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MAKING WAVES

HM KING, QUEEN SUTHIDA STUN ONLOOKERS IN KING'S CUP REGATTA VISIT



HM Queen Suthida at the helm of 52-foot racing yacht 'THA 72'. Photo: Guy Nowell / Phuket King's Cup Regatta

The Phuket News
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His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn and Her Majesty Queen Suthida set a new precedent last week as the royal couple made a surprise visit to Phuket, ahead of Queen Suthida racing in the Phuket King's Cup Regatta and handing out the awards for the international sailing event.

Stunning onlookers at Kata Beach, Their Majesties strolled out across the sand to the floating pier as they headed out to the boats offshore, where Her Majesty boarded racing yacht *THA 72* for a practice session ahead of her competing as crew on the boat in the regatta's top-flight

IRC Zero class last Saturday (Dec 9). (See page 14.)

Their Majesties' visit to the beach and public appearance were largely unannounced, yet it was the humility in their demeanour and not requiring any special homage that astonished observers.

The King and Queen smiled and waved as they passed by, while people at the beach were left to go about enjoying their day. One woman was pictured taking a photo of Their Majesties. The woman was covered by only a bikini, but saw no interference from security at the beach.

During her practice session as crew on board *THA 72*, Queen Suthida even tried her hand at the helm of the 52-foot racing yacht. After the session

she returned to shore.

Her Majesty returned to Phuket last Saturday (Dec 9) to rejoin the crew and to take part in the final day of the Phuket King's Cup Regatta, where she spent nearly three hours racing on the water.

In addition to usual crew duties, such as 'hiking out' – sitting on the side of the boat with her legs hanging over the side – Her Majesty stunned observers even more by climbing the mast of the 52-foot yacht. Those familiar with the practice know that although it is relatively safe, it can be unnerving, especially as TP52 race boats have masts some 22.5 metres tall (about 73 feet).

With Her Majesty on board, *THA 72* won both races in the IRC Zero

class on the final day, but with three DNS (Did Not Start) on Races 4, 5 and 6, *THA 72* placed third overall in the class by the regatta's end.

Top honours in the IRC Zero class went to Raymond Roberts' crew on *Team Hollywood*, which has now won the IRC Zero class four consecutive times.

After returning to shore post-race, Queen Suthida joined the *THA 72* crew for the traditional group photo of the crew, then joined photos with key members of 35th Phuket King's Cup Regatta organising committee and other leading local figures.

Her Majesty later led the official handing out of trophies and awards to the regatta's winners during the annual event's closing ceremony.

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on Grab driver
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Sustainability
made easy by
eating right



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Liverpool top as
title race thrown
wide open



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News



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Patong welcomes new police chief

The Phuket News

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Pol Col Chalermchai Hersawat, former Cherng Talay Police Chief, has been welcomed to his new post as Superintendent of Patong Police Station.

The transfer was confirmed by posts on the official Patong Police Facebook page on Dec 6.

Col Chalermchai was welcomed to his new position by an assembly of officers in front of Patong Police Station, and presented with more than a dozen bouquets by a host of well-wishers, including Weera-wit Krueasombat, President of the Patong Entertainment Business Association (PEBA).

Meanwhile, Patong Police Chief Col Sujin Nilabodi has been promoted to the post of Deputy Commander of the Phang Nga Provincial Police.

Before taking up his post in Patong, one of Col Chalermchai's last acts as Cherng Talay Police Chief was to have

his officers get two taxi drivers to "surrender" for the vicious beating of a Grab driver who suffered a punctured lung when he was beaten with a piece of wood during an attack near Bang Tao Beach.

He also issued a report in September to inform Pol Gen Torsak Sukwimol – deputy national police chief at the time, now Commissioner-General of the Royal Thai Police – of the arrest and impending charges against well-known MMA fighter Khusein Askhabov and his twin brother Khasan.

The Russian brothers were arrested in connection with three Kazakh nationals forcing their way into an Italian man's villa at a resort in Cherng Talay and holding him bound and gagged while beating him for information in an hours-long ordeal that ended with the three men flying out of Phuket to Dubai after robbing the Italian man of more than B12 million in personal belongings.

All the senior ranking



Photo: Patong Police

officers down the chain of command to Region 8 Police, Phuket Provincial Police and even the Phuket Governor and Thalang District Chief were also copied in on the report.

However, the Askhabov brothers were later cleared of the charges and released.

Yet no details of the incident were ever reported by Col Chalermchai or any other officers under his command at Cherng Talay Police. The news broke only after a copy

of the report was provided to *The Phuket News*. Even after the news broke, Cherng Talay Police remained silent on the attack.

Col Chalermchai's policy of silence on police action is somewhat commensurate with the public image policy maintained by former Patong Police Chief Col Sujin, with Patong Police regularly reporting minor police action in the tourism town – but remaining steadfastly silent

on any major incidents.

Col Sujin and his officers at Patong Police Station remained silent on the gang attack and subsequent shootings on Bangla Rd only two weeks earlier.

Col Sujin was also serving as Patong Police Chief when a 25-year-old noodle vendor from Trang was shot and beaten by a drunken, off-duty Phuket Provincial Police officer on Bangla Rd in February 2021.

In both cases, Col Sujin deferred to senior Provincial Police officers to provide explanations to the press.

If no senior officers step forward, police remain silent on such incidents that affect tourism – just as they remain silent on the killings of a 19-year-old woman from Luxembourg and a 21-year-old American man in a road accident involving a Russian woman in Rawai last month.

Patong Police post regular brief reports on people illegally selling beers on the street or

fireworks on Patong Beach, and more recently charges filed against business operators for employing minors in "service establishments", namely massage shops.

Col Sujin's policy did see Patong Police marked as the "most moral" and "most transparent" police station in Phuket in the annual 'Integrity and Transparency Assessment' (ITA) conducted by the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC).

In contrast, Cherng Talay Police were given a pass mark of only 55.39%, and, as with most police stations in Phuket, marked with the note "Must improve urgently".

Of note, the police transfers follow Phuket Immigration Chief Col Thanet Sukchai late last month submitting his resignation from government service over "morals". His resignation was refused, and instead he was transferred to Prachuap Khiri Khan Immigration Office.

Nepotism questions raised about police promotions

MOVE FORWARD PARTY MP Rangsiman Rome has demanded an explanation about how a police officer who happens to be a nephew of Thaksin Shinawatra's ex-wife managed to secure the top job with the immigration police at Phuket airport.

The opposition lawmaker also asked why Pol Col Thanet Sukchai, the former Phuket Immigration Chief, had to resign shortly before he was transferred to Prachuap Khiri Khan and replaced by a new commissioner in the Nov 29 police reshuffle.

"I personally think the Royal Thai Police need to respond to these and other questions raised over the latest police reshuffle at the Phuket police immigration office and Immigration Division 6," Mr Rangsiman wrote in a Facebook post.

Phuket Immigration Office is under Immigration Division 6, which is headquartered in Hat Yai district of Songkhla.

"What actually made Pol Col Thanet less suitable for the position (of Phuket immigration police chief)? And why is the new commissioner



Pol Col Padthongtew now has the top immigration post at Phuket airport. Photo: Padthongtew Damapong

more suitable than him?" Mr Rangsiman asked.

The same question applies to the promotion of Pol Col Padthongtew Damapong as the new chief of the immigration police unit at the Phuket airport in the same reshuffle, said Mr Rangsiman.

Pol Col Padthongtew is the son of an older brother of Khunying Potjaman na Pombejra, the ex-wife of former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

Khunying Potjaman's father, Pol Gen Preawphan Damapong, was a former national police chief. Thaksin began his career with the police before starting the businesses that would make

him a billionaire and later entering politics.

Mr Rangsiman noted that the promotion of Pol Col Padthongtew, 41, to the highly coveted position in Phuket came just 10 months after he was appointed as the chief of an administrative unit at the Immigration Bureau headquarters.

Pol Col Padthongtew must be a really outstanding official, have a special "pass" to a fast-track promotion, or receive support from a very important person, said Mr Rangsiman.

"And is Pol Col Thanet one of the police commanders whose wish would not come true, while Pol Col Padthongtew is among the commanders whose wish would become true as mentioned by Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin recently?" he wrote, referring to media reports last month about Mr Srettha reportedly saying some police officials would be happy while others would be disappointed with the reshuffle. The prime minister vehemently denied the reports.

Bangkok Post

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Grab driver beating spurs protest

The Phuket News
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More than 200 taxi app drivers gathered at Phuket Provincial Hall on Dec 6 to appeal for fairness after a Grab driver was beaten by two ‘green plate’ taxi drivers in Bang Tao.

The taxi app drivers, also called “R.Y.18” drivers after the section of the law that allows them to use private vehicles as taxis, submitted a formal letter of complaint addressed to the Governor of Phuket, Sophon Suwannarat.

However, it was Phuket Vice Governor Amnuay Pin-suwan who received the letter of complaint on the Governor’s behalf. Kornpitak Atassuwan of the Phuket Provincial Land Transport Office (PLTO) was also present.

THE ATTACK

The Grab taxi driver, 25-year-old Teerajet Chukaew, filed a formal complaint with Cherng Talay Police after he was punched, slapped, pushed and beaten with a piece of wood by two men for picking up passengers outside a beach club at Bang Tao.

The complaint was filed



Photo: Eakkpop Thongtub

at Cherng Talay Police Station, and received by Pol Lt Khajonkiat Khamwichairat at 12:01am Dec 3.

Mr Teerajet explained that he received an order to pick up passengers outside the Maya Beach Club less than an hour earlier, at about 11:30pm (Dec 2). He arrived to pick up the passengers, who he said were tourists, but was confronted by local taxi drivers operating from a queue there.

One of the taxi queue drivers asked if he received money from an app to pick up passengers along the road. Mr Teerajet said he just moved

on to park so the passengers could get in his car.

However, just as his passengers were about to enter his vehicle, objects were thrown at his car.

Two men holding sticks then approached. One of them said, “Didn’t you listen?”

Mr Teerajet tried to explain, but one of the men punched him once and slapped him once. The other man struck his back with a stick four times and pushed him.

Mr Teerajet fled and drove immediately to Cherng Talay Police Station and filed the complaint.

He was later admitted to Thalang Hospital for treatment of his injuries. He suffered pain to his right ribs and a punctured lung. Afraid for his safety, Mr Teerajet returned to Trang province to continue to receive hospital treatment there.

THUGS SURRENDER

The two men wanted for beating Mr Teerajet surrendered to police the next day, but only after Cherng Talay Police officers went to the scene of the attack at about 9am on Dec 4.

The two men – Kamjorn Kanyacharee, 48, and

Bamrung Thipkonglat, 46 – presented themselves at Cherng Talay Police Station at 10:30am that day.

Kamjorn admitted to police that he was the one who had “caused the incident” and carried out the assault.

Bamrung said he was a witness to the incident and was the one who intervened to dissuade Mr Kamjorn from “the incident”, namely the attack.

Kamjorn apologised to the Grab taxi company and to “the driver”, namely Mr Teerajet.

He apologised “to all Phuket brothers and sisters for destroying the image of Phuket tourism”.

Police said they would proceed to press charges against Kamjorn. However, Cherng Talay Police at time of press till had yet to confirm exactly which charges he will face.

At time of press the PLTO, which regulates all public transport on the island, had yet to issue any statement even recognising the attack, nevermind what action was to be taken against the two drivers.

The attack came just one day after Prime Minister Sret-

tha Thavisiin visited Phuket to witness tourism safety demonstrations in Patong, which the prime minister said were vital for Phuket’s tourism image.

The attack on Mr Teerajet also came just nine days after Vice Governor Amnuay had expressly called for local taxi drivers to “control their emotions” when in situations involving taxi app drivers.

That appeal, made directly to representatives of Phuket taxi cartel cooperatives with PLTO officials present, went ignored.

One day after the taxi app drivers massed at Provincial Hall, the PLTO on Dec 7 re-issued a notice confirming which taxi apps have been approved by the Department of Land Transport and are legal to operate in Thailand.

The notice confirmed that the taxi apps Hello Phuket, Grab, Airasia Super App, Robinhood, Bonku, Asia Cab (operating as ‘Cabb’), Bolt and InDriver are legal to operate in the country.

The notice specifically singled out that ride-sharing service ‘Maxim’ as still uncertified by the DLT, and therefore illegal in Thailand.

Tourists caught up in forced eviction from Kamala hotel

TOURISTS STAYING AT a resort in Kamala last week found themselves caught up in a legal battle that has seen the hotel operator evicted from the site, with tourists staying in some 20 rooms left to find alternative accommodation by themselves.

The eviction started a week earlier, after Kamala Police arrived to serve the eviction notice, and notice against trespassing, on Dec 8.

Phuket Tourist Police were also present to explain the situation to the tourists.

“Private property, No entry without permission. Violators will be prosecuted,” says a sign now hanging across the front entrance to the resort.

The warning is in Thai, English and Russian.

Police and the property owner also posted copies of the court order authorising the eviction, and documents providing evidence of ownership of the land, belonging to Alongkot Kingkaew, currently residing in Chalong.

Mr Alongkot explained that the land had been rented out as an empty lot to Kamphon Turakij Co Ltd since 2004.



Photo: Eakkpop Thongtub

A notice posted at the hotel – originally built as the Kamala Beach Inn Hotel, currently renamed Kamala Resort – explained that original rental fee was B250,000 a year, gradually increasing each five years thereafter.

However, Kamphon Turakij Co Ltd had refused to pay rent for at least the past eight years.

A court order by Phuket Provincial Court for the property to be vacated in 2019 was ignored, as were any other attempts to have the property vacated, Mr Alongkot explained.

A Supreme Court on June 5, 2020 found in Mr Alongkot’s favour, and deemed its decision final. And still the property remained illegally occupied, he added.

The hotel, which has 120 rooms continued to operate

over the years, but its operations were an oddity, he explained.

Although the hotel now looks closed, tourists still come and go, and there is a security guard posted at the front, he noted.

“The hotel is closed like it’s deserted, but there are people coming in and out. There is a security guard in charge, but it’s not open all year,” he said.

“Every year, when we enter the area, they find someone to come in, a third party, to prevent us from [reclaiming the property],” he added.

Phuket Tourist Police confirmed that some of the tourists staying at the hotel moved out immediately when the eviction notice was served.

Others were allowed to stay until they could find alternative accommodation.

“I don’t want anything to affect tourism or affect the image of Phuket Province,” Mr Alongkot said.

“They can still stay if the booking came from an agent. It’s not really okay, but we have already accepted this to try to help them,” he added.

Eakkapop Thongtub

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Prosecutors drop car repo charges

Eakkapop Thongtub
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The Phuket Public Prosecutor's Office has decided to take no action against four men accused of using "excessive force" in repossessing a car for failing to make loan repayments.

Thalang Police launched an investigation into the incident, which occurred in the parking lot of the Robinson Lifestyle Thalang shopping mall near Heroines Monument in August.

In the incident, four men approached Kulwit Wong-saratnawut, a 32-year-old resident of Moo 5, Mai Khao, on Aug 7 and told him that he had B200,000 in loan repayments outstanding on the car.

The men were working for the loan provider, the Union Car Auction Warehouse in Baan Lipon, Srisoonthorn.

Three of the men attempted to enter the car in the parking lot, but Mr Kulwit refused them. His refusal led to an



Police at the car yard. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

assault in which the men removed the car key from Mr Kulwit's trouser pocket.

The men took Mr Kulwit and the car to the Union Car Auction Warehouse in Baan Lipon, Srisoonthorn, where Mr Kulwit was "forced" to sign over ownership of the car, a white Ford Focus.

As police launched their investigation, Mr Kulwit's father, Mr Kitt, at the time presented a bank statement proving loan payments made, confirming that the outstanding amount was only B61,000.

Mr Kitt last Saturday (Dec 9) confirmed to reporters that

the Phuket Public Prosecutor's Office had decided to not press charges against the key suspect, Wichan Danai, and the four men who took forced repossession of the car.

Mr Kitt laid no blame on the response of the Thalang Police in investigating the incident.

Thalang Police Deputy Chief Pol Lt Col Anukul Nooket at the time confirmed that the behaviour of the four men described by Mr Kulwit in his complaint was illegal.

"It is a violation of the law. There was persecution, threats, coercion, harm, he

[Mr Kulwit] did not give his consent," Lt Col Anukul said.

"As for the complaint of robbery, we have to look at the evidence again. What were the men's intentions and what are the conditions for seizing property [for non-repayment of loans]?"

"The car is now already with the company that violated the law and used coercion to seize the car," he said.

Mr Kitt presented documents that confirmed Thalang Police presented their case, and their evidence, to the Phuket Public Prosecutor's Office in order for charges to be formally brought against Mr Wichan and the four men.

He also presented a copy of a letter confirming that the Phuket Public Prosecutor's Office had declined to proceed with the charges due to "lack of evidence".

Mr Kitt did blame Thalang Police for accepting the decision of the Phuket Public Prosecutor's Office to not press charges.

"This is even though my son filed a police report with a doctor's certificate from Thalang Hospital proving his injuries, his bruises, and his need to rest and recover," Mr Kitt said.

"But the police concluded that there was no injury, no injuries, even though the case was a shocking one.

"There was CCTV as clear evidence [of the incident in the car park, but the prosecutors absolutely did not press charges," he said.

It was noted that the refusal to press charges against the men raised questions over the subsequent role of the police, and that of the Phuket Public Prosecutor's Office.

In September, two former Phuket Public Prosecutors – including a former chief of the Phuket Public Prosecutor's Office – were sentenced to jail for attempting to extort a bribe from a company in order to avoid prosecution for encroaching on government land.

Officials vow against graft

PHUKET GOVERNOR SOPHON Suwannarat and the heads of all 19 local government administrations on the island vowed to not tolerate corruption on Dec 8.

The pledge, a traditional affair, was made at an event at Phuket Provincial Hall held to mark International Anti-Corruption Day.

Of note, UN International Anti-Corruption Day was observed around the world on Dec 9, as it has done since the passage of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption on Oct 31, 2003.

The event at Phuket Provincial Hall last week was held under the concept 'Zero Tolerance. Thai people do not tolerate corruption'.

In total 20 Phuket local government organisations were represented at the meeting, noted an official report.

Also present for the occasion were representatives from the private sector, the report said.

Certificates were awarded to all organisations that had their work assessed in terms of 'ethics and transparency' in the Thai government's 'Integrity & Transparency Assessment (ITA)' initiative for 2023.

The organisation that received



Photo: PR Phuket

the most points was Pa Khlok Municipality, with score of 97.85, said the report

The results of the other 19 organisations were not reported.

After the certificates were handed out, Governor Sophon then led the assembly in taking the pledge to not engage in corruption, or support corrupt practices in any way.

The officials pledged "to perform official duties with honesty and request that all sectors join together to fight against all forms of corruption, as December 9 every year is International Anti-Corruption Day", the report concluded.

The Phuket News

Danish family in hospital after head-on collision

A FAMILY OF FOUR DANISH tourists, including two children, are in hospital after the passenger van they were travelling in collided head-on with a pickup truck on the Muang Mai-Baan Para road, in Thalang, on Monday morning (Dec 11).

Pol Lt Col Pongpipat Khamchomphu, Deputy Inspector (Investigation) at Thalang Police Station, was notified of the accident at 9:30am.

A rescue unit from Pa Khlok Municipality and rescue workers from the Kusoldharm Foundation Muang Mai unit arrived at the scene, on the boundary between Tambon Thepkasattri and Tambon Pa Khlok, to find a white Phuket-registered Toyota van with heavy damage to its front.

The driver, Kittisak Chamrung, 23, and his four passengers, all Danish nationals from the same family, were injured.

The four Danish passengers were named as Joakim Pedersen, 55; Ms Sanne Lund Hansen, 47, Paul Valdemar Lund Pedersen, 15; and Agnes Elisabeth Lund Pedersen, just 13 years old.

All four were taken to Thalang Hospital before being transferred to Bangkok Hospital Phuket in Phuket Town.

On the other side of the road



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

was a Ford pickup truck, registered in Bangkok, also with heavy damage to its front.

The driver, Sonthaya Chatratin, 59, had also been injured in the accident.

The extent of any of the injuries suffered in the collision were not disclosed.

The van driver, Mr Kittisak, explained that he had picked up the family from Phuket International Airport and were taking them to Ao Po Pier when the accident happened.

According to the initial investigation by police, the driver of the pickup truck, Sonthaya, was attempting to overtake a car on the one-lane-each-way road when the collision happened.

Both Sonthaya and Mr Kittisak were unable to avoid the collision.

At last report, police were continuing their investigation into the accident.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Officials dodge pipeline update

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With the island's three main reservoirs collectively 92.2% full, the Phuket Provincial Water Resources Subcommittee met last week to discuss options for dealing with any potential water shortages in the coming 'dry season'.

The aim of the meeting, held at Phuket Provincial Hall on Dec 6, was to discuss strategies "to support the drought situation and lack of rain during 2024 through the Thai Water Plan", said an official report of the meeting.

Leading the meeting was Phuket Vice Governor Amnuay Pinsuan, joined by Sukrit Klinson, Manager of the Provincial Waterworks Authority, Phuket Branch, and Phuket Irrigation Office Director Kriksak Leenanon, as well as the heads of a variety of government agencies.

The volume of water in all three main reservoirs in Phuket – Bang Wat reservoir in Kathu, Bang Neow Dum reservoir in Srisoonthorn and Khlong Kata reservoir in Chalong – totalled 18.5 million cubic metres as of Oct 31, said the official report.

The reserves marked 85.92% of their full combined capacity of 21.53mn cubic metres, the report added.

However, the numbers given



Photo: Phuket Waterworks Authority

were despite the Phuket Irrigation Office itself reporting that as of Dec 1 the three reservoirs were collectively 92.2% full – with Bang Wad holding 10.04mn cubic metres of water (98.4% of its 10.2mn cubic metre capacity); Bang Neow Dum holding 6.76mn cubic metres (94.09% of its 7.19mn cubic metre capacity) and Klong Kata holding 3.05mn cubic metres (73.7% of its 4.14mn cubic metre capacity).

Regardless, the committee focussed on dealing with any short-

ages that may occur in the coming months, with special recognition given to Phuket entering its 'tourist season'.

"If an El Niño situation occurs [sic], the reservoir of concern is Khlong Kata Reservoir In Chalong, which serves Rawai and Karon sub-districts," the official report noted.

"Local agencies have been asked to help monitor the water situation. And this period has entered the tourist season. More tourists will travel to Phuket. Water must

be managed better because of the image of Phuket province [sic]," the report added.

The Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) has prepared vehicles and equipment to help people who suffer water shortages every year, including helping by having "water pumped from various water reservoirs and delivering it to people who request it" the report said.

"The key issue is solving the short-term problem over the next

four to five months. The goal is to prevent a lack of water for consumption. The PWA must keep it in reserve for use during the dry season," the report added, without attributing the quote to any particular person.

While the report of the meeting focussed on the standard, every-year "preparations" for dealing with mass water shortages on the island, it only gave a mention of the water-supply pipeline from Phang Nga to Phuket that is supposed to be under construction.

"As for solving long-term problems, the Provincial Waterworks Authority has created a construction project to improve and expand the Provincial Waterworks Authority network," the report said.

Phase 1 of the project is to cost B3.2bn, while Phase 2, feeding the water from Phang Nga to Mai Khao, is to cost B1.4bn, the report noted.

"The project has already passed the Cabinet. As for future planning, dredging may be required to store water reserves to full potential. If it rains, the water can be diverted and stored as monkey cheeks [smaller weirs and other water-holding areas] to be raw water for the Provincial Waterworks Authority to use further," the report said.

No other details on the Phang Nga water-supply project were given.



Image: Phuket Red Cross

Red Cross Fair set to return

THE ANNUAL 'RED Cross Fair' and New Year festivities will return to Saphan Hin from Friday, Dec 29 to Saturday, Jan 6.

The dates for the annual festivities, now called the 'Dee Phuket' fair, were announced by officials last week when declaring that tickets for the popular Red Cross lucky draw were now available from government offices and other selected private outlets.

Tickets cost B100 each, with books of 10 tickets costing B1,000 apiece. Numbers available for the lucky draw tickets range

from 1,000 through to 8,999.

Up for grabs is the main prize of a Toyota Fortuner 2.4V, with a Toyota Yaris ATIV 1.2 Smart as the second main prize.

Other main prizes to be won include three Honda Scoopy-i motorbikes, five small electric scooters and seven 42-inch TVs.

The draws for the main prizes will be held at the centre stage area at 10pm on Saturday, Jan 6.

Among the other prizes to be won as the "last 3 digits" prize are 80 oil-free fryers.

Traditionally offered as smaller prizes to be won each night are bags of household necessities just to offer people something to take home from the fair on the night.

The festivities, as always, will include live entertainment on stage each night. The lineup of artists has yet to be announced for the event this year.

Money raised from the sale of lucky draw tickets goes towards funding Phuket Red Cross projects, namely providing assistance to people living in poverty.

The Phuket News

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4am closing comes into effect

Bangkok Post

The National Alcohol Beverage Policy Committee has ordered pubs and restaurants opening until 4am, which comes into effect on today (Dec 15), to open sobering-up areas and prevent drunk customers from driving.

Santi Promphat, deputy minister of public health, on Saturday (Dec 9) said the committee, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai, met on Friday (Dec 8) to extend the opening hours for entertainment venues in Phuket, Chiang Mai, Chon Buri, Bangkok and Surat Thani (only on Koh Samui), under a government policy to spur the economy.

The policy change also applies to hotels nationwide. Nighttime entertainment venues must strictly comply with rules and regulations, particularly the Entertainment Place Act and Section 29 of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Act, which prevent establishments from selling alcoholic beverages to people under 20 years old.

Mr Santi said operators of these venues must provide



Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee (centre, in white shirt) conducts an inspection of Bangla Rd. Photo: Chalermpong Saengdee / Facebook

breathalyser tests to customers who intend to drink and drive. Such businesses must also provide areas for drivers with blood alcohol levels above the legal limit of 50 milligrammes per decilitre to sober up.

Customers must wait in the area until they are sober enough to drive, he said.

If customers refuse to wait, pub operators must contact the friends and relatives of customers so they can be driven home or provide transport for the customers, he said. Customers must pay

for this service.

Various agencies will compile the information and carry out an impact assessment on the extension of operating hours, he said.

Motorists should not drive while intoxicated during the New Year's festival. Businesses must comply with the law and prohibit the sale of alcoholic drinks to people under 20 years old, he said, adding alcohol sales are allowed from 11am to 2pm and again from 5pm to midnight.

Mr Santi also urged family members to keep an eye on

their children to prevent them from driving while drunk. Checkpoints will be beefed up to check motorists.

He said that during the 'seven dangerous days' last year, road accidents occurred 2,440 times, with 317 dead and 2,437 injured. Drunk driving was the second biggest cause of road accidents, accounting for 25.49%, he said.

PHUKET PLANS

Public hearings about introducing the 4am closing measures held as a requirement of

the government policy agreed to extend the operating hours of nighttime entertainment venues until 4am.

A source Phuket Provincial Administration Office said that the measure will be implemented in six zones located on Bangla Rd in Patong. The measure will also be implemented in 106 of 229 entertainment venues located in outer zones.

The extension of the hours is expected to increase the venues' earnings by 30-50% and boost the employment rate by 20-30%.

Most tourists tend to stroll along the road from the early evening, which helps spur the island's economy, the source said.

For the first of the six measures, CCTV cameras will be set up in the six designated zones, monitored by a special administrative unit and various agencies.

Second, tambon health promoting hospitals will work together to outline active health check plans in these areas to provide advice on people's health as well the conditions of staff accommodation and the entertainment venues themselves.

Third, emergency mobile units will be stationed at police booths and near the TaiPan nightclub.

Fourth, police units will be deployed to provide help with road and pavement traffic from 6pm-9pm, with patrols carried out around the clock.

Fifth, rubbish and waste must be collected from 6am-6pm so it can be separated before being dumped on outer roads or at special spots arranged by the municipality.

To ensure the municipality is ready to suppress disasters and maintain safety in Patong, three municipal units, two fire-fighting units, and 36 lifeguards – four working overnight – will be deployed.

Eight volunteer lifeguards will also be in action from 8pm to 8am.

In addition, some zones will be designated for cannabis smoking to avoid disturbing others.

Police, administrative and security officials will beef up their illicit drug suppression measures and take legal action against wrongdoers, the source said.

The distribution of alcoholic drinks will also be strictly controlled.



Market vendors appeal against new shopping mall

VENDORS AT THE PHUKET City Municipality Fresh Market 2, located on Ong Sim Phai Rd in Phuket Town, have filed a formal appeal against the construction of a new shopping mall across the road from the market.

The vendors submitted their appeal to the Phuket Provincial Damrongdhama Center (Provincial Ombudsman's Office) on Dec 4.

Present to receive their appeal was Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat.

Fresh produce vendor Rueangsak Saetan, 45, explained to Governor Sophon that the new mall threatened their livelihoods.

The current plans allow for vendors at the new mall to sell fresh produce, thereby instantly threatening the incomes of the vendors at the long-standing Phuket City Municipality

Fresh Market, he explained.

Mr Rueangsak urged Governor Sophon to investigate and immediately suspend construction of the new mall.

Governor Sophon formally received the request and ordered the Phuket Provincial Damrongdhama Center to coordinate with Phuket city Municipality and those responsible for the construction of the mall, including representatives of the Agricultural Market Committee, to come together to find ways to solve the problem.

Of note, Phuket City Municipality Fresh Market 2 is located directly across the the building that was once home to the original Robinson department store in Phuket, which operated for some 20 years and also sold fresh produce as part of the department store. *The Phuket News*

Long weekend brings tourism boon

THE THREE DAY WEEKEND FROM DEC 9-11 brought a welcome boost to Phuket's tourism industry with an estimated 40,000 tourists arriving each day, the local Tourism & Sports chief has announced.

Ratchadaphon O-in, head of the Phuket office of the Ministry Tourism & Sports, said that on average a total of 40,000 to 50,000 domestic and international passengers have passed through Phuket International Airport each day since the long weekend began last Saturday (Dec 9).

The average occupancy rate on the island was 85.32%, Ms Ratchadaphon said.

During the same period in 2019, occupancy was still at 75%, she added.

Ms Ratchadaphon noted that Phuket was on target to reach its target of 9 million tourists this year.

"The island is bustling with tourists. It's not just the tourist attractions around the beach that are crowded with tourists, but also includes tourist attractions in the city such as in the Phuket Old Town area, including the Chartered Bank Intersection, Thalang Rd and Soi Rommanee," Ms Ratchadaphon said.

"There are both Thai and foreign tourists who come to take photos of the beauty of the Sino-European architecture of the buildings, and they are constantly looking to buy souvenirs during the long holiday," she said.

Ms Ratchadaphon also noted that Phuket Carnival in Patong had played a key role in attracting tourists to the island.

"That has received a lot of attention from both Thai and foreign tourists," she said.

The annual Phuket Carnival in Patong got underway last Friday night (Dec 8), starting with the traditional parade of floats and entertainers from a variety of Phuket's leading tourism attractions and businesses.



Among the floats were cowboys, cheerleaders and dancers along with elaborate costumes and modern, artistic versions of characters from traditional Thai folklore. Among those taking part in the parade were Jungceylon shopping centre, Central Patong Department Store, Phuket FantaSea, Carnival Magic, Simon Cabaret and Andamanda Water Park.

The parade started at the southern end of Phra Metta Rd at 4pm and continued along Prachanukroh Rd then along the Patong beach road, where it came to an end at 'Bangla Plaza', the main entertainment area on the beach where the stages were set up for the nightly entertainment.

Phuket Vice Governor Amnuay Pinsuwan officially declared the annual three-day event underway, joined by Patong Mayor Chalerm Sak Manee Sri.

This year marks the 37th time the festival has been held to mark the official start of the tourism high season. The carnival this year is being held under the theme 'Time of Happiness'.

The carnival continued from 10am to midnight last Saturday and Sunday nights (Dec 9-10).

Among the stars performing at the carnival were Green Light Band, Super, DJ Masta J, Rosezy AE, and DJ Samatsky.

Crowds thronged on the beach each night, enjoying the free live entertainment, which concluded with a fireworks display. *The Phuket News*

Thailand makes COP28 climate-finance pitch

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

Thailand has called for further action from its partners to achieve the goal of US\$100 billion (B3.5 trillion) in climate finance by 2025, saying it is crucial for helping developing nations to reach their climate targets.

Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Pol Gen Phatcharavat Wongsuwan issued the call during an address to the COP28 global climate talks in Dubai last Saturday (Dec 9).

He also reaffirmed Thailand's determination to achieve carbon neutrality in 2050 and net-zero greenhouse gas emissions in 2065, adding the country has updated its National Adaptation Plan (NAP) to alleviate the impacts and risks of climate change.

The plan covers key areas such as water management, agriculture and food security, tourism, public health, natural resources and environment management, as well as human settlement and security, Pol



Gen Phatcharavat explained.

Thailand, he said, was expected to reach peak emissions in 2025. Meanwhile, studies have shown that the share of renewable fuel sources in electricity generation will need to reach 68% in 2040 – compared with about 15% now – and 74% by 2050 for the country to reach carbon neutrality. “We are also moving towards phasing down fossil fuel in line with our 2050 Carbon Neutrality goal,” the minister added.

In the agricultural sector, a climate-smart rice farming project is now being funded by

the Green Climate Fund. The B1.5 billion project is expected to promote low-emission rice farming and improve climate resilience among farmers.

Pol Gen Phatcharavat reiterated that the worldwide climate finance goal of \$100bn for a Loss and Damage Fund by 2025 is crucial for developing states.

In 2009, developed countries promised that starting from 2020, they would transfer \$100bn a year to poorer nations hit by worsening climate change-fuelled disasters. They later indicated the target would not be met until 2023, and are

now hoping to secure commitments to meet the goal by 2025.

According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), contributions by developed nations and other participants reached \$89.6bn in 2021.

“No one and no country is spared from the adverse effects of climate change,” Pol Gen Phatcharavat told the meeting. “I am gratified that the Loss and Damage Fund has been established and will be materialised further at COP28.”

The fund is intended to help compensate vulnerable countries for the impacts of climate change, such as increasing extreme weather events. At COP 28, the United Arab Emirates said it would commit \$100mn to the fund, with another \$100mn coming from Germany, \$17.5mn from the US and \$10mn from Japan.

Pol Gen Phatcharavat expressed optimism that the Dubai talks “will set a firm pathway for all of us to achieve the 1.5 degrees Celsius target under the Paris Agreement”.

Songkran receives UNESCO Cultural Heritage status

BANGKOK

UNESCO, THE UNITED Nations Agency for Education, Science, Culture, Communication and Information, has officially recognised the Thai Songkran Festival as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity.

The announcement was made during the 18th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage held in Kasane, Botswana on Dec 6.

Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin expressed profound gratitude on behalf of the Thai government and its people. He stated that the annual festival reflects the core values of gratitude, benevolence and unity among Thai people.

Songkran is widely known for its lively water-splashing activities, symbolising Thailand's rich cultural diversity, creativity and communal spirit.

The recognition marks “Songkran in Thailand” as the fourth Thai element to be listed in UNESCO's



intangible cultural heritage inventory, following the inclusion of the “Khon” masked dance performance in 2018, “Thai Massage” in 2019, and the “Nora” dance performance from Southern Thailand in 2021.

In celebration of this honour, the Ministry of Culture organised an event titled “Songkran in Thailand, Traditional Thai New Year Festival” at Lan Khon Muang and Wat Suthat Thepwararam in Bangkok last Friday (Dec 8).

The recognition of Thai intangible cultural heritage, which involves practices, expressions, knowledge, and skills, underscores its vital role in the nation's cultural identity. It also contributes significantly to the Sustainable Development Goals, reinforcing the cultural fabric and heritage of Thailand on a global platform. *NNT*

Harmful dust pollution returns

BANGKOK

PEOPLE IN 50 PROVINCES awoke to harmful levels of ultrafine dust in the air they breathe on Monday morning (Dec 11), according to the Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency (Gistda).

The worst affected areas were in the Central plains and the Northeast, the agency confirmed.

Gistda reported at 7am on Monday on its website pm25.gistda.or.th that 50 of the 77 provinces, mostly central plains and north-eastern provinces, were shrouded in a harmful density of particulate matter 2.5 micrometres and less in diameter (PM2.5).

The levels ranged from 37.7 to 96.6 microgrammes of PM2.5 per cubic metre of air over the past 24 hours. The government's new safety threshold is 37.5µg/m³.

At 7am, the worst level, 96.6µg/m³, was recorded in Sing Buri, followed by 89.8µg/m³ in Kalasin, 85.0µg/m³ in Chai Nat, 82.2µg/m³ in Nong Khai



Thick toxic smog blankets Bangkok on Monday morning (Dec 11). Photo: Bangkok Post

and 77.1µg/m³ in Ang Thong. These provinces were in the red levels of PM2.5, meaning the air pollution could seriously affect a person's health.

The levels were 47.7µg/m³ in Bangkok, 44.6µg/m³ in Samut Prakan, 44.4µg/m³ in Nonthaburi, 50.1µg/m³ in Nakhon Pathom and 45.2µg/m³ in Pathum Thani.

People in 50 provinces (65%) out of 77 provinces nationwide were suffering under the smog. Only 27 provinces were spared unsafe levels, most in the North or the South.

They were the northernmost province of Chi-

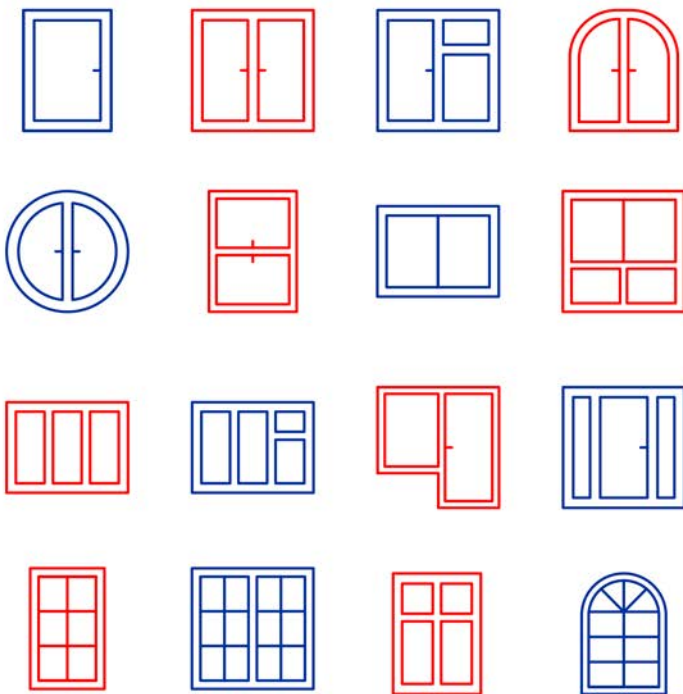
ang Rai, with the lowest reading of 7.7µg/m³, Mae Hong Son, Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Pattani, Surat Thani, Krabi, Chumphon, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Phayao, Lampang, Phuket, Phang Nga, Satun, Ranong, Songkhla, Yala, Phrae, Nan, Phatthalung, Trang, Narathiwat, Trat, Bung Kan, Chanthaburi, Nakhon Nayok and Tak.

The Meteorological Department attributed the air pollution to stagnant air, while people in the affected provinces were advised to avoid outdoor activities such as exercise, officials said.

Bangkok Post



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Koh Yao Noi farming free range eggs and chickens.

How to eat sustainably in Phuket



SUSTAINABLY YOURS

Palmer Owyong

With The United Nations Climate Change Conference (AKA COP 28), finishing on Dec 12 and the constant reminders that we are not hitting our climate emission targets on the news. You might wonder what you can do to live more sustainably.

According to a 2019 study by Oxford researcher Joseph Poore, changing your diet by cutting down on meat and dairy is the single biggest way we can reduce our impact on the planet, because it

addresses land use, water and air pollution and biodiversity loss. Whereas flying or driving less just cuts your CO2 emissions.

Eating Meat is Killing the Planet

Food production emits about a quarter to one-third of the world's greenhouse gases, and when combined with its contributions to poor health and ecological damage, inflicts about US\$12 trillion of damage to the world economy from biodiversity loss and CO2 emissions.

Livestock is responsible for almost 60% of all emissions from food production and takes up 80% of agricultural land, is 80% responsible for deforestation in the Amazon, while only providing us with 20% of our calories.

The Food and Agricultural Organization identifies animal agriculture as a

leading cause of water pollution, dead zones in the ocean and the death of coral reefs. And 75% of antibiotics are used on livestock, which is leading to antibiotic resistance, making it harder to treat diseases such as pneumonia, tuberculosis and salmonella, which are already showing increased levels of resistance.

You Don't Have to Go Vegan

There are also a lot of fad diets like Keto, Paleo and Carnivore that advocate eating a lot of meat as a strategy for health and weight loss. However, they are not sustainable for the planet, and while they may help you lose weight in the short-term, they are not good for your long-term health.

However, members of the Blue Zones, the healthiest, longest-lived people on the planet, eat an average of just 2 oz (50 grammes) of meat five times per month, while the average American eats 67 oz (1,899 grammes) per week. This means that the average American could cut their meat consumption by 97% and would be healthier for it.

What You Should Eat

So, if you don't want to eliminate meat and dairy from your diet, you can try cutting back to just one to three times per week instead of every day. You should also opt for lower emission meats like chicken, which produce about one-tenth the CO2 per kilogram as beef does.

If you like seafood, eating bivalve mollusks like mussels, clams, oysters and scallops fight climate change, clean the water and provide a habitat for fish to spawn. They are also nutrient dense and provide Omega 3s, zinc, iron and magnesium.

Eating organic is also important because pesticides on fruits and vegetables from Thailand often exceed the maximum residual level recommended by the European Union. Not only can this be bad for your health, but it is also bad for the environment, as excessive pesticide use destroys the biodiversity needed for a healthy ecosystem.

Farm To Truck

However, ever since the Phuket Farmers Club closed, it has been difficult to find places that sell organic food on our island. Introducing Farm to Truck which was founded by British expat Roy Tirthankar and his Thai wife Chotipa Wasantasiri in 2020 in Chiang Mai.

They started by delivering vegetables grown in their backyard to the local community. But now they deliver countrywide, selling a wide variety of mostly organic fruits and vegetables and artisanal products delivered in bio-

degradable or reusable packaging. The goods are now grown by a network of Thai organic farmers and producers.

Although you have to pay a shipping fee to have the groceries delivered to Phuket, their lower prices and the convenience of getting them brought to your door offset this. You might be concerned that the food producers aren't local, but most of the fruits and vegetables that you purchase from night markets or the grocery stores around Phuket, the food has come from Northern Thailand or even overseas.

Buying Locally

Another sustainable farming operation that was set up locally in 2023, by German-Taiwanese expat Thomas Krause and his Thai wife Zai is called Koh Yao Noi Farming. Located just five kilometres from Phuket on the island of Koh Yao Noi, their mission is to build a business that empowers local farmers to grow food that creates healthier ecosystems and improves the well-being of their customers.

The operation has 200 chickens that roam 3.5 rai of land for at least six hours per day, rather than being stuffed in a cage. This allows them to hunt and forage for their favourite foods like insects and seeds or eat the black soldier flies that are grown for them from food scraps. This produces happier, healthier chickens that also lay better tasting organic eggs with a thicker, richer yolk. All while creating a zero-waste farm that has a lower carbon footprint than those that feed their chickens soybeans.

The operation also grows four types of organic rice. Although you can't buy their products directly from Koh Yao Noi Farming, you can purchase their eggs and rice at the Panama Market (Cherng Talay), Crust (Phuket town) and Leikki Café (Rawai). Several restaurants also use their products, including Bella Fresca (Chalong) Tusky (Phuket town) and Laan sabai (Rawai).

In the future, they plan on expanding their range to include fruits, vegetables and nuts.

Event for Sustainable Agriculture

If you are interested in learning more about sustainable agriculture, KYN Eco Entrepreneurs are holding a three-day workshop on Koh Yao Noi from December 22-24. The cost to attend is B500.

Palmer Owyong is the author of 'Solving the Climate Crisis: A Community Guide to Solving the Biggest Problem On the Planet.' You can download the first three chapters from his blog [PalmerOwyong.me](https://palmerowyoung.me)



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HeadStart presents: The Wizard of Oz!



Last week over 60 of HeadStart's Creative & Performing Arts students wowed four audiences with their performance of The Wizard of Oz.

Once again, we have had an exciting and fast paced term one, filled with an incredible commitment from our Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) students who have outdone themselves this year. It continues to be a pleasure beyond measure that I get to work with these students and get to not only see them dedicate themselves to our productions but also develop as individuals along the way. In CAPA we are always striving to make improvements and you will see we have continued to build on previous successes: our pit band has again expanded and are performing even more complex music; we have established a 'CAPA Create' programme for our backstage team who have been working hard throughout the term creating set and props and working collegiately to ensure the performances run smoothly; and we have the addition of multimedia elements in the performance.

Involvement in CAPA is more than just a talent or a desire to be creative, it is about working together to achieve a common goal, developing confidence and communication skills and developing resilience and focus. These skills are essential as our students move into adulthood.



The CAPA family is just that, a family. We are incredibly lucky to work with such a dedicated team of teachers who give up their time to ensure a successful performance for our students. I have worked in education for many years and this is, without a doubt, the most talented CAPA team I have had the pleasure of working with.

- Ms Sillett, Director of Creative & Performing Arts



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POP QUIZ

- 1. American escape artist Harry Houdini was originally born in which country?
- 2. What is the melting temperature of chocolate?
- 3. Which is the tallest bridge in the world?
- 4. The Pitti Palace is a vast palace in which European city?
- 5. Who was the last man to walk on the Moon? In which year?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Hard

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across

 - 1. Lyric poem section
 - 8. Hesitate
 - 14. Stimulating
 - 16. Disinclined
 - 17. Start of "big" list
 - 19. Bladed weapon
 - 20. A ___ pittance
 - 21. Berry
 - 22. Hot pepper
 - 25. Word with electric or before socket
 - 26. Additionally
 - 30. Farm mother
 - 32. Hints
 - 36. Hypothesis
 - 40. "Big" list, part 2
 - 42. "Pomp and Circumstance" composer
 - 43. Charge for delay at sea
 - 44. Eighty-six
 - 46. Not open for business
 - 47. La lead-in
 - 50. Understanding
 - 54. ___ Kringle
 - 56. Big oil company
 - 57. Genesis twin
 - 61. "Big" list, part 3
 - 65. Money back
- Down

 - 1. Bar order, with "the"
 - 2. Mouth, slangily
 - 3. Like some wines
 - 4. Yorkshire river
 - 5. Kind of particle
 - 6. Retrovirus, for short
 - 7. Foe
 - 8. Tail of frayed rope
 - 9. Blvd.
 - 10. Bulgarian moolah
 - 11. Hint
 - 12. Blue book filler
 - 13. Knot again
 - 15. Butter
 - 18. Coffee ___
 - 22. Circle
 - 23. Jot
 - 24. With enthusiasm
 - 26. Lacquered metalware
 - 27. Face shape
 - 28. "Lulu" composer
 - 29. Kidney, for one
- 31. The writer Saki's real name
 - 33. Doze
 - 34. Compass dir.
 - 35. Total
 - 37. Flight data, briefly
 - 38. Guru
 - 39. Winter toy
 - 41. A whole lot
 - 45. Short holidays?
 - 47. Bypass
 - 48. Abalone
 - 49. Belafonte dance
 - 51. Grand ___ ("Evangeline" setting)
 - 52. Tennis whiz
 - 53. Laser printer powder
 - 55. Airplane assignment
 - 57. Arab ruler
 - 58. Alone
 - 59. "___ Lang Syne"
 - 60. Handles
 - 62. Highest
 - 63. Lab eggs
 - 64. "Losing My Religion" rock group

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) Hungary; 2) 30-32°C (86-90°F); 3) Millau Viaduct, France (343m); 4) Florence; 5) Eugene Cernan, 1972

1	2	3	4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11	12	13
14							15		16				
17								18					
19						20				21			
					22	23				24		25	
26	27	28	29						30	31			
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40									41				
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				44		45				46			
47	48	49		50		51	52	53					
54			55		56						57	58	59
61				62						63	64		
65							66						
67								68					

Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

4

seconds of awkward silence is all it takes to significantly increase your anxiety during a conversation.

40

copies of genes that code for the tumor suppressor protein p53 is why elephants rarely get cancer. Humans have only two.

162

dollars is how much the average US household spends each year on lotteries. Households that make less than \$10,000 spend about \$597 a year.

20,000

US dollars per episode was the clothes budget for 1970s TV show Charlie's Angels.

150 million

work days and up to 189 million school days were missed each year in the US due to people having colds – before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Surin Beach sunset. Photo by Alena Plotnikova

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

This week in history

Dec 15, 2014

Gunman Man Haron Monis takes 18 hostages inside a café in Martin Place for 16 hours in Sydney. Monis and two hostages are killed when police raid the café the following morning.

Dec 16, 1930

Bank robber Herman Lamm – the “father of modern bank robberies” – and members of his crew are killed by a 200-strong posse following a botched bank robbery, in Clin-

ton, Indiana. His gang made off with US\$15,567 – equivalent to about \$286,797 today.

Dec 17, 1903

The Wright brothers make the first controlled powered, heavier-than-air flight in the Wright Flyer at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

Dec 18, 1271

Kublai Khan renames his empire ‘Yuan’, marking the start of the Yuan dynasty of Mongolia and China.



Seconds into the first controlled airplane flight, near Kitty Hawk.

Dec 19, 1606

The ships Susan Constant, Godspeed and Discovery depart England carrying settlers who founded, at James-

town, Virginia, the first of the 13 colonies that became the United States.

Dec 20, 1955

Cardiff is proclaimed the capital city of Wales.

Dec 21, 1988

A bomb explodes on board Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland, killing 270. This is to date the deadliest air disaster to occur in British soil.

Source: Wikipedia

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SAT16DEC



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Please reserve the date and register for the annual Rotary Club of Patong Beach Christmas Party happening at the Holiday Inn Resort Phuket. Registration and Prepayment is mandatory. Prices until December 01: Rotary Club Members and their immediate family members: 2,000 THB per Adult. Non-Rotary Members: 2,500 THB per Adult. For Children aged 6 to 12 years old: 750 THB. The price includes a sumptuous buffet and free flow of well- chosen drinks per person. For bookings and more info email address: president@rotarypatong.org or LINE ID kamala110

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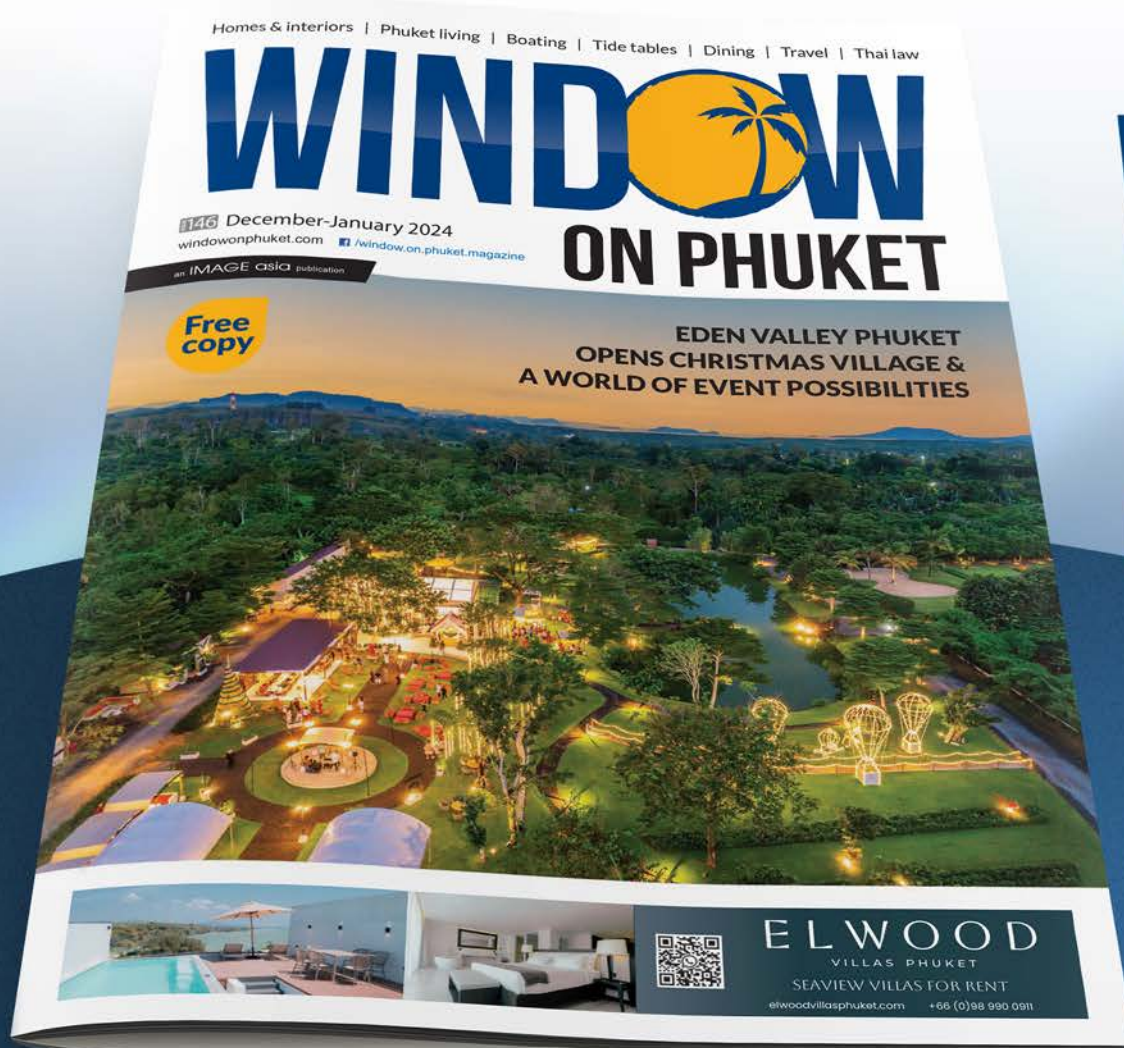
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SOIRÉE DE GALA 2023 BONJOUR PHUKET 2023

The annual gala dinner for Bonjour Phuket, the French community group, was held on Dec 1 at the Courtyard by Marriott Phuket Town. Over 200 members and guests enjoyed drinks by the pool followed by an international and Thai buffet. Entertainment from Monkey Diva Phuket French Cabaret show from Kamala had guests on their feet well in to the night. Bonjour Phuket is a French-speaking, non-profit club, made up entirely of volunteers, to find out more visit bonjourphuket.club



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Four in a row for Team Hollywood

SAILING

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Ray Roberts' *Team Hollywood* was the toast of the town last weekend as they won the Phuket King's Cup Regatta for the fourth successive year.

Competing in the IRC Zero class, the TP52 Hollywood heroes came in ahead of second-placed *THA 72*, James and Kate Murray's *Callisto* in third and Steve McConaghy's *Aftershock Syndicate*, a Davidson 55, in fourth.

The TP52 *THA 72* won both races on Saturday's (Dec 9) final day of racing in the 11-race series, made all the more remarkable as Her Majesty Queen Suthida Bajrasudhabimalalakshana was one of the crew on deck, demonstrating her very capable sailing skills throughout.

In other racing categories, Ithinai Yingsiri's Thai vessel *Pine Pacific*, an X-Yacht 55, won the Premier class after triumphing in all seven races, with Peter Cremers' *Shatoosh*, a Warwick 75, finishing in second.

Hans Rahmann's *JV 72*



Ray Roberts' Team Hollywood won their fourth straight Phuket King's Cup Regatta last Saturday (Dec 9). Photo: Guy Nowell

custom-built *Yasooda* chances were hurt with a 'Did Not Finish' (DNF) in race three, meaning they had to settle for third overall. Bernard Huybens' *Aphrodite*, a Vitters 92, was fourth in the class and did not sail on the final day.

Nick Burns' *Witchcraft*, edged out Rolf Heemskerk's *The Next Factor* in the seven-boat IRC One class, just as it did two weeks ago at the Raja Muda Selangor International Regatta.

Witchcraft won seven of the ten races sailed in this class, with Craig Douglas' and

Gordon Kettleby's *Ramrod* finishing third and Craig Nichols' *Alright* edging out Susurnu Kurose's *Char Chan* by one point to take fourth spot.

Robert Carr and Sandy Farquharson's *Aquarii* was hurt by a 'Did Not Start' (DNS) in race eight and had to settle for sixth overall, while Clayton Craigie's *Anjo* had a challenging regatta with four DNFs and one DNS and finished last in the class.

TIGHTEST CLASS

Elsewhere, the six-boat Bareboat Charter Class saw Dean

Peng's and Tiffany Khoo's *Gragonborn* win five of the seven races sailed, with Mike Downard's *Piccolo* narrowly edging out Toshihiko Iijima's *Hippocrates* by one point to take second.

Moonshine, featuring the ASA Sailing Dream Asia, was fourth while *Team Hayato* took fifth in the class, with Alan Anderson's *Judy* not starting the last three races and thus being relegated to sixth position.

The five-boat Monohull Cruising class was the tightest class going into the final

day with three boats tied with nine points. But when it was all sailed and done, Philippe Dalle's *Swan II* edged out Steve Maine's *Enavigo* by two points and Jianhao Yang's *Isabella* by three points, the latter disqualified in the third race for carrying an anchor on the bow. Thomas Veltin's *Brisk* was fourth with Mo Yiwei's *Sumalee* fifth.

The two-boat Multihull Racing class saw Dan Fidock's *Parabellum* zip around the course to win seven of the nine races sailed. John Newnham's *Kata Rocks 2*, aka *Twin Sharks*, was the only other boat competing in this class.

Andrew McDermott's *Trident* won all five races in the Multihull Cruising class after having to sit out day one because of a demasting. Frank Kastelein's *Team No Escape (Pooichat)* was the only other yacht competing in this class.

ROYAL AWARDS

The Regatta's International Dinghy Classes this year competed in a three-day competition divided into four classes: Monohull Dinghy Handicap (12 boats); ILCA 4 (15 boats); Open Skiff (17 boats); and Optimist (79 boats).

The overall Optimist

winner was Patcharaphan Ongkaloy, continuing on her gold-medal performance from the Southeast Asian Games. Fellow Thais Pailin Jaroenpon and Karit Phrammanee finished in second and third respectively.

The Open Skiff class was won by India's Anandi Chandavarkar, with Thailand's Dom Kaewpradab second and India's Ayaan Nath third.

The ILCA4 class was swept by Thailand with Nanvatorn Supaamphonwit capturing top spot, Ton Rattana finishing second and Thanaphat Sirichaoren placing third.

The Monohull Dinghy Class (Handicap) was won by Claudia Nazarov with Voravong Racharattananuruk coming in second and Morten Jakobsen in third.

The official awards ceremony on Saturday evening carried an extra air of importance as Queen Suthida, fresh from her successful exploits on the water earlier in the day, presided over proceedings.

Her Majesty bestowed royal awards to winners in the Keelboat and Multihulls classes and the International Dinghy classes in a ceremony held at the Beyond Kata Resort.

Suteepat wins maiden Asian Tour crown

GOLF

THAILAND'S SUTEEPAT Prateptienchai secured his first victory on the Asian Tour when he cantered to a four-shot victory in the US\$400,000 (B14 million) Taiwan Glass Taifong Open on Dec 3.

The Asian Tour rookie, who had a two-stroke lead at the start of the day, shot a fine four-under-par 68 to finish on 19 under at the Taifong Golf Club, in the second from last event of the season on the Asian Tour.

Thailand's Atiruj Winai-charoenchai fired a 66 to finish second with Malaysian Shahriffuddin Ariffin who came in with a 69 in third. It is the best performance by both Thai players on the Asian Tour.

Five birdies in a row from the third set up Suteepat for the win and allowed him to stroll to victory exactly one year after he came second in this event to wrap up the Asian Development Tour (ADT) Order of Merit (OOM).

Thirty-year-old Su-



Suteepat with the trophy. Photo: Bangkok Post

teepat, a professional since 2017, burst onto the scene last year with three ADT wins, all in Indonesia, which helped earn him his place on the Asian Tour as the top-10 finishers from the OOM secured their cards.

He had enjoyed as strong debut season on the main Tour with five top-20 fin-

ishes before his win in Taiwan.

"Really happy, I love this place," said Suteepat, who won US\$72,000 and leapt into 24th place on the Asian Tour OOM, from 53rd.

"I won the ADT title here, I got my Asian Tour card here. Yeah, I love it."

Bangkok Post

Rahm confirms move to LIV Golf

GOLF

REIGNING MASTERS CHAMPION JON Rahm has confirmed he is joining LIV Golf in a deal reportedly worth between US\$300 million (B10.7 billion) and \$600mn, sealing a stunning coup for the Saudi Arabia-backed circuit.

After weeks of 'Will he-won't he?' speculation linking the Spanish world number three with a move to LIV, two-time major-winner Rahm announced his decision to leave the PGA Tour in an interview with Fox News on Dec 7.

LIV Golf issued a statement saying details for a team captained by Rahm in the coming season, which starts on Feb 2 at LIV Golf Mayakoba in Mexico, will be released soon.

Rahm becomes arguably the biggest star to join LIV, the upstart circuit whose emergence has upended the golfing world over the past two years.

His move comes as the PGA Tour and the Saudi backers of LIV Golf attempt to finalise the details of their bombshell merger announced in June ahead of the Dec 31 deadline.

The Wall Street Journal speculated Rahm's signing could either be a tactic by LIV's backers to force the PGA Tour to conclude a deal by the agreed deadline, or a move to give fresh impetus to the rival circuit in 2024 if the proposed joint tie-up collapses.

The possibility of Rahm jumping ship to LIV had once seemed unthinkable.

While LIV successfully recruited major winners such as Brooks Koepka, Phil Mickelson, Dustin Johnson, Bryson DeChambeau and Cameron Smith, Rahm had been one of the most staunch PGA loyalists, repeatedly



Jon Rahm has confirmed his jump to the Saudi-backed LIV Golf circuit. Photo: AFP

stating that the riches offered by LIV held no appeal when balanced against the tradition of the PGA Tour.

"I laugh when people rumor me with LIV. I've never liked the format," Rahm said earlier this year.

Asked in his Dec 7 Fox interview about his past criticism of LIV's 54-hole, shotgun start format Rahm said he'd be discussing it with LIV officials, but had made his peace with it.

Last year, Rahm said he had discussed the possibility of a move with his wife Kelley and decided to remain firmly in the PGA Tour camp, saying the huge monetary compensation offered by LIV wasn't enough of an attraction.

However, things have now changed and Rahm said he was prepared for the inevitable criticism of his move.

"I'm very comfortable with my decision," Rahm said. "I'm no stranger to hearing some negative things on social media or in media. It's part of what it is, we're public figures but you just learn to deal with it right?"

"This certainly won't define who I am or change who I am." AFP

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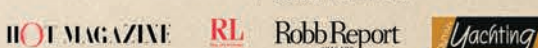
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