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THE CROSSING



Image: Phuket Highways Office

PLANS AFOOT FOR THAILAND'S FIRST SUSPENSION BRIDGE TO SERVE PHUKET

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Thailand could soon see its first-ever suspension bridge, linking Phuket to the mainland province of Phang Nga, as part of a major infrastructure upgrade to the region's key highway.

The ambitious proposal, led by the Department of Highways, was unveiled during the first public seminar on the redevelopment of Highway No. 402 and what local officials collectively call the 'the Sarasin Bridge', raising both hopes and concerns among island

residents, local officials, and transport stakeholders.

The 'Sarasin Bridge' area comprises the three bridges connecting Phuket with the mainland: the original Sarasin Bridge, which today can be traversed only on foot, the Thepkrasattri Bridge, which brings vehicles onto Phuket' and the Srisoonthorn Bridge, which carries vehicles heading off-island.

Now officials are looking to build a fourth bridge, and make history by doing so.

The seminar, held at the Royal Phuket City Hotel in Phuket Town earlier this month, gathered around

100 participants including local government officials, community leaders, private sector representatives, members of the House of Representatives and local residents. Chaired by Mueang Phuket District Chief Pairoj Srilamul, the meeting aimed to present the project concept and gather public feedback in its early stages.

At the heart of the proposal is a new suspension bridge, approximately 1,000 metres long, which would span the Chong Pak Phra channel (the body of water that separates Phuket from the mainland) and become a new gateway

to Phuket. Designed without pillars in the water, the current plans for the bridge aim to minimise environmental disruption, particularly to the marine ecosystem, while offering a unique visual landmark and boosting the island's tourism appeal.

CONNECTIVITY

According to Sukit Yindeesuk, project manager and civil engineer from the Department of Highways' Survey and Design Office, the plan to build a suspension bridge is part of a broader transport development strategy by the Ministry of Transport. The strategy aims to...

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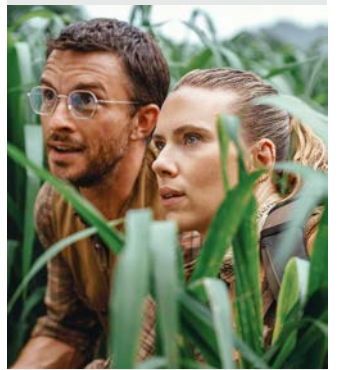
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Dinosaurs are back in Jurassic World: Rebirth



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Smooth sailing at Phuket Yacht Sales Regatta



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PHUKET'S QUALITY TILE BOUTIQUE

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Photo: Patong Municipality

Patong prepares for tsunami drill

PATONG MUNICIPALITY WILL hold a tsunami evacuation drill on July 29 as part of ongoing efforts to ensure the safety of residents, workers, students, and tourists in the area.

Patong Mayor Lalita Maneesri announced the drill at a meeting at the Patong Municipality Office on July 8.

Present for the preparation meeting were senior officials from Patong Municipality, Kathu District Office, the Phuket Provincial Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Office (DDPM Phuket), Patong Police, Patong Hospital as well as local schools, business operators and community leaders.

The evacuation exercise on the day will begin with a briefing and presentation on tsunami evacuation plans, warning systems and escape routes at the 4th-floor meeting room of Patong Municipality School (Baan Sai Nam Yen) from 8:30am to midday, Mayor Lalita confirmed.

From 1:30pm to 3pm, an on-ground evacuation drill will take place, starting at the entrance of Bangla Rd and ending at the car park on Soi Saensabai, one of Patong's designated safe zones.

The exercise is designed to familiarise people with evacuation procedures and warning signals, helping both residents and workers respond effectively in the event of a real emergency, Mayor Lalita said.

The drill is also part of Patong Municipality's wider commitment to safety under its vision of a 'Modern, Clean, Beautiful, Safe and Sustainable Tourism City', she added.

The Phuket News

Looking for 'Bridge No. 4'

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...integrate Thailand's intercity expressway network with the national rail system under the MR-Map policy, improving long-term mobility while reducing community displacement and land expropriation.

"This bridge won't just be another road – it will be a symbol of modern engineering and sustainable infrastructure," Mr Sukit said. "It will also be a crucial link in solving traffic issues and enhancing logistics across the region."

The suspension bridge is set to replace or supplement the existing Sarasin Bridge, which has long served as the sole road link between Phuket and the mainland. The project route begins at kilometre marker 40+500 in Baan Tha Noon in Tambon Khok Kloi, Takua Thung District, in Phang Nga, crosses the channel and ends at kilometre marker 49+000 in Mai Khao, Thalang. The 8.5-kilometre corridor is part of the wider MR9 Intercity Motorway route between Surat Thani and Phuket, Mr Sukrit explained.

TOURISM, LOGISTICS BOOST

Somkit Kittisopit, Chief of the Phuket Highways Office, explained that the new route and bridge would be designed to improve the efficiency of Highway No. 402, a critical arterial road for southern Thailand – which in Phuket becomes known as Thepkasatri Rd.

He noted that the suspension bridge would offer both functional and economic value, linking not only Phang Nga and Phuket but also

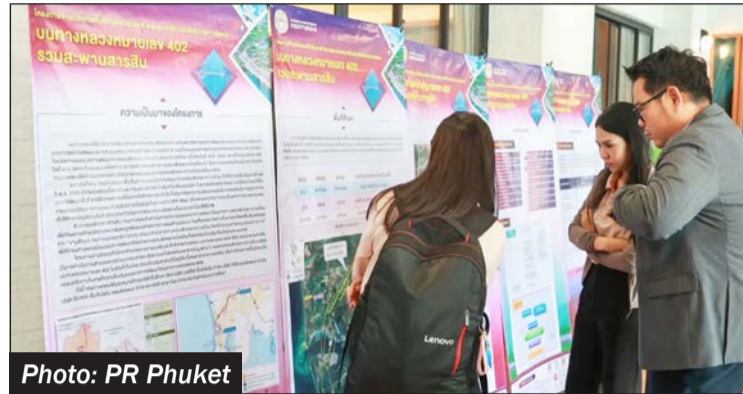


Photo: PR Phuket

supporting special road projects such as the Muang Mai – Kathu Motorway and the Patong Tunnel project.

"Beyond transport benefits, this project will elevate Phuket's infrastructure to a new level, helping facilitate faster and safer travel for both locals and tourists," Mr Somkit said.

Official data shows the current bridges handle roughly 14,600 vehicles inbound and 14,100 outbound on an average day. While these figures reflect consistent use, supporters of the new bridge argue that existing infrastructure will struggle to cope with projected future demand as Phuket continues to grow as a global tourism hub and domestic economic centre.

FEEDBACK

Despite the project's promise, environmental and social concerns have been raised. Parts of the proposed alignment run through mangrove forests and national forest reserves, and the bridge itself would span protected marine areas. Due to this, the development must undergo a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), including a series of public consultations

to gather community input and mitigate potential conflicts.

"The public participation process is critical," said Mr Sukit. "We are not just building infrastructure – we are building trust. We want to hear from the people who will be most affected."

The Department of Highways has appointed a consortium of engineering firms – Norseep Engineering Co Ltd, TEC Consultant Co Ltd, Future Engineering Consultant Co Ltd and Tharaline Co Ltd – to carry out the feasibility study, including detailed designs, environmental assessments, and technical documentation. The study is scheduled for completion by the end of 2026.

NOT EVERYONE ON BOARD

While the concept of a landmark bridge is drawing attention, not all local leaders are convinced of its necessity.

Kongsak Koophongsakorn, President of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce, voiced scepticism about the urgency of the bridge. "If we're talking about long-term flexibility, sure, a second entrance to Phuket makes sense. But right now, it's not urgent," he said.

"There are more pressing needs in the province."

He pointed out that the existing bridges still function efficiently and that current traffic congestion stems more from checkpoint bottlenecks than road capacity.

"Once you're past the checkpoint, the road is clear. The issue is not the bridge – it's the lanes and the lack of advanced screening technologies," he said.

Mr Kongsak also questioned the scale and cost of the project. "Spending B10 billion or more on a bridge when we could be upgrading checkpoints with AI systems, expanding lanes and fixing existing roads at a fraction of the cost doesn't seem practical."

He acknowledged the potential for the bridge to facilitate tourism, especially if larger ships are able to pass underneath. However, he cautioned that the shallow channel between Phang Nga and Phuket, known for rocky seabeds and strong tidal currents, may pose significant engineering challenges.

"I've seen the rocks just below the surface when the tide recedes. Building a suspension bridge over that will require serious study," he said.

As the study progresses over the next 18 months, local authorities, civil society groups and residents will continue to monitor developments. While many agree that modern infrastructure is essential for Phuket's continued development, there remains a strong call for transparency, cost-effectiveness and prioritisation of local needs.

Police defend bar closures over alcohol ban on religious holidays

PHUKET POLICE HAVE defended their closing of selected bars and restaurants across the island last week, saying that only service establishments with valid licenses are allowed to sell alcohol during the Buddhist holidays.

The closures came during Asarnha Bucha Day on July 10 and Khao Phansa on July 11.

Chalong Police Chief Pol Col Rungrit Ratanaphakdi told *The Phuket News*, "Only service establishments with the correct

license are permitted to sell alcohol [during the Buddhist holidays]."

The Phuket News questioned Pol Col Rungrit after receiving reports that police in Rawai and Karon were forcing bars and restaurants to close because of the alcohol ban.

Pol Col Rungrit emphasised that restaurants or shops – even those with licenses to sell alcohol – do not automatically fall under the exemption to the alcohol ban.

Meanwhile, Kathu



Thalang District officials warned operators before the Buddhist holidays began. Photo: Thalang District Office

Police Chief Pol Col Pratuang Pholmana added that many venues in his jurisdiction had been ordered to close.

"Other areas are also not permitting operations that resemble entertainment venues. Shops and restaurants remain restricted, and no new announcement from the Ministry of Public Health has lifted this ban," he said.

Chalong Police Chief Pol Col Rungrit explained that Vice Governor Adul Chuthong on July 9 issued an official notice outlining strict enforcement of national regulations prohibiting alcohol sales on Buddhist holidays such as

Makha Bucha Day, Visakha Bucha Day, Asarnha Bucha Day, Khao Phansa Day and Wan Org Phansa.

Sales exceptions are allowed only in specific cases, including: passenger terminals within international airports, licensed service establishments under the Service Establishment Act, hotels licensed under the Hotel Act, and locations hosting national or international special events with prior approval.

The notice instructed local leaders and police to

inform all businesses that are not exempted by the law – including restaurants, shops, convenience stores and venues that resemble entertainment places – that they must halt all alcohol sales on July 10-11.

Violations are subject to penalties under Section 39 of the Alcohol Beverage Control Act B.E. 2551, which include fines up to B10,000 or imprisonment for up to six months, or both, the official notice warned.

Natnaree Likidwatanasakun

MP 'Coach Sam' tires of online defamation

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Chalermpong Saengdee, Member of Parliament for Constituency 2 in Phuket, filed an official complaint with the Phuket City Police on Monday (July 14), accusing two online media pages of defamation that he says has damaged his political reputation.

MP Chalermpong, also called 'Coach Sam', arrived at the police station with his legal counsel, Nitat Prasertnetikul, at 10am to submit the complaint to an investigating officer.

The case involves allegations of criminal defamation, potentially under Sections 326 or 328 of the Thai Criminal Code, which address defamation communicated to third parties, including through advertising or online posts.

The complaint specifically targets two Facebook pages that use the same moniker 'State Media, Breaking News' (สื่อรัฐเจาะข่าวเด็ด), which Mr Chalermpong accuses of spreading false and defamatory statements about him.

Among the serious claims made online were accusations that he is a "servant dog of the Chinese mafia", and accusing MP Chalermpong of "promoting a large number of Chinese



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

mafia, setting themselves up as foreign mafia gangs" and being a "nominee for foreign mafia gangs and capitalists".

"These accusations are completely baseless and intended solely to damage my political credibility and destroy the public's trust in me," MP. Chalermpong said. "They aim to mislead the people and discredit my work as a representative of the people."

Mr Chalermpong defended his record in Parliament, stating that over the past two years he has worked tirelessly to bring forward issues affecting the people of Phuket – ranging from infrastructure and public services to broader societal concerns. He noted that all of his activities and

parliamentary interventions are publicly documented on his Facebook page.

"I have never remained indifferent to the suffering of the people. My intention is to create change, raise awareness, and push for long-standing problems to be addressed," he said. "These attacks are not just aimed at me, but at the democratic process and the people's voice that I represent."

The MP emphasised that he would pursue legal action to protect his integrity and continue serving his constituents. "No matter how much you try to discredit me, I will stand with the people. I will never destroy the hope and faith they have placed in me."

The case is now under police investigation.

Officials set sights on noisy nightlife venues

PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS convened a meeting last week to address ongoing public complaints about noise pollution caused by entertainment venues located near residential communities.

To combat the issue Phuket Vice Governor Samawit Suphanprai led a meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall on July 9, attended by Monchai Sae Lao, Director of the Phuket Provincial Damrongtham Center, as well as representatives from key government agencies and community stakeholders.

The forum was aimed at finding practical and sustainable solutions to noise disturbances, particularly those caused by loud sound systems and live music at entertainment venues, which residents say are disrupting daily life – especially for the elderly and those with health conditions, said an official report of the meeting.

Participants included affected members of the public, local business operators and representat-



Photo: PR Phuket

ives from the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office, the Provincial Public Works and Town & Country Planning Office and the Mueang District Office. Attendees were given the opportunity to share their experiences, concerns and proposed solutions.

Vice Governor Samawit stressed the need to balance Phuket's reputation as a tourism and nightlife destination with the rights and wellbeing of local residents.

He urged agencies to conduct thorough investigations into specific complaints and to work toward clear, enforceable and community-sensitive regulations.

"While tourism plays a vital role in Phuket's economy, it is equally important to protect the quality of life of people living in these areas," he said. *The Phuket News*

Land cleared for Patong Tunnel

THE LONG-AWAITED Kathu-Patong expressway project – better known locally as the Patong Tunnel project – is progressing with a budget of B16.76 billion. With land expropriation already completed, Patong Municipality, assigned by the Expressway Authority of Thailand (EXAT), has begun clearing the land, and is expected to finish by Sept 7.

According to Weerawit Kreuasombat, President of the Patong Municipality Council, all designated land has now been expropriated, and clearing the land is underway.

"The expropriation budget totals approximately B5bn, with further disbursement of funds contingent upon the complete clearance of all structures within the project area," Mr Weerawit told *The Phuket News*.

EXAT reported that approximately 230 eligible recipients have already received their compensation.

The expressway's total budget has increased from the original B14.49bn to B16.76bn following the



Photo: Natnaree Likidwatanasakun

decision to shift from a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) to full government construction and expropriation.

The adjustment was approved by the EXAT board in late 2023 and reflects changes in unit pricing, inflation and additional construction measures – including tunnel reinforcement to account for potential geological risks. The revised budget includes: B10.96bn for construction, and B5.79bn for land acquisition and ownership.

The 3.98 kilometre route begins in Patong, at the Phra Metta Rd intersection, and features an elevated road across Phisit Gorani Rd, a double tunnel through the Nakkerd Hills, and another elevated section ending in Kathu, near Route 4029.

The current project timeline includes Cabinet review and approval in March 2024, construction starting in October 2025 and completion and opening in October 2028.

In an official letter to the Patong Municipality, the Expressway Authority of Thailand (EXAT) formally requested municipal assistance to allow property owners, who have already received compensation to proceed with demolishing their buildings by Sept 7.

The request refers to the Royal Decree published in the Government Gazette (Volume 140, Part 33 A, dated June 1, 2023), which defined expropriated areas in Patong and Kathu for expressway construction.

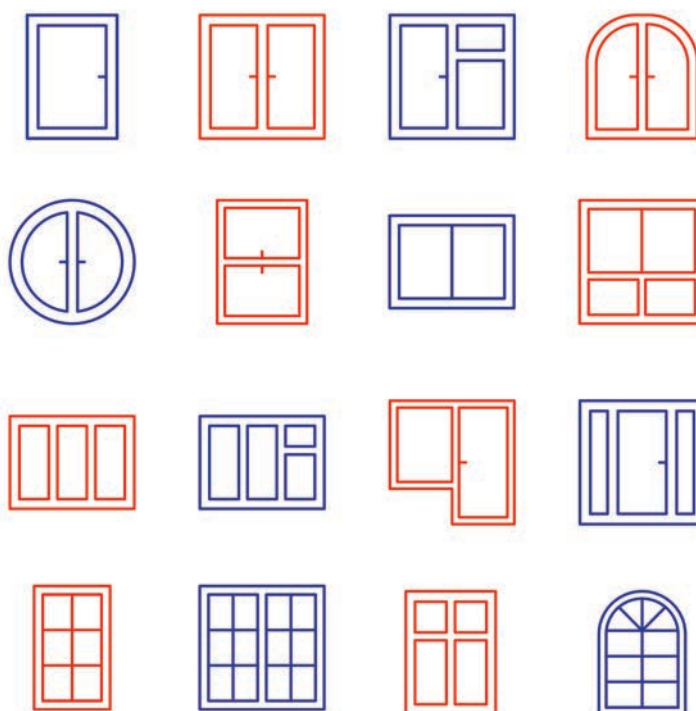
Under the terms of the compensation contracts, property owners must complete demolition and vacate the area within 90 days of receiving payment.

Patong Municipality has been asked to assist with public awareness and to coordinate with Chirawat Intrachit, a designated legal officer from EXAT.

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Wind 11 m/s

SAT JULY 19

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Low: +28°
Wind 11 m/s

SUN JULY 20

High: +35°
Low: +28°
Wind 11 m/s

MON JULY 21

High: +35°
Low: +27°
Wind 4 m/s

TUE JULY 22

High: +35°
Low: +28°
Wind 4 m/s

WED JULY 23

High: +37°
Low: +28°
Wind 4 m/s

THU JULY 24

High: +36°
Low: +27°
Wind 4 m/s

Police sergeant crashes car, wipes out tea stall

A POLICE OFFICER was injured after losing control of his vehicle and crashing into a roadside tea shop in Thalang in the early hours of July 8.

The incident occurred on the Muang Mai-Airport Road, in front of the T.R.O. Setthi Noi service shop.

CCTV footage of the crash posted online showed that the accident occurred at 3:53am.

The driver of the black Honda sedan, registered in Nakhon Sri Thammarat, was identified as Pol Sgt Maj Santisuk Yaisingam, 34.

He was reportedly driving from Ban Muang Mai, in Thepkasattri, towards Phuket International Airport when he lost control on the wet road and veered off course, slamming into a tea shop before his vehicle overturned.

Rescue workers from the Kusoldharm Phuket Foundation arrived at the scene and provided first aid.

Sgt Maj Santisuk had sustained a four-centimetre laceration to the back of his left foot and an injury to his ankle.



Photo: Kusoldharm Phuket Foundation

Rescue workers transported Sgt Maj Santisuk to Thalang Hospital for further treatment.

Mr Yut, the owner of the tea stall, said he was shocked to find the destruction when he arrived later that morning. He explained that he discovered the identity of the driver after checking the car's licence plate, which had landed near the wreckage.

Upon reviewing past customer records, he found that Sgt Maj Santisuk had previously visited the shop. He contacted the officer directly, who confirmed he was at the hospital and admitted to speeding on a wet road.

"The shop was badly damaged – the structure and all the equipment inside," Mr Yut said, adding that they are now in discussions about compensation for the repairs.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Man arrested with gun aimed to shoot ex-wife

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A Thai man, fueled by a money dispute with his ex-wife, was intercepted at the Tha Chatchai checkpoint last Sunday (July 13) while attempting to enter Phuket with a handgun loaded 9mm pistol and 35 rounds of ammunition.

During a routine vehicle search, officers – including members of the Volunteer Defense Corps (OrSor) and Tha Chatchai Police – discovered a 9mm CZ pistol, one magazine and 35 bullets hidden inside the suspect's car.

The man, who had driven from Bangkok, was arrested and charged with illegal possession of a firearm and ammunition, and carrying a weapon in a public place without a permit.

He later told police he was planning to confront and shoot his ex-wife, claiming she had cheated him out of money.

However, officers remain skeptical of his statement and are continuing their investigation.

The case has been handed over to Tha Chat-



Photo: Thalang District Office

chai Police Station for legal proceedings.

The arrest follows Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat personally visiting the 'Phuket Check Point' last Friday (July 11) to encourage frontline officers and reinforce the importance of safety and discipline at the province's main land entry point.

Arriving at 1:15pm, Governor Sophon met with police and Thalang Volunteer Defense Corps officers stationed at the checkpoint, which connects Phuket to the mainland. He praised their dedication and urged continued vigilance in maintaining peace and order.

"You are the first impression visitors receive," he told officers. "Your discipline and professionalism are essential for safety

and for building confidence among both locals and tourists.

"You're not just protecting the province. You're helping shape Phuket's image as a safe and welcoming destination," he added.

The governor emphasised strict adherence to safety protocols and thanked all personnel for their ongoing service, noting that their role is crucial not only in enforcing laws but also in supporting Phuket's tourism-driven economy.

Tha Chat Chai is the only road checkpoint onto the island, handling thousands of vehicles daily. It plays a key role in screening those entering Phuket by land, especially during peak travel periods.

Swede arrested for cocaine

PATONG POLICE HAVE arrested a Swedish man and a Thai woman for distributing cocaine in Phuket, following a joint operation carried out by the Patong Police investigation team.

The suspects were identified as Swedish national Alex Akram Hussien, 41, and Aphaporn Kanchanasorn, 32, from Kalasin Province.

The couple were arrested in front of a 7-Eleven store on Ratchapathanusorn Rd on July 6.

A follow-up search at Saiyuanburi Condominium on Soi Samakkhi 2 in Rawai saw officers seize as evidence 15.37 grammes of cocaine, 80 small clear plastic drug bags with zip-seal closures, a digital scale,



Photo: Patong Police

a yellow MG5 sedan and two iPhones.

The pair have been charged with "jointly distributing Category 2 narcotics (cocaine) by possessing them for sale without permission", in violation of Thailand's Narcotic Act, Patong Police reported.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Riders warned after scarf snagged in wheel

TWO WICHIT POLICE OFFICERS have been praised for their swift action in helping a Myanmar woman whose scarf became entangled in the wheel of a motorbike while she was riding pillion, narrowly avoiding serious injury.

The incident occurred at around 8:30am on July 9, while Pol Sgt Thanakrit Kodi and Pol Sgt Nattawich Kaewprom were on patrol in Wichit.

The officers noticed a young woman sitting on the roadside next to a parked motorcycle and stopped to check on her. They discovered that the scarf she had worn – as part of dressing up to make merit – had become caught in the rear wheel of the bike, causing a minor accident.

The officers promptly assisted her by removing the tangled fabric, allowing her to continue on her



Photo: Wichit Police

way. They also issued a warning to others to be cautious of loose clothing, especially when riding motorcycles, as it can easily become trapped in moving parts and lead to serious injury or worse.

Wichit Police Superintendent Pol Col Somsak Thongkliang commended the two officers for their attentiveness and quick response.

"This shows that our officers are not indifferent when they see someone in trouble – whether Thai nationals, foreign visitors or migrant workers. They act immediately and without hesitation, regardless of the size of the incident," he said. Eakkapop Thongtub

Dangerous surf warning amid spate of rescues

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Lifeguards are once again urging tourists and beachgoers to obey red warning flags after a dramatic rescue of two French children who were caught in a dangerous current at Kata Beach last Friday (July 11).

A video clip of the incident, shared by Facebook user 'Kon La Fan, I'm poor. So I have to fight', shows lifeguards using a surfboard to reach a 12-year-old French boy and his younger sister who were swept away while playing in the sea. The children's parents were reportedly sunbathing on the beach and unaware their kids were in trouble.

Mr Arm, a lifeguard stationed at Kata Beach, said he noticed the children struggling in the water after being pulled out by a strong current. "They were alone and unable to get back to shore. The waves were very strong, and red flags had



Photo: Patong Municipality

been placed clearly along the beach," he said. He and his team rushed into the sea and brought the children safely back to shore.

Following the rescue, the parents thanked the lifeguards and offered them B1,000 as a token of their appreciation. The family was also shown the beach safety signage and taught how to identify flag colours that indicate whether it is safe to swim.

Lifeguards stressed that red flags mean swimming is strictly prohibited due to hazardous conditions such as strong waves or rip currents.

"Lifeguards are doing their best, but we need the

cooperation of tourists and parents," Mr Arm said. "The red flags are there for a reason."

The incident comes amid a busy period for lifeguards in Phuket, especially at Patong Beach, where dozens of rescue and first aid operations were carried out in June, according to a report released by Patong Surf Life Saving.

Lifeguards rescued no less than 86 people from strong rip currents at Patong Beach last month alone, the report said.

Three of those rescues require the victim to be taken to hospital, the report added.

There were also multiple cases of marine animal

stings, including jellyfish and sea cucumbers, which were treated on site. Four people sustained injuries from sharp objects or shells, with one case requiring hospitalisation, the report noted.

Eight tourists were injured while engaging in water sports, and three of them had to be taken to the hospital. There were six cases involving fainting, dizziness, or asthma attacks, including one incident related to marijuana intoxication.

At night, six tourists were warned not to swim in the sea, and two cases of intoxication required hospital treatment.

In total, 14 individuals were transferred to the hospital for further care, Patong lifeguards reported.

Lifeguards emphasised that many of these incidents could be avoided if beachgoers followed safety guidelines, stayed within designated swimming areas, and paid attention to beach warnings.

'Blue Dragon' spotted washed up on shore

TOURISTS AND BEACHGOERS are being warned after specimens of the potentially dangerous marine creature the 'marginated sea lizard' (*glaucilla marginata*) – known by Thais as the 'blue sea dragon' – was spotted at Karon Beach for the first time in nearly two years.

The sighting was shared online by the environmental group 'Monsoon Garbage Thailand' which posted an image of the tiny creature inside a glass, reportedly found on Karon Beach.

The caption humorously announced the return of the elusive animal, stating, "The blue sea dragon has come to Karon Beach again... if you have good eyesight, you will miss out."

The blue sea dragon – often also called the 'sea swallow' or 'blue angel' – grows to only about three centimeters long but carries a potent sting.

It collects toxic stinging cells from its prey, such as fire jellyfish and fire coral, storing the venom in its own body to use as a defense mechanism. By storing and



Photo: Theerasak Sak-sritawee / Facebook

concentrating the venom, the blue dragon can deliver a more powerful sting than the jellyfish it eats.

Though not venomous by itself, contact with a blue sea dragon can cause serious symptoms in humans, including acute skin irritation, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, and in rare cases, complications affecting the nervous or cardiovascular system.

The creature is typically found floating on the ocean surface in tropical waters across the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans. It stores air in its body to stay afloat and drifts with ocean currents.

Since they store venom from their prey, treatments for blue dragon stings are similar to those for jellyfish, such as applying hot water and vinegar.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Rescue dinghy donation gifts Patong lifeguards a boost

PATONG LIFEGUARDS have received a brand-new rescue boat to bolster sea safety efforts in one of Phuket's busiest tourist areas, thanks to a joint donation from the Rotary Club of Patong Beach and local business Tonsai Marine Services.

The GEMINI GRX 420 rescue boat, worth approximately B700,000, was officially handed over during a ceremony on July 7 attended by Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee, local officials and representatives from both donor organisations.

The 4.2-metre-long vessel, constructed from Hypalon rubber and resin, is powered by a 30-horsepower Suzuki two-stroke engine. Delivered in brand-new condition and equipped with essential safety gear, the boat will support lifeguards and emergency responders in preventing and assisting with accidents in the water off Patong Beach.

The handover ceremony included the signing of a



Photo: PR Phuket

memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Tonsai Marine, the Rotary Club of Patong Beach and Patong Municipality to enhance cooperation in emergency response and strengthen the capacity of local lifeguards who work year-round to safeguard tourists on Patong Beach.

The Patong lifeguards put the new rescue dinghy through its paces immediately, with a series of surf rescue training exercises.

President of the Rotary Club of Patong Beach, Alexander Longman, said the donation aligned with Rotary International's guiding motto of "Service Above Self".

"Our club is made up of members from diverse backgrounds united by a common purpose – to make a real and lasting difference

in our community," Mr Longman said.

The rescue boat project, Mr Longman added, was made possible through the generosity of Warangkana Kisby and Daniel Kisby of Tonsai Marine Services. "We are proud to stand with the Patong lifeguards – not just as donors, but as long-term supporters," he said.

Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee praised the initiative, saying it would play an important role in safeguarding the thousands of visitors who flock to Patong Beach each year. "This is an excellent example of the private sector and community organisations working together for the public good," he said.

The event concluded with a message of appreciation from the donors: "We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Patong Beach lifeguards for their tireless dedication. May this boat be of great use in your mission and help save many more lives in the years to come."

The Phuket News



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Cannabis rules made clear

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket officials have announced new regulations for businesses selling cannabis, following the Ministry of Public Health's recent designation of cannabis as a controlled herb under updated national guidelines.

The announcement was made during a press conference at Phuket Provincial Hall on July 9, chaired by Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat.

Somsuk Sampanprateep, Deputy Director of the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office, explained the main points of the Ministry of Public Health's announcement, which was published in the Royal Gazette on June 25 and came into effect on June 26.

The updated rules clarify that cannabis is now considered a 'controlled herb', with usage permitted primarily for 'medical purposes' and under strict regulatory conditions.

Mr Somsuk explained that the new framework supports medical cannabis



Photo: PR Phuket

access for patients with qualifying conditions and aims to balance public health with economic opportunities for legal cannabis businesses.

Importantly, shops selling cannabis must only source their products from farms certified under the Good Agricultural and Collection Practices (GACP) standards by the Department of Thai Traditional and Alternative Medicine, he said.

Currently, four farms in

Phuket meet these standards: Phuket Herbal and Health Tourism Community Enterprise; Blossom Business Co Ltd; The Emerald Club Co Ltd; and Medigreen Solution Co Ltd.

Mr Somsuk stressed that cannabis can only be sold to patients who present a prescription from a qualified medical professional.

Accepted professionals include doctors, dentists, pharmacists, Thai traditional medicine doctors, Thai traditional medicine

practitioners, Chinese medicine practitioners and registered folk doctors.

Shops must retain each prescription for at least one year for inspection purposes, he warned.

Key Requirements for Cannabis Retailers:

- * Smoking cannabis on the premises is strictly prohibited.

- * No advertising of cannabis products is allowed through any medium or method.

- * Shops must file

detailed reports on product sources (Form PorTor 27) and product usage Form PorTor 28) at the end of every month.

These must be submitted via two channels:

- Email: cannabisreport-pk@gmail.com

- Online portal linked to the shop's specific licence number

Failure to comply with the regulations may result in suspension or revocation of the shop's cannabis licence, Mr Somsuk also warned.



Individuals with revoked licences will be banned from operating under the Protection and Promotion of Traditional Thai Medicine Wisdom Act B.E. 2542 for a period of two years.

Selling cannabis without a licence is a criminal offence punishable by up to one year in prison, a fine of up to B20,000, or both.

The Phuket Provincial Public Health Office will conduct strict monitoring and enforcement, Mr Somsuk said.

In the initial phase, the focus will be on reviewing submitted reports, ensuring compliance and providing education and support to licensed sellers.

In later phases, follow-up inspections will take place, and legal action will be taken against any violators, he added.

Governor Sophon urged all cannabis-related businesses to follow the guidelines closely, not only to ensure public safety but also to support Phuket's goal of becoming a leader in sustainable health tourism, said an official report of the announcement.

Phuket joins TAT roadshow to 'CIS'

THE TOURISM AUTHORITY OF Thailand (TAT) has launched a major tourism promotion campaign across Central Asia with the 'Amazing Thailand Roadshow to CIS Countries 2025', held from June 30 to July 4 in three key cities: Tashkent in Uzbekistan, and Astana and Almaty in Kazakhstan.

The initiative, spearheaded by the TAT Moscow Office and led by Director Kanchana Sing-udom, aims to attract quality tourists from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region to Thailand, particularly to high-profile destinations such as Phuket, Bangkok, Krabi, Chonburi and Surat Thani.

A total of 27 Thai tourism operators participated in the roadshow, including a strong delegation from the Phuket Tourist Association, which led business-to-business negotiations with more than 300 prominent tour companies across the three cities.

The TAT in its report emphasised that CIS countries represent a high-potential tourist market, noting that travellers from this region often visit with families or groups of friends, tend to stay longer and have significant spending power – aligning with Thailand's strategy to focus on attracting "quality tourists".

In Astana on July 2, the event was officially opened by Piyapin Niyomrerks, Thai Ambassador to Kazakhstan, who highlighted the importance of tourism in strengthening bilateral ties between Thailand and Kazakhstan.



Photo: PR Phuket

The Phuket Tourist Association, with support from the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO), showcased the island's tourism offerings to CIS tour operators.

Chalam Attham, Vice Chairman of the PPAO, along with PPAO members, led 16 private sector representatives from Phuket to promote the province as a year-round, world-class destination.

The Phuket delegation also presented updates on the island's diverse tourism products, events and activities – beyond its well-known natural beauty – to ensure CIS tour and travel agents were informed of the latest offerings.

The roadshow is expected to significantly boost the number of tourists from CIS countries visiting Phuket and other Thai destinations, with projections for longer stays and increased spending across the tourism and hospitality sectors. *The Phuket News*

Strong start for Phuket tourism

Phuket has enjoyed strong tourism performance in the first five months of 2025, with more than 5.8 million visitors generating over B220 billion in revenue, officials have announced.

The news was delivered at a press conference at Phuket Provincial Hall on July 9, chaired by Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat. Also present were senior provincial officials and representatives from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and the private sector.

Kamolphan Chalermkulrat, Deputy Director of the TAT Phuket office, and Thaneth Tantipiriyakit, President of the Phuket Tourist Association, presented an overview of tourism performance.

From January to May 2025, Phuket recorded a total of 5,859,022 tourist arrivals, an increase of 3.14% compared with the same period last year. Of this number, 1,591,817 were Thai tourists, representing a rise of 6.73%, while 4,267,205 were foreign visitors, up by 1.86%.

Tourism revenue for the



Photo: PR Phuket

five-month period totalled B223.77bn, an increase of 5.19% year-on-year. Revenue generated by Thai tourists was B16.65bn, up by 12.74%, while spending by international visitors amounted to B207.11bn, an increase of 4.63%. The average spending per visitor was B38,192 per trip.

In June 2025 alone, Phuket welcomed 1,713,776 visitors. This included 582,555 Thai travellers and 1,131,221 international tourists. The average hotel occupancy rate for the month was 62.63%, with visitors staying an average of 3.24 days. Total tourism income for the month exceeded B35.51bn.

The top 10 source markets for international arrivals in June were India, Russia, China, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom, the United States and South Korea.

Phuket International Airport handled a total of 7,062 inbound and outbound flights during June 2025. These flights carried a total of 1,064,131 passengers, comprising 317,346 international travellers and 216,083 domestic passengers.

Looking ahead to the Asalha Bucha and Buddhist Lent long weekend (July 10-13), officials anticipate welcoming approximately 199,460 visitors to the island. This is expected to generate around B2.89bn in revenue, with an estimated average hotel occupancy rate of 60.57%.

A number of high-profile tourism events are also planned for July and August. These include the Phuket Health Expo 2025, the Phuket Lobster Festival 2025, the Thailand Surfing Championship, the Thailand Biennale Phuket 2025 and the Por Tor Festival.

Each of these events aims to draw both domestic and international interest while enhancing Phuket's cultural and culinary appeal, said an official report of the announcement.

The Phuket News

NACC panel to investigate PM's Hun Sen phone call

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

The National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) has unanimously agreed to set up a panel to investigate suspended Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra for alleged ethical misconduct, in connection with the audio clip featuring a controversial phone conversation between her and Cambodian Senate President Hun Sen.

The conversation in question, concerning border tensions between Thailand and Cambodia, has not only called into question Ms Paetongtarn's ability to lead the government but also sparked ethical questions.

On July 1, the Constitutional Court voted unanimously to accept a petition filed by a group of senators and, by a 7-2 majority, ordered Ms Paetongtarn's suspension from her duties as it began reviewing the leaked audio clip of the private conversation with Hun Sen.



Paetongtarn Shinawatra at Government House on July 3. Photo: Chanan Katanyu

In the recording, the premier made critical remarks about the commander of the Second Army Region and appeared overly conciliatory towards the Cambodian strongman, allegedly implying a willingness to yield to his demands.

Earlier, the NACC had unanimously agreed to launch a preliminary investigation into the matter, setting a 10-day deadline for officials to verify the facts. The panel was tasked with transcribing the leaked conversation, providing accurate foreign-language translations, interviewing relevant witnesses and reviewing applicable legal precedents.

The precedents include the Constitutional Court's ruling in the case of former prime minister Srettha Thavisin, who was removed over his appointment of Pichit Chuenban as minister attached to the Prime Minister's Office. Pichit was convicted of contempt of court for attempting to bribe Supreme Court officials in 2008 while representing former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra in a controversial land case. The law forbids the appointment of cabinet ministers with a criminal background.

NACC chairman Suchart Trakulkasemsuk and commissioner Prapas Kongied will serve as members of the new inquiry panel which

marks the beginning of a formal legal process under NACC procedures, while several steps remain before any formal charges can be brought.

If sufficient evidence is found, allegations will be formally presented, and the accused will be given the opportunity to respond. Only then will the case file be concluded and submitted to the NACC board for a final decision.

On June 20, Senate Speaker Mongkol Surasajja formally signed a letter to the chairman of the NACC, forwarding a complaint submitted by the group of senators against Ms Paetongtarn. The complaint accuses her of a serious violation of ethical standards and possibly of committing a deliberate breach of the constitution or the law.

According to Constitutional Court President Nakharin Mektrairat, Ms Paetongtarn can seek a standard practice deadline extension to submit her defence in her ongoing ethics case.

Fast track immigration for Chinese students' families

BANGKOK



Photo: Immigration Bureau

IMMIGRATION POLICE have set up fast lanes for Chinese students' families at major airports to welcome them to Thailand during their school holidays.

Pol Maj Gen Choengron Rimpadee, commander of the Immigration Division 2 which supervises major airports, said on July 13 that tourism-related operators had urged for measures to stimulate the arrivals of Chinese visitors as their numbers had dropped by about 50% from 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response, immigration police set up 'Happy Chinese Summer Channel' lanes for Chinese students' families at Chiang Mai, Don Mueang, Phuket and Suvarnabhumi airports from July to September.

The fast lanes limited waiting time for visitors to 15 minutes to complete their immigration processes, down from up to 40 minutes during peak hours, Pol Maj Gen Choengron said. He expected the special

immigration channels to serve at least 5,000 Chinese students and family members each day. About 20,000 Chinese visitors arrive in Thailand every day.

The airport immigration commander said he met a deputy director-general of Chinese consular affairs and learned that Thailand remained a popular destination among Chinese students' families, after Macau and Hong Kong.

Marine attractions in Pattaya and Phuket were their favourite destinations in Thailand and Chinese authorities had no policy to discourage Chinese people from visiting Thailand, Pol Maj Gen Choengron said.

Chinese people increasingly chose domestic trips because their income dropped after the COVID-19 pandemic, the commander added.

Bangkok Post

Thailand's biggest call-scam gang sentenced to prison

BANGKOK

SEVENTY CRIMINAL ACCOMPLICES rounded up in Thailand's biggest scam-gang bust have been sentenced to up to 24 years in prison.

The Department of Special Investigation (DSI) announced on July 9 that the Thung Song Provincial Court had passed sentence on the 70 defendants on May 22.

The huge, transnational scam was operated from a four-storey building in the southern province of Nakhon Sri Thammarat.

The case centred on the mass arrest of Thai and Chinese members of the call-centre gang - the largest such criminal network detected operating in the country to date, according to the DSI.

The police operation began in November 2023 after investigators uncovered evidence of the gang's illegal transnational activities. One of the targeted premises was the four-storey, five-unit building with 22 separate rooms.

On Mar 28, 2024, officers from the DSI, Cybercrime Police Division, Immigration Bureau and the Department of Employment raided the building and other minor spots in Chawang district. They arrested 71 people, 52 Chinese and 19 Thais.

During the raid, police encountered Thai security guards on the ground floor of the building, the DSI said.

Police impounded 223 computers, 1,001



Photo: Department of Special Investigation

mobile phones, 14 iPads, 298 SIM cards and 86 bank accounts, along with illegally imported items found on the premises.

Investigators also uncovered internet chat boxes used to scam victims in Chinese, Japanese, Russian and Thai languages.

The passports of the Chinese suspects showed multiple trips to Cambodia. Some had overstayed in Thailand.

The case was handed over to the Cybercrime Investigation Division 5.

Seventy of suspects faced prosecution for fraud - 52 Chinese, 16 Thais and two juristic entities.

The court sentenced the gang leaders each to 24 years in prison, and others to lesser terms.

The 70 defendants were also ordered to repay money they scammed from two Japanese victims and had yet to return to them - one to receive ¥10,670,000 (about B2.4 million), and the other ¥450,000 (about B10,000). Bangkok Post



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Jurassic World: Rebirth nothing really new

David Griffiths

One of the strange things I have noticed these days is that most film critics expect nearly every film to either make a powerful political or social statement, be new or different, or, to put it simply, be a masterpiece. Many seem to have forgotten the fact that it is okay for movies to be just fun and entertaining.

When director Gareth Edwards (*Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*) and screenwriter David Koepp (*Spider-Man*) sat down to work out what should happen with *Jurassic World: Rebirth* I'm pretty sure the last thing on their mind was making a game-changing Oscar winner. The idea behind a Jurassic World movie is pretty basic – an entertaining film that pits humans up against the biggest and baddest dinosaurs.

That is not saying that there haven't been highs and lows in this franchise. I think many of us still remember sitting there in awe as we watched the original Jurassic Park movies and groaning with disbelief as *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* tried to convince us that it is plausible that dinosaurs could be auctioned off in a mansion. To be honest *Jurassic World: Rebirth* is not the best film in this franchise but it certainly is not the worst.

This time around the character at the centre is mercenary Zora Bennett (Scarlett Johansson – *The Avengers*) who has a knack of delivering whatever her client needs. This time around she has been hired by Martin Krebs (Rupert Friend – *Pride & Prejudice*) who works for one of the world's biggest pharmaceutical companies.

Around them the love affair with dinosaurs has waned right around the world. Now having them back is just a burden on everyday life – and exhibitions like the ones put together by Dr Henry Loomis (Jonathan Bailey – *Wicked*) are huge failures.



Photo: IMDb

With his latest exhibition closing early Zora recruits him to be on her team as her 'dinosaur expert' as Krebs hires her to go on a mission to find some of the most dangerous and rarest dinosaurs and collect their DNA as it is believed it could lead to cures for some of the world's most deadly diseases – including cancer.

But as her team, which includes the tough Duncan Kincaid (Mahershala Ali – *Green Book*), head into the restricted zone to find these dinosaurs, they find themselves fighting for their lives alongside a shipwrecked family made up of Reuben Delgado (Manuel Garcia-Rulfo – *The Magnificent Seven*), Teresa Delgado (Luna Blaise – *Manifest*), Isabella Delgado (Audrina Miranda – *Criminal Minds*) and Teresa's boyfriend Xavier (David Iacono – *Cinnamon*).

Beautiful creatures

While Koepp hasn't exactly gone out of his way to reinvent the action genre with this film he has loaded it with suspense. If humans being attacked by dinosaurs left, right and centre isn't enough to raise the audi-

ence's heart rates the fact that one member of the team is almost killed by another who then tries to cover it up without the others knowing will certainly have them on the edge of their seat.

Koepp also puts some brilliant social commentary into the screenplay with themes including animal exploitation being explored in great detail. The fact that the popularity of dinosaurs has waned has led to zoos discarding them is a sad example of what many zoos do around the world, and the fact that many of the dinosaurs in the restricted zone are the sad remnants of what happened when many of the scientists tried to experiment with cross-breeding also resembles what has happened with many dog breeds over the years.

Of course the big social question asked here though is when Bennett is left facing the question what will happen to 'these beautiful creatures' if the pharmaceutical companies realise just how much their DNA is going to be worth and what experiments would be conducted on them as more research is needed. Many audience members will be left asking themselves questions on where they stand on pharmaceutical companies after watching this film.

When it comes to the acting nobody is really tested here. Johansson breezes through her action sequences while Friend seems to love the opportunity to play the villain. Ali announces himself as a beefed up action hero while the best performance here goes to Bailey who plays the conflicted scientist sensationally well.

Being a huge fan of the film *Monsters* I did expect Edwards to do a lot more with a Jurassic World movie but still I didn't leave the cinema disappointed. If you go into *Jurassic World: Rebirth* expecting a simple human versus dinosaur movie you won't be disappointed... that is really the only way to approach this film.

Jurassic World: Rebirth is currently screening in Phuket and rated 'G'

3/5 Stars

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

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Which AI assistant should you trust with your life?

Joe Smith

It's been a while since your first fling with ChatGPT. AI's break-neck evolution has now seen the emergence of a crop of aspiring rivals – names like Llama, Grok and DeepSeek. So is it time to trade in ChatGPT for a younger model?

In this column, we find out why you should ditch ChatGPT in favour of Gemini, and when and why you should dally with the second-rate alternatives mentioned above (spoiler – it has to do with sex and money).

First though, for serious work, there really are only two choices of AI productivity tool – the US\$20-a-month paid-for versions of OpenAI's ChatGPT and Google's Gemini.

Loyalists will tell you that Anthropic's Claude also scores in the same ranges of AI capability, and that it too has voice integration and a good mobile app. Claude has a very large context window – meaning it will stay focussed with 100-page documents. Fans also praise its empathetic character and thoughtful, philosophical mien.

But Claude lacks vital features possessed by its rivals. It does not remember past conversations. This capacity of Gemini and ChatGPT is creepy and intrusive but makes those models much more useful in furthering

your projects. Secondly, it does not have image or video generation capabilities.

You may say, "I don't need video generation capabilities". Well, you might not now, but you will. For a parallel, consider that, back in the age of dinosaurs, "I don't need it" is exactly what people said when makers started putting cameras in mobile phones.

This is one respect in which Gemini is ahead of ChatGPT. Both have state of the art native image generation capabilities. But now Gemini also allows you to create video clips too (click the Video button in the prompt window). For now, these are limited to eight seconds, but this is bound to improve.

With Gemini too, you can interrogate your Gmail and Google Drive archives. Granted, you can use Microsoft's OpenAI-powered Copilot to do the same in Outlook and OneDrive – but do you actually have your data in OneDrive?

Gemini is more reliable at web search, as you might expect from a Google product.

Finally, Gemini is ahead – in Thailand and at least – in its multimodal capabilities. What I mean by this is its ability to assist you in real time as you interact with the world. In Gemini's mobile app, you can press a button called Live, give it access to your camera and microphone and allow it to see and hear what you do. You can point it at a plant, or your dinner or another



Image: Victoria Page

person and ask, what is this? Can I eat it? Voice mode on your mobile AI is a game changer, opening new realms of productivity, and this feature of Gemini's is a glimpse of the AI-augmented future.

What about the rest of the field? Something that can grate about frontier models like ChatGPT and Gemini – apart from the cost – is their political correctness.

For a guardrail-free and costless experience, try Grok from Elon Musk's X. It will talk candidly about things that others won't – sex, for example. Beware though – recent reports suggest that Musk might be trying to brainwash his own artificial mind into parroting his own unsavoury world views.

Also free and less constrained by

Western mores is China's DeepSeek. Like Facebook's Llama, this model is open source, and has a loyal nerdy fanbase for that reason. These alternatives are second-or-third tier models, however, and noticeably less smart than the leaders.

The conclusion: Try Live mode in Gemini on the mobile app and see the world through a new lens.

Joe Smith is Founder of the AI consultancy 2Sigma Consultants. He studied AI at Imperial College Business School and is researching AI's effects on cognition at Chulalongkorn University. He is author of *The Optimized Marketer*, a book on how to use AI to promote your business and yourself. Contact joe@2Sigmaconsultants.com.

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POP QUIZ

1. In the song *Waltzing Matilda* what is a Jumbuck?
2. King Zog ruled which country?
3. What colour is Spock's blood in *Star Trek*?
4. What would you do with a Yashmak?
5. What does a funambulist do?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Hard

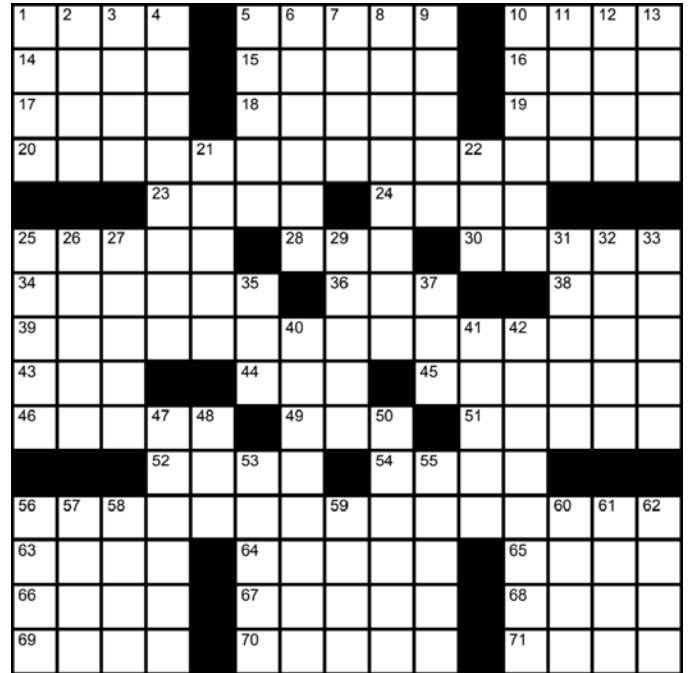
		5			6	3		1
		7	1					
		3		2	7			
9							6	
2		8				5		4
	1							2
				5	3		8	
						8	4	
8		9	7			1		

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across
1. Blubber
 5. City on the Loire
 10. Ready a gift
 14. Hodgepodge
 15. Confounded
 16. Epitaph opener
 17. Red River, to the Vietnamese
 18. Addict
 19. Copacati worshipper
 20. Aims high, like a TV host?
 23. Low islands
 24. Heads up
 25. They meet in the middle
 28. Self-image
 30. Accords
 34. Myanmar natives, e.g.
 36. Piz Bernina, e.g.
 38. Indeed
 39. Appeared on TV host's show twice?
 43. Be up
 44. Inits. on a rocket
 45. Sportsman's guide
 46. Feature of some photo layouts
 49. Chinese brew
 51. Finish lines
 52. Car until 1957
 54. Thai currency
- Down
1. Prominent Danish physicist
 2. Insect repellent ingredient
 3. Stage area
 4. Syllogist, e.g.
 5. Sweet confection
 6. Of no use
 7. Tech support caller
 8. Landlord's paper
 9. Hindu holy man
 10. Odd idea
 11. City north of Carson City
 12. Big name in oil
 13. Hymn of praise: Var.
 21. Angel
 22. U.S.N.A. grad
 25. Browning's Ben
 56. Lift the mood of a TV host?
 63. Wild ____
 64. Object of many prayers
 65. Zing
 66. Soup vegetable
 67. Beat
 68. "Le ____," Emile Zola novel
 69. Knawe, for one
 70. War horse
 71. Sheldrake
 - Ezra, e.g.
 26. Assoc. of nations
 27. Fare reductions
 29. Loud Australian bird
 31. African antelope
 32. Rhodes of Rhodesia
 33. "Land ____!"
 35. Pittance
 37. Hard throw, in baseball
 40. Onion plant
 41. ____ owl
 42. Record holders
 47. The Supreme Court, e.g.
 48. Child's play?
 50. Erode
 53. ____ Tower
 55. Expressed pleasure
 56. ____ Canyon
 57. Snap request?
 58. Plot unit
 59. Pipe type
 60. Hypothetical substance
 61. 90's party
 62. De novo

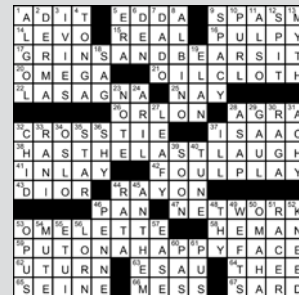
Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

- 1) Sheep; 2) Albania (1928 to 1939); 3) Green; 4) Wear it - it's an Arab veil; 5) Tightrope walker



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

6

feet in a fathom.

22

percent of Americans will be asleep before midnight on New Year's Eve.

923

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

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



Boat through a tree, Cape Panwa. Photo by Marco Capriz

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

This week in history

July 18, 1925

Adolf Hitler publishes *Mein Kampf*.

July 19, AD 64

The Great Fire of Rome causes widespread devastation and rages on for six days, destroying half of the city.

July 20, 1968

The first International Special Olympics Summer Games are held at Soldier Field in Chicago, with about 1,000 athletes with intellectual disabilities.

July 21, 1645

Qing dynasty regent Dorgon issues an edict ordering all Han Chinese men to shave their forehead and braid the rest of their hair into a queue identical to those of the Manchus.

July 22, 1951

Soviet space dogs: Dezik and Tsygan were launched into a sub-orbital spaceflight from Kapustin Yar and became the first dogs to fly in space and the first to safely return.

July 23, 1903

The Ford Motor Company sells its first car.

July 24, 1567

Mary, Queen of Scots, is forced to abdicate and be replaced by her one-year-old son James VI.



Mary, Queen of Scots.

Source: Wikipedia

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Phuket Veterans invite all members, families, and friends to join us for the first annual 100 Legends Summer Ball held at The Courtyard by Marriott, Phuket Town. What's Included? Band and DJ, Dancing, Buffet, Thai and Western food. Canapé, welcome drinks and free flow soft drink. There will be a raffle prize draw with the proceeds going to charity - Live, Play, Work Thai Priorities Services. Live Play Work Supports Veterans, individuals, their Families, Community & Business to Live..Play..Work Their Best Life! From 6:00 PM, tickets THB 2,000 THB per person. RSVP - Dave Gormley (IVA Secretary) to register WhatsApp +44 7726 274096 or davegormley@icloud.com or message via Facebook: facebook.com/phuketveterans Dave Gormley, davegormley@icloud.com

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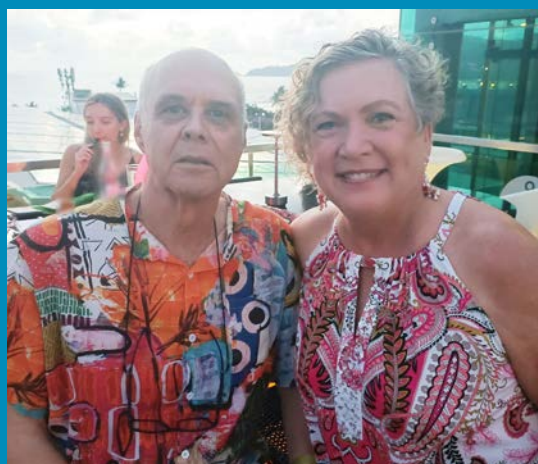
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THE OFFICIAL INSTALLATION OF THE 25TH PRESIDENT OF PATONG BEACH ROTARY CLUB

A wonderful night celebrating the installation of Alex Longman as the 2025/26 president of the Rotary Club of Patong beach. Over 50 Rotary members, Patong government officials and guests enjoyed a great night of fellowship, great food and fantastic views at The Kee Resort & Spa, Patong's Kee Sky Lounge on Wednesday, July 9. To find out more about the great initiatives that the Rotary Club of Patong Beach are doing, visit facebook.com/RCoPB



Aimsaard sisters, new mixed duo steal show

BADMINTON

AIMSAARD SISTERS Benyapa and Nuntakarn won their second title in two weeks, while Ruttanapak Oupthong and Jhenicha Sudjaipraparat claimed their biggest career win in Canada on July 6.

Benyapa and Nuntakarn won the women's doubles title while Ruttanapak and Jhenicha took home the mixed doubles crown at the US\$240,000 (B7.92 million) BWF Canada Open in Markham, Ontario.

For Benyapa and Nuntakarn, the victory followed their triumph at the US Open on June 29, which was their first title in over a year. It was their seventh career title at the World Tour level.

Benyapa and Nuntakarn defeated Kaho Osawa and Mai Tanabe of Japan 21-12, 21-18 in the final.

Earlier, Ruttanapak and Jhenicha defeated



Benyapa and Nuntakarn Aimsaard. Photo: AFP

Presley Smith and Jennie Gai of the US 21-14, 21-17 for their first World Tour Super 300 title and their second overall.

Ruttanapak and Jhenicha won the Super 100 Kaohsiung Masters for their first World Tour title in Taiwan last year and were also finalists at the US Open.

Each of the winning pairs received \$18,960.

Benyapa suffered a knee injury after winning the 2024 Thailand Masters with her sister and was sidelined for several months. The early stage of their comeback produced mixed results but the pair continued to train hard under coach Saralee Thungthongkam and their intensive work has paid off handsomely with back-to-back victories.

Bangkok Post

Sinner Wimbledon winner

TENNIS

AFP

Jannik Sinner downed defending champion Carlos Alcaraz 4-6, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 last Sunday (July 13) to win his first Wimbledon title, gaining sweet revenge for his painful defeat in the French Open final.

The world number one is the first Italian to win at the All England Club and now has four Grand Slams to his name at the age of 23.

Sinner stayed ice cool after losing the first set, with the momentum quickly shifting, and wrapped up victory in a shade over three hours.

He had squandered three championship points in the final at Roland Garros five weeks ago but this time made no mistake as he served out for victory.

Sinner and two-time defending Wimbledon champion Alcaraz have now shared the past seven Grand Slam titles between them, with the Italian winning four of those.

Defeat in Paris last month was a bitter blow for the top seed, who led by two sets and had a clutch of championship points.

Sinner said he had tried to learn from his "tough loss" on clay.

Prior to Sunday's victory, Sinner had lost five consecutive times against Alcaraz, including the final of the Italian Open in the first tournament he played after returning from a three-month doping ban.



Sinner poses with the winner's trophy. Photo: AFP

But this time he turned the tables in impressive fashion, denying world number two Alcaraz a sixth major.

Sinner cruised through the first three rounds at Wimbledon, losing just 17 games – equalling an Open era record set in 1972.

SWIASTEK DOMINANT

Meanwhile on Saturday, Iga Swiatek demolished Amanda Anisimova 6-0, 6-0 in the most one-sided women's Wimbledon final for 114 years to win her sixth Grand Slam title.

The Polish eighth seed, who has now won all six major finals in which she has competed, was in charge from the first point and wrapped up victory in just 57 minutes.

It is the first time a woman has won a final at Wimbledon without dropping a game since 1911.

And Swiatek, 24, is just the second player in the Open era to win a major title without losing a game in the final after Steffi Graf beat Natalia Zvereva at the 1988 French Open.

Swiatek had looked increasingly strong while the top seeds tumbled at the All England Club, losing just one set in her run to the final.

US 13th seed Anisimova was expected to prove a stern test after ousting world number one Aryna Sabalenka in the semi-finals, but Swiatek performed a brutal demolition job to take the title with ease.

Thai spikers dodge relegation fears

VOLLEYBALL

THAILAND GAINED ONE vital point in a 2-3 loss to Canada last Sunday (July 13) that was enough to keep them in the Volleyball Women's Nations League next year.

The Thais needed only one point to survive a relegation threat in their final match against Canada in Arlington, Texas, regardless of the outcome. They eventually went down 2-3 (25-17, 23-25, 28-30, 25-23, 15-13) in a hard-fought competition.

Thailand totalled six points after earning that crucial point from the last match, while South Korea had five.

The South Korean team were relegated as they stayed in the bottom of the table.

"We played a very good game. All joined forces with a mission to stay in the VNL next year," captain Ajcharaporn Kongyot said after the match.

Thailand went down to hosts United States 1-3 (26-28, 25-21, 25-27, 15-25) in the opening match of the third and



Relief against Canada. Photo: Bangkok Post

last week of the 2025 FIVB Women's Volleyball Nations League preliminary phase on July 9.

The Thais also lost their second game against the Dominican Republic 0-3 (21-25, 18-25, 23-25) on Friday.

"We haven't played so well in the VNL so far this year," said setter Pornpun Guedpard after the Dominican Republic loss.

"I don't think we've been as competitive as we were in past seasons, but we have many young players, and it's been good for them to be here and get some experience," she added.

Bangkok Post

Red Bull sack team chief Horner

FORMULA ONE

CHRISTIAN HORNER WAS sacked by Red Bull on July 9 after a hugely successful 20 years as team principal of the Formula One outfit.

The 51-year-old has been in charge since the team was formed in 2005 and led them to eight drivers' titles and six constructors' crowns.

Dutchman Max Verstappen has won the past four drivers' titles for Red Bull, matching the achievement of Sebastian Vettel, who dominated for the team from 2010 to 2013.

Horner broke down in tears as he informed the team's workforce of the news of his departure at the team's base in Milton Keynes.

Horner's dismissal as CEO and team principal comes 17 months after he was accused by a woman colleague of "inappropriate behaviour".

The Englishman was twice cleared over the claims by the Formula One team's parent company, Red Bull GmbH, and his wife, former Spice Girl Geri Halliwell, stood by him.

But there have been rumblings of discontent within the team, with several high-profile departures, while form on the track has nose-dived.



Christian Horner. Photo: AFP

"Red Bull has released Christian Horner from his operational duties with effect from today and has appointed Laurent Mekies as CEO of Red Bull Racing," said a statement from Red Bull GmbH.

Verstappen tweeted his reaction several hours after the announcement.

"From my first race win, to four world championships, we have shared incredible successes," he wrote on X.

"Winning memorable races and breaking countless records. Thank you for everything, Christian!"

Oliver Mintzlaff, CEO of corporate projects and investments, paid tribute to Horner, thanking him for his "exceptional work".

"With his tireless commitment, experience, expertise and innovative thinking, he has been instrumental in establishing Red Bull Racing as one of the most successful and attractive teams in Formula 1," he said.

"Thank you for everything, Christian, and you will forever remain an important part of our team history."

Horner's departure comes amid speculation that Verstappen may be tempted to jump ship to Mercedes.

Although the 27-year-old Dutchman won the title last year, he only topped the podium twice in the final 14 races of the season.

Red Bull have won only two races this season, with McLaren taking their place as the team to beat.

Verstappen is languishing 69 points behind championship leader Oscar Piastri at the halfway point of the campaign and finished a disappointing fifth at the British Grand Prix on July 6, having started on pole.

Other key figures responsible for the team's previous dominance have left since last year including design guru Adrian Newey, who signed for Aston Martin, and sporting director Jonathan Wheatley, who joined Sauber.

AFP

Chelsea's Maresca hails Club World Cup triumph

FOOTBALL

AFP

Chelsea coach Enzo Maresca insisted winning the Club World Cup meant as much as winning the Champions League after his side beat Paris Saint-Germain 3-0 in the final of the first edition of FIFA's new competition last Sunday (July 13).

"I have the feeling that this competition is going to be as important, if not more important than, the Champions League," said Maresca after adding the trophy to the UEFA Conference League title his team won in May.

Maresca only took over at Chelsea a year ago but was previously on the coaching staff under Pep Guardiola at Manchester City when they won the Champions League in 2023.

"I was lucky to be on the coaching staff of a team that won the Champions League a few years ago, but this competition features the best teams in the world and I think we can value it on the same level," said the Italian.

"It is a great triumph for us and it will allow the Chelsea fans to have that on our shirt for the next four years, so it is a source of pride."

Maresca said he instructed his players to go out and take the game to



Chelsea players and staff celebrate with the trophy. Photo: AFP

PSG from the off - they went on to net all three goals in the first half with Cole Palmer netting a brace before Joao Pedro added his name to the scoresheet.

"The message was to let them understand that we were here to win the game and I think in the first 10 minutes we showed them that," Maresca said.

"That set the tone of the game, and then the quality of the players was also important."

England international Palmer was named player of the match after bagging a brace and setting up Joao Pedro's goal.

The 23-year-old therefore lived up to his superstar billing - his face has appeared on billboards around New

York advertising the tournament, alongside the likes of Real Madrid duo Kylian Mbappe and Vinicius Junior.

"To score the goals was a great feeling, as was the way the team showed fire out there - the gaffer's game plan was spot on," Palmer said.

"I just try to do my job every time I go onto the pitch and hopefully I will continue."

"I have seen the billboards in Times Square and outside Madison Square Garden and it is obviously a nice feeling to be alongside those players," he added.

US President Donald Trump presented the winners' trophy and received boisterous booing from large sections of the crowd.

Ikeda to remain as Chaba Kaew coach

FOOTBALL

THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION of Thailand (FAT) is keeping faith in Japanese coach Futoshi Ikeda despite the national team's failure to make it to the AFC Women's Asian Cup finals in Australia next year.

After a meeting, the FAT confirmed on July 7 that Ikeda will continue to coach the Chaba Kaew.

Thailand were denied a place in Australia 2026 after they suffered a shock 2-1 defeat at the hands of India at Chiang Mai's 700th Anniversary Stadium on July 5.

The teams went into the deciding game on identical points and goal difference, with both sides requiring victory to advance.

The win 2-1 win helped India end the qualifying tournament with a perfect 12 points in Group B of the qualifiers as former champions Thailand missed out on the finals.

Prior to the shock loss against India, Thailand had won all three of their Group



Futoshi Ikeda. Photo: Supplied

B qualifying games, hammering Mongolia 11-0, beating Timor Leste 4-0 and demolishing Iraq 7-0.

However, despite the disappointment, the annual meeting of the FAT executive board committee agreed to let Japanese tactician Ikeda continue as the coach of the national women's team, the association's president Nualphan Lamsam told media on July 7.

"We have the ASEAN Women's Championship in Vietnam next month and the 33rd SEA Games in Thailand in December, so we think it will be good for the team to stay under Ikeda," Nualphan explained.

Bangkok Post

Queensland upset NSW to snatch State of Origin

RUGBY

QUEENSLAND PRODUCED A rousing performance for skipper Cameron Munster as they upset New South Wales 24-12 in Sydney to claim the State of Origin decider on July 9.

Tom Dearden bagged two tries as the Maroons clinched the best-of-three series in front of 80,256 fans, the 25th time Queensland had lifted the shield after they thwarted the Blues' title defence.

Favourites NSW had controlled much of the opening two games, but were left stunned by the physicality of Queensland who ran rampant to lead 20-0 at the interval.

Queensland were forced to defend in the second-half, but were never seriously threatened as they won for the ninth time out of the last 11 deciders.

It was an emotional triumph after the sudden passing of Munster's father days earlier and the skipper was in tears at the finish and consoled by players from both teams.

It was a disappointing start to the tenure of returning coach Laurie Daley, who was previously at the New South Wales helm from 2013-17.

The series had major momentum shifts with the Blues dominating the first game in Brisbane before the Maroons



Photo: AFP

forced a decider after a thrilling 26-24 victory at the neutral venue of Perth last month.

A fiery contest was expected and bone-crunching tackles marked the tense early exchanges before Valentine Holmes converted a penalty to put Queensland ahead 2-0.

The pumped-up Maroons capitalised on their period of dominance when Xavier Coates dived into the left corner to score before Dearden waltzed under the goal posts unopposed after the Blues' defence was caught napping.

Queensland's brilliant first-half was complete when hooker Harry Grant barrelled past NSW's disjointed defence.

The Maroons remained wary, having faded badly in the previous two games.

Their nerves were heightened when Stephen Crichton finally got the Blues on the board when he crossed over in the 55th minute before Dearden added a second try to clinch the result. AFP

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Sport



Thai spikers hold onto VNL status > p14



Parabellum on the way to capturing the Multihull Racing class. Photo: Scott Murray

Parabellum, Alright and Trident shine at Phuket Regatta

SAILING

Scott Murray

Parabellum, Alright and Trident won their respective classes to take home the hardware in the 2025 Yacht Sales Co Regatta, which took place between July 2-6 at the Phuket Yacht Club in Chalong.

The racing conditions were fabulous throughout, with strong winds and mostly sunny skies for every race set against great scenery, with great parties shoreside every night at the Phuket Yacht Club.

Dan Fidock's Extreme 40 *Parabellum* whizzed through the course all week taking line honours in every race and winning seven out of nine races to capture the Multihull Racing class.

John Newnham's *Twin Sharks* won the other two races and finished four points back in

second spot in the overall standings. George Eddings' *Blue Nose* finished third with Glywn Rowlands' *Twister 2*, the Stealth from Asia Catamarans, in fourth and Neil Ayre's *Ballerina* in fifth.

Ayre's and his son George, plus their other two crew, flew in from Manchester, UK to sail in the event hiring Peter Taylor's *Ballerina* to compete with two other Fireflys (Mark Pescott design, Mark Horwood build) *Twin Sharks* and *Blue Nose*. All three Fireflys were built in Phuket as were *Twister 2* and *Zephyrus* by Asia Catamarans.

Monohull Racing saw Craig Nicholls and James Bury's team on *Alright* won all eight races staged in this class over Nils Degenkolw's *Phoenix*, but the margins were very close in many races. The two teams decided not to race on the final day as the outcome was a foregone conclusion.

Andy McDermott's *Corsair* *Trident* won four of the six races

staged in the Cruising Multihull division to win that class. James Baxter's *Zephyrus* won race five and claimed second overall. David MacInnis' *Vancouver*, a Lagoon 450F, sailed down from Yacht Haven Marina in northern Phuket to compete in the event, and finished third but was able to win the final race.

MARQUEE SAILING

After the racing was done, competitors gathered at the Phuket Yacht Club for a buffet dinner and prize-giving event hosted by Peter Dyer, Commodore of the Phuket Yacht Club. Charles Robinson of the Yacht Sales Co was on hand to officially hand over the trophies.

Since its inception, this regatta has been renowned for having family members compete together and this year was no different. Glywn and Karen Rowlands had their daughter Sian sailing on *Twister 2*. As mentioned, Neil

Ayre and his son George were sailing on *Ballerina*, while Ket Manglaseranee and his daughter Kwang sailed on *Trident*. Kwang, by the way, is an accomplished Muay Thai fighter, winning a series of fights recently at Bangla Stadium in Patong.

The Cholamark Boat company kindly provided their flagship RIB as the photography/safety boat for the regatta. This 11-meter rib is capable of going 50 knots and is featured in the new Hollywood blockbuster *Jurassic World: Rebirth* as the escape boat. Ironically, the film was released in Thailand on the opening day of the regatta, July 2 – quite a coincidence.

A huge shoutout must go to Phuket Yacht Club Commodore Peter Dyer for all the hard work he put into making the event happen. Many Phuket Yacht Club committee members were either overseas, sick or unavailable due to work commitments, but Peter

did an amazing job of making it work for which all regatta participants were very grateful.

And Simon James, aka the Wind Whisperer, did an outstanding job as race officer, sending competitors out on a different set of courses each day. As one competitor said, when it comes to finding wind Simon can "make a silk purse out of a sow's ear".

This regatta is now the marquee sailing event of the summer season. Formerly called the Multihull Solutions Regatta it used to be a three-day event, that only featured multihulls. It acted as a feeder for Phuket Raceweek as competitors from abroad could fit in two regattas in 10 days. Now with its main sponsor being the Yacht Sales Co (associated with Multihull Solutions), it is the key event of the Phuket summer racing season for both monohulls and multihulls, with five full days of racing.

Sansiri Academy introduces 'FIFA For Schools' Program

FOOTBALL

NOW IN ITS 19TH YEAR, Sansiri Academy, a philanthropic initiative by real estate developer Sansiri, continues its commitment to youth empowerment through the game of football.

This year marks a major milestone as the program expands in partnership with various organisations to introduce the globally recognised FIFA For Schools curriculum to children and coaches across three districts in Phuket.

The initiative not only nurtures essential skills and values through sport but also plays a vital role in growing Thailand's "football population" a foundational step in the long-term advancement of the sport nationwide.

The FIFA For Schools program is available to local children, volunteer coaches and trainers. More than just a football training initiative, the program places fun at its heart – encouraging children to enjoy the game while learning key

values such as respect, equality and teamwork. The ultimate aim is to inspire continuous self-development and cultivate a lasting passion for football that extends far beyond the field.

As a special highlight, participating schools and volunteer coaches receive over 200 Adidas footballs during each session – empowering them to continue practicing and nurturing their passion beyond the training transforming everyday spaces into playgrounds for fun, learning and growth.

The first training session was recently held at Thanyapura Sports & Health Resort in Thalang District, while the second session followed at the Prince of Songkla University Phuket Campus football field in Kathu.

Since launching Sansiri Academy Phuket in 2012, Sansiri has committed to creating long-term positive impact within the community. To date, more than 5,000 children have participated in the program – developing not only athletic



Photo: Supplied

skills, but also discipline, unity and social values.

Entirely free of charge, the philanthropic initiative reflects Sansiri's belief in the power of sport to strengthen bonds between children, families, and the broader community.

To register or for more information, please call: 1685

Press Release