

PHUKET CANDIDATES REGISTER FOR ELECTION > PAGE 2

SPLASH BACK



Water fights on Bangla Rd were short-lived last year after they were shut down by order from Bangkok. Photo: The Phuket News / file

SONGKRAN WATER FIGHTS RETURN AFTER THREE-YEAR 'COVID HIATUS'

The Phuket News
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Songkran water fights are back in action this weekend as water play has been legally allowed with government support after three years of water-play bans due to COVID-19. Phuket officials first broke the news late last month. In doing so, they were arguably the first officials in the country to confirm that water play would be allowed during Songkran this year.

The confirmation came through the announcement that water play would be allowed at the official government celebrations in Phuket Town.

A special zone was set up on Dibuk Rd, in front of the Limelight Avenue shopping mall, where some 30,000 people were expected to take part.

In addition to traditional festivities, the event was lined up to feature concerts on April 13, the official day that the Thai New Year is celebrated, by artists including Kao Jirayu, Retrospect and SDF, along with local DJ Ong Khemrat.

The official event included formal support by the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO), Phuket City Municipality, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Phuket Office, the Tourism and Sports Authority Phuket office, Phuket City Police,

the Royal Thai Navy Third Command, the Phuket Provincial Cultural Office, the Health Promotion Foundation (ThaiHealth) and the Non-Alcoholic Organisation Network (SorKhor).

The official celebrations on Dibuk Rd were maintained as drug- and alcohol-free. Although water play was allowed, attendees were required to wear a shirt at all times and paint, play dough, ice, foam, coloured water or high-pressure water guns were not allowed.

PATONG

Patong Municipality left it until early this month to announce that its official celebrations would return to

Bangla Plaza with live concerts on the beach. Water fights also returned to Bangla Rd – the traditional location for 'intense' water fights by local residents and tourists alike.

Enthusiastic revellers on Bangla Rd last year caused a stir, launching into water fights with verve on the night of Apr 12, akin to 'Songkran Eve', much to the consternation of officials in Bangkok.

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha ordered Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew to take action. By late afternoon on Songkran day last year, law-enforcement were on the popular nightlife street to prevent any further water play. However, smaller, slightly...

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Aussie expat slain over salary in Krabi



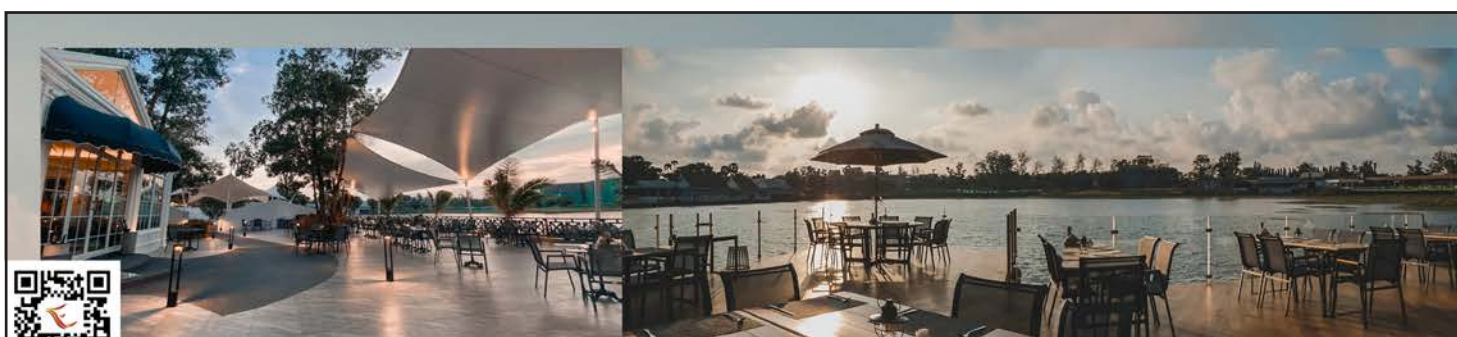
LIFE PAGE 7

Capturing the unique essence of Phuket



SPORT PAGE 12

Krabi to Phuket swim in aid of sea conservation



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News



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Songkran marks return to normal

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...restrained water fights did continue, albeit with smaller water guns. No large buckets were allowed.

This year, Patong traditional celebrations began with a merit-making ceremony featuring 199 monks on the morning of Apr 13. Then, under the banner “Songkran this year. Don’t forget to splash water @ Patong”, Patong Municipality got the party started at Bangla Plaza with a DJ at 10am, playing through to 3pm. The rest of the town was left to celebrate in the fashion it usually does.

ISLANDWIDE

In addition to the hundreds, if not thousands, of privately held Songkran celebrations being held across the island over the weekend, local municipalities in each subdistrict will be holding their own festivities.

Karon Municipality began its traditional activities with Songkran ablutions performed at Wat Kitti Sangkharam (Wat Kata) early on Apr 13, followed by a parade of a Phra Buddha Sihing statue followed by pouring scented water on the hands of revered elders



Foreigners illegally enjoying the Songkran water fights on Bangla Rd last year.

for blessings. In the evening, ‘Karon Night Songkran 2023’ provided the entertainment with a water tunnel, foam party and EDM DJs at Nong Harn lagoon until late into the night.

Local municipalities in other key areas across the island, including Chalong, Cherno Talay, Rawai and Kamala, all the way north along

the west coast to Nai Yang, all held their own festivities.

FULL FLIGHT

With Songkran festivities in full flight across the country this year, TAT Governor Yuthasak Supasorn said that an estimated B18 billion in tourism-generated revenue was expected from nationwide Songkran events.

Mr Yuthasak Supasorn said a total of 3.8 million trips were expected to be made by Thai people during the Thai New Year, plus 300,000 trips by foreign tourists.

Highlight events for this year’s festival included the Yen Tua La Maha Songkran event and the International Amazing Splash 2023 event in Bangkok, held at Soi Chulalongkorn 5

on Apr 13-15.

The TAT also organised ‘Water Festival 2023’ events in several locations across the country between Apr 13-16.

Several temples in Bangkok such as Wat Pho, Wat Arun, and Wat Rakhang would be holding traditional activities for the Thai New Year, alongside major events at Tha Maharaj, Iconsiam shopping mall, and Asiatique, Mr Yuthasak said.

Many provinces will have their key events organised, such as at the Old House of Chiang Mai, Ban Chiang World Heritage Cultural Square in Udon Thani, the Andamanda water park in Phuket, and a traditional Songkran event in Phra Pradaeng district of Samut Prakan, which will be taking place on Apr 21-23, he added.

Throughout the entire festival, the TAT will be working closely with the Tourist Police Bureau to enforce safety measures to boost confidence among both domestic and international visitors, the TAT Governor noted.

LOCAL BOOST

Suksit Suwandittakul, Presi-

dent of the Thai Hotels Association’s Southern Chapter, has praised the government’s We Travel Together tourism stimulus campaign for helping to bring to Phuket an expected boost to hotel occupancy of 5-10% over the Songkran holidays.

Phuket has almost 200,000 hotel rooms and the average occupation in April is 60-70%, Mr Suksait explained.

However, this will rise by 5-10% during Songkran, according to a survey by Phuket City Development, he noted.

Thanet Tantipiriyakij, President of the Phuket Tourist Association, said Phuket was expected to attract more than 40% of all domestic tourism during the holidays, up from 30% in 2022.

Phuket will also welcome more international arrivals next month, with the top three countries of origin for foreign visitors currently being Russia, China and India, respectively, Mr Thanet said.

Phuket International Airport will resume full operations in May after its taxiway maintenance has been completed, providing more slots for Chinese airlines, Mr Thanet noted.

Local candidates step up to contest May 14 national election

CROWDS OF SUPPORTERS turned out in droves at the Phuket Auditorium, located at the Phuket Provincial Administration Center in Phuket Town last week as candidates registered to contest seats as Members of Parliament representing Phuket in the upcoming election to be held on May 14.

The May 14 election will be the first that three MP seats for Phuket will be up for grabs. Previously Phuket had been allocated only two.

Nationwide, candidates had from 8:30am on Apr 3 until 4:30pm Apr 7 to register. In line with national policy and registration centres set up elsewhere throughout the country, the Phuket office of the Election Commission of Thailand (ECT Phuket) started receiving registrations at the provincial government centre, on Tha Kraeng Rd, Phuket Town.

On the first day of registrations a total of 28 candidates in Phuket representing 13 political parties registered. Only five parties – Kao Klai, Bhumjaithai, Palang Pracharat, Pheu Thai and Seri Ruam Thai – fielded candidates to

contest all three MP seats available.

SILENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

ECT Phuket has been required twice to seek public feedback on which of three maps will be used to define the three constituencies in Phuket.

However, at time of press ECT Phuket had yet to announce through a public announcement exactly which map will be used in the May 14 election.

After calls by *The Phuket News* to the main ECT Phuket office went unanswered, *The Phuket News* was finally able to speak to an ECT Phuket officer last, who said that ‘Map 2’ had been selected.

The officer repeatedly said that ECT Phuket had announced which map was to be used on its website – but was unable to explain where. *The Phuket News* has been unable to locate the public announcement.

Days later the Phuket Info Center was asked by a Thai national which map was being used, to which the center posted Map 3 – only to be informed by another Thai national that Map 3 was the incorrect map.

The Phuket office of the Public



Photo: PR Phuket

Relations Department and its affiliate Phuket branch of Radio Thailand Phuket at time of both also still had yet to announce to Phuket people through their official Facebook pages that ‘Map 2’ had been chosen.

FULL STEAM AHEAD

The lack of public knowledge of which map was to be used, hence which areas each MP seat will cover, did not stop candidates from turning out in force on Apr 3 to register to enter the election. Apparently the prospective candidates had already been told.

As such, as posted on the public boards at the registration centre were the full list of candidates, and their numbers on the ballot, as follows:

CANDIDATES FOR AREA 1

- Pol Lt Col Payao Maneerat from Thai Pakdee Party
- Acting Second Lieutenant Somchat Techathavaroen, Kao Klai Party
- Nippon Aikwanich, Bhumjaithai Party
- Prasert Prateep Na Thalang, Thai Sang Thai Party
- Anantarak Phethin, Seri Ruam Thai Party
- Jirayut Songyos, Palang Pracharat Party
- Watcharapong Anantakul, Pheu Thai Party
- Piya Sidokbuab, Thai Sang Chart Party
- Natdanai Hirunsetthi, Plian Party

CANDIDATES FOR AREA 2

- Awut Noochet, Pheu Thai Party
- Chalermpong Sangdee, Kao Klai Party
- Nuanchan Samart, Ruam Thai Sang Chart Party
- Sutha Prateep Na Thalang, Palang Pracharat Party
- Wongsakorn Chanakij, Bhumjaithai Party
- Pakwan Kitprasarn, Thai Sang Thai Party
- Thames Kraitat, Chart Pattana

Kla Party

- Nio Nimu, Seri Ruam Thai Party
- Karom Dermim, Pheu Chart Thai Party

CANDIDATES FOR AREA 3

- Oratai Kerdsup, Chat Phatthana Kla Party
- Nathee Thinsaku, Palang Pracharat Party
- Sumet Bunon, Klong Thai Party
- Winyu Kongkithana, Seri Ruam Thai Party
- Thitikan Thitipruethikul, Kao Klai Party
- Soratham Chinda, Pheu Thai Party
- Acting Second Lt Channarong Prateep Na Thalang, Ruam Thai Sang Chart Party
- Maneerat Wichaidit Sukyiran, Thai Sang Thai Party
- Wiwat Jindapol, Bhumjaithai Party
- Srithep Udomlap, Thai Pakdi Part

Officials confirmed that four more candidates registered on Apr 4, but at time of press ECT Phuket had yet to issue a full list of all candidates who had registered before the Apr 7 deadline. *The Phuket News*

Aussie expat slain over salary

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Krabi resort owner and former long-term Phuket expat Peter Heppell, 57, was attacked and murdered at the bar of his own resort, 'Melina's Monkey House and Whale Bar' in Baan Tha Lane, Khao Thong subdistrict, Krabi, on Apr 2.

Pol Capt Tirakorn Thairit from Ao Nang Police Station was informed of the incident on the Sunday afternoon by Krabi Hospital, confirming that Mr Heppell had died from his injuries.

Mr Heppell had suffered multiple stab wounds to his right chest, piercing his lungs, and several slash wounds to his right arm.

Police confirmed that the incident happened at the bar at the resort, which is an outdoor area near the beach. Officers found blood on the ground and about 50 metres away they found a 30cm kitchen knife stained with blood.

Peerachat Songsri, 24, a resident of Songkhla province who lived in Krabi, surrendered himself at Ao Nang Police Station for the murder, police confirmed.



MAIN: Police at the scene. Photo: Visut Rongpon

Staff at the resort told police that it was lunchtime when the incident occurred. There were no staff at the scene at the time. Mr Heppell was at the bar with some resort guests.

Peerachat came to meet Mr Heppell to talk about outstanding salary for his wife, who had been fired. Staff said they believed that Mr Heppell might have cut some amount from her final pay, making

the man angry.

During the meeting, Peerachat ran into the kitchen and brought back a cooking knife. He stabbed Mr Heppell before fleeing on his motorcycle. The guests at the resort rushed Mr Heppell to Krabi Hospital, where he was later pronounced dead.

Peerachat has been charged with manslaughter. He admitted his guilt but has not yet

clarified the details of the cause of the murder, police said.

Peerachat is being held for further questioning. Officers will contact his wife also for more questioning, police said.

Mr Heppell was celebrating his 57th birthday when he was confronted by Peerachat at the resort, which he named in honour of his 6-month-old daughter who died when the

tsunami struck Phuket on Dec 26, 2004.

Before moving to Krabi, Mr Heppell was a long-term expat resident in Phuket. Well known, and well liked, he has been widely described as a 'larger than life' character.

He was also a well known Aussie Rules footballer, in his youth playing with North Beach Football Club in his hometown of Perth. Mr Heppell, who went by the nickname 'Whale', was also a founding player for the Tigers Australian Rules Football Club.

"The Thailand Tigers are deeply saddened by the tragic passing of Peter 'Whale' Heppell. Our thoughts are with his daughter Aly, his family and all his friends," the club posted on their official Facebook page.

"We all have such wonderful memories of Whale. As one of the original Tigers, he has been a great friend to Tigers old and new. His love for the Tigers was second only to that of his family.

"Rest in peace Whale! The Tigers are poorer for your loss."

Other messages of condolences and grief have flooded

Mr Heppell's Facebook page since news of his passing has spread.

"RIP Peter - another legend gone. Spent many a good night at the Whale bar in Tha Lane," said fellow Aussie and long-term Phuket expat Harry Usher.

"Rest In Peace Peter. Will miss you brother," wrote Jeff Rowe. "RIP dear friend," said Viktoriya Edmunds. "Oh my god. Terrible news. Thoughts are with Whale's family," wrote Tony Carter.

"We are devastated to post that Peter's life was taken suddenly and violently on his 57th birthday in Krabi, Thailand. Peter will be remembered as a larger than life character, who walked to the beat of his own drum and lived life to the fullest..."

"He survived motorbike accidents and miraculously the Boxing Day Tsunami! Peter loved his daughter Aly, the ocean, beer, footy and Thailand.

"The family is so grateful that we were able to spend time with him recently. Now reunited with baby Melina... Our hearts are breaking," wrote his sister Karen Bormolini.

Sunbed vendors removed from Kata Beach

MORE SUNBED AND umbrella operators have been removed from Kata Beach following an inspection by local officials accompanied by personnel from Royal Thai Army Region 4 base in Nakhon Sri Thammarat.

The inspection was ordered by Mueang District Chief Phairot Srilamul, noted an official report posted Apr 5.

Joining the inspection were soldiers from Army Region 4, led by Col Phatsawee Pochada; Royal Thai Navy personnel from the Third Area Command at Cape Panwa; members of the Volunteer Defense Corps (OrSor); along with officers from Karon Police and Karon Municipality.

Also joining the inspection were officials from the Isoc Region 4 unit. Internal Security Operations Command (Isoc) serves as the political arm of the Royal Thai Military.

The aim of the inspection was to maintain the beach for public use, Mr Phairot said.

"Measures have been put in place to organize all beach areas to be clean, safe and 100% for people and tourists in order to enhance the tourism image of Phuket and Thailand," he said.

The sunbed-umbrella operators had been warned



before, he said.

However, the latest inspection found several operators working outside their designated area.

"Therefore, [officers] seized the sunbeds, umbrellas and other equipment," Mr Phairot noted.

However, the operators affected have now filed a formal complaint to the Commander of the 4th Army Region and the Mayor of Karon Subdistrict to request to use the beach area so they can make a living, Mr Phairot explained.

"Which will be raised at the next meeting of the district beach organising committee," he said.

The removal of the beach chair operators at Kata follows a beach inspection tour on Phuket by Lt Gen Santi Sakuntanark, Commander of the 4th Army Region, based in Nakhon Sri Thammarat, on Mar 27.

Following that inspection, a beach chair operator was removed from Freedom Beach.

While in Phuket, Lt Gen Santi also visited Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew "to discuss measures to help solve problems and promote cooperation in order to yield 'satisfying results'".

He also visited the Phuket operations team of the Isoc Region 4 branch, to encourage the officers and emphasise that their operations must be morally upstanding.

"They must not get affiliated with mafias, and not accept bribes," Lt Gen Santi said.

He also said that they have to get close to the local people by understanding the identity and local culture so that they can be a part of the community and create confidence and safety among local people and tourists.

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SAT APRIL 15



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Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

SUN APRIL 16



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

MON APRIL 17



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

TUE APRIL 18



High: +32°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

WED APRIL 19



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

THU APRIL 20



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

'Lovable rogue' Aussie expat 'Diver' passes away

THE "LOVABLE rogue" Ian 'Diver' Dick, a resident of Phuket for more than 40 years and best known for his bar at Surin Beach that he ran for nigh on a decade, where he saved seemingly countless lives from dangerous surf, has passed away.

Born on August, 12 1948, Diver was 74.

Diver came to love Phuket after he started a series of frequent trips to the island in the very early 1990s. He moved permanently to Phuket in 1991.

He set up a laundry business with his wife Khun Pranee in Kamala, but his passion for the sea was always there.

Daily ocean swims and at the time living on Surin Beach saw him jump into action rescuing many people over the years.

The number of people, nearly all tourists, that he rescued grew into the hundreds, due to how dangerous the surf at Surin Beach becomes during the 'low season'.

Diver had a background in life saving, having supervised swimming pools and waterparks in Sydney before making the move to Phuket. At one time he also held an Australian freediving record.

Diver evolved over the years, opening many beach bars, his most famous amongst around five of them was DIVERS, located right on the beach at Surin.

Many people today will miss Diver, especially all the local residents who frequent the Sports Bar in Kamala.

Very few people reach Diver's legendary status, but on Phuket, Diver was a legend and a gentleman. He will be sadly missed by many.

The Phuket News



Ian 'Diver' Dick rescued hundreds of people from dangerous surf at Surin Beach over the years. Photo: Supplied

Crackdown on taxi-app drivers steams ahead

The Phuket News
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The checkpoints hunting for illegal taxi drivers as promised by Adcha Buachan, Chief of the Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO), last week have caught another driver deemed to be operating illegally.

At a press conference on Mar 30 joined by Phuket Governor Narong Woociew, Mr Adcha announced that checkpoints would be set up to catch taxi drivers deemed to be working illegally. PLTO officers would be supported by police in the hunt for illegal taxi drivers, he said. Present for the announcement were Phuket Provincial Police Deputy Commander Pol Col Jirasak Siemsak and Wichit Police Chief Pol Col Chatri Chukaew.

Mr Adcha repeated that currently only two taxi apps are legal in Phuket: Hello Phuket and Grab. The two taxi-hailing apps have a total of 365 drivers registered to provide taxi services. Hello Phuket has 228 drivers registered, Grab has 111 drivers registered and 26 drivers are registered with both apps, he said.

Mr Adcha also repeated that the PLTO had created stickers for private cars to use so they could be easily identified as

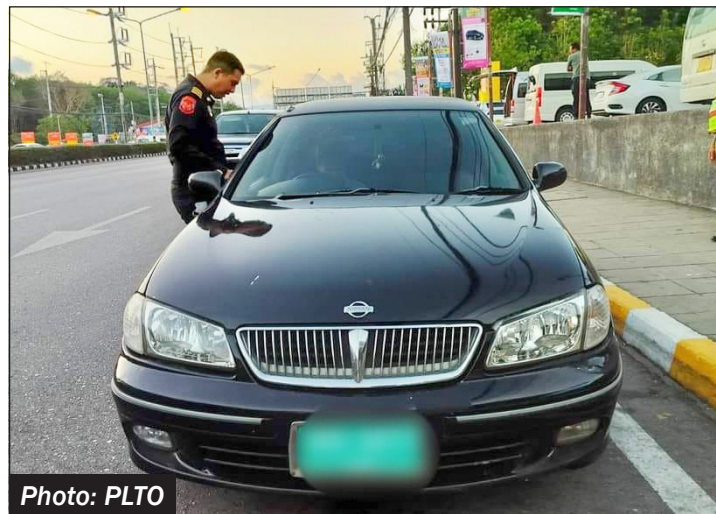


Photo: PLTO

registered through a legal app and certified by the PLTO.

Continuing to refer to taxi-app drivers as 'black plate' taxis, Mr Adcha said that "measures" were to be taken by officials against taxi drivers deemed to be illegal.

As such, a checkpoint was set up in front of Central Festival Phuket shopping mall on the bypass road on Apr 4, with Wichit Police officers present.

The espoused aim of the checkpoints was to "prevent quarrels between taxi service providers". However, the campaign is only targeting drivers using specific ride-sharing apps to pick up passengers, namely Bolt and inDriver.

The checkpoint, in operation from 6pm to 9pm, was set up at the same location where only a

week earlier a 'green plate' taxi driver harassed and verbally abused a woman picking up passengers in a car that has been approved by the PLTO to use with the "approved" apps. The 'green plate' taxi driver was never held accountable for his behaviour, and did not even present himself at Wichit Police Station after the incident.

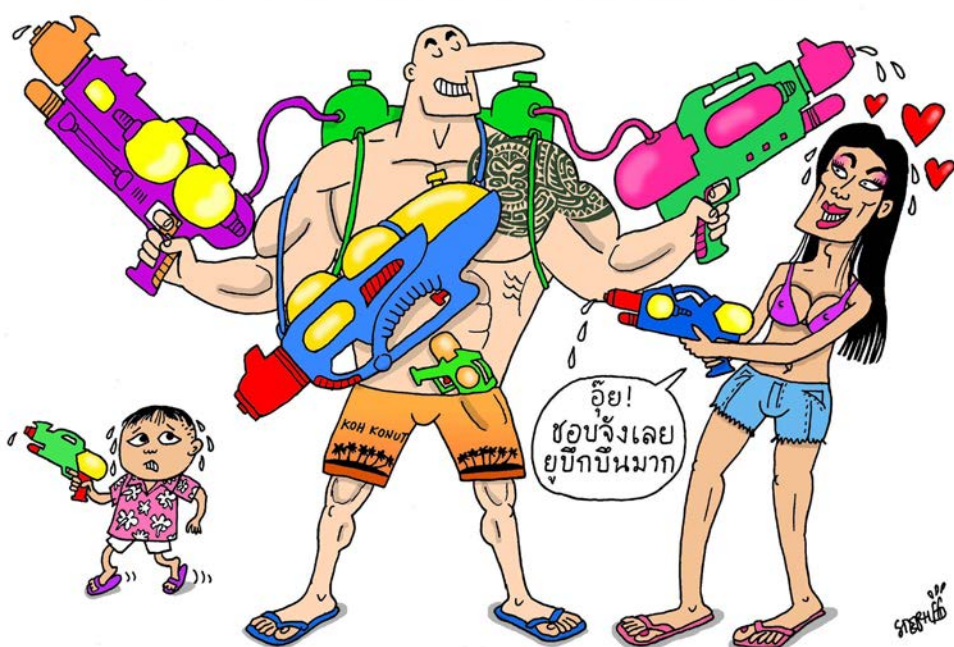
Officers stopped and checked any vehicles whose drivers were suspected of operating illegally as taxi drivers. Throughout the three hours, officers found one driver deemed to be operating illegally. The PLTO marked in its report that its officers were taking action against the driver, and were to "consider" suspending the driver's licence, which has become standard punishment.

FARANG AFFAIRS

By Stephff

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Army inducts only 47

OF THE 433 YOUNG MEN in Kathu District called up to present themselves for conscription duty at Saphan Hin last week, only 47 will serve as soldiers, officials have reported.

The conscription service was conducted at the 'Indoor Sports Stadium' on Apr 3, with Lt Col Kawit Satitsomboon overseeing the proceedings. Lt Col Kawit is Commander-in-Chief of the 5th Infantry Division, serving with the Region 4 Army base in Nakhon Sri Thammarat.

Of the 433 men called to present themselves, 24 chose to enlist voluntarily, while 23 drew the 'red card', meaning they will be obliged to perform mandatory military service. The remaining 386 were exempted from military service.



Photo: NNT

Some of those conscripted formally requested to delay their period of military service.

According to the Government Contact Center (GCC), Thai men who must attend the call-up for conscription in 2023 are those born in 2002, and those born between 1994 and 2001 who had never attended a conscription call-up before or had been called up previously but never completed their military service. Students and others with special circumstances may defer their period of service. The Phuket News

Cash handouts spark concern among voters

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

The Pheu Thai Party's promise to give away B10,000 to anyone 16 or older as part of its proposed economic stimulus policies has been called into question, with concerns over how it will be honoured and paid for.

The party said during an electioneering event on Apr 5 that if it can form a government after the May 14 general election, it will give B10,000 in digital currency to everyone 16 and over to spend on a local economic stimulus project.

The project was described by Paetongtarn Shinawatra, Pheu Thai's chief adviser on public participation and innovation, as a blockchain technology-based effort to help distribute products made in Thailand abroad and bring digital currencies into the kingdom.

The B10,000 is to be spent within a four-kilometre community radius within six months during the project's early phase in a bid to attract



Sansiri magnate Srettha Thavisin, a prime ministerial candidate of the Pheu Thai Party, announces the B10,000 handout policy on Apr 5. Photo: Bangkok Post

international digital currencies.

Pheu Thai's aim is to make Thailand Asean's fintech hub, Ms Paetongtarn said.

Initial responses have been largely negative, with critics arguing it is a cash-for-votes gimmick that targets first-time voters and exploits low-income citizens.

"The policy is disgusting. Do they really think most people are that foolish?" said second-year university student Preeyaphat Raksasana.

"This policy is simply intended to attract public recognition for Pheu Thai and to

win more votes," commented Sunthari Hatthi Sengking, an activist in an informal economy network.

"Business people-turned-politicians don't have to invest in much except in thinking of what to say to get results," said Bandit Paenwiset from the Friends of Women Foundation.

Chaiwut Thanakamansorn, minister of Digital Economy and Society, and also deputy leader of the ruling Palang Pracharath Party, said he needs more time to study the Pheu Thai policy before commenting in detail.

On the surface, he said, the policy appears to be a reinvention of the village fund policy of Thai Rak Thai, which preceded Pheu Thai. That policy involved giving B1 million to every village.

Questions on how the project will be funded have also been raised, with taxpayer money the most likely.

Thanakorn Wangboonkongchana, a minister in the prime minister's office and a chief strategist in the United Thai Nation Party, said he also wanted more detail. He estimated the budget would run to B500 billion if 50 million Thais were each given B10,000.

Creating a digital currency would be a major challenge with implications for Thailand's entire financial system, he added. He suspected the policy was a marketing gimmick.

"Considering Thailand's current financial status, I dare say we are not financially capable of funding populist policies that involve giving away money," said Anusorn Tamajai, a leading economist.



Photo: NNT

Thailand reinstates visa policy for tourists

BANGKOK

THAILAND HAS REIN- stated its 30-day visa exemption policy for tourists from roughly 60 countries, effective Apr 1, marking a reversal of a previous regulation that allowed visitors from these countries to stay up to 45 days without obtaining a prior visa.

Tourists from mainland Europe, the UK, the US, Australia, Saudi Arabia and other countries will now only be granted a 30-day stay in Thailand if they choose to enter the kingdom without obtaining a prior visa.

According to the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), visa-exempt visitors will still have the option to extend their stay once for an additional 30 days if they go through immigration, allow-

ing them to travel the nation for a maximum of 60 days.

Visa-exempt countries will also have another option to obtain a 30-day extension by briefly leaving and re-entering the country. However, land border crossings can only happen twice per calendar year. While there are no official restrictions on entry by air, immigration officers have the discretion to refuse tourists entry and require them to obtain a formal visa from a Thai embassy beforehand.

Additionally, the visa-on-arrival period, which had been extended from 15 to 30 days, has now reverted back to 15 days for countries considered visas on arrival.

The TAT reportedly plans to approach the new government after the general election to potentially revise the visa program again to attract more tourists. NNT

Campaign to reduce road accidents over Songkran

BANGKOK

THAI HEALTH PROMOTION FOUNDATION (ThaiHealth) and its partner agencies have launched a campaign called "Don't Drink and Drive; Topsy Kills" that is hoped will reduce road accidents and fatalities during the Songkran festival.

ThaiHealth Assistant CEO Pairoj Saonum said on Apr 6 that this year's campaign emphasises the impacts that just one glass of alcohol can have on a driver, which can sometimes be fatal.

Dr Pairoj said driving with a blood alcohol content of 0.05% (50 milligrams of alcohol in 100 milliliters of blood) doubles the chance of encountering an accident. A blood alcohol level of 100mg increases the risk of accidents by six times; 150mg of alcohol in 100ml of blood or above raises the risk of an accident by as much as 40 times and causes the driver to lose the ability to control the vehicle.

The campaign highlights the impact of small amounts of alcohol on drivers with statistics indicating that as many as 51% of people killed in road accidents during Songkran festivals are heads of households and 53% of Songkran road accident fatalities occur within a five-kilometre radius of the home.

Penalties for drinking and driving have been raised, with the first offense carrying



Photo: NNT

a maximum penalty of one-year imprisonment or a fine of B5,000 to B20,000.

A repeat offense transpiring within two years entails a maximum prison term of two years or a fine of B50,000 to B100,000 and the court will always prescribe a penalty involving both a jail term and a fine for repeat offenses.

Furthermore, the driver's license of the repeat offender will either be suspended for at least one year or revoked.

Dr. Pairoj said the "safe water play" areas on streets popular with Songkran revellers have been expanded to about 60 locations. The number of alcohol-free water splashing areas has been increased to about 100 nationwide.

Phra Mahathawi Phothimethi, the abbot of Buddhapanya Temple in Nonthaburi province, asked that Buddhists abstain from consuming alcohol during Songkran as it takes away people's conscience and results in a lack of self-control. NNT

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Event 3 - Sun, 25 th Jun	Event 4 - Sun, 27 th Aug
Event 5 - Sun, 22 nd Oct	Event 6 - Sun, 17 th Dec

12:00 Shotgun Start

2,550 THB for Visitor	2,250 THB for Thai Resident	1,950 THB for Aquella Club Card Holder
--------------------------	--------------------------------	---

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18 hole green fee, caddy fee, golf cart & 1 tray of driving range balls Premium dinner buffet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tournament and lucky draw prizes 1 complimentary drink
--	---

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POP QUIZ

1. On which island is Honolulu, the capital of Hawaii, located?
2. Where and when was the first Formula One race held?
3. In which movie would you hear the line 'Don't call me Shirley'?
4. Which organ in the human body produces insulin?
5. The extinct Elephant Bird was native to which island?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Easy

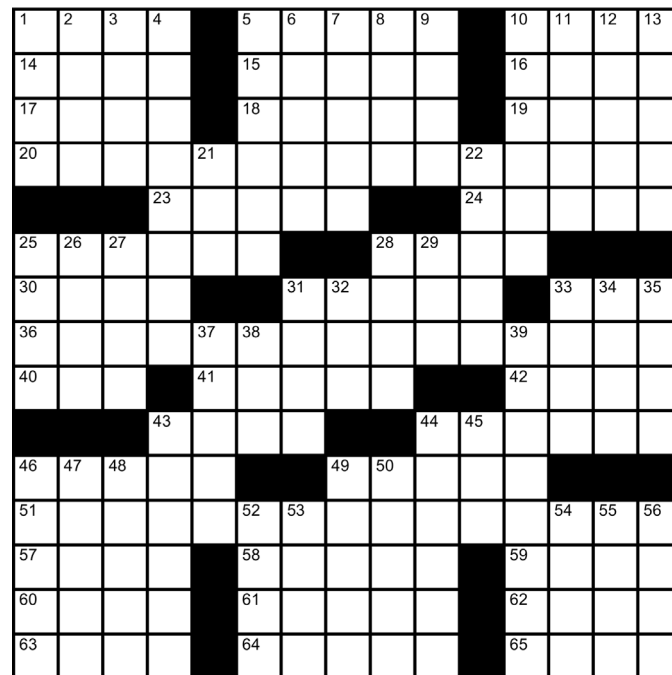
		1						9
	3	7	2		8			
8				7			4	
		4		2	9			
7	1			6			5	4
			7	1		2		
	9			5				3
			9		1	4	8	
3						1		

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across**
1. Ballyhoo
 5. Cut's partner
 10. Crescent point
 14. Coin featuring Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man
 15. Letter opener?
 16. "Finnegans Wake" wife
 17. ___ Rose
 18. Moves a muscle
 19. First fugitive?
 20. Tells fortunes, in a way
 23. Frank kept one
 24. Comfortable
 25. Nickelodeon staples
 28. Sonata, e.g.
 30. Primatologist's study
 31. Player
 33. Finish, with "up"
 36. Tamarindo, for one
 40. Body shop fig.
 41. Greek physician
 42. Part of CNN
 43. ___ over
 44. Horrified
 46. Round trip?
 49. Ancient musical instrument
 51. Likely loser in court
 57. Literally, "injured"
- Down**
1. Seckel, for one
 2. Elegance
 3. Carbamide
 4. "___ Woman," Fleetwood Mac tune
 5. Agnolotti and bucatini, e.g.
 6. Union station?
 7. Serpentine
 8. Over, for short
 9. How Phileas Fogg traveled
 10. Certain beans
 11. Deprive of heat?
 12. Insinuating
 13. Wuss
 21. Anger, e.g.
 22. Grasshopper sound, var.
 25. Newfoundland promontory
- 26. Body of verse**
- 27. Medical advice, often**
- 28. Arab League member**
- 29. Ballpoint, e.g.**
- 31. Embellish**
- 32. Big club**
- 33. Iris holder**
- 34. Puts in stitches**
- 35. Start with while**
- 37. Banded stone**
- 38. Amscrayed**
- 39. Kind of treatment**
- 43. Foot travelers**
- 44. Knitting pattern, var.**
- 45. Wildebeest**
- 46. Young hooter**
- 47. "The Canterbury Tales" pilgrim**
- 48. Supported**
- 49. Boatload**
- 50. Court call**
- 52. "Heartbreak House" writer**
- 53. Hyperbolic tangent**
- 54. The America's Cup trophy, e.g.**
- 55. Indian bread**
- 56. Create an email**

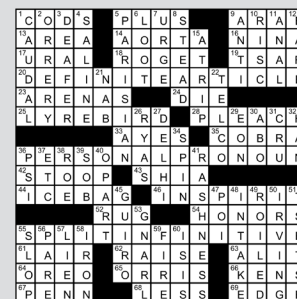
Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

Airplane II (also known as Flying High); 4) Pancreas; 5) Madagascar
1) Oahu; 2) Silverstone, England (May 30, 1950); 3) Airplane or



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

1.2

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

17

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

40

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

5,000

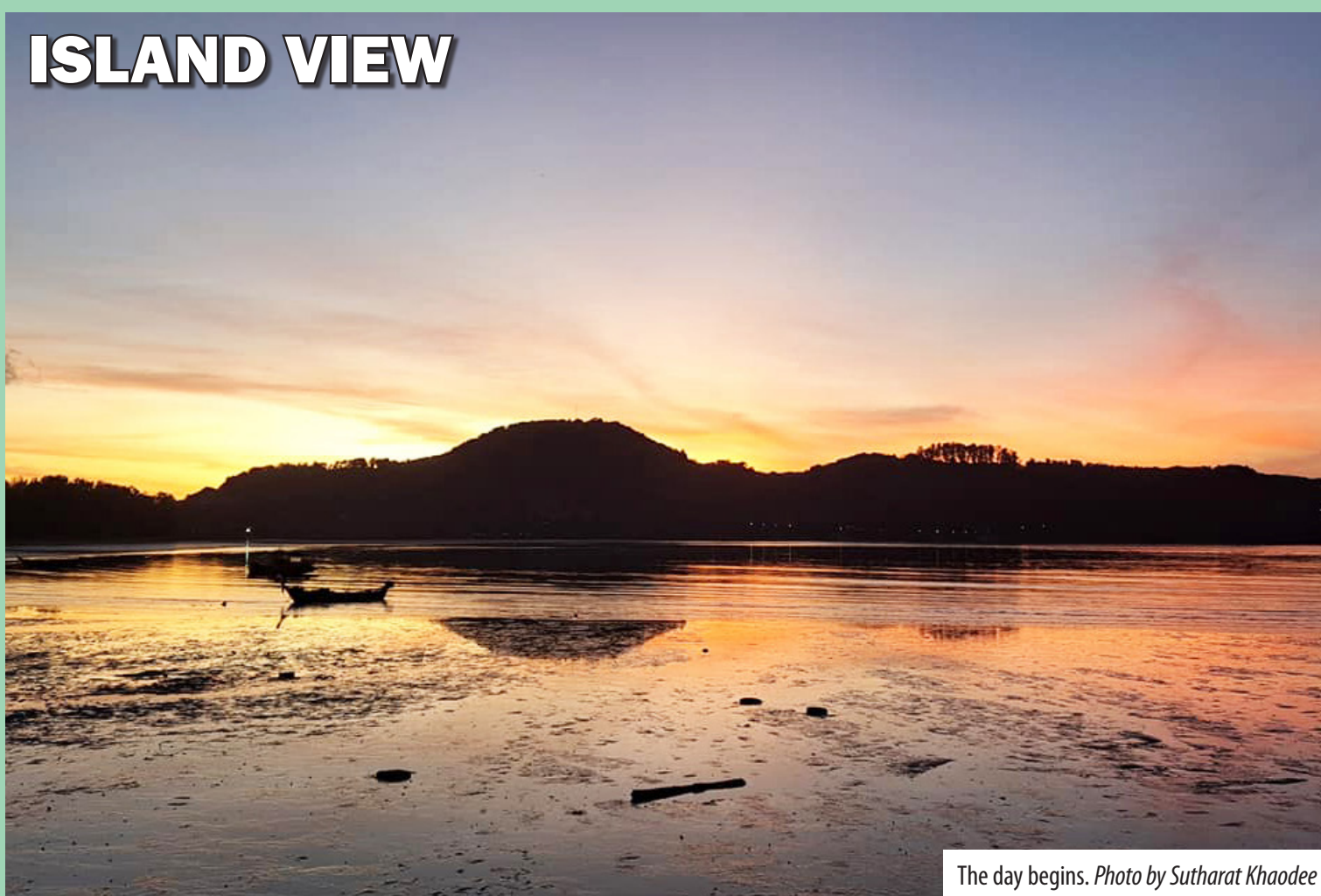
steps per day and sitting for less than 300 minutes is the norm for people who are fit.

265 million

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

Source: *Uberfacts*

ISLAND VIEW



The day begins. Photo by Sutharat Khaodee

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

This week in history

April 14, 1912

The British passenger liner RMS Titanic hits an iceberg in the North Atlantic at 23:40, sinks morning of April 15.

April 15, 2013

Two bombs explode near the finish line at the Boston Marathon in Boston, Massachusetts, killing three people and injuring 264 others.

April 16, 1457 BC

Likely date of the Battle of Megiddo between Thutmose III and a large Canaanite coalition under the King of Kadesh, the first battle to have been recorded in what is accepted as relatively reliable detail.

April 17, 1961

Bay of Pigs Invasion: A group of Cuban exiles financed and trained by the CIA lands at the Bay of Pigs in Cuba with the



Photo: US Coast Guard

aim of ousting Fidel Castro.

April 18, 1930

The BBC announces "there is no news" in their evening report.

April 19, 1984

Advance Australia Fair is proclaimed as Australia's national anthem, and green and gold as the national colours.

April 20, 2010

The Deepwater Horizon drilling rig explodes in the Gulf of Mexico, killing 11 workers and beginning an oil spill that would last six months.

Source: *Wikipedia*



Praeploy Lertrakkul.

Catch and transmit

Phuket through the optic of Niravit Voravanitcha

Anton Makhrov
russian@classactmedia.co.th

In the brave new world of mass production, not only material objects are manufactured at factories – images and ideas are created in a similar manner. Just Google “Phuket” and enjoy the selection of identical “iconic images” of a tropical paradise complete with white sand, blue sea, a long-tail boat in the foreground and a lime rock in the background. This is Phuket as it is marketed to the world, and nobody actually cares that the scene in the picture is literally not Phuket but a different province. Feel Good Inc produces ideas for Dear Valued Customers just as Cadbury makes chocolate bars for them.

Phuket photographer Niravit Voravanitcha – or just Mr Mos as we call him in *The Phuket News* newsroom – is not exactly confronting this approach, he just doesn't follow it and shows Phuket the way he sees it. A XXI century artist, he is pretty far in both time and style from the renowned Thai photographer Saengjun Limlohakul. Mr Mos's art is not the black-and-white ultra-realism of Saeangjun, but rather a colourful fantasy of the island. Yet they have one important thing in common: Niravit takes his shots on the same streets where Saeangjun took his.

One may wonder if Phuket is okay with being portrayed like that. Apparently, yes – as evidenced by Niravit's first-place prize at the most recent Phuket Town photo contest.

Mos got his first camera, a Nikon D3100, as a present for his 18th birthday. Being 28 now, he has spent 10 years catching Phuket's vibe and transmitting it to the audience, now including the discerning judges of photo competitions. And how beautiful his artist's model can be, the main protagonist of the story is Phuket.

A Phuket native, Niravit clearly reveals his origin when asked about his favourite places on the island. “The Old Town, the Windmill Viewpoint...,” he starts listing, and I cannot help but expect Bang Wad Reservoirs to follow. “And Bang Wad Lake in Kathu,” Mr Mos concludes.

I find Bang Wad picturesque but a little bit lacking in action. But Mr Mos – a Bangkok graduate in computer graphics – knows how to fill empty

spaces and turn a Phuket landscape into a scene from *Frozen* or brighten it up in some other way.

Niravit's top spots are Thalang Rd and Phang Nga Rd after dark, when the Sino-Portuguese buildings are extravagantly coloured with assorted lights. His award-winning photo set was taken during the Chinese New Year celebrations, when the Town is specifically generous in lights and colours.

“Light has an amazing power of transforming the emotion your photos transmit,” says Mr Mos.

The photographer starts his editing with light correction before proceeding to retouching, placing accents and more. According to Niravit, an initial .raw file undergoes a 50% transformation on its way to “Mosholl Jpg”, his gallery posted on Facebook.

This is pretty different from Saengjun's photography, which pictured life the way it was. Unlike the old master, Mr Mos not only pictures Phuket, he also paints over the original island fabrique using Phuket as a canvas.

I specifically love Niravit's shots where the Sino-Portuguese Old Town tries on some cyberpunk garments bridging 1907 and 2077. Apparently, the artists never meant anything like this or tried to provoke such an associative flow. But hey-ho, even in Phuket androids dream of electric sheep and Adam Jensen and Keira Knightley stopping a songthaew with a wave of a shotgun in hand.

This is the essence of art and this is how it works. By capturing and sharing an image, an artist starts a chain reaction with unpredictable final interpretations and emotional responses from the observer. Art is relatable, marketing is not (though trying to mimic).

Concept, location and compositions are the holy trinity of a great photo, Mr Mos explains. Starting with an idea, he then picks location, light, internal composition, focus, etc.

“First, know what you want to share. You need to understand what you are doing, so start with a clear concept,” he says.

Apparently, some do it vice-versa – kickstarted by the power of the moment, they formulate the concept when the creative locomotive is already steaming ahead. The order of steps is arguable as at the end of the day; nine out of 10 Phuket photographers do not have any of their own messages at all.

Relying on premanufactured templates, they produce quality images for quality consumers without any quest for their own vision. Kipple drives out nonkipple, but we are happy to have few who if not exactly confront it, but at least do not support it.

“Yet, Mr Mos claims that he is ready to make a photo-shoot for a paying client and assures he would be even able to keep his vision of Phuket in it.”

Niravit ‘Mos’ Voravanitcha is Class Act Media's graphic designer in charge of the visual appearance of The Phuket News, IMAGE asia and other products’.



Mr Mos.

To enjoy more of his photography or get in contact, check out Facebook.com/MoshollJpg.

WINDOW ON PHUKET

April/May 2023 issue



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FRI 21 APR



Skål International Phuket Dinner at RPM

Get aboard the 40 ft catamaran Sunset Traveler for a sunset cruise on the Andaman Sea. With a tasting from Blackbird Group and Italian dinner on the boardwalk at Isola Ristorante at Royal Phuket Marina. The date is Friday, April 21. Max capacity for 26 people on board the catamaran and in the restaurant. Dress: smart casual. Registration - 1645-1715, Sundowner cruise on the Sunset Traveler - 1715-1845, Tasting and Italian dinner from 1845. Visit - facebook.com/SkalPhuket

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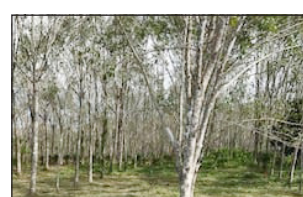
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Lampard returns to Chelsea

FOOTBALL

AFP

Frank Lampard has made a surprise return to Chelsea after he was appointed caretaker manager until the end of the season on Apr 6, just over two years after he was sacked by the Premier League club.

Lampard, Chelsea's record goalscorer, previously managed the Blues from July 2019 until January 2021, when he was replaced by Thomas Tuchel.

The 44-year-old's unexpected move back to Stamford Bridge came after Tuchel's successor Graham Potter was dismissed on Apr 2 with the club in the bottom half of the Premier League.

Former England midfielder Lampard had been out of a job since January when he was sacked by relegation-threatened Everton after less than a year in charge.

Lampard claimed he did not have to swallow his pride to return to Chelsea despite his brutal exit during Roman Abramovich's reign as owner.

The Blues legend couldn't refuse the opportunity to help a club so close to his heart after his 13-year spell as a Premier League and Champions League-winning Chelsea player.

"It's a pretty easy decision for me. This is my club. I have a lot of emotions and feelings," Lampard said.

"It's a big challenge, but aren't they all? I'm ready to put my work into this challenge and take it day by day. I'll give my utmost to give the fans what



Former Chelsea player and manager Lampard has returned to the troubled club in a caretaker capacity until the end of the season. Photo: AFP

they want until the end of the season."

COOPER AVOIDS NOTTS FOREST CHOP

Meanwhile, Nottingham Forest owner Evangelos Marinakis has said Steve Cooper will remain in charge of the struggling Premier League club but warned results must "improve immediately."

Forest's 2-1 defeat at relegation-rivals Leeds on Apr 4 extended their winless league run to eight matches and left them, at time of press, 17th in the table – above the drop zone only on goal difference.

But in a statement on the club's website, Marinakis said he was standing by Cooper after reports emerged that the coach faced the sack.

"We wish to end the speculation and

the false and disruptive reporting in the media to confirm that Steve Cooper remains our manager at Nottingham Forest," said the Greek billionaire.

"We have all been disappointed with recent performances and it is very clear that a lot of hard work needs to be done to address this urgently. Results and performances must improve immediately."

Cooper, who won promotion to the English top flight with Forest last year, said he trusted in himself and his players to secure their Premier League status.

Marinakis' comments only days after Chelsea sacked Potter and Leicester City parted ways with Brendan Rodgers, bringing the number of managers to lose their job in the English top flight this season to an unprecedented 13 in total.



Issara Sritaro. Photo: Bangkok Post

War Elephants draw tough group at the SEA Games

FOOTBALL

THAILAND HAVE BEEN drawn into a tough group in the men's football tournament at the Southeast Asian (SEA) Games in Cambodia next month.

The Thais will face defending champions Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore and Laos in Group B, following the draw made on Apr 5.

Group A, which looks much weaker, features hosts Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Timor Leste.

The men's football competition, which is for U23 players, is scheduled from Apr 29 to May 16. The SEA Games will officially begin on May 5 and end on May 17.

Despite the tough draw, however, Thailand U23 coach Issara Sritaro remained upbeat.

"I am OK with the draw," Sritaro said immediately after the draw had been made.

"We want to win every game although the match against Vietnam will be a difficult one."

In the women's event, Thailand will meet Cambodia, Singapore and Laos in Group B.

In Group A are defending champions Vietnam, the Philippines, Myanmar, Malaysia and Indonesia.

The women's tournament will take place from May 2-15.

The Thai men and women both lost to Vietnam in the final title matches at the previous SEA Games in Hanoi in May 2022.

It was a major disappointment as the Sports Authority of Thailand had targeted gold medals in both events and will be looking to go one better next month. Bangkok Post

Gender equality inevitable in F1, says Red Bull chief Horner

FORMULA ONE

RED BULL CHIEF CHRISTIAN Horner says it was inevitable that gender equality would reach Formula One amid reports that a team employing an equal split between men and women was looking to enter the sport.

Former British American Racing (BAR) founder Craig Pollock told CNN on Mar 25 he wanted to debut "Formula Equal" from the 2025 or 2026 season onwards.

The aim was to have a 50% split between males and females across the whole organisation, from the cockpit to the engineers and the boardroom.

He has reportedly submitted an expression of interest to racing's governing body, the FIA, which opened up the process for finding a potential 11th team earlier this year.

Horner, when asked about Pollock's plan, said he believed gender equality in the traditionally male-dominated sport would happen "naturally" anyway.

"I think it's fantastic to see the amount of girls, females, that are showing interest in Formula One now and we're seeing it at all levels," the Briton said in Melbourne ahead of the Australian Grand Prix on Mar 31.

"I think the interest is growing... it's appealing to more women to get involved in the sport, whether that's from an engineering basis or across all aspects of the organisation.



Christian Horner. Photo: AFP

"As the sport does become more accessible, and we are pushing to make it more accessible, I think that it is something that will naturally happen anyway."

Pollock, formerly the manager of 1997 F1 champion Jacques Villeneuve, acknowledged funding such a venture would be hugely expensive but said he was in intense discussions with "a Gulf-area country" about bankrolling it.

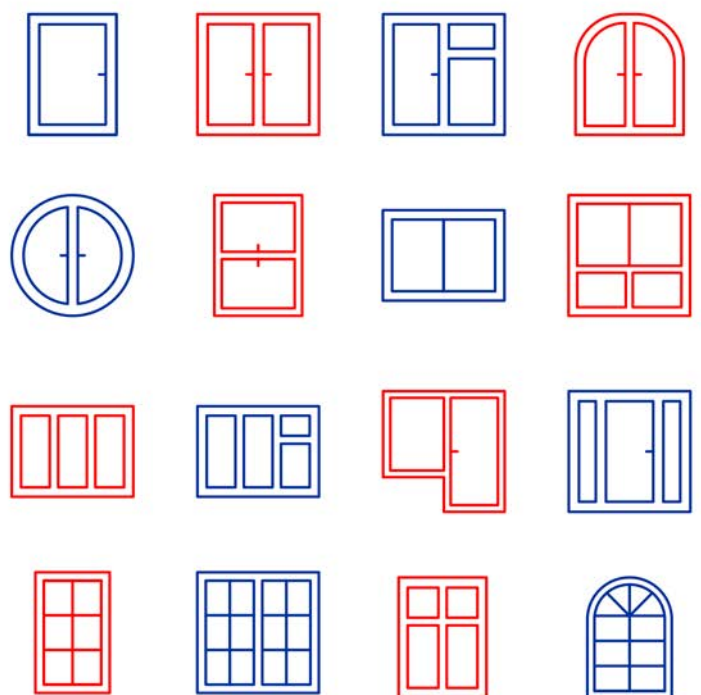
Alpine team boss Otmar Szafnauer said gender equality was "important to everybody in Formula One".

"So anything we can do to increase diversity in F1 I think everyone here would welcome it," he told reporters in Melbourne.

"But I don't know anything other than what I briefly read about their (Formula Equal) entry." AFP



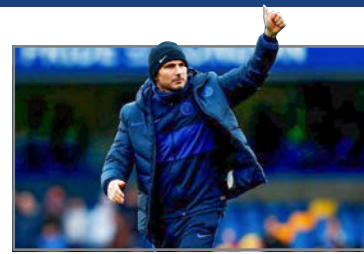
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Lampard back in Chelsea hot seat > p11

NO FOOLS!

A-Team star lights up Fight Circus 6

Jackson and Sapp (right) take on Nutt and Wood in the 'Siamese Boxing' twin fight. Photo: Fight Circus

MMA

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With Phuket becoming a major hub of combat sports, from Muay Thai to MMA and bareknuckle boxing, it was only a matter of time before it would all be flipped on its head.

Fight Circus 6 'The Rise of Sloppy Balboa' took place on April Fool's Day (Apr 1) at Illuzion Nightclub in Patong, with some legendary names lending their star power to the weirdest show this side of the cage.

The main event featured none other than MMA legend Quinton 'Rampage' Jackson, known to many for his portrayal of B.A. Barracus

in the 2010 film adaptation of the popular 1980s TV show The A-Team, whose regular catchphrase of "Pity the fool" has become the stuff of popular culture legend.

Jackson is a former UFC Light Heavyweight Champion who unified the Pride Middleweight Championship belt and also had a successful stint as a professional wrestler.

His partner in the ring for a 'Siamese Boxing' twin fight was veteran Bob Sapp, a former American Football player who played for both the Chicago Bears and the Minnesota Vikings in the late 1990s. Since retiring he has also been a kickboxer, professional wrestler, actor and mixed martial artist, who is currently under contract with Rizin Fighting Federation in Japan.

Ringleader and Fight Circus founder, Jon Nutt, a veteran of the combat sports scene in Thailand, led the festivities throughout the evening, which was streamed on their website and Fite TV.

Jackson and Sapp – the 'Twopollo Ramsapp Creed' team – took on Nutt and highly-regarded fight trainer Andrew Wood of Bang Tao Muay Thai in the 'Siamese Boxing' twin fight.

This entailed Jackson and Sapp, strapped together in an oversized shirt, throw hands against the 'Sloppy Balboa' duo of Nutt and Wood, who were also shoulder-to-shoulder in their massive shirt.

Jackson and Sapp displayed their intent from the outset and Nutt was soon dropped with a vicious body punch in the first round, dragging Wood to the

canvas with him as he fell.

The bout lasted two rounds of one-and-a-half minutes each, despite multiple stoppages, and the crowd were left demanding more even after Jackson and Sapp were declared the winners.

'WHEEL OF VIOLENCE'

Jackson and Sapp's victory was the culmination of the typically odd yet humorously entertaining card that also included a blindfolded Muay Thai fight, a two-versus-one fight, a 'ring girls tug of war' and a bareknuckle bout between two motorbike drivers, for the chance to win a brand-new Honda Click motorbike.

In addition, the night saw a 'Human Piñata' match in which Steve 'Panda' Banks, wearing a backpack filled

with cash, fought off against six other fighters. The fighters who managed to successfully rip off the backpack and take the money won the cash.

The night also saw a 'Wheel of Violence' matchup between Joel Fratelo and Kushal Vyas, in which both young fighters would spin a wheel and get into a scrap dependant upon where the wheel would land. This included a 2-minute Muay Thai fight, and a 3-minute MMA bout, which would see Fratello victorious.

Fight Circus 6 did include an MMA fight, which put Kyoken Tampiyanan against Phuket-based fighter Campbell Symes, who was making his debut. Symes won the bout in under two minutes to start off with a 1-0 in his career.

Fight Circus has certainly

found a home in Phuket, with several events having taken place on the island over the last two years. Nutt, whose previous ventures included the Full Metal Dojo MMA promotion that was largely based out of Bangkok, has no plans of slowing down, with more events in the works.

Sapp had taken part in previous Fight Circus events at the Rawai Boxing Stadium although Fight Circus 6 is certainly their biggest production to date, with UFC and Pride legend Jackson by far the biggest star involved. Fight Circus announced his addition to the card earlier this year, which made headlines worldwide and shone a spotlight on the event, given the stardom of the 44-year-old former MMA champion.

Krabi to Phuket swim aims to raise marine conservation efforts

SWIMMING

A GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS will soon be aiming to set a national record by swimming from Krabi to Phuket via Phang Nga as part of a marine conservation and awareness project.

'Sea You Strong' is a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) consisting of a small team of people dedicated to raising awareness of marine conservation by collecting rubbish and cleaning beaches, cliffs and bodies of water.

Their latest initiative entitled 'Project Sivasamut' will see participants swim approximately 70 kilometres through three separate provinces on Apr 27-29. The objective is to create awareness of environmental preservation by encouraging the care and rehabilitation of natural resources, biodiversity and the habitat of aquatic animals.

Siranat 'Sai' Scott from Sea You Strong will swim 40km alone, with around 35 friends covering individual sections of the additional 30km. If achieved it will officially be a new national record for individual and



Photo: Sea You Strong / Facebook

group sea swimming distances.

The swimmers will set off on Apr 27 from Long Beach in Nuea Khlong District, Krabi and end up at Ao Por in the north east of Phuket two days later, stopping at selected islands

en route, including Koh Poda, Koh Daeng, Koh Hong and Koh Yao Yai.

Mr Siranat said the idea came after seeing similar initiatives that had used swimming as a means to successfully raise awareness to environmental challenges, adding that it aligns perfectly with Krabi's slogan of being the 'green city'.

The 26-year-old Mr Siranat, who is half-Thai half-Scottish, has been involved in marine conservation projects for many years now and regularly swims out to collect the remains of old discarded fishing nets which could harm wildlife.

He said it is hoped the upcoming swim will encourage locals and tourists alike to act responsibly in regards to the plight of local waters, which are facing monumental challenges due to ongoing pollution, most of which is man made.

"The sea belongs to us all. We are doing this for the sea and to protect the animal habitat," he said.

He further explained that any other conservation groups interested in getting involved or collaborating on future projects can contact the group via their Facebook page.

The Phuket News