had been repeatedly proposed for more than a decade, but were denied as the road passes through a protected forest area. That hurdle was instantly dismissed as officials scrambled for alternative routes to Patong following the Patong Hill landslide on Oct 19.

The project was initially estimated to take two weeks to complete with an opening deadline in early November.

The plans were then changed in favour of a 12-metre-wide permanent road. Plans included widening the road, creating large drainage ditches on either side "to prevent people from taking advantage of the new road either by illegal logging or

illegal excavation", PPAO President Rewat Areerob announced at the time.

The permanent road was also to include bicycle lanes. Fences were to run along each side of the road to help prevent wildlife from straying onto the road. Small tunnels were to be built to allow wildlife to cross from one side to the other without risking crossing the surface of the road.

How much the project would cost in total to build the fully fledged road, and how much the road has cost so far, have never been revealed.

Mr Tiwat declined to give a figure for the construction costs for the road. "We are still finalising it," he said.

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Wanton joyride ends in arrest, serious injury

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An Australian man has been arrested after he stole a car at the carpark at Phuket International Airport, hit a parked car and left the scene and ran two police checkpoints before he was apprehended last week.

The arrest came only after the Australian man had struck a motorbike, seriously injuring its Russian rider.

Lt Col Bandasak Srilert of the Sakhu Police revealed details of the arrest to *The Phuket News* on Mar 2.

Sakhu Police were informed by a Thai man at about 5:50pm on Mar 1 that a foreign man had stolen his white Toyota Yaris from the airport carpark.

The foreigner hit a parked car at the carpark and drove off, police were told.

The officers started tracking the stolen car through its GPS, and officers from the Chalong Police set up a checkpoint on Chao Fa East Rd.

However, the foreign man, later identified as 56-year-old Australian national John Joseph Donnelly, drove past the officers at high speed, with traffic police giving chase by motorbike.

Donnelly next encountered another police checkpoint set up in front of Lotus's Rawai on Wiset Rd.

Donnelly again tried to avoid the checkpoint, but struck a motorbike



Photo: Sakhu Police

being driven by Russian man Philipp Vorontsov, 35. Mr Vorontsov was knocked off the motorbike. *The Phuket News* learned later that Mr Vorontsov suffered serious injuries to one of his legs. He was rushed to Vachira Phuket Hospital in Phuket Town.*

The impact left the motorbike stuck under the front left of the car, causing the front left tyre to blow out.

Donnelly attempted to keep driving, but eventually had to stop near Friendship Beach because of the damage to the front left wheel.

Donnelly then attempted to flee on foot. Police gave chase and soon had him in custody.

Donnelly was first taken to Chalong Police Station, then taken to Sakhu Police Station, where he was presented with a slew of charges, including auto theft

and reckless driving causing damage to private property, Lt Col Bandasak said.

Donnelly denied all charges against him, he added..

Donnelly already had a criminal record for theft committed in Phuket Town, Lt Col Bandasak noted.

Donnelly is also known to be on medication for a mental disorder, Lt Col Bandasak said.

At time of press police had yet to confirm the legal action taken against Donnelly.

* As of last Friday (Mar 3) urgent blood donations were still needed for Mr Vorontsov. People with O- or B-blood were asked to present themselves at the blood bank at Vachira Phuket Hospital to donate blood, and explain that they were there to donate blood for Mr Vorontsov.



Photo: PR Phuket

Fake goods factory raided in Kathu

OFFICERS LED BY REGION 8 Police raided several commercial units in Kathu last week where trademark logos of companies such as Adidas, Nike, Under Armour and RVCA, owned and operated by Billabong and Quiksilver, were illegally produced on shirts.

Officers arrived at the row of commercial unit shop-houses, located near Kathu Waterfall, on Mar 2 with a warrant issued by Phuket Provincial Court.

Leading the raid was Region 8 Police Deputy Commander Maj Gen Saksira Phuak-am. Joining him were officers from the Phuket Intellectual Property Violation Suppression Center, Provincial Police Region 8, representatives of the copyright owners and Kathu Police.

At the first unit raided officers found the workshop

where the trademark logos, including Boss and Gucci, were screen-printed onto the shirts.

At another unit about 100 metres away officers found shirts already screen-printed with the logos being prepared for distribution.

Three people found working at the units, and were taken to Kathu Police Station to be prosecuted, Maj Gen Saksira confirmed.

"This inspection is the result of a complaint and the investigation has resulted in the arrests and seizure," Maj Gen Saksira said.

"As you can see, there are a lot of tourists coming to Phuket, causing the trademark logos to be copied and brought out for sale in large numbers. This causes a lot of damage to the copyright owners and the country," he added.

The Phuket News

Police hunt down alleged 'black taxi'

POLICE IN CHERNG TALAY last week were called in to track down a man wanted for using a private car to pick up tourists at Bang Tao after being booked through the Grab app.

Officers from the Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO) arrived at the beach to investigate an incident posted on social media on Mar 3, the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket) reported last Sunday (Mar 5).

The post showed what appeared to be a private car picking up tourists from in front of a store near Bang Tao Beach in Chergn Talay.

The PLTO officers spoke with taxi drivers in the area, who told them that the tourists booked the taxi through the Grab app, PR Phuket reported.

However, the car used to pick up the tourists did not have any signs or markings indicating that it was a taxi, said the report.

The car was hence presumed to driver illegally operating a 'black taxi'.

According to the report, allegedly there was an argument over the incident. PLTO officers, Chergn Talay Police and the PR Phuket report did



Photo: PR Phuket

not elaborate further on the "argument" – the word previously used by Phuket officials when avoiding any recognition of a physical altercation.

Phuket officials publicly released the name of the man wanted for allegedly operating a 'black taxi' as Weerayut Kaewpan. Phuket officials also publicly reported his car's licence plate number.

However, no officials named any of the taxi drivers questioned or even involved in the "argument".

Phuket officials were happy to report that Lt Col Sutham Ratsawangwong, Deputy Chief of Chergn Talay Police, was formally requested to track down Mr Weerayut and have him brought to Chergn Talay Police Station.

In an attempt to be seen as fair, the PR Phuket report described the officials' intention as "inviting both parties to clarify the facts at Chergn Talay Police Station regarding

the relevant laws".

Officials did not report what action was taken against Mr Weerayut or specify the law that was broken.

The PLTO with any explanation posted two national regulations last month relevant to operating taxis. One of the regulations, issued by Department of Land Transport Director-General Chirut Wisanchit on Dec 2, 2021, mandated that EV taxis must be white, and that non-EV taxis must be yellow in colour – with an exemption for non-EV taxis registered before that date.

The PLTO campaign targeting illegal taxi drivers, with special focus on 'out of province' taxi drivers, was launched within hours of taxi drivers from Phuket's powerful taxi cooperatives and associations staging a protest at Provincial Hall on Feb 2.

The drivers complained that non-Phuket drivers and other drivers presumed to be illegal – especially if they operated outside of the Phuket 'public transport' cartel organisations – were charging less than local Phuket drivers, and hence costing the local cartel drivers passengers and income. *The Phuket News*



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Wind 11 m/s

SAT MARCH 11

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Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

SUN MARCH 12

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Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

MON MARCH 13

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Wind 4 m/s

TUE MARCH 14

High: +32°
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Wind 4 m/s

WED MARCH 15

High: +30°
Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

THU MARCH 16

High: +30°
Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

Three arrested for brawl with tourist

The Phuket News
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Patong Police have responded to accusations of lack of action taken regarding a Canadian tourist being attacked and robbed on Patong Beach in the early hours of one morning last month.

Police have investigated the incident and prosecuted three suspects – all youths – resulting in a fine of B4,000, Patong Police reported on Mar 2.

According to the report, the investigation was ordered by Patong Police Chief Col Sujin Nilabadee following complaints posted on the 'Hot Jung Phuket' Facebook page.

The complaints posted online accused Patong Police of taking no action to investigate the assault on 28-year-old Canadian tourist William Lamarche, who had reported that he had been attacked and robbed by a group of men on Patong Beach who made off with his watch and cash, said the report.

However, the report by Patong Police failed to mention that Phuket Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Sermphan Sirikong had already come forward to explain that he had ordered officers to investigate the attack.

The incident occurred on Patong Beach in the early hours of Feb 11, Patong Police reported.

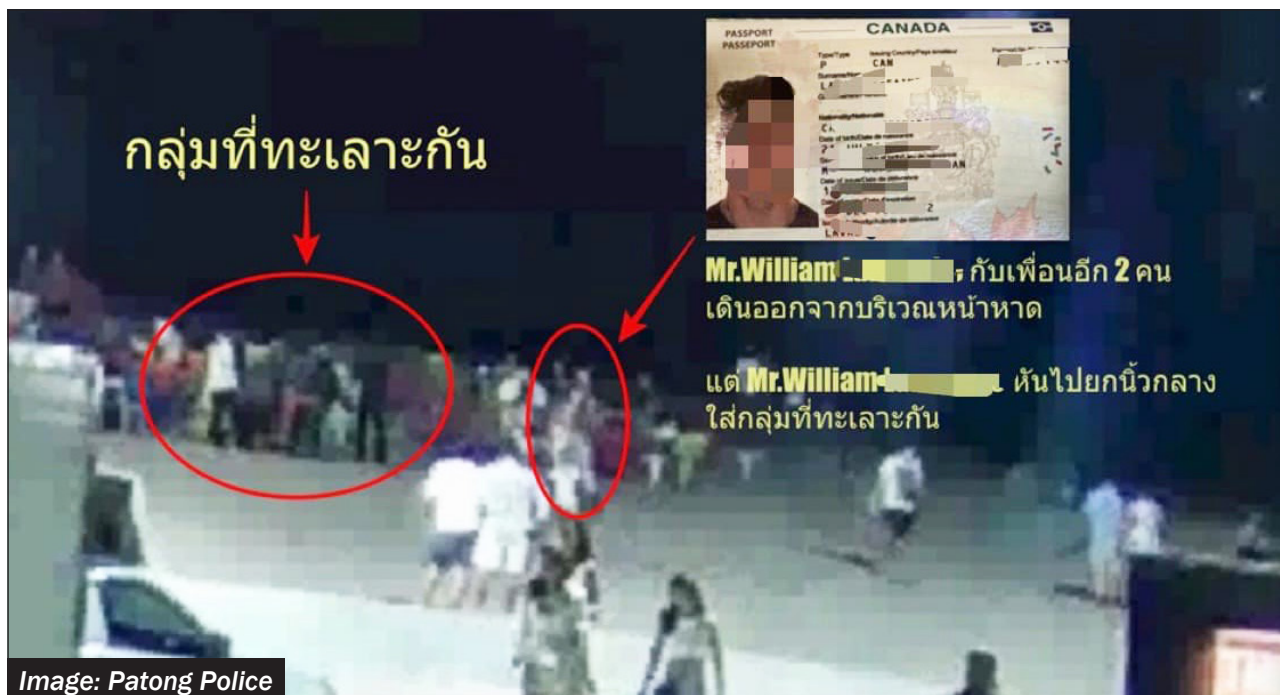


Image: Patong Police

Officers confirmed through CCTV that Mr Lamarche was in McDonald's on Bangla Rd at 2:22am, and CCTV at the police box at the end of Bangla Rd confirmed that he walked from Bangla Rd to sit and drink with a group of friends on the beach at 2:40am, police said.

At about 2:51am Mr Lamarche was drinking with a group of friends on the beach when he became involved in an argument and a fight with the perpetrators.

At about 3:03am Mr Lamarche walked back along Bangla Rd, and at about 3:15am entered 'Clinic Bodrum'

to receive medical treatment.

Recognised by Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Sermphan in the initial response to the incident, Mr Lamarche had suffered a broken nose and multiple contusions in the affray.

Patong Police reported that three youths had been held responsible for the attack, named only as "Kantsak", 18; "Sittisak", 13; and "Tan Chin Huai", a Myanmar national whose age was not reported.

The report by Patong Police noted that the prosecutions had resulted in a fine of B4,000, but did not clarify whether the amount was the fine in

total or the fine for each offender.

The report made no mention of the Rolex watch and B50,000 cash reported stolen by Mr Lamarche.

The report also made no mention of claims by Thai witnesses that the attack was not a mugging, but an incident after an argument at a local "restaurant" where the Canadian allegedly refused to pay the bill.

The report by Patong Police also made no mention of any action taken over Mr Lamarche's complaint that he had reported the incident immediately after the attack to a Patong Police officer on patrol, who did nothing.

Illegal cigarette smugglers busted

POLICE HAVE ARRESTED two women on charges of smuggling illegal cigarettes onto the island in addition to being in possession of electronic cigarettes and hookahs, known as 'baraku' in Thailand.

Officers from Muang police station conducted the raid last Saturday night (Mar 4) and apprehended 47-year-old Ms Ya (not her real name) and 17-year-old Ms Porn (not her real name) after the pair were found in possession of the illegal contraband at a residential property on Yaowarat Rd in Phuket Town.

The seized haul included 470 packets of cigarettes procured from overseas, more than 70 e-cigarette devices and almost 500 individual pieces of hookah-specific paraphernalia such as disposable mouthpieces and refill bottles.

Additionally, the officers retrieved a phone, a notebook computer and seven trading bookings detailing cash transactions from the sale of illegal cigarettes total-



Photo: Phuket Info Center

ling B66,920.

The two females were promptly taken to Muang police station where they faced charges for violating the Consumer Protection Board's order prohibiting the sale or possession of illegal cigarettes, e-cigarettes and hookah equipment that have not yet paid tax or passed through customs in the correct process to gain entry into the Kingdom.

The Phuket News

Patong ladyboy arrested for snatch and run

A LADYBOY FREQUENTING Bangla Rd has been arrested and charged for the snatch and run of a gold necklace from a British tourist in the early hours of Mar 2.

Patong patrol police were informed of the theft at around 4:30am, said a report by the Phuket Info Center.

The officers arrived at the scene, in front of the Central shopping mall on Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd, to meet the victim, British national Dilan Manish Amin.

Mr Amin explained that a ladyboy had snatched the gold necklace from around his neck and then ran into the bathroom at a nearby bar.

The officers checked the bar bathroom, but the suspect had already left.

Mr Amin then told police that a friend of his had just spotted the thief nearby at the end of Bangla Rd.

The officers moved quickly and had the suspect, Chakri 'Tan' Kaew-Akhaad, in custody while still standing on Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd.

Mr Amin confirmed to the officers that Tan was the suspect who stole his necklace.

Tan was then "invited" to Patong

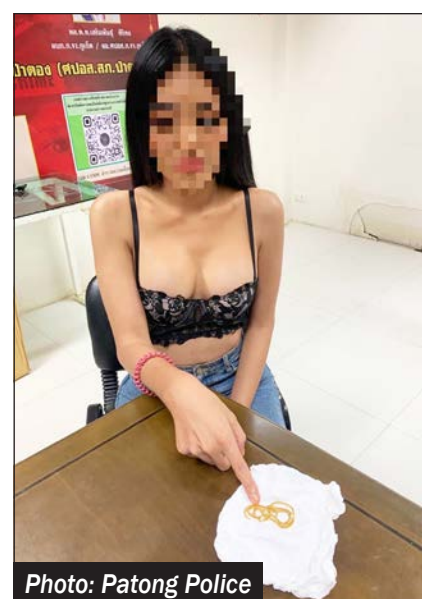


Photo: Patong Police

Police Station and searched. However, officers found no trace of the necklace. The officers then asked Tan to remove her high heels, and they found the gold necklace wrapped in this tissue under Tan's foot.

That's when Tan confessed, police said.

Tan has been charged accordingly for the theft, and the necklace was returned to Mr Amin, police reported.

The Phuket News

Kathu-Srisoonthorn road inches forward

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The move to build a new road directly linking Kathu with Srisoonthorn is gaining momentum with representatives of three influential Phuket families ready to donate the land necessary to build the road.

Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) President Rewat Areerob presided over the meeting held last week to discuss the dedication of land from the private landowners.

Mr Rewat said the PPAO welcome the project in order to help alleviate traffic congestion in the centre of the island.

The road, to be 12 metres wide, will start near the Phuket Mining Museum in Kathu and cross the hills in the heart of the island to connect with the east side of Bang Neow Dam reservoir in Baan Manik, Srisoonthorn, Mr Rewat said.

The meeting was held “to acknowledge the preliminary details” and to ensure that the



An artist's impression of what the six-kilometre road over the hills in the heart of the island will look like. Image: PPAO

donation of the land required to build the road complies with government “guidelines”, namely regulations, under a Cabinet resolution made on August 1, 2007, said an official report of the meeting.

The essence of the Cabinet resolution was that such projects must be mutually beneficial and for the public benefit, the report said.

At the meeting represent-

ing the three families to donate the land were Sanguan Kulwanich, Kitti Saksaktawee and Nginao Ekvanich.

In announcing the intent to build the new road, patriarch Nimit Ekwanich last November explained that the road will start between two old tin mine ponds near the Tin Mining Museum in Moo 4, Kathu.

Motorists already use a

dirt track over the hills from there, accessing it via Soi Kathu 4, he said.

The road connects to Moo 3 and Moo 7 in Srisoonthorn, covering a distance of about six kilometers, he said.

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



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

Krabi man hits reduce speed traffic sign, dies

A 24-YEAR-OLD MAN from Krabi was killed when he lost control of the motorbike he was riding and hit a ‘City Limits - Reduce Speed’ sign by the side of Thepkasattri Rd last Sunday (Mar 5).

Capt Kornphoomphot Pongpaiboon of the Thalang Police was notified of the accident, near the Shell petrol station on Thepkasattri Rd southbound in Tambon Thepkasattri, at 7:40am.

Officers along with Kusoldharm Foundation rescue workers arrived to find the motorbike, a Phuket-registered black-red Honda PCX, demolished by the side of the road.

Its driver, Thanongsak Raiyai, 24, a resident of Moo 7, Nuea Khlong, Krabi Province, was lying dead nearby. He had broken his neck and

had died instantly at the scene, police said.

His passenger, Piyaporn Kittikulnatee, 30, was injured in the accident, and was rushed to hospital.

From their initial investigation, police said that Mr Thanongsak had just returned from his home in Krabi when he lost control of the motorbike and struck the sign by the side of the road.

Police are continuing their investigation into the cause of the accident, officers said.

According to the national Thailand Road Safety Committee (ThaiRSC), as of last Sunday, 25 people had already died and 4,230 people had been injured in road accidents on the island since the start of the year.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Hatching leatherback turtles get a helping hand from locals

IT IS PAST MIDNIGHT ON A BEACH IN Southern Thailand and 12-year-old Prin Uthaisangchai is anxiously staring at a leatherback turtle nest, waiting for scores of the endangered hatchlings to scurry out from the sand.

The Bangkok secondary school pupil is producing a short documentary about the snappers, under a programme run by the Environmental and Social Foundation, an NGO working to educate children about conservation.

That morning a team of marine biologists noticed the sand covering one of the leatherback nests on Phang Nga beach was beginning to sink in on itself.

That was a telltale sign the eggs buried inside were starting to crack and that sometime that night the hatchlings would emerge and make a dash to the ocean under the cover of darkness.

But after more than 20 hours with no sign of any baby turtles, Prin and the team grew worried.

Donning plastic gloves, they carefully dug into the nest to give each squirming critter a helping hand into the world.

Soon the tiny turtles were scrambling towards the shore where waves swept in, taking them into their new ocean home.

“I feel very disappointed how we have to interfere with a natural living thing that shouldn’t need a human’s help,” said Prin. “But in the end, we have to help.”

RECLAIMING THE BEACHES

Leatherbacks, the world’s largest sea turtle



Prin ‘Por’ Uthaisangchai (2nd right) with Environmental and Social Foundation founder Alongkot Chukaew (3rd right) as he explains the behaviour of turtles. Photo: AFP

weighing up to 500 kilogrammes, are a rarity in Thailand thanks to habitat loss, plastic pollution and consumption of their eggs. The creatures are listed as vulnerable globally on The International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List, with many sub-populations deemed critically endangered.

The pandemic allowed the turtles to reclaim beaches usually packed with tourists, with marine biologists recording an increase in nests.

Better protections for the creatures have also helped. Thailand banned poaching their eggs in 1982, and locals are now awarded B20,000 for reporting a leatherback nest – like the one closely watched by Prin under the moonlight.

But only 87 hatchlings from 126 eggs in the nest survived their short journey to the sea.

“It was a good decision to lend them a hand otherwise we would see more deaths,” said marine biologist Hirun Kanghae from the Phuket Marine Biological Centre. AFP

Jellyfish sting warning, first aid posters released in four languages

THE PHUKET PROVINCIAL Public Health Office (PPHO) has created jellyfish warning and first aid posters in four languages to inform tourists of the dangers of jellyfish stings and what to do if they are stung.

The notices are in English, Thai, Russian and Chinese, and are to be distributed to local administrations and lifeguards at popular Phuket beaches.

The posters were created in coordination with the Phuket office of the Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR) and Karon Municipality following rising incidence in the number of people suffering jellyfish stings at Phuket beaches, the PPHO explained.

“Tourists who are fascinated by the beauty of the sea take the risk of coming into contact with poisonous jellyfish. The relevant agencies are aware of the importance and safety of tourists and has publicised for tourists to learn first aid methods when exposed to a jellyfish sting,” the PPHO



Image: PPHO

said in its release.

“Tourists can seek first aid assistance from lifeguards working on the various beautiful beaches [sic],” the PPHO added.

Last month signs were posted at beaches along Phuket’s west coast warning visitors of jellyfish in the waters following a rising number of tourists being stung by the marine creatures.

Officers from the Phuket Marine Resources Conservation Center and local

administration organisations bolstered lifeguard stations with extra bottles of vinegar and other medical supplies to help provide treatment for stings.

The move followed increases in reported stings along the west coast, including at Patong Beach.

However, the signs posted warning of jellyfish stings were in Thai language only.

The new series of posters aims to rectify that.

The Phuket News

Condo recovery needs time

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Phuket condominium market remains an attractive investment opportunity with good ROI figures especially for foreign investors, but still needs time to recover and is waiting for more foreign tourists to increase, says Nattha Kahapana, Managing Director, Knight Frank Thailand.

Mr Nattha gave his appraisal in the latest Knight Frank report made available last Friday (Mar 3). The report in full reads as follows:

MARKET OVERVIEW

After the COVID-19 epidemic situation subsided, the condominium market situation in Phuket began to recover slowly. Foreign tourists have come back to travel in Phuket more. Developers started to re-launch marketing campaigns and develop projects again after the project was paused due to transportation problems of construction materials.

In addition, foreign investors cannot make international money transfers for payment terms during the construction of the condominium according

to the contract conditions.

Thus, many projects were not able to continue building projects for a certain period. As such, the overview of the condominium market in Phuket has slowed down both in terms of supply and demand.

The survey and data gathering during the second half of the year until the end of 2022 found that the demand for the condominiums market is increasing but still not popular compared to the villa market in Phuket during the same period.

SUPPLY

At the end of 2022, the total supply of condominiums on the west coast of Phuket from Mai Khao to Rawai Beach amounted to 24,211 units. Throughout the year, there were 941 new condominium units launched for sale.

As the overall market has not fully recovered, most developers focus on selling the existing supply first. From the survey, it was found that there was a missing supply from the market from 2018 to 2022 amounting to 4,247 units because the project develop-

ment was ceased due to the lack of financial liquidity of the project owners during the COVID outbreak situation.

Moreover, there were problems in obtaining a construction permit in an area that is not suitable for project development and those projects have not currently made any further development progress.

The new condominiums launched for sale are mostly located in Bang Tao Beach, with 45% of the total new supply, followed by Layan Beach at 31%, and Nai Yang Beach and Kata Beach at 18%

and 6%, respectively.

The added supply this year has a view that does not overlook the sea but is still within walking distance as the land plots by the beach or with sea view are relatively scarce. It is projected that the future condominium development projects will be further away from the beach.

DEMAND

At the end of 2022, there were 18,613 condominiums sold of a total supply of 24,211 units, representing a sales rate of 76.9%. The sales rate decreased by 1.4% from 2021, which stood at 78.3% with approximately 5,598 units left for sale.

Only 397 new units were sold in 2022, which decreased almost half from 2021 and represented a continued downward trend since 2020.

The main buyer of new units is still almost 100% Russian. They come to Phuket during the high season (October-February) for both work, as they can work online, and for leisure. Some are Europeans who buy for staying during this high season. However, the reopening of the destination and the arrival of tourists this

year has not yet stimulated an increasing demand for condominiums.

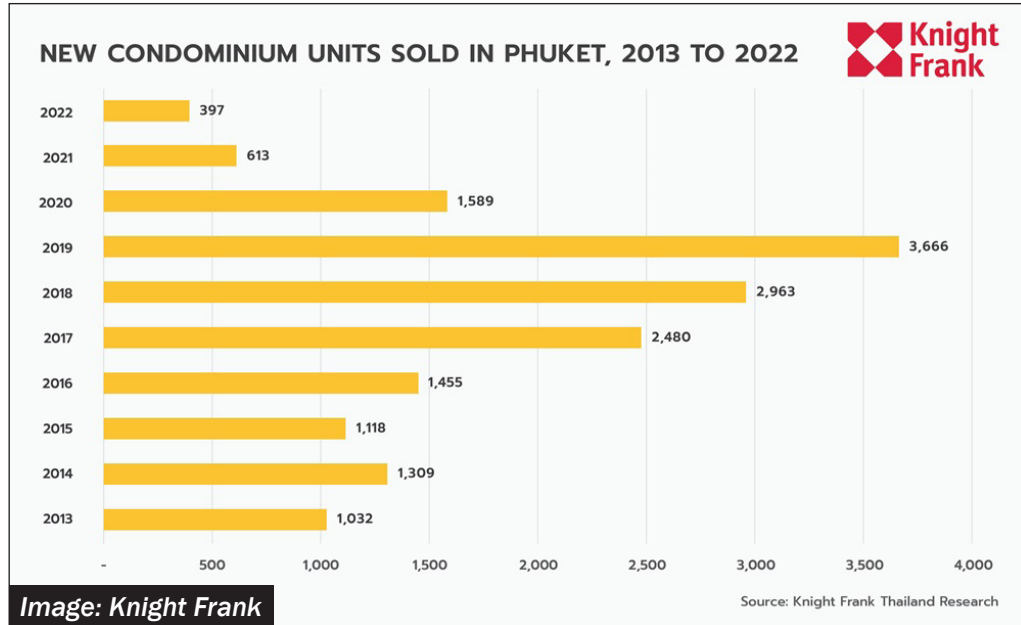
On the other hand, it was found that there was more demand in buying villas for both living and investment. Most of the foreigners who come to Phuket are Russians.

ASKING PRICES

The average asking price for sea view condominiums on the west coast of Phuket as of the end of 2022 was B196,900 per square metre, a slightly increase from 2021 by 0.45%. The average asking price of condominiums with partial sea views was B97,915 per square metre, representing a 0.38% increase from 2021. Condominiums without sea views had an average asking price of B74,548 per square metre, an increase of 0.22% from 2021.

OUTLOOK

The condominium market will need another one to two years to fully recover to pre-COVID levels. Many projects under construction will this year gradually be completed and open for service as hotels to welcome more tourists, especially Chinese.



Phuket targets more French tourists

A ROADSHOW HELD in Paris on Mar 2 is aiming to increase the number of tourists visiting Phuket from France, officials have confirmed.

The roadshow was organised in the French capital city by the Phuket Tourist Association in conjunction with the Tourism Authority of Thailand's Paris office, overseen by Bunyarit Wichesphan.

The event provided an opportunity for Thai businesses and entrepreneurs to present Thai specific hospitality products and services to potential travel partners and businesses in France.

Also present at the event was Tana Weskosith, Thailand's Ambassador to France, who welcomed delegates and representatives of French travel agencies and international airlines.

Amb Tana also thanked those in attendance for supporting Thai tourism, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic when major challenges were experienced, adding that their support contributed greatly to the success of the Phuket Sand-



box Project, which helped pilot the country's reopening in mid-2021.

The roadshow also highlighted Phuket's ambition to host the Specialized Expo in 2028 under the theme "Future of Life: Living in Harmony, Sharing Prosperity", which organisers said will be an opportunity to exchange knowledge and further enable Thailand's sustainable

development goals.

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha also lent further support to Phuket's bid to host the Expo last Friday (Feb 3) when he ordered all relevant government agencies to focus on the development of medical tourism to enable the provinces of Phuket, Krabi and Phang Nga be recognised as international health centres by 2026.

The Phuket News

Kongsak takes the reins at Chamber

KONGSAK KOOPHONGSAKORN HAS been installed as President of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce at the chamber's annual general meeting.

Mr Kongsak was formally elected and installed as the new president at the event held on Feb 28 at the Royal Phuket City Hotel in Phuket Town.

The event also saw a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the Chamber of Commerce members involved in launching the 'Phuket Privilege Card' and the Phuket provincial government.

The 'Phuket Privilege Card' is to provide a 'one stop service' for business operators looking to invest in the province.

Acting as signatory on behalf of the provincial government was Phuket Vice Governor Amnuay Pisuwan, who highlighted how the launch of the card was in line with the provincial policy of public-private collaboration in providing a 'One Stop Service Center' to facilitate business investment in the province.

Ten private sector organisations, including the Phuket branch of the Federation of Thai Industries; the Thai Hotel Association Southern chapter, of which Mr Kongsak was formerly the president; the Phuket Tourist Association and the Phuket Real Estate Business Association, were all signatories as witnesses to the signing.

Outgoing president Thanusak Phungdet welcomed Mr Kongsak to his new role, and listed the projects that the chamber is currently involved with and supported.

"Currently, there is a project of the Damrongdhama Center [provincial ombudsman's office] to bring the Traffy Fondue platform to public use in order to notify local offices



of repairs to public facilities needed and to manage the city by providing a service for receiving complaints, through which advice can be given and to provide information to the public conveniently and quickly," Mr Thanusak said.

"This is in line with the work of the private sector that has designed a one-stop service center for the private sector for foreign investors to be able to contact and receive advice with accurate information and facilitating business operations in Phuket for the sustainable growth of industries in Phuket," he added.

"This is in accordance with the policy of the Chamber of Commerce, which wants to promote and support private businessmen," he said.

"We want to build an alliance with investors and encourage more investment in the area," Mr Thanusak noted.

"All of this can be linked to the future. If Phuket hosts the Expo 2028 Phuket Thailand with the highlight of Phuket being known around the world as a world-class tourist destination, there will be more than 4.9 million people attending the event. For that, we need to prepare to facilitate hosting the event," Mr Thanusak noted.

The Phuket News

One in 10 Thai children classed clinically obese

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

Almost 10% of Thai children are clinically obese, according to a Department of Health study that was released last Sunday (Mar 5).

The report warned the situation is expected to get worse if parents and teachers fail to improve nutritional awareness and physical exercise among the young.

During a briefing to unveil the findings on Sunday, department chief Dr Suwannachai Wattanayingcharoenchai said parents should create a healthier environment as the study suggests youngsters are exposed to an overabundance of food containing unhealthy levels of fat, sugar and salt.

According to the ministry's Health Data Centre, 9.1% of children aged 0-5 years old are considered overweight for their age, with that proportion rising to 13.4% in 6-14-year-olds and 13.2% in the 15-18 category.

The World Obesity Federa-



Availability and accessibility of healthy food are factors in child obesity. Photo: Wichan Charoenkiatpakul

tion has forecast that rates of childhood obesity are expected to double between 2020 and 2035.

These findings are in line with another department report into children's diets, which discovered that a third consume sweet snacks and beverages every day and almost 30% are permitted to select food based purely on their own preferences.

Sugary drinks are a particular concern with an estimated 25% of youths in the age bracket consuming them

regularly, Dr Suwannachai said.

Youngsters in this age bracket will typically consume tea, coffee and other sugar-sweetened beverages once or twice a week. Similarly, about 31% of people aged 45-59 and 27.4% of those aged 25-44 consume such beverages daily.

BAD CHOICES

"As World Obesity Day falls on March 4, we would like parents to select healthy food for their children," Dr Suwannachai explained at last Sunday's briefing.

"Children often make bad choices when left to choose what to eat which is only made worse by the marketing strategies of confectionary manufacturers.

"Parents and schools should teach them how to select good food and what the consequences to their health a poor diet can pose," Dr Suwannachai added.

"They should eat sweets no more than twice a week, a serving of fish at least once a week, a maximum of three eggs a week, as well as more calcium-rich foods such as sardines, beans and lentils.

"Fresh fruit and vegetables are recommended every day, as is exercise to strengthen muscles and bones," Dr Suwannachai suggested.

Obesity is a disease that can cause serious long-term health complications such as diabetes, high blood pressure, excess fat, heart disease and dementia.

It is an issue that has become worryingly prevalent in recent years with trends in Thailand continuing to rise among the nation's population.

Transport minister suspended by court

BANGKOK

THE CONSTITUTIONAL Court last Friday (Mar 3) suspended Transport Minister Saksayam Chidchob from performing his duties over alleged share concealment pending the court's decision on the case.

The court's order came after it unanimously accepted a petition by a group of 54 opposition MPs to rule on the status of Mr Saksayam.

According to the petition, the minister of the coalition Bhumjaithai Party used a nominee to hold shares in a construction company, Buri-jarearn Construction Limited Partnership (BCLP), which was awarded contracts worth billions of baht by the Transport Ministry.

Saksayam has been informed to clarify the allegations with the court within 15 days starting from the date he received a copy of the petition, which he said he will comply with.

Deputy Transport Minister Atirat Ratanasate would serve as caretaker transport minister during Saksayam's suspension.



Saksayam Chidchob. Photo: Bangkok Post

The opposition accused Saksayam of violating Section 187 of the constitution that prohibits a minister from holding shares, saying he concealed his assets in BCLP and used an employee as a nominee to hold shares on his behalf.

Although Saksayam initially relinquished his shareholding position on entering politics in 1997, he became a major shareholder in 2015 when he increased the company's registered capital to B120 million.

Before the 2019 election, he transferred his shares worth B119.4mn to his nominee, according to the opposition.

The minister had rejected the allegations, saying it was a friend who bought the company's shares and there was proof of the money transfer.

Bangkok Post

Minister plans new law on animal fighting, betting to attract visitors

BANGKOK

JUSTICE MINISTER SOMSAK Thepsutin has ordered the drafting of new standards for animal fights and racing to attract visitors, raise the value of the animals and boost tax revenue.

Mr Somsak said on Feb 27 that officials would collaboratively draft the new law which will cover animal fighting and racing with legalised gambling and pave the way for the development of pedigrees to increase the value of the animals.

The minister said this followed the Interior Ministry giving approval for provincial governors to resume local competitions such as bull, cock and fish fighting and horse racing, together with related gambling.

"It will be a soft power that will stimulate the Thai economy and attract foreign tourists. Animal competitions in the various regions are a long-standing lifestyle and tradition for Thais," Mr Somsak said.

"The new law will be beneficial to people. Sports animals such as bulls and cocks can be exhibited for tourists. There will be internationally accepted rules for the fights... This will attract visitors and more admission fees will be collected," the justice minister added.

He also foresaw the development of pedigrees for the bulls, cocks and horses involved, which he said would raise their value.



A bullfighting ring in Phatthalung province. Photo: Werapan Chaikere

"I want all sections of the ministry to collaborate," Mr Somsak said.

"As for gambling, if we legalise it, have online platforms and collect tax, the state will earn revenue for national development... Once the law comes into effect, it will benefit many villagers and farmers," Mr Somsak concluded.

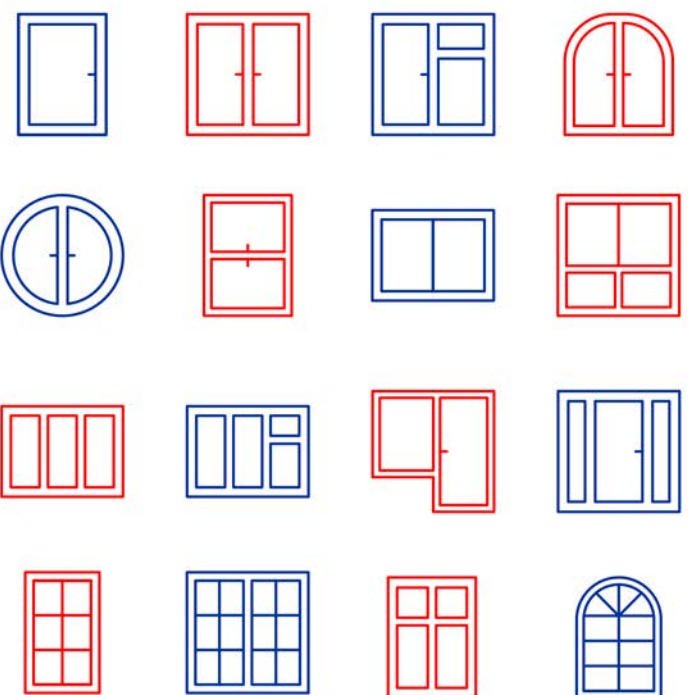
Venues for various types of animal fighting and racing that allow betting were closed in early 2020 with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, such venues were permitted to re-open last month when it was confirmed that the disease had become controllable.

Suttipong Juljarern, permanent secretary to the interior minister, sent letters to provincial governors on Feb 24 explaining that the venues could operate once again on the provision they obtained an official permit to do so. Bangkok Post



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A Commitment to Excellence

Meet Pamela Ong, General Manager, Courtyard by Marriott Phuket Town

Nattha Thepbamrung
life@classactmedia.co.th

Celebrating International Women's Day on March 8, we had a great opportunity to sit and chat with Pamela Ong to speak about her career journey and success story, which has the potential to inspire and empower a new generation of female hospitality leaders.

Pamela joined Marriott International in 2001 as Director of Sales & Marketing of Miri Marriott Resort & Spa in Malaysia. Since then, her professional career with Marriott has grown from strength to strength.

A highly motivated executive with a commitment to excellence, Pamela is a BMSC Sales University certified trainer and completed the Marriott Elevate General Manager program in 2018. In 2021, she oversaw the successful opening of Courtyard by Marriott Phuket Town as Hotel Manager, before achieving her first General Manager role.

Throughout her career, Pamela has proven that high-quality management is not gender-specific and that women have a vital role to play in the leadership of all industries, including hospitality.

"Continue to push the boundaries and strive for excellence. Success is no accident; it is a combination of perseverance, passion for what you are doing, and the belief in your ability to be

successful and impact others positively."

What's your educational background? Was it hospitality/hotel management?

I studied Secretarial Studies and decided to join the hotel industry as a Sales Coordinator at 19. Starting from a very junior position, I was fortunate to have great mentors throughout my career who helped me excel and further push my boundaries.

What was your hotel management experience that made you become the successful GM of Marriott Courtyard?

I had many mentors who let me have hands-on experience in taking on more extensive responsibilities despite the role I had. This helped me with my people and project management skills. Also, the pandemic made us realise how we utilise and manage with limited resources.

What do you think are the main things that made you successful in your career?

I always have a 'can do' attitude and am very optimistic. I believe you need to have the right mindset to be successful, as that will propel you to pursue both knowledge and excellence and drive you to do and achieve more.

Do you have a passion for hotel/hospitality?

I am incredibly passionate about the hotel, from my team members to guests. When I was growing up, my parents would spend every school holiday with

a local hotel staycation, so I was always amazed by the magic that happens at hotels. When I started working in the industry, making a difference to a guest and our associates and seeing their reactions and happiness was a key driver to my passion for improving the hotel and service wherever I am.

What is your own management strategy as a GM?

At Marriott, our core values drive us where we put people first, both guests and associates, so my management strategy is very people focused, with delivery by execution of projects and plans. Success is achieved as a team, and we must involve the impacted. I have very open conversations with my team members and give them feedback; they can also share challenges with me, knowing they have my support.

What do you think is the strength of Marriott Courtyard?

The strength of Courtyard by Marriott Phuket Town is our associates. They are passionate, and our assets, ensuring all our guests are well looked after.

What are your future plans for hotel management during this time as tourism starts to recover?

With tourism starting to bounce back, Phuket is having a workforce challenge. One of our management strategies is to keep reaching out to the next gen-



Pamela Ong.

eration to showcase how Marriott International is the best place to work with a strong pipeline of hotels to open. We want to showcase connecting people through the power of travel and that, as a company, we invest in our associates and provide access to opportunities.

As a successful woman, what encouragement would you offer other women who are working their way to their accomplishments?

Do not be afraid to dream and reach for the stars. There are equal opportunities out there for everyone who is driven and has the passion to strive for success. Find a mentor who is able to be a sounding board, who is able to steer you in the right direction, and always keep a positive attitude as there will be some hurdles along the way. Conquering those hurdles will make you a stronger leader.

WINDOW ON PHUKET

The April-May 2023 hard copy issue goes to print very soon

Distributed in resorts/hotels lobbies, in a high number of restaurants and coffee shops, plus inserted in one issue of *The Phuket News* each month, it is a great way to Talk to Phuket.

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Life Beyond Glasses: The Game-Changing Advantages of Refractive Lens Exchange!

ADVERTORIAL

Are you over 50 and tired of constantly reaching for your glasses to read the newspaper, watch TV, or even see your loved ones' faces clearly? Do you find yourself limited by your eyeglasses, preventing you from living life to the fullest?

As you get older, it's common to experience changes in your vision. Many people find that they need glasses to see things clearly, whether it's reading a book or simply navigating their surroundings. But constantly relying on glasses can be frustrating and limiting, making it difficult to enjoy the activities you love or even just go about your day-to-day life. If this sounds familiar to you. Now, It's time to say goodbye to the limitations of glasses and hello to the freedom of Refractive Lens Exchange (RLE) surgery with Trifocal IOLs.

What exactly is RLE and how can it change your life?

RLE is a surgical procedure that replaces your natural lens with an artificial lens to correct your vision. This procedure is typically used to treat a range of vision problems, including nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism. RLE is a painless outpatient procedure that takes very short time, very safe and can provide you with long-lasting vision correction.

What are Trifocal IOLs and how do they work?

Trifocal IOLs are a type of artificial lens used in RLE surgery that provide clear vision at three distances: near, intermediate, and far. This means that you can see clearly at all distances, reducing your need



for glasses even further. Trifocal IOLs use advanced technology to split the incoming light into different focal points, allowing you to see clearly without the need for your glasses.

How is the surgery done? Is it painful?

What is the recovery like?

RLE surgery with Trifocal IOLs is a safe and painless procedure. During the procedure, you will receive a local anesthetic to numb the eye, so you won't feel any pain or discomfort. The surgeon will make a small incision in your eye and remove your natural lens, replacing it with the artificial lens. The surgery typically takes only 30 minutes per eye.

After surgery, your vision begins to improve almost immediately and should be about 85-90% of what it can be on the next day.

Your dream life, Your future vision, Available for you "today".

If you are boring your life with glasses, RLE can be a life-changing procedure. Imagine waking up in the morning and not having to reach for your glasses or put in your contact lenses. Imagine being able to read the fine print without struggling to focus. Live the way you want, See the world as you wish - without glasses.

The procedure is recommended for individuals aged 50 and above who have a persistent need for glasses and have not undergone any form of laser vision correction such as Lasik/PRK previously.



To learn more or schedule a consultation, visit www.brightviewcenter.com or email bpk.brightview@bgh.co.th.

Author:

Dr. Captain Wiriyaluppa, MD is an experienced ophthalmologist with over 13 years of experience in Refractive Lens Exchange surgery. He has performed over 1000 successful procedures with exceptional outcomes, and he is recognized as one of the most experienced Trifocal IOL implanting surgeons in Thailand. In 2022, he received the "Trifocal User Award" from Carl Zeiss Meditec AG (Germany), recognizing him as one of the highest experienced surgeons in Thailand when it comes to Trifocal Lens implantation.

Carl Zeiss Meditec AG is a German medical technology company that specializes in the development and production of medical devices, particularly in the field of ophthalmology. Its trifocal IOLs has had a significant impact on the field of ophthalmology and has improved the vision and quality of life for countless patients worldwide.



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POP QUIZ

1. The Singapore national anthem is on which banknote?

2. Can hippos swim?

3. The four 'Little Women' of the classic novel of the same name are Beth, Jo, Amy and who?

4. In which year was the machine gun invented?

5. How many 'Ivy League' colleges are there?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Medium

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

1. One who crosses the line?

5. Draconian

10. Worn

14. Kashmir clan

15. Emulate Cicero

16. Sari-clad royal

17. Like some vaccines

18. Nephritic

19. Briefly unknown?

20. Where to get lost?

23. Monthly bill: Abbr.

24. Thickness

25. Tolerates

29. Decay

34. White-tailed eagle

35. Endorsement, e.g.

36. Where the buoys are

37. Way there and back

41. Ties

42. Something in the air

43. Baja bread

44. Act

46. Muffle

48. "There it is!"

49. Hindu month

50. Place in Central London

59. Suspension

Down

1. Patronizer

2. Guardianship

3. Gelatin substitute

4. Comfort

5. Lots

6. ___ doozy

7. Bluster

8. Antares, for one

9. Place to take off and land

10. ___ nitrate

11. Confessed

12. Hydroxyl compound

13. Navajo language

21. Beehive State native

22. Cover story?

25. Home with a view

26. Cheer type

27. Taken

28. Animal house

29. Gunk

30. Insect stage

31. Set, as a price

32. Followers

33. Big name in stationery

35. Boys in the 'hood

38. Russian retreat

39. Tryout

40. Fin. adviser

45. Rapids traveler

46. Topped cookies

47. Shingle abbr.

49. Dogsbody

50. Tough

51. Word waiters write

52. Chlorella, e.g.

53. Computer command

54. Rather

55. Organic compound

56. Unsubstantial

57. Vogue

58. Asteroid discovered in 1898

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:
(1) SG\$1,000; (2) No; (3) Meg; (4) 1884; (5) Eight

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17					18						19			
20					21						22			
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25	26	27	28					29	30			31	32	33
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50	51	52					53	54				55	56	57
59							60					61		
62						63						64		
65						66						67		

Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

1

tonne of recycled paper saves about 17 trees.

92

days is how long the average person will spend on the toilet in their lifetime.

2,617

times a day is how often the average smartphone user touches their phone.

30,000

degrees Celcius is the temperature of the air immediately surrounding a bolt of lightning – that's 5 times hotter than the surface of the Sun.

253 trillion

US dollars is the equivalent of how much people all around the world owe. There is only the equivalent of US\$90.4trn in circulation.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW

Beautiful Bang Tao. Photo by Chris Oakes

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

This week in history

March 10, 1909

Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909: Thailand relinquishes its sovereignty over the Malay states of Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis and Terengganu, which become British protectorates.

March 11, 2011

A 9.0 magnitude earthquake strikes 130km east of Sendai, Japan, triggering a tsunami killing thousands of people, and triggering the second larg-

est nuclear accident in history.

March 12, 1881

Andrew Watson makes his Scotland debut as the world's first black international football player and captain.

March 13, 1921

Mongolia is proclaimed an independent monarchy, ruled by Russian military officer Roman von Ungern-Sternberg as a dictator.

Andrew Watson in 1882.

March 14, 44 BC

Casca and Cassius decide,

on the night before the Assassination of Julius Caesar, that Mark Antony should live.

March 15, 1985

The first Internet domain name is registered (symbolics.com).

March 16, 597 BC

Babylonians capture Jerusalem, and replace Jeconiah with Zedekiah as king.

Source: Wikipedia

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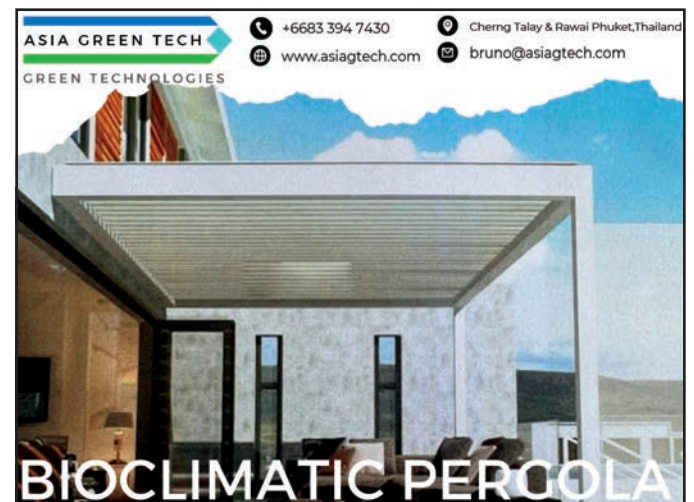
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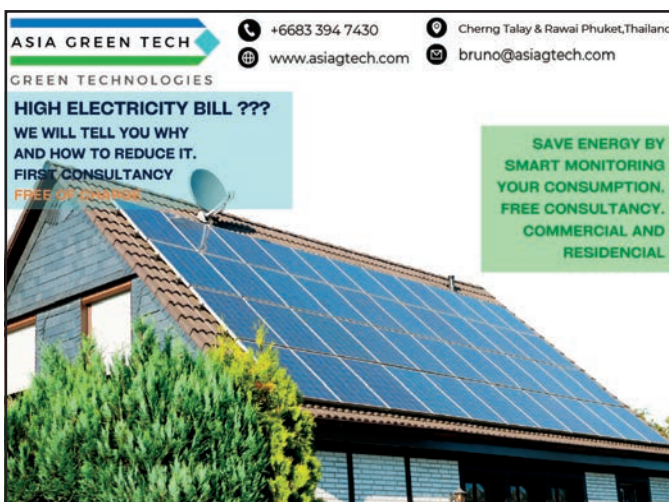
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WHERE ART MEETS ARCHITECTURE

Held at the Grind Cafe at the Underwood Art factory on March 2nd, a select number of guests enjoyed insights on the history of the Underwood Art factory and details on the next development they are involved in. John and Zach Underwood were joined by Louis Cousin, a hospitality investment expert, who provided details on the El Nido Beach development in the Philippines.



BDO PHUKET BREAKFAST BRIEFING: HOTEL & TOURISM INDUSTRY

BDO Thailand and Hughes Krupica organised the event, held at NH Boat Lagoon Phuket Resort on March 3rd, with speakers Bill Barnett of C9 Hotelworks, Bjorn Courage from Phuket Hotels Association and David Arell, Development Management Group, all sharing their thoughts and findings on the current and future state of the hospitality industry in Phuket.



GROW BOATING MARCH NETWORKING

Held at Royal Phuket Marine on March 3rd, a small but enthusiastic group gathered to network and connect. Thanks to Royal Phuket Marina for sponsoring the drinks and snacks. Looking forward to seeing you all next month on April 7th at Boardwalk Bistro at Phuket Boat Lagoon.

Verstappen dominates in Bahrain

FORMULA ONE

Michael Lamonato
michael@boxofneutrals.com

Max Verstappen dominated the season-opening Bahrain Grand Prix ahead of Red Bull Racing teammate Sergio Perez last Sunday (Mar 5), but Fernando Alonso stole the show with a thrilling third for the newly competitive Aston Martin team.

Verstappen had the race won at lights-out, his perfect getaway clearing the way for him to build a 10-second lead early in the race. He only briefly relinquished his advantage at the first pit stops, but the gap to the rest of the pack was so large later in the race that his second tyre change came for free.

The Dutchman took the chequered flag with a healthy 12-second gap to Perez and a foreboding 38.6-second advantage over the rest of the grid after spending much of the race in cruise-home mode.

"It was a very, very good first stint where I basically made my gap, and from there it was all about looking after the tyres," he said.

"I think we have a good race package. Of course it will depend a bit race to race, but we can definitely fight with this."

Perez might have had the pace to challenge his teammate, but a bad



Max Verstappen crosses the finish line to win the Bahrain Formula One Grand Prix last Sunday (Mar 5). Photo: AFP

start dropped him to third on the first lap behind Ferrari's Charles Leclerc.

Leclerc had saved a new set of soft tyres from qualifying and used them to fend off the Mexican, but he was no match for his pursuer after the first pit stops, when Perez's tyre usage was so good he was able to take another set of soft tyres and comfortably relegate Leclerc to third.

By then he was already more than 13 seconds adrift of his teammate, a deficit he managed to keep in check but never threatened to overcome by the end of the grand prix.

Alonso was a sensational addition to the podium after a weekend that confirmed his Aston Martin team had made the gargantuan leap from seventh in last year's constructors championship into the frontrunning pack this season.

The 41-year-old Alonso wound back the clock with some vintage racing, including a memorable duel with old teammate Lewis Hamilton that saw him dive down the inside of the tricky turn 10 for fourth and a high-pressure duel with Ferrari's Carlos Sainz for third, from where

no-one could catch him late in the race.

"Amazing for the team," Alonso said. "It was a great weekend. "Finishing on the podium in the first race of the year, it's just amazing what Aston Martin did over the winter."

"To have the second-best car in race 1 is just unreal," he added.

CHASTENING WEEKEND

Sainz was easy prey for Alonso in a disappointing grand prix for Ferrari. The team had hoped it had cured its poor tyre wear from

late last year, but neither Sainz nor Leclerc had anything close to Red Bull Racing's race pace.

The Italian team's misery was compounded by an engine failure for Leclerc in the closing laps, a concerning throwback to last year's unreliability-riddled campaign.

Lewis Hamilton finished fifth on a chastening weekend for Mercedes, which has come to the conclusion the car concept it debuted last year and carried over this season isn't competitive enough to become a title contender.

The seven-time champion only just saw off a late pursuit from Lance Stroll in the second Aston Martin, who in turn had no trouble seeing off George Russell in the other Mercedes.

Valtteri Bottas finished eighth for Alfa Romeo ahead of Alpine's Pierre Gasly, who stopped three times to recover from 20th into the points.

Thailand's Alex Albon completed the top 10 for the last point of the race in a surprisingly competitive Williams car.

Albon said ahead of the weekend that he expected the team to improve on last year's last place and Sunday suggested it could regularly snipe for points, particularly with rookie teammate Logan Sargeant finishing less than 10 seconds behind him in 12th.

Keerati makes impressive comeback at Royal Varuna

SAILING

TWO-TIME OLYMPIAN Keerati Bualong put on a stellar performance to snatch gold at the 2023 ILCA 7 Masters World Championship held at the Royal Varuna Yacht Club, Pattaya last Saturday (Mar 4).

The Thai turned 30 in December, making him eligible just in time to enter the regatta limited to those 30 years of age and older for the first time.

Sailing in the Apprentice division for those aged 30-44, Keerati managed to finish first in all but one of 11 races he sailed.

After representing Thailand at the London 2012 and Rio 2016 Olympics, he had turned to coaching with the Yacht Racing Association of Thailand.

"I'm glad to be back racing again after two years," Keerati said. "It's nice to be back competing. It's more fun now."

The UAE's Adil Khalid won silver with Italy's Pietro



Keerati. Photo: Supplied

Corbucci claiming bronze.

In the Master division (ages 45-54), Greece's Adonis Bougiouris matched Keerati's record, with first-place finishes in all but one of the races he contested.

Christoph Bottini of Australia and Peter Hurley of the United States took silver and bronze respectively.

In the Grand Master division (ages 55-64), Australia's Brett Beyer won gold, with

compatriot Jan Scholten taking silver and Andrew Holdsworth of the United States claiming bronze.

In the Great Grand Master division (age 65 and older), defending champion Tim Law of the UK secured the gold medal, with Australians Stephen Gunther and Jeff Loosemore, claiming silver and bronze respectively.

Bangkok Post

Saisunee overcomes all the odds

WHEELCHAIR FENCING

CHANCES ARE MOST PEOPLE WON'T be familiar with the sport of wheelchair fencing, let alone the name Saisunee Jana.

However, the 48-year-old from Chiang Mai is regarded as a true legend in the wheelchair fencing community, an expert in both the Épée and Foil classes who was Thailand's first ever female Paralympic gold medalist at the 2004 Athens Paralympics.

She has since gone on to secure two gold, one silver and three bronze at five separate Paralympic Games, including her country's first medal at Tokyo 2020. She was also the flag bearer for her country at the opening ceremony of the 2012 Paralympic Games in London.

The medals and accolades continued in January when Saisunee won two golds at the Wheelchair Fencing World Cup in the United States, for which she received a message of personal congratulations from Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha.

Saisunee's story is one of triumph over tragedy. Born into poverty, she worked in a factory from a young age to help support her family before she was involved in a tragic accident aged 17 when the motorbike she was riding collided with a 10-wheel truck, leaving her paralysed in both legs.

Saisunee's tough, determined character saw her face up to her plight, however. She soon discovered sports for the physically challenged and hasn't looked back.

She has used her career earnings astutely, purchasing houses for her parents in addition to land for the family to farm, while also fund-



Saisunee Jana. Photo: Sports Association of Thailand

ing her younger sister's university education. The COVID-19 pandemic only strengthened this tight family bond, she says.

"The pandemic taught me several lessons. I often overlooked appreciating my roots and my provincial home. Since COVID I no longer need to wait until retirement to see the importance of returning to my family's farming roots and practising the self-sufficient tradition that is part of Thai culture."

Any mention of retirement can wait for now, however, as Saisunee looks towards yet further success at the World Championships in Italy in October and no doubt another chapter in her incredible story.

The Phuket News with additional reporting by the Bangkok Post

Seventh heaven for Reds as Salah breaks goal record

FOOTBALL

AFP

Mohamed Salah scored twice in Liverpool's astonishing 7-0 rout of Manchester United at Anfield last Sunday (Mar 5) to become the club's all-time top Premier League goalscorer with 129 goals.

Egyptian star Salah was delighted with his achievement, saying: "It's very special, I can't lie. This record was in my mind since I came here. After my first season I was always chasing the record."

A brace each from Cody Gakpo and Darwin Nunez and a late strike from Roberto Firmino completed the result, United's heaviest defeat in a competitive game since 1931.

Jurgen Klopp's men also set a new record margin of victory in the clash between English football's two most successful clubs.

"It was one of the best performances for a long, long time," said Klopp.

Just a second defeat in 23 games in all competitions



Liverpool players celebrate Mohamed Salah's record-breaking goal in the win against Man United. Photo: AFP

realistically ends United's hopes of a first league title in a decade as they remain 14 points adrift of leaders Arsenal in third.

"The result is quite obvious. It is unprofessional and there are many things which make me angry," said United manager Erik ten Hag.

Meanwhile, Arsenal recovered from conceding the second-fastest goal in Premier League history in a thrilling encounter with Bournemouth last Saturday, with Reiss

Nelson's strike in the seventh minute of stoppage-time giving the Premier League leaders a 3-2 win.

Arsenal hadn't even touched the ball when Philip Billing gave bottom of the table Bournemouth the lead after just 9.11 seconds with a clinical finish from inside the Gunners area.

They fell further behind when Marcos Senesi's scored in the 57th minute but showed they can cope with the pressure of the title race with a

remarkable comeback as goals from Thomas Partey and Ben White drew them level with 20 minutes to go.

Then came Nelson's late winner, a superb finish from 20 yards to spark scenes of wild celebration all around the Emirates Stadium.

"I'm incredibly happy," said Gunners manager Mikel Arteta. "They never gave up. We want to stay there [at the top] for as long as possible."

Second-placed Manchester City beat Newcastle United 2-0 thanks to goals from Phil Foden and Bernardo Silva to leave the Citizens five points behind Arsenal.

Elsewhere Wesley Fofana's second-half strike helped Chelsea to a 1-0 home win against Leeds United to ease the pressure on under fire boss Graham Potter.

Spurs lost 0-1 at Wolves while Everton and Nottingham Forest fought out a pulsating 2-2 draw. Aston Villa defeated Crystal Palace 1-0, Southampton overcame Leicester 1-0 and Brighton kept West Ham's relegation fears alive with a 4-0 trouncing at the Amex Stadium.

Siripaporn secures world snooker title

SNOOKER

SIRIPAPORN NUANTHAKHAMJAN became Thailand's second world women's snooker champion in a row with her triumph in the World Women's Championship final last Saturday (Mar 4).

Siripaporn, better known in Thailand as 'Baipat Sriracha', beat Chinese teenager Bai Yulu 6-3 in the final at the Hi-End Snooker Club in Bangkok.

The 19-year-old Chinese took a 3-2 lead in the first session only for the Thai to rally and win the contest in the second.

Siripaporn had never previously been beyond the semi-finals of the biggest tournament in women's snooker, but this time the 23-year-old went all the way to lift the Mandy Fisher Trophy.

The victory comes with a card to the professional tour for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 seasons. Siripaporn will be one of two Thai women on the tour next



Photo: Bangkok Post

season, alongside Nutch-arut Wongharuethai (Mink Saraburi), the world title-holder who she knocked out in the semi-finals.

Siripaporn's previous best career moment came in 2019 when she won the Women's Snooker World Cup alongside compatriot Waratthanun Sukritthanes.

She didn't become a regular competitor on the women's tour until last year, and has since climbed to 11th in the rankings.

She reached the final of the recent Asia-Pacific Women's Snooker Championship so came into last week's event high on confidence.

She finished top of her group before knocking out England's Jamie Hunter, Mongolia's Bayarsaikhan Narantuya and compatriot Nutcharut. *Bangkok Post*

Scotland's Gilchrist to miss rest of Six Nations after ban

RUGBY

GRANT GILCHRIST WILL MISS THE rest of Scotland's Six Nations campaign after being handed a three-week ban following his red card against France, tournament chiefs announced on Monday (Mar 6).

The second row admitted prior to an independent judicial committee hearing, which he attended via video link, that he had committed an act of foul play when catching Anthony Jelonek with his shoulder early in the game at the Stade de France on Feb 26.

France won the match 32-21 to end Scotland's Grand Slam dream.

The committee applied World Rugby's mandatory minimum mid-range entry point for foul play involving contact with the head, resulting in a starting point of a six-week suspension.

However, Gilchrist's early acknowledgement that the incident warranted a red card, his lack of intent and clearly expressed remorse meant the punishment was reduced to three weeks.

Gilchrist will be suspended for the last two matches of Scotland's campaign, at home to Ireland on Sunday (Mar 12) and Italy next week.

Meanwhile, France said it was dropping centre Julien Delbouis and back-rower Alexandre Roumat from the extended 42-man squad for tomorrow's Six Nations game



Gilchrist (left) receives his red card against France on Feb 26. Photo: AFP

against England.

Delbouis gives way to Montpellier's uncapped Thomas Darmon, the rugby federation said.

France and England have both won two of their three matches heading into round four and still have a chance of winning the championship should unbeaten Ireland slip up.

The absence of Roumat, who had only been called into the squad last Sunday as a replacement for Dylan Cretin, opens the way again for La Rochelle's Paul Boudehent.

Another La Rochelle player, Thomas Lavault also dropped out on Sunday, his place going to Bordeaux-Begles' lock Thomas Jolmes.

Neither Delbouis nor Roumat was in line to make the 23-man matchday squad for Le Crunch at Twickenham tomorrow. *AFP*



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Magic Mo sets new goal record > p15

DOJO SHINES DOWN UNDER

More medals for Judo students and tutor



Alexis (left), Gabin and Valentine show off their medals at the Sydney International Judo tournament on Feb 26. Photo: Alexis Plantard

JUDO

Ben Tirebuck

editor3@classactmedia.co.th

Fresh off the back of their success in Manila last month, the team from Dojo at Blue Tree Phuket once again showed their worth with another impressive medal haul at the Sydney International Judo tournament on Feb 26.

Hosted by Judo New South Wales and held at the Grand Sports Hall of the Quay Centre at Olympic Park in Homebush, Sydney, the tournament is the largest event of its kind in Australia, with this year's competition attracting over 600 competitors from 20 countries.

Among the medal winners for the Phuket Dojo team were Valentine, who captured bronze in the cadet under 90kg category, while pre-cadet

Gabin also secured a bronze medal with a third-place finish in his division under 38kg class.

Additionally, Dojo at Blue Tree Phuket head instructor Alexis Plantard once again demonstrated his class by winning gold in the men's senior under 90kg class and silver in the overall open weight division.

Falling outside the medal rankings, but still delivering fine performances, were pre-cadets Oliver, who finished 9th overall in under 30kg weight class, and Oscar who finished 9th in under 34kg class.

"It was an extremely tough competition but one that we as a team will take invaluable lessons from," Alexis told *The Phuket News*.

"There were some very strong competitors involved in the tournament but we performed brilliantly as a

team and I am so very proud of all of my students; to fight at the venue that hosted the Olympic Games in Sydney in 2000 was a proud and emotional experience for all of us," he added.

"All the cadets at the Dojo are improving all the time, something that was not only clearly evident in Sydney but in every tournament we enter. We will take confidence from our experience in Sydney and look to move forward and improve even more.

"We will now focus on the rest of 2023 with some very big competitions ahead. The three major ones we will be preparing for are the USA nationals in New York City in early July and the United States International Open in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, at the end of July, as well the selection for the pre-cadet France national Champion-

ships in Paris, France, in November.

"There is a lot of hard work ahead of us before that but we will train hard and be fully prepared," he added.

Outside of that there is a very busy schedule ahead with further tournaments including: the Singapore Open Judo Championships next weekend (March 11-12); the World Cup of wrestling in Tajikistan on March 18; the Hong Kong National Judo Championships on March 26; the Nakhon Si Thammarat Judo Championships on April 19-22; the European Games in Finland on June 26-27; the World Cup of Wrestling in Romania on Sept 1-3; European Wrestling Championships in Rome, Italy on Oct 10-12; the Jakarta Judo Open Championships on Oct 27-29; the World Judo Championships in Abu Dhabi on Nov 5 and the Malaysia

Open Judo Championships on Dec 9-10.

SCHOOL TRAINING CAMPS

Alexis also confirmed that there will be four separate training camps being held at the Blue Tree Dojo facility to coincide with upcoming school holidays.

The camps will focus on teaching judo to newcomers while also embracing broader martial arts such as jiu-jitsu and wrestling.

"The popularity of martial arts is continuing to grow, something that is demonstrated by the ongoing number of new students we receive at the Dojo at Blue Tree Phuket," Alexis explained.

"Martial arts is a great way for children to exercise, while teaching them focus and self-confidence," he added. "It is all done under expert tutorship in

a safe, fun environment where the children get to meet many new friends. We are very much looking forward to the school holiday training camps where everyone between the ages of 5 to 18 is welcome."

The dates for the camps are as follows: April 3-7 and 10-14; May 29 – June 2; July 24 – August 31. Classes run from 8:30am until 5pm and are held at the Dojo at Blue Tree Phuket in Cherg Talay.

Prices are B2,000 a day per child or B7,500 a week per child, with both prices including lunch and snacks throughout the day, in addition to ongoing access to the water refill station and shower facilities.

More information can be found at the Dojo at Blue Tree Facebook page and bookings can be made via dojo@bluetree.fun or by calling 092-8058527.

Eco-friendly Jet Ski World Championships comes to Phuket

WATERSPORTS

PHUKET IS GEARING UP TO host the eco-friendly four-day WPG#1 Waterjet Offshore World Championship 2023 at Laguna in Cherg Talay between March 16-19.

The offshore competition will take place two kilometres off Bang Tao Beach with competitors required to complete one "lap" of the island, a distance of 120km, or 74.56 miles.

The lap is broken down into two legs, starting at Bang Tao Beach and racing to Prompthe Cape, a distance of 60km, with the return leg between the two locations completing

the overall distance of 120km. The quickest competitor to complete the course will be declared the winner.

The competition is divided into separate categories including: Runabout Open A class for male and female competitors; a male specific class; a female specific class; a +300HP stock C class and a novice class.

Although, at time of press, specific numbers were not confirmed, competitors representing Thailand, Australia, USA, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Cambodia, Germany and Russia are all scheduled to take part.

Reigning world champion Jean

Bruno Pastolelo of France has also confirmed he will be competing, making him the automatic favourite to win.

The action will take place between 8am and 5pm each day during the competition and will also be shown live on Eurosport Channel 1, which has a viewing base of over 155 million households in Europe alone.

As part of a pledge to reduce the sport's carbon footprint, organisers have confirmed that they are introducing an eco-friendly electric jet ski for participants at the event. The 'Orca Electric PWC' model is a product they hope has a bright future and that will eventually be

widely adopted within the maritime industry.

At a press conference on Feb 23, Tourism and Sports Minister Pipat Ratchakitprakarn commented that the competition is a fantastic way to promote Phuket to the world as an idyllic water sports and tourism destination and that he was delighted the renowned competition has chosen Phuket as its venue for the race.

He added that the fact the competition will be using eco-friendly equipment aligns nicely with the Ministry of Tourism and Sports' "Save the World" project, which aims to reduce carbon emissions caused by vehicles involved in water sports.



Photo: WPG#1 Jet Ski World Cup

The organisers confirmed that Laguna Phuket are currently offering special discounted rates on rooms at both their Cassia and Angsana resorts for the duration of the competition.

For more information please contact info@jetski-worldcup.com

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