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BUS STOP



Patong Mayor Chalernsak Manesri (left) receives the complaint from a tuk-tuk driver representative. Photo: Patong Municipality

PATONG TUK-TUK, TAXI DRIVERS PROTEST PLANNED 'BAHT BUS' SERVICE

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

About 50 tuk-tuk and taxi drivers descended upon the Patong Municipality offices last week to protest the 'baht bus' style circular service to be launched in the tourism town.

Present to meet the drivers and receive the formal complaint on Oct 31 were Patong Mayor Chalernsak Manesri joined by and members of the executive council and the Patong City Council, with officers from the Patong Police looking on.

"If the project actually happens

there will be a large impact on the occupations of public transport service professionals in the Patong Municipality area," said the complaint.

Mayor Chalernsak said he would be happy to serve as an intermediary in providing assistance and coordinating with the Phuket Provincial Land Transport Office (PLTO), which has started receiving applications from business operators to launch the 'baht bus' style service.

"There has never been any coordination from the Phuket Provincial Transport Office regarding details regarding the said project. And there has never been a meeting on this mat-

ter before," Mayor Chalernsak said.

"Currently, there are already a large number of vehicles for hire in the Patong area. If such a project is allowed to happen it will cause an increase in the number of vehicles for hire.

"I understand the problems and sufferings of professional groups very well. Today I am happy and ready to provide assistance by being the intermediary in coordinating with the Phuket Provincial Transport Office to inquire about details, facts and continue solving problems," he added.

Joining the tuk-tuk and taxi drivers today was Chalermpong Saengdee.

MP for Phuket District 2, who was asked by Saichol Nuchet to attend the event. Mr Saichol is a representative of the taxi operators of the Khok Makham community in Patong.

Mr Chalermpong was told that launching the 'baht bus' service would affect the jobs of about 200 tuk-tuk and taxi drivers in Patong.

The formal complaint asked for the Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO) to suspend any progress on launching the baht bus service, Mr Chalermpong noted.

Citing the letter of complaint, Mr Chalermpong said, "I would like to request that the Phuket Land Transport...

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Tourist Police get ready for the high season



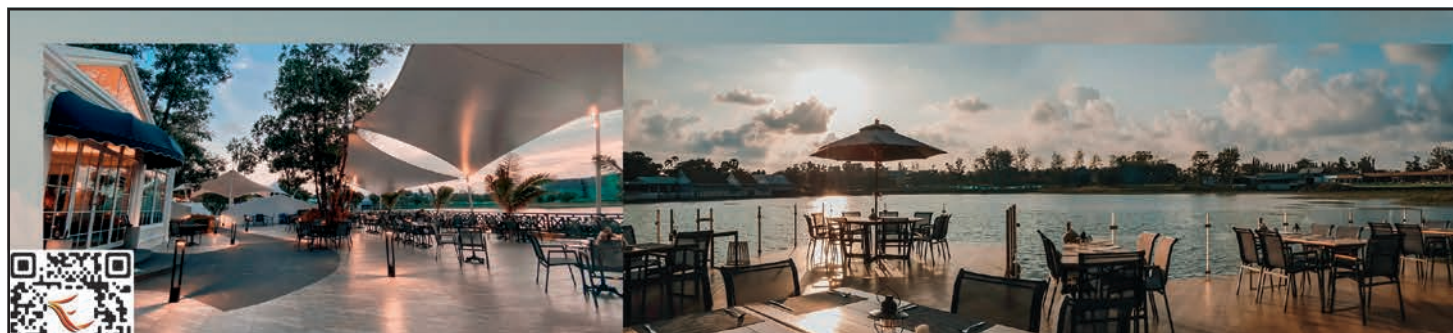
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Fundraising for Loy Krathong goes to the dogs



SPORT PAGE 16

Medal haul for Thais at Asian Para Games



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News



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Phang Nga pipeline on the agenda

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Regional Waterworks Authority will yet again request a budget of more than B3 billion to build the Phang Nga - Phuket water supply pipeline to solve long-term water problems to support tourism, officials have announced.

Confirmation of the budget request to be filed came at a meeting of the Phuket Provincial Water Resources Subcommittee chaired by Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat at Phuket Provincial Hall on Oct 31.

At the meeting it was recognised that the current El Niño phase of global weather is expected to affect Phuket through next year, said an official report of the meeting.

The island's three main reservoirs contained 19.7 million cubic metres of water, accounting for 91.5% of the total capacity of 21.53mn cubic metres of all three reservoirs combined, said the report.

The water will be needed for the dry season, especially from December through May to meet the needs of local residents and tourists, the official report noted.

At the meeting, the Phuket branch of the Provincial Waterworks Authority (PWA) explained it was continuing with its usual strategies to bolster water supply, listed as:

- Pumping raw water from public water sources
- Buying raw water from private mines (old water wells)
- Buying raw water from private mines (new water wells)
- Increasing the rate of private water purchases
- Placing Water pipelines connect the water distribution areas to 3 main stations.



Bang Neow Dum reservoir in Srisoonthorn in July 2019, a year when Phuket received 10 million foreign tourists. Photo: Supplied / file

The sixth strategy announced was the project "to improve and expand the Provincial Waterworks Authority, Phang Nga - Phuket branch".

The total budget to be requested was given as B4,673,970, "with the objective of increasing water production capacity".

The exact budget to be requested for the Phang Nga - Phuket pipeline was not specifically given. The B4.6bn budget is to be requested this fiscal year (FY 2024 - Oct 1, 2023 - Sept 30, 2024), the official report noted.

Governor Sophon at the meeting instructed all government agencies to give importance to water management, and to provide enough water to meet the needs of residents and tourists.

Solving short-term water shortage problems by pumping raw water from public water sources and buying raw water from private mines, and so on, must be done immediately, he said.

As a "medium-term solution", the budget for the Phang Nga - Phuket pipeline must be submitted this fiscal year (FY 2024) as "government subsidy type" form of funding.

"When the budget is allocated, it

can be implemented immediately," he said.

Officials were instructed to also look into having a raw water pipeline from Ratchaprapha Dam in Surat Thani help supply water to Phuket as a long-term solution to Phuket's water supply woes.

"The results of the completed studies were taken into consideration to determine the guidelines for driving the project forward. This was presented to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior to support the project," Governor Sophon said.

Looking forward to Fiscal Year 2025, the subcommittee resolved to approve 69 projects requiring budget funds B1.218bn.

Twenty-one projects requiring B460.89mn were not approved "because they were "projects that are not ready for operation and not in line with the 20-year water resources management master plan".

PIPELINE REVIVAL

The Cabinet in 2019 approved a budget of B3.5bn for officials to go ahead with the Phang Nga - Phuket

pipeline.

However, the project, already fully planned and ready to roll out, soon stalled and became mired in bureaucracy. Then the tourism shutdown policies were brought into effect in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, effectively putting all major infrastructure projects on hold.

Among his first acts as Governor of Phuket, Narong Woonciew in July 2020 travelled to Bangkok to raise the issue with headlining officials in the capital, to no avail.

Of note, Sarawut Chevapraserat, Deputy Secretary-General of the Office of National Water Resources (ONWR) was in Phuket in September to officiate the launch of three projects that will expand the total capacity at Phuket's three main reservoirs by a total of 850,000 cubic metres of water. Yet the Phang Nga pipeline was not mentioned among the water supply projects to go ahead.

TOURISM PRESSURE

The move to finally revive the Phang Nga pipeline project comes amid a push to increase the number of tourists coming to Thailand, and specifically to Phuket.

According to Ministry of Tourism & Sports statistics, Phuket welcomed 10,167,165 foreign tourists in 2019, staying on average 4.01 days. During that year, Phuket's water reserves ran dangerously low.

Even without the usual number of tourists on the island due to the COVID-19 pandemic, by April 2020 the water level at the Bang Wad reservoir in Kathu – the island's main reservoir with a capacity of 10.6mn cubic metres of water – sank so low that an old shrine not seen since the drought of 2002-3 became visible again. At that time, on Apr 18, Mr

Graisorn confirmed the reservoir contains just 80,000 cubic metres of water.

However, tourism officials are again hoping to see Phuket welcome 10mn foreign tourists during the coming year.

"From Sept 2022 through Sept 2023, there were 86,741 domestic and international flights and 13,606,638 passengers during the high season of Phuket," Monchai Tanode, General Manager of Phuket International Airport said recently in marking Phuket airport's "35th Anniversary".

"The number of flights and passengers between October and December 2023 is forecast to see 26,000 flights and more than 4.1 million passengers," he added.

The visa-exemption measures for Chinese and Kazakhstani nationals will be the main driver for tourist arrivals during the upcoming months, Mr Monchai noted.

The visa-exemption measures for tourists from China and Kazakhstan came into effect on Sept 25 and will conclude on Feb 29, 2024. The government's plan aims to attract 2.9mn Chinese arrivals and generate B140bn in tourism revenue over the five months in a move seen as a critical step in shoring up the nation's economic recovery.

The extension of the visa-free stay for Russian tourists from 30 days to 90 days, also in an effort to boost tourism to Thailand, came into effect on Nov 1.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin on Oct 31 announced that tourists from India and Taiwan will be able to enter Thailand without a visa from today (Nov 10) through to May 10, 2024 in a bid to draw in more tourists as high season approaches.

Patong tuk-tuk, taxi drivers claim new 'baht bus' will cost 200 jobs

Continued from page 1

...Office suspend the operation of the bus transportation project around Patong,

"The operations of the Phuket Land Transport Office are causing damage and will impact at least 200 public transport drivers in the area of Patong Municipality," he added.

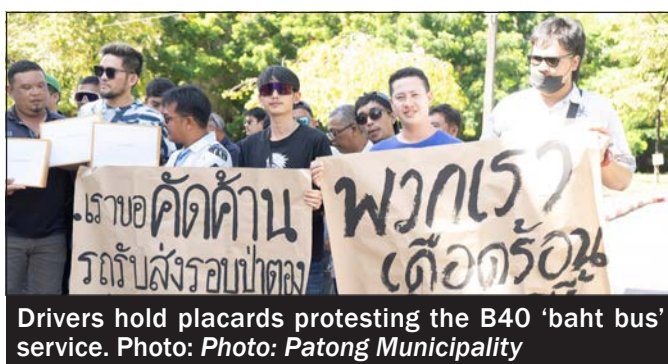
"From our preliminary inspection, they never received news of the project or been surveyed about the impact of this project, even though their own group was the one to be directly affected.

"If the Phuket Land Transport Office launches this project, it is expected that such groups will become unem-

ployed and suffer a lack of income to make a living and support their families, which will cause great damage to those who are engaged in providing transport services in Patong," Mr Chalermpong said.

Much silence preceded the PLTO posting three notices on Oct 17, all announcing that the PLTO was now receiving applications from business operators to operate three separate 'bus' services.

Two of the notices announced two circular routes in Patong to be served by operators, while the third route open to applications from prospective operators was the decades-old bus service



Drivers hold placards protesting the B40 'baht bus' service. Photo: Photo: Patong Municipality

between the old bus station on Phang Nga Rd in Phuket Town and Patong.

Both Patong circular services in Patong will travel along the beach road. Both will turn right onto Phra Barami Rd at the northern end of the town. From there, one will turn right onto Rat-U-Thit

200 Pi Rd, while the other will travel south along Phra Metta Rd. Both services will turn right onto Prachanukroh Rd in order to return to the Patong beachfront and begin the journey over again.

Both services must make a minimum of 40 trips per day. "The fare throughout the line

is 40 baht," the announcements by the PLTO read.

While all three announcements were posted by PLTO on Oct 17, they were all marked as "announced on 29 September 2023" by PLTO Chief Adcha Buachan.

PLTO Chief Mr Adcha so far has given no explanation for the delay of more than two weeks in announcing the new services to be provided.

He has also not given any explanation for the notices being posted publicly more than two months after the Phuket Provincial Land Transport Control Committee – the top regulatory transport committee for the island – approving the new services, as confirmed in a

previous report by Phuket MP Somchart Techathavorncharoen, MP for Phuket District 1.

Before the taxi and tuk-tuk drivers arrived on Oct 31, Patong Municipality had also so far not issued any notices announcing the new 'baht bus' services to be provided.

Apparently Patong Municipality received no notification from the PLTO – and does not monitor any public announcements from Provincial Hall or from the PLTO.

Meanwhile, the invitation for operators to submit applications for the new 'baht bus' services in Patong all carried the same deadline: the PLTO must receive the applications by Nov 28.

Officials prepare for 4am closing, tourist season

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat has ordered local officials to prepare to allow local nightlife venues on the island to remain open until 4am.

The order came at a meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall on Oct 30. Officials were ordered to investigate the “zones”, that is, the exact areas, where the 4am closing will come into effect.

For Phuket officials, the clock is ticking. Deputy Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, who also serves as the Interior Minister, that same day announced in Bangkok that the late closing will be in effect in time for the New Year holiday period.

This year the Cabinet has approved a four-day holiday for the New Year, starting Dec 29.

Prime Minister Srettha Thavasin last Friday (Nov 3) directly confirmed to the media that an integrated tourism plan meeting agreed to extend opening hours for nighttime entertainment venues, including pubs and bars, to 4am in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Chon Buri and Phuket for a trial period starting Dec 15.

“We intend to spur the economy and tourism domestically. The plan will also help generate more income for businesses in the tourism sector, including restaurants and entertainment venues,” said Mr Srettha.

SECURITY BOOST

Before Mr Srettha addressed the press last Friday, Phuket Governor Sophon led the official launch of a campaign on Nov 1 that will see the Phuket branch of the Volunteer Defense Corps (OrSor) provide extra security and target criminals during the upcoming tourism high season.

As Governor of Phuket, Mr Sophon is Commander of the Phuket Volunteer Defense Force, which operates under the Ministry of Interior’s Department of Provincial Administration (DOPA). Established by the Border Patrol Police in 1954 to fight communist insurgents in border villages, the OrSor are easily identified by the white elephant as the main feature of their insignia.



Photo: PR Phuket

The opening ceremony on Nov 1 was held in front of the OrSor’s ‘Phuket Province Command and Service Company’ headquarters.

The campaign, titled ‘Kick Off’, includes the establishment of a ‘Phuket Province Social Organising and Suppressing Influencer Operations Center’, which is “ready to build confidence in safety for residents and tourists during high season”, said an official report of the launch.

The campaign is “in accordance with the Ministry of Interior’s policy to ‘cure suffering, nourish happiness’ for the people,” the report added.

The campaign is to “emphasise prevention and suppression of influential people” and to “suppress drugs, human trafficking, possession and carrying of firearms and gambling, and carry out tracking and surveillance of influential people, including organising service establishments and entertainment venues”, the report continued.

The OrSor personnel are to be active 24 hours a day, and integrate their work with the Provincial Damrongdhama Center (provincial Ombudsman’s office). and related agencies, including the police and military, the report noted.

TOURIST POLICE BOLSTER RANKS

Tourist Police and supporting agencies held an assembly in the heart of Phuket Town last Sunday (Nov 5) as a show of their commitment to provide safety measures for tourists in the upcoming tourism high season.

Tourist Police Commissioner Maj Gen

Saksira Phueakam led the assembly in front of the popular Chartered Bank building just before the opening of the inaugural Chartered Walking Street market on Phang Nga Rd.

The assembly included Tourist Police officers who conduct patrols by pushbike, as well as Tourist Police Volunteers and the staff from the Tourist Assistance Center, who continually provide invaluable assistance to tourists for a wide range of issues.

Maj Gen Saksira said the assembly was to highlight how Tourist Police are “ready to take care of the safety of tourists in both urban areas and tourist attractions all over Phuket Island”.

“We have prepared measures to support the opening of entertainment venues until 4am to build confidence in [Phuket] being a safe tourist city,” he said.

“We have raised the level of security for tourists with cooperation from network partners at tourist attractions according to the ‘Strong Tourism Community’ project,” Maj Gen Saksira said.

“It can be seen that Phuket’s tourism economy has improved, especially with the increase in foreign tourists after the government issued visa-free measures,” he added.

Following the assembly, Maj Gen Saksira paraded along the Chartered Walking Street market to stop and speak with tourists along the way.

Under the banner ‘Safe & Smile’ and the Tourist Police’s long-standing motto, ‘Your First Friend’, Maj Gen Saksira and fellow Tourist Police officers handed out bookmarks and keychains promoting the Tourist Police hotline 1155.

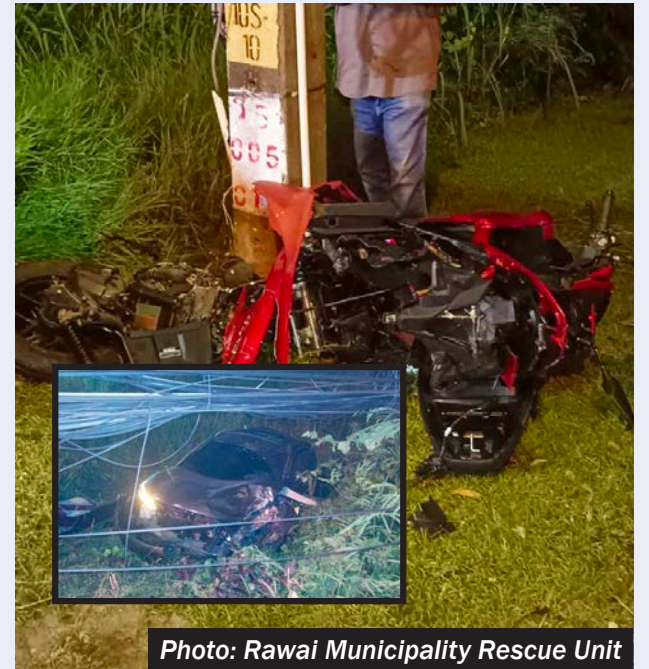


Photo: Rawai Municipality Rescue Unit

Foreigners killed as motorbike struck by car

A 21-YEAR-OLD AMERICAN man and a 19-year-old woman from Luxembourg were killed when the motorbike they were riding was struck from behind by a car on Wiset Rd in Rawai early last Sunday morning (Nov 5).

Pol Capt Charat Lempun of the Chalong Police was informed of the accident at 1am.

Police along with rescue workers from the Rawai Municipality Rescue Unit and the Kusoldharm Foundation arrived at the scene, near the entrance to Friendship Beach Resort, to find a grey Phuket-registered BYD car with heavy damage to its front left in a ditch beside the road.

The driver, Irina Pustovalova, 41, had sustained injuries in the accident and had been taken to hospital before police arrived.

Nearby was a Honda

Click motorbike bearing a Phuket-issued red license plate. The motorbike was nearly destroyed by its impact with a power pole. Among the debris beside the power pole was a blue helmet.

In the grass nearby was the body of a 21-year-old American man, named by police as Nickolas Joseph Ayoub, who had been identified as the driver of the motorbike.

Also nearby was the body of a 19-year-old woman from Luxembourg, named by police as Schintgen Ceylan, who was sitting on the back of the motorbike.

The bodies of both victims were taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital for post-mortem examination.

Police said they were continuing their investigation into the accident.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Patong’s Phra Mettha Rd finally reopens

THE SECTION OF PHRA Mettha Rd in Patong that has been closed to traffic for the past four months finally reopened on Nov 1.

The one-kilometre stretch of Phra Mettha Rd running behind Jungceylon shopping mall from Soi Banaan to Soi Nanai 8 closed on June 20 to enable the construction of a new flood prevention system, something Patong Police described as a “sand trap” (SPI), near the wastewater treatment plant.

The construction work was initially scheduled to take only two months, and was therefore supposed to be completed by Aug 26. However, despite opening partially from Sept 25, it ultimately took twice that long until the entire road was officially reopened last week.

Mayor Chalernsak Maneesri, Deputy Mayor Weerasak Khaminthong and other leaders from Patong Municipality were on hand to oversee the official reopening ceremony on Nov 1.

All officials participated in a religious ritual where

incense sticks were lit and prayers carried out before the customary firecrackers were let off to welcome good fortune.

Additionally, local municipality workers washed the road surface, using water from a fire truck provided by the local DDPM branch, before the barriers closing off the road and warning signs were removed.

At approximately 11am traffic returned fully to the section of road, although no official road markings have yet been installed.

During the ongoing work, Patong was flooded several

times as heavy rains lashed the island. Local residents expressed their frustration and anger on several occasions due to the delays on the project, with social media platforms inundated with questions about the reasons for the extended closure and the resulting disruptions.

Additionally, *The Phuket News* reached out to Patong Municipality in late August, seeking an explanation for the prolonged road closure and the inconveniences that have followed. However, no official statement was forthcoming,



Photo: PR Patong

which left frustrated residents and commuters in a state of uncertainty.

Despite the delay, authorities are confident that the newly-installed flood prevention system can minimise any threat from future heavy rains.

Officials also stressed the importance of having the road return to normal ahead of the upcoming high tourist season, when traffic is anticipated to be very heavy.

The Phuket News

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CONTACT US

editor@classactmedia.co.th 076 612 550

PURIYA BEAVAN
Editor**CHRIS HUSTED**
Executive Editor
084 307 7408
execeditor@classactmedia.co.th**BEN TIREBUCK**
News / Sport Editor
061 806 8132
editor3@classactmedia.co.th**CHUTHARAT 'UM' PLERIN**
Thai Editor
088 766 1615
thai@classactmedia.co.th**JASON BEAVAN**
General Manager
086 479 7471
gm@classactmedia.co.th**SIRIPORN (NOK) SEANGMAS**
Sales Support
086 479 7470
sales@classactmedia.co.th**NIRAVIT 'MOS' VORAVANITHA
THANAPONG 'OAK' KHAO-AMPHAIPHAN**
Graphic designersThe Phuket News
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Man sentenced for online posts

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Phuket Provincial Court has sentenced a man to 27 months in prison for defamation after he posted false claims online claiming that former Governor Narong Woonciew was illegally smuggling Muslims into Phuket in 2021.

Mr Narong authorised Thitima Chaemchoi, Legal Officer at the Phuket Provincial Administrative Office, to file a formal complaint about the posts on Feb 17, 2022, reported Phuket Info Center.

The complaint was filed against Aiya Phetthong, registered as a resident of the Lat Phrao District in Bangkok. The complaint was received by Pol Lt Col Thada Sodarak of the Phuket City Police.

The filing of the formal complaint to police followed the national Anti-Fake News Center issuing two warnings of fake news spreading online accusing Governor Narong of illegally smuggling Muslims into Thailand, and of using state funds to build a mosque.

The first fake news warn-



Pol Lt Col Thada Sodarak of the Phuket City Police receives the formal complaint in February last year. Photo: NNT / file

ing, in October 2021, noted that a post circulating claimed that the "Governor of Phuket Secretly is smuggling foreign Muslims into the country illegally".

"The Anti-Fake News Center investigated the facts via the Phuket Provincial Public Relations Office and found that such information is false," the warning said.

"In the case of posting a message with a picture that states that the Governor of Phuket is secretly smuggling foreign Muslims into the country illegally in the hope of proliferating and devouring [sic] the Thais to the end,

the Phuket Public Relations Office reviewed the post and clarified that such information is not true, because the Governor of Phuket is Buddhist. In addition, there is no illegal smuggling of Islamic people into the country," the Anti-Fake News Center said.

"Therefore, people are asked not to trust such information and [we] ask for cooperation not to send or share such information on various social media channels. People can receive more information from the Phuket Public Relations Office posted through the website https://pr.prd.go.th/phuket or [they

can] call 076-216118," the post added, using its standard reminder.

The second fake news warning, in December 2021, warned, "According to the information published on the subject 'Phuket Governor Approved budget for building a mosque of 56 million baht and transporting Muslims to Phuket', the Anti-Fake News Center has conducted a fact check by Phuket Provincial Public Relations Office found that such issues is false information.

"In the case of posting information indicating that a Muslim governor who pre-

tends to be a Buddhist moved from Chaiphum to Phuket approved a budget of more than 56 million baht to build a mosque and bringing a large number of foreign Muslims into Phuket, the Phuket Public Relations Office has reviewed the post and clarified that It's not true at all.

"The governor of Phuket is a Buddhist. He has never approved a budget of 56 million baht to build a mosque and has never smuggled Muslims into Phuket in any way," the notice said.

Mr Aiya, identified as responsible for posting the claims online, was found guilty under Section 328 and Section 78 of the Criminal Code, said the Phuket Info Center report.

The Phuket Provincial Court handed down its verdict on Oct 31, the report added.

Mr Aiya is to post corrective notices on social media and on Facebook for seven days, and have corrective notices published in at least two daily newspapers for seven days each.

He is also to remove all posts regarding the fake claims from online.

Police seize 49,000 meth pills in Phuket Town

PHUKET PROVINCIAL POLICE have announced the seizure of more than 49,000 methamphetamine tablets (ya bah) and 4.43 grammes of of crystal meth (ya ice), altogether worth over B800,000, in a series of arrests targeting dealers in Phuket Town.

Announcing the news at Phuket Provincial Police headquarters on Nov 1 was the new Phuket Provincial Police Commander, Pol Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum, who previously served as Commander of Region 3 Police.

The arrest team was led by Phuket Provincial Police Crime Suppression Division chief Pol Lt Col Pichit Thongto, joined by Phuket Provincial Police Crime Suppression Division officers.

The press conference was held to specifically announce three arrests.

Anon 'Non' Sukchuang, 43, registered as living on Sakdidet Rd in Talad Nuea Subdistrict of Phuket Town, was arrested at a hotel room on Chaofa Rd.

A subsequent search of a property on Ranong Rd led to officers seizing 46,400 tablets of ya bah and 4.13g of crystal meth. Also seized as evidence were a digital scale and one mobile phone, among 10 other items.

The second arrest announced was that of Paradee 'Boom' Posri, 43, from Chiang



Photo: Phuket Provincial Police

Rai Province. She was arrested at a rented room on Soi Phoonpon 9.

Officers seized 2,688 ya bah pills and 0.18g of ya ice, along with drug-taking paraphernalia, a mobile phone and eight other items.

The third arrest was that of Patsak 'Pok' Suwannakat, 42, from Phatthalung, in front of Mae Sombat Restaurant on Phoonpon Rd. A subsequent search of an unregistered abode in the Soi Saensuk Community in Phuket Town resulted in the seizure of 213 ya bah pills and 0.12g of ya ice, and one 357-calibre bullet.

Also seized was one Samsung Galaxy a04 mobile phone, among 10 other items.

All three were taken to Phuket City Police Station and charged with illegal possession of a Category 1 narcotic with intent to distribute and with illegally taking a Category 1 narcotic. Patsak was also charged with illegal possession of ammunition.

All three confessed to the charges against them, police said.

Eakkapop Thongtub

the Phuket News



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

Phuket woman wins B24mn on lottery

A 48-YEAR-OLD WOMAN in Phuket Town has won B24 million on the Government Lottery drawn on Nov 1.

Not wasting any time in confirming her win, Duangjai Inrod, a resident of the Talad Nuea Subdistrict, presented herself and her winning lottery e-tickets at Phuket City Police Station at Phuket at 5:52pm on Nov 1. The draw was announced at 4pm that day.

On hand to confirm that Ms Duangjai had indeed

bought four tickets of the correct number – 743951 – was Pol Lt Patcharada Poolpipat, Deputy Inspector of Investigation.

Ms Duangjai had purchased the tickets through the Paotang app, Lt Patcharada confirmed.

As Ms Duangjai had four tickets all with the first prize valued at B6mn each, the total prize money won was B24mn, Lt Patcharada noted.

"So we have entered this into the daily record as evidence," Lt Patcharada said.

Eakkapop Thongtub

New Walking Street market brings crowds

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Tourist Police Commissioner Pol Maj Gen Saksira Phueakam was among the officials marking the grand opening of the inaugural Chartered Walking Street on Phang Nga Rd in Phuket Town last Sunday night (Nov 5).

Joining the national Tourist Police chief was Phuket Vice Governor Amnuay Pinsuwan and Rewat Areerob, President of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO), along with Phuket Town Deputy Mayors Prasit Sinsawaphak and Onphailin Trakulpalinphon.

More than 200 vendors had stalls set up along the 380-metre section of Phang Nga Rd, which was closed to traffic through to midnight as tourists and local residents enjoyed local delicacies and perused the handicrafts on display as part of the 'Creative Space Project'.

The new market, which will be held from 4pm to 10pm each Sunday, will help



Photo: PR Phuket

stimulate the local economy for Phuket Town residents while preserving local identity and tourism in urban areas, said Vice Governor Amnuay.

"Phuket is a world-class tourist city, known as 'Andaman Pearl', and has many outstanding features, whether it is a beautiful tourist attraction, beautiful cultural traditions and the Phuket way of life," he said.

"Therefore, to increase household income and create employment for business operators and local people, this will help alleviate the

economic impact and help drive the economy in Phuket province after being affected by the COVID-19 situation," he added.

"In holding the Chartered Walking Street [market], the important thing is to make tourists confident about safety and confidence in coming to Thailand. We must guarantee cleanliness and safety for tourist attraction operators. Phuket Province has a master plan with 10 economic and social pillars to drive its development strategy, including 'Business Leisure Tourists', which is one

of the economic pillars. is to drive the strategy of being a city of cultural diversity in food.

"In order to create additional economic value, therefore, all sectors must help each other because this is what will make the tourism industry grow sustainably in the long term," he concluded.

Phadet Wuttichan, President of the 'Chartered [Bank area] Tourism Community Enterprise', explained that although the Chartered Bank building was a popular landmark for tourists, local businesses continued to suffer.

"Many people come to take photos as a souvenir, but overall Phang Nga Rd remains quiet and business is sluggish, despite Phang Nga Rd having many other interesting tourist attractions that are worth seeking out and exploring.

"Phang Nga Rd is an area that nurtures the diversity of local people, traditions, lifestyles, food, and contemporary art, perfectly expressed in the form of architecture, art and culture that has become unique," he said.

Action continues on new inland road

SURVEYS AND INSPECTIONS will be conducted, and maps showing land boundaries will be created, in order for the proposed new road joining Kathu and Srisoonthorn to proceed, a working group created to see the new road to fruition has confirmed.

The meeting of the working group, chaired by Phuket Vice Governor Amnuay Pinsuwan, met at Phuket Provincial Hall on Nov 1.

Suggestions on guidelines and measures to strengthen cooperation between government and private agencies through the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) were discussed, said an official report of the meeting.

The PPAO has become the focal-point agency for coordinating efforts to create the new road. Present was PPAO President Rewat Areerob along with Srisoonthorn Mayor Chalermopol Kerdsup and Nimit Ekwanich, Chairman of the Wichit Municipality Council. Also present was Phuket Provincial Prosecutor Vikrom Komoltri.

Three families, represented by Sanguan Kulwanich, Kitti Saksaktawee and Nginao Ek-



Photo: PR Phuket

vanich, are willing to donate the land required to build the new road, which will be 5.6 kilometres long.

At a previous meeting of the working group in March, Mr Rewat explained that the road is to be 12 metres wide. It will start near the Phuket Mining Museum in Kathu and cross the hills in the heart of the island to connect with the east side of Bang Neow Dam reservoir in Baan Manik, Srisoonthorn.

The aim of the road is to reduce traffic congestion along Thepkasattri Rd, the main traffic artery down the centre of the island, and provide an alternative route for people traveling to Phuket airport.

In announcing the proposed new road in November last year, Mr Nimit said, "Land for new roads is limited and expensive, while mobility and traffic safety are essential."

The Phuket News

Trucker charged following brake failure on Patong Hill

A 59-YEAR-OLD TRUCK driver from Ubon Ratchathani narrowly escaped injury when he lost control of his vehicle on Patong Hill last Friday (Nov 3). Fortunately, a roadside barrier prevented the truck from rolling down the slope, limiting the consequences to property damage.

Lt Col Kittisak Saengmanee of the Kathu Police received a notification about the accident on Patong Hill around 1pm. According to the report, a truck from outside of Phuket lost control while heading to Patong from Kathu and collided with a roadside barrier.

Arriving at the scene, police officers discovered a damaged six-wheeler registered in Nakhon Pathom lodged on the roadside barrier. Part of the cargo was scattered on the road, blocking one of the lanes.

The accident resulted in damage to government and private property and caused a significant traffic jam. The driver, Somjit Montanard, had escaped unharmed.



A roadside barrier prevented a serious accident on Patong Hill on Nov 3. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

Mr Somjit explained to the police that he was making his first cargo delivery to Patong. Unfamiliar with the road, he relied on GPS, which provided no information about the slope.

The driver was taken by surprise when the pneumatic brakes of his Hino truck ran out of air, rendering the system useless. He attempted to slow down the

truck using the gears but was unsuccessful.

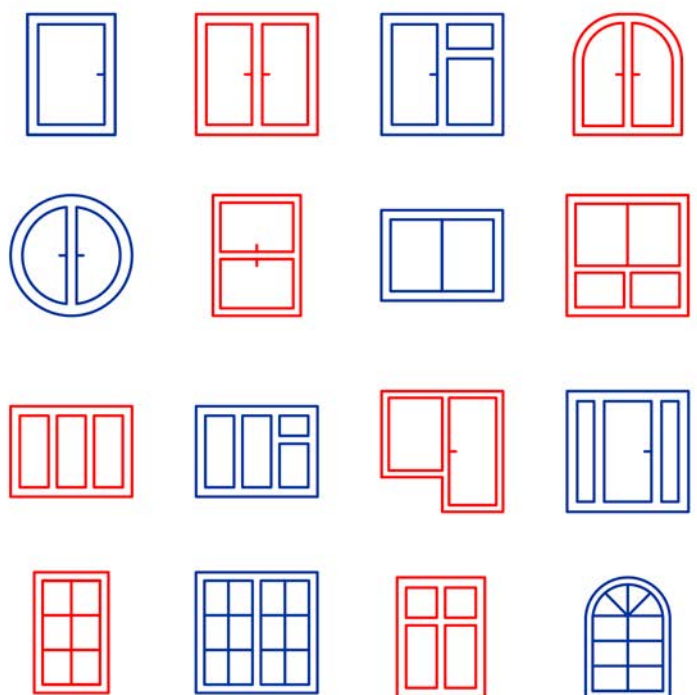
"Fortunately, there was a fence; otherwise, the truck would have flown down the slope to the foot of the hill," said Mr Somjit.

Kathu Police confirmed that Mr Somjit would be charged with "reckless driving" and causing damage to government property.

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The wine tax protectionist barrier

Diego Sala

Why is the tax on wine in Thailand 250% on average? Is it to protect Thailand's domestic production? While Thailand does produce wine in places such as Loei, Hua Hin, and Khao Yai, they are often inferior in quality due to unfavorable weather conditions. In addition to their high prices, many in Thailand tend to prefer imported wines.

Against an annual production output of a million litres, imports account for 18.5 million litres per year, for a market worth B4 billion before customs, thus estimated at (at least) B20bn in turnover on the retail market (source: Thai Customs, December 2022). Therefore, taxes on wine imports into Thailand is unlikely to be a protectionist measure.

WINE CONSUMER MARKET IN THAILAND

Until 2019, red wine dominated (85-90% of total consumption). Since the country's reopening in 2022, white wine has gained ground, now comprising around 30% of total consumption.

Wine is primarily consumed in large hotels and international restaurants, with average prices ranging from B1,300 to B2,500 per bottle. The collector's market is rapidly expanding, with private individuals importing fine wines, especially from



Italy, through professional operators.

HOW ARE WINE TAXES CALCULATED IN THAILAND?

As mentioned earlier, wine taxes in Thailand serve as a revenue source for the Thai government. The Excise Department, one of Thailand's most efficient authorities, holds a prominent financial position, even surpassing the Revenue Department in budgetary terms.

WINE TAXATION IN THAILAND CONSIDERS

SEVERAL FACTORS:

Ad Valorem Tax: The standard tax rate is 54%, calculated based on the DDU value, but countries with Free Trade Agreements are exempt.

Alcohol Tax: This tax is calculated based on the alcohol content of wines, with an excise duty of B1,500 per litre of alcohol.

Local Taxes: These taxes fund social initiatives and add a 17.5% increase to the total excise duty.

Consumption Surcharge: Importers must declare the final retail price, and if it exceeds B1,000 (including VAT), a 10% tax is levied.

Value Added Tax (VAT) is also applied at a standard rate of 7% to the cumulative total of these taxes.

IMPORTING WINE TO THAILAND

Only Thai entities, whether individuals or juristic persons, are eligible to obtain the licences required for importing wines into Thailand. These are some of the requirements:

Import Licence: It requires a registered address, not near schools or temples, and typically takes about 30 days to acquire.

Wholesale Licence (Type 1): This licence, for selling quantities exceeding 10 litres, can be obtained in around 20 days.

Retail License (Type 2): Necessary for selling single bottles or serving wine by the glass in shops and public establishments, with location restrictions.

Other Licences: There are four additional types for private clubs and entertainment venues.

After obtaining licences, label registration with the Excise Department is crucial. Any discrepancies during customs categorisation can lead to delays and fines. Professional assistance in regulatory and customs matters is recommended. Once labels are approved, one bottle per label undergoes analysis, and then the initial batch of wine can be shipped. Customs will handle affixing Thai labels and excise duty payment

stamps through your broker.

FREE TRADE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THAILAND AND EUROPE: REALITY OR LEGEND?

Ongoing discussions between Thailand and Europe on Free Trade Agreements, which began in 2013 and have seen interruptions, could potentially reduce or eliminate import duties. This would level the playing field for European and Australian wines, significantly impacting market shares. The recent 'High Level Dialogue on ASEAN Italy Economic Relations' conference in Bangkok on Oct 4 emphasised the importance of such agreements, as Europe imports more from Asean than it exports.

While Europe withdrew from negotiations in 2014 due to Thailand's political situation, the roles have reversed, with Thailand now seeking a peaceful environment. Despite cultural and political differences, both sides share a mutual need, and a Free Trade Agreement is likely to materialise in 2024, although potential limitations may persist if geopolitical strategies remain unchanged.

To learn more about wine taxes and other licensing requirements for importing wine into Thailand, get in touch with specialists at info@silklegal.com or visit silklegal.com.



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Financial lure keeps Thai foreign workers in Israel

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

About 20,000 Thai workers remain in Israel for financial reasons while pictures show that those abducted by Hamas are still alive, Pongsathorn Chuthasamit, reception director of the Department of Protocol, said on Monday (Nov 6).

Mr Pongsathorn was among nine foreign affairs officials who returned from Israel after the Foreign Affairs Ministry closed its Thai evacuation centre at InterContinental David Tel Aviv Hotel on Nov 3 after the number of Thai workers wanting to return home dropped dramatically. However, the Thai embassy in Tel Aviv is operating normally and is ready to facilitate citizens who wish to return home, Mr Pongsathorn confirmed.

Only two Thais arrived from Israel last Sunday (Nov 5), he confirmed, adding that no other Thai nationals had currently expressed interest in returning to their homeland.

Labour Minister Phiphat



Thai workers arrive from Israel at Don Muang Airport in Bangkok on Oct 26. Photo: Bangkok Post

Ratchakitprakarn said on Monday most Thai workers decided to continue to work in Israel for financial reasons. They were indebted and feared that they would be unable to earn a similar salary if they left Israel, he said.

This followed Labour permanent secretary Pairote Chotikasathien confirming that Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin had approved a support grant for repatriated Thai workers from Israel of B50,000, together with another B15,000 from the overseas

worker's fund.

Mr Pairote also explained that there are about 700 Thai workers who have signed up for farm-based work in Israel but whose employment has been delayed due to the ongoing attacks in the region.

Meanwhile, later on Monday, Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin said Gen Songwit Noonpakdee, chief of defence forces, saw pictures of several Thais who were abducted from Israel by Hamas, proving that they were still alive.

The Prime Minister said he

hoped that while negotiations were going on, the hostages might be released in the event of a temporary ceasefire.

He said that there was no update on the report that three Thai hostages were missing and another Thai person had been abducted.

The Foreign Affairs Ministry reported last Saturday (Nov 4) that 24 Thai people were abducted, 19 were injured, 34 were killed and 7,470 returned from Israel since the start of the Israel-Hamas war.

Mr Srettha added that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had expressed his condolences to Thailand for the deaths of Thai nationals during the conflict and promised his full support in rescuing any Thais held hostage by Hamas.

"He told me he would inform us if there is any progress in the hostage situation. I told him we welcome any help and conditions in exchange for their safe and quick release," Mr Srettha said.

The Prime Minister urged Thai citizens to return while the situation remains relatively manageable.

New rule set on meth possession

BANGKOK

A PERSON WHO POSSESSES no more than five methamphetamine pills will now be regarded as a drug user, not a dealer, the Public Health Ministry has confirmed.

Dr Kittisak Aksornwong, the ministry's acting deputy permanent secretary, told the media on Nov 3 that the amount was set based on well-rounded information on health issues.

Previously, those who possessed 10 pills or less were to be considered drug users. Now, a person who has more than five pills may be classified as a dealer if the designation is approved.

Dr Kittisak explained that a panel of experts from the Department of Mental Health, Food and Drug Administration, police and related agencies discussed the matter and initially concluded that a person in possession of five meth pills or less could be considered as a drug user who is in need



Photo: Bangkok Post

of medical treatment.

Citing medical information from Ramathibodi Hospital, he said that consuming over 55 milligrammes of methamphetamine can make users develop SMI-V (Serious Mental Illness with High Risk of Violence).

The conclusion will be submitted to the public health minister for approval, he said, adding public hearings will be held before it is sent to the Cabinet for approval. If approved, an announcement will be made by the Office of the Council of State as a ministerial regulation.

The ministry has invited academics, anti-drug agencies and related departments to come up with a definitive figure of how many meth pills a person can possess before he or she is considered a dealer. Bangkok Post

Excluded nightspots eye slice of 4am pie

BANGKOK

AFTER THE GOVERNMENT EXTENDED opening hours for nightspots to 4am in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Chon Buri and Phuket, business operators in other provinces are calling for the same policy to be applied there.

Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin announced on Nov 3 that the government would extend nightlife opening hours for a trial period in the four provinces first in an effort to boost tourism.

The measure is expected to take effect from Dec 15, he said, adding state agencies will consider how many months is suitable for the trial and whether other zones will be added in future.

He said the government intends to spur the economy and tourism domestically. The plan will also help generate more income for businesses in the tourism sector, including restaurants and entertainment venues.

"If the extension boosts tourism and local economy in the four provinces, other provinces should also be allowed to add opening hours," said Pichanont Ingprasarn, a co-owner of nightlife venues in three eastern provinces of Trat, Chanthaburi and Rayong.

"The government should look at other provinces with the potential for tourism growth such as Rayong and Trat which have tourist attractions [such as Koh Chang in Trat]. Nightlife venues there are also the targets of foreign tourists," he said.



Bangkok is one of four locations to receive extended opening hours for nightlife venues. Photo: Bangkok Post

He also wants the government to allow more nightspot operators on Koh Chang to apply for licences to operate legally, assign clear zoning for them and ensure stricter law enforcement to prevent underage people from visiting the venues and other problems.

Samphan Chandern, an adviser to the Trat Tourism Council, also supported the extension of opening hours in Trat as it would will boost tourism income in the province, especially on Koh Chang.

Ratchaporn Poonsawat, president of the Koh Samui Tourism Association, said Koh Samui in Surat Thani is not among the provinces where the extension of opening hours for entertainment venues is taking effect, despite its tourism value. He said business operators here already discussed operating hour extension with the previous government. Bangkok Post

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'Nature Red in Tooth and Claw'



GREEN THOUGHTS

Patrick Campbell

Tennyson observed in his 1855 poem 'Maud' that 'the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and prey'. The wood is part of a Victorian garden but the poet might just as well have been talking about your flower beds in Phuket.

Tennyson had been reading Darwin and his 'world of plunder and prey' is an oblique reference to Darwin's theory of 'the survival of the fittest'. While the role of key 'plunderer' has since been assumed by man as the apex predator— whose assault on the natural environment has been both massive

and murderous — those less visible skirmishes and battles alluded to by the poet, continue in the natural theatre that is your garden. Nature red in tooth and claw.

Let me offer some examples. The primary bio-controls in your estate are carried out by predatory insects and, to a lesser extent, by insectivorous birds and reptiles. Fast-moving insects tend to spend their days or nights on an obsessive hunt. I watch with fascination as turquoise dragonflies, some of the first winged insects to evolve, quarter the zone above the swimming pool, displaying aerobatic skills that far surpass those of any machine invented by man. Why? They are chasing down and catching small flying insects which are then clutched between their front legs and devoured on a perch. They can devour up to a hundred insects a day.

While they are on the prowl, I rarely get bitten by mosquitoes or midges. It is no coincidence.

Among other efficient insect eaters, your garden will have its complement of creatures that operate by stealth. They can move at lightning speed, but generally only need to do so prior to the moment of capture. While spiders generally ensnare insects in their sticky, silken webs, some species hunt actively on foot and can run down their prey. All spiders are venomous but very few — some tarantulas and the brown widow aside — pose any real threat. In fact, like dragonflies, they are extremely efficient pest controllers, and though arachnophobes would not agree, they are the gardener's friend. It has been estimated that the world's 25 million tons of spiders kill 500 tons of prey every year: twenty times their own body weight. But that they are themselves predated will come as no surprise to Darwinians. They are attacked by sphecid wasps and, higher up the chain of being, by small birds such as the aptly named spider hunter, which is adept at extracting spiders from the centre of their webs with its long curved bill.

Other critters which enjoy a mixed reputation among Thai gardeners are centipedes and praying mantids. Both look ferocious and both are extremely efficient hunters. But only the centipede is actually a bad guy and then only when accidentally touched or threatened. Its bite is said to be extremely painful and long-lasting. Make it a rule never to clear up leaf litter and other garden rubbish without wearing gloves. As for its value in the garden, the jury is out. It does consume a range of noxious insects, including small fly larvae, but is also known to prey on earthworms, a valuable resource. But even the fast-moving, heavily armed centipede is sometimes a victim - eaten by mice, lizards and snakes. Dog eat dog.

The praying mantids seem to have forsaken my garden. I used to see them on palm fronds — a camouflaged ambush predator that can eat small birds as well as a range of insects. A pity it has gone, since it looks so exotic. I wonder if it is a victim of the skinks or maybe of the mournful coucal which has proved so adept at eradicating all the oleander hawk moth caterpillars. Please come back.

I feel less concerned about the vanishing millipedes. Black and glossy, they look menacing and indeed they contain cyanide in their body fluids. My Thai partner sweeps them into a dustpan and hurls them into the undergrowth. But they are pretty harmless unless ingested, and as detritivores, their diet consists almost exclusively of



Photo: Krunal Mistry / Unsplash



Photo: Kerolainy / Pixabay

rotting vegetable matter. But like centipedes they should be kept away from children.

In the early days of this column I wrote a piece about cockchafers. While the name is unfortunate, its disappearance — at least from my garden — is more explicable than that of the praying mantids. Known in my childhood as a 'Maybug' — for obvious reasons — the adult beetle (*Melolontha melolontha*) enjoyed its drunken sojourn in the sun before abruptly expiring.

The earlier damage to plants was caused not by the love-crazed imago, but by its voracious larvae, large cream grubs that regularly killed my container plants by munching away, unseen, at their roots. In those days, it was garden enemy number one. Nowadays it has disappeared, at least from my pots.

Similarly, they used to be a huge pest in Europe, responsible for the wholesale destruction of food crops, but their numbers there are now much reduced. Pesticides, there as here, are now a fact of life.

But in the Kingdom at least the Maybug, or 'maeng plud', are also a succulent addition to the daily diet for Thais who still collect them during the 'danse macabre' that preceded their death. Nature red in tooth and claw...

Patrick Campbell's book 'The Tropic Gardener', described in one Bangkok review as the best book on Thai gardening for 50 years, is available for B500 (half price) to personal callers from 59/84 Soi Saiyuan 13 in Rawai (Tel: 076-613227 or 085-7827551).

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Floating charity for animal welfare

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

This Loy Krathong will see the annual fundraising event and doggie fashion show hosted by CHOW Pet Foods moved to Blue Tree Phuket, where guests will enjoy an evening meal designed by an executive chef and the stars of the show, the doggies, will enjoy a five-course feast.

The event, to be held on Sunday, Nov 19, will be the sixth annual fundraiser held to help provide assistance to independent animal welfare rescue volunteers in the north of the island, explained key organiser of the event, Janice Deknatel, owner of CHOW Pet Foods.

“CHOW Pet Foods makes fresh natural dog food delivered to people’s doors weekly. In addition to donating 2kg of food per client per month, we also host a charity event every year – but this will be our first of the sit-down gala kind. Previously, we held our events by the beach. It has turned into an annual doggy fashion show in its own way,” explains Janice.

“This year we have great help and support from Blue Tree, who is organising the venue, entertainment equipment, F&B, and location! Extra thank you to Khun Kay and Chef Bryan from Blue Tree. Money raised will be used among animal rescuers for sterilisation and vaccination and improve the health of street dogs and cats,” she adds.

Thalang Pet Hospital has set up a fund that can be accessed by multiple rescuers within the community. “As these people are independent rescuers they are not tied to a specific charity group but they do a LOT in the community. These are ladies well known by locals,” explains Janice.

“They drive around Phuket daily to feed strays; they provide medical treatment to injured strays. They capture, sterilise and release stray cats and dogs. They take in and foster puppies and rehome to take them off the streets. They keep their eyes and ears open for any stray dogs or cats in need and go to great lengths to help and improve their lives. They spend nights waking up every two hours to feed puppies and kittens left behind after the mother has been killed by whatever reason. They respond to calls when anyone tells them about an animal in need.

“Dr John who has been here a long time has assisted in setting up this fund so that these independent rescuers can sterilise and where necessary cover vet bills for stray animals.

“Because they are independent rescuers everything they do is out of



Khun Meen from Rustic and Blue with ‘Cody’ after winning a raffle prize at a previous dog fashion show fundraising event organised by Chow Pet Foods. Photo: Paul Panton

their own pocket – but they still answer people’s calls to help. Vet bills and sterilisations are costly so the support of donations greatly assists in their ability to do more. Dr John has offered discounted prices for his services to these rescuers in addition to setting up this fund,” she adds.

“Every year I focus on one single rescuer to raise money for them, with a larger event this year I wanted to focus efforts towards something that could support more than one person,” Janice notes.

This year she is hoping to raise B100,000 to B150,000 in donations.

MAIN EVENT

The event will be held at ‘Colosseum’, also called the ‘Amphitheatre’, where the water fountains sprout out of the ground, right opposite the Tree House.

There are 50 seats available for people, but no limit on the number of entrants in the dog fashion show. The event will start at 4pm and officially conclude at 7pm, but will likely go on through to 8pm. “It’s an early start, early finish for a fresh Monday morning,” says Janice.

“The event is tailored to adults. of course children are welcome to join, although there is no kids’ menu or kids’ ticket price. If anyone is vegan we will also have a menu for them,” she adds.

Executive Chef Bryan has lined up a sterling menu for guests to enjoy: Rustic Pork Liver Terrine with Coconut Chutney & Country Bread; Roasted Duck Tostadas with Mango & Cabbage Slaw;

Sicilian Mackerel with Cauliflower Puree; Braised Beef Cheek, Glazed Carrots & Sweet Potato... Or Fennel & Chili Porchetta with Pumpkin Purée & Roasting Jus; and Banana Malva Pudding with Toasted Coconut Dukkah.

The night’s musical entertainment will be provided by independent artist, singer and guitarist Jay Celada, but as always the main highlight of the evening will be the fashion show.

“Human models will be dressed by Island Magic

Concept Boutique, and doggies should be dressed by their owners with a Loy Krathong inspired theme,” Janice explains.

“The models are the people on the island, friends, neighbours, family. We want to maintain a community vibe. Island Magic Concept Boutique owned by Renata and Khun Pueng will be dressing the human models. The carry brands include Endless Summer by Mona and Ocean Bloom,” she adds.

The evening’s entertainment in-

cludes raffles and auctions of a wide variety of prizes. “We have memberships, IV drips, makeover vouchers, hotel vouchers, diving vouchers and a lot more up for grabs – with the biggest prize on auction being a six-hour boat trip with Simpson Yacht Charter,” Janice says.

Among the other prizes to be raffled and auctioned off are a five gym session voucher and a sports massage at Optimise Fit Phuket, a one month membership for Thailand Top Tennis Court sponsored by SiamSportsPro, and a US\$1,000 cash voucher for your next dive trip sponsored by Master Liveaboards.

The full list of sponsors contributing prizes to be won include: Simpson Yacht Charter; Good Vibes Thailand; Master Liveaboard; Live More; Siam Sports Pro; Optimise Fit Phuket; Seeds of Change; Canine Point Academy; 5 Star Marine; Rustic and Blue (La Playa, By the Sea and Getaway outlets); Vegan Junkie; The Colourist; Pitch Perfect Group; Tonsai Spa; Baba Beach Club; Canine Obedience Phuket; Green Hearts Phuket; and the Pamookkoo Resort.

Tickets cost B,3000 per person.

Tickets for dogs cost B500 for their own five-course dinner provided by CHOW. The deadline for registering to attend the event is Nov 15.

For more information or to register to attend the event, visit the ‘Loy Krathong Charity Gala’ event page on Facebook, or contact Janice at CHOW Pet Foods.



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POP QUIZ

1. Do goldfish have stomachs?
2. Which Wild West gunslinger was shot in the back while playing poker in Deadwood, Colorado, in 1876?
3. 'Now is the winter of our discontent' is the opening line from which William Shakespeare play?
4. Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria was assassinated in which European city, thus sparking World War I?
5. What does the acronym 'CSI' stand for?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Easy

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

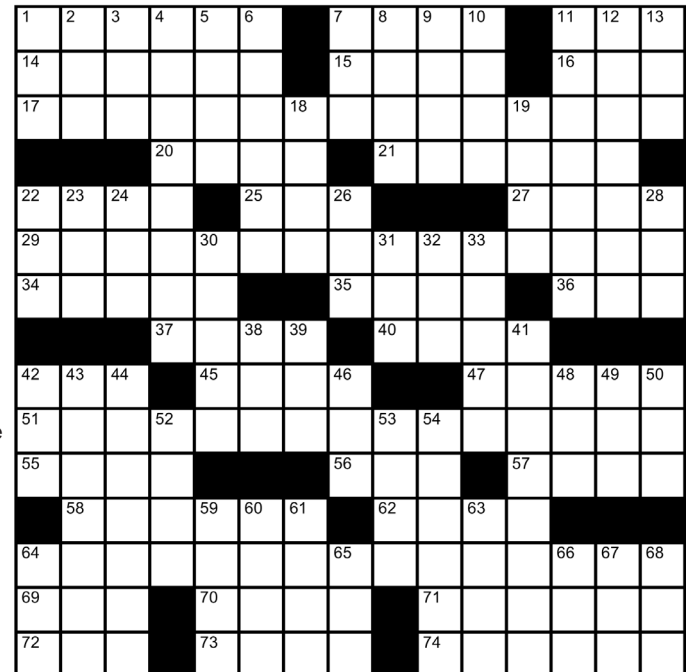
Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

1. Verse group
7. U.S. State
11. Recipe word
14. Family life, figuratively
15. Madras dress
16. Small amount
17. Racer starter
20. "Later"
21. Souvenir item
22. Capital of Azerbaijan
25. Feed lines to
27. 100 dinars
29. Make irritable
34. Skin problem
35. Delicate
36. Time zone
37. Agitation
40. Office fill-in
42. "We ___ Family"
45. Chinese mafia
47. Father of Paris
51. Reveal a secret
55. Band member
56. King preceder
57. Distress
58. Sci-fi weaponry
62. While lead-in
64. Opposed
69. Poison ___
70. It has a code

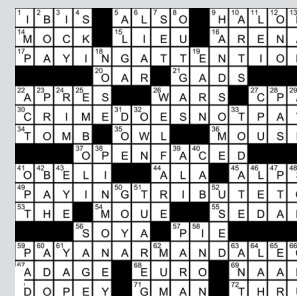
Down

71. Break out
72. Fraternity letters
73. First family's home
74. City in central Egypt
1. Tai language branch
2. Day's end, in poetry
3. Beam of light
4. Perennial herbs
5. Needle holder
6. Region in the Balkan Peninsula
7. ___ Today
8. Bakery product
9. Old flatboats
10. Lit
11. Spanning
12. Army gear
13. The Smothers Brothers, e.g.
18. Grimace
19. Cork's place
22. Software program
23. "Wheel of Fortune" buy
24. He dated Skipper's sister
26. Greek letter
28. Court call
30. Japanese weapon
31. Bomb's opposite
32. Kind of deposit
33. Nature goddess
38. Debtor's note
39. Big blast maker
41. Village in Wisconsin
42. Undertaking
43. Small roll
44. Sets off
46. Former Portuguese colony in India
48. Bar stock
49. Bitter ___
50. Stylish, in the 60s
52. Mollify
53. Hopper
54. Aim
59. Fringe
60. Cattail, e.g.
61. Commonsensical
63. Cumberbund
64. Took the cake
65. Place for a VCR
66. Arrest
67. Jacuzzi
68. Midmorning



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

1

in every 10 European children are conceived in a bed from IKEA.

25

percent of the ants in a colony are inactive, they consistently just stand around and do nothing, according to one study.

435

feet long (132.62 metres) is the record for the longest baguette in the world, which took 60 bakers and seven hours to make.

1,126

US dollars on average is spent by Americans on prescription drugs every year – double the average of other developed countries.

200,000

standard laser pointers all focusing through a lens to an exact point would be needed in order to create a laser powerful enough to kill.

Source: *Uberfacts*

ISLAND VIEW



Kamala Beach through the trees. Photo by Sutharat Khaodee

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

This week in history

Nov 10, 1958

The Hope Diamond, weighing 45.52 carats and last reported to be insured for US\$250 million (B8.241bn), is donated to the Smithsonian Institution by New York diamond merchant Harry Winston.

Nov 11, 1918

World War I: Germany signs an armistice agreement with the Allies in a railroad car in the forest of Compiègne. The armistice came into force at 11am Paris time on November 11, 1918.

Nov 12, 2003

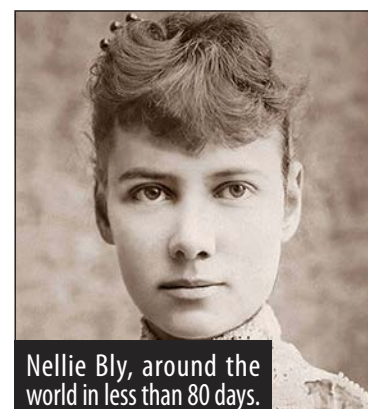
Shanghai Transrapid sets a new world speed record of 501km/h for commercial railway systems, which remains the fastest for unmodified commercial rail vehicles.

Nov 13, 1974

The Amityville Horror. Ronald DeFeo Jr murders his entire family on Long Island, New York.

Nov 14, 1889

Pioneering American female journalist Nellie Bly (aka Elizabeth Cochrane) begins



Nellie Bly, around the world in less than 80 days.

a successful attempt to travel around the world in less than 80 days. She completes the trip in 72 days.

Nov 15, 1933

Thailand holds its first election. At the time there were no political parties, so all candidates ran as independents. A total of 1,773,532 votes were cast and voter turnout was 41.5%.

Nov 16, 1990

Pop group Milli Vanilli are stripped of their Grammy Award because the duo did not sing at all on the album 'Girl You Know It's True'. Session musicians had provided all the vocals.

Source: *Wikipedia*

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Friday Mussels Night

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GROW BOATING PHUKET NETWORKING EVENING - NOVEMBER

Another great yachting networking event at Royal Phuket Marina on Nov 3, with plenty of conversation focussing on the Thailand International Boat Show coming up in January, which sponsored this month's Grow Boating Phuket event. Thanks to Isola Restaurant for the tasty treats. Looking forward to the next evening next month.



ALBATROSS CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

Last month Robert, Busaba and the entire team of Albatross celebrated 25 years in business with a six-day trip via Udon Thani to Laos. Shown here in Vientiane in front of the Patuxai Monument celebrating independence. And in front Pha That Luang Temple. This gold covered stupa has probably been established in 3rd Century AD and has undergone several reconstructions due to various invasions. The 21 Team members joined the trip by air, fast train and longtail exploring Luang Prabang, Vang Vieng and Hin Sam Wan in Bueng Kan.



Photo: Sports Association of Phuket

Phuket Rotary Club confirms charity run

RUNNING

THE ROTARY CLUB OF PHUKET has confirmed the return of its annual charity fun run later this month.

The sixth annual edition of the event will take place on Sunday, Nov 26 at Bang Wad Dam in Kathu, organisers confirmed on Nov 2.

Starting at 6am, there will be three separate distances that participants can choose to run:

- A 2.5-kilometre run with separate male and female categories and a B350 entry fee.

- A 5km run with separate male and female categories and a B400 entry fee. This distance will also be divided into age groups across the male and female groups, as follows: 20-29 years old; 30-39 years old; 40-49 years old; 50-59 years old; and 60 years of age and above.

- A 10.5km mini marathon

with separate male and female categories and a B450 entry fee. This distance will also be divided into age groups across the male and female groups, as follows: 19 years of age and below; 20-29 years old; 30-34 years old; 35-39 years old; 40-44 years old; 40-49 years old; 50-54 years old; 55-59 years old; and 60 years old and above.

Additionally, there is a VIP category where participants can select whichever distance they choose and opt to participate in multiple runs. There entry fee for this class is B1,000.

Organisers confirmed there will be commemorative plaques awarded as prizes to be the top five placed finishers in each category and age group.

For more information contact 0873-833-088, 0817-516-655 or visit: ww.soft.events/run/rotaryphuketsuth2023

The Phuket News

Mercedes slammed as 'inexcusable' by Wolff

FORMULA ONE

AFF

Team boss Toto Wolff slammed his Mercedes outfit's car and Brazilian Grand Prix performance last Sunday (Nov 5), claiming it was akin to a three-wheeler and "does not deserve to win" a race this year.

A visibly shaken and angry Wolff said the team's performance in Sao Paulo, where they won last year's race and had hoped for a similar result this year, was "inexcusable".

In a race dominated by Red Bull driver and three-time champion Max Verstappen, who won his 17th race of the campaign, Lewis Hamilton struggled home eighth and George Russell, the 2022 victor, retired.

"An inexcusable performance," said Wolff. "I don't have words for that. That car finished second last week and whatever we did to it was horrible."

"Lewis survived out there, but not George – I can only feel for the two driving such a miserable thing."

"It shows how difficult the car is. It's on a knife's edge. We've got to develop it better for next year because it can't be that within seven days you finish on the podium as one of the two quickest cars and then you're nowhere near finishing."

"We're clearly not world champions



Lewis Hamilton struggled to an eighth-place finish for Mercedes in Sao Paulo. Photo: AFP

on sprint race weekends. We do some good work on track to get it done, but still it doesn't explain what went wrong."

"That car almost drove like it was on three wheels – not on four. This car doesn't deserve a win. We need to push for the last two races and recover."

Hamilton, who drove conservatively to preserve his tyres, said: "It didn't feel as disastrous as yesterday when I literally had no tyres left – they were worn to zero and I feel like I drove a better race in terms of managing the tyres."

"There are moments it works and moments it doesn't and it's so inconsistent... And we are so slow on the straights and

really slow on the corners."

Ferrari's drivers were also downcast after Carlos Sainz battled to sixth and Charles Leclerc crashed on the formation lap and failed to start the race.

The Monegasque blamed his exit on an issue with his Ferrari engine that affected his steering and hydraulics system, and said he might fly to Lourdes before the next race to try and end his run of bad luck.

"It's so annoying because in the second half of this year I've finally found confidence in the car – and then you sacrifice a whole weekend for the race and you do six corners and that's it!"



Photo: PR Phuket

Phuket hosts amateur golf finals

GOLF

PHUKET HOSTED THE final round of the World Amateur Golf Competition (WAGC) this past week, with the competition set to draw to a close tomorrow (Nov 11).

The 27th edition of the competition, being held at several courses in and near Phuket, started last Saturday (Nov 4) and saw more than 490 golfers from 33 countries competing in competition at Laguna Golf Phuket, Red Mountain Golf Club, Blue Canyon and Aquella Golf and Country Club.

Several well-known

names were involved as part of the field, including former Liverpool and Real Madrid goalkeeper Jerzy Dudek, most remembered for helping the Reds comeback against AC Milan in the 1995 Champions League Final where he performed heroically in the penalty shootout.

The opening ceremony last Saturday was held at Angsana Laguna Phuket, the official host of the WAGC 2023 Gala Dinner and Awards Ceremony.

The occasion was presided over by Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat, who was joined by Neil G.

Nord, Chairman and CEO of WAGC Ltd, and WAGC President Isaac Saminathan.

The WAGC started in 1995 and has served as an inspiring tournament for amateur players, who compete on an individual and team basis.

Recent editions of the world finals were held in Malaysia, specifically in Kuala Lumpur, Johor and Sabah before the tournament returned to Thailand this year.

Team Malaysia are the defending champions and were confident of retaining their title on the Phuket courses throughout this past week. *The Phuket News*

Kohli equals Tendulkar record

CRICKET

VIRAT KOHLI EQUALLED SACHIN Tendulkar's record of 49 one-day international hundreds as India bowled out South Africa for just 83 in a 243-run World Cup rout last Sunday (Nov 5).

Kohli, on his 35th birthday, got to the landmark in 119 balls, including 10 fours, at Kolkata's iconic Eden Gardens which was packed with around 70,000 fans.

It had taken him 277 innings to score 49 hundreds at this level compared to the more than 450 required by fellow India 2011 World Cup-winner Tendulkar.

But Kohli said Tendulkar was still in a class of his own.

"It's a huge honour to equal my hero's record," he said. "People like comparisons – I am never going to be as good as him. He is perfection with batting."

Kohli's 101 not out was the centrepiece of India's 326-5 before their powerful attack cleaned up as Rohit Sharma's men made it eight wins out of eight at the tournament.

This was South Africa's second pool defeat following a loss to non-Test side Netherlands and the gap between the top two teams on Sunday was almost as much of a shock as that reverse.

Kohli, now averaging more than 108 in the World Cup, said during the innings break: "Every opportunity to play for India is a big one, to be able to ton up on my birthday is the stuff of dreams. It is something you dream about as a child."

Elsewhere, spinner Adam Zampa starred with bat and ball as Australia knocked defending champions England out of the World Cup



Kohli celebrates his landmark innings. Photo: AFP

with a 33-run win last Saturday (Nov 3).

Chasing 287 for victory in Ahmedabad, England folded for 253 in 48.1 overs with Zampa returning figures of 3-21 with his leg-spin to puncture England's hopes.

"It certainly feels like a low point. I've had a few but definitely as a captain," said England skipper Jos Buttler.

"To be stood in this position having arrived in India with high hopes is incredibly tough and disappointing. It hurts a lot," he added.

Earlier Saturday, Pakistan pulled off a dramatic, rain-hit 21-run victory over New Zealand to keep their hopes of progressing in the tournament alive.

After New Zealand piled up a mammoth 401-6, Pakistan were 160-1 in the 21st over when rain brought a stoppage.

Pakistan were declared the winners as they were ahead of the required rate.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka's sports minister Roshan Ranasinghe sacked the national cricket board on Monday, days after a humiliating thrashing by India.

Chasing India's 358, Sri Lanka were at one point 14-6 and were all out for 55, the fourth-lowest total in World Cup history, prompting public outcry and angry protests in Colombo. *AFP*

Gunners, Spurs rage after VAR controversy

FOOTBALL

AFP

Arsenal were beaten in the Premier League for the first time this season at Newcastle last Saturday (Nov 4) in a hugely controversial game.

Newcastle shrugged off a mounting injury crisis to climb into the top six after winning a feisty encounter at St James' Park 1-0.

Anthony Gordon's controversial winner 25 minutes from time survived a VAR check for three different offences that took close to five minutes to complete before it was finally awarded.

Gabriel Magalhaes claimed he was fouled by Joelinton before the ball broke for Gordon to smash into an empty net.

A check for offside and whether the ball had gone out of play earlier in the move also proved inconclusive.

"An absolute disgrace," said an enraged Gunners boss Mikel Arteta post match. "It's embarrassing. It's not acceptable, there's too much at stake.



Tempers flare between Newcastle and Arsenal players in what was a feisty game last Saturday (Nov 4). Photo: AFP

I don't want to be in the hands of these people.

"I have been in this country more than 20 years and [the officiating] is nowhere near the level of the best league in the world. I feel sick to be part of this," he added.

The club backed their manager with an official statement released shortly afterwards. "Arsenal Football Club wholeheartedly supports Mikel Arteta's post-match comments after yet more unacceptable refereeing and VAR errors

on Saturday evening," it read.

Arsenal's north London neighbours Tottenham Hotspur were also left aggrieved with VAR following their 4-1 defeat to Chelsea on Monday, their first loss of the season.

Spurs had Cristian Romero and Destiny Udogie sent off and were denied two goals by VAR in a remarkable game as Chelsea's Nicolas Jackson scored a late hat-trick.

"There will be a forensic study of every decision out there," lamented Spurs boss

Ange Postecoglou.

"That is the way the game is going and I don't like it. If you look at all that standing around we did today, maybe people enjoy that sort of thing. I'd rather see us playing football but I could be a lone voice," he added.

Elsewhere, an injury time winner from captain Bruno Fernandes secured a 1-0 win for Manchester United at Fulham to ease the pressure on manager Erik ten Hag as neighbours Manchester City moved to the top of the table with a 6-1 demolition of Bournemouth.

Brentford edged the game of the weekend as they came from behind to beat West Ham 3-2, while Sheffield United recorded their first win of the season by beating Wolves 2-1.

Everton and Brighton drew 1-1 while Burnley's wretched run continued as they fell 2-0 at home to Crystal Palace.

On Sunday, Liverpool needed an injury time goal from Luis Diaz to snatch a 1-1 draw at Luton, while Nottingham Forest overcame Aston Villa 2-0.



Sarit with the winner's trophy. Photo: Paul Lakatos/ Asian Tour

Sarit wins Volvo China Open

GOLF

THAILAND'S SARIT Suwannarat shot a fearless final round eight-under-par 64 to win the Volvo China Open at Hidden Grace Golf Club last Sunday (Nov 5) by the runaway margin of six-shots, to claim his second title on the Asian Tour.

A fine four-round aggregate of 19-under-par 269, saw him finish comfortably ahead of second placed Taichi Kho from Hong Kong and Chinese youngster Chen Guxin in the US\$1.5 million (B53mn) event being played on the Asian Tour for the first time since 2019, which is also part of The International Series.

Sarit's nickname is 'Safe' but he was far from that as he attacked the course from the start with a new found confi-

dence that has been missing this season.

The 25-year-old started the day three back from Chen but quickly caught up with three birdies on the trot from the second and overtook when he made another birdie on seven – a pivotal hole as Chen made a double.

By the turn Sarit was two in front before a birdie on the 12th gave him a commanding four-shot buffer as Chen bogeyed the hole. Sarit then cruised home for the win unchallenged with birdies on 14, and the final two holes.

Sarit earned a check for \$270,000 and becomes the second Thai to win China's national Open, after Prayad Marksang in 1996.

The win also sees him leap from 85th to 12th on the Asian Tour Order of Merit.

The Phuket News

Saudi Arabia only bidder for 2034 World Cup

FOOTBALL

SAUDI ARABIA IS IN LINE TO host the 2034 World Cup after FIFA announced that the kingdom had submitted the only "expression of interest" in hosting the tournament.

The decision will be ratified officially at the end of next year following a vote at two separate congress meetings and providing all of the technical criteria are met.

But the absence of any competition leaves little room for suspense, while also raising numerous questions about the compatibility of the 2034 tournament with FIFA's human rights commitments.

As a result of the continental rotation, FIFA had only "invited" member countries of the Asian and Oceanian confederations to apply – thus ruling out the traditional footballing heartlands.

At one stage, Indonesia had considered a joint bid with Australia, or even other countries such as New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore, but on Oct 19 it agreed to support Saudi Arabia's bid.

The bid comes one year after neighbouring Qatar hosted the first World Cup in the Middle East, where the Saudi national team scored a stunning group stage victory over eventual winners Argentina.

Acquiring the rights to host the



Saudi Arabia fans pose with a replica of the FIFA World Cup trophy at last year's tournament in Qatar. Photo: AFP

World Cup, a policy which emanates directly from Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, would be the latest step by Saudi Arabia to plant itself firmly in the centre of the sports world and, according to its detractors, divert international attention from its human rights violations via sportswashing.

The country is already preparing to host the next Club World Cup at the end of December and the 2027 Asian Cup.

It is also behind the breakaway LIV golf tournament, hosts major boxing matches, Formula One and horse races and its football clubs have started signing up some of the biggest names in the game, including Ballon d'Or winners Cristiano Ronaldo and Karim Benzema.

More surprisingly and widely criticised, the kingdom will host the 2029 Asian Winter Games in a futuristic complex under construc-

tion in Neom.

While there is little doubt about its financial capacity, questions have been raised about the Saudi Arabia's ability to meet FIFA's commitment to "respect internationally recognised human rights" in its competitions.

Criteria like environmental sustainability are included in the award procedure but, given there are no other options, it may not matter.

"With only a single bid for each tournament on the table, FIFA may have scored an own goal," said Steve Cockburn, Amnesty International's Head of economic and social justice.

"FIFA must now make clear how it expects hosts to comply with its human rights policies. It must also be prepared to halt the bidding process if serious human rights risks are not credibly addressed," he added. AFP



Messi and Bonmati with their awards. Photo: AFP

Messi wins eighth Ballon d'Or

FOOTBALL

LIONEL MESSI WON THE eighth Ballon d'Or of his remarkable career on Oct 30, while Spain's World Cup-winning star Aitana Bonmati took the women's prize.

Messi inspired Argentina to victory at last year's World Cup in Qatar, scoring seven goals on his way to being named the tournament's best player.

It was the crowning moment of his astonishing career and it allowed him to see off stiff competition, in particular from Erling Haaland and Kylian Mbappe, to take the award on the stage of the Chatelet Theatre in Paris.

Messi dedicated the trophy to late Argentina legend Diego Maradona, who would have celebrated his 63rd birthday the same day.

"Happy birthday Diego. This is for you too," he said.

Bonmati was rewarded for starring as Spain won the World Cup in Australia in August, where the 25-year-old midfielder was named the best player of the tournament.

Jude Bellingham won the Kopa Trophy for the best player of last season aged under 21.

The 20-year-old has started his Madrid career with 13 goals in 13 games, although the prize rewards his performances in his final campaign with Borussia Dortmund in Germany more so.

Bellingham's Madrid teammate, the Brazil forward Vinicius Junior, won the Socrates prize in recognition of his off-pitch work.

Messi's Argentina colleague Emiliano Martinez of Aston Villa won the Yashin Trophy for the best goalkeeper of the season. AFP

Sport

editor3@classactmedia.co.th



North London clubs angry at VAR > p15

PARA GAMES DELIGHT FOR THAIS

ASIAN PARA GAMES

Ben Tirebuck

editor3@classactmedia.co.th

Thai athletes finished the recent 4th Asian Para Games with an impressive 108-medal haul to place seventh overall as the tournament came to a close on Oct 28.

Held in Hangzhou, China, with over 3,000 para athletes from 44 countries competing in 502 medal events, a total of 20 world records, 71 Asian records and 279 Asian Games record were broken during the week-long event.

Thai athletes won 27 gold medals, 26 silver and 55 bronze to finish a respectable seventh in the medal table.

Once again Thailand demonstrated its dominance in Boccia with Witsanu Huadpradit winning the men's individual BC1 finals against Kim Dohyun from the Re-



Thailand's men's wheelchair sabre fencing team celebrate their gold medal triumph at the Asian Para Games. Photo: Sports Association of Thailand

public of Korea, Akkadej Choochuenklin triumphing in the men's individual BC3 gold and Pornchok Larpyen winning the men's individual BC4 gold.

Elsewhere, in the taekwondo K44-47-kilogram competition, Khwansuda Phuangkitcha excelled to overcome world number-one-ranked Isakova Ziyodakhov from Uzbekistan to claim gold.

Thai athletes also dominated in the men's wheelchair racing, with gold medals going to: Chaiwat Rattana in the T34 100 metres; Prawat Wahoram in the T54 5,000m and T54 1,500m; Athiwat Phaengnuea in the T54 100m and T54 400m; and Phongsakorn Paeyo in the T53 800m and T53 400m.

Sasirawan Inthachot won gold in the women's T47 200m

running event, while Jakkarin Dammunee won a gold in both the men's T13 100m and 400m running events.

Anuson Chaichamnan claimed gold in the mixed 50m prone air rifle SH2 and Atidet Intanon won gold in the men's 10m air rifle in the reclining position SH1.

The Thai team of Pipat Thongjapo, Chitiphat Charoenta, Yuenyong Khanthithao

and Boonsiri won gold medals in the men's sabre team wheelchair fencing, while Thai legend Saysunee Jana claimed gold in the women's épée individual, category B wheelchair fencing.

Methini Wongchomphu won gold in the women's B1 lawn bowls competition, while Anek Banjerdkitkul and Samorn Sombatdee did likewise in the mixed pairs B8 lawn bowls.

In curling, Somwang Chamnanpana won the women's B6 category and compatriot Choochat Sukjarern won the men's B7 contest.

Thai athletes also impressed in table tennis, with Wanchai Chaiwut claiming gold in the men's Class 4, Rungroj Thainiyom winning the men's Class 6, Wanchai Chaiwut and Yuttajak Glinbanchaun winning the men's doubles Class MD8, Rungroj Thainiyom and Phisit Wangphonphathanasiri taking gold

in the men's doubles Class MD14, and Rungroj Thainiyom and Kalaya Chaiwut winning gold in the mixed doubles XD14 class.

President of the Asian Paralympic Committee Majid Rashed stated that the Games had surpassed expectations and had elevated the Asian Paralympic Movement to an altogether different level.

"Athletes, you have inspired us all with your performances and you have shown the world that there are no limits to what can be achieved with determination and courage," said Mr Rashed.

"All of this shows that the Paralympic Movement in Asia is getting stronger."

During the closing ceremony the official Asian Para Games flag was handed over to officials from Nagoya, Japan, where the next edition of the Games will be hosted between Oct 14 and 22, 2026.

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