

TEENS ARRESTED FOR POST-BRAWL GUNPLAY > PAGE 5

SAFETY OVERDRIVE



A tourist rental jeep overturned after hitting one of the roadside boulders on the hill road through Kamala on July 5. Photo: Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee / Facebook

RENTAL OPERATORS, TOURISTS TARGETTED IN ROAD SAFETY PUSH

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The increasing number of people killed on Phuket's roads, especially tourists, has prompted Phuket officials to ramp up their campaign to improve road safety on the island.

Officials, led by Phuket Governor Narong Woonciw as the director of the Phuket Road Safety Center Committee, held a series of meetings at the Phuket Provincial Administration Center, home of Phuket Provincial Hall, last week to announce the revitalised campaign.

The campaign is called "Road Safety in the Phuket area", with the

focus on reducing the number of deaths and injuries resulting from road accidents in Phuket.

At the key meeting, held on July 3, with officials from all relevant departments were Phuket Vice Governor Anupap Rodkwan Yodrambam, Phuket Provincial Police Deputy Commander Pol Col Jirasak Siemsak, Chalong Hospital Director Dr Chuchat Nitwattana, Somsak Phoksueng of the Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO) and Udomporn Kan, Chief of the Phuket Provincial branch of the the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM-Phuket).

Also present was Dr Wiwat Seetamanotch, Manager of the World Health Organisation (WHO) – Royal Thai

Government Country Cooperation Strategy for Road Safety Programme

Dr Wiwat is of special importance to Phuket with regards to road safety. He is Vice President of the Provincial Traffic Accident Prevention Support Plan. As a former Deputy Chief of the Phuket Provincial Health Office, he has long championed road-safety initiatives in the province.

He is also the person who in 2015 brought to public attention Phuket's special place as the most dangerous province in the country for road accidents, at a time when Thailand was ranked, according to officially recognised statistics, as the most dangerous country in the world.

Road accidents are one of the main

reasons of death among the people in Phuket that causes the loss of both life and property and is a huge obstacle to economic development, said an official report of the meeting.

On average, 135 people a year, an average of 11 people a month, are killed in road accidents in Phuket, but the situation is becoming increasingly worse, the report said.

From January through April this year, 64 people died in road accidents in Phuket, compared with 41 deaths during the same period last year, the report noted.

On average 16 people were killed each month over the first four months of this year, with most of those killed on motorbikes. Of the total number...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

NEWS PAGE 3

Residents fight Navy over forest rights



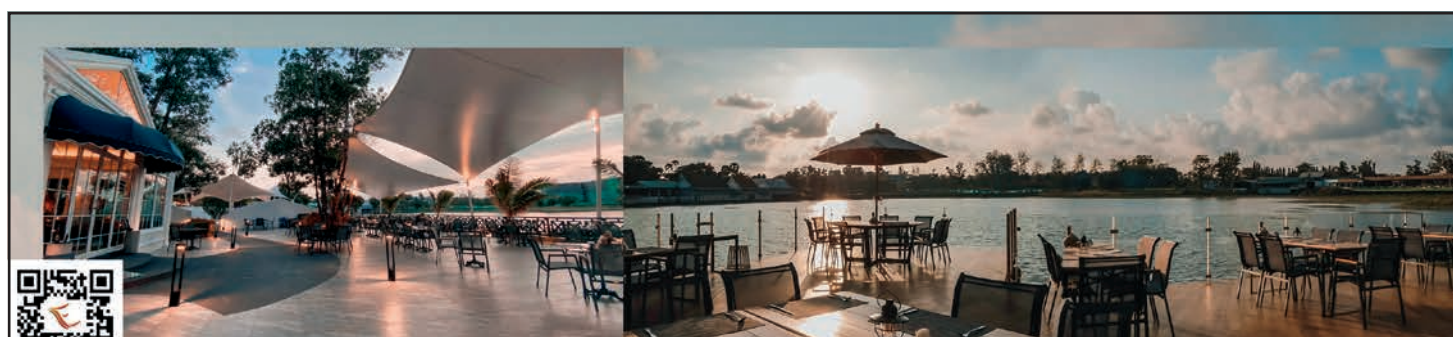
LIFE PAGE 8

Corporations playing the enviro-game



SPORT PAGE 12

Success for Thai athletes at Berlin Special Olympics



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News



Raids target bars for minors, late trading > p4



Governor Narong at the meeting. Photo: PR Phuket

10,000 Phuket children not attending schools

MORE THAN 10,000 children in Phuket are not registered as attending any educational institution on the island, Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew was told at a meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall last week.

At the meeting, held on July 6 to focus on the number of children in Phuket, were Phuket Vice Governor Amnuay Pinsuwan and Phuket MP Thitikan Thitipruethikul, along with Dr Nucharat Prasitsilpchai of the Phuket Provincial Education Area office.

Dr Nucharat pointed out that a survey had identified 10,935 children aged 6-15 who were not listed in the 2022 education system.

Of those, 7,650 children were in Muang District, 1,595 were in Thalang District and 1,690 were in

Kathu District.

Among those, 83 cases were confirmed to be caused by factors such as “family status”, disability and relocation, she said.

Officials were instructed to investigate and provide assistance to have the youths enter the education system, said an official report of the meeting.

Governor Narong also asked education officials to have students and school staff made aware of the Traffy Fondue app by announcing it at the school morning assembly for the national anthem.

Schools were also asked to urge students to observe road safety measures, and to always wear a helmet when riding a motorbike, as the driver or as a passenger.

The Phuket News

Monsoon downpours see island areas flood, again

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Thai Meteorological Department (TMD) earlier this week forecast heavy, scattered thundershowers to continue through to this weekend (July 14-15), with warnings of heavy rain and flash flooding after heavy downpours caused flooding across the island last weekend.

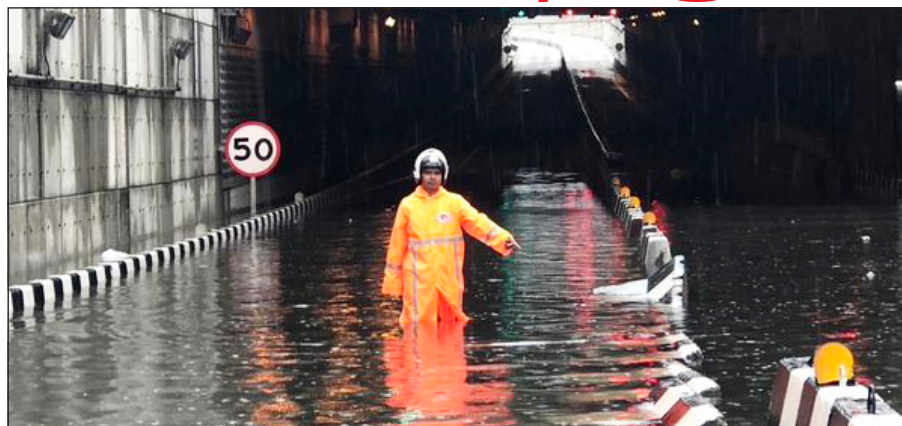
The island was put on flood alert last Sunday (July 9) after deluges caused minor flooding in Phuket Town and other areas of the island. In some areas, the flooding was not so minor.

For the 24 hours from 7am last Sunday through to 7am Monday, the northern area of Thalang received 43.1mm of rainfall, while Thalang Town received 78.6mm and Phuket Town received 60.2mm of rainfall, reported the Southern Western Meteorological Center.

Patong suffered its usual onslaught of rising floodwaters disrupting traffic, while the rising water level in the Bang Yai Canal, which flows through the heart of Phuket Town, had emergency responders on watch.

Wichit Municipality deployed teams to clear drains to help floodwaters recede, and provided sandbags to people with homes and businesses not raised enough to avoid minor flooding.

Phuket Marine Office Chief Natchaphong Pranit urged all boats setting sail during the heavy weather to comply with all water safety regulations. Officers were assigned to inspect tour boats and ferries still operating to ensure all passengers were wearing life jackets and



Traffic Police were forced to close the Darasamut Underpass due to rising floodwaters last Sunday (July 9). Photo: Phuket Info Center

that boats operating had the required safety equipment on board and that it was fully operational.

Meanwhile, municipality workers across the island began their cleanup operations on Monday, and continued their efforts into Tuesday.

UNDERPASS WOES

Traffic Police last Sunday were forced to close the Darasamut Underpass in front of the Central Floresta shopping mall on the bypass road due to rising floodwater in the tunnel, causing major traffic delays throughout the area. The tunnel was closed at about 12:30pm, with Wichit Police reporting floodwater of at least 30cm deep in the underpass.

Police reported finding licence plates from cars that were dislodged while driving through the flooded underpass. The owners of the licence plates, Phuket ฅ 220 (“GorTor 220”) and Phuket ฅ 6959 (“KorChor 6959”), were asked to contact Wichit Police Station to reclaim them.

By 7am Monday (July 10), the tunnel was reopened to normal traffic, in both directions, reported the Phuket Info Center, noting that the pump in the tunnel was now “disabled”.

Phuket MP Chalermpong Sangdee on Monday reported that a budget request had been filed to install new pumps to help cope with floodwaters in the underpass.

All three pumps in the underpass have repeatedly failed, he said. A pump provided by the Phuket Provincial Administration Organisation (PPAO) has been installed on site, but is unable to cope with the volume of water flowing into the underpass with each heavy downpour. The PPAO pump was installed “temporarily” after the underpass was closed due to flooding in May.

The “relevant authorities”, namely the Phuket Highways Office, have launched a project to “fix the problem”, Mr Chalermpong said. They have 120 days to complete the project, which is budgeted at B1.889 million, he said.

Rising number of tourist deaths on Phuket roads spurs safety push

Continued from page 1

...of people killed, 93% were people riding motorbikes, while motorbike riders accounted for 89% of the people injured in road accidents.

At the current rate, Phuket was likely to see more than 200 people die on the island’s roads within the coming year, the meeting was told.

In response, all government departments and agencies on the island are to enforce heightened measures to improve road safety.

Officials are to launch awareness campaigns calling for 100% helmet use by all people riding on motorbikes, for all people in cars to wear seat belts, for



A foreigner waits for traffic lights to change in Phuket, as seen in a video that was widely shared across Thai social media this past week. Screenshot: Morning News TV 3

people to not speed or drunk drive and to slow down when approaching pedestrian crossings, and to give ambulances and emergency vehicles clearance to pass unimpeded,

The policies must be made in writing by the head of each department, it was noted.

Of note, the Royal Thai Police have issued a public notice warning motorists that

from July 1 police will be enforcing the ‘100% helmet use law, with ‘100% use’ meaning that the chin strap must be used when wearing a helmet.

Motorbike riders caught not wearing a helmet faced a fine of up to B2,000 and having one point deducted from their licence, Royal Thai Police warned.

RENTALS TO TOURISTS

Car and motorbike rental operators were singled out to ramp up their efforts to make sure that tourists renting their vehicles have the correct licences and are aware of the road safety laws and the dangers on Phuket’s roads.

Motorbike rental opera-

tors were especially asked to make sure that tourists renting their motorbikes could safely operate one.

A special meeting of dozens of rental operators was held on Monday (July 10) at the offices of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO), where officials recognised that many of the foreign tourists who come to Phuket use rental cars and motorbikes to visit various attractions in the area.

From January through April this year, 24 foreign nationals were killed in road accidents in Phuket, the rental operators were told.

Nine of those killed were Russians, four were Myanmar nationals and two were Danish nationals. All of them

were killed while riding motorbikes.

All rental operators were asked to ensure that the people renting their vehicles had the capability to safely control the car or motorbike they were renting.

They must also ensure that the people renting the car or motorbike were told that they must obey all road safety laws, especially that motorbike riders and passengers must wear a helmet at all times.

In launching the new campaign, officials also asked especially for Phuket people to be a good host and a good role model for tourists by practising safe, disciplined driving for tourists to follow.

Residents fight for forest rights

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

More than 100 local residents occupying land within the Bang Khanun protected national forest on Monday (July 10) presented a formal request for the Royal Thai Navy to remove a barbed-wire fence from the area.

The request, addressed to Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew, was received at Phuket Provincial Auditorium by Phuket Vice Governor Anupap Rodkwan Yodrambam.

Leading the group was Uthai Suksirisamphan, who also called for the Royal Thai Navy Third Area Command (3AC) to hold a public meeting with villagers to “solve the problem” of villagers being ejected from the protected forest.

The fear of being evicted from the protected forest area follows the Royal Forest Department granting the Navy use of 3,763 rai in the forest to create a new home for the 22nd Anti-Aircraft Battalion, the 2nd Anti-Aircraft Regiment, the Anti-Aircraft Command Unit, an Air Defense and Coastal Defense Center and the 4th



The complaint was submitted on Monday (July 10). Photo: PR Phuket

Naval Police Battalion of the Naval Police Department.

Mr Uthai on Monday claimed that the Navy has never held such a meeting, despite a public meeting being held in April. Present for that meeting were representatives from the Phuket Provincial office of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE Phuket), the Phuket branch of the Royal Forest Department (RFD), local village headman (Phu Yai Baan) in the area as well as local

residents, including those who live in the protected forest.

Regardless, Mr Uthai said on Monday there should be a public meeting to let local residents decide whether or not the Navy should be allowed to use the land.

“There are crops of people who have been living and making a living continuously in the area since 1998,” Mr Uthai said.

Not recognised was that Vice Admiral Arpakorn Yookongkaew, Commander

of the Royal Thai Navy Third Area Command, has already acknowledged 265 “cases” that had been approved use of areas within the forest, which has been officially classified as “degraded forest”.

However, there are many others with no such legal right to occupy areas in the forest. Such people will be forced to vacate the area, he said.

During an inspection of the forest by V/Adm Arpakorn last month, one illegal occupier was found with a building on

site that clearly contravened any legal use of land within the forest. The occupier was given 15 days to remove the structure, or the Navy would do it for them. The move was praised with much support online.

Mr Uthai on Monday said local residents for many years had filed many objections to the Navy’s plans to build facilities in the forest. Complaints had been filed with the Ombudsman’s Office, the Royal Forest Department, the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment and even now-caretaker Prime Minister Gen Prayut Chan-ocha.

All of the complaints received no response, Mr Uthai said.

Mr Uthai argued that the Navy had no right to install the barbed-wire fence in the forest.

He also argued that the Royal Forest Department had no right to prosecute nine people for illegally occupying areas within the forest as they had already been granted TorPor 4 use of the land.

The Royal Forest Department had handed cases over to the Department of Special Investigation (DSI) to issue

summons to the accused, he said.

The nine each face a charge of “construction, clearing or burning of forests, or committing any acts that destroy forests or occupy forests for themselves or others without permission from the competent official” according to the Forest Act 1941 and according to the National Reserved Forest Act 1964.

Vice Governor Anupap, received the complaint and assured that he would pass it on to the Governor and relevant government agencies.

He also suggested that the issue be presented to Phuket MPs to consider whether relevant and problematic laws need to be amended, especially in the case of overlapping land issues between the state and the people.

Of note, Mr Uthai and the villagers occupying land in the protected forest have never recognised that their claim to using the land may end at the Royal Forest Department’s discretion.

Also of note, the Royal Thai Navy has never explained the strategic necessity of building the military installations in Phuket.

Man dies from injuries after jump from Wat Chalong chedi

A 35-YEAR-OLD RUSSIAN MAN died after jumping from the roof of the main chedi at Wat Chalong temple last Friday (July 7)

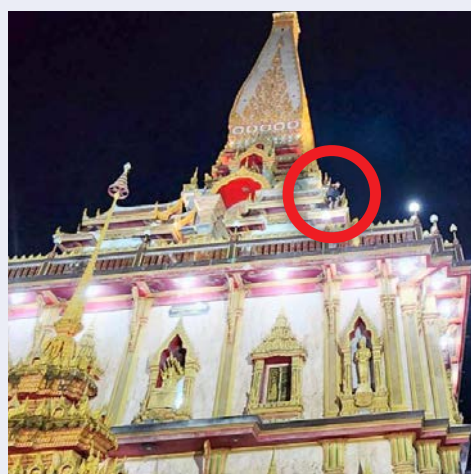
Phuket Tourist Police Bureau confirmed at around 8am last Saturday (July 8) that the Russian man, whose name was not released, had succumbed to his injuries.

The man was spotted on the roof of the chedi at around 5:30pm last Friday, reported the Phuket provincial office of the Public Relations Department of Thailand (PR Phuket), citing a report by Phuket office of National Broadcasting and Telecommunications (NBT Phuket).

Having been notified of the incident, police officers, rescue workers, and medical personnel rushed to the scene. Dozens of onlookers did the same while even more tuned in to a live broadcast on social media. Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew was among the onlookers.

Despite hours of efforts to persuade the man to come down, the foreigner remained on the roof of the sacred building, prompting rescue workers to take physical action. By that time an inflatable rescue airbag was placed by the northeastern corner of the chedi, where the man was still sitting dozens of metres above the ground.

At around 8:40pm, while rescue workers were attempting to restrain him on the roof, the man jumped down from the roof of the chedi. He landed on the safety trampoline.



The Russian man on the roof of the chedi. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

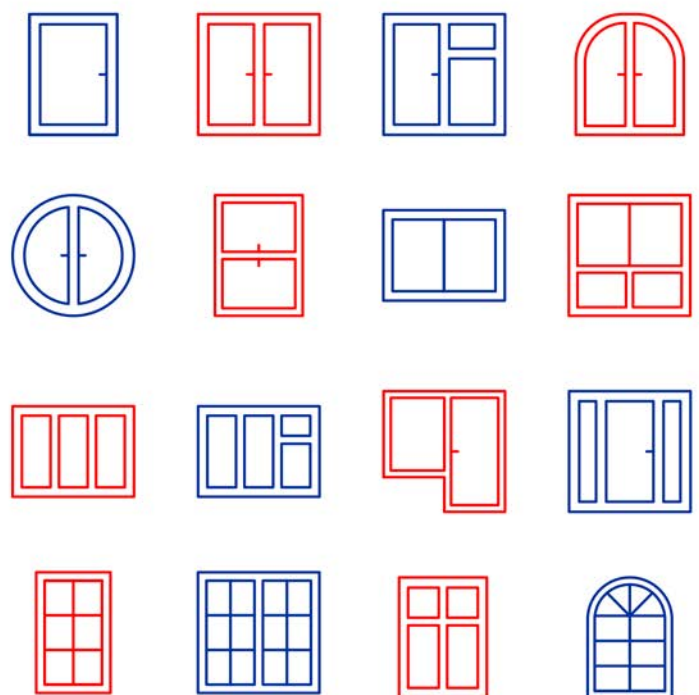
Rescue workers rushed him on a stretcher through the internal chambers of the chedi and loaded him into an ambulance. The ambulance then sped off to an undisclosed hospital.

Phuket officials made no statements regarding the man’s condition or his identity. It was only confirmed that he was taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital after jumping from the roof and landing on the air cushion.

If you or anyone you know is in need of emotional support and counselling, please contact the Samaritans of Thailand at their 24-hour hotline 02-113-6789 (English & Thai) or the Thai Mental Health Hotline at 1323 (Thai). The Phuket News



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CONTACT US

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PURIYA BEAVAN
Editor**CHRIS HUSTED**
Executive Editor
084 307 7408
execeditor@classactmedia.co.th**BEN TIREBUCK**
News / Sport Editor
061 806 8132
editor3@classactmedia.co.th**CHUTHARAT 'UM' PLERIN**
Thai Editor
088 766 1615
thai@classactmedia.co.th**JASON BEAVAN**
General Manager
086 479 7471
gm@classactmedia.co.th**SIRIPORN (NOK) SEANGMAS**
Sales Support
086 479 7470
sales@classactmedia.co.th**NIRAVIT 'MOS' VORAVANITCHA**
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SAT JULY 15



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Wind 11 m/s

MON JULY 17



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Wind 4 m/s

TUE JULY 18



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Wind 4 m/s

WED JULY 19



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Wind 4 m/s

THU JULY 20



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Wind 4 m/s

SIM card probe nets man in Phuket Town

PHUKET PROVINCIAL Police last week made a second arrest linked to the illegal sale and distribution of SIM cards.

Officers led by Pol Maj Suwisit Khirirak and Pol Maj Seksit Kulcharoen, investigators with the Phuket Provincial Police, arrested the suspect, named by police only as 38-year-old "Mr Korn" (real name withheld) about 1pm on July 5.

Korn was arrested in the Phuket Wittayalai area on Chumphon Rd, Phuket Town, Provincial Police said in their report.

Korn was found in possession with 20 "ready-to-use" SIM cards and two Thai ID card readers.

A subsequent search of a location not disclosed saw officers seize 27 unregistered SIM cards and 15 more Thai ID card readers, said the Provincial Police report.

Korn was taken to Phuket City Police Station to be charged for the illegal promotion and distribution of SIM cards, namely providing a registered SIM card to another person whose identity cannot be confirmed.

The arrest of Korn followed the arrest of Rangsin 'Bow' Prawanna, 27, a resident of Moo 5, Srisoonthon, as announced by Region 8 Police on July 4.

Rangsin was found with 50 registered DTAC SIM cards, one registered phone and a copy of



Photos: Phuket Provincial Police

a banknote that she used to lure people to buy the SIM cards, at B2,800 apiece.

Region 8 Police reported that their investigation had found that Rangsin had sent thousands of SIM cards to Chiang Rai in Northern Thailand and to Sa Kaeo province on the Cambodian border. She shipped about 1,000 SIM cards a month, police said.

Region 8 Police explained that under Section 11 of the Royal Decree on Cyber Crime Prevention and Suppression, which came into effect on Mar 17, it is illegal for a person to obtain or sell phone numbers to pass on for other people to use without knowing the end user's identity.

Allowing someone else to use their SIM card for any illicit activity carries penalties of two to five years in prison, or a maximum fine of B200,000 to B500,000, or both.

As part of the same police operation, three people in Krabi were also arrested for offenses under Section 11 of the Royal Decree on Cyber Crime Prevention and Suppression. *The Phuket News*



Photo: PR Phuket

Officials continue bar raids, staff drug tests

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Raids on 10 entertainment venues in Muang District last Friday night (July 7) found no underage drinkers and no drugs. One venue was found trading outside legal hours, officials have reported.

Muang District Chief Phairot Srilamul led the raids, accompanied by officers from the Phuket City Police, Chalong Police and Wichit Police, as well as administrative and health officials and personnel from the Volunteer Defense Corps (OrSor). Mr Phairot said that the

inspections were in accordance with the policy of the Ministry of Interior and the policy of the Governor of Phuket, emphasising that entertainment venue operators comply with the law.

The officers conducted checks for firearms, checked identification cards of customers at the venues to confirm they were of legal age, he said.

No minors were found at any of the venues, and random urine tests of employees found no evidence of drug use, he added.

The one venue found trading late was charged accordingly, Mr Phairot added.

All venue operators

were warned to not make excessive noise and to comply with the opening and closing times as required by law, he said.

The series of raids began in Thalang District one night earlier (July 6), with the Somerset Bar and Lounge in Moo 4, Srisoonthon found operating without the correct licence and "selling liquor without permission / not displaying the licence in public", reported the Phuket Info Center.

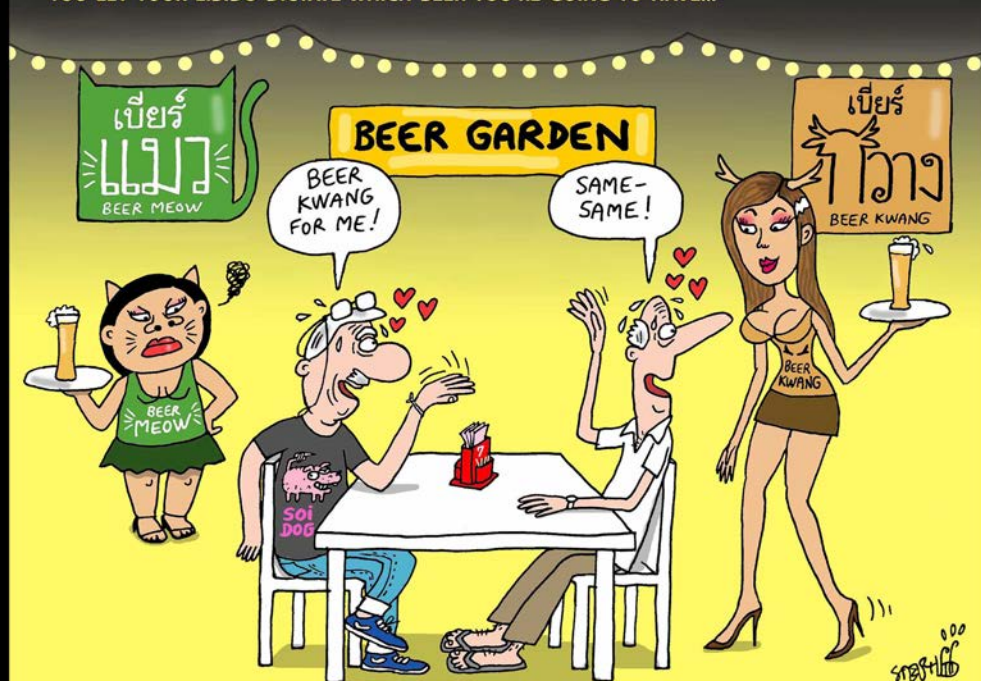
The owner of the bar confessed to the allegations and was taken to Thalang Police Station and charged accordingly, Phuket Info Center noted.

FARANG AFFAIRS

By Stephff

<https://farangaffairs.com>

YOU LET YOUR LIBIDO DICTATE WHICH BEER YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE...



The odd, angry shot

A MAN WAS ARRESTED in Moo 3, Srisoonthon last Sunday night (July 9) for firing a rifle into the air to intimidate his neighbour because he was drunk, and angry over the noise his neighbour made.

Thalang Police were called to the scene, behind the Supalai Essence Phuket housing estate, at 10:18pm.

Officers arrived to find Pramuan Hongsi, 45, drunk, driving a black Isuzu pickup out of the alley. In the pickup was a legally registered .22-calibre CZ rifle, and 55 .22-calibre bullets, a magazine and a gun cover for the rifle.

Pramuan was taken to Thalang Police Station and charged with drunk driving and carrying a firearm in a public area without justifiable cause.



Photo: Thalang Police

Pramuan confessed to firing his rifle into the air. People often brought garbage to his neighbour's house, making much noise when they did so, he explained.

He was home alone drinking when fired three to four shots into the air to intimidate them. After firing the gun, he started throwing rocks onto his neighbour's roof, he said.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Teens arrested for gunplay

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Police last week arrested five men that they claim were responsible for an incident that saw gang members fire more than 15 shots from firearms on a small, quiet street in Kathu.

The incident happened at Soi Sua Lueang, between Red Mountain Golf Course and the Phuket Mining Museum, in the early hours of July 5.

Initial police investigations suggested an altercation between two gangs of youths which led to 15 shots being fired off randomly into the air. Nobody was reported injured in the incident.

Around 10am on July 6, Kathu Police Chief Pol Col Rungrit Rattanapakdi confirmed that five men had been apprehended and charged in relation to what he described as an “outrageous” crime that completely neglected the law and displayed no regard to the safety of local residents.

Following investigations by police using CCTV footage, officers were able to determine who the perpetrators were before seeking and receiving appropriate arrest warrants from Phuket Provincial Court. The arrests were then made successfully on the night of July 5 with three of the gang under the age of 18.

The chief offender was a 30-year-



Kathu Police Chief Pol Col Rungrit Rattanapakdi. Photo: Phuket Info Center

old man called Nopporn, or ‘Kor Sankla’. Police confirmed him to be the same offender that used a firearm to threaten a lottery ticket vendor in front of the Talad Kaset fresh market on Ongsimphai Rd in Phuket Town on June 29. Police had been trying to track down the offender in that incident since.

The other members of the group

arrested were: 29-year-old Mr Pakorn, or ‘Han Noinit’; 17-year-old ‘Mr Ek’ (real name withheld); ‘Mr Chai’ (real name withheld), also 17; and 16-year-old ‘Mr Sun’ (real name withheld).

Police also successfully seized several weapons at the address where the arrests were made (address not specified in reports). These included

a Glock 19 semi-automatic pistol along with two magazines of ammunition, which police said was the weapon Mr Nopporn had used in the incident with the lottery vendor.

Additionally, a .38-calibre pistol with .38-calibre bullets was seized, as was 37 rounds of Ruger brand 9mm ammunition. Police confirmed both types of ammunition seized

matched the 15 casings retrieved from the scene in Kathu.

Further, three motorbikes – a red Honda MSX; a blue Honda Wave 150, and a Yamaha Mio – were found at the scene of the arrests that matched those identified on CCTV at the incident in Kathu.

Police confirmed their investigations revealed that a quarrel had taken place between two groups of youths in the Soi Sua Lueang area in the early hours following two motorbikes supposedly colliding with one another. One of the groups, comprising the three juveniles police later identified as “Mr Ek”, “Mr Chai” and “Mr Sun”, then called the two older men, Nopporn and Pakorn, and agreed to meet them at a nearby gas station.

The five men then returned to the scene of the altercation on Soi Sua Lueang only to find the other group had disappeared. Perhaps in an effort to draw their attention or to threaten them, Naporn and Pakorn then each fired off a series of shots from the two firearms into the sky before fleeing the scene.

All five men apprehended were to be charged with the illegal possession of firearms without permission and jointly carrying firearms in a public space. Naporn and Pakorn were to face further charges of using firearms in a public space with any reasonable cause.

New ambulance stations open in tourist areas in Cherng Talay

TWO NEW AMBULANCE STATIONS opened in the Surin and Pasak areas of Cherng Talay last week to provide swift response to medical emergencies in the tourist-oriented part of central Phuket.

The new ambulance stations were officially inaugurated by Manoch Puchalad, President of the Cherng Talay Tambon Administrative Organization (OrBorTor, or TAO), who visited both locations on July 4.

The Surin station is located at the so-called Cherngtalay Visitor Center on Srisoonthorn Rd, where the road to Surin Beach (Soi Hat Surin 8) begins. In case of a drowning or an aquatic incident at Surin Beach, medics will have to cover as little as 200 metres to reach the scene to provide first aid, and transport the patient to the hospital.

The Pasak station is located at the Baan Pasak Welfare Center on the Baan Don – Cherng Talay Rd, where Soi Pasak 11 connects to the main road. The Pasak and Baan Don area is home to multiple villa projects popular among tourists and foreign residents. The location is also close to Bang Tao Beach, Layan Beach and Leypang Beach.

The new station also has relatively convenient access to Thalang Hospital, the nearest full-scale medical facility serving central and northern Phuket.

Thalang Hospital currently remains the only hospital located north of Heroines Monument. As a standard practice, emergency patients are rushed there for treatment before, if needed, being transferred to Vachira Phuket Hospital or any of the private medical institutions operated



Two ambulance stations have opened in Cherng Talay. Photo: Cherng Talay OrBorTor

by BDMS Group in Phuket Town or Wichit.

In a separate development, Phuket Tourist Police announced last week that the agency is considering opening a Tourist Police kiosk within the Laguna Phuket development, also in Cherng Talay.

Lt Gen Sukhun Prommayon, chief of the Tourism Police Bureau of the Royal Thai Police, visited Laguna Phuket on July 6 to discuss the matter with Prapha Hemmin, Director of Activities and Corporate Relations at Laguna Phuket. Accompanying Lt Gen Sukhun on his visit were other top brass of the regional Tourist Police.

According to a publication by Phuket Tourist Police, the service point is planned to be set up at Canal Village, where Bangkok Hospital Phuket (BDMS Group) has been operating a clinic for Laguna patrons requiring medical services.

No dates for the establishment of the Tourist Police service centre at Canal Village have been announced. *The Phuket News*

Arnaud Verstraete passes away

LONG-TERM PHUKET EXPAT Arnaud Verstraete has passed away, the Rotary Club of Patong Beach has announced.

Arnaud passed away on July 4. He was 62 years old, confirmed Patong Rotary President Walter Wyler.

“It is with great sadness that we share the passing of Past President Arnaud CMC Vertraete, who also was an Arch Klumph Society member,” Mr Wyler wrote to *The Phuket News*.

Arnaud was a charter member of the Rotary Club of Patong Beach, the only English-speaking Rotary Club in Phuket.

“In the 2005/06 Rotary year he served as the fifth president of our Rotary Club. His service as President started just over six months after the Tsunami hit Phuket [on Dec 26, 2004] and his year was an intense burst of service projects and helping the region recover,” Mr Wyler commented.

“Arnaud was not only a wonderful friend who always helped wherever he could. His personal and financial contribution to Rotary was amazing. For several years he was an Arch Klumph Society member, this represents the Rotary Foundation’s highest tier of donors.

“Please remember PP [Past President] Arnaud as an outstanding and hardworking Rotarian he was. We, the Rotarians convey our heartfelt condolences to his beloved partner, Khun Yod, to his family, to his many friends and followers. Arnaud, you will always be in our hearts,” Mr Wyler concluded.

Arnaud on June 25 celebrated 11,000



Arnaud CMC Vertraete: 24/09/1960 – 04/07/2023. Photo: Rotary Club of Patong Beach

days of living in Thailand. Of his more than 30 years in the Kingdom, Arnaud spent more than the last 20 years in Phuket.

Arnaud was very well known for his involvement in supporting a wide range of charity projects.

As recently as June 10, Arnaud marked the launch of a new S/V 14 sailing boat donated to the Phuket chapter of Disabled Sailing Thailand. “From dream to reality... the ‘Spirit of Rotary,’” he posted online.

“Latest addition to the fleet of boats from Disabled Sailing Thailand (Phuket Chapter) christened and funded by the Rotary Club of Patong Beach (R.I. District 3330),” he noted.

Funeral services for Arnaud were held at Wat Chalong from last Sunday through Tuesday (July 9-11). He was cremated on Wednesday (July 12). *The Phuket News*

Hoteliers enjoy shift to quality

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Minor International and other hospitality businesses in Phuket and nationwide are mostly content with the ongoing tourism recovery despite slow growth in arrivals. Hotel occupancy remains below pre-COVID levels, but tourists are spending more than they did four years ago, according to hotel heavyweight William Heinecke, CEO of Minor Group.

“Although we have seen less tourists this year than we had in the same period of 2019, they are spending much more. Occupancy is slightly down but total revenue is way up, ADR [Average Daily Rate] is up, and we have seen this across the world,” said Mr Heinecke in an interview with American business news channel and website CNBC.

“We have seen strong recovery not only in Thailand but also in Europe, Australia, the Middle East. And when China opens up – it hasn’t really fully opened yet – you will see these numbers to be even stronger,” added Mr Heinecke, Chairman of Minor International Plc.

Minor International is a

SET-listed company with a portfolio of over 530 hotels, including renowned brands such as Anantara, Marriott, Four Seasons and Radisson Blu. The company’s total assets were valued at B358 billion as of the end of 2022. In 2022, Minor’s revenue reached B124bn, with 76% of it contributed by Minor Hotels.

An extract from the interview with Bill Heinecke, published by CNBC on July 3, did not contain any figures regarding the current state of Phuket tourism. However, the Phuket office of the Immigration Bureau partially compensated for this by publishing its monthly report on direct international arrivals to Phuket airport the next day (July 4).

Following the new standard practice of reporting, Phuket Immigration provided the overall number of direct arrivals by international flights (excluding flights via Bangkok) and numbers for the top five key markets.

According to *Novosti Phuket*, *The Phuket News*’ sister-paper in Russian language, the numbers still stand at 65-70% of the pre-COVID levels, which were historical highs for Phuket tourism.



Tourists on Patong Beach on Monday (July 10). Photo: Patong Surf Life Saving

This evaluation is supported by Thanawat Ongcharoen, Phuket Tourist Association (PTA) Vice President of Administration & Strategy, who also recently estimated international arrivals at 70% of pre-pandemic levels due to the low number of organised tour groups from China.

As of June, most Chinese tourists visiting Phuket were independent travellers, Mr Thanawat commented, as published by the National News Bureau of Thailand (NNT) on June 20.

ARRIVALS IN JUNE

According to Phuket Immigration, total international

arrivals to Phuket in June reached 248,325 travellers, an increase of 23,968 people from 224,357 in May (+10.7% month-on-month).

Of those 23,968 ‘additional’ arrivals, around one quarter (6,117 travellers) came from China. Other key markets experienced less significant growth in absolute figures, while arrivals from Russia continued to decline seasonally.

Leading the way, China provided Phuket with 44,066 direct arrivals in June, an increase of 16.4% from 37,949 in May.

Remaining in the second place since late April, Russia provided 25,947 visitors, a

decrease of 2.6% from 26,624 in May.

Australia ranked third with 21,902 arrivals in June, representing a 10.6% growth from 19,828 in the previous month.

Close behind, India provided 20,223 visits, which is 2% higher than the 19,783 in May.

Closing out the top 5, Singapore contributed 15,234 tourist arrivals in June.

BACK TO NORMAL BY YEAR-END

According to the aforementioned NNT report, figures for Indian and Australian visitors have already returned to pre-pandemic levels, “highlighting the resilience of Phuket’s tourism sector”.

Hotel occupancy in Phuket held steady at a promising 70% between January and May, as cited by Sueksit Suwanaditsakul, President of the Southern chapter of the Thai Hotels Association (THA), according to NNT.

Arrivals in Phuket in June, according to Phuket Immigration, were 10.6% higher than in May but still 18.4% lower than in April, which can be considered a transition month between the high and low seasons in tourism. Immigration

recorded 304,485 passengers arriving at Phuket International Airport on flights from abroad in April.

Earlier, the Director of the Phuket office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Lertchai Wangtrakuldee reported that the island welcomed over 6 million domestic and international tourists from January through May this year.

As of late June, the TAT expected Phuket to welcome a total of 12mn domestic and international tourists this year. No figures for international arrivals were provided.

According to Phuket-based hospitality consultancy C9 Hotelworks, international arrivals at Phuket airport in 2019 exceeded 5mn, while domestic arrivals were just under 4mn, resulting in a total of approximately 9mn visitors by Phuket airport only.

“Looking ahead at the remainder of 2023, we are looking at a balanced recovery led by the Chinese market... We expect a return to 2019 trading by the year-end of this year and the start of a new tourism cycle in 2024,” wrote Bill Barnett of C9 Hotelworks in his ‘Phuket Hotel Market Update 2023’ in March.

Economic woes curtail domestic trips

DOMESTIC TOURISM IS STILL struggling with weak purchasing power because of higher costs of living and soaring debt, leaving small hotels and regional operators with financial burdens, says Kantapong Thananerngroh, President of Thai Tourism Promotion Association.

He said domestic tourists are travelling less frequently and spending less than in recent years, especially the mass market as they confront household debts and a higher cost of living, reports the Bangkok Post.

Thailand’s household debt tallied 90.6% of GDP in the first quarter, while non-performing loans are projected to increase.

Mr Kantapong said many local businesses and second-tier tourism destinations are still hoping for a stronger flow of domestic travellers, but it is unlikely to happen this year.

Given the sluggish domestic tourism, tour operators have gained minimal profit compared with before the pandemic, leading a number of them to remain shuttered, he said.

Some operators can sustain their businesses by pivoting to middle to high-end tourists, who still have sufficient budget for travel, such as retirees, said Mr Kantapong.

Many customers are from the central region and Bangkok, as this segment has recovered faster than other regions, he said.

Udom Srimahachota, vice-president of the Thai Hotels Association’s western chapter, said Hua Hin and Cha-am tourism have been directly affected by increasing household debt, as 80% of tourists in these



People examine travel deals to various destinations at the recent ‘Thai Tiew Thai’ travel fair held at Bitec Bang Na. Photo: Somchai Poomlard / Bangkok Post

areas are local travellers.

Mr Udom said three-star hotels and those with lower ratings are suffering the most as they depend more on the mass market than five-star hotels, which can rely on high-spending customers.

With small and medium-sized enterprises across all sectors facing high operational expenses, workers are saving money for daily costs and spending less on tourism, he said.

Domestic trips are mostly occurring during long holidays, with fewer trips on weekends, said Mr Udom.

He said the average room rate in Hua Hin and Cha-am is 25% lower than the pre-pandemic rate and will remain at that level for the remainder of the year because hotels are reluctant to increase prices while consumer purchasing power is weak.

Last month, the occupancy rate for Hua Hin and Cha-am was 40%, while the projected rate for July and August is 45%, mainly attributed to European markets travelling during summer holidays, said Mr Udom. *Bangkok Post*

‘Unseen New Chapters’ hoped to spur B880bn in domestic tourism

THE TOURISM AUTHORITY of Thailand (TAT) has announced the 25 finalists in the ‘Unseen New Chapters’ campaign comprising of five up-and-coming attractions in each of Thailand’s Northern, Northeastern (Isan), Central, Eastern and Southern provinces handpicked by Thai tourists as emerging attractions offering new travel experiences.

“Through the ‘Unseen New Chapters’ campaign, these attractions will initially become new hot spots for Thai tourists by stimulating domestic travel that will help spread income distribution to local communities and increase liquidity for local tourism operators,” said TAT Governor Yuthasak Supasorn in the official announcement.

“Ultimately, we hope that the campaign will help contribute more than B880 billion from domestic tourism revenue in 2023,” he added.

TAT opened voting for the ‘Unseen New Chapters’ campaign from May 22 to June 18, inviting Thai people to participate in the selection of new attractions around the country via the websites: www.tourismthailand.org/



TAT Governor Yuthasak Supasorn announces the 25 finalists. Photo: TAT

unseennewchapters.com and www.unseennewchapters.com.

The 25 finalist attractions were the results of over 547,710 votes received, and more than 1,089,193 visits to the sites.

Voters were able to choose from a total field of 77 tourist attractions – one from each province in Thailand, these having been selected by committees and experts from government agencies and the private sector, including the 45 TAT offices nationwide and tourism entrepreneurs in each province.

To qualify, an attraction needed to meet certain criteria; this included having an interesting story, not yet being widely known by tourists, having a good tourism management system in place, and being easily accessible.

Of the 25 finalist attractions in the Unseen New Chapters campaign, 20 were chosen based on the public’s voting and five by an expert committee.

Among those selected were Manasikarn Dharma Gallery in Saraburi, Bo Cave on Mount Ibid in Phetchaburi, Phra Mahathat Chedi Phakdi Prakat of Wat Thang Sai in Prachuap Khiri Khan, Koh Si Chang in Chon Buri, Khao Shiva Cave (Tham Nam) in Sa Kaeo, Phu Bo Bit Forest Park in Loei, Pha Phaya Kupri Viewpoint in Si Sa Ket, Khao Na Nai Luang Dharma Park in Surat Thani, Mu Ko Kam in Ranong, Buddha’s footprint in the sea at Ko Kaeo Phitsadan Monastery in Phuket, Hin Phap Pha in Nakhon Si Thammarat, and Koh Tarutao in Satun.

Preliminary information on each of the 25 finalist attractions in ‘Unseen New Chapters’ campaign can be found at www.unseennewchapters.com, in Thai language only.

More information and activities relating to the campaign are also on the Facebook page Amazing Thailand.

The Phuket News

Pita warns of affront to Thai democracy

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

Pita Limjaroenrat, the prime ministerial candidate of the election-winning Move Forward Party (MFP), told parliamentarians last Sunday (July 9) that failure to vote for his premiership would be unforgivable affront to Thai democracy.

Ahead of yesterday's (July 13) joint sitting to vote for the country's next prime minister, Mr Pita stated that House representatives and senators would have a chance to return normality to Thai politics.

"Lower and upper houses will jointly decide what Thai politics will be in the next decade," Mr Pita told about 1,000 supporters in Bangkok.

"With the right decision, Thailand will be second to none. A wrong decision that is against the resolution will maintain the political abnormality of the past decade," he said.

"Return normality to all people. Please do not miss this opportunity because people



MFP leader Pita Limjaroenrat meets supporters in Bangkok last Sunday (July 9). Photo: Bangkok Post

may not forgive and may lose faith in representatives and the parliamentary system. So, do not disappoint people.

"This opportunity is a historic moment for Thailand. All the 750 members of the lower and upper houses have the chance to return normality to Thai politics so that Thailand can progress and catch up with the world," Mr Pita added.

He praised some senators who promised to "vote in favour of the people's choice

and coalition allies", referring to the eight coalition allies – including the MFP and Pheu Thai Party – which nominated him as the next prime minister. The eight coalition allies number 312 out of the 500 House representatives.

Mr Pita told the gathering last Sunday that he might not be a perfect prime minister, but he would be the most hard-working.

The constitution empowers senators to join House representatives in the vote for

a prime minister at a joint sitting. The parliament consists of 500 elected representatives and 250 appointed senators.

To become prime minister, Mr Pita needs the support of a majority of the 750 members of the joint parliament – at least 376 votes. The eight coalition allies would need at least 64 more votes in the joint sitting slated for Thursday (July 13).

Many senators earlier said they could not support Mr Pita because his the MFP planned to amend the lese majeste law.

Mr Pita's route to the premiership has also been jeopardised by petitions against his eligibility for political office relating to his past shareholding in iTV and other legal technicalities as the constitution prohibits a shareholder of a media organisation from running in a general election.

The Election Commission has been investigating whether Mr Pita violated Section 151 of the organic law on the election of MPs.

Numerous previous election winners in Thailand have been barred from taking office or removed by court rulings.



Photo: NNT

National dengue cases triple

BANGKOK

THE DEPARTMENT OF Disease Control (DDC) has revealed that the number of dengue fever cases in Thailand has surged threefold, with 27,377 reported cases and 33 fatalities during the first half of this year.

Hospital records indicate that this figure is three times higher than the same period last year, officials confirmed last Sunday (July 9).

The DDC said between June 1-28 alone, approximately 1,500 to 2,400 individuals fell ill with dengue, resulting in up to three deaths. The age group most affected by the virus was children aged 5 to 14, followed by the 15-to-24 age group.

The region with the highest number of cases was the South, followed by Bangkok and the Central Region.

Dengue fever is caused by four different virus strains

transmitted through the bite of an infected Aedes mosquito, which is commonly found in and around human dwellings.

The common symptoms of dengue fever include high fever (40°C/104°F), severe headache, pain behind the eyes, muscle and joint pains, nausea, vomiting and rashes.

To combat the spread of dengue, the DDC has launched awareness campaigns led by village volunteers, local administrations, and the private sector. These campaigns specifically target schoolchildren, aiming to educate them about protecting themselves from mosquito bites.

DDC officials emphasized the importance of seeking medical attention promptly for individuals experiencing high fever for more than two days, adding that immediate hospital visits can help determine if the symptoms are related to dengue and prevent the risk of fatalities caused by the virus. *NNT*

'Lost screws' to blame for woman's airport leg mangling 'accident'

BANGKOK

MISSING SCREWS UNDER A PLAT-form of the moving walkway were the cause of the incident at Don Mueang Airport that cost a woman a part of her left leg on June 29, a member of the fact-finding probe said last Friday (July 7).

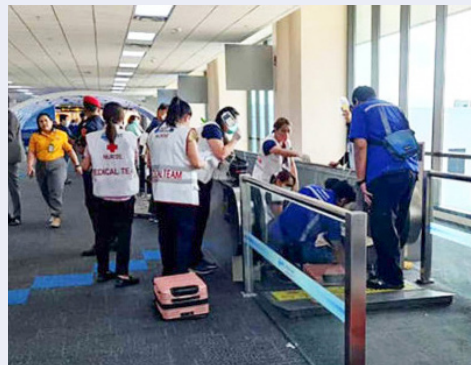
Assoc Prof Weerachai Phut-dhawong, a lecturer of the Chemistry Department at Kasetsart University's Faculty of Liberal Arts and Science, said the incident "really was an accident".

Mr Weerachai was appointed by the victim's family to join the fact-finding committee, which also comprises the Ministry of Transport, the Engineering Institute of Thailand (EIT), the Engineers Council and the Siam Hitachi Company.

Speaking after the committee meeting, Mr Weerachai said normally, each panel of the moving walkway has been tightened with four screws, but the panel that the woman stepped on had only one screw. Three screws were missing, so when she stepped on the panel, it fell while the walkway was still moving and trapped her leg.

"I view this as an accident, and it has nothing to do with luggage or the missing comb of the traveller. The traveller had been used for almost 30 years, and the sensor system was functional as it stopped the walkway in 10 seconds," he said.

However, the 10 seconds seemed to



The woman trapped in the walkway on June 30. Photo: Bangkok Post

be too long as it appears to have cost the woman her leg, Mr Weerachai said.

The question is how those screws went missing, he added, surmising it might be because the moving walkway was too old.

The incident occurred on June 29 at the domestic terminal when the unnamed woman fell on the walkway between Gate 4 and Gate 5.

Her leg had to be amputated above the left knee by a medical team at the airport before she was later transferred to Bumrungrad International Hospital for further treatment in ICU, where she remains.

Mr Weerachai proposed the committee re-enact the incident and it will hold at least two more meetings, adding that Airports of Thailand is preparing to issue a statement admitting fault and taking full responsibility for the accident.

Bangkok Post

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Beyond the Green: is ESG failing?

Dr Paul Crosio

The ESG movement of 'environmental, social and corporate governance', originally driven by good intentions, has been co-opted by lobbyists, special interest groups and various NGOs, and recent reviews have revealed its lacklustre performance in creating meaningful environmental change and have highlighted chronic abuse of flawed methodologies.

This reality is painted by a report from Brown University which exposes how energy companies are pouring vast amounts of money and time into reputation-building "green" advertisements, amounting to an eye-watering US\$3.6 billion (B126.511bn) as of the latest data.

This is echoed by a study conducted by Harvard that reveals approximately 72% of social media posts made by oil and gas companies incorporate deceptive greenwashing tactics (a deceptive marketing tactic that seeks to construct an illusion of environmental consciousness). This greenwashing tsunami is designed to mislead consumers about the environmental implications of investing in oil and gas companies, still some of the biggest contributors of greenhouse gases and global warming.

Although many instances of the creative use of statistics or simple deception have been revealed, regu-



Christine Ponce Garcia, Corporate Affairs Executive of Nestle Philippines (centre) receives a demand letter and 'invoice from the Filipino people' outlining the costs of Nestle's single-use plastic packaging. Photo: Greenpeace

latory bodies lack the resources to act and tend to prioritise other more tangible problems. However, a case in 2021 involving Walmart and other companies highlights the incredible extent of greenwashing as they faced a combined fine of \$5.5 million for mislabeling rayon as "sustainable" bamboo.

Has ESG gone too far? The 'Kit Kat' Standard

ESG investing strategies have traditionally focused on key issues such as sustainability, modern slavery, equality, executive pay, credible reporting and the environment. However, there is a growing movement within ESG activism to include "nutrition" as an important factor in guiding investment decisions.

A notable milestone in this campaign occurred when a group of institutional investors, managing approximately \$3 trillion in assets, attended Nestle's annual meeting. Nestle, a prominent player in the food industry with brands such as Kit Kat, became the target of ESG activists' demands to promote more nutritious products and reduce its portfolio of chocolates and sweets.

Nestle's shareholder mutiny served as a catalyst for the company to develop and release a new set of ranking metrics that specifically measure the nutritional value of its food portfolio in comparison to other food companies. It's well known that "ranking metrics" are used by the activist community to exert pressure on companies that fall behind in their preferred metrics. These metrics can be expanded once corporate compliance is achieved.

Not surprisingly, such examples of radical activism have raised concerns about the long-term appeal of ESG focused investments, with data showing a decline of approximately \$163.2bn in global assets under management by "ESG Friendly" funds during the first quarter of 2023 compared to the previous year.

Empirically, fund managers are now warning that whilst narrow-focused ESG funds can occasionally deliver successful outcomes, they often struggle in the long-term to outperform broader market indices. This challenge happens because these boutique funds supposedly avoid larger groups of "bad" companies, sectors, or industries in their investment strategies. It remains to be said that there are really no alternatives for a consistent return – funds

have to prioritise bottom-line investing, economic fundamentals, diversified and risk-adjusted returns and only then critical ESG goals.

Greenwashing, Kit Kats and moving goalposts

In the world of greenwashing, a newer form of misinformation known as "Greensplaining" has emerged that specifically targets environmentally conscious investors. An example of this is the introduction of the "Xtrackers MSCI USA Climate Action Equity ETF" by DWS, Deutsche Bank's asset management arm. The ETF was designed to offer exposure to companies actively engaged in climate transition. However, its strategy, which focuses solely on the top 50% of companies in MSCI's global industry-classification sectors and evaluates performance against an MSCI-designed climate-action index, lacks consistent alignment with ESG goals.

MSCI develops its own customised ESG indices and analytics and then demonstrates to investors that they can outperform their own indexes. This creates a bias as MSCI designs the index, tracks its performance, and then determines whether the companies meet its own index criteria, all while presenting it as a responsible ESG initiative. To cover this obvious issue, MSCI explicitly states that it cannot guarantee that these ESG indices and analytics will outperform broader indices or lead to better global climate outcomes.

We should remember that ESG originated from a December 2004 report commissioned by the United Nations that aimed to create meaningful connections between financial and corporate activities with social policies, with an emphasis on fostering responsible practices rather than coercing corporations into compliance with an activist agenda. This original ESG concept is being compromised, and its agenda is being hijacked.

Cases like those with Nestle and the MSCI serve as an example of the issues in the ESG movement, highlighting how it is veering off course. This diversion from the original agenda is further exacerbated by companies jumping on the sustainability bandwagon as a pure marketing tool, leading to the rampant spread of greenwashing.

It's hard to predict the future of the ESG movement, but in the meantime, let's enjoy our Kit Kats before they become extinct.

Paul Crosio is a Partner at Silk Legal & founding partner of Silk Advisory. He is a practising Australian lawyer with over two decades of corporate experience in turn-around management in Thailand and abroad.

From global corporations to small businesses, organisations worldwide are dedicated to integrating sustainable and socially responsible practices into their operations. Silk Legal, understands the challenges of navigating the complex ESG landscape and maximising opportunities for impact. Their experienced team can provide tailored solutions to help businesses achieve ESG goals and stand out as an industry leader. Email info@silklegal.com.



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More palms for your garden



GREEN THOUGHTS

Patrick Campbell

In our last foray into the subject of palms, I referred to the coconut and its more elegant cousin, the foxtail palm or *wodyetia*. Like other species such as royal, Bismarck, date and oil palms, they all possess a single trunk crowned with massive fronds. It's how the layman thinks of palms.

However, many species are multi-stemmed; they do not possess this characteristic outline. One of the most distinctive of these clump palms is the so-called lipstick or sealing wax palm. *Cyrtostachys* has stems that sprout directly from the ground and both these crown shafts and the leaf sheaths above are a surprising and attractive shade of red. Hence the name. Slender, ramrod straight stems – and there may be 20 or more – grow close together in a dense clump. As a consequence, this beautiful but slow-growing palm is often relegated to a large container, though it is better suited to open ground where it will attain a much larger size – up to 10 metres in ideal conditions. In the wild, it does best in marshy ground. As with the lady palm, it will not survive droughts and even a short period without water will lead to die-back.

Another multi-stemmed species is the golden cane palm, perhaps the variety most frequently used as a garden presence in Southeast Asia. More open in habit than the lipstick palm, its stems grow into bamboo-like canes up to six centimetres in diameter. The feathery foliage, which sprouts from near the top of each stem, is light green, but in full sun can turn an attractive golden yellow. Extremely hardy, *Dypsis lutescens* is also cultivated as a container plant where, in an open location, it will retain its golden fronds. One



Bismarckia nobilis. Photo: M McKnight

word of warning: Planted in a border, it can grow to a considerable size – maybe five metres – and become 'leggy' and less attractive in the process.

Ideal for the larger garden is the Bismarck palm. A native of Madagascar where it is ironically in serious decline, *Bismarckia nobilis* lives up to its name – an ornamental species which provides a talking point wherever it is encountered. The talking point? Its amazing glaucous fronds up to three metres across. Their matt, grey-green appearance gives the tree a truly exotic character. Instead of appearing at the crown, these fronds appear at the end of massive stalks that grow out from the thick trunk most of the way up the bole. My specimen also provided a bonus in the form of huge clusters of marble-sized black fruits like small grapes. Though inedible, their skin can be stripped off and the seeds planted in deep soil. Germination takes three months.

As this column has often pointed out, the language

of gardening is full of anomalies. Take the so-called traveller's palm. It is not, strictly speaking, a palm at all but a banana. Nonetheless, the popular name survives. More important than the wayward name is its value to us as gardeners, especially when planted in a row or along a wall, where it can display its arresting looks. The majestic beauty of *ravenala* lies in its remarkably symmetrical shape, a narrow fan which allows it to preside over borders without overwhelming smaller plants; they can easily survive beneath its enormous paddle-shaped fronds – 10 or so in number.

The traveller palm needs little maintenance, storing its own water supply at the base of each stem. Hence its popular name. And it will accept full sun or partial shade. If you want it to retain its characteristic symmetry, you may need to excise the offshoots that appear around its base. These can be re-potted to create new palms. One proviso: *ravenala* will eventually develop a longer and brownish stem which makes it less attractive to the eye; at this stage, sadly it may be better to dispose of a plant which has forfeited its good looks. All good things come to an end...

In fact, palms possess few drawbacks, but this highlights perhaps the main shortcoming- their propensity to lose their looks as they age and to produce brown and sere fronds which will need periodically to be removed. But all palms have both cultivable virtues – small root systems and a tolerance of poor soil – and undeniable aesthetic charms: both beautiful and exotic.

A tropic garden without palms silhouetted against an azure sky? Unthinkable...

Patrick Campbell's book 'The Tropic Gardener', described in one Bangkok review as the best book on Thai gardening for 50 years, is available for B500 (half price) to personal callers from 59/84 Soi Saiyuan 13 in Rawai (Tel: 076-61227 or 085-7827551).



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POP QUIZ

- Which messaging app created by Evan Spiegel, Bobby Murphy and Reggie Brown has 383 million daily users?
- Which model Ferrari did Tom Selleck drive in the 1980s' TV show 'Magnum, P.I.'?
- Which American department store organises the famous annual Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City?
- Ailurophobia is the fear of what?
- Which toy was the first toy to be advertised on television?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Medium

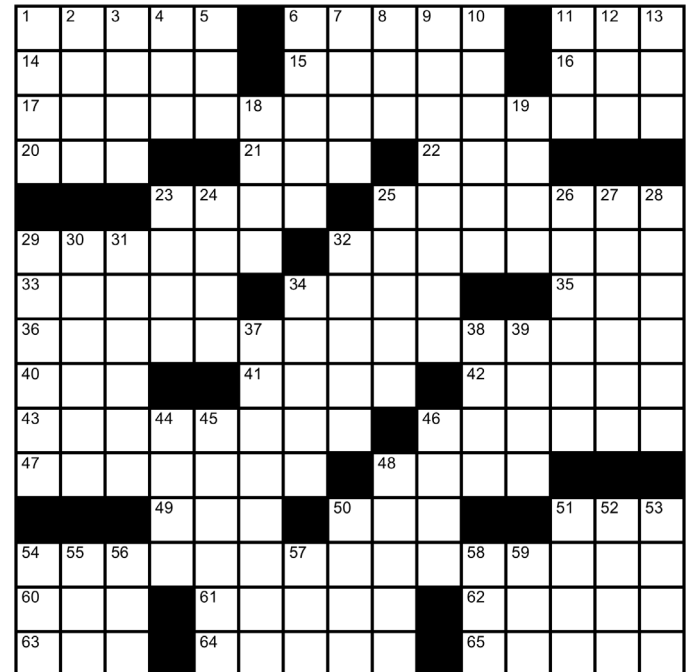
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7			8		5			

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across**
- Unable to flee
 - Choice
 - Not clerical
 - Popular wedding gift
 - Free from
 - Chemical ending
 - 1944 romantic musical
 - Suffix with auction
 - Memory unit, for short
 - Cereal grain
 - Biting
 - Most pretentious
 - Pizazz, var.
 - Ways in
 - Go over
 - Island in western Scotland
 - 50-50, e.g.
 - 1954 Oscar-winning drama
 - Axe, in Tokyo
 - Group of poems
 - Runs
 - Title defenders
 - Puddinglike dessert
 - Sets up
 - Herb in stuffing
 - "Prince ____"
- Down**
1. Climax
 - Quaker's "you"
 - Frame used for burials
 - Aardvark's morsel
 - Starchy tuber
 - Snooped
 - One year in a trunk
 - Driver's lic. and others
 - Conveyance
 - Recently
 - Moldovan moolah
 - Cuckoo bird
 - Cry of success
 - Qatari leader
 - Elevator man
 - Asian nurse
 - Endure
- 25. Large amounts**
- 26. Bars**
- 27. Fishing nets**
- 28. ____ fly**
- 29. Place for a needle**
- 30. "Mind Games" composer**
- 31. Express overtly**
- 32. Common carriers**
- 34. Mocks**
- 37. Most tearful**
- 38. Thrash**
- 39. Profligate**
- 44. Complain**
- 45. Greetings: var.**
- 46. Construct**
- 48. Indian caste**
- 50. Stage of development**
- 51. Italian bread**
- 52. Fret**
- 53. Henna and others**
- 54. Morning moisture**
- 55. Miner's load**
- 56. Cup filler**
- 57. Coolness**
- 58. Automobile sticker fig.**
- 59. Wimple wearer**

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) Snapchat; 2) Ferrari 308 GT; 3) Macy's Manhattan (first held 1924); 4) Cats; 5) Mr Potato Head



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

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

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

9

milligrammes is roughly how much cocaine each glass of Coca-Cola used to contain until 1903.

30

years old were Marilyn Monroe and Queen Elizabeth II when they first met each other. They were both born in 1926.

20,000

one-litre bottles of air every day is how much humans need to breathe.

160,000

US dollars is the value of the diamond Arizona man Walter Earl Morrison stole and then traded for \$20 worth of marijuana in 2014.

1

billion

US dollars is the offer ABBA turned down to reunite in 2000.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Spirit of Phuket Town. Photo by Tina Olitakič

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

This week in history

July 14, 1969

The US Treasury withdraws the \$500, \$1000, \$5000 and \$10,000 bills from circulation. Since then, only \$1, \$2, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100 bills have been in use.

July 15, 1910

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

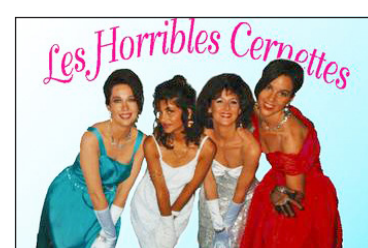
July 16, 1941

Joe DiMaggio hits safely for

the 56th consecutive game, a streak that still stands as a Major League Baseball (MLB) record today.

July 17, 1402

Zhu Di, better known by his era name as the Yongle Emperor, assumes the throne over the Ming dynasty of China. He later builds the Forbidden City and orders Admiral Zheng He to undergo major sea voyages across the South Pacific and Indian Oceans.



Les Horribles Cernettes, the first picture posted on the Internet.

July 18, 1992

A picture of Les Horribles Cernettes, an all-female parody pop band founded by employees at CERN, becomes

the first photo posted to the World Wide Web.

July 19, 1947

Prime Minister of the shadow Burmese government, Bogyoke Aung San and eight others are assassinated.

July 20, 1960

Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) elects Sirimavo Bandaranaike as Prime Minister, the world's first elected female head of government.

Source: Wikipedia

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16 JUL

WED
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19 AUG

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FUND RAISING DINNER AT KATA ROCKS FOR RICHARD VALENTINE

Kata Rocks held a fund raising event for long term Phuket resident, Richard Valentine, on Thursday July 6, who was recently the victim of a hit and run accident whilst on his motor bike in Phuket. The accident resulted in a lengthy stay in hospital and large hospital bills. Kata Rocks decided to help out by putting on an exclusive dinner for 20 people with all the proceeds going to Richard to help him with his hospital bills. The dinner was a great success, with Richard now on crutches, and able to attend. Chef Andrew prepared a fantastic menu with Canapes followed by a Smoked Seafood Gratin to start. The main course was Grilled Jacks Creek Angus Fillet. There was then a selection of cheeses with a Sticky Toffee Pudding to round off the evening. The entertainment was provided by Jeo, the Kata Rocks resident musician who was later accompanied by several of the diners, making it a fun evening for all. Richard Valentine expressed his thanks to Kata Rocks and all those who had supported the evening.



GROW BOATING PHUKET NETWORKING - JULY 2023

Lots of new faces, and plenty of regular ones, at July 7 networking evening. Thanks Isola Ristorante for the light snacks and Royal Phuket Marina for the drinks. A fun night was had by everyone. Looking forward to the August 4 event at Boardwalk Bistro and Bar at the Phuket Boat Lagoon.

Verstappen on top at Silverstone

FORMULA ONE

Michael Lamonato
michael@boxofneutrals.com

Max Verstappen led Red Bull Racing to a record-equalling 11th consecutive victory by beating home favourite Lando Norris to victory at the British Grand Prix last Sunday (July 9).

Red Bull Racing's streak dates to last year's Abu Dhabi Grand Prix and matches the record set by the legendary 1988 McLaren team.

McLaren's 1988 campaign is the most dominant in history, with Ayrton Senna and Alain Prost combining to win 15 of 16 grand prix, the most dominant run by percentage ever recorded.

It was McLaren's modern-day leader Norris who came closest to denying the 2023 juggernaut a chance to equal that historic benchmark when he sprung from second onto the grid and into the lead on the first lap.

His heavily upgraded McLaren could keep Verstappen at arm's length, but with DRS enabled and the pursuing Red Bull car's tyres



Max Verstappen on his way to victory at the Formula One British Grand Prix at Silverstone last Sunday (July 9). Photo: AFP

up to temperature, service was resumed with a straight-forward slipstream pass on lap five.

Verstappen was able to split from the field, though a late-race safety car meant his victory margin was a relatively modest 3.7 seconds.

"I had a bad start, a lot of wheel spin, so I had to work my way up again to Lando," he said. "But then once everything settled in, we lap after

lap could open up the gap to nine seconds before the safety car came out.

"Eleven wins in a row for the team – I think that's pretty incredible."

Norris was on track for a comfortable second-place finish before the safety car, which gifted Lewis Hamilton a cheap pit stop and dropped him into third on softer tyres.

The race resumed with 14 laps to go, and Hamilton was

straight on the attack.

The memorable all-British battle took them side by side through Brookland, Luffield and Woodcote, but centimetre-perfect car placement forced Hamilton to back out at every turn.

It took only a handful of close encounters for the momentum to swing decisively back to Norris, whose hard tyres fired up while Hamilton's overcooked, and the

younger Briton ground out a three-second victory.

ALBON SHINES

McLaren so nearly scored a double podium, having had Oscar Piastri starting third directly behind Verstappen and almost stealing second off the line, but the timing of the safety car, which interrupted the race just three laps after he'd already made his pit stop, enabled Hamilton to jump him.

"I really didn't expect to be on the podium today," Hamilton said. "But when we go through all the different strategy options, this is the one you hope for, which is the safety car."

"We do have a lot of work to do on our car to put ourselves in proper competitive form to fight the Red Bulls and now McLarens."

Piastri dropped to fourth after the safety car, and the final phase of his race mirrored Norris's, with Russell following him home on softer tyres, but the Australian rookie held firm for the best finish of his 10-race career.

Sergio Pérez recovered from another shocking qualifying result to an underwhelming sixth, while Fernando Alonso

held off fast-finishing Thai driver Alex Albon for seventh on a quiet day for Aston Martin but a superb day for Williams. The British minnow scored points for just the third time this season in Albon's hands to rise to seventh in the constructors standings.

Ferrari faded badly in the race, with Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz dropping five places apiece to ninth and 10th respectively.

American rookie Logan Sargeant executed a strong race to finish 11th, just four seconds from his first F1 point, beating Valtteri Bottas and Nico Hülkenberg.

Lance Stroll had taken the flag in 11th but was docked five seconds for crashing into Pierre Gasly attempting to rejoin at the Vale chicane, which put the Frenchman out of the race with damage.

It was Alpine's third double retirement of the season, with Esteban Ocon packing up early with a hydraulics issues.

Zhou Guanyu led home Yuki Tsunoda and Nyck de Vries. Kevin Magnussen was the only other retirement of the race thanks to a Ferrari engine problem in the back of his Haas.

Russian, Belarusian athletes allowed to compete as neutrals at Asian Games

ASIAN GAMES

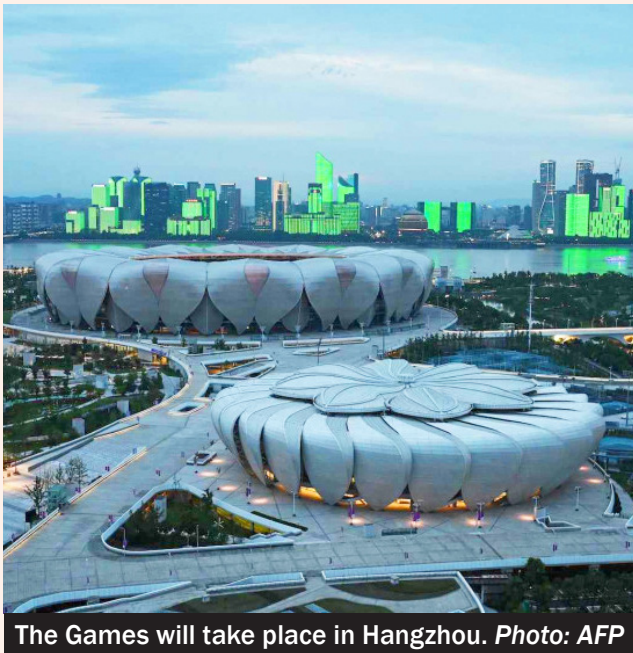
UP TO 500 RUSSIAN AND Belarusian athletes will be allowed to compete as neutrals at the Asian Games in China later this year, organisers have confirmed.

Both countries have been excluded from many sports events since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, though individual athletes have since been allowed to compete under certain restrictions.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) earlier this year said that a pathway for their athletes' participation in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games should be explored.

At a meeting in Bangkok last Saturday (July 8), the General Assembly of the Olympic Council of Asia voted to allow a maximum of 500 competitors from the pariah countries to compete, so that they may try and qualify for Paris.

"We propose to allow Russian and Belarusian



The Games will take place in Hangzhou. Photo: AFP

independent athletes to compete under neutral flag as independent athletes," said OCA director general Husain al-Musallam, before the assembly passed the motion.

He added that no politicians from Russia or Belarus would be invited to the Games – which kick off in Hangzhou in late September – and no symbols of either nation would be allowed.

The athletes also would not be in medal contention.

One of the world's biggest multi-sport events, the Asian Games typically attracts more than 10,000 athletes from across the continent.

The Hangzhou edition was due to take place in September 2022, but was postponed by a year because of China's strict COVID-19 rules. AFP

Thai MotoGP confirmed for October

MOTOGP

THE NORTHEASTERN province of Buri Ram will host the OR Thailand MotoGP Grand Prix for the fourth time in October, organisers confirmed on July 5.

The event, which is the 17th of the 20-race calendar, will be held at Chang International Circuit. KTM's Portuguese rider Miguel Oliveira won the weather-hit race last year.

Presiding over the press conference to announce the event were Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT) governor Gongsak Yodmani and Buri Ram governor Chaiwat Chunthiraphong.

"This year, we continue to move from strength to strength, with the aim to host the MotoGP event of the highest calibre," said Gongsak.

"The personnel concerned and various committees are fully prepared, thanks to their experience and success in organising the previous three MotoGP events."

"Their skills and experience will be applied to rectify weaknesses while taking advantage of the strengths to consistently improve on hosting Thailand MotoGP



The July 5 press conference. Photo: Bangkok Post

every year."

Tanaisiri Chanwittayaron, managing director of Chang International Circuit, added that constant improvements have been made to the racetrack.

"Motorsport fans will get to enjoy two days of high-octane action with the sprint race scheduled for Saturday and the main race on Sunday," he said.

"The organisers are once again fully committed to bringing and creating quality entertainment and activities across the three-day extravaganza. We encourage motorsport fans to purchase tickets and join the excitement on Oct 27-29."

Ducati's Italian rider Francesco Bagnaia is currently lead-

ing the world championship standings with 194 points after eight rounds of the 2023 MotoGP season. Spaniard Jorge Martin of Ducati-Pramac is second on 159 and Italian Marco Bezzecchi of Ducati-VR46 is third on 158.

Tickets for the three-day event officially went on sale worldwide on July 5. There are five price ranges including: Grand Stand tickets – B5,000 (sold out in three minutes after the launch); Marquez Stand – B4,000; Quartararo Stand – B3,000; Chandra Stand – B3,000; and Side Stand – B2,000.

Fans can purchase tickets via Counter Service All Ticket at 7-Eleven stores or www.allticket.com. Bangkok Post

editor3@classactmedia.co.th

Sport



England keep Ashes hopes alive > p15

PULLING NO PUNCHES

Phuket's young taekwondo stars honoured

Thanakrit (left) and Veerapat (right) with Thammawat Wongcharoenyot, President of the Phuket Sports Association. Photo: Sports Association of Phuket



TAEKWONDO

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Two young athletes from Phuket have been awarded official certificates of honour in recognition of their achievements in the sport of taekwondo.

Thanakrit Yodrak and Veerapat Krairiksh attended an official ceremony at Provincial Hall on June 30 overseen by Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew and the President of the Phuket Sports Association, Thammawat Wongcharoenyot.

Receiving the two young athletes in the Governor's lounge, Governor Woonciew praised their respective efforts and extended appreciation for bringing great pride to the country and Phuket in particular before presenting them each with an honorary certificate.

Governor Narong additionally extended thanks to the respective coaching teams and official trainers who support Thanakrit and Veerapat to enable them to achieve their success.

Thanakrit, 19, won a gold medal in the men's 58kg weight class at the 32nd Southeast Asian (SEA) Games in Cambodia, which ran from May 5-17.

Prior to this he also won gold in the same discipline at the 31st SEA Games in Hanoi, Vietnam, in May 2022, when he comfortably beat Cambodia's Youdeth Sam 34-5 to win the title in what was his SEA Games debut.

"I am very happy to win gold in my first SEA Games. I trained very hard – three times a day, two or three hours each session," Thanakrit said at the time, before giving an indication of his future aspirations: "This is just the beginning as I have

a bigger target – I want to compete in the Olympics," he explained.

Thanakrit previously won a bronze medal at the 2017 World Cadet Taekwondo Championships in Egypt and gold medals in both the Belgium Taekwondo Youth Open in 2018 and the China Taekwondo Youth Open 2019 in Yuncheng.

He also won a silver medal in the men's 58kg class at the Asian Taekwondo Championships in Chuncheon, South Korea in June 2022 and will be representing his country at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, between Sept 23 and Oct 8 this year.

Next up for Thanakrit, however, is the Muju Taekwondowon 2023 World Taekwondo Grand-Prix Challenge in Muju, South Korea, this weekend (July 14-16).

DARLING OF TAEKWONDO
Veerapat, who trains at Dragon

Gym in Phuket and competes in the men's 54kg weight class, picked up a gold medal in the 2022 Vietnam International Taekwondo Championships and a gold at the 2023 Thailand National Taekwondo Championships last month.

Veerapat also won gold in the men's 58kg weight class at the G H Bank Taekwondo Championship of Thailand 2023, which was held in Chonburi in March and April of this year. He received the outstanding athlete award for males over the age of 18 for his efforts.

Both Thanakrit and Veerapat will be hoping to follow in the footsteps of the darling of Thai taekwondo, Panipak Wongpattanakit, the top-ranked athlete in the women's 49kg weight class.

Panipak was the first Thai medal winner at the Tokyo 2022 Olympic Games and the first ever from Thailand to win a gold medal in

the sport of taekwondo at Olympic level. Her triumph in the Japanese capital was also the only gold medal Thailand won at the 2022 Games.

The 25-year-old won her fourth successive gold medal at the SEA Games in Cambodia and made history in Rome, Italy, last month when she claimed her 10th overall gold in the World Taekwondo Grand Prix, the first athlete to achieve the feat, which also placed her at the top of the charts of all time female winners.

Panipak attributes much of her success to acclaimed coach Choi Young-Seok, a South Korean who received Thai citizenship in June 2022 after 20 years coaching taekwondo athletes in the Kingdom.

Coach Choi has also been instrumental in helping Thanakrit develop, something the Phuketian hopes can continue as he strives for further success at the highest level.

Thai athletes return from Special Olympics to hero's welcome

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

TEAM THAILAND RETURNED home to a hero's welcome on June 27 after securing an impressive 42-medal haul at the recent 2023 Special Olympics World Summer Games, which took place in Berlin, Germany, from June 17-25.

A total of 35 Thai athletes competed in this year's event, consisting of eight Unified Partner athletes and 27 athletes with intellectual impairments, representing 15 different regions of the Kingdom.

Alongside the athletes were 13 coaches, a doctor and two officials making up part of the squad to support the Thai athletes during

the competition.

Team Thailand won 13 gold medals, 23 silver and six bronze, while award ribbons of various colours were presented for athletes who finished in 4th to 8th place.

While top-three finishes are respected achievements, it is the taking part in the event that truly counts, something that is illustrated by the Special Olympics Athletes' Oath which states: "Let me win. But if I cannot win let me be brave in the attempt."

The first athlete to win gold for the Kingdom was 20-year-old Thai sprinter Sittikorn Phisajarn in the men's 200-metre race on June 21, his first of three golds.

Sittikorn also won gold in the



Photo: Special Olympics Thailand

men's long jump and men's 100m, as did compatriot Phachara Nunseng in a different category of both events.

Further golds were won by Thep Tat Nunseng in the men's 200m; Nattanich Kumram and Thipasri Klapitak in the women's badminton doubles; Wutchai Potjanametha and

Rabdee Thanomkiat in the men's badminton doubles; Duangkaew Suwanpetch and Saratcha Nonprasert in the women's bocce ball doubles; and Supaporn Rasamee in the women's long jump.

The returning delegation was welcomed at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport on June 27 by Dr Naris Chaisut, President of the Special Olympics Sports Association of Thailand and Ratchaneewan Bulakul, Director of the Sports Association of Thailand, who both congratulated all the athletes for their efforts and for bringing pride to the nation.

Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the Special Olympics World Summer Games is the

largest inclusive sporting event for people with intellectual and multiple disabilities worldwide, providing year-round training and activities to 5 million participants and Unified Sports partners in 172 countries.

Its mission is to promote the acceptance and inclusion of those with intellectual disabilities through the power of sports while providing a global platform for them to showcase their athletic abilities.

The competition takes place biennially, alternating between summer and winter editions.

The 2023 Special Olympics World Games in Berlin welcomed over 6,500 athletes from 126 countries competing in 26 sports.

Ben Tirebuck