

## PHUKET HOSTS MEETING ON SOUTHERN BORDER CONTROL > PAGE 2

# PUFFED OUT

## CANNABIS SHOPS START CLOSING AS OFFICIALS WEED OUT ILLEGAL OPERATORS

Photo: Natnaree Likidwatanasakun

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The Phuket Provincial Health Office (PPHO) has defended its efforts in cracking down on illegal cannabis shops in Phuket, but says a lack of staff is holding back efforts to check the 1,500-plus shops still open on the island.

“Our team, the Thai Traditional and Alternative Medicine Group, conducts inspections almost every day. If we find any offenders, and most of the violations we find are related, their licenses will be suspended. We do this all the time,” Somsuk Samphanprathip, one of the PPHO’s two ‘Deputy Directors’, told *The Phuket News*.

“Currently, the Thai Traditional and Alternative Medicine Group approves licenses under the authority granted by the central government. There are currently approximately 1,500 cannabis shops registered under the Public Health Act,” Mr Somsuk said.

“On-site inspections are ongoing. We can confirm that we’ve been doing this consistently... We have already inspected 313 shops,” he added.

Mr Somsuk confirmed that the inspections found 96 cannabis shops were found not complying with the new regulations handed down in June, namely failing to comply with the PorTor 27 and PorTor 28 reporting of cannabis sales and sources, or running foul

of the rules regarding advertising or providing smoking facilities.

As a result, the 96 operators had their licences suspended, Mr Somsuk said.

However, more severe consequences have been short in coming. Only three operators had their licences revoked, and only eight operators had been prosecuted for breach of cannabis laws, Mr Somsuk confirmed.

Mr Somsuk again defended efforts by his officers. “Regarding license suspensions, reports have been sent to the local police stations, stating that the business must temporarily close until the suspension period of 10 or 30 days, allowing them to prepare and take appropriate action,” he said.

“Fines will be imposed only on some businesses. In some cases, fines are not imposed, but rather license suspensions,” he added.

Mr Somsuk noted that efforts to continue the checks remain hampered by a lack of personnel.

“We intend to continue monitoring as much as we can, but we do not have enough officers,” he said.

“We are currently requesting the Ministry of Public Health to increase the team size, not just within a department, but also at the district level,” he added.

### NEW RULES

Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat on July 9 announced the new regulations for cannabis...

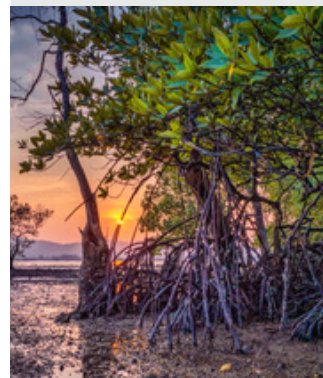
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# News



**Footpaths in Patong get revamp > p5**



Photo: Ratsada Municipality

## Koh Siray temple landslide declared disaster risk area

**AUTHORITIES HAVE DECLARED** a landslide near Wat Koh Siray in Ratsada a disaster risk area after heavy rains triggered a landslide that damaged a pavilion housing a Buddha image.

Phuket Governor Sophon Suwanarat, together with Ratsada Mayor Jirayut Songyot and Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM Phuket) Chief Wichit Sutthaso, inspected the site on Sept 1, alongside municipal council members, village headmen, engineers and other officials.

The landslide occurred near the replica of Phra That In Khuen, where continuous rainfall caused severe soil erosion and collapse. Part of the temple pavilion was left damaged, prompting officials to immediately close off the site to the public and tourists due to safety concerns.

Ratsada Municipality has declared the location a disaster risk zone and erected barriers to prevent access while assessments continue.

Governor Sophon convened a meeting on Sept 1 with DDPM Phuket, the Provincial Public Works and Town & Country Planning Office, Ratsada Municipality, the National Office of Buddhism Phuket branch, and the Mineral Resources Office.

The agencies discussed urgent safety measures and long-term management of the affected area. So far, no immediate measures have been announced.

*The Phuket News*

## Hazy cannabis crackdown

*Continued from page 1*

...businesses following the Ministry of Public Health's recent designation of cannabis as a controlled herb. The move, effective since June 26 after publication in the Royal Gazette, allows cannabis use mainly for medical purposes under strict conditions.

Somsuk Sampanprateep, Deputy Director of the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office, explained that shops may sell cannabis only to patients with prescriptions issued by qualified professionals, including doctors, pharmacists, Thai traditional medicine doctors, and registered folk doctors. Prescriptions must be kept on file for at least one year.

Retailers must source products exclusively from farms certified under Good Agricultural and Collection Practices (GACP) by the Department of Thai Traditional and Alternative Medicine. At present, only four farms in Phuket are certified.

### Key rules include:

- \* Smoking cannabis on premises is banned.
- \* Advertising is prohibited in all forms.
- \* Shops must submit monthly reports detailing product sources (Form PorTor 27) and usage (Form PorTor 28).

Violations can lead to suspension or revocation of licences, with offenders barred from operating under the Protection and Promotion of Traditional Thai Medicine Wisdom Act for two years. Selling without a licence carries penalties of up to one year in prison, fines of up to B20,000, or both.

Mr Somsuk said the provincial health office will



Photo: PPHO

initially focus on report reviews and compliance education, before moving to inspections and legal action, while Governor Sophon urged businesses to follow the rules to protect public safety and support Phuket's ambition to lead in sustainable health tourism.

### IMPACT

A major concern has been the lack of public knowledge of the inspections. Asked whether he had noticed any effect on the number of cannabis shops in tourist-heavy Patong, Weerawit Kruesombat, President of Patong Municipality Council, said plainly, "I don't know, but I see they're still open everywhere."

Asked whether he had witnessed any inspections in Patong, he laughed, "I haven't seen them."

The PPHO and its Thai Traditional and Alternative Medicine Group have together reported only two series of inspections since the July 9 handing down of the regulations in Phuket.

In all of August, the group reported only inspecting a handful of shops on Bangla Rd. No other shops were reported as inspected, and there were no reports of any transgressions.

The group reported on July 29 the arrest of a licensee for distributing or processing controlled herbs for commercial purposes, after violating a suspension order.

The arrest involved charges under Section 46 of the Act, which carries a penalty under Section 98 of up to one year imprisonment, a fine of up to B20,000, or both. The licensee's license was revoked and he will be unable to apply for any licenses under the Act for two years, the PPHO group reported.

Regardless, the number of cannabis shops operating in Phuket – legally or illegally – is actually falling.

In June, Poonwarit Wangpatravanich, President of the Phuket Cannabis Association, estimated that Phuket was home to more than 2,000 cannabis shops on the island, while Mr Somsuk last week confirmed that there were "about 1,500" cannabis operators legally registered under the Public Health Act.

Yet, according to online cannabis retailer website 'Weed in Thailand' there are 'only' 1,004 cannabis shops currently trading on the island

### STIGMA REMAINS

Despite the warnings from

officials, the new rules – and their enforcement – are still deemed to be ineffective in "correcting the market" fast enough to help prevent any impact on tourism.

Early last month during a visit to Patong the then-Minister of Tourism and Sports Sorawong Thienthong heard from key officials and tourism business operators that marijuana use in public areas remained a vital issue.

During the minister's visit, Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee submitted a formal letter urging the government to address growing concerns over the spread of cannabis shops across the province, citing their potential impact on Phuket's image as a quality tourist destination.

MP Chalermpong warned of a lack of clear legal frameworks governing cannabis use, especially in tourist areas, which has led to confusion about consumption, odour control and age restrictions.

He noted that while some tourists may be attracted to cannabis tourism, many visitors from countries such as China, Singapore and Japan still view cannabis as illegal, leading to discomfort and safety concerns.

This had negatively affected the image of Phuket as a family-friendly destination and could deter high-spending segments such as families, the elderly and group travellers, MP Chalermpong said.

MP Chalermpong also raised concerns over the mental health impact on children and youth exposed to cannabis use, as well as the burden on public health systems dealing with cannabis-related psychiatric issues.

## Thailand, Malaysia reaffirm border cooperation at Phuket meeting

THAILAND AND MALAYSIA have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation on border security and regional stability at the 117<sup>th</sup> Thai-Malaysian Regional Border Committee (RBC) meeting, held at the Angsana Laguna Phuket Hotel in Cherng Talay on Sept 3.

The meeting was co-chaired by Maj Gen Apinan Chaemchaeng, Commander of the 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and representative of the 4<sup>th</sup> Army Area Commander, and Maj Gen Dato' Hj

Fazal bin Hj Abdul Rahman, Commander of Malaysia's 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division and representative of the Western Army Field Forces Commander.

High-level representatives from both sides attended, including officials from the military, police, customs, immigration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the administrative sector of Thailand's southern border provinces. Their Malaysian counterparts included officers from the Border Defence Force,



Photo: Royal Thai Army

police, immigration, customs and other related security agencies.

The agenda focused on strengthening joint operations and intelligence sharing, with particu-

lar attention on transnational crimes such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, illegal immigration and the smuggling of goods.

The Royal Thai Army reported that discussions were conducted in a spirit of trust and understanding, reflecting the long-standing friendship between the two countries. Both sides stressed the importance of ongoing communication and coordination at all levels – government, military, and border officials – as well as the

role of the RBC mechanism in promoting not only security but also cultural exchange and good relations among border communities.

Thailand and Malaysia agreed that the next RBC meeting, the 118<sup>th</sup>, will take place in Malaysia in the first half of 2026. Officials expressed confidence that the forum will continue to serve as a foundation for building sustainable peace, stability, and prosperity across the border region. *The Phuket News*



# Chinese builder in hot water

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Concerns over the long-delayed construction of the Provincial Electricity Authority (PEA) office in Ratsada have deepened, with Phuket MP Somchart Techathavorncharoen now pressing the agency to resolve the future of the project after years of delays, cost overruns and mounting safety fears.

The main contractor for the project is China Railway Number 10 (Thailand) Co Ltd – the same company at the centre of the collapse of the under-construction State Audit Office in Bangkok in March. The disaster claimed at least 92 lives.

MP Somchart noted that, following his inspection of the unfinished PEA building in Sapam and subsequent discussions with the PEA's Public Works Division in Bangkok, it was confirmed the contractor had already been fined B210,000 per day for failing to complete the project on time.

The penalties have been accumulating for months, he said, yet little visible

progress has been made at the site.

"This is a case where the project was left unfinished and awaiting completion so that everyone can use it," MP Somchart wrote.

"However, the current weather conditions have caused it to deteriorate and remain unfinished. You can see piles of materials, but no one has continued to work on it. No workers, no one has continued. However, from what I can see, the building structure has progressed quite well."

The PEA is reportedly weighing whether to terminate the current contract and appoint a new contractor, or attempt to push the existing one to finish the job. MP Somchart urged the authority to make its decision clear and ensure transparency for the public.

He also criticised the lack of a project information signboard at the site. "What the PEA should do is post a sign stating who is responsible for the project and which agency it falls under, the budget, when it was completed, and when the building permit was



Photo: Somchart Techathavorncharoen

obtained," he said. "There is none attached."

## TROUBLED HISTORY

The B210-million PEA customer service centre project began on Feb 18, 2021, under Contract No. Jor Por 10/2564, awarded to the AKC joint venture between Akkhara Development Co Ltd. and China Railway Number 10 (Thailand) Co Ltd. The original 450-day contract expired on May 13, 2022, but work remains incomplete more than three years later.

The delays have left a half-finished building exposed to the elements, raising questions over whether deterioration has already compromised the structure. Local residents have also voiced frustration

at seeing the site idle for months while the need for improved public services grows.

The involvement of China Railway Number 10 (Thailand) — a local unit of the Chinese state-owned China Railway Group — has been a particular source of unease. The company is the same contractor linked to the collapse of the State Audit Office building in Bangkok on Mar 28, following an earthquake in Myanmar. That incident, which exposed the use of low-quality steel and other irregularities, has intensified scrutiny of all government projects involving the company.

## PREVIOUS WARNINGS

Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee was among the

first to raise the alarm earlier this year, visiting the PEA site in Ratsada and publicly questioning the quality of materials and construction practices. He noted cracks already visible in the concrete and pointed to reports that workers quickly erected black cloth barriers to prevent reporters from photographing the damage.

MP Chalermpong has also highlighted a series of red flags surrounding the contractor, including allegations of using foreign nominees, failing to comply with Thai construction laws, and engaging in questionable subcontracting practices.

Labour rights violations have further clouded the project's reputation. In 2022, at least 16 Myanmar migrant workers successfully sued for unpaid wages linked to the same contractor, with the court ordering compensation. Other lawsuits involving non-payment and wage theft remain ongoing.

## CALLS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

For both MPs, the issue is

not only about one building but also about wider questions of governance, accountability and public safety.

MP Chalermpong has repeatedly warned that Phuket, as a fast-developing tourism destination, must not allow substandard construction practices to take root. With large government projects in the pipeline, he stressed, rigorous oversight is essential.

MP Somchart's latest intervention underscores the urgency of the problem. With daily fines mounting and the building still incomplete, he urged the PEA to show leadership by either enforcing the contract or seeking a new partner capable of finishing the project to standard.

"The public has a right to know what is happening with this project and whether their tax money is being used effectively," he said. "If the contractor cannot deliver, then the PEA must act to protect both public funds and public safety."

## Officer killed in drug shootout

A NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION officer was shot dead during a drug raid at a hotel room in Wichit on Monday afternoon (Sept 8), with police returning fire and killing one suspect.

The incident occurred at about 3:06pm in a room at the Andaman Apartment complex in Moo 4, opposite the bus terminal on Chao Fa East Rd, police reconfirmed.

Phuket Provincial Police confirmed that Pol Lt Prajak Thahanthai, Deputy Inspector with the Narcotics Suppression Unit, was critically injured in the gunfight while leading a sting operation to arrest suspected drug dealers.

He was rushed to Vachira Phuket Hospital, where he was later pronounced dead.

According to initial reports, police moved to search the suspects' hotel room as part of an expanded investigation into a drug network. During the operation, one of the suspects attempted to flee into the bathroom and opened fire on officers, fatally striking Lt Prajak.

Officers immediately



Photo: PR Phuket

returned fire, killing the gunman, police confirmed.

Police initially reported that two people were injured, but later confirmed that only Lt Prajak had been struck, along with the suspect who was shot dead at the scene.

Wichit Police Chief Pol Col Somsak Thongkliang, together with 20 patrol officers, secured the scene while investigators began gathering evidence.

Present at the location on Monday were Phuket Provincial Police Commander Pol Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum and senior investigators including Pol

Lt Col Narong Muangduang, who is leading the case.

Pol Maj Gen Sinlert has ordered a full review of the operation and procedures, while extending condolences to Lt Prajak's family. His body will be taken to his home province of Trang for funeral rites.

At time of press police had yet to publicly confirm further details on the suspect or the identities of the other individuals present in the room, or whether additional arrests were expected in connection with the case.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Airport stages bomb drill

PHUKET INTERNATIONAL Airport conducted a full-scale emergency response exercise last Friday (Sept 5) to test its readiness in handling security threats and strengthen public confidence in passenger safety.

The drill, held at the airport's VIP car park, simulated the detection of suspicious or prohibited objects under the Airport Emergency Plan (AEP) and Airport Contingency Plan (ACP) for fiscal 2025.

Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat presided over the opening ceremony, joined by Phuket Airport General Manager Monchai Tanode, Phuket Provincial Police Commander Pol Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum, Thalang District Chief Siwat Rawangkul and Phetthai Chantima, Assistant Managing Director for Airport and Aviation Standards. Executives, staff, airlines, security agencies, and local rescue teams also took part.



Photo: AoT Phuket

The exercise was designed to improve coordination between agencies and ensure each unit fully understood its role and responsibilities, explained an official report of the exercise issued by Airports of Thailand Phuket branch (AoT Phuket). It followed Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) Regulation No. 37 on airport standards and the National Civil Aviation Safety Plan, the report added.

Airport GM Mr Monchai said the exercise was a joint effort with Phuket security agencies including Provincial Police Region 8.

"The drill was carried out successfully and achieved its objectives,

confirming Phuket Airport's readiness to efficiently ensure the safety of passengers and airport users," he said.

Not mentioned in the report, but evidenced by photos, was the role of the EOD squad in rehearsing the removal of an explosive device.

The EOD, often just called the 'bomb squad', was called into real action only three months ago, when an explosive device was detonated in a controlled explosion in the airport carpark.

Of note, any photos of the exercise deemed sensitive were clearly branded to ensure they were not used to present fake news online.

The Phuket News



The Phuket News

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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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FRI SEPTEMBER 12



High: +36°  
Low: +29°

Wind 11 m/s

SAT SEPTEMBER 13



High: +36°  
Low: +28°

Wind 11 m/s

SUN SEPTEMBER 14



High: +35°  
Low: +28°

Wind 11 m/s

MON SEPTEMBER 15



High: +35°  
Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

TUE SEPTEMBER 16



High: +35°  
Low: +28°

Wind 4 m/s

WED SEPTEMBER 17



High: +37°  
Low: +28°

Wind 4 m/s

THU SEPTEMBER 18



High: +36°  
Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s



Image: Wichit Police

## Man torches ex-wife's car

WICHIT POLICE HAVE arrested a 49-year-old man for setting fire to his ex-wife's car outside her home in the early hours of Sept 1.

The suspect, named by police only as Mr Yut, was taken into custody the next day (Sept 2) under a warrant issued by the Phuket Provincial Court for arson.

Police said Yut confessed to dousing the red Mazda 2 sedan with petrol and setting it alight outside the victim's home in Moo 6, Wichit, just before 1am on Monday. The vehicle, registered in Phuket, was badly damaged in the blaze.

The arrest was led by Wichit Police Chief Pol Col Somsak Thongkhang, with support from Pol Lt Col Thirawat Amnatcharoeying, Deputy Superintendent of Investigation, and Pol Lt Col Wittaya Kunnoi, Investigation Inspector.

Investigators reviewed CCTV footage which captured the entire incident. The video shows a man wearing shorts, a helmet and

a clear plastic raincoat arriving on a motorbike, pouring petrol on the car and setting it alight before fleeing.

The victim, who has been separated from Yut for more than two months, told police she believed the arsonist looked like her former husband.

With this evidence, officers quickly secured a warrant and arrested Yut at his residence. Police also seized the motorbike believed to have been used in the crime.

Yut later confessed, telling officers he had acted in a moment of anger and regretted his actions, police reported.

"This was a serious crime carried out with no regard for the law," said Pol Col Somsak. "Thanks to CCTV footage and swift investigation, we were able to identify and arrest the suspect within 24 hours."

The suspect remains in custody facing arson charges, he confirmed.

Eakkapop Thongtub

# Avocado sting nets 48,000 meth pills

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A man from Koh Yao has been arrested in Phuket after police intercepted a parcel containing more than 48,000 methamphetamine pills (ya bah) hidden among avocados.

Phuket City Police, working with the Provincial Police investigation team, arrested 25-year-old Yutthana Chanakan in Ratsada last Saturday night (Sept 6) after tracking a suspicious package to a delivery drop point in Soi Bang Chi Liao 2 in Ratsada.

The parcel, left near a coin-operated laundry, was monitored by undercover officers until Yutthana arrived to collect it at about 8pm. Inside, police found 23 foil-wrapped bundles of ya bah pills hidden among the avocados, totalling around 46,000 pills.

A subsequent search of Yutthana's rented room uncovered another 2,361 pills, a blue Honda PCX motorbike and a gold necklace.

The operation was led by Phuket City Police



Photo: Phuket City Police

Superintendent Pol Col Chatree Chukaew, under the supervision of Phuket Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum, who later questioned the suspect in person.

During interrogation, Yutthana reportedly admitted to acting as a courier and stash keeper for a drug network, saying he was paid B1,500 for each delivery and had already completed several runs before his arrest.

He now faces charges of possession of a Category 1 narcotic with intent to sell, distribution of narcotics and illegal drug use.

In a separate case, Kathu District officials arrested a 39-year-old man in Patong during a pre-dawn raid on

Sept 2. Officers found him in possession of 15 ya bah pills and drug paraphernalia at an unregistered building on Phisit Korani Rd. He was charged and handed over to Patong Police.

The arrests come as part of the nationwide 'No Drugs, No Dealers' campaign, which entered its second phase last month. Authorities have vowed to intensify investigations against networks supplying drugs across Phuket and beyond.

The latest previous major arrests came early last month when two suspected drug traffickers were arrested and 10,000 ya bah pills seized in a major operation in Baan Ket Ho, in Kathu.

## Worker crushed by concrete elevator

A MYANMAR CONSTRUCTION worker was killed last week after being struck on the head in a concrete elevator accident at a work site near the main SuperCheap branch north of Phuket Town.

Phuket City Police confirmed the deceased as 53-year-old Mr Ko Thet Win, a Myanmar national. He was rushed to Mission Hospital by co-workers but was pronounced dead shortly after arrival on Sept 2.

Pol Lt Col Natthanon Srilert, Deputy Inspector (Investigation) at Phuket City Police Station, said officers were notified of the fatality at about 11:30am.

"Initial reports indicate that the worker was hit on the head by a concrete elevator while on duty at the construction site. He sustained serious head injuries and did not survive," Lt Col Natthanon said.



Photo: Phuket City Police

Investigators have coordinated with doctors to conduct a post-mortem examination and will continue their examination of the accident scene.

Phuket City Police Chief Pol Col Chatri Chukaew has been notified of the case.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Motorbike rider killed in head-on

A 53-YEAR-OLD MAN WAS killed when his motorcycle collided with a pickup truck on the Pa Khlok-Baan Para Road in Thalang last Sunday morning (Sept 7).

Police were notified of the accident at about 7:30am and arrived at the scene in front of the Paraphan shop in Pa Khlok.

Officers found a Honda Wave motorcycle with Phuket plates damaged on the road, alongside the body of the rider, later identified as Ekkapan Phetchana, 53, a local resident of Pa Khlok. Nearby was a Mazda pickup truck, also with Phuket plates, driven by 49-year-old Wirot Suebsot, also of Pa Khlok.

Mr Wirot told police he had been driving from Baan Bang Rong to a hotel in Tambon Thepkasattri when the motorcycle approached at high speed, reportedly travelling against traffic. He said he was unable to avoid the collision.



Photo: Kusoldharm Phuket Foundation

Medical staff from Thalang Hospital confirmed Mr Ekphan had died at the scene from injuries including broken limbs. His body was taken to the hospital for autopsy.

Police took Mr Wirot to Thalang Police Station for questioning and conducted an alcohol test, which returned negative. Both vehicles have been impounded as evidence while forensic officers examine the collision.

At last report investigators were continuing their inquiries to determine the cause of the accident.

Eakkapop Thongtub



# Patong Tunnel new financing approved

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The Cabinet has approved changes to the investment model for the long-delayed Phuket Expressway Project, giving the green light for the Expressway Authority of Thailand (EXAT) to directly undertake construction of the Kathu-Patong section, better known as the Patong Tunnel, at a cost of nearly B11 billion.

The decision, made on Aug 26, allows EXAT to proceed with a Design & Build approach for the 3.98km 'Phase 1' route (the Patong Tunnel), shifting away from the private-sector investment plan approved by Cabinet in January 2022.

That plan failed after no private sector entities entered a bid for the project under the terms and conditions offered.

Under the revised model now announced, EXAT will raise funds by borrowing or



Image: EXAT

issuing bonds, with support from the Ministry of Finance to secure appropriate financing. The total budget for the Patong Tunnel project alone is set at B10.96 billion, covering construction and supervision costs.

The project has also been granted approval for highway zoning subsidies in line with the 2021 Highway Zone Usage Act, with a highway usage fee of B7.75 million per year, EXAT said in its announcement.

The Patong Tunnel project will link Phra Metta Rd in Patong to Route 4029 in Kathu via an elevated road and a tunnel through Khao Nakkerd hills.

The project includes a 900-metre stretch of elevated roadway, a 1.85km tunnel, and a further 1.23km of elevated road. The design provides four lanes in each direction, split between cars and motorcycles.

The most recent previous reports of the project noted that construction was to begin next month, with completion scheduled for October 2028.

However, the latest EXAT announcement said, "When completed in 2030, motorists will pay a flat toll, starting at B15 for motorcycles, B40 for cars, B85 for 6-10-wheel vehicles, and B125 for vehicles with

more than 10 wheels. Toll rates are set to rise every five years."

EXAT did not clarify when actual construction will now begin, despite providing a new completion date two years later than previously announced.

EXAT said the expressway will dramatically reduce travel times between Kathu and Patong, ease congestion and improve safety on Highway 4029, and support Phuket's growing tourism and logistics needs.

"The project will enhance Phuket's transportation infrastructure, improve quality of life for residents and visitors, and build confidence in the province's readiness for future growth," EXAT said in its statement.

As of last month, land expropriation, costing about B5.75bn in total, had been completed and Patong Municipality began clearing the designated sites for construction to begin.

## Push for tuk-tuks to go electric

PHUKET HAS BEEN chosen as the pilot province for a national project to convert small passenger vehicles, including the island's iconic tuk-tuks, from internal combustion engines to electric vehicles (EVs), in a move aimed at cutting pollution and easing fuel costs for operators.

Akaradej Wongpitakroj, Member of Parliament for Ratchaburi and Chairman of the House Industrial Committee, confirmed during his recent visit to the island that Phuket would lead the initiative, with lessons learned here to be applied in other major provinces such as Chiang Mai and Khon Kaen.

The selection of Phuket was based on the island's strong tourism growth, chronic traffic congestion and the rising costs facing operators of the 'Phuket Small Four-Wheeled Cooperative', which manages around 2,000 tuk-tuks and minibuses.

"Converting small passenger vehicles to EVs will help reduce air pollution in Phuket and lower energy expenses for operators," Mr Akaradej said.



Photo: United Thai Nation Party

During the visit, the first prototype electric tuk-tuk was formally handed over to the cooperative. Officials from the Department of Land Transport, Ministry of Industry, the Ratchaburi Provincial Administrative Organisation, and the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Bank of Thailand also attended to show support for the project.

Mr Akaradej explained that the scheme was initiated by a working group under the Industrial Committee. If successful, the conversion programme will be expanded nationwide to other tourism and regional hubs including Udon Thani and Songkhla.

"This is a model for how Thailand can modernise its public transport sector while helping small operators survive high energy costs," he said. *The Phuket News*

## Patong roads, footpaths face upgrade

PATONG MAYOR LALITA MANEESRI is stepping up efforts to improve local infrastructure, leading field visits this week to monitor upgrades to key roads in the popular tourist town.

Mayor Lalita, joined by municipal executives and council members, visited the road to Freedom Beach with Supachat Kitdamnoen, Vice President of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organization (PPAO) Council on Sept 3.

The delegation inspected works being carried out by staff from the PPAO Engineering Office and Patong Municipality Engineering Office, who were using heavy machinery to resurface damaged sections of the road.

The works are intended to repair long-standing surface damage, enhance safety and provide more convenient travel for residents and visitors alike.

Mayor Lalita said the initiative reflects the municipality's commitment to improving the quality of life for local people while supporting Patong's role as a leading tourism destination.

Machinery and gravel for the resurfacing were provided by the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO), with the mayor extending her gratitude for the support.

The latest inspection followed another field visit, when Mayor Lalita and officials from the Phuket Rural Highways District monitored progress on upgrades to Route 4055, linking the Route 4029 intersection to Phra Metta Road.



Photo: Patong Municipality

That project includes new lighting, improved footpaths, CCTV cameras and pedestrian crossings along Phra Metta Rd, from the Pearl Roundabout to the Wastewater Treatment Plant intersection. The works are scheduled for completion by Nov 30.

Mayor Lalita acknowledged that the project may cause some inconvenience to road users and residents, but emphasised that the improvements are vital for safety and urban development.

Improving roads and footpaths throughout Patong was a key issue for Ms Lalita in her campaign to be elected Patong Mayor in May.

"The first thing we want to push is infrastructure. We want to push for road infrastructure so that everyone can travel to Patong or in Patong conveniently and safely. Including sidewalks, walkways and various traffic lines that we want to push because we want Patong to have sidewalks and roads that are safe to walk on," Ms Lalita told *The Phuket News*.

*The Phuket News*



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## Phuket 'Hotel Job Fair' offers 2,000 positions

MORE THAN 2,000 JOBS in Phuket's hotel and service industries were made available last Friday (Sept 5) as the island hosted the 'Hotel Job Fair 2025' at The Pago Design Hotel north of Phuket Town.

The event was organised by the Phuket Provincial Employment Office in collaboration with JobBKK.com Co Ltd, with Phuket Vice Governor Suwit Pansengiam presiding over the opening ceremony. He was joined by Phuket Provincial Employment Officer Phichit Singthongkam, JobBKK Regional Marketing Communications Manager Phongsit Danprasertkul, along with representatives of government agencies, schools, and local businesses.

Over 100 employers and businesses offered positions at the fair, with applications open both in person and online. The fair welcomed all job seekers, including recent graduates, as well as the unemployed, ex-offenders, people with disabilities, the elderly and students seeking work during school breaks.



Photo: PR Phuket

Mr Suwit said the event reflected cooperation between the public and private sectors to boost employment and ease labour shortages in Phuket's fast-growing tourism sector.

"This event is a collaboration between the public and private sectors to increase job opportunities, promote employment, alleviate labor shortages, and facilitate job applicants in selecting positions that best suit their skills. This also builds confidence among employers," he added.

Mr Phichit noted that the fair aimed to connect labour needs with Phuket's tourism-driven businesses.

"This will not only increase job opportunities for the public, but also address labour shortages in Phuket's growing tourism and service industries," he said. *The Phuket News*

## Night market shut down

Natnaree Likidwatanasakun  
reporter1@classactmedia.co.th

After just two months, the B30 million 'Plern Pao Night Market' in Phuket Town has been shut down.

The news was publicly announced through a notice issued by market organiser, Plern Pao Co Ltd, on Sept 1.

The market, located near Surin Circle (the 'clocktower roundabout'), opened with much fanfare on July 5, with Phuket MP Thitikan Thitiphrutikul and Rewat Areerob, President of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO), along with local officials and community leaders present to commemorate the occasion.

The new night market, which was open daily from 4pm to 10pm except Sundays, was described at its launch as a collaborative effort between the PPAO and Phuket City Municipality.

The notice issued by Plern Pao Co Ltd expressed its gratitude to vendors, business operators and customers "for their support and for helping create a warm community atmosphere", while apologising for any inconvenience caused by the closure.

New projects are in development, with further details to be revealed in due course, Plern Pao Co Ltd said in its statement.

As part of the shutdown process, Business owners must bring original



Photo: Plern Pao / Facebook

rental documents to the market office before close of business last Friday (Sept 5) to process refunds.

Deposits will be transferred back by Oct 1. Requests submitted outside the deadline will not be eligible, Plern Pao Co Ltd stipulated.

Vendors were given until last Sunday (Sept 7) to remove their stalls and belongings. "The company will not be liable for any property lost during the process or left behind after the deadline," Plern Pao Co Ltd warned.

Document collection and demolition will be handled daily from 10am to 5pm during the relevant periods, the company explained.

Winyu Kamnakitthana, Executive Director of market organiser Plern Pao Co Ltd gave no clear explanation for the market shutdown.

"I would like to express my gratitude to the business owners and customers and apologise for any inconvenience caused," he told *The Phuket News*, adding that the reason

for the closure was "to allow the company to proceed with a new project".

He declined to provide further details. "If there is any further information, I will inform you," he said.

PPAO President Rewat Areerob, who is regularly involved in the opening of markets and festivals, declined to have any knowledge of or role in the shutdown.

"It was [run by] a private company... I was there just to open the event," he said.

The market was built with an investment of nearly B30 million, noted initial reports at its launch.

Covering more than 15 rai of land, it featured 256 stalls, restaurants, a live music zone, creative activity areas and parking facilities, and operated

The market was touted as a new nighttime landmark for Phuket, boosting tourism, providing jobs and serving as a cultural hub for locals and visitors alike.

## TAT to press on with free tickets

THOUGH THE 200,000 free domestic flight tickets scheme is still awaiting Cabinet approval, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has pledged to continue promoting the scheme even if the government changes.

The TAT plans to encourage tourists to book their trips without relying on this gimmick, as airfares for the high season continue to rise, said Governor Thapanee Kiatphaibool.

Bhumjaithai Party leader Anutin Charnvirakul was voted by the House of Representatives last Friday (Sept 5) to become the next Prime Minister. His rise to the position of Prime Minister came with the condition that he dissolve Parliament and hold new elections within four months.

The Tourism and Sports Ministry has been run by the Pheu Thai Party since 2023, succeeding the Bhumjaithai Party, which led the ministry from 2019 to 2023.



Photo: Bangkok Post

"The TAT already submitted the 'Buy International, Free Thailand and Domestic Flights' programme to the cabinet secretariat. We hope the programme will be approved to fulfil very strong demand from travellers. However, the agency cannot rush the process," said Ms Thapanee.

She said if the caretaker government cannot approve the programme and there's a change in the administration that requires the TAT to restart the process, it will not abandon this project.

The agency is ready to resubmit the project and remains confident the stimulus will benefit the tourism industry whenever it is implemented.

However, as the high season draws closer and domestic airfares continue

to surge due to higher demand from both foreign and local travellers, Ms Thapanee said people planning to visit Thailand should not wait for this programme to be implemented.

"Tourists who only plan to visit major cities are not eligible for this scheme, as the B700 million programme is dedicated for second-tier cities," she said.

As of Aug 31, the number of foreign tourist arrivals in Thailand tallied 21.8mn, down 7.16% year-on-year. Chinese and Malaysian markets had a combined share of 28%, with 3.09mn and 3.04mn tourists, respectively.

Ms Thapanee said short-haul markets are still swayed by an erosion of travel safety confidence.

Negative sentiment regarding Thai tourism in China has spread to other countries, such as Taiwan, Hong Kong and Vietnam, which recently attracted both Chinese tourists and investors.

*Bangkok Post*

## Political instability threatens tourism

POLITICAL INSTABILITY and persistent border issues continue to impact investor sentiment, making Thailand lose its competitiveness due to delayed infrastructure development and tourism stimulus, according to Phuket tourism operators.

Bill Barnett, managing director of C9 Hotelworks, a hospitality consultancy based in Phuket, said Thailand's political uncertainty has led to discontinuity in terms of national policies, including tourism stimulus and infrastructure development funding.

While investors continue to develop new properties, it's a concern that large-scale public infrastructure projects cannot catch up, as the plans have been hampered by government instability, he noted.

For Phuket, these include a slowdown of the new expressway, light rail transportation and the plan to upgrade Phuket airport.

Meanwhile, other significant developments may also need to be closely monitored, such as the high speed rail connecting three airports as a part of the



Photo: Bangkok Post

Eastern Economic Corridor, along with clarity regarding the entertainment complex bill, he said.

He said tourism operators are also worried that the giveaway of 200,000 domestic flights to foreign visitors would also be delayed from this month.

In comparison, Mr Barnett said Vietnam has more stable policies and plans to develop infrastructure projects, such as the high-speed railway connecting Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

The political vacuum in Thailand might also result in delays in trying to solve the border conflict and restore the diplomatic situation with Cambodia.

Foreigners viewed Thailand as a safe haven, but today the border dispute has affected their confidence and discouraged tourists from visiting or living in Thailand, he said.

"Three or four months ago we were optimistic about the end of the year, but now we are not," said Mr Barnett. "We are losing momentum. It's worrisome."

He said the number of foreign arrivals could reach 35.5 million, the same number recorded last year, or even below that level, which is mainly attributed to the sluggish Chinese market.

The situation regarding the low season this year is also relatively weak compared to the corresponding period last year.

Looking ahead to the high season in the fourth quarter, Mr Barnett said Phuket is expected to maintain its tourism market, though it would not be as robust as the corresponding period last year, as the number of tourist arrivals may drop by 5%, while the average daily room rate may plunge by more than 10% year-on-year.

He said some tourists are shifting to Vietnam as the average room rate at luxury hotels there is less than half the rate seen in Thailand.

*Bangkok Post*



# Anutin named as new PM

## BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

The House secretary-general announced a royal command appointing Bhumjaithai Party (BJT) leader Anutin Charnvirakul as Thailand's prime minister last Sunday (Sept 7).

The appointment of Anutin as the 32nd prime minister of Thailand took immediate effect, following the dismissal of former PM Paetongtarn Shinawatra by the Constitutional Court for ethics violations on Aug 29.

Anutin, who will also hold the position of Minister of Interior, ceremonially accepted the royal command and said it was a limitless blessing and honour for him and his family.

He promised to perform to the best of his ability in the role, with honesty and righteousness for the benefit of Thai people and the stability of Thailand.

Anutin's BJT withdrew from the coalition government of Ms Paetongtarn after her leaked phone conversation with Cambodian strongman Hun Sen, joining the opposition led by the People's Party which lent support to his bid for the premiership.

The People's Party threw its



Anutin after the royal endorsement ceremony at BJT headquarters in Bangkok on Sept 7. Photo: AFP

support to Anutin on the condition that he would dissolve the House in four months after announcing his policy platform in parliament and pave the way for a new charter, among several conditions. The People's Party did not join Anutin's coalition government.

### CONTROVERSIAL

Anutin promised he would dissolve the House in four months and have capable ministers for efficient work within the limited tenure.

"I will dissolve the House within four months as agreed. My Cabinet ministers and I will work without a holiday. There will be

no time for relaxation with families," Anutin said.

Among those proposed by Anutin for Cabinet positions are: Sethaput Suthiwartnarueput, the former Governor of the Bank of Thailand, for Minister of Finance; Sihasak Phuanketkeow for the role of Minister of Foreign Affairs; Chaichanok Chidchob for Minister of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation; and Phipat Ratchakitprakarn for Minister of Transport.

A controversial selection is that of Thammanat Prompao for Ministry of Defense. Thammanat served a four-year jail term in Australia in 1994 after being

convicted on a drug trafficking charge for his role in a heroin smuggling case.

Anutin emphasised that his government was not formed through political favours.

"My premiership does not exist because of any favour from anyone. I am in this position through the mandate of the people, expressed by their representatives. I am here to return that favour to the people," he said.

### KEY PRIORITIES

Anutin outlined four key priorities for his government: the economy, conflict with Cambodia, natural disasters, and social problems.

On the economy, he pledged to cut household expenses, reduce living, energy and transport costs, tackle debt, and raise incomes for individuals, businesses and communities.

On border security, he vowed to pursue peaceful solutions with Cambodia to minimise losses on both sides, but stressed Thailand would not concede "a single square centimetre" of its territory. He also promised swift compensation for Thai families in border provinces affected by clashes.

On natural disasters, he said his government would advance warning systems and strengthen compensation and rehabilitation schemes, building on projects he initiated as interior minister.

On social threats, he promised to confront narcotics, human trafficking, scams and both physical and online gambling.

Finally, he affirmed that his government would not interfere in the justice system. He apparently referred to the legal proceedings which were already underway in the Khao Kradong land dispute and the allegedly rigged Senate election, where some observers suspect links to BJT members.

This led to the Anti-Corruption People's Network from Four Regions, led by failed Senate candidate Akkarawat Pongthanachalitkul, petitioning parliament on Monday (Sept 8) to review Anutin's suitability for the role of prime minister.

The petition called for a thorough review of Anutin's qualifications, as well as those of future Cabinet members and deputy ministers, to make sure they have no ethical or legal conflicts that could undermine public trust.

Additional reporting by  
The Phuket News

## Green light for AI traffic signals

### BANGKOK

FOR YEARS, BANGKOK'S DRIVERS have endured hours stuck in traffic. But a quiet revolution has been underway since February this year, when the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) partnered with Google on Project Green Light.

The initiative uses artificial intelligence (AI) to optimise traffic light timings, analysing data from 561 signalised intersections to adjust green, yellow and red lights according to real-time traffic conditions.

"Each intersection requires multiple tests to determine the ideal signal durations. We collect data, Google analyses it and we adjust the signals. So far, the results at the first 55 intersections have improved traffic flow by 80-90%," Sayan Thasanakosol, director of the BMA's Traffic Engineering Office said on Monday (Sept 8).

He said the AI system cannot replace human oversight but is a tool to make traffic management smarter. "It's about taking the guesswork out of traffic control. Every junction has its own rhythm, and AI helps us find it."

Traditionally, Bangkok's traffic lights operate in two ways: fixed timing, which anticipates traffic volume and manual mode, where officers adjust signals in response to congestion. "AI allows us to go beyond both," Mr Sayan said. "We



Photo: Bangkok Post

start with intersections where traffic moves but can be optimised. The most congested junctions during rush hour come later, after we refine the model."

Deputy Governor Wisanu Subsompon, who oversees Project Green Light, believes the AI approach could transform the city's roads. "Many intersections still run on fixed schedules that don't respond to sudden surges. With AI, the system analyses traffic in real time, adjusting green and red durations to keep cars moving and reduce idling. It also lowers greenhouse gas emissions and fuel consumption."

Cities from Seattle and Boston to Jakarta, Bangalore, Haifa, Hamburg, Budapest and Abu Dhabi have similar systems. Early results suggest AI can reduce vehicle stops by 30% and greenhouse gas emissions by 10% – a boon for both drivers and the environment. *Bangkok Post*

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# Mangroves: Phuket's Natural Defence

Marco Capriz

**O**n Phuket's East Coast, at Tawanron Beach where the Chalong River meets the sea, the roots of mangrove trees spread across the mudflats. Locals gather shellfish here, and photographers admire the play of light among the roots. These trees are more than picturesque: they are living coastal infrastructure. Their roots slow waves and trap sediment, their canopies blunt wind, their soils store carbon, and their food webs support fisheries. Where mangroves remain, people and property are measurably safer.

## Carbon sinks rich with life

Mangroves thrive at the land – sea boundary. Their aerial roots create habitat for juvenile fish, crabs and prawns, which then spill into nearby reefs and open water. Studies show mangroves support billions of juveniles yearly, boosting catches and food security. They are also blue-carbon workhorses: around 1,000 tonnes of carbon per hectare is stored, mainly in deep soils. At landscape scale, mangroves filter sediments and nutrients, improve water clarity and stabilise shores. The IPCC stresses their role in protecting biodiversity and coastal food systems while reducing risk for human populations.

## Role in reducing coastal erosion

Mangroves prevent erosion by dissipat-



Photos: Marco Capriz

ing wave energy. Roots and stems slow currents, causing sediments to settle and bind the shoreline. Research shows wave-height reductions of 13-66% over the first 100 metres of mangrove. Storm surges are also reduced, especially across wider belts that extend for kilometres. Dense mangrove stands can halve shoreline erosion, while in Thailand and plantations show root mats enhancing stability by locking in sediments. A simple rule from coastal engineers applies: wider, denser forests provide more protection, though even narrow strips make a difference when combined with seawalls or levees in hybrid designs.

## Mitigating the effects of rising seas

Mangroves also help communities adapt to sea-level rise. In the short term,

they reduce flood extents and damages by lowering wave and surge levels. Globally, this equates to protection for over 15 million people and US\$65 billion in avoided flood damage annually. Over the longer term, mangroves can keep pace with moderate sea-level rise by trapping sediments and building soils.

Studies suggest a threshold of around 7mm per year; beyond this rate, mangroves struggle to maintain elevation. Where sediment supply is disrupted by upstream dams, or where coasts are hardened with infrastructure, mangroves lose their ability to migrate inland and eventually drown in place. Planning for inland migration and reconnecting sediment pathways improves their resilience.

## Value for coastal communities

Mangroves are the most cost-effective defence for many lower-income coasts. More nursery habitat means more fish and invertebrates reaching catchable size, and surveys show households near mangroves eat more aquatic foods. They also provide opportunities for climate finance: measurable soil-carbon stocks enable credible blue-carbon projects that can fund conservation or restoration. Beyond these global values, mangroves offer local benefits such as fuelwood, honey, timber and ecotourism. Nevertheless, their strongest and most consistently measured contributions remain risk reduction, carbon storage and fisheries support.

## Limits and caveats

Mangroves are not invulnerable. Protection weakens where belts are narrow, degraded or fragmented, or where deep water reaches the forest edge. Extreme surges can overwhelm them, and rapid sea-level rise without sediment or space will drown forests. This means they should be seen as a key line of natural defence, but not as a cure-all.

## The reality in Phuket and Thailand

Tourism development fragments or clears mangroves, cuts off tidal flows and hardens shores. This accelerates erosion, increases wave energy at the shoreline, and blocks mangroves from migrating inland. In Phuket, resorts, marinas and roads have squeezed mangroves, prompting high-profile prosecutions near Sirinat National Park and other protected tracts. Similar cases have been recorded at Klong Mudong and Ao Kung, where local opposition has focused on the risks to mangroves and fisheries. The national picture reflects major historical losses

in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, partial recovery since, but continued pressure in tourism hubs.

## Why this matters

Along Thailand's Andaman coast, shorelines shift between retreat and accretion depending on waves, sediments and human actions. Removing or narrowing mangrove fringes tips the balance toward retreat by exposing fine sediments to wave attack. While mangroves can keep pace with moderate sea-level rise, hard tourism infrastructure blocks their landward migration, raising the risk of loss. The IPCC identifies this process – known as coastal squeeze – as a major driver of future wetland decline worldwide. For Phuket, where the economy depends on beach tourism, the erosion of natural protection increases vulnerability to both storm events and gradual sea-level rise.

## Bottom line for Phuket

Phuket's tourism economy depends on clean beaches and calm bays. These, in turn, depend on mangroves that damp waves, trap sediment and buffer surges. Clearing or squeezing mangroves for hotels, roads and marinas increases erosion risk now and limits adaptive space as seas rise.

Solutions are straightforward: keep and widen mangrove belts, design waterways to reduce energy, and enforce zoning laws that already exist. Where these steps are taken, natural processes maintain resilience. Where they are ignored, coastal risk increases sharply.

Finally, take a walk at Tawanron Beach or over the boardwalk at Saphan Hin to see firsthand why nurturing mangroves is vital for Phuket's future.

Looking ahead, the management of mangroves in Phuket and Thailand will require balancing tourism growth with ecosystem conservation. This means not only protecting existing mangrove belts but also planning restoration projects in degraded zones. Reforestation has been attempted in many provinces with varying success, but lessons show that restoring tidal flow and sediment supply must come before planting.

For Phuket, where tourism dominates the economy, mangroves can be marketed not as obstacles to development but as assets that protect beaches, fish stocks and property. Coastal planning that integrates natural defences with built infrastructure offers a resilient path forward. In a changing climate, mangroves are not optional extras: they are frontline protection, and their loss would leave both people and businesses more exposed to risk.



## The October/November 2025 hard copy issue goes to print very soon

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# Unlikely hero Bob proves he is somebody

David Griffiths

When people talk about modern day revenge action films they seem to go straight to *John Wick* or *Taken*. Everybody seems to forget about the little gem called *Nobody* that landed in 2021. While the other two franchises had Hollywood A-list star power behind them *Nobody* made the unlikely Bob Odenkirk (*Better Call Saul*) an action hero who truly appealed to the everyday audience member.

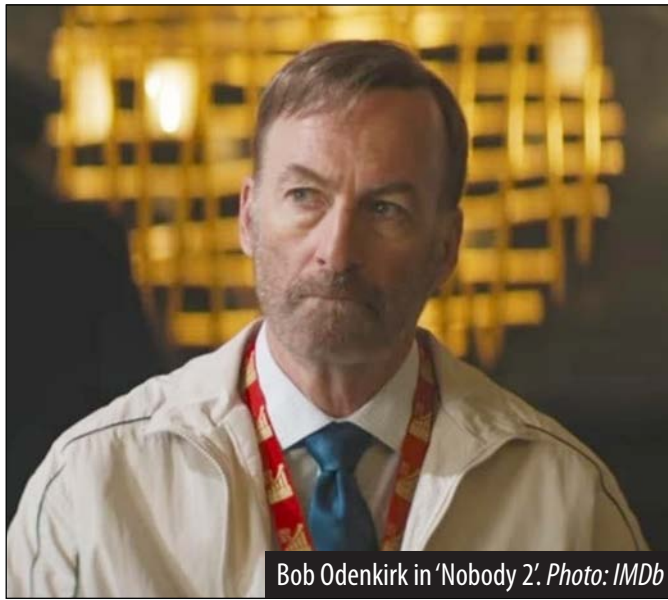
Not surprisingly the producers behind the film have decided to capitalise on the film's cult success and now the Timo Tjahjanto (*The Night Comes For Us*)-directed *Nobody 2* has just hit cinemas.

The sequel picks up months after the first film. Hutch Mansell (Odenkirk) is working off his debt to The Barber (Colin Salmon – *Resident Evil*) by putting in long hours doing whatever dirty work he needs to do. That hard work has once again put a distance between Hutch and his wife Becca (Connie Nielsen – *Wonder Woman*) and their children Brady (Gage Munroe – *Tales Of The Walking Dead*) and Sammy (Paisley Cadorath – *Harland Manor*).

In order to repair the damage his work is doing to his family Hutch organises a trip to a place that brought him happiness as a child – a small town called Plummerville that is home to a now very much run-down amusement park.

However, work soon follows Hutch to Plummerville and after Brady has a run-in with a local bully at a gaming arcade and he soon finds himself the target of local Mayor Wyatt Martin (John Ortiz – *Fast & Furious*) and the corrupt Sheriff Abel (Colin Hanks – *King Kong*).

After a couple of skirmishes that later result in Hutch going all out against Abel's dodgy organisation, he finds himself making an even more powerful en-



Bob Odenkirk in 'Nobody 2'. Photo: IMDb

emy – a vicious gangster named Lendina (Sharon Stone – *Basic Instinct*). That then starts an all out war.

Talking about *Nobody 2* is kind of difficult because as a film it doesn't go out of its way to do anything different or break new ground. This is your standard revenge action flick with a storyline audiences have seen a million time before – yet somehow it still does enough to keep you entertained without disappointing you.

Much of the heavy lifting with this film comes from Odenkirk. He takes the basic screenplay by Derek Kolstad (*John Wick*) and Aaron Rabin (*Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan*) and boosts it with charisma. It doesn't matter whether it be a hard-hitting action sequence or a touching scene with his family, Odenkirk takes it and makes it something entertaining.

That charisma also seems to wash over his co-stars. Stone takes the role of a vindictive psycho and

runs with it, even though there are close similarities to Charlize Theron's character from the *Fast & Furious* franchise, to the point where you wonder whether she is the fearsome foe that will bring Hutch undone.

Likewise, Hanks steps up and becomes a menacing enemy while the great Christopher Lloyd (*Back To The Future*) steals the show as he manages to mix his usual zany style of comedy into a character determined to not allow anything happen to his son or grandchildren.

Stylistically it feels like *Nobody 2* tries to emulate what made *Argyle* so special, but to be honest it never really reaches those heights, as its screenplay seems a little lazy. As mentioned previously, the script and plot does nothing to make the film stand out and at times during some of the action sequences fans of the genre will easily be able to tell what is going to happen next. I found myself waiting for twists and turns throughout the film that may surprise me but they simply never came. This is one of the most predictable movies that you will ever see but somehow Odenkirk still manages to make it enjoyable ride.

Take the premise of *National Lampoon's Family Vacation* and mix it with raw, comedic action of *The Fall Guy* and you basically sum up what *Nobody 2* is really about. Nielsen might be wasted here but at least it looks like Odenkirk and Lloyd had fun blowing away anybody that stands up against them.

*Nobody 2* is currently screening in Phuket and is rated '18'

2.5/5 Stars

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

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POP QUIZ

1. Which country set up the world's first chemistry lab in 1650?

2. What is the national flower of Japan?

3. What was the world's first high-level programming language released in 1957?

4. Broccoli belongs to which family of plants?

5. Consumption was the former name of which disease?

Answers below, centre

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

1. Show horse

5. Deadly poison

9. Word with hot or home

14. Jerk

15. Lover boy?

16. Bioweapon

17. Convention addresses

20. Brininess

21. One who puts you in your place

22. Lose color

23. Shade provider

24. Bad-smelling flower?

27. Objections

31. Bounty

32. Slight sound

33. Revelation response

34. Protected, in a way

38. Orinoco, e.g.

39. "\_\_\_, Babylon" (Frank novel)

40. Gonzo

41. Post-Renaissance language

44. Unit of measurement

45. Marine fish family,

for short

46. Drilling grp.

47. Spiraling form

49. Pays

53. Hard work, maybe

55. Million followers

56. Kind of skirt

57. Seasons

58. Still

59. Parker and Waterman

60. Left at sea?

Down

1. \_\_\_ for trouble

2. Hera's mother

3. Organic radical

4. Innkeeper

5. Happen to

6. Sharp spur

7. Like a yenta

8. Telesthesia

9. Determined in advance

10. Chinese tree

11. Must or pan follower

12. Level

13. Banner has two

18. Wild ass

19. Moon of Jupiter

23. Marches

24. Turn back

25. "It's a Wonderful Life" role

26. Merry \_\_\_

27. Ice cream flavor

28. Female principle, in Hinduism

29. "Over \_\_\_" (Cohan tune)

30. One who speaks

32. Salk's conquest

35. In recent times

36. Intellectual

37. Topper for lazy pupil

42. Knockout

43. Check

44. Sinkers

46. Bow application

47. Spiny shrub

48. On earth

49. John Paul II, e.g.

50. Kind of lily

51. Tech support caller

52. Snoop Dogg CD

53. \_\_\_ chi ch'uan

54. Common meas.

SUDOKU Medium

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

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) Netherlands; 2) Chrysanthemum; 3) IBM FORTRAN; 4) Cabbage; 5) Tuberculosis

15x15 crossword grid

Visit: [www.ilovecrosswords.com](http://www.ilovecrosswords.com)

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

15x15 crossword grid

10x10 Sudoku grid

GOT YOUR NUMBER

1

second of activity in the most accurate simulation of the human brain ever created took one of the world's largest supercomputers 40 minutes to calculate.

2

rats will stop playing with each other if the bigger rat doesn't let the smaller one win at least 30% of the time.

4

times more likely is an air rage incident in economy class if the plane also has a first class.

8

percent of guys who own televisions don't watch any sports at all, according to Nielsen data.

17

percent of Brits admit they would be willing to have sex with an android, and 11% are willing to raise a robot baby.

5,840

people in the United States have a last name that ends with their first name, with Donald MacDonald being the most common.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW

Hitching a ride at Bang Tao Beach. Photo by Gus Chesterton

Got an unusual or particularly beautiful picture of Phuket? Email it to [exeditor@classactmedia.co.th](mailto:exeditor@classactmedia.co.th)

This week in history

Sept 12, 1959

Bonanza, the first regularly scheduled TV program presented in colour, is launched in the United States.

Sept 13, 1609

Henry Hudson reaches the river that would later be named after him – the Hudson River.

Sept 14, 2022

Death of Queen Elizabeth II whose coffin is taken from Buckingham Palace in a procession to Westminster Hall for her lying in state over the next four days with the queue of mourners stretching for miles along the River Thames.

Queen Elizabeth II's funeral procession

Sept 15, 1916

Tanks are used for the first time in battle, at the Battle of the Somme in World War I.

Sept 16, 1620

Pilgrims set sail for Virginia from Plymouth, England, in the Mayflower.

Sept 17, 1983

Vanessa Williams becomes the first black Miss America.

Sept 18, 1837

Tiffany & Co. (first named Tiffany & Young) is founded by Charles Lewis Tiffany and Teddy Young in New York City. The store is called a "stationery and fancy goods emporium". Source: Wikipedia

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### Phuket Business Networking - Sep 2025

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

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14 SEP

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MON

15 SEP

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WED

17 SEP

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### Wednesday BBQ Night

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### Skål Phuket September Dinner

We are delighted to invite you to our next Skål Phuket dinner, hosted at the elegant Diamond Resort Bangtao – Infuse Restaurant. Our Skålleague Jo D'Hondt will warmly welcome us during the networking drinks, followed by a fabulous dinner featuring Belgium-inspired dishes prepared by the Infuse culinary team. Registration from 6pm. Members B1,200 - Non-Members B1,600. Bookings - contact@skalphuket.org

FRI

3 OCT



### Grow Boating Phuket Evening - Oct 2025

We look forward to seeing you at the Grow Boating Evening at the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar at the Phuket Boat Lagoon from 5pm. Our drinks sponsor for the evening will be the Thailand International Boat Show 2026 which will take place at the award-winning Phuket Yacht Haven Marina between the 15-18 January 2026, thailandinternationalboatshow.com There will be a delicious selection of canapes served and sponsored by the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar for all attendees. Come and join in the fun, everyone is welcome and there is no entry fee Find out more - facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket

September/October 2025 issue

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## GROW BOATING EVENING - SEP 2025

The September Grow Boating Evening was held at the Isola restaurant at Royal Phuket Marina. Kata Rocks was the sponsor for the evening, as they officially launched the 2025 Kata Rocks Poker Run programme and registration. To make the evening complete, Kata Rocks supplied sunset canapés, drinks and DJ beats along the marina promenade. Find details of the next Grow Boating event - [facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket](https://facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket)



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## Kalim Patong surfing competition confirmed

### SURFING

THE “KALIM PATONG Surfing Contest 2025” will take place next weekend (Sept 19-21) at Kalim Beach just north of Patong, with cash prizes of more than B100,000 up for grabs.

The popular annual competition is being organised by Patong Municipality in collaboration with the Kalim Reef Surfer Surfing Club, the Patong Surf Club, the Phuket Surfing Club and the Surfing Baan Kalim Community.

Organisers explained that competition will be split into male and female age specific categories across both shortboard and longboard formats, namely: Men’s open age shortboard; Men’s shortboard over 35

years of age; Boys shortboard under-12; Boys shortboard over-16; Girls shortboard under-16; Men’s longboard open age; and women’s longboard open age.

Cash prizes and trophies will be up for grabs for the top three finishers in each category and the competition will take place daily between 7am and 4:30pm.

A stand has been built for spectators at Kalim Beach to enable fans of the sport to enjoy the action, which promises to be very entertaining given the recent heavy weather creating significant swells and waves suitable for good competition.

Registration is open until Sept 15 and more information can be found at [www.kalimreefsurfers.com](http://www.kalimreefsurfers.com).

*The Phuket News*

# Magic Max’s Monza masterclass

## FORMULA ONE

AFP

Max Verstappen slowed McLaren’s Formula One dominance last Sunday (Sept 7) with a phenomenal display of driving on his way to victory at the Italian Grand Prix, the fastest ever race in the sports history.

Starting from pole, reigning world champion Verstappen completed a magical weekend at Monza which included the fastest lap ever in F1 in Saturday’s qualifying by schooling McLaren pair Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri at Monza to take the chequered flag in 1hr 13mins 24.325sec.

Red Bull’s Verstappen has little chance of securing a fifth straight drivers’ title as he still trails championship leader Piastri by 94 points with the Australian finishing third.

Piastri leads the drivers standings by 31 points from Norris, who finished second and would have finished third behind his teammate due to an awful pit stop had McLaren not enforced a position swap between the pair.

Charles Leclerc, last year’s winner and the last driver to win at Monza from pole position back in 2019, couldn’t take a podium spot for the massed ranks of Ferrari fans in the stands, the Monegasque finishing fourth.



Verstappen celebrates his win on the podium. Photo: AFP

### ‘IDIOT’

Leclerc’s teammate Lewis Hamilton gave it his best shot after a five-place grid penalty had him bumped back to 10<sup>th</sup> at the start, charging up to sixth thanks to some spectacular driving early in the race although he couldn’t push past his former Mercedes teammate George Russell and was left with another underwhelming result in his first Monza GP with Ferrari.

Verstappen’s win, which hinged on a bold overtaking move against Norris on lap four, was just his third of a season dominated by a McLaren car which has blown away the competition by winning all but four GPs.

But a second win in Italy this year, after triumphing in the last Emilia

Romagna GP back in May, capped a historic weekend for the blunt 27-year-old.

Verstappen was forced to allow Norris into first place after a frantic start in which he appeared to force his British rival off the track.

That move caused Norris to call Verstappen an “idiot” over the team radio, but he was soon back behind the Dutchman who took control of the race by passing Norris with a daring move at the chicane on lap four.

From there Verstappen sped off into the distance, developing a gap of around six seconds over Norris by the time he pitted to switch from medium to hard tyres on lap 38, before then cruising to a hugely impressive victory.

## Phuket Student Sports Competition gets underway

### ALL SPORTS

THE OFFICIAL OPENING ceremony of the Phuket Student, University and Public Sports Competition 2025 took place on Sept 3.

The competition, which runs until Sunday (Sept 14), has over 6,000 athletes and associated team members from 68 schools in Phuket involved.

As an extra incentive the winner of the under-18 category is each sport will go on to represent Phuket in the 45<sup>th</sup> National Student Games Qualifying Round 8 in Krabi later this year to qualify for the final round of the Buriram Games in February 2026.

With the athletics already having taken place from Aug 29–31, the competition features a total of 16 sports, namely: football; volleyball; basketball; 3x3 basketball; badminton; tennis; table tennis; swimming; beach



Photo: PR Phuket

volleyball; karate; taekwondo; woodball; petanque; futsal; and sepak takraw.

The opening ceremony was held at Saphan Hin Sports Center in Phuket Town, overseen by Tham-mawat Wongcharoenyos, president of the Sports Association of Phuket, Rewat Areerob, President of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO), and Ratchadaporn Oin, head of the Tourism and Sports Ministry office in Phuket.

Ms Oin explained that the tournament provides the opportunity for students to enhance their physical well being, with top performing athletes in their particular field able to advance and participate at regional, national and possibly international competition.

*The Phuket News*

## Italy win FIVB World Women’s Championship

### VOLLEYBALL

ITALY WERE CROWNED WORLD champions for the second time after overcoming Turkey in a five-set thriller in the final of the 2025 FIVB Volleyball Women’s World Championship last Sunday (Sept 7).

The top-ranked team added yet another trophy to their cabinet by prevailing over continental rivals 3-2 (25-23, 13-25, 26-24, 19-25, 15-8) at the Huamark Indoor Stadium in Bangkok to claim their first world crown in 23 years.

The Italians won the tournament for the first time back in 2002 and have now made three consecutive podium appearances after taking silver in 2018 and bronze in 2022.

Sunday’s victory gave the Italians their fourth major international title in just over a year, following their victories at the Volleyball Nations League and the Paris Olympics in 2024 and their repeat as VNL champions just over a month ago.

Now undefeated in the 36 matches they played in the last 15 months, the Italians are the first women’s national team to simultaneously hold the Olympic and the world titles since Cuba did it in 2002.

“This victory is very emotional for us,” said head coach Julio Velasco. “After winning the World



Italy’s players celebrate their final win. Photo: Bangkok Post

Championship, the Olympics, and two VNLs, I believe this team will be remembered as a legendary one in the future, like a few others.

“I’m very proud of them. They won two very difficult matches over the last two days, and they do their best every single day in practice and really deserve everything they’ve achieved,” he added.

Star opposite Paola Egonu led the Italians to the title with 22 points (18 kills, three blocks, one ace). Outside hitter Myriam Sylla contributed 19 points (14 kills, four blocks, one ace), while Ekaterina Antropova made a difference off the bench, producing 14 points (12 kills, two blocks).

The final’s top scorer was Turkish star opposite Melissa

Vargas, who tallied an incredible 33 points, with 28 kills, four aces and one block. Captain Eda Erdem also played a very solid match, contributing 19 points, with 15 kills, three blocks and one ace.

Earlier on Sunday, Brazil topped Japan 3-2 (25-12, 25-17, 19-25, 27-29, 18-16) to finish third in the 20<sup>th</sup> edition of the tournament.

“The tournament has been a great success and it was well received by the Thai sports fans,” Thailand’s former minister of tourism and sports Sorawong Thienthong said after the final.

“The organisation of the three-week event was also top-notch and it has been duly praised by the FIVB and volleyball fans across the globe.” *Bangkok Post*



# Five big deadline day transfers

## FOOTBALL

AFP

Premier League clubs demonstrated their awesome financial power during the summer transfer window, spending more than £3 billion (B130bn) on new signings.

The window officially closed for club's in the English top flight on Sept 1 with several headline moves completed in the final hours. Here are five of the biggest deals to go update through on deadline day.

### Alexander Isak – Newcastle United to Liverpool

After weeks of speculation and public tension between the player and Newcastle United, Alexander Isak finally completed his high-profile switch to Liverpool.

The 25-year-old Swedish striker joins the Reds for £125 million on a six-year contract worth around £280,000 per week. He will take the No. 9 shirt vacated by Darwin Núñez, who moved to Al Hilal in Saudi Arabia this summer.

### Yoane Wissa – Brentford to Newcastle United

Newcastle quickly found a replacement for Isak by signing Congo international Yoane Wissa from Brentford for £55mn. The 29-year-old will earn £75,000 per week, a significant rise from his £25,000 a week wages at his former club.



New Liverpool signing Alexander Isak training with Sweden during the international break. Photo: AFP

Wissa's contract also includes a 25% sell-on clause. He will inherit the No. 9 shirt following Callum Wilson's move to West Ham United, and is expected to be available for Newcastle's home clash with Wolverhampton Wanderers tomorrow (Sept 13).

### Senne Lammens – Royal Antwerp to Manchester United

Manchester United signed Belgian goalkeeper Senne Lammens from Royal Antwerp for an initial £18.2mn plus £3.4mn in add-ons.

The 23-year-old has signed a five-year deal until 2030, though his squad number has yet to be announced. Lammens will compete with André Onana and Altay Bayındır for the starting spot.

He made 64 appearances for Antwerp, helping them to the Belgian Super Cup in 2023.

### Antony – Manchester United to Real Betis

After impressing during his loan spell

in the second half of the 2024-25 season, Brazilian winger Antony has joined Real Betis permanently.

The 25-year-old rediscovered his form at the Villarreal, scoring nine goals and adding five assists in 26 matches.

Betis have sealed the deal for €25 million (B940mn), with Manchester United retaining a 50% sell-on clause. Antony has signed a five-year contract.

### Nicolas Jackson – Chelsea to FC Bayern Munich

Despite initial doubts due to Liam Delap's injury, Chelsea eventually sanctioned Nicolas Jackson's move to FC Bayern Munich.

The Senegalese forward has joined on loan, with a mandatory purchase clause set at £56.2mn if appearance targets are met. Bayern have also paid an additional £14.3mn loan fee, taking the total potential value of the deal to £70.5mn.



Photo: Bangkok Post

## War Elephants fall to Iraq in King's Cup final

## FOOTBALL

IRAQ HELD THEIR GROUND to edge defending champions and hosts Thailand 1-0 in the 2025 King's Cup final despite being reduced to nine men last Sunday (Sept 7).

Mohanad Ali scored the winning goal in the 75<sup>th</sup> minute from an Ibrahim Bayesh pass at Kan- chanaburi Central Stadium.

Frans Putros was given his marching orders just two minutes later for picking up his second yellow in the game, while Ali was shown a straight red in stoppage time for a vicious tackle on Chanathip Songkrasin.

Thailand pushed hard for the equaliser but Iraq held firm to win their second King's Cup after having also triumphed in the 2023 edition.

Thailand coach Masa- tada Ishii admitted after the match that his men had adopted a wrong approach in the first half.

"In the first half, we were overly defensive. In the second half, we improved after the adjustments we made at half-time," said the Japanese coach.

"We only had one week of collective training for this tournament. If we can hold continuous camps, I think the Thai players will have a chance to advance in the next World Cup qualifying round."

"We now look ahead to our next match against Taiwan in the Asian Cup qualifiers next month."

Thailand will next play their third and fourth matches of the AFC Asian Cup Group D qualifiers against Taiwan on Oct 9 and 14. *Bangkok Post*

## All Blacks, Wallabies edge out tough wins



### THE GLOBAL RUGBY COACH

THERE WERE A RAFT OF QUESTIONS ahead of last weekend's matches in the Rugby Championship; Is Australia's improvement a myth or reality? Can Argentina continue to develop? Is New Zealand about to crumble at Eden Park? Is South Africa in a downward cycle?

Both games were frenetic, high-octane encounters played with intense physicality and the return fixtures will no doubt provide similar entertainment.

Despite their 28-24 loss to Australia, Argentina played some exhilarating support play, which led to tries. The Wallabies have an attacking DNA and this enabled them to come back from a 14-point deficit at half-time. However, Argentina will be shocked at their loss in a game they know they could have won.

Similarly, South Africa will rue the fact that it could not cope with New Zealand's fast start in their 24-17 loss. The All Blacks proved once again that they are nigh on impossible to beat at Eden Park, demonstrating a high level of skill and a fast tempo start which draws in the crowd immediately and consumes them for over 80 minutes.

The winners of the next World Cup in Australia in 2027 will come from this group of four, although the likes of England, Ireland and France might disagree.



The All Blacks celebrate. Photo: AFP

The average age of the World Cup-winning teams is around 27. Getting the blend right is so important, as is developing a winning habit. The winners usually have a mixture of experienced players as well as emerging but proven talent.

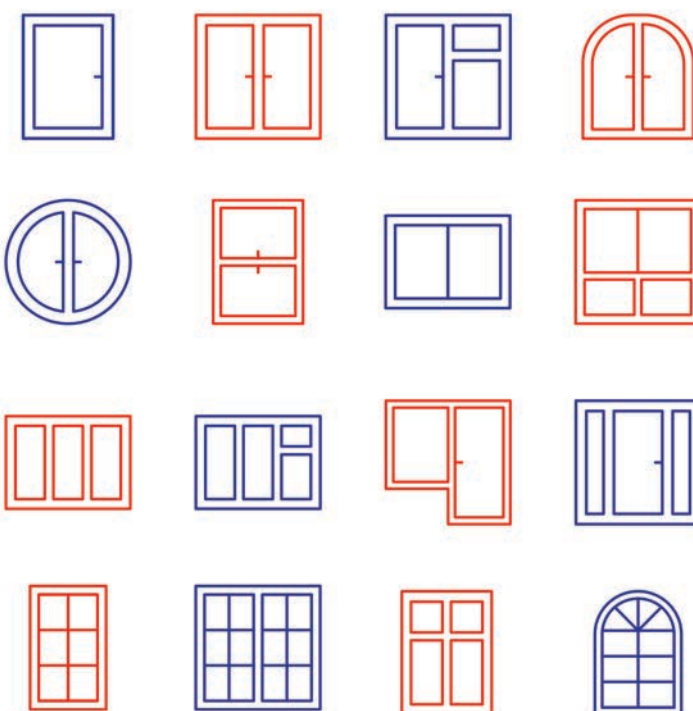
In the return games on Saturday (Sept 13), can Argentina and South Africa avenge their respective losses? It will require a high degree of mental strength. New players will be selected and quality technique will be the order of the day.

Who dares wins!

*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.rugbycoaching-consultancy.com](http://www.rugbycoaching-consultancy.com).*



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# Sport

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Italy spikers win volleyball title > p14

# IT'S A DATE!

## All set for Laguna Phuket Triathlon 2025

The official press conference on Sept 4 confirming the Laguna Phuket Triathlon 2025. Photo: Laguna Phuket

### TRIATHLON

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The dates for the 31<sup>st</sup> edition of the Laguna Phuket Triathlon (LPT) at Laguna Grove have been confirmed as the weekend of Nov 22-23, organisers said at a press conference on Sept 4.

Renowned as the “Race of Legends” and the longest-running triathlon in Southeast Asia, LPT 2025 will welcome over 1,000 athletes and 3,000 spectators from around the world, igniting Phuket’s high season with world-class sporting action and international attention.

Celebrated for its unique course and exceptional standards, LPT combines the island’s natural beauty, modern facilities and internationally recognised safety management. The LPT 2025 route includes a 1.8km swim in both the Andaman Sea and the freshwater lagoons of Laguna Phuket, a scenic 50km bike ride through

coastal roads, hills and local villages, and a 12km run around the lush resort complex.

The race also features the Sprint Triathlon (0.5km swim, 20km bike, 6km run) and the Duathlon (4km run, 50km bike, 12km run), making the event more accessible to a wider range of athletes.

This year, new age categories have been introduced in the Sprint event, ensuring inclusivity across all levels and a total prize purse of US\$20,000 (B644,000) awaits top finishers.

#### WORLD-CLASS LINE-UP

The 2025 edition will see a stellar line-up of elite triathletes from across the globe, including returning champions and rising stars. Confirmed male professionals include Antony Costes (France), Joel Wooldridge (Australia), Rostyslav Pevtsov (Ukraine), Guy Crawford (New Zealand), Casimir Moine (France), and James Thorp (Australia).

Among the women’s pro field are Kate Bevilaqua (Australia), Kseniia Levkovska (Ukraine), Alanis Siffert (Switzerland), and Dominika Jamnický (Canada), marking her first appearance at LPT. Thailand’s very own Kitpong Chawaldit, known for his remarkable endurance across four consecutive IRONMAN events in Sweden, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, will also return to the LPT 2025 course.

A major highlight this year is the Open Water Swim presented by TriHub, now in its second edition, taking place on Saturday, Nov 22, one day before the main race. Staged on the pristine beach of Laguna Phuket, the event invites both professional and amateur swimmers to test themselves across multiple distances.

The race is designed to be inclusive, safe, and inspiring for all – from experienced swimmers to newcomers taking their first strokes in the world of triathlon. With professional safety teams,

international-standard course design, and Phuket’s pristine natural setting, the Open Water Swim is more than just a race – it’s an experience that connects people with nature and with each other, while strengthening the triathlon community across Thailand and the region.

#### HOLISTIC HUB

This year’s staging reaffirms Phuket’s positioning as an Active Lifestyle Destination, not only as a holiday island but as a holistic hub for health, sports and wellness. Beyond driving local economic impact, the event underscores Phuket’s global reputation as a world-class sports tourism hub, supported by strong partnerships with leading national organisations including the Phuket Provincial, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT), the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Thai Airways International and many more.

“We are proud that Laguna

Phuket, Thailand’s first and largest integrated resort, has remained home to the Laguna Phuket Triathlon for more than 31 years,” commented Paul Wilson, Managing Director of Laguna Phuket.

“This is a place where athletes and their families can enjoy comfort, wellness and relaxation alongside world-class competition. We are committed to continuous development to align with today’s travel trends, where visitors seek not only leisure but also health, well-being and exciting new activities. Each year, our goal is to elevate the event and ensure that Laguna Phuket Triathlon remains the number one choice for athletes worldwide as well as health-conscious travelers who choose Phuket as their preferred destination.”

Registration for LPT 2025 is now open via [www.lagunaphukettri.com](http://www.lagunaphukettri.com). Stay updated through the official Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/LagunaPhuketTriathlonThailand](http://www.facebook.com/LagunaPhuketTriathlonThailand).

## BISP alumni Lauren Hoh making her mark on the beautiful game

### FOOTBALL

BRITISH INTERNATIONAL School, Phuket (BISP) graduate and former Cruzeiro Academy footballer Lauren Hoh has taken her passion for football to extraordinary heights, representing Malaysia on the senior national team, continuing her journey as a student-athlete at Trinity College in the United States, and most recently being named captain of the Malaysian U-19 Women’s National Team for the AFF 2025 Championship in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Lauren joined BISP through the

Cruzeiro Academy pathway, where her commitment, leadership and talent quickly stood out. Coming from Malaysia, she brought with her a deep love for the game, one that had been growing since childhood and had already taken her across the globe. At BISP, she refined her skills, developed her confidence and embraced challenges that helped shape her both as a player and a person.

During her time at the school, Lauren embraced the full boarding experience while studying, training and competing at the highest level. Her

technical development flourished under Cruzeiro’s possession-based philosophy, and by her final year, she had grown into a team captain, leading with calm determination and inspiring her peers on and off the pitch.

Lauren’s story is one of resilience and drive. She came to BISP with an impressive background, including stints with boys’ teams in Malaysia, a place in the FC Barcelona training programme and the opportunity to represent Malaysia at the Gazprom Football for Friendship programme in Russia during the

2018 FIFA World Cup.

But behind her success was a journey marked by personal challenge, sacrifice and strength. Her time at BISP helped her channel those experiences into growth, empowering her to take the next step with confidence.

Since graduating, Lauren has continued to represent Malaysia at both youth and senior levels, including the 2023 SEA Games, and has earned a place playing NCAA soccer in the US. Most recently, she trained with the AC Milan and Liverpool academies – yet another milestone in a journey that has never stopped evolving.



Lauren (right). Photo: BISP

Lauren’s journey from backyard games to international football is a powerful example of where passion and perseverance can lead and serves as an inspiration to young athletes, especially girls in sport.

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