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LAST LINE

LIFEGUARDS: PHUKET'S FIRST AND LAST DEFENCE AGAINST TOURIST DROWNINGS

Photo: Patong Surf Life Saving

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At least 14 foreign tourists have drowned at Phuket beaches so far this year – yet neither the Phuket office of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MoTS) nor the Phuket branch of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) accepts responsibility for publicly reporting the incidents, leaving lifeguards on the sand as the first, last and only line of defense.

Ratchadaporn O-in, Director of the Phuket branch of the Ministry of Tourism & Sports, told *The Phuket News* her office has “no role and no responsibility” in reporting tourists drowning.

The admission by Ms

Ratchadaporn has finally formally exposed the gaping hole in the government’s policy to help prevent tourists from drowning. Other than news reports of drownings at Phuket beaches, tourists arriving on the island are given no prior warning of how dangerous the monsoon rip currents are at the island’s popular beaches.

“It is the role of the Tourist Police to report the number, and the role of local municipalities to take care of matters. You can get the details of drowning victims from the police,” Ms Ratchadaporn said.

“Regarding statistics collection, the agency [MoTS Phuket] does not keep a total record of all tourist drownings each year. The data available only includes cases in

which TAC [Tourist Assistance Center] staff provided assistance. If a tourist is hospitalised or dies without our agency’s assistance, no data is collected,” she explained.

“The primary role of the Phuket MoTs office is coordination. The TAC’s primary role is to facilitate coordination between the consulate and the relatives of tourists who have suffered accidents,” Ms Ratchadaporn continued.

“This includes coordinating the repatriation of bodies of a tourist’s death. The TAC also provides interpreters to assist tourists who cannot communicate in English or other languages.”

Similarly, the TAT does not collect accident statistics, as its primary role is marketing and public relations. The agency only

gathers data on tourist arrivals, an official at the TAT Phuket office noted.

No explanation was given as to what measures – if any – the TAT takes to warn tourists of the dangerous, and often deadly, conditions at Phuket beaches during the southwest monsoon, from May through October, each year.

According to Ms Ratchadaporn, the primary agencies that maintain any records of drowning accident and fatality statistics, with clear details, are the Police (Tourist Police and Provincial Police) and Phuket Public Health Offices (which collect statistics when there are drowning cases and tourists are admitted to hospitals).

Ms Ratchadaporn repeated the mantra, “The role of the TAT/TAC...

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Fixing Phuket via the power of community



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Rugby juniors representing Phuket in style



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News



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Deadly undercurrents

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...in reducing incidents is limited to public relations and information campaigns.”

She even claimed, “These include media campaigns explaining the meaning of beach flags, such as red and yellow warnings.”

However, *The Phuket News* has failed to find clear evidence of the government conducting surf danger awareness campaigns specifically aimed at foreign tourists – that is, not on Thai language only platforms where tourists are not likely to see such warnings.

The warnings, far from frequent and clear, are posted only on the websites and social media platforms of government agencies – which no tourists coming to Phuket for a holiday are expected to see. The only clear and present warnings are those shared through news reports and social media channels of expats targeting foreign arrivals.

Ms Ratchadaporn noted that the MoTs supports local efforts, in that, “Phuket MoTs agencies are providing assistance or supporting local municipalities with training to reskill and upskill lifeguards.” However, details on exactly how the support is provided were not explained.

POLICE

However, Capt Pichet Thongtan, Director of the Marine Police Department's Information Division, told *The Phuket News* that it was the local TAT office's responsibility to collect, and report, drownings at Phuket beaches.

“Marine police only collect overall statistics on water accidents, whether fishing boats or other accidents. When it comes to tourist accidents, we coordinate with and report information to the



TAT,” Capt Pichet said.

“The TAT office is required to report, and is specifically tasked with collecting information on tourist drownings. I know that [TAT in] Krabi province just reported drownings. So why isn't Phuket reporting? Is there no report at all? Actually, they are responsible for compiling reports to submit to the MoTs,” Capt Pichet added.

The best source of information on Phuket drownings that *The Phuket News* could find was provided by the Tourist Police, which confirmed that from January through September this year, 14 people drowned and 14 more suffered serious medical conditions requiring hospital treatment from drowning incidents in Phuket.

The fatalities comprised three Americans, one Australian, one Italian, one Albanian, one Japanese, one Kuwaiti, one Saudi, one Canadian, one Swedish, one Russian, one Bahraini and one Chinese.

Those who suffered serious medical conditions from drowning incidents included, four Kazakhs, two Russians and one Bahraini.

August recorded the highest number of fatalities, with five

deaths in a single month, Phuket Tourist Police confirmed.

Last year, Phuket recorded 20 drowning deaths and 31 more people suffering such intense harm that they required serious medical treatment, with May being the peak month, when 12 deaths and six hospitalisations were reported.

ON THEIR OWN

The funding and support of the lifeguards at Phuket's beaches has been left in a shambles since Norraphat Plodthong, Governor of Phuket at the time, in late 2017 ordered that local municipalities were now responsible for hiring and funding their own lifeguards.

The order was handed down in the hope of putting to bed a corruption scandal over how lifeguards contracts were awarded to private companies, and how much those contracts were worth.

Before Governor Norraphat's 2017 order, the Phuket Provincial Administration Organisation (PPAO) was responsible for funding and providing Phuket lifeguards. However, that order came with a high price. Without proper funding and support, the drowning death rate at Phuket beaches doubled within 12 months.

Rawai Mayor Thames Kraitat is hoping to improve support for lifeguards at Nai Harn, Yanui and Koh Racha by making them full-time municipal employees.

“Despite red flags and constant whistle signals, many tourists return to the water and repeat the same behaviour as soon as lifeguards turn away,” Mayor Thames said.

He warned that many foreign tourists underestimate the danger of rip currents. “No matter how skilled a swimmer, once caught in a rip current, you will be pulled away,” he said.

Rawai currently has eight lifeguards at Nai Harn Beach but plans to raise this to 11. “We cannot guarantee this will be sufficient due to the increasing number of tourists,” he noted.

The mayor highlighted budget pressures, with B8-9 million spent annually on lifeguards, yet within two months lifeguards will be directly employed and managed by the municipality.

“This change gives us authority to fully care for lifeguards, especially after assaults by tourists,” he said. If lifeguards are municipal officials, assaults carry immediate consequences.

COMMON SENSE

Winai Tanboon, Head Lifeguard Supervisor for Kata, Karon and nearby beaches, said Karon's three-kilometre stretch is patrolled by just over 20 lifeguards, spaced 500 metres apart, “insufficient for the roughly 10,000 tourists who visit daily”.

Most drownings, he said, involve tourists swimming after drinking alcohol or using marijuana, often after 7pm. Red flag violations are constant. “Even with about seven flags posted, people still swim,” he said.

Without lifeguards, “at least five people could die each day,” Mr Winai said. In Karon alone, three to four people are rescued from rip currents daily, with 30-40 rescues in the past month.

“All safety issues end up with lifeguards. No provincial authorities have ever seriously addressed their importance. Everyone has seen tourists ignore red flags, but no action has been taken,” he said.

Mr Winai added that sea safety should be publicised at every stage of a tourist's visit. “Airports, hotels and guides must educate tourists from the moment they arrive. Swimming should be banned during monsoon season, or at least require life jackets,” he suggested.

Viroon Chuasaman, Head Lifeguard at Surin-Bang Tao, said the real problem is the lack of safety information before tourists reach the beaches.

“I have never seen provinces, hotels, or airports provide proper guidance or videos on monsoon season, red flags, or precautions,” he said.

Mr Viroon criticised fragmented management, with lifeguard programs divided among municipalities. “Budgets and staff are unequal. I propose transferring management back to the PPAO to ensure equipment, budgets and operations are always ready,” he said.

He also took aim at hotels. “They fail to warn guests, yet lifeguards are blamed when accidents happen. Instead of wasting money on overseas study trips, budgets should be used to train new lifeguards. Meanwhile, millions have been spent on underpass lights and Surin's ‘glass balcony’, which has already scarred the beach's natural beauty,” he added.

Phuket to host InterPride World Conference

PHUKET HAS BEEN selected as the host of the 2026 InterPride General Meeting and World Conference (GM&WC), marking the first time the global Pride network's most important gathering will be held in Asia.

The announcement was made on Oct 1, confirming that the event will take place from Oct 26-31, 2026.

The successful bid was secured through collaboration between Bangkok

Pride (Narumit Pride Co Ltd), the Foundation for Gender Rights and Justice (FOR-SOGI), and Phuket's Andaman Power Association (Phuket Pride), beating out a rival bid from India.

The six-day conference is expected to draw between 200-400 in-person delegates, alongside online participants from InterPride's more than 400 member organisations worldwide. The programme

will include policy sessions, workshops, knowledge exchanges, cultural experiences, networking events, a gala dinner and special caucus-led pre-events focusing on trans and BI-POC communities.

Arun Chumaporn Waddao, co-founder of Bangkok Pride, called the announcement a “historic milestone” for Asia's Pride movement.

“InterPride's decision to hold its General Assembly

and World Conference in Thailand and Asia for the first time is not only significant for the global Pride movement, but also for advancing gender equality and justice in our region,” Waddao said.

The selection comes as Thailand takes major legislative steps towards LGBTQ+ rights, including the recent passage of marriage equality laws, ongoing efforts for gender recognition legislation, and ad-

vocacy around sex worker rights.

Organisers emphasised that Phuket 2026 will not only showcase Thailand's progress but also strengthen connections between Pride movements worldwide.

“We are confident that Phuket 2026 will be a crucial turning point, sparking unity, engagement, and lasting change for the Pride movement globally,” Waddao added.

The event is set to



Photo: PR Phuket

cement Thailand's reputation as one of the region's most LGBTQ+-friendly destinations while placing Pride Asia firmly on the global stage, said an official report of the announcement.

The Phuket News

Underpass splurge faces scrutiny

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Phuket Highways Office Chief Somkit Kittisopit has defended the B48 million project to upgrade the lighting in all five underpasses on the island from public criticism that the project is too expensive, explaining that the project cost goes far beyond replacing light bulbs.

According to procurement records, the Phuket Highway Office awarded the contract to Better World Traffic Co Ltd as the lowest qualified bidder on Sept 26. The total contract value is B48,412,000, and includes B120,000 for control room data systems and B720,000 for electrical connections and equipment.

"Many people's concerns about the high cost of the project stem from technical reasons that are far more complex than simply replacing light bulbs," he said.

Mr Somkit explained that the old systems had been repeatedly damaged or stolen, requiring a complete overhaul.



Phuket Highways Chief Mr Somkit with Wichit Police at the Darasamut Underpass. Photo: Phuket Highways Office

"The new lighting system isn't just ordinary household lighting," he said. "All the wiring had to be rewired to maintain centerline lighting. There's also a switching system to prevent malfunctions, as the old system operated 24/7, causing problems."

The new designs will use 500-watt high-power LED, each costing tens of thousands of baht, Mr Somkit said.

The government procurement contract allocated B28,800 for each LED light inside the tunnel. With a total of 94 LED lights to be

installed in the underpasses, the total cost of just the lights amounts to just over B2.7 million.

Yet Mr Somkit stressed that the cost of each LED light is justified. "They are not the same as the cheap ones you can buy online," he said. Current base prices for 500W LED lights sold online start at about B499 each.

Mr Somkit explained that the brightness of each LED light can be adjusted individually, with Wichit Police having full control remotely.

"The system is support-

ed by a new wiring network to maintain consistent visibility. The system also includes automatic switching and real-time alerts to the control room in case of malfunctions," he said.

The aim is to have low brightness at the entrance and exit of each underpass, and brighter lights in the middle of the tunnel. "This will improve visibility, which will reduce accidents," he said.

However, while Mr Somkit says the aim is to have individual control of the brightness of each light, the procurement contract

accounts for a series of LED lights of differing brightness that will achieve the same effect.

The contract accounts for 38 250W LED lights in each tunnel, with the each light costing B11,250 (total B2,137,500); a further 28 150W LED lights in each tunnel costing 8,460 each (total B1,184,400); and yet another 149 75W LED lights in each tunnel costing 7,920 each (total B5,900,400).

Further, a new LED billboard costing B200,000 each will be installed at the entrance to each tunnel, costing a total of B1.6mn. The billboards include 'smart features', and are called 'Variable Message Signs' (VMS), Mr Somkit explained.

and integrated camera systems that allow police to monitor vehicle speeds, scan license plates and control multiple intersections remotely from the control room.

AI systems will further support real-time traffic and crime management.

A total of 14 AI CCTV camera units also will be installed, costing a total of B2,112,488, and five units

of the software required for the cameras will cost a total of B250,000, he added.

"The underpasses in Phuket need to be modernised, but some people think it's just the lights that need replacing, bit that's not true" Mr Somkit said flatly.

The lighting project is highly expected to reduce the number of rear-end accidents in the underpasses, especially the Darasamut Underpass, which sees three to four accidents every month.

Pol Lt Col Wutthiwat Liangboonjinda, Deputy Superintendent of Traffic at Wichit Police Station, which stands just one kilometre from the busy underpass, has openly identified poor visibility as a major factor causing the accidents.

Late last month saw a semi-trailer fail to brake in time to avoid a major collision that resulted in a 15-car pile-up, with many people rushed to hospital for injuries sustained.

Even though police confirmed that brake failure was the main cause of the accident, visibility was still a contributing factor.

MP calls to revise 'visa-free' policy

PHUKET MP CHALERM-pong Saengdee has submitted a formal request urging the government to reconsider Thailand's visa-free policy.

"While the government's visa-free measures, allowing tourists from many countries to travel to Thailand without a visa, have increased tourist numbers and revenue, they have also led to a number of inappropriate behaviours by tourists, including creating pornographic content, using drugs, causing disturbances, engaging in illegal activities, and taking jobs from Thais," MP Chalermpong's formal request explained.

"These behaviours damage the country's image and impact residents in key tourist areas such as Phuket, Pattaya and Chiang Mai, the country's main tourist destinations," he added.

MP Chalermpong raised an example of reports from both domestic and international media, including the BBC documentary 'Thailand: The Dark Side of Paradise', that he said reflected Thailand's negative image as a result of low-quality tourists.



Photo: Chalermpong Saengdee / Facebook

"Therefore, I urge the new prime minister to reconsider the visa-free measure. Measures should be implemented to screen quality tourists, ensuring Thailand truly benefits from tourism while mitigating long-term damage," MP Chalermpong said.

After submitting the formal request, he shared his concerns on Facebook.

"Phuket has been in the news recently, mostly because of scandals. Reports include Russians hiring Thais to make adult content in the back of pickup trucks, and a man dancing naked in Patong after taking mushrooms. These incidents have attracted a lot of attention.

"Honestly, these are just the reported cases. Many more likely go unnoticed, escaping both authorities and public scrutiny. But they all follow similar pat-

terns of disruptive behaviour," he said.

MP Chalermpong stressed that while many tourists are positive contributors to Phuket's economy, the undeniable rise in problematic behaviour is largely due to the visa-free policy.

"It's not just Phuket; other major tourist provinces face similar challenges. Some individuals even pose as tourists while engaging in illegal activities, shady businesses or taking jobs from Thais," he added.

Tourism remains a crucial driver of Thailand's economy, especially for Phuket. The revenue generated supports local businesses, merchants, and residents, he noted.

"But for these low-quality tourists, the damage far outweighs the economic benefit," MP Chalermpong said.

"We must review Thailand's visa-free policy and screen tourists to allow only quality visitors. Otherwise, we'll continue addressing issues reactively, after serious problems have already harmed Thailand's tourism image. *The Phuket News*



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PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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Wind 4 m/s

Russian man dies in swimming pool

POLICE ARE INVESTIGATING the death of a Russian man found in a private villa in Rawai on Oct 2.

Chalong Police reported that officers were called to a property at a housing estate in Moo 5, Rawai, at 11am, where they discovered the body of the 58-year-old Russian man* lying face up on a bed. His body was still wet when officers arrived, police confirmed.

The man's wife told police that she had last seen him at around 7am. She said she later went back to sleep, and was woken up around 10am by the housekeeper, who told her the victim had been found in the pool.

The man was pulled from the water and placed on the bed before police were called, Chalong Police noted in their report.

Investigators confirmed that no signs of struggle or assault were found in the room or on the body.

Officers from Chalong Police, together with a forensic doctor from



Photo: Chalong Police

Vachira Phuket Hospital and Phuket Forensic Police, conducted the examination at the scene.

The man's body was sent to Vachira Phuket Hospital for post-mortem examination to confirm the cause of death. Chalong Police have recorded the case for further investigation.

Pol Col Rungrit Rattanaphakdee, Superintendent of Chalong Police, said officers are continuing to collect evidence while awaiting the post-mortem results.

* The Phuket News is withholding the man's name until it has been confirmed other members of his family have been notified.

The Phuket News

Politician's grandson held for pub stabbing

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The grandson of a prominent Phatthalung politician has surrendered to police in Phuket Town following a violent stabbing at a local pub that left a 25-year-old man seriously injured.

Thirayut Thammapetch, 43, grandson of Phatthalung Town Mayor Kraiwat Thammapetch, turned himself in at Phuket City Police Station just after midday on Oct 3, accompanied by his lawyer.

He had been named as the prime suspect in the stabbing of Mr Kantawee Preecha, from Nakhon Sri Thammarat, during a brawl at the Rhythm pub on Tilok U-Thit 1 Rd late on Oct 1.

Police said the attack occurred at about 11:05pm. CCTV footage showed the assailant walking up to the victim from behind before stabbing him several times in the neck, chest and arm with a pocketknife. The attacker then fled the scene in a brand-new white BMW Z4 bearing Bangkok licence plates.

The car was later found abandoned near Poonphol



Photo: Phuket City Police

Night Plaza and seized as evidence.

Phuket City Police Chief Pol Col Chatree Chukaew confirmed that Thirayut presented himself directly to him before being handed over to Pol Lt Col Udom Petcharat for formal questioning. He was interrogated for more than two hours, during which he admitted owning the knife but denied the charge of attempted murder.

Police subsequently executed an arrest warrant issued by the Phuket Provincial Court on Oct 2, charging Thirayut with attempted murder and carrying a knife in a public place without reasonable cause.

Col Chatree told reporters that Thirayut has so far declined to provide further details about the incident, claiming the mat-

ter was personal and that no one else was involved.

"The suspect has denied the attempted murder charge. He has the right not to answer questions. Investigators will continue questioning him and gathering evidence," Col Chatree said.

According to police, the motive is believed to stem from jealousy. Witnesses told investigators that the victim had been drinking at the pub with his girlfriend at the time of the assault. She later told police that Thirayut was her former boyfriend, with whom she had ended a four-year relationship about three months earlier, before beginning a new relationship with Mr Kantawee.

Mr Kantawee was rushed to Bangkok Hospital Phuket by friends and at last report remained in stable condition.

Cockfight raid nets gamblers

NINE MEN HAVE BEEN arrested in Phuket after officials raided an illegal cockfighting and gambling ring in Koh Kaew.

The Phuket Provincial Administration Special Operations Unit moved in on a migrant worker camp in Moo 4, Koh Kaew, last Sunday (Oct 5) following complaints of illegal cockfighting, gambling and drug use disturbing the local community.

The operation was led on the ground by Phuket Provincial Defence Office Chief Akara Suwatthikul, Assistant Governor Thongchai Rattanadet and 15 members of the Volunteer Defense Corps (OrSor).

Officers arrived to find more than 30 people engaged in illegal cockfighting. Most fled the scene, but nine men – four Thai



Photo: Phuket City Police

nationals and five Cambodian nationals – were apprehended.

Seized at the scene were two fighting cocks, a set of cushions used to form a cockfighting ring, a stopwatch and B1,160 in cash.

All nine suspects were charged with illegal gambling and cockfighting. In addition, one Thai national and two Cambodian nationals were charged with illegal possession of a Category 1 narcotic (methamphetamine).

The suspects and evidence were handed over to Phuket City Police for further legal proceedings. *Eakkapop Thongtub*

Indian overstay comes to end

PHUKET IMMIGRATION officers have arrested a 38-year-old Indian man for overstaying his visa by more than three months after receiving a complaint that he was residing illegally in a luxury condominium in Kathu.

The arrest took place on Monday (Oct 6) when officers entered the condo and found the man, named by police only as 'Mr Tanuj', inside the property.

Immigration officers confirmed his identity and asked to see his passport, which showed he had overstayed his permitted stay in Thailand by 107 days.

Mr Tanuj admitted to remaining in the country without applying for an extension or leaving when his visa expired. He told officers that he loved Thailand and did not want to return to India.

He was charged with overstaying his visa, taken to Phuket Immigration for processing



Photo: Phuket Immigration

and later transferred to Kamala Police Station for further legal proceedings. He now faces deportation and being placed on the immigration blacklist, barring his return to Thailand.

Phuket Immigration noted that the arrest was part of a wider crackdown under the direction of Police Lt Gen Panumas Boonyalak, Commissioner of the Immigration Bureau, targeting foreigners who overstay, work illegally or engage in activities that may affect public safety and tourism confidence.

Eakkapop Thongtub

New Governor vows to push forward

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Saransak Srikruanetra, 57, a native of Udon Thani, officially assumed office as Phuket's new Governor on Oct 1, pledging to tackle the island's key challenges, including infrastructure, traffic and sustainable development.

He also vowed to work hard to make Phuket an even better place for residents and visitors, before officially starting work.

Mr Saransak took office following his Cabinet appointment on Aug 19. Speaking on his first day, he acknowledged both the opportunities and the challenges that come with leading a world-class tourist destination.

"As a new governor, I have already studied the previous governor's practices to some extent and share the same viewpoint as everyone in Phuket. While Phuket is a province of great benefit to Thailand, the right to development does not always meet the needs of everyone in Phuket or the needs of a world-class tourist destination.

"However, essentials such as public utilities and infrastructure issues must be addressed by the local government and the central government," he told *The Phuket News*.



Photo: PR Phuket

"I promise to do my best, as I deeply appreciate the contributions of everyone in Phuket. I had the opportunity to intern in Phuket for approximately six to seven months, and I reaffirm that, upon returning as Phuket Governor, I am committed to performing my duties well, ensuring the satisfaction and well-being of everyone in Phuket, and ensuring the continued development of the province in a positive direction. I am also ready to work with the local government agencies, local communities and all the private sector," he added.

Governor Saransak highlighted critical issues facing the island. "Several urgent issues are high on my agenda, including easing traffic congestion in

Phuket, developing a modern public transportation system and advancing the water transportation project to help reduce road traffic.

"These efforts will also use modern technology such as Big Data to improve traffic safety and enhance the quality of tourism services," he stated.

Governor Saransak emphasised his commitment to Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul's '7 Pillars' policy, which he explained aims to rebuild confidence in the economy and society, support small businesses and households with cash flow, lower living costs, promote fair trade and investment, improve safety from crime, drugs and online threats, prepare for global economic risks and boost tourism

and spending to create income.

"I am determined, attentive, and sincere in my work for the people of Phuket. Despite some obstacles, my ultimate goal is to create benefits and well-being for the people," Governor Saransak said.

Mr Saransak, a native of Udon Thani, brings with him more than 29 years of experience in government service.

He holds a bachelor's and master's degree in Political Science from Chulalongkorn University, and has completed a wide range of professional development courses both in Thailand and abroad, including international crisis management at the University of Malaya in Malaysia.

He began his career as a Deputy District Chief in Udon Thani before serving as District Chief in Loei, Nong Khai and Udon Thani provinces.

He later rose to Vice Governor of Udon Thani and an Inspector General at the Ministry of Interior. He was then promoted to Deputy Director-General of the Department of Provincial Administration (DOPA) before his appointment as Governor of Phuket.

"This is another important step for me, and I believe it will help Phuket move forward in safety,

security, and development as a world-class tourist city, using the experience and vision I have gained over many years," he said.

Accompanied by his wife, Ruedeewan Srikruanetra, who now takes up the post as the new President of the Phuket branch of the Red Cross Society of Thailand, the Governor began the day by paying homage at the Phuket City Pillar Shrine, followed by the Heroines Monuments in Talang, and Wat Chaiyatharam (Wat Chalong), where he paid respects to Luang Por Chaem.

In the afternoon, he paid tribute at the King Rama V Monument at the Old Phuket Provincial Hall before leading ceremonies at the new Phuket Provincial Hall.

The day concluded at the Phuket Governor's Residence, where he met with heads of government agencies and local business representatives.

Provincial leaders including all three Vice Governors – Adul Chuthong, Samawit Suphanphai and Suwit Phansengiam – along with Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) President Rewat Areerob, senior officials and community representatives joined the ceremonies throughout the day before the new Governor he began his official duties.

Exhibition opens ahead of Biennale

THE PHUKET ART Association has opened the 'Two Experiences' art exhibition, presenting works by local artists and unveiling a replica of 'Dheveena', one of the highlights of the upcoming Thailand Biennale Phuket 2025.

The exhibition was officially launched at the Royal Phuket City Hotel on Oct 2. Anchalee Vanich Thepbutr, President of the Phuket Art Association, presided over the ceremony, joined by representatives from the public and private sectors including Sitt Phoncharoen, Managing Director of the Royal Phuket City Hotel, and Chalam Attham, Vice President of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO).

The show brings together the works of two veteran artists from Trang, Ajarn Aree Kongpol and Ajarn Samrit Phetkong, both of whom studied in Phuket before pursuing their careers in the South. Together, they have spent



Photo: PR Phuket

more than three decades contributing to the island's artistic landscape.

Ajarn Aree's 'Imagination of Creation' series explores the power of creativity through sculpture and mixed media, with 'Dheveena' – a piece set to appear in the Thailand Biennale – standing out as a centrepiece. In contrast, Ajarn Samrit's 'Way of Life' series captures the simplicity and resilience of Southern communities through warm, understated paintings.

Adding depth to the exhibition are works by members of the Kalyanamitra Network, including Suwit Jaipom,

Sakchai Utthito, Subin Muangchan, Somjai Patisiri, Maneerat Srikampa and Supachai Sittichai, who contribute additional layers of style and interpretation.

Described by organisers as a "parallel journey" of imagination and lived experience, the exhibition aims to inspire faith in art while reflecting Phuket's growing role in the international creative scene, said an official report of the opening.

'Two Experiences', on display on the first floor of the Royal Phuket City Hotel, will run until Oct 30.

The Phuket News

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Tourism chief urges 'mindset modification'

THE TOURISM AND sports minister has acknowledged Thailand is no longer a 'tourism giant', but he plans to attract 2-3 million more Chinese tourists during his four-month term.

"Thailand is not a tourism giant anymore as new competitors are emerging. This situation has forced us to adjust our mindset. We should target markets that truly have growth potential," said Tourism and Sports Minister Artthakorn Sirilattayakorn during his first visit to the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) last week, where he presented his working policy called 'Big Impact, Act Fast' to TAT executives.

Among the markets shrinking this year, Mr Artthakorn said China still has potential and the government is aiming for 2-3mn more Chinese tourists during his four-month term.

He said the TAT is tasked with promoting Thailand's strengths, such as Thai food and hospitality, which requires strong



Photo: Bangkok Post

collaboration between domestic stakeholders and overseas partners.

Mr Artthakorn said the ministry and the TAT plan to focus on markets with high growth potential, including Japan, China, South Korea, India, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Jordan.

Meanwhile, he said Thailand should be able to maintain the flow of inbound markets that already recorded strong performance, including the US, Europe, Scandinavia, Russia and Poland.

To spread tourism revenue, Mr Artthakorn said the government will continue encouraging both local and foreign tourists to visit second-tier cities throughout the country.

According to the TAT, foreign arrivals this year are projected at 33.4mn, down from 35.5mn recorded last year. *Bangkok Post*

Phuket sets sights on Hong Kong, Malaysia

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket tourism operators have held a major tourism roadshow in Malaysia and Hong Kong to strengthen ties with two of the island's most important markets and showcase Phuket as a sustainable, world-class destination.

The 'Phuket Roadshow to Asia Pacific 2025', held from Sept 24-26, was organised by the Phuket Tourist Association (PTA) in collaboration with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) offices in Kuala Lumpur and Hong Kong, with support from the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PAO).

Led by PTA President Thaneth Tantipiriyakij, a delegation of more than 20 Phuket tourism operators – including hotels, resorts, tour operators and community-based tourism groups – joined the mission, which featured B2B 'table-top sales' with local



Photo: Phuket Tourist Association

partners.

The first event was held at Berjaya Times Square Hotel in Kuala Lumpur on Sept 24. Thai Ambassador to Malaysia Lada Phumas presided over the ceremony, underlining the cultural links between Phuket and Malaysia and noting future plans to expand direct flights and cruise routes.

TAT Kuala Lumpur Director Sirintra Surakanit highlighted Malaysian travellers' preference for short holidays, beach relaxation, spas, seafood and community-based tourism, noting that value and convenience keep Phuket high on their list of preferred destinations.

PTA Vice President

Thanawat Ongcharoen presented an update on Phuket's tourism outlook, pointing to the island's diverse activities and its role as host of upcoming global events such as the Thailand Biennial Phuket 2025, the GSTC 2026 Conference, and the annual Phuket Vegetarian Festival.

Malaysia remains a key year-round market for Phuket, with daily direct flights operated by Malaysia Airlines, AirAsia and Batik Air Malaysia. The flight takes just 1 hour and 20 minutes.

The roadshow continued in Hong Kong on September 26 at the New World Millennium Hong Kong Hotel, where Consul-

General Chaturon Chaiyakham opened the event and stressed the importance of building stronger tourism business networks.

TAT Hong Kong Director Prommon Chansri welcomed over 40 Hong Kong-based business operators, while PTA President Thaneth thanked participants and underscored Phuket's appeal for all travellers, with year-round opportunities to enjoy both beaches and southern Thai culture.

Hong Kong has long been a strong source market for Phuket, with direct flights from Cathay Pacific and HK Express taking around 3 hours and 30 minutes.

The Phuket Roadshow to Asia Pacific 2025 highlighted the island's readiness to serve as a premier global destination, with a focus on sustainable growth, product updates and closer cooperation between public and private sector partners, the PTA said in its report of the roadshow.

Community products to help boost OTOP exports

PHUKET IS MOVING AHEAD with plans to raise the profile of its locally made goods, with 27 more community products approved for certification to help them reach international markets.

The decision was made at a meeting of the Community Product Standards Certification Committee held on Sept 30 at the Phuket Provincial Industry Office. The session was chaired by Phuket Provincial Industry Office Chief Yaowanit Saetang, joined by Industry Promotion and Development Group Head Sermpong Promli, Standards Specialist Pinsanya Laksanwilas and representatives from related agencies.

The committee reviewed testing results for a wide range of locally produced items, agreeing to certify 27 new products. These include cloth bags, tie-dyed fabrics, pearl-decorated items, water hyacinth products, handicrafts, painted fabrics, shadow puppet paintings, ready-made clothing and coated cashew nuts.

The new certifications add to the 15 Phuket products that had previously received official recognition. Certification ensures that community goods meet established quality and safety benchmarks, boosting consumer confidence and allowing producers to market their products more widely.



Photo: PR Phuket

Ms Yaowanit said the move aligns with national efforts to develop OTOP (One Tambon One Product) goods to internationally recognised standards. "This process strengthens Phuket's community entrepreneurs, enabling them to compete not only within Thailand but also in global markets," she said.

The meeting also underlined the need to comply with ISO/IEC 17065 requirements, particularly in maintaining confidentiality and preventing conflicts of interest during the certification process.

Ms Yaowanit said that she expected the latest round of approvals to help local producers steadily expand their sales channels at home and abroad, supporting both Phuket's economy and the livelihoods of small-scale community businesses. *The Phuket News*

Na-Ranong family offers prime marina site for development

THE NA-RANONG FAMILY, one of Phuket's most respected names in the tourism sector, has announced the release of a rare marina site for development, billed as one of the last opportunities of its kind on the island.

The site, which has capacity to accommodate up to 200 yachts, is being marketed as a prime location for a deep-water marina alongside extensive residential, leisure and retail facilities. With marine tourism in Thailand experiencing unprecedented growth, the family says the project represents a landmark investment opportunity.

"Phuket is now firmly on the map as a world-class yachting hub," said Krystal Prakaikaew Na-Ranong, owner of The Slate Phuket.

"We are seeing a surge of interest from high-net-worth travellers who are drawn to Thailand's natural beauty, warm hospitality, and unrivalled cruising grounds. This deep-water site offers an extraordinary



Image: Supplied

chance for visionary investors to create something truly iconic and contribute to the growth of an industry that is becoming central to the island's future."

The Asia-Pacific superyacht market has grown steadily over the past decade, with Phuket emerging as a leading destination. Industry observers believe that a marina of this scale would further strengthen Phuket's position as a luxury yachting hub.

The Na-Ranong family has long been at the forefront of Phuket's tourism development. Ms Na-Ranong's father, Wichit Na-Ranong, is credited with first putting the island on the global map in the 1970s after helping to bring the James Bond film *The Man With the Golden Gun* to

Phuket. Their hospitality ventures, including the award-winning design resort The Slate, are well known for innovation and respect for local heritage.

"We have always been passionate about Phuket's future," Ms Na-Ranong said. "By making this unique site available, we are opening the door for the next chapter in the island's tourism evolution. Yachting is no longer a niche pursuit and is becoming one of the most desirable ways to discover Thailand. With the right vision, this marina could become a landmark destination for generations to come."

The site is available for sale or as a long-term lease. With Phuket's visitor numbers forecast to double by 2030, the family says marina development will play a central role in securing sustainable growth by attracting high-spending international visitors and strengthening Thailand's credentials as a marine tourism hub.

The Phuket News

Heavy rain sees flood warning

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

The Thai Meteorological Department (TMD) has warned of continued rainfall and floods until Oct 15, although the Office of the National Water Resources (ONWR) has expressed confidence that there is no risk of flooding reaching 2011 levels.

The TMD on Monday (Oct 6) warned of widespread heavy rainfall across the country from Oct 6 to 15, with particular concern for flood-prone areas.

According to the warning, the weakened Typhoon Matmo is expected to affect Vietnam, Laos and northern and upper north-eastern provinces of Thailand.

Meanwhile, the southwest monsoon is intensifying over the Andaman coast and the eastern region, affecting provinces such as Ranong, Phang Nga, Phuket, Krabi, Trang, Chanthaburi and Trat. Accumulated rain could lead to flash floods and overflowing rivers.



The Nan River overflows in Taphan Hin district of Phichit on Monday (Oct 6). Photo: AFP

Between Oct 9-15, the monsoon trough is forecast to shift southward, spreading rain over the lower parts of the country, especially Bangkok and surrounding provinces, where thunderstorms are expected in 60-70% of the area.

STABLE

The TMD stated that Thailand will transition to winter after Oct 12, with less rainfall in the North and Northeast and wind directions shifting eastwards and northeastwards, a sign that a cold air mass is approaching.

According to ONWR Secretary-General Danucha Pichayanan, although rainfall has increased in the north, overall water levels

remain manageable, with major dams like Bhumibol Dam and Sirikit Dam likely to increase water releases to maintain balance and prevent downstream overflow.

The Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) reported on Monday that flood levels were either stable or lower in the six northern provinces of Nakhon Sawan, Phetchabun, Phichit, Phitsanulok, Sukhothai and Uttaradit.

This came after flooding struck 16 provinces across the country on Sunday, mostly in the Central Plain which was hit by deluges of water from the upper section of the Chao Phraya River, with the highest

number of affected households in Ayutthaya province.

Floods struck parts of eight provinces in the Central Plain, namely Uthai Thani, Chai Nat, Sing Buri, Ang Thong, Suphan Buri, Ayutthaya, Pathum Thani and Nakhon Pathom.

TOP PRIORITY

Meanwhile, after chairing the meeting of the Committee for Disaster Prevention and Mitigation on Monday, Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul emphasised that the government places the well-being and livelihoods of the people as its top priority.

"I urge provincial governors to work closely with central authorities to ensure assistance reaches affected residents as quickly as possible," Anutin said.

Deputy PM Sophon Zarum echoed Mr Danucha's stance, reassuring the public that water management measures are under control and that this year's floods will not be as disastrous as those in 2011, though constant monitoring and adjustments are ongoing.

Pet lion escapes, mauls two villagers

KANCHANABURI

A MAN AND A BOY were wounded when they were attacked by a pet lion which escaped from its house in Bo Phloi district last Saturday (Oct 4).



The captured lion. Photo: Bangkok Post

The injured were identified as Arthit Nueangnui, 11, who was bitten and clawed in his hip, and Sarawut Tokaeo, 43, who was clawed in his leg. They were treated at local hospitals and discharged on Saturday night.

The lion owner was identified as Parinya Parkpoom, 32, a social media influencer who frequently shared posts about exotic pets, including the lion. Officials were checking the ownership of the lion, who Parinya bought from its previous owner in Chachoengsao.

According to Athapol Charoenshansa, Director-General of the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, officials

ordered the owner on Oct 3 to improve the security of the lion's cage but the incident occurred before the improvement was completed.

Parinya said that he chained his one-year-old female lion aged one year to a steel pole in his house but it got loose.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Suchart Chomklin ordered the seizure of the lion from its owner and said it would be kept at the Bungchawak Wildlife Extension Centre in Suphan Buri province.

Letting a wild animal out of its cage without a proper reason is liable to a jail term of up to six months and/or a fine of up to B50,000.

Bangkok Post

B35mn gold heist carried out 'to fund rebel activities'

NARATHIWAT

AN ARMED ROBBERY OF A GOLD shop in Narathiwat's Sungai Kolok district last Sunday (Oct 5), which netted over B35.6 million in gold jewellery, was carried out to fund a southern separatist network, according to the Internal Security Operations Command (Isoc) Region 4.

Investigators looking into the heist found two pickup trucks abandoned at a palm plantation in Waeng district on Monday, which they believe were used by the suspects.

Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and forensic officers were deployed to the site to ensure that there were no explosives hidden in the vehicles and to collect fingerprints and DNA evidence.

Police believe the heist involved 19-20 men divided into three groups. The first group of individuals stole the two pickup trucks used in the heist, another raided the gold shop, while a third planted explosives and scattered spiked strips around the shopping centre to prevent being chased.

In total, two bombs were detonated, one damaging a streetlight pole along the Sungai Kolok-Sungai Padi road, while the other caused damage to a railway barrier.



The retrieved pickup truck. Photo: Bangkok Post

The suspects are believed to have fled along the Sakor-Waeng route to Malaysia, via natural crossings.

Lt Gen Norathip Pounok, commander of the Fourth Army Region and acting director of Isoc Region 4, has ordered heightened security in both urban and rural areas. He also ordered extra patrols along the Thai-Malaysian border.

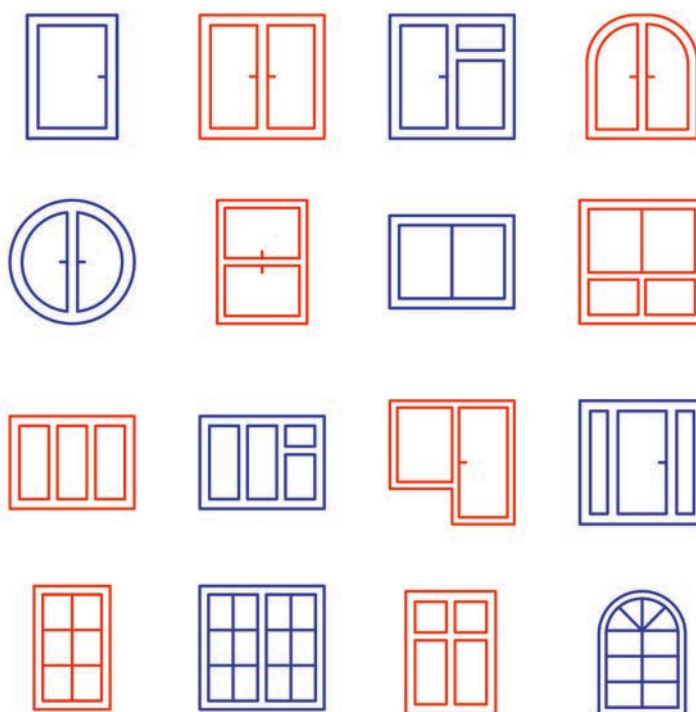
Security agencies are reviewing CCTV footage and collecting forensic evidence to identify those involved, he said.

Investigators suspect the group has ties to the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN), a key rebel movement in Thailand's deep South.

Officials believe the heist was not only intended to create panic but also to generate funds for rebel activities. Similar cases in the past include coordinated ATM robberies in August and a major gold shop raid in Songkhla in 2019. Bangkok Post



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Leo & Co battle on but underwhelm

Leonardo DiCaprio in 'One Battle After Another'. Photo: IMDb

David Griffiths

Even the mere thought of director Paul Thomas Anderson teaming up Leonardo DiCaprio should be enough to excite any film lover. The man responsible for stunning films like *Boogie Nights*, *Inherent Vice* and *Licorice Pizza* directing a movie starring an actor who rarely makes a bad movie is certain to result in some cinematic magic, right?

Well you would expect so – but what

none of us factored into that equation is that perhaps both of them were due for a miss. To be honest *One Battle After Another* isn't exactly a terrible film, it just doesn't reach the heights of either Paul Thomas Anderson or Leonardo DiCaprio's past films.

The film centres around a couple known as Pat Calhoun (Di Caprio – *Titanic*) and Perfidia Beverley Hills (Teyana Taylor – *Coming 2 America*) who are members of a domestic terrorist organisation known as French 75. Their plan is to free people from a fas-

cist Government that is in charge of the United States of America.

However, shortly after giving birth to a baby, Perfidia's life is changed forever when she is arrested after a bank robbery and she finds herself in the hands of Col. Steven J. Lockjaw (Sean Penn – *Milk*), a man who not only wants to bring down French 75 but is also so severely sexually attracted to her he is almost stalking her.

As Perfidia is forced to testify against her friends in order to save herself Pat takes off with their baby daughter to begin a new life far removed from his days of political activism.

Cut to 16 years later and Pat, now known as Bob, is living in a town in the middle of nowhere that seems to want to protect the illegal immigrants and so called 'enemies of the state' that live within. Bob is a shadow of his former self as years of drug and alcohol addiction have left him both mentally and physically damaged.

Meanwhile his daughter, now known as Willa (Chase Infiniti – *Presumed Innocent*), is a surprisingly well adjusted teenager who excels at school and has been learning marital arts under the watchful eye of Sensei Sergio St. Carlos (Benicio Del Toro – *Sicario*). But once again their freedom (and lives) are put in jeopardy when Lockjaw turns up in town on the hunt for them with full military backing.

Realism

To be honest the general plot of *One Battle After Another* works pretty well. In today's political climate in the United States a story revolving around domestic terrorism has an air of realism about it and the film itself makes a powerful companion piece for recent films like *Civil War* and *Eddington*.

The problem here is that not only does the film run way too long but it also feels like Anderson loses control of this film at the screenwriting stage. There is way too much going on in this film and perhaps if he had been able to trim away some of the pointless side stories or redundant characters this could have been a much more serviceable film.

Perhaps the best example I can give of that issue is the fact one character at one moment meets their demise in a way that would have been satisfactory to the audience only to then be resur-

rected for an extra part of their story that certainly doesn't mean to be there.

There are also parts of this film that also feels like they are contradicting themselves in a way. On one hand you have brilliant performances from Taylor, Del Toro and Infiniti and on the flipside you have DiCaprio being wasted in a role where he never gets to show his true calibre while Penn gets to play one of the interesting characters of the film but is dangerously allowed to 'over-act' at times. Its during those times where the audience is taken out of the realism and reminded that they are watching a film.

More of a shame with Penn and DiCaprio's characters is the fact that they are never explored properly. Lockjaw had the potential of being one of the most interesting characters to grace our screens in a long, long time – an Army officer so racist he wants to join an All-White hate group but at the same time finding himself being driven crazy by the fact that he is sexually attracted to a black woman. Sadly, though the ins and outs of his character are never thoroughly explored and he becomes a walking cliché.

Likewise, DiCaprio's character of Bob. He is set up as an explosives expert but by the time he needs to fight to save his daughter he becomes a bumbling idiot that almost feels like he is there for comedic relief. Imagine the intrigue that could have been generated if Anderson had chosen to explore the notion of what happens when the hero wastes away but in a serious rather than a comical form.

At times *One Battle After Another* does make some poignant remarks on modern day American society but those moments are few and far in-between in a movie that is over-bloated and seems to dangerously lose its way at times.

One Battle After Another is currently screening in Phuket and is rated '15'.
3/5 Stars

David Griffiths has been working as a film journalist for over 25 years. That time has seen him work in radio, television and in print. He currently hosts a film podcast called *The Popcorn Conspiracy*. He is also a Rotten Tomatoes accredited reviewer and is an alternate judge for the Golden Globes Awards. You can follow him at Facebook: *SubcultureEntertainmentAus*.

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'Broken Windows' a way to resolve widespread litter

Josh O'Neill

Here in Phuket, we are accustomed to seeing the glittering, flawless façade of luxury tourism. But step just a few streets away, into the heart of the island's older, poorer or underinvested communities, and you see another reality: pockets of neglect. A discarded fishing net here, a pile of unmanaged waste there, a public space overgrown and forgotten.

It's easy to dismiss this as a lack of resources or laziness, but a powerful idea from social psychology suggests something deeper is at play – and it offers a clear path toward transformation.

The concept is known as the "broken window" effect. First proposed in 1982 by social scientists James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, the theory suggests that visible signs of crime, anti-social behaviour and civil disorder – even something as small as a single "broken window" left unrepaired – creates an environment that encourages further, more serious acts of disorder and vandalism.

When we translate this idea to conservation psychology, the effect is startlingly simple: litter breeds litter. A single piece of carelessly discarded plastic quickly signals that no one cares about the space, so others feel it is ok to add their own litter to the area. This downward spiral quickly destroys community pride and makes the community feel overwhelmed or

hopeless in being able to change it.

But the good news is that the process works in reverse, too. Repairing those broken windows – or in our case, cleaning up that single pile of litter – can trigger an upward spiral of positive change. This is the opportunity before our local Phuket communities today. The transformation doesn't require a massive government grant or a multi-million-baht development project; it requires focused, grassroots action on shared public spaces, shifting attention from our clean and tidy home to our collective neighbourhood.

Collective efforts

Simple, repeatable activities are what we need. Showing respect for our garbage collectors by sorting our waste, tying our bags and putting them in the bin, not beside it, helps everyone. Starting small community gardens or designated composting areas doesn't just stop food waste going to the landfill; it literally cultivates shared ownership and beauty.

These collective efforts bring neighbours and neighbourhoods together, break down social barriers and create communities and shared spaces for all to be proud of. The result is instant, visible and instills pride. When a shared area is clean and beautiful, the residents become its protectors, actively discouraging others from creating mess.

This is how struggling communities are transformed into beacons of change. The pride generated

from successfully maintaining a shared space doesn't stay local; it spreads confidence and attracts attention. These formerly neglected areas become models of community involvement. They foster community cohesion, proving that when residents collaborate on a common goal – a cleaner beach, a community garden, a shared space – their collective power is powerful. The success is shared, and the feeling shifts from one of hopelessness to hope.

To change our current landscape, we must invest in the future. Education of the younger generation is essential, instilling a deep sense of respect for their shared environment – the park, the local stream, the beach. By fostering pride in public spaces, we teach children that their community is an extension of their home. If we empower our local residents, starting with these simple acts of conservation, Phuket can showcase not only its stunning natural beauty but also the vibrant, collective spirit of its people. Let's stop talking about broken windows and start polishing the glass.

Josh O'Neill, a Certified Green Project Manager, GPM-b, with a Diploma in Conservation Psychology and an environmental advocate who leverages his extensive experience in community engagement and environmental awareness to highlight Phuket's environmental issues and sustainable initiatives. Phone/WhatsApp 099-998-9274 or support@thelitterclub.org.

Photo: Supplied



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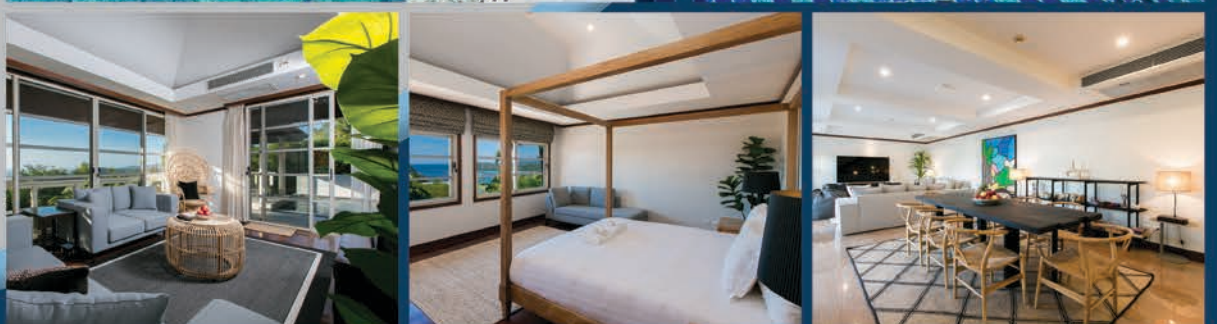
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POP QUIZ

1. Who composed the Brandenburg concertos?

2. What animal's name translates as water horse?

3. In Greek mythology who killed the Gorgon?

4. Where did the mutineers of the Bounty settle?

5. If you suffer from epistaxis, what is wrong?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Easy

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

1. In accordance with

6. Catalan surrealist

10. Made like time?

14. Western director Sergio

15. Tucked in

16. It may be polished

17. Say before thinking

18. Get carried away?

19. Some pods

20. Duel

23. Kind of patch

24. Tending to business

25. Bargain

28. Empty talk

31. Imprison

35. Palindromic title

36. City in Arizona

37. Cooling-off period

38. Of unsound mind

41. Electron tube

42. They may provide relief

43. United Nations agcy.

44. Hindu holy man

45. Place

46. Throw off

47. "Nothing _____ Matters" (Metallica song)

Down

1. Skin products line

2. Individual

3. 18th-century hairdo

4. Transported

5. Tighten, maybe

6. Large dark area on the moon

7. Source reference, abbr.

8. Extremely popular

9. Cineplex _____ (theater chain)

10. Leading singers

11. Ilk

12. Like raw silk

13. Sport

21. Flower part

22. Clan members

25. Imitates a hot dog

26. Plato's plaza

27. Fissiped mammal

29. Venomous hairy caterpillar

30. Actress Watts

32. Dyed fabric

33. Catlike

34. Plant more seeds

36. Mathematical adverb

37. Challenge

39. Well integrated

40. Bill encl.

45. Association

46. Labor

48. Devour

50. On the other hand

51. Get by

52. Ring

53. Marsh bird

54. Impecuniosity

55. Chances

56. Certain chieftain

57. Began, with "off"

58. Subjoins

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) Johan Sebastian Bach; 2) Hippopotamus; 3) Perseus; 4) Pitcairn Islands; 5) Nosebleed

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14						15				16			
17						18				19			
20					21				22				
			23				24						
25	26	27			28	29	30		31		32	33	34
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51	52	53					54	55			56	57	58
59					60					61			
62					63					64			
65					66					67			

Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

S	P	E	W		N	O	G	S		B	A	B	E	L		
A	R	N	E		O	I	N	K		A	M	U	S	E		
S	E	T	S		C	L	U	E		S	I	S	S	Y		
S	W	I	T		C	H	E	S		W	I	T	C	H	E	S
E	A	T		O	A	R				R	E	E	F			
D	R	Y	R	U	N		S	K	E		S	E	R	I	C	E
					A	R	C	A	N	A		S	E	R	U	M
S	H	A	T	T	E	R	S	H	A	T	T	E	R	S		
O	A	T	E	S		T	U	N	D	R	A					
T	H	Y			U	S	E		R	O	L	L	E	R		
					P	A	W	L		I	O	N		O	V	A
S	L	I	G	H	T	E	R	L	I	G	H	T	E	R		
L	U	C	I	A		D	O	L	T		E	I	R	E		
I	N	A	L	L		D	U	E	L		M	O	S	S		
M	E	L	E	E		A	E	R	Y		S	N	O	T		

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

1.2

miles per hour (1.9km/h) is the average top speed of a mosquito.

17

years is how long the average woman in the UK spends of her life dieting, says one recent study.

40

when spelled out is the only number whose letters appear in alphabetical order.

5,000

steps per day and sitting for less than 300 minutes is the norm for people who are fit.

265 million

US dollars is what it cost to create the video game 'Grand Theft Auto V', the largest budget of any video game at the time (in 2013). It made US\$1 billion in the first 72 hours of its release.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW

Rawai sunrise. Photo by Didier Giesen

Got an unusual or particularly beautiful picture of Phuket? Email it to editor3@classactmedia.co.th

This week in history

Oct 10, 1492

The crew of Christopher Columbus's ship, the *Santa Maria*, attempt a mutiny.

Oct 11, 1984

Aboard the Space Shuttle *Challenger*, astronaut Kathryn D. Sullivan becomes the first American woman to perform a space walk.

Oct 12, 2002

Terrorists detonate bombs in

two nightclubs in Kuta, Bali, Indonesia, killing 202 and wounding over 200.

Oct 13, 1792

In Washington, D.C., the cornerstone of the United States Executive Mansion (known as the White House since 1818) is laid.

Oct 14, 1964

Martin Luther King Jr. receives the Nobel Peace

Prize for combating racial inequality through nonviolence.

Oct 15, 1815

Napoleon Bonaparte begins his final exile on Saint Helena, a remote island in the South Atlantic Ocean.

Oct 16, 1923

Walt Disney and his brother, Roy, found the Disney Brothers Cartoon Studio, today known as The Walt Disney Company.

Source: Wikipedia

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FRI

10 OCT



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Friday Mussels Night

6 PM onwards: Belgian style mussels served with French Fries. All you can eat. Your choice, Your style: Marinere, Selected drinks, Provencale, Garlic & cream, Creamy curry, Blue cheese or Thai style. We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 325 baht P.P. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/shakersphuket Oliver, Shakers restaurant 98/18 Vises Road, Rawai 83130, 081 891 4381



Come and have a few at the Phuket Business Networking
 2nd Friday every month

Phuket Business Networking - Oct 2025

Make sure to bring lots of business cards, as getting to know each other is what PBN is all about. A small entry fee, THB 500 per person, that includes the first 3 drinks and pizza. Location - Oasis Bar, Koh Kaew, starting 5pm. Register your attendance here or call Jason - 086 479 7471.

SUN

12 OCT



STEAK HOUSE & RESTAURANT
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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



Canadian Thanksgiving Dinner

The spirit of Thanksgivings follows us wherever we may go. This year's Cdn's in Phuket Thanksgiving Dinner will be extra traditional, our special guest chef is a Canadian Certified Master Chef who formerly called Quebec home. Join us for a Traditional Canadian Thanksgiving! Welcoming you with a classic Canadian Caesar. Begin with maple-glazed bacon lollipops and mini tourtière bites. Savour roast Heritage Turkey with classic giblet gravy and cranberry sauce, silky mashed potatoes, maple-roasted Brussels sprouts, and glazed carrots. Then to finish with a Pumpkin & Maple Symphony dessert. A special mini turkey plate awaits our little canucks! Thanksgiving is about community, gratitude and sharing a meal together — values that travel with Canadians no matter where they live. This day is not only for Canadians, but also for our Commonwealth friends and those from other countries to join in this special occasion. Join us at the Avista Hideaway Resort, Tri Trang, Patong. This event sells out every year. Tickets - thephuketnews.com/phuket-ticket-master.php



MON

13 OCT



STEAK HOUSE & RESTAURANT
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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 OCT



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Wednesday 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

THU

16 OCT




Skål Phuket October Member Drive Dinner

We are delighted to invite you to our upcoming Skål International Phuket Member Drive Dinner, hosted by SAii Laguna Phuket. This special evening will begin at 5:00 pm with an engaging panel discussion on "The Future of Hospitality in Phuket 2027". Panelists - Bart Callens, General Manager, SAii Laguna Phuket, Khun Sears, Vice President, Thai Hotel Association (Southern Chapter) and Lighthouse, Business Development Representative. Following the discussion, we will enjoy a networking drinks and Skål dinner, surrounded by Phuket's leading professionals in hospitality and tourism. Bookings - contact@skalphuket.org

FRI

24 OCT



REGGAE WAVES
 SAVE THE DATE
 FRI | 24 | OCT
 6.30PM

REGGAE WAVES

Rotary Club of Patong Beach is pleased to announce the return of Reggae Waves to be held at Carpe Diem Beach Club - Bang Tao, Phuket. Block the date for a great evening of fun and for a noble cause, all proceeds from this event will benefit the local community. More details coming soon.

SAT

25 OCT



ANDAMAN ASIA CUP 2025
 OVER 35's AUSTRALIAN RULES FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT IN PARADISE
 WHEN: SATURDAY 25th OCTOBER 2025 9:00AM Start
 WHERE: ACG CRICKET & SPORTS FACILITY, PHUKET, THAILAND
 FORMAT: MEN'S DIVISION OVER 35'S / 12 A SIDE / 2 X 12 MINUTE HALVES
 MORE INFO: FACEBOOK: fb.com/ThailandTigers EMAIL: thailandtigers@gmail.com
 COME FOR THE FOOTY STAY FOR THE FUN!

AFL Masters Cup 2025

AFL Masters is confirmed for Phuket on October 25 from 9am at the ACG Cricket & Sports facility, Baan Lipphon. This one day event features AFL teams from Indonesia, Singapore, Australia and Thailand. Players must be 35 years or older. Matches consist of 2 x 12-minute halves with a final between the top sides to decide who raises the Pacific Cross Health Insurance AFL Andaman Cup. For more info visit facebook.com/ThailandTigers

FRI

31 OCT



AustCham Joint Chambers Phuket Sundowners - October

AustCham Thailand, in collaboration with Australian Alumni, AMCHAM, BCCT, Belgian-Luxembourg/Thai Chamber, CanCham Thailand, FTCC, GTCC, NTCC, NZTCC, Phuket Chamber of Commerce and Thai-Swedish Chamber, will host the Joint Chambers Phuket Sundowners from 18.00 - 21.00 hrs., at Courtyard by Marriott Phuket Town. Join us for a wonderful night of making new connections and catching up with familiar faces in the Australian-Thai business community in Phuket. 650 THB for AustCham members, partner Chambers' members, and Australian Alumni Members, 1,200 THB for non-members. To book contact - office@austchamthailand.com

SAT

1 NOV



Spooktacular Halloween Family Fun Carnival

Eat, play, win, repeat at Niran Farm — all while supporting children's education! • Halloween Games with Prizes • Trick Horse Rider Show • Kids' Tombola, Adult Raffle, Silent & Live Auction • BBQ Buffet Dinner • Spooky Costume Parade with Prizes • Special Performance by EKA Soundz Tickets: Available by donation – book before 11th October for an early bird discount! • Regular Ticket: 1,000 THB NET (was 1,200 THB) • Kids (5–12 years): Half Price – includes 5 game coupons • Under 5: Free entry Don't miss out on this Spooktacular night of fun, food, games, and entertainment – all for a great cause! Contact: Tina@phukethasbeengoodtous.org All proceeds support Phuket Has Been Good To Us & Good Shepherd Phuket Town. Costumes optional. Cash bar available. Limited seats – advance tickets only! Book now to avoid missing this night of spooky fun!

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TUE

4 NOV



Melbourne Cup Brunch

The fabulous Melbourne Cup Brunch is back at Casa Boho, Hyatt Regency Kamala Tuesday, 4th November • 9:30 AM – 2:30 PM • Free-flow drinks & brunch • Fashions on the Field with prizes for Best Hat, Best Dressed, Best Suited & Chicest Couple • Raffles & auctions • Live screening of the race that stops a nation • DJ with ocean views Casa Boho is the perfect brunch spot: air-conditioned, with ocean breezes and panoramic views across Kamala Bay. All proceeds go to Phuket Has Been Good To Us Foundation, funding free English education for disadvantaged children. Donation: 3,000 THB Tickets: tina@phukethasbeengoodtous.org Don't miss this party with a purpose!

FRI

7 NOV



Grow Boating Phuket Evening - Nov 2025

We look forward to seeing you at the Grow Boating Evening at the Isola restaurant at the Royal Phuket Marina from 5pm. We are delighted to announce that our drinks sponsor for the evening will be Royal Phuket Marina. Royal Phuket Marina is a distinguished world-class destination combining luxury waterfront living with a state-of-the-art marina. See royalphuketmarina.com/marina There will be a delicious buffet sponsored by Isola Restaurant for all attendees. Come and join in the fun, everyone is welcome and there is no entry fee. Find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket/>

SAT

8 NOV



Music Festival at Le Meridien Phuket Mai Khao Beach

Save the Date! The Experience Unlocked Music Festival on the Beach is back at Mai Khao! Get ready for an electrifying night where music meets the waves. Headlining the stage is DJ Pegg, crowned DMC Thailand 2025: The Open Champion, bringing his award-winning beats to the shore. Joining him are DJ Alex, DJ Tob, Violin Roman, Gunny Jazz Band, and a spectacular fire show under the stars. Unlimited food, free-flow drinks, and non-stop energy await you right on the beach. Le Méridien Phuket Mai Khao Beach Resort | 17:00 – 00:00 Early Bird THB 2,099 (until 31 Oct 2025) Regular THB 2,599 (01–08 Nov 2025) Call us: (+66) 76 603 699 Email: fadmin@lemeridienmaikhao.com

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GROW BOATING PHUKET EVENING - OCT 2025

This month's Grow Boating Evening was held on October 3 at the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar at the Phuket Boat Lagoon. The drinks sponsor for the evening was the Thailand International Boat Show 2026, which will take place at the award-winning Phuket Yacht Haven Marina from January 15-18, 2026 (see thailandinternationalboatshow.com). There was a delicious selection of canapes served and sponsored by the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar for all attendees. Come and join in the fun. Find out more - facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket



SUNSET SIPS & CANAPES AT 7TH FLOOR

A sellout event at the 7th Floor Rooftop Restaurant, located at the Sole Mio Boutique Hotel & Wellness in Bang Tao was held on Saturday, Oct 4, to raise funds for Phuket Has Been Good To Us Foundation. It was a night of refreshing drinks, delicious bites and live entertainment, all for a wonderful cause. To find out about the great work that Phuket Has Been Good To Us does providing free English education and after-school programmes to over 600 underprivileged children. Visit phukethasbeengoodtous.org

ACG set for major AFL action

AFL

Andrew McMillan

Seasoned Australian Rules Football (AFL) veterans from across Southeast Asia are set to convene in Phuket on Oct 25 for a day of high-intensity, competitive footy action as the Thailand Tigers host the highly anticipated Pacific Cross Health Insurance AFL Masters tournament at the Alan Cooke Ground (ACG) in Thalung.

Since its inception, the Pacific Cross Health Insurance AFL Masters (also known in past years as the Andaman Cup) has built a reputation as one of the region's premier over-35s AFL events. In 2024, the tournament returned with great fanfare, with teams from Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore and beyond converging on Phuket for a full day of matches.

This year teams from Thailand (Thailand Tigers / Sabretooth Tigers), Indonesia (Bali Geckos), Singapore (Sharks) and possible squads from Australia,



Hong Kong, Malaysia, Vietnam and Cambodia are expected to join local side the Phuket Power.

The 2025 tournament will again adopt a Masters format: 12 players per side, playing two 12-minute halves, with the usual over-35 age restriction. Fixtures are expected to be announced in the lead-up to the event, likely with a morning start (around 9am) and successive matches through the morning culminating in a grand final early in the afternoon.

From prior tournaments, the competition has been fierce. In 2024, the Bali Geckos, captained in part by ex-Sydney Swans veteran Troy Luff, proved hard to beat, while the Thailand Tigers and the Singapore Sharks each brought solid squads with strong regional reputations.

HOME SOIL

For the Phuket Power the tournament is more than just a fixture. It is a chance to showcase how far the local programme has pro-

gressed, to test themselves against regional rivals and to ignite local interest in AFL in southern Thailand. In the last 12 months, 15 of Phuket's players have represented the Thailand Tigers at international events, helping the national team raise the IndoChina Cup earlier this year and the inaugural AFL Asia Cup held in Vietnam.

The team will be eager to make an impact on home soil. With growing local participation (including recent integration of players

from rugby, netball and the Hash House Harriers), the club will aim to field a strong 17-20 player squad, blending experienced imports and recent AFL Asian Championship players with local talent.

At last year's tournament Phuket's contingent included a mix of Australians, Irishmen, Brits and Thais with many new arrivals to the sport. Even though results were mixed, individual performances (such as from Joshua Linthorne and Matt Stenning) were noted positively.

For the visiting teams, it's a chance to compete in a tropical setting against veteran players, and build camaraderie across the Asian footy network. Many players see it as a highlight of their annual footy calendar and one more reason to bring their best game on and off the field.

On the sidelines, local support is expected to be strong and spectators can anticipate a full schedule of tightly contested matches, shifting momentum, fast ball movement, and phys-

ical contests – classic characteristics of AFL at its best! Previous tournaments have delivered “match of the day” performances, nail-biting finishes and standout individual displays.

Entry to the ground is free and all are welcome, from families to footy fanatics alike. The ACG clubhouse provides the ideal raised vantage point to watch the footy and a range of food and beverages are available for purchase at the ground throughout the day. Post-match medals and trophies will be presented to the tournament winners along with the leading goal kicker, best on ground and local player honours.

The ground's lush playing surface and ideal weather conditions earned praise from players and fans alike last year and organisers will be hoping for similar conditions for the top-level over-35s competition this time around.

For more information please visit the Phuket Power Facebook page.

Aussie Rules axes 'centre bounce' after 130 years

AFL

AUSTRALIAN RULES football (AFL) has started games with a centre bounce for more than 130 years, but from next season it will be ditched because umpires are finding it too hard to master the skill.

The country's most popular spectator sport, similar to Ireland's Gaelic football, traces its roots back to 1858 when spherical or oval balls were first used.

Since 1887, field umpires have been required to bounce the ball at the start of each quarter, rather than throw it in the air. A centre bounce after each goal was introduced four years later.

But mastering the skill has become a barrier for prospective umpires, according to AFL executive manager Greg Swann.

“The centre bounce has long been a part of Australian Football tradition, but as the game has evolved, there are several areas which will benefit from allowing



Photo: AFP

umpires to simply throw the ball up at the restart,” he said on Oct 1.

“Currently, umpire pathways are being narrowed by the requirement of the bounce.

“It is a difficult skill to execute, and we believe is preventing some of our best umpiring prospects from progressing any further in the AFL pathway despite having elite decision-making skills,” added Swann.

The new rule will bring the men's game in line with the women's – the AFLW – where the ball has been thrown up rather than bounced since its inception in 2017. *AFP*

Russell wins Singapore GP

FORMULA ONE

MERCEDES' GEORGE RUSSELL won the Singapore Grand Prix last Sunday (Oct 5) ahead of Max Verstappen and Lando Norris, as McLaren clinched the Formula One constructors' championship.

Oscar Piastri was fourth, meaning his lead over McLaren teammate Norris at the top of the drivers' standings was cut to 22 points.

The 27 points scored by Piastri and Norris were more than enough for McLaren to equal the record set by Red Bull in 2023 by winning the team title with six races to spare.

It was McLaren's second title in a row and 10th in the team's history, and was won despite their two drivers clashing in the opening turns with sparks flying as Norris got the better of Piastri.

“They have driven brilliantly all season. You can't win the constructors' without two awesome racing drivers,” said McLaren CEO Zak Brown.

Russell was overjoyed to win the night race for the first time, saying it was payback for his final-lap crash two years ago while pushing for victory on the Marina Bay Street Circuit.

“It feels amazing, especially after what happened a couple of



Russell celebrates his win. Photo: AFP

years ago. That was a bit of a missed opportunity, but we more than made up for it today,” said the Englishman, who started on pole.

Max Verstappen finished second for Red Bull while Kimi Antonelli crossed the line fifth in a Mercedes, followed by the Ferraris of Charles Leclerc and Lewis Hamilton.

Fernando Alonso, Oliver Bearman and Carlos Sainz rounded out the top 10.

At the start, Russell got away cleanly from Verstappen, but the drama all happened behind the Mercedes.

Norris, from fifth on the grid, darted past Antonelli and dived up the inside of Piastri, who started third, at turn one.

Norris was flying and clipped the back of Verstappen on the way to barging his way into third place in a wheel-to-wheel clash with teammate Piastri.

The championship leader was not impressed. “So are we cool with Lando just barging me out of the way there? What's the go there?” Piastri complained on team radio.

His anger was not appeased by the team saying they would discuss the incident after the race and not order Norris to swap places.

“That's not fair. I'm sorry, that's not fair,” Piastri said.

Norris disagreed. “It was good racing,” he said.

The night race in tropical Singapore was declared the first official Formula One “Heat Hazard” meaning all drivers had to have liquid-cooled vests available, though wearing them was not mandatory.

However, with the air temperature around 28°C for the race, rather than the expected 31°C, some opted not to use the new equipment, including Verstappen. *AFP*

Gunners go top as Reds slip

FOOTBALL

AFP

Brazilian wonderkid Estevao's first Chelsea goal inflicted a third consecutive defeat on Liverpool last Saturday (Oct 4), allowing Arsenal to go top of the Premier League after they beat West Ham 2-0.

After winning their opening seven games of the season in all competitions, Liverpool suffered a nightmare week to leave Arne Slot plenty to ponder over the international break.

Injury-hit Chelsea were well worthy of the dramatic win at Stamford Bridge to end their three-game winless run in the Premier League.

One-time Liverpool target Moises Caicedo blasted the Blues into a half-time lead with a blistering strike into the top corner on 14 minutes.

Cody Gakpo equalised just after the hour mark before Estevao slid in at the far post to meet Marc Cucurella's cross deep into stoppage time, sparking wild celebrations from



Chelsea's Moises Caicedo celebrates scoring his team's first goal in the 2-1 win against Liverpool. Photo: AFP

manager Enzo Maresca who was shown a red card for sprinting down the touchline.

Liverpool now trail Arsenal by one point, while Chelsea edge up to sixth.

In Mikel Arteta's 300th match in charge, Arsenal

proved far too strong for the struggling Hammers to further their ambitions of a first Premier League title for 22 years, with Declan Rice and a Bukayo Saka penalty sealing the win.

Manchester United handed Ruben Amorim

some relief with a 2-0 win over Sunderland thanks to goals from Mason Mount and Benjamin Sesko, while Tottenham showed their newfound defensive resolve under Thomas Frank to end Leeds' year-long unbeaten league run at Elland Road

with a 2-1 victory.

Erling Halaand's goal on Sunday was enough for Manchester City to secure a 1-0 win at Brentford and move within three points of leaders Arsenal.

The Norwegian maintained his sensational early

season form to score his 18th goal for club and country in just 11 appearances this season, bullying his way through the Brentford defence from Josko Gvardiol's long ball to fire home on nine minutes.

However, victory came at a cost for Pep Guardiola's men as Rodri was forced off in his latest injury setback since returning from an anterior cruciate ligament tear that saw him miss most of last season.

Crystal Palace missed the chance to go second after a 2-1 defeat at Everton which also saw the Eagles relinquish their 19-game unbeaten run in all competitions.

Daniel Munoz opened the scoring for Palace before a Iliman Ndiaye penalty and a Jack Grealish goal late into added on time settled the game.

Ange Postecoglou's wait for a first win as Nottingham Forest manager goes on after a 2-0 defeat at Newcastle while Wolves remain the only team in the division without a win after a 1-1 draw with Brighton and Aston Villa defeated Burnley 2-1.

Springboks beat Argentina to retain Rugby Championship

RUGBY

COBUS REINACH AND Malcolm Marx scored two tries apiece as South Africa beat Argentina 29-27 at Twickenham last Saturday (Oct 4) to win successive Rugby Championship titles for the first time in their history.

The world champions' relentless forward power ultimately proved the difference as they overturned a 10-point deficit after Argentina led 13-3 early in the first half.

South Africa retained the Rugby Championship title on points difference from arch-rivals New Zealand as a thrilling edition of the southern hemisphere tournament ended in dramatic style.

South Africa knew a win would guarantee them the title after New Zealand's 28-14 defeat of Australia in Perth earlier in Saturday's final round of the tournament.

But they were a man down inside two minutes when Canan Moodie was



South Africa celebrate with the trophy. Photo: AFP

yellow-carded for head-on-head contact with Argentina wing Juan Cruz Mallia.

The Pumas were 13-10 up at half-time thanks to the first of two Bautista Delguy tries and two penalties from Santiago Carreras, with the Springboks' points coming via a Sacha Feinberg-Mngomezulu penalty and a converted try from scrum-half Reinach.

But hooker Marx's try early in the second half saw the Springboks lead for the first time at 15-13 before Reinach's second of the match gave the Springboks breathing space.

And after Marx went over again, South Africa led 29-13 heading into the last quarter.

Delguy's second try, in the 66th minute, gave Argentina renewed hope.

And with three minutes left Carreras' penalty from the half-way line, which would have reduced South Africa's lead to six points, hit the right post – in what proved to be a crucial miss.

Carreras' superb cross-kick then allowed Argentina replacement Rodrigo Isgro to score a last-minute try.

The full-back's conversion was just too late to turn the tide in the final act of a game, whose climax was in marked contrast to the Springboks' 67-30 thrashing of the Pumas in Durban the previous weekend.

AFP

Thailand handed a tough draw in the U23 Asian Cup

FOOTBALL

THAILAND WILL FACE 2013 champions Iraq, Australia, and China in Group D after the draw for the AFC U23 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2026 took place on Oct 2 in Kuala Lumpur.

First-time hosts Saudi Arabia, who have automatically qualified for the finals, are joined by 15 teams from the qualifying competition.

The 16 teams were divided into four groups for the seventh edition of the tournament, which is scheduled to be held from Jan 6-24, 2026.

Saudi Arabia, the 2022 champions, will play 2018 runners-up Vietnam, Jordan and Kyrgyzstan in Group A.

Defending champions Japan will have to contend with 2024 hosts Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Syria in Group B.

The 2018 champions



Thai U23 players in training. Photo: Bangkok Post

Uzbekistan are in Group C with the 2020 champions South Korea, Iran and finals debutants Lebanon.

The top two teams of each group will progress to the knockout stage.

Thailand topped qualifying Group F thanks to a Kakana Khamyok brace in the 2-1 win against Malaysia on Sept 10 at Thammasat Stadium in Bangkok.

That result left Thailand and Lebanon tied

on seven points each with the former securing top spot on the basis of better goal-difference.

Thailand hammered Mongolia 6-0 in their first game of qualifying on Sept 5, while Lebanon proved sterner opposition two days later when the Thais had to battle to come from behind and salvage a point in a hard-fought 2-2 draw in Bangkok.

AFP

Sport

editor3@classactmedia.co.th



ACG readies for annual AFL tourney > p14



The Phuket Piranhas girls line-up in Chiang Mai with a little help from their friends from the Tanglin Rugby Club of Singapore. Photo: Supplied

Phuket youths impress at international rugby comp

RUGBY

Saacha Kang / Arjan Kang

Several talented local youngsters travelled to Chiang Mai recently to take part in the CNX7s rugby tournament, performing with distinction in what was a tough competition.

Hosted by Laana Rugby Club at the Yaowarate Sport Club & Resort on the weekend of Sept 20-21, both boys and girls from the Phuket Piranhas youth team were in action to represent the province in style.

Playing for the girls were 14-year-olds Saacha Kang, Yuna Coffey, Maia Dubois and 15-year-old Evie Layard, who were coached by 17-year-old Aelia Noret, while 14-year-old Julian Noret and 12-year-old Arjan Kang represented the boys.

Waking up in hot and humid conditions in Chiang Mai, the players were a mix of excitement and nerves, ready for two long days of rugby action ahead. Arriving at the ground, they were immediately taken by the beautiful green pitch cut to perfection, although they quickly remembered hadn't come to admire

the grass but to show everyone what Phuket rugby has to offer.

Despite a lack of players in general the true spirit of rugby shone through with clubs coming together to mix and match and help guarantee that all players had a team to run out for, with Arjan joining the Singapore Irish Rugby Clubs in the U-12 age category and Julian stepping up age wise to play for Lanna Rugby Club U16s.

While Arjan's first game resulted in a hard-fought loss against Ban Huay Pu Mae Ai, the team fared much better in the next contest as they defeated Lanna Blue 28-0. Their next group opponents, The Vikings, failed to turn up for their fixture meaning they forfeited and Singapore Irish were awarded an automatic win. In their last game of day one they played the Bangkok Lions and put in some nice tackles, nice runs and nice teamwork to pull off a win of 33-0.

VALIANT FIGHT

The only official Piranhas team in name involved was on the girls side where, with the addition of several players from Tanglin Rugby Club from Singapore, they debuted against the Singapore Irish U-14s, managing to come out victorious in only their second

ever touring tournament. The team beat Laana Rugby Club in their second game but unfortunately lost their winning streak when playing Singapore Irish for a second time that day, despite putting up a valiant fight.

The four Piranhas' girls were doubling up as they also turned out for the Tanglin girls U-16 team, who were also in need of some extra players. They had a great start against Singapore Irish who put up a strong battle but were eventually outplayed. Despite it being their first match, they showed great teamwork and continued the day in high spirits, powering through to win all of their group games.

The fact that the U-14 games followed merely minutes after the U-16 contests put an extra strain on the girls, who were forced to change their kits rapidly before switching fields for the next game, although they performed brilliantly throughout.

HIGH SPIRITS

Waking on day two exhausted but eager for more rugby action, the Piranhas contingent headed off to Yaowarate Sport Club & Resort in high spirits.

First off was a semi-final clash for Arjan and the Singapore Irish

Rugby Clubs U-12 team, which they won comfortably 26-0 to set up a tough final showdown against RPG 30, a small, fast, agile and nimble side who were especially good in the tackle. However, after the ball was won from a ruck, it was played to local lad Arjan who just managed to stretch over the line to make it 5-0, before successfully slotting home the conversion to make it 7-0.

Singapore Irish believed they had done enough to resist the constant pressure before RPG 30 scored a try in the final minute, meaning a successful conversion would result in a tie. In a moment that felt like hours but was merely a matter of seconds, the kicker missed and Singapore Irish had the U-12 trophy in the bag.

Day two brought tougher competition for the U-14 Piranha and Tanglin team, who lent on experienced advice, skill, knowledge, support and motivation from their coach Aelia to push through each struggle and proceed to impress everyone watching. The Piranhas ended up losing their final after leaving it all on the pitch but still managed to place 2nd for their age group, a fine achievement, especially after the four girls had been so instrumental in helping the U-16 team

remain unbeaten to secure first place.

The Piranhas' Julian Noret played for Lanna Rugby Club in the boys U-16 age group and he impressed by using his many strengths to his advantage, such as his amazing passing, his fast and agile movement and his ability to read the game to make an impact. Although they didn't get the win that they were hoping for, it was a hard fought tournament and hopes are high for next time.

By the end of the tournament all the Phuket players had pushed their limits, represented the Piranhas with pride, and left Chiang Mai with plenty to be proud of. For many, it was a chance to develop their skills, gain match experience and enjoy playing competitive rugby in a new environment.

The Piranhas will be forever grateful to Laana Rugby Club, Matt Hirst and Jason Bray for providing the opportunity to experience such an amazing international tournament and they look forward to the next adventure with Tanglin, Singapore Irish and anyone else that wants to experience the Phuket Piranhas' journey. For more details visit the Phuket Piranhas Rugby Instagram page at @phuketpiranhas.rugby.