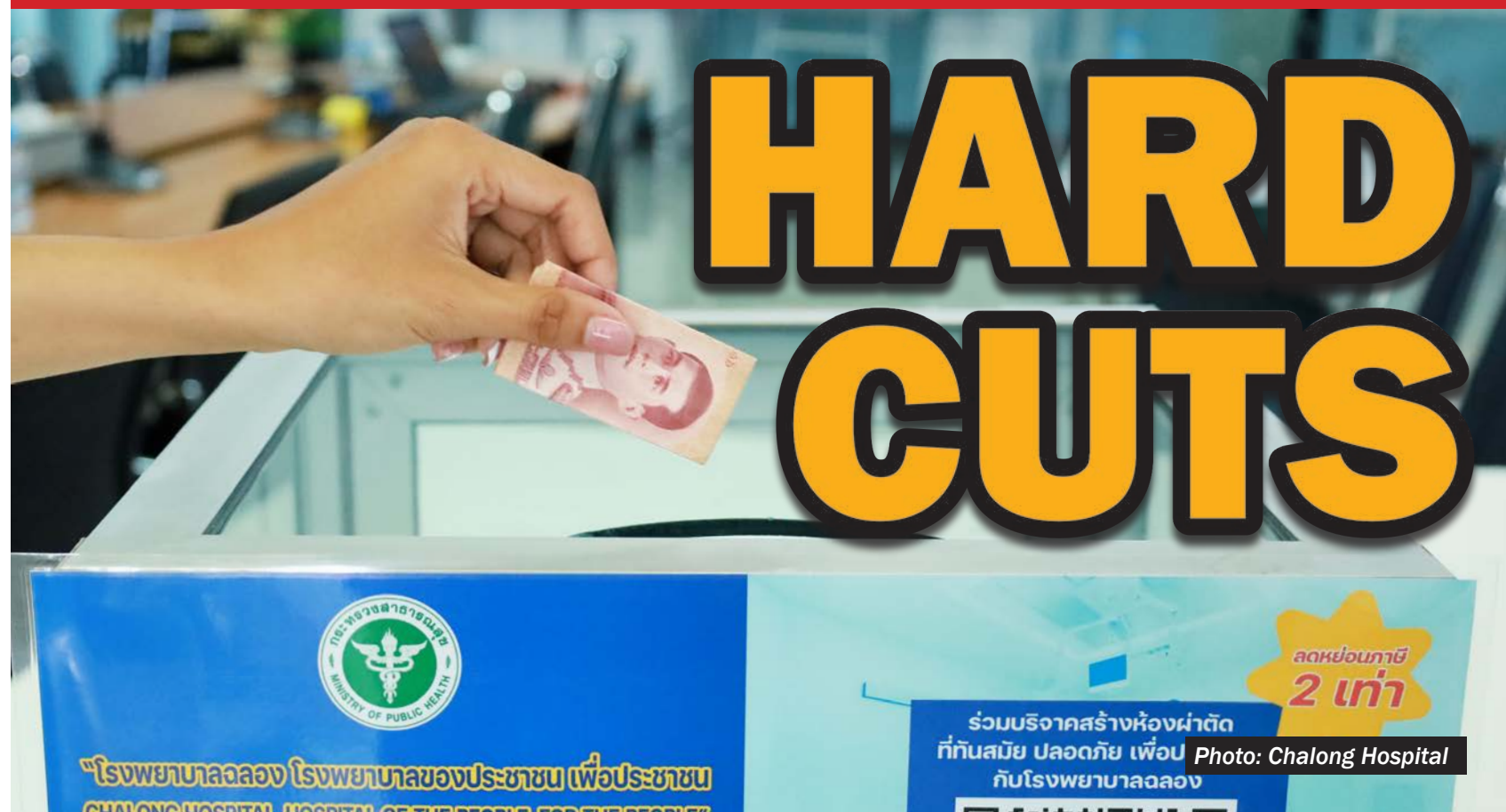


**TSUNAMI WARNING TOWERS GO MISSING > PAGE 3**



## CHALONG HOSPITAL DONATIONS NEEDED FOR OPERATING ROOM

**Natnaree Likidwatanasakun**  
reporter1@classactmedia.co.th

As with the recent call for donations to complete the Andaman region's first government cancer treatment centre at Vachira Phuket Hospital, Chalong Hospital is now also calling for donations for a new operating room and medical equipment due to insufficient funding from the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH).

"Chalong Hospital needs B56,929,400 to build an operating room with medical equipment," Chalong Hospital Director Chuchart Nitchawatana told *The Phuket News*.

The new 'operating room' is to have six separate 'operating theatres', Mr Chuchart added.

"Chalong Hospital has received only B4.7 million from the MoPH for the whole operating room project," Mr Chuchart confirmed.

"The Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation [PPAO] has provided additional support by funding B10mn, but it's still not enough to cover costs, including operating room materials.

"Right now, we [Chalong Hospital] are now seeking further financial support from Rawai, Karon and Chalong Municipalities," Mr Chuchart said.

Chalong Hospital is positioned to be the main government hospital for residents in those three municipal areas, he explained.

The Ministry of Phuket Health is represented in Phuket by the

Phuket Public Health Office (PPHO), yet no one at the PPHO was willing to be named in explaining the lack of budget funding for the only government hospital in the south of the island.

One of the PPHO's 'Executive Committee – who specifically asked not to be named – confirmed to *The Phuket News* that a budget request for the full B56.9mn has been submitted to the central MoPH head office in Bangkok.

However, he noted, "While Chalong Hospital can request funding, the process takes time".

### ON ITS OWN

Chalong Hospital Director Mr Chuchart explained that when Chalong Hospital was built, and first opened, it was operated under

the administration of Vachira Phuket Hospital in Phuket Town, which serves as the main government hospital on the island.

However, that is no longer the case, Mr Chuchart said.

"Chalong Hospital does not operate under Vachira Phuket Hospital anymore. Both hospitals are independently managed, with separate budgets and individual allocation processes," he said.

"Before Oct 1, 2020, Chalong Hospital was under Vachira Phuket Hospital, and received assistance in terms of budget for various equipment. But due to the continuous growth in patient numbers, we decided to separate from Vachira in order to independently develop and manage our own facilities," he explained...

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**SPORT** PAGE 12

**Yapp making his mark on the beautiful game**



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PHUKET'S QUALITY TILE BOUTIQUE



exeditor@classactmedia.co.th

## News



**Homeless hit local officials' agenda > p4**

# Delayed funding hurts hospitals

Continued from page 1

Chalong Hospital now serves more than 160,000 patients each year, Mr Chuchart noted.

"However, some patients still need to be referred to Vachira Phuket Hospital for surgery, and nearly 1,000 are admitted through private hospitals each year. This is why we urgently need to build our own operating room," he said.

"The doctors and medical staff we've sent for further training are expected to return in July, and we aim to have the operating room completed and ready for service by December this year."

Chalong Hospital plans to build six operating rooms in total, "but we will start with three due to urgent needs," Mr Chuchart continued.

"These should be sufficient to meet patient needs during the first half of next year, with plans to expand as needed. The operating rooms will be located on the fourth floor," he added.

## HAND IN POCKET

The lack of funding by the MoPH has made it necessary for Chalong Hospital to call for donations to have the operating rooms built and fitted out.

"We accepting donations to build modern, safe operating rooms. We still need B38,696,198.10 mn to reach our goal," Mr Chuchart said.

"The amount of donations we have received so far is only B225,201.88," he noted.



"We are now in the process of finalising the blueprints and having a company selected by committee [as per government requirements]. We hope to have this part of the process completed by the end of April," Mr Chuchart said.

"And we will accept donations until Sept 30, then start the construction," he added.

## SAME OLD SONG

The call for donations for Chalong Hospital is the same as required by Vachira Phuket Hospital to make its 'first cancer treatment centre' a reality, the PPHO Executive Committee member told *The Phuket News*.

"For the radiation treatment centre at Vachira, the only medical equipment being provided by the MoPH is the radiation machine, which alone costs B300mn," he said.

"However, the budget allocated for the radiation building is insufficient, and this part of the funding has not yet been approved.

"If Vachira Phuket Hospital didn't call for donations, they would have to submit another budget plan, wait for approval and then wait for the funds to actually arrive," the PPHO executive said.

"The bureaucratic process takes too much time for the hospital to meet the increasing number of patients... Most hospitals can't wait because people need treatment, and the building needs to be completed quickly," he added.

"Phuket has a small number of registered residents but many hospitals with high-budget plans, and there are several other factors to consider as well.

"There are currently 13,533

government hospitals across the country, and the reason for the delays and budget limitations is that many hospitals in other provinces are also waiting for funding," he noted.

"That's why most hospitals decide for donations, requesting a budget is difficult. Even if the budget is approved and construction starts, it often proves to be insufficient, and asking for additional funds adds another complex step in the process," he said.

"Similarly, Chalong Hospital couldn't wait to build an operating room, so they rushed to complete it by calling for donations and handled it themselves.

"The MoPH doesn't have enough for every hospital," he added.

## ALL SILENT

Regardless, the PPHO executive member gave no explanation as to why the MoPH was so consistent and so meagre in its providing of funds for government healthcare in the one province that generates more income for the national economy than any other province outside Bangkok.

Government officials have been loud in announcing that Phuket generated B497 billion (B497,000,000,000) in tourism revenue last year alone. This year officials are hoping to break the half-trillion-baht barrier.

Further, despite several visits to Phuket by Prime Minister

Paetongtarn Shinawatra already this year in the name of reviewing "the progress of critical infrastructure projects", funding for government hospitals on the island have never been mentioned as a critical issue discussed during her visits.

Meanwhile, the call for donations goes on. Phuket residents and businesses stepped up for Vachira's cancer centre fundraising, easily surpassing the B290mn required, with the extra funds to pay for essential medical equipment to be used at the centre.

As with all donations made to the Vachira fundraising effort, any donations to the building of the new operating room at Chalong Hospital will be granted twice the value of the donation as a tax deduction within the tax year.

For more information about the Chalong Hospital fundraising drive, visit Chalong Hospital's website (<https://chalonghospital.moph.go.th/>) or call 076-384342-3 (ext. 2702) or 088-2940994, available 24/7. People can also email [donate.chalonghospital@gmail.com](mailto:donate.chalonghospital@gmail.com).

*Donations can be made directly to:*

*Account Name: 'Donations to improve the operating room at Chalong Hospital'*

*Account Number: 664-2-95110-7*

*Bank: Krungthai Bank, Chalong Branch*

# Officials move to resolve unlicensed slaughterhouses

PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS have encouraged feedback and suggestions from local leaders and business representatives to address growing concerns over unlicensed slaughterhouses in Phuket, amid ongoing tensions surrounding public hygiene, safety and the impact on local meat traders.

Officials recently discussed the issue with local leaders and business representatives at Phuket Provincial Hall at a meeting chaired by Phuket Vice Governor Suwit Phansengiam.

Also in attendance were Rewat Areerob, President of the Phuket



Photo: PR Phuket

Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO); Lt Cdr Phongsakorn Itsamut of the Phuket branch of the Internal Security Operations Command (Isoc); and Phuket MP Somchat Techathaworncharoen.

Participants included officials from the Phuket Provincial Livestock Office, Public Health Office and municipalities across the

province, as well as private business representatives from pig slaughterhouses, carcass traders and local distributor SuperCheap Co Ltd.

The meeting came in response to enforcement of a 2022 order by the Phuket City Municipality mandating the closure of unlicensed slaughterhouses, following updated regula-

tions from the Phuket Provincial Livestock Office.

With only two licensed private slaughterhouses currently operating in the province – and unable to meet the total demand – many operators had continued slaughtering animals outside authorised facilities, raising public health concerns.

During the discussion, officials and stakeholders worked to find a temporary solution that balances legal requirements with the urgent needs of affected business operators and the public.

Key outcomes from the meeting included:

1. Registration and Hygiene Compliance: All

11 previously unlicensed slaughterhouse operators must register their intent to reestablish operations in their original locations. They must also meet standards for sanitation, safety and humane practices, with a commitment to minimising public disturbance.

2. Legal Appeal: Operators are encouraged to petition the Phuket Administrative Court to revoke the order barring them from operating. They may also request temporary relief to allow continued operations while the court deliberates.

3. Temporary Exemption: The Phuket Provincial Livestock Office has been tasked with submitting a

request to the Governor to consider the public impact and propose a temporary exemption. If approved, it would allow limited slaughtering outside licensed facilities under Section 39 of the Animal Slaughter Control Act (B.E. 2559).

4. New Facility Planning: Phuket City Municipality and the PPAO will collaborate to identify a new site for a centralised slaughterhouse. If located outside city limits, the area will fall under the PPAO's jurisdiction, with Phuket City Municipality providing funding for construction.

*The Phuket News*



# Tsunami warning towers amiss

Natnaree Likidwatanasakun  
reporter1@classactmedia.co.th

The tsunami warning towers at Mai Khao Beach and at Ley Phang Beach are missing entirely while the siren at the tower at Kata Beach is out of service for repairs, due to be functioning normally by the beginning of September.

Phuket MP Thitikan Thitipruethikul on Apr 2 called for parliament to launch an investigation into what happened with two tsunami warning towers on Phuket's east coast that are now missing.

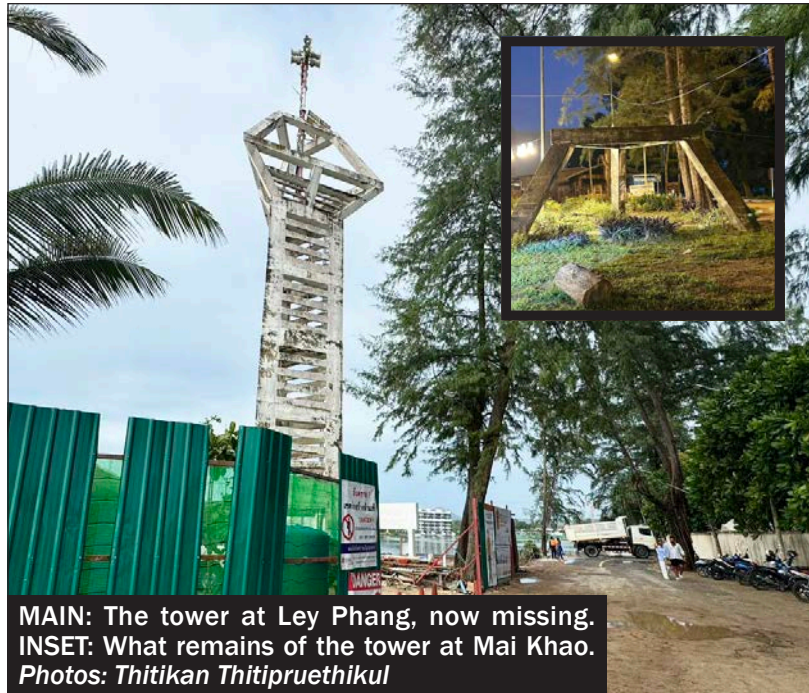
Of the two missing tsunami warning towers, one is WH09 at Mai Khao Beach, and the other WH10 at Ley Phang Beach, just north of Bang Tao.

"I requested urgent repairs for the damaged warning towers, on Oct 24, 2024 for Ley Phang and another request on Dec 12, 2024 for the one at Mai Khao Beach," MP Thitikan told Parliament.

"My team inspected the sites and found both warning towers missing," he said.

MP Thitikan expressed serious concern over WH10 on Ley Phang Beach. "A hotel had fenced off the area and then the tower disappeared," he said.

Mr Thitikan questioned whether the tower at Ley Phang



MAIN: The tower at Ley Phang, now missing.  
INSET: What remains of the tower at Mai Khao.  
Photos: Thitikan Thitipruethikul

was on state or private land and who approved its construction, or if authorities wrongly built the tower on private land.

"Both warning towers were removed without any announcement details or notification from the Phuket DDPM. This caused much concern among local residents," Mr Thitikan said.

"This change leaves the entire western coast of Thalang with only two warning towers, which is not enough. More importantly, Ley Phang is home to many hotels, tourists and local residents, making it crucial to keep the

tower in place," he added.

"Clear and official announcements are important and will help prevent the spread of incomplete information that could cause panic."

Following his presentation to Parliament, a complaint letter was submitted to the Committee on Prevention and Mitigation of Natural Disasters, received by committee Rapassorn Niyamosatha, to investigate the issue.

## EXPLANATIONS

Wichit Sutthaso, the new Chief of the Phuket Provincial Disaster

Prevention and Mitigation Office (DDPM Phuket), gave *The Phuket News* some explanations as to what happened to the two missing warning towers.

Of note, Mr Wichit took up the position of DDPM Phuket Chief only days earlier, on Mar 31, replacing Sopon Thongsai.

"Phuket's tsunami warning system is facing disruptions due to old and damaged towers. As a result, Mai Khao, Ley Phang and Kata Beach are temporarily without warning sirens," Mr Wichit confirmed.

Regardless, Mr Wichit assured that 16 of the 19 tsunami warning towers on Phuket are functioning normally.

Regarding Ley Phang Beach, Mr Wichit said, "The tower has been 'moved' (sic) and is being relocated to Tai Mueang in Phang Nga, where it will offer improved signal transmission and more efficiency.

"The missing tower at Mai Khao was demolished because it was damaged, and a new one will be built.

"The structural damage was severe, requiring demolition and disposal by the DDPM Phuket office," Mr Wichit explained.

"The warning siren itself remains at Mai Khao, but it is no longer working because it is no longer fitted to the tower. Once

the new tower installation is complete, it [the siren] will be re-installed and work as normal," he added.

"The same will happen at Kata Beach [where the tower itself remains in place]. Once the repairs are complete, everything will return to normal."

For Ley Phang Beach, Mr Wichit refused to explain why additional towers were not installed at Tai Mueang instead of reducing the number of towers on Phuket's west coast.

Instead, he gave a vague response, stating that the tower's "efficiency" in its new location is better than it was at Ley Phang.

He also noted that since he recently replaced Mr Sopon, the project had already been implemented before he took office.

"When I arrived, everything was gone, including the tower and the siren. It had already been moved to Phang Nga," he said.

Likewise, Mr Wichit had no explanation as to why his predecessor, Sopon Thongsai, never issued an official announcement on the matter.

Regardless, Mr Wichit assured, "We are monitoring the progress closely. Our technical department has backup plans in place if an emergency situation occurs."

## Karon Police restart landslide probe

THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE deadly landslide in Kata last August that killed 13 people and injured many more has been delayed as Karon Police wait for documents to confirm the construction as a contributing factor for the landslide.

The questioning of victims has been completed, and officers are now awaiting the submission of additional documents, Pol Lt Col Ekkasak Kwanwan, Senior Inspector (Investigation) at Karon Police, told *The Phuket News*.

"I want a document that proves how the construction is considered a factor in negligence and in what way it is negligent," he said.

Pol Lt Col Ekkasak, even without evidence, has already determined that the illegal construction at the Big Buddha Viewpoint was not the sole factor that caused the landslide.

"The landslide deaths were not caused solely by the construction.

"Other factors like natural disasters and rocks must also be considered, as they were on the list too," he said.

The "list" that Pol Lt Col Ekkasak was referring to is the official landslide investigation report conducted by the Department of Mineral Resources. The department was instructed to carry out the investigation into the cause of the landslide, which occurred on protected forest land administered by the Royal Forest Department (RFD).

"Before questioning the Phra Phuttha Ming Mongkol Saththa Foundation 45 and its president, Suporn Wanichkul, we need a detailed statement from Phongsakorn



Photo: Chalermpong Saengdee

Kangwan, Director of the Office of Mineral Resources Region 4, who inspected the site, to explain if the construction played a role in the landslide deaths and could be seen as negligence," Pol Lt Col Ekkasak said.

Pol Lt Col Ekkasak declined to acknowledge that his own statement and the request for more confirmation from the Department of Mineral Resources contradict the fact that the Department of Mineral Resources had already conducted an investigation into the landslide, and that Karon Police already have that report.

Regardless, to expedite matters, the Phuket Bar Association has requested the Phuket Governor's Office to formally request Mr Phongsakorn to present himself and verify the findings of the official investigation into the cause of the landslide with the police, and provide any additional documents supporting claims of negligence against the foundation and its president since March.

Phuket Bar Association President Rungnapa Phutkaew met with Vice Governor Adul Chutong on Apr 2 to follow up on the landslide case and seek justice for those affected. Mr Adul pledged full support for the investigation.

Natnaree Likidwatanasakun



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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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SAT APRIL 19

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Wind 11 m/s

SUN APRIL 20

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Wind 11 m/s

MON APRIL 21

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Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

TUE APRIL 22

High: +35°  
Low: +28°

Wind 4 m/s

WED APRIL 23

High: +37°  
Low: +28°

Wind 4 m/s

THU APRIL 24

High: +36°  
Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

# Australian consulate in Phuket to open for May 3 voting abroad

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Australian Consulate-General in Phuket has announced that it will be open to receive ballots from Australian nationals for the upcoming Australian national election on May 3.

"The Australian federal election has been announced for Saturday, May 3. If you're an Australian citizen overseas on the day of the election, you can still have your say by voting at an overseas voting centre or by postal vote," the consulate explains in its notice posted online

## IN-PERSON VOTING

Australian nationals will be able to vote in-person at the Australian Consulate-General according to this schedule below:

Monday, April 28 – 1:30pm to 4:30pm

Tuesday, April 29 – 1:30pm to 4:30pm

Wednesday, April 30 – 1:30pm to 4:30pm

Thursday, May 1 – 1:30pm to 4:30pm

Friday, May 2 – 1:30pm to 4:30pm

Saturday, May 3 – 9:00am to 3:00pm

\* All times given are Phuket local time.

## We're open for in-person voting in the federal election

Image: Australian Consulate-General Phuket

## WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE-GENERAL

People are not required to make a booking to vote.

People do not need to provide evidence of identity to cast a vote. However, you will need to provide evidence of identity, for example, your passport or driver's licence to enter the Consulate.

Entry to the Consulate will be subject to standard security processes.

## POSTAL VOTING

If an Australian is overseas and are unable to vote in-person, you can apply for a postal vote.

Postal vote packs will be sent by international courier from Australia commencing three weeks before polling day. The latest date to request an overseas postal vote

from the AEC is 6pm Wednesday, April 30.

The Australian Consulate notes that this may be too late for a postal vote to reach the prospective voter and they are encouraged to apply as soon as possible.

"If you provided an email address or phone number when applying for a postal vote, you will receive an automatic notification when it is dispatched.

"If you did not provide an email address or phone number and your postal vote does not arrive within 10 days from the date you submitted your application call the AEC on +61 2 6160 2600," the consulate advises.

People can mail completed postal votes to the Australian Consulate-General or drop it off in person no later than 3pm Saturday, May 3.

Australians can also return their postal votes directly to the AEC in Australia. The cost to return a postal vote by courier or mail to the Australian Consulate-General or to the AEC in Australia is the sender's responsibility.

Postal votes can be returned to the Australian Consulate-General, Phuket at the address:

Attn: Returning Officer – Federal Election

Australian Consulate-General Phuket

6<sup>th</sup> Floor CCM Complex  
Chalermprakiat Rama 9  
(Bypass) Road  
Muang Phuket, 83000

For a postal vote to be counted it must be completed before 6pm AWST time (5pm Phuket time) 3 May 2025, and received by the AEC in Australia by 6pm Friday 16 May 2025 AEST.

Further information:

Australian nationals must be enrolled to vote. People can enrol, update their details or check their details on the AEC website.

If an Australian cannot vote because they are overseas, they need to advise the AEC by completing an Overseas Notification Form.

Additional information on the election and voting can be found at aec.gov.au or Smartraveller.gov.au.

# Stronger measures planned to address homelessness

PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS are stepping up efforts to tackle homelessness with a comprehensive action plan following the first Homeless Protection Subcommittee Meeting of 2025 earlier this month.

The meeting, chaired by Phuket Vice Governor Samawit Suphanphai, took place at Phuket Provincial Hall on Apr 3 and gathered key government officials and agencies to discuss solutions for the issue.

The meeting reviewed the latest report on homelessness in Phuket, which highlighted ongoing challenges in providing support.

According to the report, 66% of 'service users' were either homeless or at risk of homelessness, with 90% of that group struggling with alcohol or drug addiction.



Photo: PR Phuket

Additionally, many faced chronic diseases and mental health issues, requiring continued medical attention at Vajira Hospital.

However, distance and staffing shortages have made access to healthcare a challenge.

Another key issue identified was family vulnerability, often stemming from poverty, lack of education and difficulties accessing government welfare programs.

Many homeless individuals also lack proper identification documents, preventing them from receiving essential services such as medical care and financial aid.

One assistance measure deployed has been the 'Drop-In' project, which has been actively working to provide welfare assistance, ID card registration and healthcare support across all three districts in Phuket.

A total of 125 individuals benefited from the project, including 21 homeless people and 104 members of the general public, said an official report of the meeting.

Additionally, financial aid has been distributed to vulnerable groups, including:

- 449 low-income and homeless families receiving B3,000 each (totaling B1,347,000)

- 98 AIDS-infected individuals and their families receiving B2,000 each (totaling B196,000)

- Eight individuals with critical social problems receiving B5,000 each (totaling B40,000)

Looking ahead, Phuket authorities are prioritising a more integrated and sustainable approach, said the official report.

The meeting outlined a plan for fiscal year 2026, emphasizing the formation of local multidisciplinary care teams and collaboration with local administrative organisations to address housing shortages and improve access to welfare benefits.

Officials also aim to implement proactive measures to prevent homelessness, ensuring long-term solutions rather than temporary relief efforts. With a focus on systematic support, the province hopes to create a more inclusive and stable environment for those in need, the report added.

The Phuket News



# 'Fear and anxiety' in Bangkok

## BANGKOK

AFP

Shaken hours earlier by a massive earthquake, Phatsakon Kaewkla's terror was magnified when he came home to find gaping cracks in the walls of his 22<sup>nd</sup> floor Bangkok apartment.

Feeling unsafe in the building damaged by the biggest tremors to hit the capital in generations, the 23-year-old Thai decided to stay away for two days until experts gave the high-rise the all-clear.

The sales coordinator is now one of many Bangkok residents wondering if they should seek safer housing in a city where hundreds of residential buildings were damaged by the 7.7-magnitude quake that struck neighbouring Myanmar on Mar 28.

The owners of Phatsakon's condominium assured him that engineers had checked every part of the building and concluded it was habitable. But he is still spooked about the cracks.

"I feel a little bit scared. And also my mum told me to move out from here," he said.

Over 1,000 kilometres away from the epicentre, the Thai



A damaged corridor inside a Bangkok high-rise residential condominium after the Mar 28 earthquake. Photo: AFP

capital – its skyline dotted with hundreds of towers and glinting high-rises – virtually never experiences such tremors.

Bangkok-based real estate consultant Owen Zhu, 40, said that the impact on his sector had been "significant".

"People seem to have realised that living in high-rise buildings might carry greater risks when it comes to earthquake resistance compared to two-story or low-rise structures," the Chinese property expert said.

The earthquake prompted a

flurry of enquiries from residents looking to relocate in week immediately following the disaster, he says, due to widespread "fear and anxiety" of living far above ground.

### 'GAP IN PERCEPTION'

Yigit Buyukergun from Turkey was at home in Bangkok with his wife when the quake struck. After it subsided, they emerged from under a table to inspect the damage on their 22<sup>nd</sup> floor flat.

"Everywhere is cracked, especially in the corridor. You can

see all the roof is really bad condition," the 25-year-old said.

Despite Buyukergun's safety concerns, the owners of the block seemed unfazed.

They say it is "100% safe, but I don't believe it," he said.

A large number of studio apartments in Bangkok's sprawling residential projects are rented out on annual leases requiring a two-month deposit.

Most condos do not permit short-term rentals for security reasons, and only hotels may lease for under 30 days.

Zhu says tenants and property owners often disagree over the habitability of quake-damaged apartments, with disputes becoming more common.

There is "a gap in perception and judgment between the two parties," he said.

"The landlord sees the unit as safe, while the tenant feels it's unsafe and insists on moving out and getting their deposit back."

### RAISING THE BAR

Earthquake safety standards for buildings in Thailand were "not particularly strict" before the disaster and not something property-seeking clients specifically asked about, Zhu said.

Heightening anxiety since the quake was the shocking total

collapse of a 30-storey construction in Bangkok that trapped dozens of workers, most of whom remain unaccounted for over a week later.

City authorities are now investigating whether substandard building materials had been used in its construction.

Zhu says more of his clients are now opting for low-rises.

For house hunters still considering high-rises, they often require that the property sustained "minimal or no damage during the recent earthquake, or at least was not severely affected".

He believes property prices will grow in the long-term as demand for safer buildings drives the adoption of costly seismic resistance measures, adding that "the bar for Thailand's real estate sector has been raised".

But for Buyukergun, talk of improving building regulations is not enough to calm his fears about the uncontrollable factors of geology.

While the prevalence of earthquakes in his home country of Turkey made him feel uneasy, he had not expected to feel the same way about Thailand.

"Thailand is safe," he recalled thinking before. "That's why I couldn't believe (the) earthquake (happened)."

## Minimum wage rise in effect by May 1, pledges Phiphat

### BANGKOK

LABOUR MINISTER PHIPHAT Ratchakitprakarn has pledged a minimum wage increase to B400 by May 1, along with support measures for small and medium-sized (SME) businesses.

During the censure debate on Mar 25, People's Party (PP) MP Sirikanya Tansakul criticised the government's failure to implement the B400 wage policy earlier promised by the premier.

"That promise was only a lie to the public for political gain," said the MP.

Ms Sirikanya said an 11% rise in business shutdowns had taken place since the start of the Paetongtarn administration, while there was only a rise of 4% in new business openings. Many workers were laid off with little compensation, when the prime minister and the Cabinet were in charge of the compensation budget.

Mr Phiphat responded by saying the permanent secretary for labour, who chairs the wage committee, was set to convene a meeting before the Songkran festival to determine the next steps for a nationwide wage adjustment in time for May 1, Labour Day.

Previously, wage increases were introduced in Phuket, Chon Buri, Rayong, Chachoengsao and Koh Samui, he said.



Labour Minister Phiphat. Photo: Bangkok Post

But wage changes could affect some 5.8 million workers and 500,000 employers in the SME sector, the backbone of the economy, said the labour minister. A flat base wage, he said, would possibly lead to some 1.9mn workers, 30% of the SME employees, losing their jobs.

The government's growth target of 3% would also be considered; as a result, certain employment sectors might get different levels of wage rises to limit the economic impact, said Mr Phiphat.

The minister also touched on the issue of foreign workers, focusing on Chinese nationals who might have worked in Thailand illegally. He said the state has been cracking down on foreign nominees, especially in the Eastern Economic Corridor area, to promote the employment of local workers.

Bangkok Post

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# Sinning with Ryan Cooglar

Michael B. Jordan (left) and Miles Caton in 'Sinners'. Image: IMDb

David Griffiths

In a time period where cinema trailers are often accused of giving away plot points that should have remained secret, it is has been kind of nice to see a trailer released that actually leaves the public asking questions.

When the trailer for *Sinners* dropped recently audiences were left with the following question: okay it looks like a horror or a thriller, but what kind of horror is it?

When director Ryan Coogler is asked about the specifics for *Sinners* he

laughs – it almost feels like he enjoys being back in the realm of making audiences guess what he is doing after a foray into the world of comic book movies with two Black Panther movies.

“Well the film is actually pretty genre fluid,” he says still with a big smile across his face. “It actually pushes into a lot of different genres but yes, vampires are one of the elements of the movie but that is not the only supernatural element. The film is about more than just that and I think that will surprise people in a good way.

“Some of my favourite films in this genre have been done in such a way that you could take away the supernat-

ural element and they are still saying something,” he continues.

“I really wanted to make a film in that tradition. This film has all the elements of things that I really love. This really is a personal love letter from me to cinema and to the art form itself. Specifically the theatrical experience. It is interesting working in a post-COVID time because the theatrical experience is what was I missed most during that time. And this is a film that needs to be seen in that way.”

## PERSONAL

Despite the fact that this is primarily a genre flick, Coogler says this is still a film that has a very deep personal connection for him.

“I have been blessed because every time I have made a film I have been able to make it more and more personal,” he explains. “With this one I was really digging into some true relationships. One with my maternal Grandfather who I never met, he died about a year before I was born, but he was from Mississippi and only moved to Oakland to marry my Grandmother.

“There was also my Uncle James who I grew up with and he actually passed away while I was working on post-production on *Creed*,” he explains sadly.

“He was also from Mississippi but he wouldn’t really talk about his time in Mississippi to me... unless he was listening to the blues. Then he would reminisce. I miss him profusely and with this film I was able to dig into my own history here in the States. With the Panther films I was able to do that as a generational thing but this time I was actually able to go to the South and the film is actually about the music that was so special to my Uncle. I have to say I could not be happier about that and with the film.”

It is here that Coogler explains just how important the music of the South is to the film. “This film is very different,” he says. “The musical element of this film is ever present. It is a film about American music and I have never seen a score like this before. In many ways I wrote this film with my composer in mind. He was there with us on set every day, because he is an Executive Producer as well, and his father was a guitar teacher and that was how he got into music. When we were doing our preliminary scout for this film his father came with us on the Blues Trail

in Mississippi and his father grew up in Sweden, so this was the first time for him to come to the home towns of his heroes. We went to B.B. King’s hometown and these guys got to play on B.B. King’s stage.”

## KINDRED SPIRIT

Of course the other big element of *Sinners* is the cast led by regular Coogler collaborator Michael B. Jordan – someone that is obvious that he is really happy to work with.

“Working with Mike is incredible,” he laughs. “Mike was a working actor when I met him. He had been on some incredible television shows and had been a working actor since he was a school-aged kid but he hadn’t had a feature film role where he was the lead yet. So when we worked together on *Fruitville* that was his first time in the lead in a movie and it was my first time making a movie so in many ways we have grown up together.

“I have definitely found a kindred spirit in him – he is someone who is incredibly gifted and he has this God-given charisma,” he continues. “He has this ability to channel empathy without even trying. He also has an amazing work ethic and a true dedication to the craft and he has this desire to want to push himself – you can really see him stretch and to have all those things rolled up into one makes it something special.

“We are around the same age and we became work friends and eventually we have become like family,” he says. “It is an incredible gift to have someone like that. He is someone that I can call up and be like, ‘Hey, I have a new one here for you. What do you think?’ I know that he is always constantly looking for new challenges. I know that he doesn’t want to rest on his laurels and I thought that this role would be something where we could challenge each other.”

*Sinners* was released in Phuket cinemas yesterday (Apr 17) and is rated R (18+).

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

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# How reward incentives can help clean up

Josh O'Neill

Recently the Thai government introduced a controversial but potentially effective policy targeting e-cigarette users and sellers. Under this scheme, anyone reporting illegal vaping activities via the Thang Rath mobile app is eligible to receive 60% of the fines collected. Informants could earn as much as B3,000 from a single successful report, a compelling incentive to help enforce this public health measure.

This raises an intriguing question: if monetary rewards are effective at curbing vaping, could a similar strategy be employed to tackle the rampant problem of fly-tipping and littering in Phuket?

Many communities have struggled for years with illegal dumping and careless littering, significantly damaging both our environment and local quality of life. Mangroves choke on discarded plastic, waterways become polluted, wildlife suffers and community pride deteriorates considerably. Despite regular community clean-ups and educational programmes through initiatives like The Litter Club and Sustainable Mai Khao, the root issue persists because the behaviour causing it remains largely unaddressed.

Taiwan faced a similar dilemma decades ago. Taipei, once notoriously litter-strewn and environmentally compromised, prompted the government to introduce a rigorous, reward-based enforcement policy. Residents reporting litterers and illegal waste dumpers shared a portion of the fines imposed, dramatically shifting public behaviour and attitudes toward responsible waste disposal. Today, Taipei stands as an inspiring model of cleanliness and environmental responsibility, demonstrating the potential power of incentive-based enforcement.

Thailand already has fines in place for littering – up to B2,000 for standard offenses and as much as



Implementing a financial reward system for reporting illegal dumping and littering could pay handsome dividends. Photo: Supplied

B10,000 for violations involving roads and waterways. However, enforcement remains sporadic and relatively ineffective due to limited resources and insufficient incentives for public cooperation. Imagine the positive impact if the Thai government extended its reward-based reporting policy to littering and fly-tipping offenses. This incentive system would motivate communities to actively protect their surroundings and foster a shared sense of responsibility.

## STRUGGLE

Many of Phuket's local communities exemplify the ongoing struggle against litter and illegal waste dumping. Community leaders frequently express frustration at being unable to effectively control or reduce the volume of waste improperly discarded around residential and natural areas. The ecological impact is clear – local marine life suffers as litter infiltrates coastal ecosystems, reducing biodiversity and damaging critical habitats like mangroves, seagrass and coral reefs. Furthermore, the economic implications are considerable, potentially harming tourism, a key

source of income for Phuket's residents and businesses.

Implementing a financial reward system for reporting could change this trajectory. It empowers ordinary citizens, providing them with a clear and personal incentive to participate actively in protecting their environment. When communities take ownership of local environmental issues, the outcomes often surpass expectations. Encouraging this participatory approach could not only reduce immediate litter but also instill lasting behavioural change.

Of course, enforcement alone will never entirely eliminate littering. It must operate alongside robust educational initiatives and consistent community engagement. Regular educational campaigns highlighting the importance of environmental stewardship, coupled with the reward scheme, can reinforce the values of cleanliness, responsibility and sustainability. Such integrated approaches have proven successful globally in reducing waste and fostering long-term environmental awareness.

If we truly aim to safeguard Phuket's natural beauty and ecological health, perhaps it's time to consider innovative solutions like reward-based reporting. Offering monetary incentives for responsible citizenship could serve as the catalyst needed to ignite widespread community action. Phuket deserves a pristine environment, one that future generations can proudly inherit. With a thoughtful combination of incentives, education, and community collaboration, we can transform our beloved island into a shining example of environmental responsibility and pride.

*Josh O'Neill, a sustainability expert and environmental advocate, leverages his extensive experience in community engagement and environmental awareness to highlight Phuket's environmental issues and sustainable initiatives. Phone/WhatsApp 099-998-9274 or support@thelitterclub.org.*

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## POP QUIZ

1. What was the name of the peace treaty that ended World War I?
2. In what decade was the internet created?
3. Which is the only body part that is fully grown from birth?
4. What is the only country flag that does not have four sides?
5. Which country is credited with inventing ice cream?

Answers below, centre

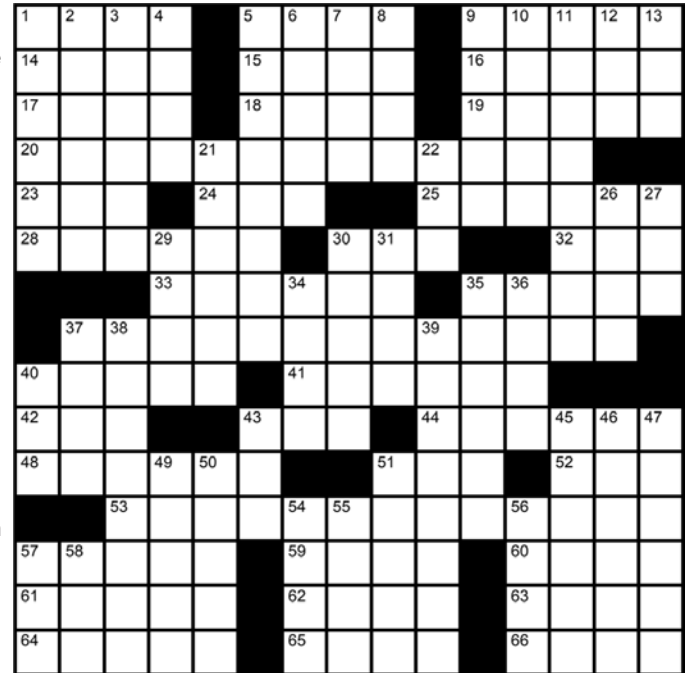
## SUDOKU

Hard

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

## Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across
1. 60s rock group, with Corner
  5. Slight
  9. Partition
  14. Lion's beard?
  15. Type of insurance for owners
  16. Pointed arch
  17. Nose out
  18. Tapi endings
  19. Rich tapestry
  20. Place for pessimists
  23. Virgo mo.
  24. Cries at a circus
  25. Keen
  28. Swimmer's gear
  30. Banned pesticide, for short
  32. "Star-Spangled Banner" preposition
  33. Tongue
  35. Conundrum
  37. Invest in a risky fashion
  40. Witch
  41. Bean
  42. Greyhound, e.g.
  43. Magazine revenue source
  44. Come back again
  48. Go up and down
  51. Supporting
- Down
1. Cells in the sea?
  2. Improvised
  3. Captivate
  4. At no point in time, contraction
  5. Native American people
  6. Scottish water areas
  7. Mosque V.I.P.
  8. City in Arizona
  9. Drenches
  10. Wading bird
  11. Great musicians
  12. "Desperate Housewives"
- actress, first name
13. Court matter
  21. A chemical salt
  22. Deserter
  26. Romeo or Juliet
  27. Blunder
  29. Distinctive flair
  30. Beach sights
  31. Angry outburst
  34. Investor's alternative
  35. Inquisitive people
  36. Look at flirtatiously
  37. Constant
  38. Flower starts
  39. Belladonna poison
  40. ABC's rival
  43. Amazement
  45. Plant
  46. Fertility goddess
  47. American sharpshooter
  49. Driving hazard
  50. Common carriers
  51. Flute player
  54. Consider, with on
  55. Cover up
  56. Legal wrong
  57. PC component, for short
  58. Delicacy



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

## Solutions to last week's puzzles:

LEAF	CEASE	GRAF
ECRU	AEGIS	RAVE
THEJACK	OFSPADES	
TAIGA	TEUTONS	
OOLS	RINSE	
BAYOU	UNBARS	
ECLAT	NOES	ESP
THEKING	OFHEARTS	
HEM	ORZO	MINUS
SPRYER	BRENT	
PISTE	REAL	
INTENSE	BELIE	
QUEEN	OFDIAMONDS	
USED	STOIC	OLIO
EELS	OSTIA	MYTH

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:  
1) Treaty of Versailles; 2) 1960s; 3) Eyes; 4) Nepal; 5) China

## GOT YOUR NUMBER

12

people have walked on the moon

82

kilometres is the overall length of the Panama Canal

923

words in the English language break the 'i before e' grammar rule and only 44 words actually abide by it

1,350

is roughly how many volcanoes are currently active around the world

340,733

to 1 is the chance of dying from a fireworks related incident

Source: *Uberfacts*

## ISLAND VIEW



Sunset at Cape Panwa. Photo by Marco Capriz

Got an unusual or particularly beautiful picture of Phuket? Email it to [editor3@classactmedia.co.th](mailto:editor3@classactmedia.co.th)

## This week in history

Apr 18, 1506

The cornerstone of the current St. Peter's Basilica is laid.

Apr 19, 1775

The American Revolutionary War begins with an American victory in Concord during the battles of Lexington and Concord.

Apr 20, 1999

Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold kill 14 people and injure 23 others before committing suicide at Columbine High School in Columbine, Colorado.

Apr 21, 753 BC

Romulus founds Rome.

Apr 22, 1977



The Hubble Space Telescope.

Optical fiber is first used to carry live telephone traffic.

Apr 23, 1927

Cardiff City defeat Arsenal in the FA Cup Final, the only time it has been won by a team not based in England.

Apr 24, 1990

STS-31: The Hubble Space Telescope is launched from the Space Shuttle Discovery. It is still active. Source: *Wikipedia*



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**FRI**

**18**  
**APR**



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**SUN**

**20**  
**APR**



**Sunday Roast**

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**MON**

**21**  
**APR**



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**WED**

**23**  
**APR**



**Wednesday BBQ Night**

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**FRI**

**25**  
**APR**



**ANZAC Day Memorial Service – Phuket**

Phuket Veterans invite you to join us in honouring the sacrifices of Australian and New Zealand service members at our ANZAC Day Memorial Service. Time: 5:30 AM. Location: Kamala Beach (Meeting point: Kamala Police Station). Following the service, all attendees are invited to a Gunfire Breakfast at Devils Bar, Kamala. Dress Code: Smart Casual / Uniform. We look forward to commemorating this important day with you. For more info - [facebook.com/phuketveterans](https://facebook.com/phuketveterans)



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**FRI**

**2**  
**MAY**

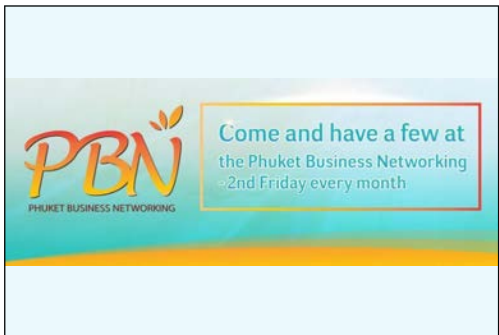


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We look forward to seeing you at the Grow Boating Evening at the Isola restaurant at the Royal Phuket Marina from 5pm. There will be a delicious buffet sponsored by Isola Restaurant for all attendees and as always, all your favourite beverages will be available from the bar. Come and join in the fun, everyone is welcome and there is no entry fee and if you know anyone you think would be interested in coming, please invite them along. Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket/](https://facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket/)

**FRI**

**9**  
**MAY**



**Phuket Business Networking - May 2025**

Make sure to bring lots of business cards, as getting to know each other is what PBN is all about. A small entry fee, THB 500 per person, that includes the first 3 drinks and a light buffet. Location - Oasis Bar, Koh Kaew, starting 5pm. Register your attendance here - [facebook.com/phuketbusinessnetworking](https://facebook.com/phuketbusinessnetworking) or call Jason - 086 479 7471.

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# Molly retires but legacy lives on

## MMA

Catherine Ly

Molly 'Meatball' McCann announced her retirement from MMA following a submission loss to Alexia Thainaraat at UFC Fight Night at The O2 in London, England, on Mar 22.

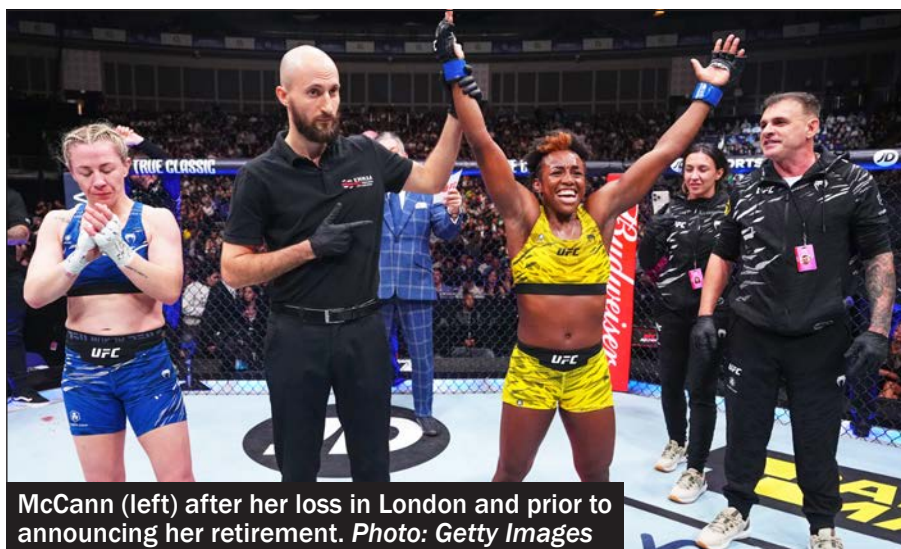
With her gloves laid down on the cage floor, McCann, 34 and a prominent figure in the UFC, humbly explained her decision during the post-fight interview.

"You don't live off your past performances, you live off your current ones, and I'm not good enough right now," she said.

As one of the most successful female fighters from the UK, McCann played a pivotal role in growing the UK MMA scene within the UFC. But perhaps her greatest legacy is how she inspired a generation of young women to pursue MMA.

Her journey began as a young girl watching Rhonda Rousey dominate the sport and it was Rousey's influence that sparked McCann's own passion for martial arts. Now, after years of competing in the UFC, McCann has grown through her MMA journey and has become a role model for countless women who've followed her journey and rise from a hopeful newcomer to a UFC veteran.

McCann's departure is a reminder that success at the highest level of



McCann (left) after her loss in London and prior to announcing her retirement. Photo: Getty Images

sport isn't solely measured by championships or victories. Her true impact lies in her ability to inspire future generations of athletes, proving that the power of influence can be just as significant as a world title.

We live in a time where representation matters and McCann's career will continue to inspire young women to believe that they too can achieve greatness in a male-dominated sport. It is a legacy built not only on her fighting skills but on the message that hard work, resilience and passion can create lasting change.

McCann's retirement also underscores a broader trend within the MMA community, where athletes recognise the responsibility they carry as role models.

Many fighters on the London card shared their thoughts on the import-

ance of being a positive influence for younger generations, especially for their children. Light heavyweight fighter and father of two Carlos Ulberg emphasised the significance of being a positive role model, while featherweight Nathaniel Wood, also a dedicated father to a young daughter with a second on the way, said he supports the idea of teaching his children martial arts, not only for self-defense but for the life lessons it imparts.

MMA is more than just a sport; it instills discipline, resilience and growth in ways that extend well beyond the octagon. As McCann steps away from competition, the influence she's had on her community will continue to ripple through the sport, leaving behind a legacy that transcends victories and losses. Catherine Ly



Kai Tak Sports Park. Photo: AFP

## North London derby in Hong Kong

### FOOTBALL

ARSENAL AND Tottenham have confirmed they will play in a pre-season friendly in Hong Kong, the first North London derby to be held outside the United Kingdom.

The London rivals will clash at the new 50,000-capacity Kai Tak Stadium on July 31, just over two weeks before the start of the Premier League season.

Former Spurs and England defender Ledley King said it would give fans in Asia "a glimpse of what a North London derby is like".

"It's a pre-season game, but there's no friendlies when these two teams play each other," he added.

Meanwhile, Liverpool will play Serie A giants Milan at the same stadium on July 26.

It will be a re-run of the classic 2005 Champions League final, which the Reds won on penalties after being 3-0 down at half-time.

After Hong Kong, Liverpool will travel to Japan for the first time during pre-season, the club said, without giving dates.

Hong Kong officially opened a major the US\$3.85 billion sports park this month with the futuristic Kai Tak Stadium as its centrepiece of it.

The stadium saw its first major event when it hosted the Hong Kong Rugby Sevens, with more than 110,000 spectators attending between Mar 28-30.

It is all part of efforts to restore the city's image, which took a battering after political protests and a Beijing-imposed national security law.

AFP

## Aston Martin to sell F1 stake

### FORMULA ONE

LUXURY CARMAKER Aston Martin Lagonda has confirmed it plans to sell its minority stake in the Aston Martin Aramco Formula One team to help turn around its loss-making core business.

At the same time, Aston Martin's main shareholder, the Yew Tree Consortium, plans to raise its stake in the group to 33%, a statement said.

Aston Martin, the model beloved by fictional British spy James Bond, added that the combined action will increase the group's liquidity by more than £125 million (B\$5.5 billion).

The consortium is led by Canadian Lawrence Stroll, whose son Lance Stroll drives for the F1 team, and the company said its long-term F1 sponsorship deal will not be affected.

"A long-term contract is now in place to ensure the Aston Martin name remains at the pinnacle of



Photo: AFP

motorsport for decades to come," said a statement from the F1 team.

Aston Martin chief executive Adrian Hallmark said the new investment will "accelerate our progress into being a sustainably profitable company".

The company last month announced it would cut about 5% of its workforce as weak Chinese demand contributed to losses widening in 2024.

By increasing its stake above 30%, the consortium would be required to make a bid for all of Aston Martin, under British takeover rules – but Yew is asking for this to be waived.

"Exemptions have

been granted in the past, yet it feels like a takeover would be a better outcome as it would mean the car company would be free to pursue a turnaround strategy out of the public spotlight," noted Russ Mould, investment director at AJ Bell.

"Time after time, Aston Martin has tapped investors for more money, yet the business is arguably going nowhere."

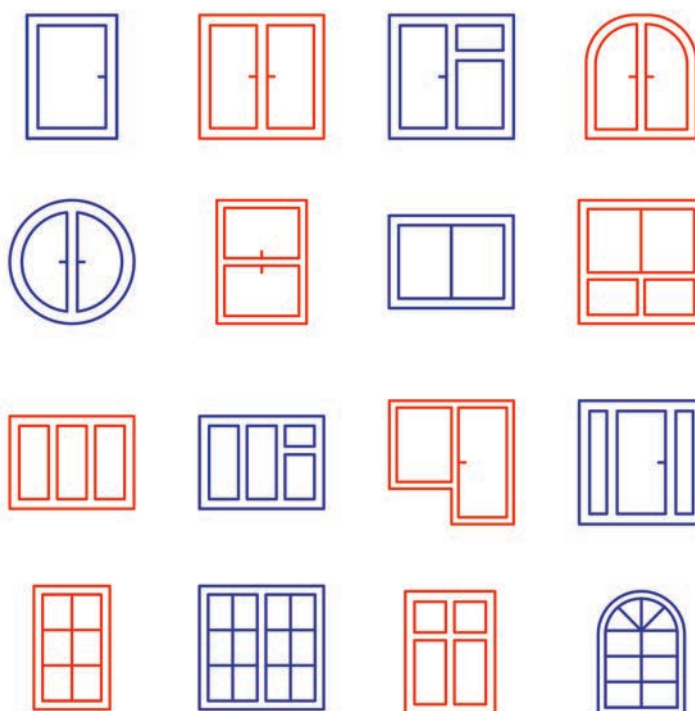
Mould added offloading the stake in the Aston Martin F1 team "screams of desperation".

However, Lawrence Stroll insisted: "These moves demonstrate that Aston Martin's place on the Formula One grid is as secure as ever."

AFP



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# Sport



**UFC's Molly hangs up her gloves > p11**

# LOCAL HERO



Siam Yapp (centre) celebrates after scoring for Buriram United. Photo: Supplied

## FOOTBALL

Simon Causton

Phuket can lay claim to another feather in its cap: producing one of the most exciting young footballers in Thailand.

Siam Yapp, the talented young forward currently on loan at Nakhon Ratchasima FC (Swat Cats) from Buriram United, is a product of Phuket's nurturing footballing environment, a testament to the island's growing influence on the national stage.

Yapp's journey in football began at a young age, right here in Phuket. He attended Phuket International School and later British International School, Phuket (BISP) where his passion for the beautiful game blossomed.

Crucially, he honed his skills at the renowned Cruzeiro Academy at BIS, a breeding ground for talented young footballers.

"The Cruzeiro Academy was instrumental in my development," Yapp reflects. "We were training twice a day, every day, from Monday to Saturday. The dedication and intensity were

incredible. It really prepared me for the demands of professional football."

The Cruzeiro Academy in Phuket has a proven track record of producing talented players who have gone on to achieve success at the professional level. Alumni like Micah and Jonah Duchowny, who are currently making waves in the Thai League, are a testament to the quality of coaching and development provided by the academy.

Yapp's talent didn't go unnoticed, and he soon had the opportunity to showcase his skills on a bigger stage. He had trials with Bayern Munich and represented their youth teams in international tournaments. He also played for Sporting CP in Portugal and even had a stint with the Brazilian Cruzeiro academy, gaining invaluable experience and exposure to different styles of play.

Despite these experiences abroad, Yapp ultimately decided to return to Thailand to begin his professional career.

"My aim was always to join a youth academy in Europe," Yapp explains. "But it was difficult due

to my English passport and the situation with Brexit. It was much harder to sign as a foreign player."

Yapp's first professional club in Thailand was BEC Tero Sasana, where he initially found it challenging to adapt to the Thai style of play. He subsequently had loan spells at Bangkok FC, where he gained valuable experience and playing time.

### BREAKTHROUGH

His breakthrough came last season when he joined Buriram United, the most successful club in Thailand. He quickly impressed with his performances for the youth team, earning a loan move to Nakhon Ratchasima FC this season to gain further first-team experience.

"I wanted to play and show everyone what I could do," Yapp says. "I wanted to get my confidence back and score some goals."

Yapp has certainly achieved that, scoring crucial goals and putting in impressive performances for the Swat Cats. He is now focused on returning to Buriram United next season and

cementing his place in the first team.

"Buriram is the place where I want to be if I play in Thailand," Yapp says. "It's hands down the most professional club in Thailand."

As a dual-nationality player, Yapp has the option to represent either England or Thailand. He has chosen to represent Thailand at the youth level and hopes to progress to the senior national team soon.

"My goal is to play for the first team and continue going forward with Thailand," Yapp says. "I'm sure my mom would be proud."

Yapp acknowledges that being a mixed-heritage player in Thailand comes with its own set of challenges.

"I have faced some challenges," he admits. "It's not completely the same as everyone else. I get treated differently sometimes."

However, Yapp is grateful for the support he has received from his teammates and coaches, and he believes that the increasing number of mixed-heritage players in Thai football is helping to

break down barriers and create a more inclusive environment.

"I think it's great that there are more and more mixed-heritage players coming through," Yapp says. "It's helping to change the image of Thai football."

Looking ahead, Yapp has ambitious goals for his career. He hopes to continue to improve his game in Thailand and eventually make a move to a European league.

"I want to rack up the stats and get a few more good, consistent performances in the Thai League," Yapp says. "Then, I think Japan or maybe European divisions would be an interest of mine."

With his talent, determination, and growing experience, Siam Yapp is a player with a bright future ahead of him. He is a symbol of the new generation of Thai footballers who are embracing their diverse heritage and taking the game to new heights. And for Phuket, he is a source of immense pride, a shining example of what can be achieved with hard work, dedication and the support of a nurturing footballing community.