

FIVE ARRESTED FOR BOMB-SCARE PLOT > PAGE 2

OPEN SOON?

BIG BUDDHA OPERATOR CLAIMS TOURIST VIEWPOINT TO REOPEN SOON, DESPITE LEGAL CHALLENGES

Photo: Phra Phuttha Mingmongkol Sattha 45 Foundation

Natnaree Likidwatanasakun
reporter1@classactmedia.co.th

The popular Big Buddha viewpoint atop the Nakkerd Hills between Chalong and Kata is preparing to reopen to the public, with the operator of the site, the Phra Phuttha Mingmongkol Sattha 45 Foundation, claiming to have reached a “settlement” with the Phuket office of the Royal Forest Department (RFD Phuket) in a long-running land encroachment dispute.

Suporn Vanichkul, President of Phra Phuttha Mingmongkol Sattha 45 Foundation, which operates the Big Buddha viewpoint area, told *The Phuket News* that the site “will definitely reopen”, though he could not yet give a specific date.

“Please wait a bit. It won’t be long,” Mr Suporn said confidently.

Mr Suporn downplayed the site as a tourist attraction, instead choosing to emphasise the site’s spiritual importance.

“Every day, more than 1,000 people come to pay their respects, and most of them Myanmar visitors,” he said. “Visitors come to meditate and find spiritual refuge. They are moved by the foundation’s efforts to share the teachings of the Buddha.”

He also downplayed the donations that the foundation receives from visitors to the Big Buddha site, estimated to be millions each year.

Despite the legal requirement for all registered foundations to publicly disclose their financial operations, Mr Suporn said, “I don’t know about the donated money. We’re not opening Big Buddha for profit. People give

from the heart, out of faith. Money is not the main factor, it’s all voluntary.”

Mr Suporn repeatedly declined to provide any financial reports, and *The Phuket News* has yet to confirm any records publicly released detailing how much money Big Buddha has received, how it has been used or where it has been distributed.

CLEARED

However, Mr Suporn was happy to repeat to *The Phuket News* that the illegal encroachment case against the foundation for building more structures without permission on protected forest land at the Big Buddha site had been “resolved”.

“The case with the Phuket office of the Royal Forest Department is now complete. It’s over,” he said.

The case stems from the deadly landslide on Aug 23 last year that killed 13 people, injured 19 and damaged over 50 homes in Kata, at the base of the hill below the Big Buddha site. Heavy rains triggered a landslide, burying homes along Soi Patak 2.

Investigators from the Royal Forestry Department found the landslide originated at the back of the Big Buddha site, where illegal deforestation – and illegal construction of structures on protected forest land – was linked to the disaster.

Following a formal complaint from the RFD Phuket office, Karon Police charged Mr Suporn with illegal forest encroachment.

As a result, authorities seized more than five rai of land deemed unlawfully built on.

Mr Suporn told *The Phuket News*...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

NEWS PAGE 3

NACC Phuket reveals officials' incomes, assets



LIFE PAGE 9

Euro bike ride to help Phuket environment



SPORT PAGE 16

Dojo Phuket team win big on home soil



execeditor@classactmedia.co.th

News



**Cherng Talay
cannabis shops
raided > p4**



Photo: Chalermpong Saengdee / Facebook

Residents plea over Kamala evictions

PHUKET MP CHALERM-
pong Saengdee has called
for action to address the
plight of more than 100
residents evicted from
crown land near the
beachfront in Kamala,
after meeting with
Phuket Governor Sophon
Suwannarat.

The meeting, on June
30, followed the residents
gathering to submit a
formal request to the
Governor, asking for a
solution after some had
received police sum-
mons in connection
with the land dispute.

Many expressed deep
concerns about the
security of their homes
and their right to remain
on the land.

MP Chalermpong
later explained in a pub-
lic post that he had atten-
ded the meeting to help
find a solution to the
issue involving the plot
of land known locally as
the NorSorLor land
("crown land") in
Kamala.

During the talks, the

affected residents out-
lined the long history of
the community and ex-
plained how the area's
social and living condi-
tions had changed over
time.

They also raised
concerns about the im-
pact of certain govern-
ment regulations on their
lives.

Governor Sophon
acknowledged the resid-
ents' concerns and form-
ally accepted their
petition. He instructed the
Kamala Subdistrict
Administrative Organisa-
tion (OrBorTor) to gather
factual information from
those affected, which will
be used to help guide the
next steps.

According to the
official report of the
meeting, the Governor
confirmed that all relev-
ant agencies will be
invited to a follow-up
discussion to ensure the
issue is considered prop-
erly and in line with
official procedures.

The Phuket News

Big Buddha to reopen

Continued from page 1

...that in the months since
the disaster, the case had
advanced and a settlement
with RFD Phuket had been
reached.

"The case has now
finished," Mr Suporn said.

'NOT FINISHED'

However, Sorasak Rananan,
Director of the Phuket
Forestry Center, which
operates under the RFD
Phuket office, told *The
Phuket News* that the case
was unequivocally, "Not
finished".

"I don't know how he
can say that... Since we
[RFD Phuket] seized the
five rai [on which the
foundation illegally built
structures], Mr Suporn
became a suspect. At that
point the operation of the
Big Buddha site was handed
over to the Phuket branch of
the National Office of
Buddhism..."

"So right now the
foundation does not even
operate the Big Buddha
site," Mr Suporn said.

However, Wasan Sanka-
sin, Chief of the Phuket
office of the National Office
of Buddhism, declined to
answer any questions from
The Phuket News about the
operation of the Big Buddha
viewpoint as a religious site.

He also had no
information to share on the
financial operations of the
Big Buddha viewpoint.

'NOT OUR FAULT'

Despite the ongoing legal
and public scrutiny, Mr
Suporn defended the



Suporn Vanichkul, President of Phra Phuttha
Mingmongkol Sattha 45 Foundation.

foundation's role and denied
allegations of negligence
related to the landslide that
killed 13 people.

"It was a natural dis-
aster. We didn't cause the
rain. Everything was invest-
igated according to proced-
ure. It is not our fault," he
said.

With the RFD complaint
now withdrawn, Karon
Police have also dropped
the criminal investigation
against Mr Suporn and his
foundation, saying there
was not enough evidence to
proceed with criminal
negligence causing death
and destruction of property.

Last month, Pol Lt Col
Ekkasak Kwanwan, Senior
Inspector at Karon Police
Station, told *The Phuket
News* that illegal construc-
tion at the Big Buddha
viewpoint was no longer
seen as the primary cause of
the deadly landslide in Kata.

He said that the situation
did not meet the criteria for
a criminal negligence
charge.

Pol Lt Col Ekkasak said
that geotechnical experts
from the Department
of Mineral Resources

determined the landslide
was a natural disaster,
occurring in a high-risk "red
zone" prone to such events
due to steep, unstable
terrain and heavy rain.

Because multiple natural
factors contributed to the
cause of the disaster, the
police no longer viewed the
case as straightforward
negligence, and there was
no clear liable party, Pol Lt
Col Ekkasak said.

FIGHT GOES ON

Meanwhile, the case is far
from over in the eyes of
locals and legal activists.
The Phuket Bar Association
is preparing a civil lawsuit
on behalf of the victims,
frustrated by lack of action
by police.

Phuket Bar Association
President Rungnapa
Phutkaew, a legal represen-
tative working with affected
residents, said both civil and
criminal cases against the
foundation remain active.

"The local residents'
case is not over. The
Lawyers Council has
already submitted a letter to
the civil court for an invest-
igation," she said.

"We also filed a com-
plaint to the Phuket office of
the Ombudsman two
months ago, requesting an
audit of the foundation's
financial records and its
income – but we've re-
ceived no response so far,"
she added.

Ms Rungnapa expressed
concern that some authori-
ties may be showing leni-
ency toward the foundation.

"The police and some
government agencies may
lean on that foundation, but
the criminal case is still
active. We've moved things
to court and encouraged
victims to wait for more
expert input," she said.

She added that an expert
has now joined the case and
will help assess the situation
and provide a professional
opinion on the cause of the
landslide and any related
legal responsibilities.

While acknowledging
the locals' dwindling re-
sources and morale, she
vowed to continue the legal
fight.

"The victims are tired.
They're afraid that they'll
get nothing in return, and
court fees are a burden. But
we haven't given up. The
law isn't closed. We can
still take it to court. We will
do our best until the end,"
she stated.

Despite the push to
reopen the site, Ms Rung-
napa warned that govern-
ment agencies should
proceed with caution. "If
they open it, let them. But
the case isn't over, and
officials should be aware
that legal risks remain."

Five of 20 suspects arrested for Andaman bomb-scare plot

POLICE HAVE ARRESTED
five of the 20 suspects believed
to be involved in the bombings that
rocked key tourist destinations in
Krabi, Phang Nga and Phuket late
last month. Fifteen suspects
remain at large as authorities
continue their investigation.

The co-ordinated attacks
caused widespread panic among
locals and tourists in the popular
Andaman coastal provinces.
Following intensive operations,
security forces on July 2 tracked
down and seized a vehicle
believed to have been used to
transport the bombers, reported
national government news
platform NBT Connex.

The vehicle, a silver
Mitsubishi Triton pickup truck
with license plate KorTor 5429
Pattani, was allegedly used to
shuttle the perpetrators from
Yarang District in Pattani
Province to Thepha District in
Songkhla Province. From there,
the suspects reportedly travelled
to the three bomb sites using
another vehicle.

The pickup was found hidden
at a house in Moo 5, Tambon
Khlong Mai, in Yarang District,
Pattani. Authorities seized the
vehicle for further legal
proceedings, but no arrests were
made at the property as initial
investigations suggest the resid-



ents may not have been involved.
However, police confirmed the
investigation is ongoing and legal
action will be taken if further
evidence links anyone at the
house to the attacks.

The Internal Security
Operations Command (ISOC)
Region 4 Forward Command

assured the public that all efforts
are being made to quickly bring
the remaining suspects to justice
and to reduce disruption to the
community. ISOC also urged
people to refrain from sharing
unverified or misleading
information, which can create
unnecessary fear and confusion.

The warning follows reports
spreading online that the suspects
at the house where the Mitsubishi
pickup was seized were directly
involved in the bomb-scare plot.

Investigators have not made
any such claims, the report
highlighted.

Officials reminded the public
to rely on updates from verified

sources and provided ISOC's
hotline (1341) and the 4th Army
direct line (06-11732999) for
accurate information.

Spreading false information
may lead to prosecution under the
Computer Crime Act B.E. 2560,
which carries penalties of up to
one year in prison, a fine of up to
B20,000, or both, the government
report said.

continue to encourage public
cooperation to prevent the spread
of fake news and to support
efforts to maintain peace and
mutual understanding, particularly
in Thailand's southern border
provinces.

The Phuket News

Officials' income, assets made public

Natnaree Likidwatanasakun
reporter1@classactmedia.co.th

The Phuket office of the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC Phuket) has publicly released the official income and asset declarations of key municipal leaders who either retained their positions or lost their seats in the May local elections.

The financial disclosures, published earlier this week, cover the final declarations of officials who served during the previous term before the May elections, NACC Phuket Chief Suwat Saowaran confirmed to *The Phuket News*.

Mr Suwat explained that releasing these figures is standard. Those newly elected to office in the May elections have 60 days to submit their declarations, and that 60-day deadline has yet to pass, he added.

According to the documents posted by NACC Phuket, the declarations filed detail the annual income and assets of re-elected officials, and outgoing officials, as required by law, as of June 25, 2025.

Under Thai law, while some personal details are withheld from public view, office holders must declare the income and assets of their spouses.



NACC Phuket Chief Suwat Saowaran (centre). Photo: NACC Phuket

The following are the details released by NACC Phuket:

Saroj Angkanaphilas – Former Phuket Town Mayor
* Income: B300,000 salary, B240,000 from land rental, B240,000 from land dealings, B900,000 from house rentals
* Assets: B73,213,711
* Spouse's Income: B300,000 salary
* Spouse's Assets: B18,936,625 (Total annual income: B1,980,000; Total assets: B92,150,336)

Chalerm Sak Maneesri – Former Patong Mayor
* Income: B666,360 salary, B120,000 bonus, B120,000 from meeting allowances (Total annual income: B906,360)
* Assets: B1,041,742
* Spouse: No income or assets reported

Jadet Wichrasorn – Former Karon Mayor
* Income: B756,000 salary, B192,000 pension
* Assets: B4,774,305
* Spouse's Income: B840,000
* Spouse's Assets: B12,014,483 (Total annual income: B1,788,000; Total assets: B16,788,788)

Thanaporn Triwong – Former Chalong Mayor
* Income: B756,000 salary
* Assets: B72,050,845
* Spouse: Declared not married

Aroon Solos – Former Rawai Mayor
(Suspended from office, banned from running for re-election while facing corruption charges)
* Income: B540,000 from house rentals, B540,000 salary, B108,000 from meeting allowances, B108,000 bonus

* Assets: B94,436,770
* Spouse's Income: B840,000 salary, B756,000 from house rentals, B156,000 from land, B120,000 from selling vegetables
* Spouse's Assets: B17,061,248 (Total annual income: B3,168,000; Total assets: B111,498,018)

Kreetha Chotiwichanphiphat – Re-elected as Wichit Mayor
* Income: B900,000 salary, B500,000 bonus, B962,000 from house rentals, B30,000 from fruit farming, B40,000 from vegetable farming
* Assets: B65,120,159
* Spouse's Income: B10,000,000 inheritance, B240,000 from selling vegetables, B160,000 from selling a car
* Spouse's Assets: B11,411,051 (Total annual income: B12,832,000; Total assets: B76,531,210)

Nakarin Yosangrat – Former Ratsada Mayor
* Income: B756,000 salary
* Assets: B1,889,536
* Spouse's Income: B1,146,000 annual income
* Spouse's Assets: B208,565,816 (Total annual income: B1,902,000; Total assets: B210,455,352)

Sunirun Rachatapruek – Re-elected as Mayor of Cherg Talay Municipality
(which is separate from the Cherg

Talay Tambon Administration Organisation (OrBorTor), which oversees Bang Tao.)

* Income: B756,000 salary, B72,000 bonus, B7,992,000 from ownership in an unnamed resort, B4,734,000 from house rentals
* Assets 3,838,716
* Spouse's Income: (section left blank)
* Spouse's assets 1,846,282 (Total annual income: B13,554,000; Total assets: B5,684,999)

Chalerm Pol Kerdsup – Re-elected as Srisoonthorn Mayor
* Income: B756,000 salary, B840,000 from house rentals
* Assets: B120,167,547
* Spouse's Income: entered as "0.00"

* Spouse's assets B27,462,214
Mr Chalerm Pol also reported that his child had assets of B100,000

(Total annual income: B1,656,000; Total assets B147,629,761)

Regarding Panya Samphaorat, who has been re-elected as Mayor of Pa Khlok Municipality, Mr Suwat explained that Mr Panya was late in submitting his declaration of income and assets, and that no official information was currently available about his financial status.

Mr Panya was allowed to run for re-election despite facing corruption charges.

Taxi drivers plea for fairness

LEGAL TAXI AND public transport operators have called on officials to finally get tough on illegal taxis infiltrating Phuket's transport system, saying years of lax enforcement and loophole-ridden ride-hailing apps have created an unfair, unsafe environment for drivers and passengers alike.

In a formal complaint lodged with the Phuket Damrongtham Center (the Provincial Ombudsman's Office) on June 30, groups representing registered public transport operators demanded immediate action against unlicensed vehicles operating via popular travel apps.

"These apps are allowing illegal vehicles to slip through the cracks, completely unchecked," the groups said "They're undermining the operators who follow the law and putting passenger safety at serious risk."

The complaint, received by Monchai Sae Lao, Director of the Phuket Damrongtham Center, with Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO) officials also



Photo: PR Phuket

in attendance, outlined deep frustration over the unchecked spread of unregistered taxis that continue to operate freely via digital platforms.

The groups argued that the system is not only broken but dangerously skewed in favour of illegal operators, whose cut-rate services and lack of oversight pose a threat to both licensed drivers and the safety of the travelling public.

To address the problem, the groups proposed both immediate and long-term

solutions, including:

* Offering cash rewards to members of the public who help identify and report illegal taxis.

* Expanding accessible channels for filing complaints.

* Publishing public transport vehicle registrations so passengers can verify a taxi's legitimacy.

Significantly, the groups also demanded full transparency, pressing for authorities to openly list all licensed public transport vehicles and drivers – a demand that directly challenges the

PLTO's long-standing refusal to publish even the names of taxi drivers convicted of violent offences, let alone those guilty of dangerous driving or other serious infractions.

Despite this push for transparency, officials have historically hidden behind policies that protect drivers' identities, even in cases where passenger safety is at stake.

Nonetheless, the meeting was described as cordial, with all sides signalling a willingness to cooperate in pursuit of a fairer, safer transport system for Phuket.

An official report of the meeting made special mention that Phuket Governor Sophon Suwanarat had elevated the complaint to a matter of provincial policy.

Apparently Governor Sophon has forwarded the concerns to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society for further action. The matter is also reportedly on the agenda for consideration at the Cabinet level. *The Phuket News*

Phuket gets a new French Consul

THE FRENCH EMBASSY in Bangkok has announced the appointment of a new French Honorary Consul in Phuket.

"We are pleased to announce that Jean-Pierre Dousse, a resident of Phuket for many years, has just received approval from the Thai authorities," the French embassy said in a statement.

"Jean-Pierre Dousse therefore becomes Honorary Consul of Phuket, whose area of jurisdiction also covers Krabi, Phang Nga, and Ranong," the embassy confirmed.

The Phuket Consular Agency will reopen to the public on Monday, July 21, 2025, according to the following schedule:

- Monday: 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

- Tuesday to Friday: 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

The address remains unchanged: 88/6 Moo 5, Chao Fa West Rd, Chalong, Phuket 83130



Jean-Pierre Dousse, the new French Consul for Phuket, Phang Nga and Ranong. Photo: French Embassy Bangkok

Mr Dousse takes up the post of French consul in Phuket in place of long-term Phuket expat Alain Faudot, who in turn replaced fellow long-time Phuket expat Claude de Crissey, who had previously held the post since 2012.

Mr de Crissey arrived in Phuket in 1997 and is well known for his businesses All 4 Diving and the Royal Phawadee Village resort in Patong.

The Phuket News

The Phuket News

CONTACT US

editor@classactmedia.co.th 076 612 550

PURIYA BEAVAN
EditorCHRIS HUSTED
Executive Editor
084 307 7408
execeditor@classactmedia.co.thBEN TIREBUCK
News / Sport Editor
061 806 8132
editor3@classactmedia.co.thCHUTHARAT 'UM'
PLERIN
Thai Editor
088 766 1615
thai@classactmedia.co.thNATNAREE 'MILD'
LIKIDWANASAKUN
Reporter / Translator
082 295 3244
reporter1@classactmedia.co.thJASON BEAVAN
General Manager
086 479 7471
gm@classactmedia.co.thSIRIPORN (NOK)
SEANGMAS
Sales Support
086 479 7470
sales@classactmedia.co.thNIRAVIT 'MOS' VORAVANITCHA
Graphic designerThe Phuket News
@thephuketnews

ADVERTISING

ClassAct Media

The Phuket News

WINDOW ON PHUKET

Where to eat in PHUKET

Новости Phuket

ข่าวภูเก็ต

NEWS TV

LIVE 89.5

Phuket TICKETMASTER

076 612 550 ext. 605

Fax: 076 612 553

info@classactmedia.co.th
thephuketnews.com99/7 Moo 1 (Billion Plaza),
T. Kathu, A. Kathu, Phuket 83120

PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

www.foreca.com

FRI JULY 11

High: +36°
Low: +29°
Wind 11 m/s

SAT JULY 12

High: +36°
Low: +28°
Wind 11 m/s

SUN JULY 13

High: +35°
Low: +28°
Wind 11 m/s

MON JULY 14

High: +35°
Low: +27°
Wind 4 m/s

TUE JULY 15

High: +35°
Low: +28°
Wind 4 m/s

WED JULY 16

High: +37°
Low: +28°
Wind 4 m/s

THU JULY 17

High: +36°
Low: +27°
Wind 4 m/s

Both die in lovers' duel

TWO MYANMAR NATIONALS have died after a violent knife fight erupted over a suspected love affair near an employee dormitory opposite Karon Police Station last week.

Police were alerted to the incident at approximately 10:45pm on July 2, with the fight taking place at the entrance to a hotel staff dormitory on Patak Rd in Karon.

Upon arrival, officers found two men seriously injured from stab wounds. Both were rushed to Chalong Hospital. One of the men, later identified as Paeng Htet Naing, was pronounced dead shortly after arrival. The second man, Ye Min Tun, who was placed on a ventilator, succumbed to his injuries around 3am.

An initial investigation revealed that the altercation stemmed from a personal dispute. According to witness Ms Ei Ei Moe, the two men had arranged to meet to discuss a romantic relationship with the same woman. The discussion quickly escalated into a violent confrontation.

Ms Ei Ei Moe further stated that Mr Htet Bhome Hlaing, Mr Paeng Htet Naing's younger brother,



Photo: Karon Police

attempted to intervene and was injured in the foot during the fight. He is currently receiving treatment and will be questioned by police once his condition allows.

Pol Lt Col Wivat Chamnankit, Chief of Investigation at Karon Police Station, confirmed that the men attacked each other with a long, sharp knife and were found lying in pools of blood when emergency responders arrived.

"This was a tragic case of personal conflict that turned deadly. Our preliminary understanding is that the dispute was over a love affair," he said.

Reporters visited the scene the next day and found traces of blood still visible. Relatives of the deceased had returned to the site to pay respects by offering food, water and lighting incense.

At last report police were continuing their investigation.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Cannabis shops face new raids by officials

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Thalang District Office has ordered the immediate suspension of licenses for seven cannabis shops found to be in violation of regulations during a coordinated inspection operation last week.

The inspections were carried out on July 2 by the Thalang District Office from 1:30pm to 4:30pm, in collaboration with the Phuket Public Health Office (PPHO), the Thalang District Public Health Office, Cherng Talay Police, village headmen and security personnel from the Volunteer Defense Corps (OrSor).

A total of eight cannabis shops in the Cherng Talay area were inspected. Of these, only one shop was found to be fully compliant with the regulations.

The inspection uncovered multiple violations across the remaining seven shops, including smoking cannabis on the premises at two shops and failure to submit required reports documenting the source and quantity of controlled herbs



Photo: Thalang District Office

(PorTor 27) and their usage (PorTor 28) at five shops.

Other violations included advertising of controlled herbs at three shops and the sale of cannabis extracts without proper authorisation at two shops.

Samples from the two shops were taken for analysis to determine whether they fall under the Herbal Products Act or the

Narcotics Code.

The infractions led to the immediate suspension of the cannabis shop licenses involved, the Thalang District Office reported.

Thalang officials also vowed that proactive enforcement will continue to ensure that cannabis sales comply with the Ministry of Public Health's guidelines and to maintain public order in the area.

Kuwaiti man drowns at Bang Tao

A 74-YEAR-OLD KUWAITI man died after being pulled from the water unconscious at Bang Tao Beach last Saturday morning (July 5).

Police said they arrived at the beach at 8:20am to find the man, identified as 'Mr Naser', unconscious among the rocks at the southern end of the beach.

Police and rescue workers had been called to the beach by the owner of a nearby resort, where the Kuwaiti man had been staying for the past three months.

According to police, Mr Naser had been socialising with two Thai friends the night before the incident.

Witnesses reported that around 7am on Saturday, Mr Naser went to swim in the sea, despite his companions' efforts to dissuade him. Shortly afterward, he was seen drowning.



Photo: Cherng Talay Police

One of his friends entered the water and managed to pull Mr Naser to shore. However, he was unconscious and unresponsive, and his friends were unable to locate a pulse. A foreign tourist in the area attempted CPR, but also was unable to revive him.

When rescue workers from a local foundation arrived, they said they had detected a faint pulse and immediately rushed Mr Naser to Thalang Hospital. However, despite hospital staff efforts, Mr Naser was later pronounced dead.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Grocery shop used as front for meth

PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS have arrested a drug suspect in Baan Phru Samphan, in Tambon Thepkasattri, following a sting operation that uncovered the illegal sale of methamphetamine pills (ya bah) from a local grocery store.

The raid, at around 6:30pm on July 2, was carried out by the Phuket Provincial Office special operations team, led by Phuket Provincial Defense Officer Akkara Suwattikhul.

Also present to bolster the local officials' presence were 10 security personnel from the Volunteer Defense Corps (OrSor).

Officials had received complaints that the grocery store owner, previously involved in a drug-related case and currently out on bail, was continuing to sell methamphetamine openly and without fear of legal consequences.

An undercover officer was deployed to conduct a sting operation, which led to the arrest



Photo: PR Phuket

of one male suspect, said an official report of the raid, which did not name the suspect arrested.

The man has been charged with the distribution of Category 1 narcotics with intent to sell, and possession of severe Category 1 narcotics without permission, the report confirmed.

Seized as evidence in the raid were 282 ya bah pills (including 25 pills obtained during the sting operation) and B560 in cash, the report said.

The suspect was taken to Thalang Police Station for legal processing. The officers confirmed that further investigations are underway to dismantle the wider drug network operating in the area. *The Phuket News*

Nightlife boss takes Patong council

Natnaree Likidwatanasakun
reporter1@classactmedia.co.th

Weerawit Kreuasombat, longtime President of the Patong Entertainment Business Association (PEBA), has outlined his vision for Patong after being elected President of the Patong Municipality Council. With more than two decades representing Patong's nightlife industry, Mr Weerawit now steps into a formal leadership role in the town's governance.

Winning 10 of the 18 council votes, Mr Weerawit has promised to address Patong's persistent garbage problems and push forward key infrastructure projects.

Mr Weerawit secured his seat on the council in the local elections in May, representing Voting District 3 – which covers Patong beachfront, Bangla Rd, Jungceylon and the busy southern areas of town. Despite being one of the smaller voting districts, District 3 includes Patong's main business and residential zones.

Now, as both an entertainment industry leader and council president, Mr Weerawit said he is fully committed to improving Patong. "I wear two hats," he said. "By day, I serve the municipality; by night, I walk Bangla Rd myself to



Photo: Patong Municipality

oversee safety and support businesses. I give this job everything I've got – round the clock."

Mr Weerawit, who is also aligned with the Creative Party, acknowledged that while the party holds a majority on the council, some seats were won by opposition members, which can cause difficulties in securing budget approvals. However, he remains confident in pushing forward with essential projects.

His top priority is to resolve Patong's mounting garbage problem. "Patong now produces

up to 200 tonnes of garbage per day in the high season, double the amount from previous years," he said.

With only around 20,000 officially registered residents, Mr Weerawit estimates Patong's true population, including foreign workers and long-term visitors, is closer to 100,000. "The hidden population and lack of proper waste separation are overwhelming our garbage management system," he said.

He added that Patong's busy nightlife zone, Bangla Rd, is now much cleaner, thanks to

stepped-up efforts to manage waste more effectively. He also highlighted plans to improve lighting, install CCTV cameras, and move electrical cables underground to enhance safety and the town's appearance.

Mr Weerawit supports a recent private proposal to build a waste incinerator using modern, low-pollution technology, although he stressed that the project must meet strict environmental standards.

Traffic congestion is another pressing issue. Mr Weerawit pointed out that many traffic jams are caused by tourists coming and going from Patong to other parts of Phuket. He is also cracking down on illegal taxi parking, which clogs the town's narrow streets.

"Taxis often park where they shouldn't – in yellow-and-white zones or on small streets that are only six metres wide, leaving room for just one car to pass," he said. "I have already asked the police to take action, but so far, nothing has been done."

Mr Weerawit added that improving public transport links between Patong and the rest of the island requires cooperation with provincial authorities.

Among his key infrastructure projects is the second phase of the Patong beachfront promenade renovation, which is expected to be completed next year. A major

project to bury electrical lines underground is also moving forward, with a budget of about B180 million, shared between Patong Municipality and the Provincial Electricity Authority.

In addition, 12 new roads are being planned, including Phetkood Rd, although some approvals are still pending from the Phuket Forestry Department and the Phuket Agricultural Land Reform Office.

"We need better road infrastructure," he said, urging residents to be patient. "Once these projects are completed, traffic flow and accessibility will improve."

Another significant development involves a 12-rai plot near Graceland Resort, originally allocated for Muslim burial grounds. A section of the land – 4.5 rai – will now be converted into a public sports field, supported by an B85 million budget from the Phuket Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning.

"This new sports field will provide a place for people to gather, exercise, and strengthen the local community," Mr Weerawit said.

"I'm committed to making real, visible changes that benefit everyone who lives, works, and visits Patong."

Minister urges public to stop giving to beggars in tourist hotspots

VARAWUT SILPA-ARCHA, Minister of Social Development and Human Security, has urged the public to stop giving money to beggars, particularly in popular tourist destinations such as Phuket, Bangkok, Chiang Mai and Chonburi.

Speaking in an interview about the ongoing issue of begging in Thailand, Mr Varawut emphasised that while the problem has existed for many years, it is important for people to understand that begging is illegal under Thai law.

Authorities, including the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and the police, are actively working to address the situation, Mr Varawut said.

"When beggars are arrested, whether they are Thai nationals or foreigners, the law is clear," Mr Varawut said. "Foreign beggars are deported to their countries of origin – not only Cambodia but other countries as well. Thai beggars, however, are handled with care because the matter is more sensitive."

The Ministry works with the police to offer Thai beggars support through the Homeless Protection Centers under the Department of Social Development and Welfare. These centers provide vocational training and social welfare services to help beggars reintegrate into society, Mr Varawut explained.

However, Mr. Varawut noted that participation in the program is voluntary.



Varawut Silpa-archa, Minister of Social Development and Human Security. Photo: Varawut Silpa-archa / Facebook

"We cannot force anyone to stay at the protection centers without their consent. If they refuse, we are legally required to release them."

The Minister stressed that as long as people continue to give money, the begging problem will persist.

"In many cases, the beggars people give money to may actually have more savings than the donors themselves," he said. "Please do not let your goodwill encourage illegal activities or support organised begging networks, whether involving Thai citizens or foreigners."

Officials are continuing to monitor and take action against begging, particularly in areas with high tourist traffic, to maintain public order and protect the country's image, Mr Varawut said. *The Phuket News*

Explore Phuket's newest Pool Club

SO
HO
POOL CLUB

Let's get social

find us at
Boat Lagoon Marina
Phuket

www.sohophuket.com

- chilled out beach club vibe
- open to everyone, no membership needed
- great Thai and Western menu
- fantastic place for your event or party

Debt relief scheme to be expanded

THE CABINET HAS approved expansion of debtor eligibility for the 'You Fight, We Help' debt relief programme.

Under the new criteria, debtors who have been in arrears from one day up to 30 days, as well as those with overdue debts exceeding 365 days, are now allowed to join the scheme.

The expansion will increase the number of eligible debtor accounts by 2 million, with a total debt value of B310 billion, according to Deputy Finance Minister Paopoom Rojanasakul.

Speaking after the weekly Cabinet meeting earlier this week, Mr Paopoom said previously only debtors who owed money for more than 30 days but less than 365 days were eligible for the scheme.

"This expansion of the programme should allow more debtors to benefit from it," he said.

"The registration deadline for the programme was extended to Sept 30 of this year, from the original deadline of June 30."

Since the programme launched in December of



Photo: Bangkok Post

last year until April 15, 2025, 530,000 eligible debtors, or 27% of the 1.9 million eligible participants, have registered.

The amount of debt enrolled in the programme tallied B385 billion, accounting for 43% of the total eligible debt amount of B890bn.

According to Mr Paopoom, the Cabinet's decision to expand eligibility criteria aims to support all groups of debtors and assist the public.

The types of debtors and methods of assistance remain the same.

Under the programme, repayment instalments are gradually reduced over a three-year period.

If the debtor fully complies with the conditions throughout the entire term, the interest is waived.

Bangkok Post

Phuket showcases wellness tourism

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket last week kicked off the 'Phuket Health Expo 2025' as part of a major push to position the island as a world-class wellness tourism destination.

The event, held at Central Festival Phuket from July 2-6, was officially opened on July 2 by Phuket Governor Sophon Suwanarat.

Also present were key figures from the local government and business sectors, including Anupap Vetchawanichsanong, Deputy Chairman of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO), Kongsak Khoopongsakorn, President of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce, and Thanusak Phuengdet, President of the Andaman Chamber of Commerce.

Under the theme 'Living in Paradise', the expo was part of the 'Connecting Phuket, Connecting the



Photo: PR Phuket

World' campaign, which aimed to showcase the island's readiness to serve as a second home for international visitors seeking health services, quality lifestyles, and wellness experiences.

The event featured a wide range of exhibitions and activities highlighting Phuket's health and wellness potential across the entire supply chain. Visitors explored the 'Wellness Map' through a modern 3D immersive experience using Google Maps and virtual reality technology.

Free health checkups were offered by leading hospitals and clinics, along with cultural performances such as a Wai Khru Muay

Thai demonstration, live music from Yamaha Music School, a golf simulator competition, herbal compress demonstrations, and a 'Wellness Culinary Art' workshop by a five-star chef.

Workshops on life-saving skills, including CPR training with certificates issued to participants, were also part of the programme. The event included the sale of health products and exclusive wellness travel packages such as the 'Phuket Health Expo Trip' and 'Premium Wellness Trip', offered in collaboration with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), the PPAO and the Association of Thai Travel Agents (ATTA).

A highlight of the expo was the 'CEO Talk' seminar held on July 3 at the Floresta Mini Convention Hall, featuring leading executives from the wellness tourism sector. Business matching sessions were also organised to connect local health businesses with international partners.

The event also included 'Living in Paradise Awards' to recognise outstanding businesses in six wellness sectors: hotels, spas, clinics, hospitals, real estate, and health product outlets.

Looking to the future, the Phuket Chamber of Commerce and its partners announced their efforts in pushing for Phuket to become a pilot area for a new 'Wellness Visa' to complement the existing 'Medical Visa'.

There were also calls for government-backed financial support for wellness businesses, including Wellness Loans and SME Bank guarantees, to strengthen the sector.

Work permit applications to go online

THE DEPARTMENT of Employment has launched an outsourcing project aimed at transforming the process of applying for work permits for foreigners – and for work permit renewals – in Thailand into an online streamlined service.

Speaking at a press conference in Bangkok, Somchai Morakotsriwan, Director-General of the Department of Employment, unveiled the initiative to hire private companies to manage the production of work permits and provide application and employment notification services through an 'Outsourcing Service' system.

The project is part of a nationwide push to modernise and digitise public services in line with Thailand's 20-year national strategy to elevate government efficiency and international competitiveness, Mr Somchai said.

"This project will help reduce the steps and time involved in the work permit process, making



Photo: Department of Employment

applications faster, more accurate and more efficient. Previously, the process took about three days, but the new system will significantly cut this time," Mr. Somchai explained.

The Phuket News notes that the issuance of new work permits in Phuket can take much longer than three days.

Mr Somchai said that business operators and foreign workers will be able to submit applications online 24 hours a day via the 'e-WorkPermit' platform.

More than 40 service centres will be available across the country to support the new service, along with eight mobile units to reach more remote areas, he said.

Advanced security features, including fingerprint and iris scans, will also be introduced to ensure transparency and verify applicant identities, Mr Somchai noted.

Phichit Singthongkam, Chief of the Phuket Provincial Employment Office, confirmed that the system is scheduled to begin accepting new applications and renewals from Aug 1. The official website for submissions has yet to be announced.

The outsourcing partner will handle the online application process, while local employment offices will simultaneously receive application copies to ensure coordination, Mr Phichit said.

"The Department of Employment is still considering whether the new work permits will be in card format with embedded digital information or if the traditional booklet format will remain. A final decision on this is expected by the end of this month," he added.

The Phuket News

NBTC endorses new cybercrime rules

THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) board has approved eight measures to prevent and suppress crimes related to technology.

The eight measures form guidelines for telecom operators and related parties to adopt to comply with the amended emergency decree on the prevention and suppression of cybercrime, which went into effect on April 13.

First, telecom operators must check and screen users who display unusual behaviour, immediately suspending their usage. Unusual behaviour may include making a lot of calls, the locations of calls and the devices used for calls (such as using a SIM card box).

Second, service operators must immediately suspend callers' usage upon being notified by the NBTC that they are suspicious numbers. The mobile phone operators must suspend the service within 24 hours, while other related telecom operators must suspend the service within three days.

Third, the operators responsible for registering new customers must comply with the NBTC's related rules.

This means these operators must recheck the information of customers registered from Jan 1, 2024 until the date these eight measures take effect. They must finish rechecking within 90 days after the announcement of these measures.

They must also finish rechecking the information of customers registered before 2024 within one year after the announcement of the measures.

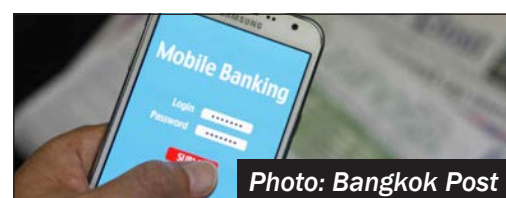


Photo: Bangkok Post

Fourth, in the case of SMS sending from applications on the basis of application-to-person, operators are required to ask such applications to register the senders' names with the operators first before they can send messages with attached links and the operators must always examine the links before they send them.

Fifth, the operators are bound by duty to limit the registration of SIM cards by foreigners to three per person/mobile service provider and require the use of passports to verify identity to register the SIM cards.

Sixth, the operators will have to limit the validity period of SIM cards of foreign tourists to no more than 60 days.

Foreigners will not be allowed to top up the call value to extend the service usage after the service expires. They will have to register to authenticate their ID with the operators again to renew the usage.

Seventh, the operators must not allow unauthorised SIM boxes with capacity to hold more than 4 SIM cards to connect to their telecom network.

Eighth, the operators must add the prefix numbers to overseas incoming calls to warn customers that they are receiving incoming calls from overseas. The NBTC has yet to announce when the eight measures will take effect. Bangkok Post

Thai Cabinet shuffled and sworn in with acting PM

BANGKOK
AFP

Thailand saw its third person helming the prime minister's office in a week on July 3, as the King swore in a new Cabinet after a court decision plunged the nation's top office into turmoil.

The prime minister's office was upheaved on July 1 when the Constitutional Court suspended Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra pending an ethics probe which could take months.

Power passed to transport minister and deputy prime minister Suriya Jungrungreangkit who took office for only one full day, as the bombshell was dropped in an awkward interim ahead of the reshuffle.

Former defence minister Phumtham Wechayachai was sworn in as interior minister by the King on the morning of July 3, taking on a deputy prime minister role outranking Suriya's – thus becoming the acting premier.



The Thai government said in a statement on social media that the new Cabinet approved Phumtham's role as acting prime minister at its first meeting.

Before Paetongtarn was ousted she assigned herself the role of culture minister in the new Cabinet, meaning she has kept a perch in the upper echelons of power.

The revolving door of leadership comes as the kingdom is battling to revive a spluttering economy and secure a US trade deal averting President Donald Trump's looming threat of a 36% tariff.

'BIG COMRADE'
Phumtham is considered a

loyal lieutenant to the suspended Paetongtarn and her father Thaksin Shinawatra, the powerful patriarch of a dynasty which has dominated Thai politics so far this century.

Thaksin-linked parties have been jousting with the pro-military, pro-conservative establishment since the early 2000s, but analysts say the family's political brand has now entered decline.

The 71-year-old Phumtham earned the nickname 'Big Comrade' for his association with a left-wing youth movement of the 1970s, but transitioned to politics through a role in Thaksin's telecoms empire.

In previous Cabinets he

held the defence and commerce portfolios, and spent a spell as acting prime minister after a crisis engulfed the top office last year.

Paetongtarn has been hobbled over a longstanding territorial dispute between Thailand and Cambodia, which boiled over into cross-border clashes in May, killing one Cambodian soldier.

When she made a diplomatic call to Cambodian ex-leader Hun Sen, she called him "uncle" and referred to a Thai military commander as her "opponent", according to a leaked recording causing widespread backlash.

A conservative party abandoned her ruling coalition – sparking the cabinet reshuffle – accusing her of kowtowing to Cambodia and undermining the military.

The Constitutional Court said there was "sufficient cause to suspect" Paetongtarn breached ministerial ethics in the diplomatic spat.

Thai water monitor lizard breeding gets green light

BANGKOK



THE ASIAN WATER monitor can now be bred in captivity for commercial purposes, according to a new declaration in the *Royal Gazette*.

The Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation has greenlit the rearing and breeding of the Asian water monitor, scientifically known as *Varanus salvator*.

The dinosaur-like reptile is protected under the Wild Animal Conservation and Protection Act BE 2562, which prohibits the hunting, trading, possession or harming of the species.

However, Department chief Atthaphon Charoensansa said that water monitors kept for breeding must be acquired from licensed hatcheries and those keeping the animals must also receive authorisation.

The allowance does not permit the capture of wild water monitors but recognises them as a new animal with economic potential. Regulations on handling the lizard and commercial prices are currently being drafted.

Those who wish to breed the animal must have a licensed space for their care and no record of violating the Wildlife Protection Act.

All captive water monitors must be microchipped to prevent smuggling and capturing the dinosaur-like reptile in the wild remains a criminal violation.

Earlier this year, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) addressed concerns regarding the increasing number of water monitors in Bangkok's city centre.

The new regulations are expected to boost local employment opportunities and stimulate sustainable tourism around the handling and viewing of these animals. Experts say that responsible breeding programmes could help reduce illegal trade and wild capture, contributing positively to the protection of natural habitats. *Bangkok Post*

Medical clinics to replace cannabis dispensaries

BANGKOK

CANNABIS DISPENSARIES MUST transition into medical clinics if they are to continue to run legally, says the Department of Thai Traditional and Alternative Medicine.

The department's chief, Dr Somlerk Jeungsmarn, said it is working on a draft of the new ministerial regulation to regulate the use of the plant for medical purposes, as the government moves to tighten cannabis rules.

This would include having a medical professional stationed at the shop who has a licence to sell cannabis, he said.

The dispensaries must then be registered as a hospital or clinic under the Hospital Act.

The ministerial regulation would include how to issue drug prescriptions, which will be required to access cannabis medical products.

The department has issued 18,000 licences to cannabis shops nationwide but only a few operate as a hospital or a clinic.

Among them, 12,000 will have their licences renewed this November, and they must comply with the new ministerial regulation by that date, he said.

"If they want to sell cannabis, they will have to switch to being a hospital or clinic under our new regulation; otherwise, they won't be able to sell it," Dr Somlerk explained.

"We hope that the new regulation will be implemented within the next three



months, before the period of licence renewals in November," he added.

Observers see the move as bringing an end to cannabis dispensaries that issue the plant for recreational purposes.

The department revealed it has a plan to control cannabis medical product prices, which will be made public shortly, and that it has trained over 9,000 doctors who would be authorised to issue prescriptions.

The news came ahead of cannabis advocates holding a mass rally at the Ministry of Public Health on Monday (July 7) to protest the government's campaign to recriminalise the plant three years after it was removed from the national narcotics list.

Dubbed "Operation 7-7", the gathering demanded "answers from the public health minister and push for the right approach to regulate cannabis", organisers said.

Bangkok Post

Safe, Secure, Soundproof Windows and Doors

087 061 7631 Nathan Window Man Brown pvcphuket.com

Exploring mental health in Phuket teens

Dominik Schulz

One in seven adolescents (aged 10-19) suffers from a mental health disorder, with suicide being the third leading cause of death among those aged 15-29, according to a 2024 study on youth mental health by the World Health Organization.

In Phuket, limited mental health services, constant peer turnover, and a lack of social spaces outside school or home make it even harder for teens to build the emotional support systems we need to thrive. So, what can parents do to support their teens in a place that seems like paradise on the outside, but often feels isolating on the inside?

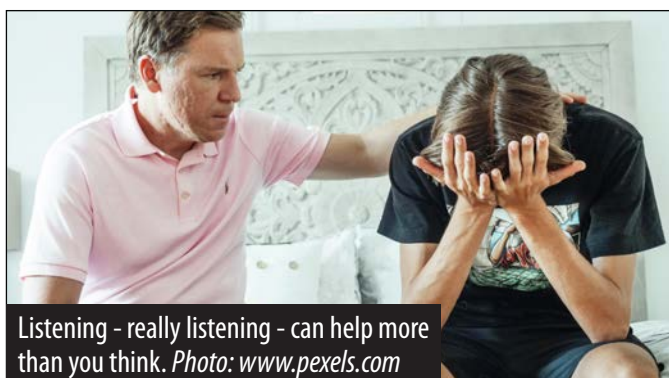
Social media

Unlike many European countries, Phuket has no dedicated youth centres for teens to socialise. The public transport system here is scarce and notoriously difficult to use, making in-person meetups even more challenging for us. Hence, many of us turn to social media.

Yes, social media helps us connect more easily than ever – but that doesn't mean it's always a good thing. A lot of my peers often describe feeling like they constantly have to perform, compare themselves to others, and manage how they're seen online. Over time, this pressure builds up and makes some teens base their self-worth entirely on other people's opinions.

Ironically, the rise in mental health awareness has also created a different kind of pressure. Some teens I know say awareness campaigns make it even harder for them to be honest about what they're going through.

A 2023 study by Foulkes and Andrews found that although these campaigns are meant to reduce stigma, they can unintentionally heighten it – especially for teens. Some of us feel like our struggles aren't "bad



Listening - really listening - can help more than you think. Photo: www.pexels.com

enough" to count, which makes speaking up feel risky. No one wants to be judged, dismissed, or misunderstood. So instead of reaching out, many stay quiet.

International environment

Growing up in an international school community poses a unique challenge. Peers come and go all the time, forcing teens to say goodbye again and again – an experience that can seriously affect our mental health.

I've been in a couple of international schools over the past 10 years, and I've seen it firsthand – new faces arriving each term, while familiar ones suddenly move away. It's hard to fully invest in friendships when you know they might be short-lived, and this uncertainty often leaves us feeling lonely or disconnected. Eventually, some of us stop trying to get close at all.

A 2024 academic study by Li and Goldman found that teens who went through multiple peer turnovers had higher rates of loneliness and depressive symptoms compared to those with more stable friend groups.

While schools do offer some support, from what I've seen, no programs can fully prepare us for the emotional rollercoaster of losing friends over and over again.

What parents can do to help

The most powerful support we can get? A parent who listens with empathy. When we feel truly seen and heard by our parents, it builds a foundation of trust that helps us navigate through our challenges. Even small moments of genuine understanding can prevent emotional shutdown.

The moment we feel brushed off or misunderstood by our parents, we shut down emotionally. Even when parents mean well, dismissing our feelings can leave a lasting scar.

A better approach is something called "emotion coaching", a parenting style developed by Dr John Gottman in the 1990s. It basically means responding to the child's emotions with empathy, curiosity and patience. It's more than just letting us talk – it's about helping us put our feelings into words and really listening. Saying something like "help me understand what you're going through" can mean the world. It makes us feel safe.

Just as important is for parents to model vulnerability, humility, and honesty. Share your own struggles. Own up to your mistakes. Show us how to repair emotional rifts. When parents do that, they become someone we can go to without fear. Someone we can learn from, not just about life, but about how to deal with big feelings in a healthy way.

If you're a parent reading this, know that just listening – really listening – can help more than you think. Encourage open, honest conversations. Ask questions without jumping in with answers. And when we feel heard, we'll be much more likely to reach out when it really matters.

Dominik Schulz is a Year 11 student at HeadStart International School, City Campus. This article is part of his Work Experience Program, guided by Milla Budiarto from Safe Space Phuket.



The August/September 2025 hard copy issue goes to print very soon

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

Want to be in it?

✉ CONTACT JASON TODAY – gm@classactmedia.co.th

TransEuropa: One Wild Ride for Phuket



GLOBETROTTER

Todd Miller

Most people cross Europe at 30,000 feet with a gin and tonic in hand. I, on the other hand, thought it'd be a great idea to do it on a bicycle.

Starting this week, I'll cycle from the breezy shores of the Baltic Sea all the way to the sun-baked rock of Gibraltar. That's 6,000 slow-motion kilometres to question my decision to cross Europe the hard way.

By the time I reach the finish line, my legs might unfriend me – but they'll be pedaling for a purpose: Phuket's own Sustainable Maikhao Foundation (SMF). I'm trading in my flip-flops for bike cleats to shine a spotlight on an environmental cause that hits close to home.

Do I still have it in me?

This isn't my first long-haul spin. In 2010, I cycled coast-to-coast across North America. A year later, I crossed Europe – from Lisbon to Istanbul – on a totally different route, direction, bike and mission.

Fourteen years have spun past since I last tackled something this physically intense. The big question now is: do I still have the gears – and the grit – to pull this off again?



TransEuropa 2025. Image: Todd Miller

Why the Sustainable Maikhao Foundation?

Because they don't just preach green – they get their hands dirty protecting what makes Phuket extraordinary: its natural environment.

They've led over 300 beach cleanups across Greater Phuket, clearing more than 25 tonnes of trash. They also teach local kids that sustainability is a lifestyle, not just a buzzword. Last month, SMF celebrated its fifth anniversary by launching the Campaign for 2030, an ambitious drive to raise US\$350,000 (approximately B11 million) to build a dedicated Learning and Recycling Center.

This ride is my high-gear salute to their mission, and a rolling reminder that local action can create global ripples.

From Estonia to (almost) Africa

TransEuropa begins on the cobblestone streets of Tallinn, Estonia. Seventy-three days and 11 countries later, it



Todd Miller on a training ride in Sri Lanka earlier this year. Photo: Todd Miller

ends at the tip of the Mediterranean, just a stone's throw from Africa.

But this ride isn't really about the distance – it's about connection. I'll meet people, share stories and spread a simple message: if a small foundation in Thailand can make a difference, anyone can. Whether you're in Phuket or Ptuj, small steps – or steady pedal strokes – add up.

What's ahead

This Euro pedal won't be all champagne and croissants. I'm expecting sideways rain, flat tyres at the worst moments and enough wrong turns to qualify as a scenic tour. I'll likely encounter enthusiastic dog escorts, physics-defying headwinds and at least one meltdown – mechanical, emotional or both.

But then, every so often, comes the bliss: that quiet, soul-filling moment when the world opens up from the best seat in the house – the saddle. Cycle touring feels strangely Thai. It's *mai pen rai* on wheels. You just roll with it,

trust the road and smile at every medieval village, mountain pass and sun-drenched vineyard that greets your tyres.

And yes, I'll be fuelling the mission with pierogi in Poland, paella in Spain and anything edible Italy throws my way. Saving the planet requires carbs.

Join the journey

This ride is all about shining a light on Phuket – not just as a paradise, but as an ecological gem worth protecting. A place where the love for nature runs deep. Every pedal stroke sends a message. Every action makes a difference. Follow the journey on: Facebook: @Sustainable Mai Khao // @thephuketnews; Instagram: @sustainable.maikhao // @thephuketnews.

A big thanks to *The Phuket News*, official media sponsor of the ride, for championing this cause across its print, radio and digital channels.

Support the Campaign for 2030: sustainablemaikhaofoundation.org

TransEuropa 2025 isn't just a bike ride. It's a sweaty demonstration that even small wheels can take on big challenges. And sometimes, the best way to move the world forward is to pedal furiously in what you hope is the right direction.

Adventurer Todd Miller has explored more than 115 countries. He authored the bestseller 'ENRICH: Create Wealth in Time, Money, and Meaning'. www.ToddMiller.asia.



THAI
RESIDENTIAL

Phuket's No.1 Trusted Real Estate Advisor

Katamanda is one of Phuket's most renowned luxury resorts, within walking distance to Kata Noi and Kata beaches. The resort has a club house, gymnasium, tennis court, onsite management office and 24 hour security. Expertly run by CBRE, this villa would make a fabulous family home or an excellent investment property.

Key Features

- 4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms
- 32 M THB
- 647 Sq m Land Plot
- 520 Sq m Build
- Gated Community + 24 hour security
- Stunning Seaviews
- Fully Furnished
- Protected/Secured Leasehold

An amazing value sea view villa for sale on one of Phuket's most prestigious estates. This 4 bedroom villa set on 3 stories, consists of 4 en-suite bedrooms, large living area, all set within an amazing tropical environment.



PHUKET@THAIRESIDENTIAL.COM | +66 94 8411 918 | WWW.THAIRESIDENTIAL.COM
THAIRESIDENTIAL CO., LTD. 82/37 SAM PAO COURTYARD, MOO4, PATAK ROAD, T.RAWAI, PHUKET, 83130

POP QUIZ

1. Carl and the Passions changed their band name to what?

2. What is the outermost layer of the Earth's atmosphere called?

3. How many rooms are on the Cluedo game board?

4. What would you expect to find in a binnacle?

5. In 2024 which country drank the most coffee per capita?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Medium

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

1. Passage

5. Tropical starchy root

9. Jerk

14. Prefix for scoliosis

15. Kind of number

16. Like some fiction?

17. Accepts with aplomb

20. Watch word?

21. Waterproof fabric

22. Trattoria order

25. Not only that but also

26. Synthetic fiber

28. City on the Yamuna River

32. Support beam

37. Composer Albéniz

38. Wins out in the end

41. Table-top design

42. Murder, e.g.

43. Christian name

44. Manufactured fiber

46. Criticize harshly

47. 1976 satirical film

53. Brunch order

58. Atlas, e.g.

59. Tune from "Bye, Bye Birdie"

Down

1. Star in Perseus

2. Skin layer

3. Penn and others

4. South Seas kingdom

5. Chapter in history

6. Kind of mother

7. Carpenter's groove

8. White rat, e.g.

9. Stupefied

10. Ripple, as water

11. Therewithal

12. Kind of curl

13. Ragnarok, e.g.

18. Wilt

19. Valley in Wales

23. Bill

24. Husk

27. Like spinach salad

28. Chop-chop

29. French person

30. Indian music

31. In need of a massage

32. Scolded

33. Punjabi princess

34. Home of Vigeland Park

35. Principal

36. Lacking

37. Down

39. Directly

40. Adjust a violin

44. Figure in Maori mythology

45. Hymn of praise

46. Tubular pasta

48. Your, once

49. Fabric threads

50. Siouan language

51. Snake genus

52. Injured, in a way

53. Work

54. Speechless

55. Needle holder

56. Desolate

57. Mollify

60. Dance bit

61. Hindu month

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	35	36						37				
38								39	40					
41								42						
43					44	45								
					46				47		48	49	50	51
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:

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

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

5

the number of boroughs New York City is comprised of.

50

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

98

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

1,350


is roughly how many volcanoes are currently active around the world.

35 million

people worldwide are direct descendants of the Mayflower Pilgrims.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Dark, stormy clouds setting in at Bang Tao Beach. Photo by Lineke van Nederpelt

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

This week in history

July 11, 1914


Babe Ruth makes his debut in Major League Baseball.

July 12, 1971

The Australian Aboriginal flag is flown for the first time.

July 13, 1930

The inaugural FIFA World Cup begins in Uruguay.



Nintendo's Mario.

July 14, 1983

Mario Bros. is released in

Japan, beginning the popular Super Mario Bros franchise.

July 15, 1910

In his book Clinical Psychiatry, Emil Kraepelin gives a name to Alzheimer's disease, naming it after his colleague Alois Alzheimer.

July 16, 622

The Hijrah of Muhammad begins, marking the beginning of the Islamic calendar.

July 17, 2014

Malaysia Airlines Flight 17, a Boeing 777, crashes near the border of Ukraine and Russia after being shot down. All 298 people on board are killed.

Source: Wikipedia

NEWS TV LIVE 89.5

thepuketnews

Trades & Services

 The Phuket News
 @thephuketnews

PROPERTY

OPEN YOUR EYES



DON'T BUY YOUR PROPERTY BLIND. CARRY OUT A FULL INSPECTION AND SURVEY
CITADEL PHUKET ARE AN INDEPENDENT INSPECTION COMPANY
OVER 600 INSPECTIONS LAST YEAR WWW.CITADELPHUKET.COM (+66) 65 349 0552

CORPORATE SERVICES

 **MARS HOSPITALITY**

Enhance Your Hotel's Performance with Professional Asset Management
Specialized Services to optimize your hotel's profitability and performance:

- Hotel Management Agreement (HMA) & Technical Services Agreement (TSA) Review
- Comprehensive Asset Management
- Business Plan
- Monthly Financial & Commercial Reports
- Budgeting & Forecasting Review
- Accounting Controls & Reconciliation Processes

Let's Talk - First 25-Minute Consultation is Free!
We also offer short-term assignments tailored to your specific needs.
Contact us at hoteliersfinance@gmail.com

OTHER

Want your **BUSINESS** listed here?
Reserve your space **NOW!**

076 612 550
sales@classactmedia.co.th

HOME IMPROVEMENT

HOUSE - CONDO - VILLA
CLEANING SERVICES
AT YOUR DOOR STEP

BABYSITTING SERVICES

- IN-HOME BABYSITTING
- EVENING AND WEEKEND BABYSITTING
- EMERGENCY BABYSITTING
- BABYSITTING FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS

BOOK NOW

Spotless Cleaning and Babysitting Service
Phuket - Thailand
nammcasting@gmail.com
089 6548873

CORPORATE SERVICES

 **VERTIGO**
VIDEO PRODUCTIONS

WE MAKE YOU LOOK GOOD!

VERTIGOVIDEOPRODUCTIONS.COM

HOME IMPROVEMENT

Waterproofing & Crack Repair

20 year WARRANTY

under yearly checkup plan...

TCM Asia Co., Ltd - quality services since 2003
office@tcm-asia.com 086-9439834

Drone Survey
Pipe Inspection

HOME IMPROVEMENT

25 Jahre

WOOD FLOOR PHUKET

Solid and engineered wood floor
Sand & refinish wood floor
Solid wood deck

 /solidwoodfloorphuketthailand
 Matt 081 271 2684 or Jessika 062 372 6624

HOME IMPROVEMENT

 **SMART TILES**
Tile Leveling System

Baan Wana - Cherng Talay
Tel : 076 620168

www.tile-asia.com | letstalk@tile-asia.com

MARINE SERVICES

 **C&C MARINE**  

MARINE ENGINEERING SPECIALISTS

C&C Marine (Thailand) Co., Ltd.
Tel: +66 076 272049 Fax: +66 076 273248
Email: cholmes@candc-marine.com
www.candc-marine.com
16/2 Moo 4, Soi Koh Kaew 33, Thepkassatri Rd,
Koh Kaew, Muang, Phuket 83000, Thailand


WANT TO TALK TO PHUKET?

The **Phuket News** Your Island - Your Paper
Новости **Пхукета** Твой остров - твоя газета
ข่าว **ภูเก็ต**

WINDOW ON PHUKET
The map of PHUKET English 中文 Русский
Where to eat in PHUKET
LIVE 89.5 **NEWS TV**

Contact: gm@classactmedia.co.th

FRI
11
JULY




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

Phuket Business Networking - July 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 on FB/phuketbusinessnetworking or call Jason - 086 479 7471.

MON
14
JULY



STEAK HOUSE & RESTAURANT
 98/18 Vises Road,
 Rawai
 OI: 081 891 4381
 www.shakersphuket.com
 shakersphuket@gmail.com
 FB: shakersphuket

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
16
JULY



STEAK HOUSE & RESTAURANT
 98/18 Vises Road,
 Rawai
 OI: 081 891 4381
 www.shakersphuket.com
 shakersphuket@gmail.com
 FB: shakersphuket

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

SUN
13
JULY



STEAK HOUSE & RESTAURANT
 98/18 Vises Road,
 Rawai
 OI: 081 891 4381
 www.shakersphuket.com
 shakersphuket@gmail.com
 FB: shakersphuket

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



STEAK HOUSE & RESTAURANT
 98/18 Vises Road,
 Rawai
 OI: 081 891 4381
 www.shakersphuket.com
 shakersphuket@gmail.com
 FB: shakersphuket

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



Listen for
**DAILY
 EVENT UP
 DATES ON**
LIVE 89.5 Radio

SAT
19
JULY



PHUKET VETERANS PROUDLY PRESENT
100 LEGENDS SUMMER BALL 2025
 SATURDAY | 19 JULY, 2025 | 6:00 PM
 ATTIRE: BLACK TIE | EVENING GOWN
 THE COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT
 TICKETS: THB 2000 PER PERSON

100 Legends Summer Ball 2025

Phuket Veterans invite all members, families, and friends to join us for the first annual 100 Legends Summer Ball held at The Courtyard by Marriott, Phuket Town. What's Included? Band and DJ, Dancing, Buffet, Thai and Western food. Canapé, welcome drinks and free flow soft drink. There will be a raffle prize draw with the proceeds going to charity - Live, Play, Work Thai Priorities Services. Live Play Work Supports Veterans, individuals, their Families, Community & Business to Live..Play..Work Their Best Life! From 6:00 PM, tickets THB 2,000 THB per person. RSVP - Dave Gormley (IVA Secretary) to register WhatsApp +44 7726 274096 or davegormley@icloud.com or message via Facebook: facebook.com/phuketveterans Dave Gormley, davegormley@icloud.com

MON
21
JULY




Celebrate
BELGIAN NATIONAL DAY 2025
 Mon, 21 July | 12-5 PM
 Food, drinks & live beats by DJ YEODIE
 Book now! WhatsApp: +66 62 245 5704 or via QR Experience app

Belgian National Day 2025


Get ready to celebrate Belgian National Day 2025 — we're bringing a slice of Belgium to Phuket with tasty bites, cold drinks, and feel-good vibes! Join us for a fun-filled afternoon with Belgian delights and beats by DJ YEODIE! ? Date: Monday, 21st July 2025 Time: 12:00 PM – 5:00 PM Venue: Infuse Restaurant @ Diamond Resort Phuket RESERVE YOUR TABLE NOW! WhatsApp: +66 62 245 5704 Email: infuse@diamondresortphuket.com. SUNSET AFTER PARTY @ SOLIS BEACH CLUB Keep the celebration going with our Free Flow Drinks Package – only 999.- THB per person for Diamond Resort guests! Diamond Resort Guests will also receive an ORANGE 15% Membership Card Let's toast to Belgian pride, great vibes, and unforgettable memories – see you there!

THU
24
JULY




Skål July Dinner: Thai Flavours & Friendship


Join us for an evening of Thai flavours, laughter and great company at the charming Albatross Café, Canal Village, Laguna Phuket, hosted by our fellow Skål member Robert de Graaff and Khun Odd. Expect a warm welcome, a delicious Thai dinner, and the unbeatable Skål spirit! Registration from 6pm. Members B1,200 - Non-Members B1,600. Bookings - contact@skalphuket.org




WANT TO TALK TO PHUKET?




WINDOW ON PHUKET




The Map of PHUKET
 English 中文 Русский




Where to eat in PHUKET




LIVE 89.5




Phuket News



Новости Phuket



ข่าวภูเก็ต




Phuket NEWS TV

Contact: gm@classactmedia.co.th

CLASSIFIEDS

PROPERTY FOR RENT



Luxury Ocean View Pool Villa

The Cube Villa Kalim, is a modern ocean view pool villa with over 800sqm living space with a private 90 sqm infinity saltwater pool. Ocean Rock Villa Estate, 9/4 Soi Prabaramee 7, Kalim Beach, Patong, hello@the-cube-villa-kalim.com, +66(0)92 870 6065



LIVE 89.5 Radio

**Your Island, your radio station.
 On FM and online.**



LISTEN ONLINE

CHRISTOPHER DAVID BARTLEY WILLIAMS Deceased

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 (England and Wales) anyone having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the deceased, late of Village, No. 2 Thepkasattri Sub-district, Thalang District, Phuket Province, 83110, who died on 25 November 2024, must send written particulars to the address below by 05 September 2025, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests notified.

Alan Thompson
 c/o ACT Legal Ltd,
 2nd floor, 6a Hove Park Villas,
 Hove, BN3 6HW,
 United Kingdom

Alcoholics Anonymous

If you want to drink that is your business

If you want to stop that is ours

Daily Meetings
 Patong, Chalong,
 Phuket Town,
 Bang Tao & Karon

CALL
081 895 4763
help@aaphuket.org
 Google www.aaphuket.com



NEW COLOURS OF THE SIS KATA EVENT

On July 4 a select group of local media and influencers from around Thailand enjoyed a wonderful evening getting to know the owners and team from The SIS Kata and hear about the design upgrades. When asked about the group's policy on lowering rates during the green season, Matthew C Hindmarch, Director of Hotel and Resorts at AKSARA Collection, replied, "At The SIS Kata and within the AKSARA Collection, we've always believed in offering value over volume. While lowering rates may bring short-term occupancy gains during low season, it can also risk diluting the brand and guest experience. Instead, we focus on enhancing what's included – from thoughtful in-room amenities to curated local experiences to ensure that guests feel their stay is truly worth the investment.

"We've found that today's travelers, especially couples and lifestyle-focused guests, are looking for more than just a good rate, they want authenticity, comfort, and memorable moments. By maintaining our rate positioning and delivering added value, we attract guests who appreciate quality and are more likely to return or recommend us to others. It's a long-term mindset that supports both brand integrity and sustainable business. Importantly, we will always keep our eyes on the Thai domestic tourism market and continue to offer special packages and promotions as it was the Thai market that kept us going during the COVID era. We are sincerely grateful and will never forget that support." To find out more visit thesiskata.com



THE DRUNKEN LEPRECHAUN REOPENS

On Saturday July 5 a lively crowd enjoyed live music by Lee Shamrock, and great food and drinks. Wonderful to see this outlet reopening after a long break, a perfect family friendly place to visit in Patong. The Drunken Leprechaun is located at the Raddison Red Phuket Patong Beach.

Aimsaard sisters end dry spell with US Open title

BADMINTON

AIMSAARD SISTERS Benyapa and Nuntakarn claimed the women's doubles title at the BWF US Open in Iowa on June 29.

The Thai third seeds defeated sixth seeds Hsu Ya-ching and Sung Yu-hsuan of Taiwan 21-15, 21-15 in the title decider at the Mid America Centre, Council Bluffs, to claim the World Tour Super 300 event, officially known as the Yonex US Open 2025 for sponsorship reasons.

It was their first World Tour title in over a year and sixth overall. The sisters last won a tournament at the 2024 Thailand Masters – also a Super 300 event.

In winning the US Open event in Iowa the sisters became the first Thais to win the women's doubles title at this tournament.

They pocketed the US\$18,960 (approx B625,680) winners'



Benyapa (left) and Nuntakarn. Photo: Supplied

cheque, while the runners-up received \$9,120 (B300,960).

Ruttanapak Oupthong and Jhenicha Sudjaiparat were unable to complete a double for Thailand after they lost to Danish pair Rasmus Espersen and Amalie Kudsk in the mixed doubles final.

Fifth seeds Espersen and Kudsk, the only European presence in the finals, took the title with a 21-17, 13-21, 21-10 victory.

India's Ayush Shetty won the men's singles title, Zhang Beiwen of the US took the women's singles crown, while Taiwan's Lai Po-yu and Tsai Fu-cheng claimed the men's doubles crown.

Bangkok Post

Lando wins home Grand Prix

FORMULA ONE

AFP

Lando Norris boosted his world title bid last Sunday (July 6) when he drove to a commanding rain-splashed victory ahead of McLaren team-mate Oscar Piastri in a chaotic British Grand Prix.

The 25-year-old Briton made the most of series leader Piastri's mid-race misfortune, when he was given a 10-second penalty for slowing excessively while leading behind the safety car, to finish 6.8112 seconds clear.

It was his first home win, his fourth win of the year and the eighth of his career, lifting him within eight points of the Australian. Norris also became the 13th different home winner of the British race.

"Thank you, McLaren, thanks everyone," said Norris. "This is beautiful. Winning at home. This is a dream."

Nico Hulkenberg finished a stirring third for Sauber to claim the first podium appearance of his long career after 239 races.

"It feels good," the veteran German said. "A long time coming! But we had it in us and I had it in me somewhere. It's pretty surreal. All a bit crazy now."

Piastri was careful not to express his disappointment at the time penalty verdict.



Norris celebrates his win. Photo: AFP

"I want to congratulate Nico," he said. "That's the best story of the day – but I don't want to say much else to avoid getting into trouble."

Lewis Hamilton took fourth for Ferrari ahead of Red Bull's four-time champion Max Verstappen.

In an epic event run in extreme and changeable weather conditions, Pierre Gasly was sixth for Alpine, ahead of Aston Martin's Lance Stroll, Williams' Alex Albon, two-time champion Fernando Alonso in the second Aston Martin and Mercedes' George Russell.

In F1's 75th anniversary year, it was the 1,173rd race since the inaugural world championship event at Silverstone on May 13, 1950, and with the field so closely-packed few races had been more keenly anticipated.

Russell and Leclerc gambled on switching to slick tyres before the start as Verstappen led the opening lap

from his 44th pole ahead of Piastri, Norris and Hamilton.

RB's Liam Lawson went off at Stowe on lap one, triggering a virtual safety car (VSC), and Franco Colapinto retired his Alpine after stalling in the pit-lane.

The race re-started on lap five with Piastri hounding Verstappen before a second VSC intervention when Gabriel Bortoleto abandoned his Sauber. It was stop-go stuff with everyone waiting for more rain.

After chasing him, Piastri passed Verstappen at Stowe on lap eight to lead. Verstappen then ran off at Becketts and Norris passed him before they all pitted as the rain resumed.

By lap 26, and mid-race, Piastri led Norris before the Australian pitted to serve his time penalty, leaving Norris to soak up a memorable win.

Team Hong Kong set for Rugby World Cup debut

RUGBY

HONG KONG BEAT South Korea 70-22 in Incheon last Saturday (July 5) to win the Asia Rugby Championship and qualify for the World Cup for the first time.

The Hong Kong men's side has got to the last stage of qualifying for the last two World Cups only to fall short but will now take their place at the expanded 24-team showpiece tournament in Australia in 2027.

"There has been an enormous commitment from the team over the last 12 months," head coach Andrew Douglas said.

"I'm particularly pleased with how the players stayed together as a group and how they held their nerve under pressure to come through a tough qualification decider away from home."

An emotional captain Joshua Hrstich added: "It's been overwhelming to be



Hong Kong's Joshua Hrstich against South Korea. Photo: AFP

honest, just super proud of our playing group, our management, our coaching staff, people behind the scenes, there is a lot that goes into making a team successful."

The United Arab Emirates beat Sri Lanka 29-21 in Colombo on Friday to finish second in the championship and will play off against an African nation in July for a spot at the final World Cup qualification tournament.

Hong Kong are only the second team from Asia to get to the World Cup after Japan, who have already qualified after finishing third in their pool at the 2023 tournament in France.

AFP

Sluggish Lions fail to fire in warm-ups



THE GLOBAL RUGBY COACH

THE BRITISH AND IRISH Lions may have won their opening three warm-up games on Australian soil but they have looked far from impressive in each one.

On July 2 they beat the Queensland Reds 52-12 and followed it up with a 21-10 victory against the NSW Waratahs last Saturday in Sydney.

However, similar to their first match against the Western Force, the Lions were without nine test stars in both games and, despite showing determination, they lacked quality in depth. The Waratahs looked like a beach team, perhaps no great surprise after a poor season in Super Rugby.

Regardless, Lions players performing poorly are contributing to coach Andy Farrell's selection issues. He will have discarded some already and may have selected 90% of the team. In each of the games to date, the forwards have looked sluggish in defence and slow to react and get into position. This sluggishness is contributing to the unforced error count, which is currently unacceptable.

The backs need Gibson-Parke and Russell at 9 and 10. The two Smiths, Marcus and Finn, are not



The Lions take on the Waratahs. Photo: AFP

world-class. Several weeks ago, I proposed that Scotland has the potential to contribute five players to the Lions' backline, something that is becoming increasingly likely. Kinghorn, Jones, Van de Merve, Russell and Tuipulotu may all well make Farrell's final 15.

Team units playing well are the answer to Farrell's problems. To date the units have been barely adequate against very weak franchises. Occasionally, the superstars in the team can lift the performance standard as examples, although only Russell and Gibson-Parke have star quality.

Joe Schmidt, the Wallabies' coach, knows all this, having coached the Irish side. He will have plans to limit Russell's attacking options and put pressure on Gibson-Parke at the breakdown.

Don't underestimate Australia. They have had a few lean years, but

playing attacking rugby is in their DNA. If they are to beat the Lions, the first test is the one to win.

The dilemma Farrell has is when to show his hand. The units and their combinations need to participate effectively in the upcoming two games and demonstrate strong performance. Injury is an ever-present risk, as is ensuring the bench provides quality cover.

Four months ago, the Lions were odds-on to win the series 3-0. The odds have shortened massively, so be careful how you spend your money.

The Global Rugby Coach, Mike Penistone, is a globally renowned professional rugby coach based in Phuket who is also an ambassador for the Asia Center Foundation, a charity for disadvantaged children. For more information visit: www.rugbycoachingconsultancy.com.

ONE shifts to Bangkok

MMA

Bangkok Post

ONE Championship has officially moved its global production operations to Bangkok – marking another shift in the martial arts promotion's centre of gravity, as it leans deeper into its weekly Lumpinee Stadium events and reports a sharp rise in revenue.

The company confirmed on June 30 that it has relocated its production hub from Singapore to the Thai capital, citing increased output, logistical efficiency, and the growing scale of its weekly ONE Friday Fights broadcasts.

"This move allows us to centralise production and improve coordination," ONE chairman and CEO Chatri Sityodtong said in a statement, adding that Thailand has "played a key role in our global production efforts over the past two and a half years."

The decision comes amid what Chatri called a "step forward" in the company's growth as a media property – revealing that ONE's overall revenue for 2025 is "approaching US\$200 million," up from \$148mn last year.

Bangkok's operational importance has risen steadily since the launch of ONE Friday Fights in January 2023, with the weekly shows now broadcast to 195 countries during primetime hours in Asia. A new traditional



Chatri Sityodtong says the move is a 'step forward' in the company's growth strategy. Photo: AFP

five-round Muay Thai series is also in the pipeline, set to debut later this year.

Singapore will remain the company's corporate headquarters, home to investor relations, strategic planning, and senior leadership, the statement added. The firm also remains domiciled in the Cayman Islands as "part of long-term capital planning and corporate structuring".

'STEP FORWARD'

"This is a step forward in our evolution as a global sports media property," Chatri said.

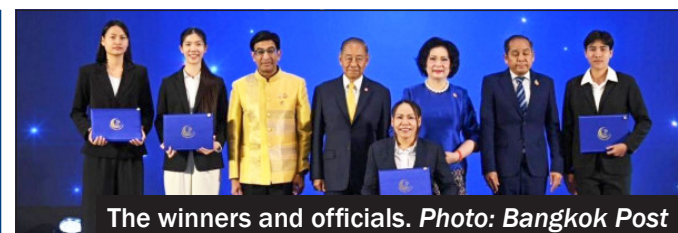
A recent Nielsen study claimed ONE contributes more than \$470mn in annual economic impact to Thailand – figures the promotion has leaned on to underscore its growing role in the local sports and tourism ecosystem.

ONE now runs more than 50 shows annually at Lumpinee Stadium alone, forming the backbone of its global content output. Its long-term strategy appears increasingly tied to Thailand – both in the ring and behind the scenes.

The company did not disclose whether the move would affect staffing levels in Singapore but reiterated its long-term commitment to the city-state.

"We remain committed to Singapore while re-allocating resources to where it makes the most operational sense," Chatri added.

ONE was reported by Bloomberg to have raised \$50mn in new funding from the Qatar Investment Authority and a group of investors last October, soon after making a "few dozen" job cuts including some at its Singapore headquarters in a bid for profitability, according to AFP.



The winners and officials. Photo: Bangkok Post

National sports icons receive morality awards

ALL SPORTS

TWO-TIME OLYMPIC champion Panipak Wongpattanakit and volleyball star Pleumjit Thinkaow were honoured during the 5th Thailand Moral Awards ceremony 2024 on July 2.

Panipak and Pleumjit, both of whom have retired from the national team in their respective sports, received special honorary awards for their determination and morality that officials stated has inspired youth and society.

They received the awards from Air Chief Marshal and Privy Councilor Chalit Pukbhasuk, who presided over the ceremony at the National Art Gallery in Bangkok.

Also attending the ceremony were Khunying Patama Leeswadtrakul, chairperson of the Center for Morality Promotion, and

Assoc Prof Dr Suriyadeo Tripathi, director of the Center for Morality Promotion.

Panipak won taekwondo gold medals at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games and the 2024 Paris Games and a bronze medal at the Rio 2016.

Pleumjit was a long-serving national volleyball player and a two-time Asian champion. She was also a multiple SEA Games gold medal winner and an Asian Games silver and bronze medal winner.

Meanwhile wheelchair fencer Saysunee Jana and boxer Janjaem Suwanapeng were named Moral Ambassadors. The two athletes were recognised for their endurance, determination and dedication.

Saysunee won three gold medals at the 2024 Paralympic Games while Janjaem won a bronze medal at the Paris 2024 Games. Bangkok Post

Football world mourns tragic Jota

FOOTBALL

LIVERPOOL AND PORTUGAL forward Diogo Jota and his brother were laid to rest last Saturday (July 5) in their hometown, just days after the pair died in a car crash that shocked the football world.

Jota, 28, and Andre Silva, 25, were killed on July 3 after their vehicle veered off a motorway in northwestern Spain and became engulfed in flames, a week after the Portugal forward had got married.

Just hours before the accident, Jota had posted a video of his June 22 wedding to partner Rute Cardoso, with whom he shared three children.

Football stars joined family and friends at the funeral in his hometown of Gondomar, near Porto and conducted by the bishop of Porto.

A number of teammates from the national side, including Bernardo Silva, Bruno Fernandes, Danilo Pereira and Joao Felix, as well as coach Roberto Martinez attended, while Liverpool captain Virgil van Dijk bore a garlanded wreath of red flowers in the form of a Liverpool shirt bearing Jota's number 20.

Friday evening had seen Van Dijk and several players including Liverpool's Uruguay international Darwin Nunez and Liverpool coach Arne Slot meet with Jota's family and attend a wake for the deceased brothers.



Club World Cup tribute. Photo: AFP

The death of the Portugal international and his brother triggered an outpouring of emotion in football, and beyond.

One minute's silence to pay respect was held at Club World Cup matches in the US, similarly at women's Euro 25 matches, while Wimbledon relaxed its strict all-white dress code to allow Portugal's Francisco Cabral to wear a black ribbon during his match on Friday.

British rock band Oasis, making a return to touring after 16 years, played their song "Live Forever" in tribute to Jota at a concert in Cardiff on Friday.

After joining from Wolverhampton Wanderers, Jota played 182 games and scored 65 goals over five seasons for Liverpool, helping them to the Premier League title in 2024-25, one FA Cup and two EFL Cups.

He also made 49 appearances for Portugal, twice winning the UEFA Nations League. AFP

WANT TO TALK TO PHUKET?

The Phuket News Your Island - Your Paper

Новости Пхукета ข่าวภูเก็ต

Where to eat in PHUKET

WINDOW ON PHUKET

LIVE 89.5

Phuket NEWS TV

The map of PHUKET English 中文 Русский

Contact: gm@classactmedia.co.th

Sport

editor3@classactmedia.co.th



Football world mourns Jota tragedy > p15



The team pose after the Phuket Jiu-Jitsu Provincial Championships on June 29. Photo: Alexis Plantard

JIU-JITSU

Ben Tirebuck
editor3@classactmedia.co.th

The Dojo Phuket team shone on home soil at the recent Phuket Jiu-Jitsu Provincial Championships to register an impressive 27-medal haul.

The event was held on the weekend of June 28 and 29 at the Saphan Hin Stadium in Phuket Town, with over 100 athletes ranging in age from six to 18 years old participating.

The Dojo Phuket team comprised of 12 athletes overall who managed to win 10 gold medals, nine silver and eight bronze, the perfect preparation for their next major tournaments in the United States later this month, stated lead instructor Alexis Plantard.

Young student Mikhail was especially impressive at the

Saphan Hin event, winning three gold medals in a single day and affirming the progress he has made in the last few months, according to his coach.

His team-mate Timur was equally impressive, displaying high levels of confidence and sound technique to also claim three golds, while Aleksander confirmed his status as one of the team's leading figures who never gives up by claiming two golds.

The occasion will forever be a memorable one for young Andrei who managed to win his first gold medal at competition level, as well as securing a silver and a bronze medal. "It was a beautiful day for him and one he will remember for a long time," Alexis told *The Phuket News*.

"Andrei is the perfect example that continued dedication in training leads to progress and, ultimately, results in medals. He won his first medals at

competitions in Singapore and Malaysia earlier this year but the first gold is always an extra special one," he added.

Team captain David continued to lead by example, winning three bronze medals, as he continues his impressive development. "David is on course for his black belt, which I am confident he will secure next year," commented Alexis. "He always leads by example to inspire those around him and he is ready for the upcoming events in the USA."

Mayel and Meera both bagged silver medal trebles, with the former receiving special praise from his coach for his versatility and commitment. "This year so far has been an incredible one for Mayel, with medals in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and not only in jiu-jitsu but different disciplines such as judo and wrestling. The sky is the limit for him, I believe," said Alexis.

He was also quick to afford accolades to 8-year-old Meera who continues to develop and impress him. "She is, without doubt the most powerful athlete in her age group I have ever seen," he explained. "She is not only incredibly strong but possesses a natural fighter's instinct and is able to attack in a variety of different directions to overcome her opponent. She is a beast!"

Alexis also showered praise on Danil, who won a silver and two bronze and recently qualified for his blue belt status, Ashia, who won silver at Saphan Hin, and Johnathan, who left the event with a bronze medal hat-trick.

"What pleases me the most is as a team we are able to demonstrate our versatility in being able to not only compete and win medals at national and international level in jiu-jitsu, judo and wrestling," Alexis said proudly. "It is a pleasure to work

with such a willing and dynamic group of students who are so keen to listen, learn and improve."

Prior to the Phuket event, Alexis competed at the 2025 Japan Veterans International Judo Championship in Kagoshima on the weekend of June 14-15.

Battling it out against 15 other competitors in his weight class of 90-kilograms, Alexis finished in third place with a bronze medal.

"It was the hardest event I have competed in so far this year but the most rewarding against such tough opposition," he said.

"As I always relay to my students, every contest is a learning curve, whether it ends in victory or defeat."

Next up for the team is the USA Jiu-Jitsu International Open in Hawaii on the weekend of July 19-20 before the US Judo International Open in Fort Lauderdale, Florida on the weekend of July 25-27.

Phuket charity fitness event aims to aid medical research

RUNNING / CYCLING

OFFICIALS HAVE CONFIRMED a multi-sports charity event to take place later this year with which aims to raise funds to help fight the threat of heart disease, strokes and paralysis.

The "No Stop No Stroke" event will take place at Bang Wad Dam in Kathu on Sunday, Nov 2 and feature a 5-kilometre course that participants can choose to walk, run or cycle.

The event is part of the National Sang Nam Jai Thai Project in honour of His Majesty

the King and Her Majesty the Queen and will raise funds towards medical research into mitigating and managing heart failure, strokes and paralysis.

Organisers confirmed that 30% of funds raised will be donated to the Somdej Phra Yupparaj Hospital Foundation to support the Mobile Paralysis Care Unit Project.

The event is being organised by Phuket authorities in cooperation with Siriraj Stroke Center, part of the Faculty of Medicine at Siriraj Hospital Mahidol University as part of the 11th Sang Nam Jai Thai Nation Project.

In addition to raising much-needed funds for medical research the event also aims to raise awareness of the threat of stroke and paralysis while encouraging more exercise and healthy living among Thais.

The event will run from 6am to 9am on Sunday, Nov 2 at Bang Wad Dam with an entrance fee of B360 per person, which is tax deductible, and a reduced rate of B240 for participants between the ages of 7-18 years old.

Applications are open now until Aug 31 and can be made at: <https://wrb11.thai.run/event/>

PKT. Alternatively, applications can be made in person at the Non-Communicable Disease Control Group Mental Health and Drug Abuse office at the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office during official opening hours.

Previous editions of the event proved extremely popular with several thousand people participating so organisers have urged those interested to confirm their involvement sooner rather than later to avoid disappointment, without stating a maximum limit on the number of entrants.

Commemorative shirts will

ขอเชิญทุกท่าน
เดิน ร้อง ปั่น กับ อัมพาต
ยังยับยั้ง ยังห่างไกลโรค
เพื่อสุขภาพที่ยั่งยืน
No Stop No Stroke

นาย โสภณ สุวรรณรัตน์
ผู้อำนวยการจังหวัดภูเก็ต

ออกกำลังกายพร้อมกัน ณ สวนสาธารณะพางคิน
ในวันอาทิตย์ที่ 2 พฤศจิกายน 2568
ค่าสมัคร* 360 บาท
เยาวชนอายุ 7 - 18 ปี ค่าสมัคร 240 บาท

สมัครที่
wrb
(แจ้งเตรียม
บัตรประชาชน
มาด้วย)

Photo: Sports Association of Phuket

be provided as part of the registration package and medals will be distributed to all participants who finish the course.

For further information call: 076-212-297 ext. 1300.

The Phuket News