

## LANDSLIDE PROBE SEES BIG BUDDHA OPERATOR CHARGED > PAGE 3

# ALL ABOARD



Photo: PR Phuket

## NEW EV SMART BUS LAUNCHED FOR PHUKET TOWN - PATONG

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Phuket Smart Bus (PKSB) has launched a new electric bus service connecting Phuket Town and Patong. The new service costs just B50 per passenger each way.

Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat presided over the opening ceremony at the launch event on Oct 10, joined by Atcha Buachan, Chief of the Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO).

Also present were Waithat Upatising, Executive Director of Phuket City Development Co Ltd (PKCD) and PKCD's Administrative Coordinator Suphakit Thir-arangsikul, along with Phuket Smart Bus General Manager Natthakanya Namphrai.

"Phuket Smart Bus has brought six electric buses into service, which are environmentally friendly and help reduce air pollution," Governor Sophon said.

"This new route is expected to help students travel to school more

conveniently and help alleviate traffic problems in the morning and evening.

"The drivers are well-trained and there are eight exits in total: one exit door, one emergency door, and six emergency exit glass hammers," he added.

Phuket Smart Bus Co Ltd is one of the ventures launched by PKCD, which acts as the umbrella consortium of companies launched and operated by the local families with the focus on improving Phuket.

PKCD, through Phuket Smart Bus, joined with the Sustainable Tourism Development Foundation together to launch a free air-conditioned electric bus service in Phuket Town earlier this year.

Phuket Smart Bus also has long operated the only bus services from the airport and down Phuket's west coast all the way to Rawai.

Speaking at the launch event, Phuket Governor Mr Sophon said the new Phuket Town - Patong service aims to benefit both locals and tourists by offering convenient...

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Late goal sees War Elephants win King's Cup



Lile-it<sup>TM</sup>

PHUKET'S QUALITY TILE BOUTIQUE



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News



Veg Fest sparks  
B15bn tourism  
revenue spurt > p6



Photo: PR Phuket

# New EV buses begin service

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...and eco-friendly transportation, while also easing traffic congestion and reducing pollution.  
The new electric bus (EV) route will run through key areas of Phuket, including Samkong, Kathu and Patong, covering important locations such as schools, hospitals, markets and popular tourist spots like Patong Beach.  
The service will operate daily from 6am to 8pm, with buses running every hour.

- THE ROUTE INCLUDES 16 BUS STOPS:**
- Phuket Bus Terminal 1
  - Sanam Chai
  - Satree Phuket School
  - Phuket Wittayalai School
  - Vachira Phuket Hospital
  - Bangkok Hospital Phuket
  - Chillva Market
  - Lotus Samkong
  - Andamanda Water Park
  - Kathu Fresh Market
  - PTT Kathu
  - Si Kor
  - Kathu Police Station
  - Makro Nanai
  - Malin Plaza
  - Patong Beach

# Unfired firecrackers spur landfill fire fears

The Phuket News  
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Officials from Phuket City Municipality have been tasked with tackling the issue of unspent firecrackers posing a fire danger at the landfill in Saphan Hin in the wake of this year's Phuket Vegetarian Festival.

Large quantities of 'firecracker waste' were cleaned up after the series of street processions and at the participating shrines each day during the festival, Phuket City Deputy Mayor Suphot La-onghphet explained.

When strips of firecrackers were set alight, not all of the firecrackers detonated, and the strips, believed fully spent, were discarded.

The unspent firecrackers still had unused gunpowder in them, thus posing the fire risk once the waste was dumped at the landfill, he added.

Mr Suphot visited the landfill to discuss with officials from the Waste Disposal Group at Phuket City Municipality's Engineering Division on how to dispose



Photo: Phuket City Municipality

of the large amount of firecracker waste.

The problem is how to prevent the leftover gunpowder from being ignited and starting a fire at the landfill, especially once the rains have gone and the weather turns hot, Mr Suphot said.

Officials have been ordered to monitor the landfill closely to prevent any incidents, he noted, but other than keeping watch, very little could be done.

Mr Suphot also noted that the solid waste disposal facility at Saphan Hin was struggling to keep up with the high volume of trash, processing about 1,100 tons of waste daily, while its incinerators can only handle 700 tons.

The situation is worsened by the ageing incinerator, which has led to an accumulation of over 10,000 tons of waste, he said.

With the tourist season approaching, waste levels are expected to rise to 1,500 tons per day, creating further pressure on the city's waste management system, Mr Suphot said.

## FINALE

An estimated 1 million firecrackers were set alight during the final night of festivities for this year's annual Phuket Vegetarian Festival in Phuket Town last Friday night (Oct 11).

Tens of thousands of people, including local residents and international tourists, turned out for the

final night of fireworks and rituals.

The nine-day festival, which began on Oct 3, concluded with spectacular street processions through the heart of Phuket Town by devotees from the 39 shrines that took part in this year's festival.

Along the procession route, the streets of Phuket Town were ablaze with the sound and colour of firecrackers filling the air with smoke and the roar of continuous explosions.

The processions made their way to Saphan Hin, where the deities Yok Hong Song Tao and Kiew Hong Tai Te were symbolically sent back to heaven with a ritual "burning of the blessings" and a bonfire.

As is tradition, the final act in closing the annual festival was held at sunset the day after the Saphan Hin rituals, with devotees lowering Go Teng poles at all participating shrines last Saturday (Oct 12) to mark the end of this year's festival.

The dates for next year's Phuket Vegetarian Festival have already been announced as from Oct 21-29, 2025.

# Phuket residents killed by flash flood in Nakhon Sri Thammarat

TWO PHUKET RESIDENTS ON holiday were swept away by a flash flood while visiting a waterfall in Nakhon Sri Thammarat last Friday afternoon (Oct 11).  
A group of nine tourists from Phuket were at a camping resort near the Wang Lung Waterfall in Phrom Khiri District when heavy rainfall in the nearby mountain range triggered a sudden flash flood.

Despite warnings from the business owner about the rising water levels, the tourists continued to stay at the waterfall.  
When the water changed colour, a second warning was issued, but three of the tourists were soon caught by the fast-moving floodwaters.  
Locals were able to rescue one of them, Ms Orrawan Kunok, 42, who was rushed to Phrom Khiri Hospital.  
However, the other two tourists, Wilawan Boonnum, 48, and Upatham Tha-ue, 43, both residents of Phuket,



Photo: Phrom Khiri Police

were swept away. Their bodies were found later that evening at around 6pm.  
Ms Wilawan and Mr Upatham were the only two people to die in flooding in Nakhon Sri Thammarat last Friday.  
In Betong district of Yala, Koder Luebaji, 66, was swept away on Friday evening when his house, located on a canal bank, collapsed during heavy rain. His body was later recovered. Six of his family members managed to escape and seek shelter with relatives, reported the Bangkok Post. *Eakkapop Thongtub*

# Marine Police seize four illegal jet-skis, arrest two operators

MARINE POLICE HAVE seized four illegal jet-skis and arrested two operators who were preparing to offer services to tourists without the proper licences.

The arrests were made during routine patrols at a pier in Koh Kaew, as part of an ongoing crackdown on illegal activities in the region.

The operation, led by Pol Lt Col Jirayut Niyomdet, Superintendent of Marine Police Sub-Division 3, and coordinated by officers from the Central Investigation Bureau (CIB), resulted in the arrest of 'Mr Chetchai' and 'Mr Narinthorn', both of whom were found operating jet-skis without valid licences.



Photo: Phuket Marine Police

The officers made the arrests after noticing the suspects acting suspiciously while waiting for tourists to board their jet-skis.  
Mr Chetchai was found with two green-and-white jet skis, while Mr Narinthorn was found with a yellow-black jet-ski and a green-white jet-ski at the same location.  
Both suspects failed to produce registration documents for the jet-skis,

leading to both of them being charged with "using a boat without a licence" under the Thai Navigation Act.  
During questioning, both suspects admitted that the jet-skis had not been properly licensed, but they intended to use them to provide tourist services.  
Both men were taken to Phuket City Police Station to face further legal action.  
*Eakkapop Thongtub*



# Parents face charges for beating infant girl

**Eakkapop Thongtub**  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The parents of a 2-year-old girl are facing child abuse charges after the infant suffered a beating that left her unconscious with a fractured skull. The parents have also tested positive for drug use.

The alarm was raised by a neighbour who called an ambulance to the girl's home, a street next to Surakul Stadium.

The child now remains in hospital care.

The neighbour told reporters that the child was beaten often, every time she cried, urinated or otherwise upset her parents.

The neighbours could hear the attacks, and had previously warned the father to stop, but the most recent incident was too much for them to bear.

On Monday (Oct 14) officers from Wichit Police Station questioned and conducted drug tests on the mother and father of the child. The tests confirmed that both parents had used drugs.

Wichit Police Chief Pol Col Chatree Chueakaew told reporters that the parents will initially face charges for drug use. The police have also contacted the Phuket Provincial Social



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

Development and Human Security Office to file a complaint.

After that, police will proceed with charges related to child abuse. However, they are waiting for the results of the medical report confirming the child's injuries before pressing further charges, Col Chatree said.

While the parents are being held for drug-related offences, their youngest child will be cared for by the grandmother, and the older child will also be placed in her care.

Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee, who was involved in the response to the incident by officials, noted, "Our society is facing serious family issues, worsened by economic hardships, which sometimes lead to parents taking out their frustrations on their children.

"Phuket is dealing with several similar cases, such as one in Rawai that remains unresolved. Now, in Wichit, another case of child abuse has emerged," he added.

Mr Chalermpong emphasised the need to focus on family problems, as children are the future strength of the nation. He further stressed that drug abuse is a serious national issue, affecting families and putting children at risk.

"Urgent action is being taken to combat drug use. Anyone with information should report it. All reports will be kept confidential and shared only with relevant agencies, including the ONCB (Office of the Narcotics Control Board) and the Phuket Provincial Police Commander," Mr Chalermpong noted.

## Man gunned down in Kathu street shooting

A MAN FLEEING HIS attacker was shot and killed in a small street near Kathu Police Station last Sunday (Oct 13).

Police were called to the scene, in Moo 6, Kathu, at about midday.

The victim, identified as 38-year-old Suwit 'Lek' Nokket, was shot twice before attempting to flee across the road to the police station.

Mr Suwit was taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital by rescue officers from the Kusoldharm Foundation but was pronounced dead upon arrival.

According to initial reports, the shooter fled towards Kathu Waterfall in a white five-door sedan with Phuket licence plates KorTor 7490.

The police pursued the vehicle, which sustained damage to its rear left wheel near Phanason housing estate.

During the chase, a passenger in the front seat, armed with a gun, jumped out of the vehicle. Police quickly arrested the suspect, identified as Thitiphong Thongyung, 32, while the driver managed to escape.



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

The investigation revealed that Thitiphong used a 9mm CZ semi-automatic weapon in the shooting.

Further inspections led to the discovery of the suspect's vehicle abandoned at Kathu New Fresh Market, where forensic teams were called in to collect evidence.

Pol Col Rungrit Ratanaphakdi, Superintendent of Kathu Police Station, explained that the altercation appeared to be a personal dispute between the two men.

They had reportedly met at an Isan restaurant to resolve personal issues, but the discussion escalated, resulting in the fatal shooting. Police have ruled out any connection to drug activity in the case.

Police are continuing to search for the driver who fled the scene.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Karon Police confirm encroachment charges against Big Buddha operator

THE PHRA PHUTTHA MING Mongkol Sattha Foundation 45, which operates the tourist-popular Big Buddha viewpoint, has been charged with illegally clearing and damaging forest land without permission, Karon Police have confirmed.

The case follows the deadly landslide on Aug 23 that killed 13 people, injured 19 others and destroyed or damaged more than 50 homes.

Heavy rain caused rocks and mud to cascade down from the Nakkerd hills, resulting in fatalities and extensive damage as homes and properties were buried by mud along Soi Patak 2, Karon Police noted in a statement issued on Oct 9.

An investigation by the Phuket Provincial Forestry Department and related agencies revealed that the landslide occurred at the site of the Big Buddha statue, constructed by the Phra Phuttha Ming Mongkol Sattha Foundation 45, Karon Police said in the statement.

Authorities linked the deforestation of protected forest land at the site to the deadly landslide, the notice confirmed.

Sorasak Rananan, Director of the Phuket Forestry Center, filed a formal complaint at Karon Police Station on Aug 27, accusing the

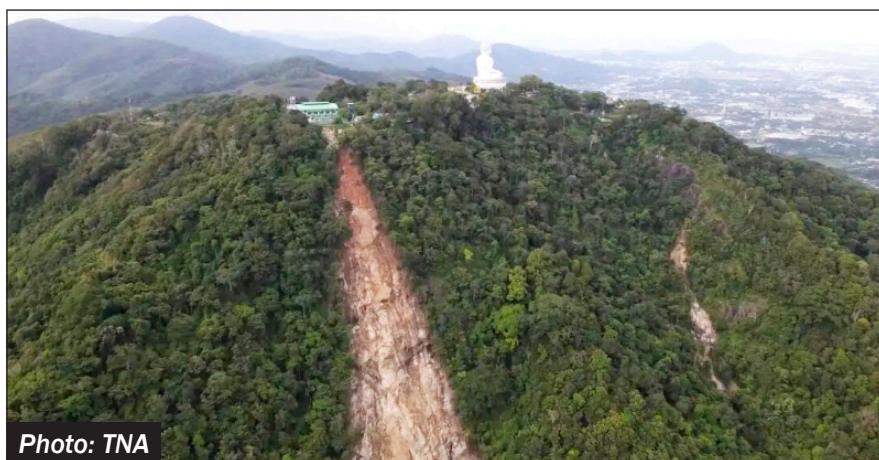


Photo: TNA

foundation of violating the Forestry Act of 1941, the notice said.

The charge follows the Royal Forest Department investigating a complaint filed by local residents in Karon, who blamed illegal construction at the tourist-popular Big Buddha viewpoint for the deadly landslide.

In conducting their investigation, RFD officers seized more than five rai of land at the Big Buddha viewpoint deemed to have been illegally expanded on by the foundation.

"Karon Police launched an extensive investigation, with close supervision from senior officials, including Pol Lt Col Surapong Thanomchit, Commander of Provincial Police Region 8, and Pol Maj Gen

Sinlert Sukhom, Commander of Phuket Provincial Police," said the statement by Karon Police.

"After gathering sufficient evidence, Karon police indicted Suporn Wanichkul, both in his personal capacity and as the president of the Phra Phuttha Ming Mongkol Sattha Foundation 45. The charges include 'jointly constructing, clearing, burning forests or doing anything that destroys forests or occupying forests for oneself or others without permission'," Karon Police explained.

"The case file, along with the suspects, has now been sent to the Phuket Provincial Prosecutor's Office for further legal proceedings," Karon Police assured.

The Phuket News



Image: Supplied

## Mass fish deaths at Patong Beach

BEACHGOERS IN PATONG received a disturbing surprise last Friday morning (Oct 11) when they found thousands of dead fish washed ashore.

The sight raised concerns among local residents, tourists and local authorities, who are now urgently searching for the cause of the sudden marine die-off.

Various species of fish were scattered along the beach, brought in by strong winds and waves.

Local residents were seen collecting the fish, with many taking them home to cook.

According to some villagers, they have been

frying or boiling the fish as part of their daily meals, with some incorporating them into dishes like sour curry.

Fishermen in the area had attempted to scoop up as many fish as possible, but due to the sheer numbers, not all could be retrieved. Larger fish were collected and shared with local residents.

Officials are now working to determine the cause of the mass fish deaths, while urging caution to the public when consuming the fish.

Eakkapop Thongtub



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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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FRI OCTOBER 18

High: +36°  
Low: +29°

Wind 11 m/s

SAT OCTOBER 19

High: +36°  
Low: +28°

Wind 11 m/s

SUN OCTOBER 20

High: +35°  
Low: +28°

Wind 11 m/s

MON OCTOBER 21

High: +35°  
Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

TUE OCTOBER 22

High: +35°  
Low: +28°

Wind 4 m/s

WED OCTOBER 23

High: +37°  
Low: +28°

Wind 4 m/s

THU OCTOBER 24

High: +36°  
Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s



Photo: Chalong Police

## Teens arrested after brutal attack at Nai Harn

TWO TEENAGERS HAVE been arrested following a violent attack involving a gun, a sword and a pipe left three men injured near Nai Harn Beach early last Friday morning (Oct 11).

Chalong Police were informed of the incident at 12:10am.

Police arrived at the scene, near the Nai Harn beachfront, to find three men injured: Sonchai Unok, 25, who had been shot in the arm; Mitchai Unok, 47, who suffered a knife wound to the back of his head; and Sathan Chamnan, 56, who had been struck with a pipe, causing a head injury.

Witnesses reported that a group of teenagers launched a sudden attack on the victims, who tried to flee.

However, the attackers, armed with various weapons, pursued them and inflicted serious injuries before fleeing.

Police were able to intercept and arrest two of the suspects, one a 17-year-old and the other an 18-year-old.

The 17-year-old has been charged with "possessing ammunition without permission", while the 18-year-old faces a charge of "jointly attempting to kill others".

Both suspects were taken into police custody and were to be brought before the court for further legal proceedings, police confirmed.

At last report police had yet to give any motive for the attack.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Woman fights off bedroom intruder

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A woman has reported to the police that a man broke into her room, attempted to sexually assault her and then robbed her. She screamed for help, but the man punched her in the eye and fled.

The woman, 34 years old, reported the attack to Phuket City Police on Oct 7. The report was received by Pol Capt Khantong Khaowalit, an investigator at Phuket City Police.

The woman explained that while she was asleep in her bedroom on the third floor of where she lived, in Moo 3, Ratsada, a man in his 40s, wearing a black sleeveless shirt and shorts, appeared at the foot of her bed.

When she woke up and saw him, the man jumped on the bed and attempted to molest her, the woman reported.

She screamed for help from her aunt, who was in the room across the hall. The man, angry, punched her in the face and eyes several times. He then fled the scene.

The woman sustained a cut above and below her left eye from the punches.



Image: Supplied

After checking the CCTV footage, the woman saw that the man had arrived at the house on a blue Honda Wave motorbike, but the CCTV was unable to reveal an identifiable licence plate.

The CCTV showed the man entering the building just before the attack.

Police said they were working to track down the suspect.

The woman explained to reporters on Oct 8 that she was called to work at 5:40am.

When she returned home at around 8am, she left the door below open, assuming it would be fine since she was just upstairs.

At around 10am, a LINE message on her phone woke her, and she noticed the man standing at the foot of her bed. He jumped onto the

bed and tried to assault her, but she screamed for her aunt. In response, the man hit her repeatedly, but she fought back and kicked him. He then left the room and fled.

The woman said that she vaguely recognised the man, possibly as a customer from the shop where she worked.

While some of her money and gold jewellery were stolen, her main concern is understanding why he targeted her.

The woman speculated that the man might have followed her from her workplace, which is about five kilometres from her house.

Police have reassured her that they are investigating the case, noting that this is a serious crime, the woman said.

## Hotel maid caught stealing cash from tourists' rooms

A HOTEL MAID HAS BEEN arrested for stealing US\$1,800 (more than B\$9,000) in cash from three tourists at a hotel in Patong.

The thefts occurred in three separate incidents where money was taken from safes in the tourists' rooms.

Patong Police launched an investigation after the tourists reported the missing funds. Officers gathered information from the hotel, including records of room access and safe usage, and questioned hotel staff, including the cleaning crew.

One maid aroused suspicion but initially denied any involvement.



Photo: Patong Police

Further questioning at Patong Police Station led the maid to confess to stealing the money.

The cleaner then guided police to recover the stolen cash from all three hotel safes, which had been hidden in a room at a residence in Kathu.

The maid has since written a full confession. Police have confiscated the stolen funds and are proceeding with legal action against the suspect.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Body of foreign man found in water south of Patong

POLICE ARE TRYING TO identify the body of a foreign man found in the water south of Patong Beach early on Oct 10.

Police were called to the scene, in front of a hotel on Muen Ngern Rd, on the headland immediately south of Patong, at 9:10am.

A team of police officers and personnel from the Kusoldharm Foundation arrived to find the body of the man, wearing only shorts, floating face down in the water.

Rescue workers recovered the body and transported it to Patong Hospital, where a post-mortem examination will be conducted to confirm the cause of death.

Initial reports suggest that hotel staff were first alerted to the body



Photo: Patong Police

after a guest spotted it floating near the shore and reported it.

At last report police were working to determine the man's identity and whether there have been any missing person reports in the area and to investigate the circumstances of the man's death.

Eakkapop Thongtub



# Phuket remembers King Bhumibol

The Phuket News

editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat led local government officials, military personnel, police and residents in a religious merit-making ceremony last Sunday (Oct 13) to honour the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej on Nawamintharathirat Day, which marks the anniversary of the King's passing.

Nawamintharathirat Day was officially named by royal decree and designated by the Cabinet on Sept 26, 2023, to be observed annually on Oct 13 to commemorate the profound impact of King Bhumibol's reign on the nation. The day serves as a reminder of his deep compassion and dedication to improving the lives of the Thai people.

Born on Dec 5, 1927 at Mount Auburn Hospital in Cambridge, Massachusetts, King Bhumibol The Great passed away on Oct 13, 2016. He was 88 years old, and had reigned as King of Thailand for 70 years.

The event in Phuket last Sunday was held at Phuket Provincial Hall and was



Photo: PR Phuket

presided over by the head monk of Phuket, Phra Udom Wachiramongkol, and included offerings to 49 monks.

The merit-making ceremony began at 7:30am, with offerings of dry food and rice presented to the monks as a tribute to King Bhumibol's enduring legacy and his contributions to the Thai people.

Following the merit-making, a wreath-laying ceremony took place at 8:30am at the Mahisorn Phakdi Auditorium at the Phuket Government Administration Center.

At the wreath-laying ceremony, Governor Suwannarat was joined by his wife, Ms Busadee, who is also the President of the Phuket Red

Cross Society.

Also present for the ceremony were Phuket Vice Governor Adul Chuthong and other high-ranking officials. Representatives from government agencies, the military, police, judiciary and volunteers, along with residents from various sectors, also attended.

The group gathered to

lay wreaths and pay respects in front of a portrait of King Bhumibol, expressing their gratitude for his life's work and service to the Thai people.

During the ceremony, participants observed a 90-second moment of silence to reflect on the King's legacy.

Over his more than 70-year reign, King Bhumibol worked tirelessly to improve the lives of the people, initiating 4,741 royal projects across Thailand.

His work, guided by wisdom and compassion, brought countless benefits to the nation. The King also introduced the philosophy of a sufficiency economy, a principle that has helped not only the Thai people but also people in other countries to live balanced, sustainable lives.

## BIG CLEAN

Governor Sophon last Sunday also led a volunteer activity at Cherng Talay Wittayakhom School dedicated to the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej on the anniversary of his passing.

Attendees included Vice Governor Adul Chuthong, Thalang District Chief Pairoj Srilamul, heads of local government agencies and over 900 volunteers, including royal volunteers and Phuket residents.

Governor Sophon delivered a speech expressing gratitude to His Majesty for his contributions and acknowledged the royal volunteer initiative 'We Do Good Deeds with Our Hearts', which fosters public unity and community service.

Following the assembly event, held at 2pm, the volunteers deployed to clean both sides of Baan Don-Cherng Talay Road and the Pasak-Khoktanode Road, dedicating the cleanup as making merit to the late monarch.

The cleanup aimed to beautify public areas and honour the late King's legacy of kindness and service to the Thai people. Volunteers followed His Majesty's example by contributing to the nation, religion, and monarchy, as encouraged by His Majesty's guidance, said an official report of the event.

## Reservoirs hit capacity

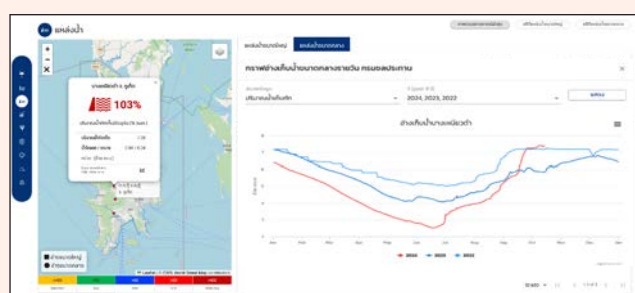
THE WATER LEVEL AT Phuket's Bang Neow Dum reservoir in Srisoonthorn has reached 103% of capacity, while the water levels at the island's two other main reservoirs – Bang Wad in Kathu and Klong Kta in Chalong – are also nearly full.

Bang Neow Dum reservoir currently contains 7.38 million cubic metres of water, of which 7.35mn is usable volume, reports the Office of the National Water Resources (ONWR).

The reservoir's official capacity is 7.2mn cubic metres.

According to the ONWR, Bang Wad reservoir in Kathu is 97% full, with 9.86mn cubic metres of water, of which 9.59mn is usable volume. Bang Wad's official capacity is 10.2mn cubic metres.

Meanwhile, Klong Kata reservoir in Chalong is 95% full, with 4.1mn cubic metres of water, of which 3.94mn is usable volume.



The water level at Bang Neow Dum reservoir in Srisoonthorn. Image: ONWR

The ONWR does not list a capacity volume for Klong Kata, though most recent reports have yet to be updated from its last recognised capacity of 3.49mn cubic metres.

Krirksak Leenanon, Director of the Phuket branch of the Royal Irrigation Department, last month warned the reservoirs would be full by the beginning of October.

Following heavy downpours across the country, before the current spate of floods in the North, officials nationwide were ordered on Sept 19 to monitor water levels at all reservoirs at risk of overflowing, and to take

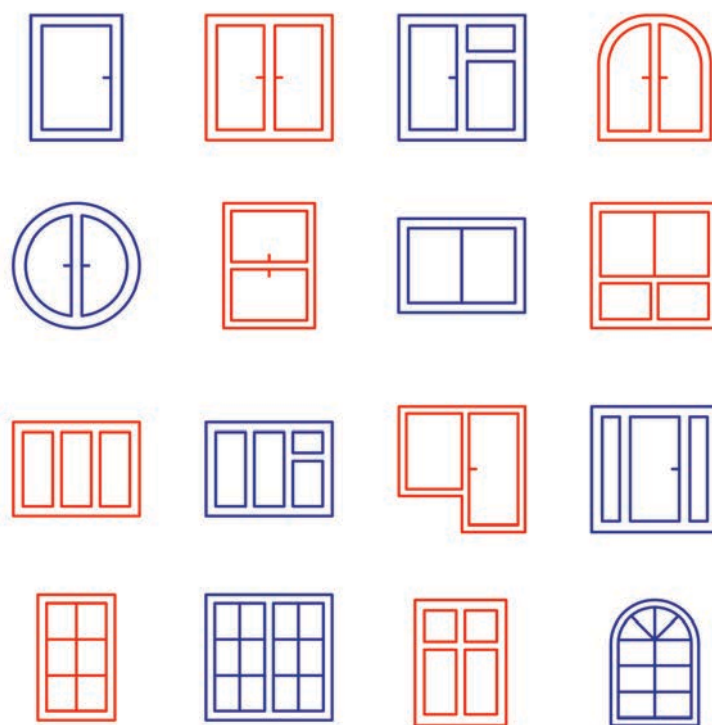
any immediate action to prevent further calamity.

Mr Krirksak last month assured that when the time comes officials will start releasing water through the reservoirs' spillways to make sure they do not overflow. However, he has yet confirm whether officials were already doing that. "This will not affect people in downstream areas," Mr Krirksak also assured.

According to the TMD, Phuket has already recorded 2,057mm of rainfall this year. Last month, with sporadic flash floods across the island, 664mm of rainfall fell on Phuket in September alone. *The Phuket News*



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Photo: PR Phuket

## Veg Fest touted to bring B15bn boost to Phuket

PHUKET EXPERIENCED a surge in tourism during the 2024 Vegetarian Festival, held from Oct 3-11, with over 400,000 visitors flocking to the province, reports Lertsak Wangtrakuldee, Director of the Phuket office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT).

The influx of tourists generated B15 billion in revenue, boosting the local economy, Mr Lertsak said.

About 100,000 of the visitors were Thai, while 300,000 were foreign tourists, led by Chinese nationals, followed by Malaysians and Singa-

poreans, Mr Lertsak noted.

The high occupancy rates at local hotels, ranging from 80-90% across Phuket's 2,069 hotels and 111,427 rooms, contributed to the vibrant tourism scene during the festival, he added.

Looking ahead, Mr Lertsak noted that early 2025 is already seeing strong accommodation bookings from European and Russian tourists, marking a promising high season.

Phuket's tourism sector is on track to meet its 2024 target, expecting over 13 million visitors by year's end, he said.

*The Phuket News*

# Tourism operators fret over climate change

Bangkok Post

Phuket tourism operators are worried about the impact of climate change, resulting in severe weather and flooding in Thailand as well as tourist source markets.

Thaneth Tantipiriyakij, president of the Phuket Tourist Association, said flooding in Phuket is now an annual event in the same areas, ravaging Kata, Karon and Kamala this year.

He said a few months ago, landslides from severe rainfall occurred in Kata and Karon, leading to the deaths of foreigners. Last week, water submerged portions of roads in the Kamala area.

Even though such incidents might not significantly affect tourists' decisions to travel to Phuket, they cause inconvenience and traffic jams, said Mr Thaneth.

"I still haven't seen any attempt by the central government to redevelop Phuket's water management



Motorists attempt to drive through flooded streets in Phuket. Photo: Bangkok Post

or urban infrastructure," he said.

This year Phuket projects B500 billion in tourism revenue, exceeding the pre-pandemic period, but infrastructure maintenance has been unable to keep pace with growing tourist arrivals, said Mr Thaneth.

Virintra Papakityotsaphat, president of the Tourism Council of Phuket, said natural disasters stemming from climate change are a crucial risk for the tourism industry.

She said because natural disasters and severe weather are unavoidable, the government should focus on

regulation and preparing infrastructure to cope with these events.

This includes strict regulation of illegal construction in prohibited areas that block floodways or water retention areas.

Last month Hurricane Helene struck, while Hurricane Milton slammed Florida this week, leaving over a million people without power, while airlines cancelled flights.

Mrs Virintra said these incidents could discourage tourists from travelling abroad, particularly during the peak season for long-haul travel to Thailand.

However, it should not significantly impact Phuket tourism, as the island has other markets such as Russia, Europe, India and China, she said.

Siripakorn Cheawsamoot, deputy governor for marketing in Europe, the Americas, the Middle East and Africa at the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), said there are no reports of US tourists left stranded in Thailand because of flight cancellations.

However, some tourists who already booked their trips but cannot travel might delay their plans until after the situation eases, he said.

Recent natural disasters should only affect the US market in the short term, said Mr Siripakorn. The TAT is still confident of at least 1mn US visitors this year, he said.

The agency said it is intensifying its focus on promoting Thailand as a preferred destination for eco-friendly and low-carbon tourism.

## More property stimulus could be on the way

THE STIMULUS COMMITTEE IS scheduled to meet later this month to discuss more measures, including those for the real estate sector, says Deputy Finance Minister Paopoom Rojanasakul.

Mr Paopoom said the real estate stimulus measures would target both demand and supply, aiming to prod both property buyers and developers to create a comprehensive impact.

He said new stimulus measures were needed because the existing ones were fully utilised.

The Finance Ministry recently utilised state financial institutions, such as Government Housing (GH) Bank, to support real estate stimulus.

In April, GH Bank launched a low-interest loan programme called "Happy Home" with a total loan amount of B20 billion.

The scheme offered flexible lending conditions to help low-income individuals access mortgages, with a maximum loan amount of B3 million per person and a fixed interest rate of 3% for the first five years.

However, this programme reached its loan limit.

In a separate development, Mr Paopoom said the B10,000 cash handout to 14.5 million vulnerable people has generated rapid circulation of money in the economy.



GH Bank's booth at Money Expo 2024. The Finance Ministry used the bank to support previous real estate stimulus measures. Photo: Bangkok Post

He said this group tends to spend money quickly, as evidenced by a tenfold surge in ATM withdrawals following the cash transfers and a significant increase in store sales. This suggests a sustained positive effect, said Mr Paopoom.

For the second phase of the cash handout, he said the stimulus committee will meet again later this month to decide on the amount, method and timing of the distribution.

Pornchai Thiraveja, director-general of the Fiscal Policy Office, said the first phase of the handout had a budget of B145bn and is expected to raise economic growth by 0.35 percentage points. Most of the funds are expected to enter the economy in the fourth quarter.

Mr Pornchai said it is difficult to estimate how many times this money will circulate in the economy.

*Bangkok Post*

## Confidence in tourism sector takes a hit

THE TOURISM CONFIDENCE INDEX in the third quarter plunged year-on-year and remained below the benchmark, hampered by sluggish spending from factory closures, unemployment, rising non-performing loans and severe flooding in both Thailand and abroad, according to the Tourism Council of Thailand (TCT).

The TCT is meeting with the board chairman of the Tourism Authority of Thailand to discuss increasing subsidies for the next phase of the proposed co-payment travel scheme from 40% in previous phases to 50%, with a focus on second-tier provinces, said TCT President Chamnan Srisawat.

He said a minimum budget of B5 billion should help generate at least 5mn room bookings and encourage local travellers to book three to four room nights on average during the scheme.

If possible, the government should not wait until the next low season to implement this scheme, as about 30 provinces were heavily affected by floods, said Mr Chamnan.

According to the TCT, the tourism confidence index for the third quarter was only 68, lower than the benchmark of 100 recorded before the pandemic.

The index fell from 79 in the second quarter and 69 in the corresponding period last year.

The future tourism index for the fourth quarter was 80, up slightly from 77 year-on-year, attributed to the high season.

The reading was derived from a survey of 740 local operators between Aug 10 and Sept 15, according to the TCT.



Tourists relax on a hop-on, hop-off boat cruising along the Chao Phraya River, as air pollution from dust particles returned to Bangkok. Photo: Pattarapong Chatpattarasill / Bangkok Post

Mr Chamnan said the sluggish economy played a critical role in the index declining for the third quarter, mainly attributed to six months of easing inflation. The situation was worsened by severe flooding in many provinces last month, he said.

Mr Chamnan said the ongoing wars in the Middle East and Ukraine, as well as a strong baht, were critical factors to watch in the next few months.

The B10,000 handout for vulnerable groups should help to lift the economy, but only for a short period, he said.

Other than in Bangkok, the southern and eastern portions of the country, the third-quarter index declined year-on-year.

On average, tourism operators reported their revenue was at 47% of 2019 levels, while 82% were still recording lower revenue than during the pre-pandemic period, far worse than 54% in the corresponding period of 2023, according to the TCT.

The employment rate in the tourism industry was registered at 84% of the 2019.

*Bangkok Post*



# Tak Bai ruling crucial for government, warns expert

## BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

The popularity of the government and Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra would be eroded if all those accused in the Tak Bai massacre case were allowed to walk free, a prominent law lecturer has warned.

Prinya Thaewanarumitkul, director of the Law Centre at Thammasat University, said on Monday (Oct 14) the government's failure to bring to justice people accused of responsibility for the 85 deaths during the dispersal of the Tak Bai protest rally 20 years ago could deal a major blow to the prime minister, her administration and the Pheu Thai Party.

"Pheu Thai is promoting its work. The popularity of Ms Paetongtarn is improving," said Mr Prinya, who was a protest leader at the Black May rally in 1992.

"If the case is not handled in a straightforward manner, it will affect [the prime minister]. What the public is watching is the stance of the government and Pheu Thai on this matter," he added.

The former student leader said Ms Paetongtarn had full authority to direct police to arrest those accused under arrest warrants. Under the law, the prime minister directly supervised the



Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra. Photo: Bangkok Post

police force.

The 20-year statute of limitations in the Tak Bai case expires on Oct 25 this year. A total of 14 people have been named and accused of responsibility for the massacre.

Eighty-five demonstrators were killed, either at the rally scene outside Tak Bai police station in Narathiwat on Oct 25, 2004, or while being taken to the army's Ingkhayutthaboriharn fortress in Nong Chik district of Pattani. Seventy-eight people suffocated during the journey after being stacked like logs on the back of army trucks.

Families of the victims and of the many people who were injured sued the authorities responsible. In August this year, the Narathiwat Provincial Court finally accepted the case for trial.

The Tak Bai lawsuit is divided into

two groups of accused. The first involves seven authorities involved in issuing and executing the order leading to the deaths of the protesters. The second is people involved in the deaths during transport to the army camp for interrogation.

Gen Pisal Wattanawongkiri, then Army Region 4 commander and who is now a Pheu Thai list MP, was one of the key men involved in the incident. He recently filed a leave of absence from the House until Oct 30, five days after the limitations expire.

Deputy Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai and other Pheu Thai key members have said they do not know where Gen Pisal is. He reportedly went overseas for medical treatment.

At time of press, the Pheu Thai Party board was set to vote on Tuesday (Oct 15) on whether to expel Gen Pisal.

## Thailand elected to UN Human Rights Council

### BANGKOK

THAILAND HAS SUCCEEDED in its bid for a seat on the United Nations Human Rights Council, for a three-year term starting on Jan 1, 2025, despite the protests of critics who have pointed to deficiencies in the country's human rights record.

In balloting that took place at the UN General Assembly in New York on Oct 9, there were 19 candidates for 18 vacancies on the 47-member body.

Seats are allotted according to regional groupings and most countries ran unopposed. The exceptions were what the UN calls the "Asia-Pacific" – Thailand, Cyprus, Marshall Islands, Qatar, South Korea and Saudi Arabia – where six countries competed for five seats.

Thailand topped the table with 177 votes from UN country members. Saudi Arabia, long condemned by activists who say it is among the worst rights offenders in the world, finished last with 117



UN HQ in New York. Photo: AFP

votes and was eliminated.

Switzerland, South Korea and Ethiopia are among other new members of the Geneva-based rights body.

The Human Rights Council has a long history of including members with chequered records on the very issue it is supposed to help oversee. China and Cuba were re-elected for additional three-year terms last year, while Venezuela and Russia recently sat on the council.

Activists in Thailand had been campaigning against the country's selection. They pointed to the widespread use of the lese-majeste law to silence political dissent, as well as the country's poor record for deporting political refugees, mainly to regional countries with poorer human rights records than Thailand's. *Bangkok Post*

## Cannabis controls to be tightened

### BANGKOK

THE PUBLIC HEALTH MINISTRY will issue a new ministerial regulation to tighten control of the production, import, export, sale and possession of cannabis and hemp extracts.

Pol Lt Gen Phanurat Lukboon, secretary-general of the Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB), said on Oct 9 that the Cabinet has approved in principle the draft of a ministerial regulation on the permission for the import, export, sale and possession of cannabis and hemp extracts, which are categorised as Type 5 narcotics.

The draft, proposed by the Public Health Ministry, will be submitted to the Council of State, the government's legal arm, for scrutiny, Pol Lt Gen Phanurat said, adding the draft regulation will be issued under the Narcotics Code.

The regulation will lay down the criteria for applying for, granting and renewing licences and licence fees for the production, import, export, sale and possession of cannabis and hemp extracts for medical, commercial, industrial purposes, scientific research, as well as for anti-drug operations, he said.

When it takes effect, those who are not granted the licence to engage in those activities will be liable to a jail term of up to five years and/or a fine of up to B500,000.

In particular, if they use the extracts



Photo: Bangkok Post

for commercial purposes without a licence, which lead to their widespread use, or sell them to young people under the age of 18, they will face a harsher punishment – a jail term of up to 15 years and/or a fine of up to B1.5 million, Pol Lt Gen Phanurat said.

The ONCB secretary-general met British Ambassador Mark Gooding on Oct 7 to discuss measures to tackle the smuggling of cannabis from Thailand to the UK.

Representatives of the Royal Thai Police, the Customs Department, and Airports of Thailand (AoT) also attended.

The British envoy said more than 200 smugglers from Thailand have been arrested in the UK so far this year.

Justice Minister Pol Col Tawee Sodsong has instructed the ONCB to work with the UK's National Crime Agency to share information and jointly hold a programme to train AoT personnel in drug analysis. *Bangkok Post*



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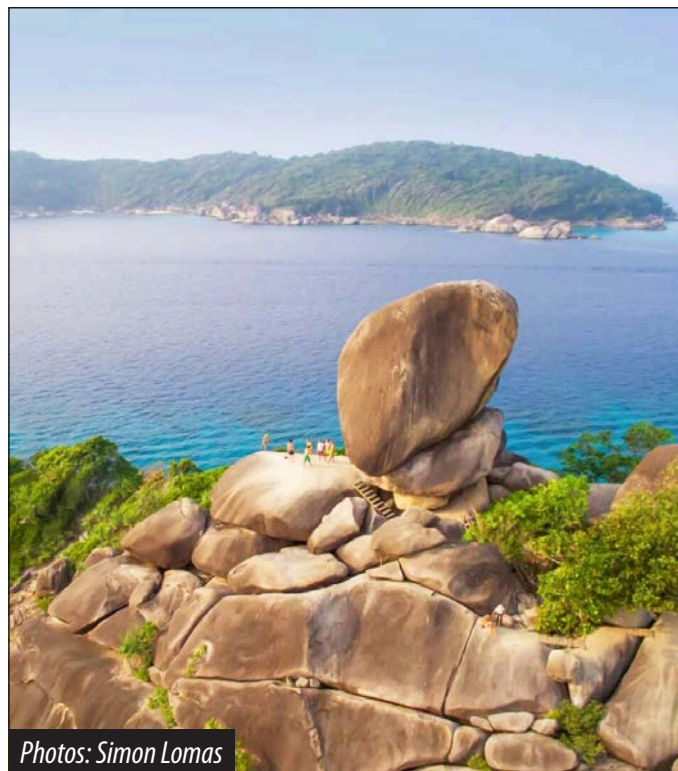
26 October

Time: 13.00-16.00 hrs

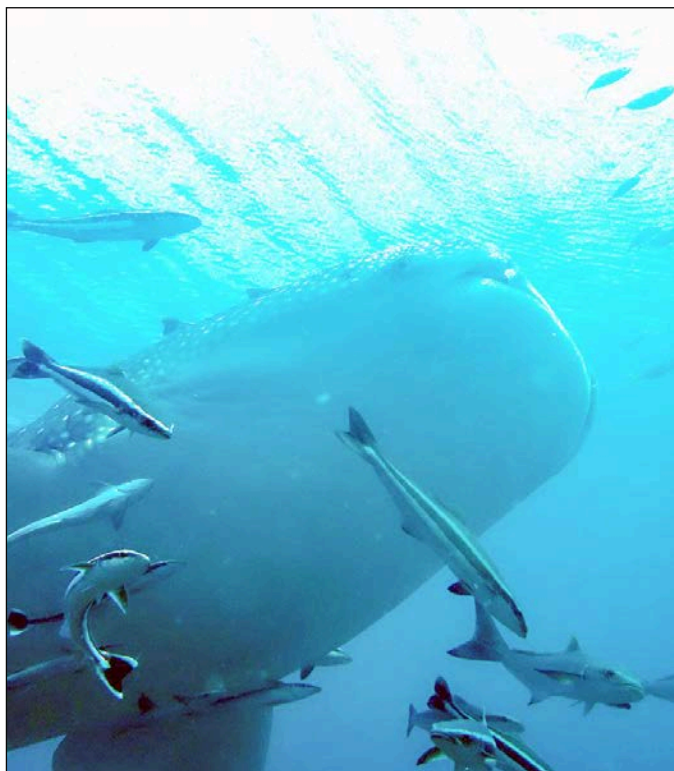
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Photos: Simon Lomas



# Natural beauty? Park it and see...

Simon Lomas

Here in Phuket we have so many beautiful natural sights on our doorstep and a bit further afield. This month I will be taking a break from Phuket itself as one of the best known national parks reopens for the high season.

There are many national parks within easy reach of Phuket. Some are open all year and others close for six

months to give nature a break from the tourists. The most well known is the Similan and Surin islands. These lie off the west coast of Thailand to north west of Phuket. To get there is about a 90-minute drive to the pier and then a further hour and a half by speedboat.

The Similan Islands are a chain of nine islands, some small and others a bit larger, but these days all uninhabited except for the ranger station. A few years ago there was the possibility to stay on one of the islands in tents but that is no longer possible.

The islands offer great snorkelling and scuba diving excursions, but be warned the strict policy for preserving the islands does limit the number of people allowed in each day, so it is a good idea to book the trip a couple of days in advance just to be sure you can go on the day you want to.

The islands offer some of the best diving and snorkelling you will find anywhere. Crystal clear waters teeming with wildlife, white sandy beaches and palm trees coming right down to the water's edge. Seeing Nemo (clownfish), turtles, pufferfish, parrotfish and angelfish are 'the normal' here, and not 'the rare'.

As to scuba diving, 30-metre visibility is the norm and not the special. Even down at 30m the water is still clear and bright. The islands themselves have sand so soft you just sink right into it and the amount of wildlife you see both in and out the water is breathtaking, with dolphins a good possibility on the boat ride to and from the islands.

Then heading north of the Similans is the island of Koh Bon. Many of the dive boats will do two dives here as this is really the first location where you have a fair chance to see the reef and even the giant oceanic manta ray. These magnificent creatures can be up to six metres across and glide through the water effortlessly. Many people make the mistake when encountering a manta ray as they try to swim or dive with it – thus using up a lot of energy, and if diving your air supply, by chasing it. Mantas tend to swim in larger circles when feeding and hang around Koh Bon. For a clear view the best thing is just to wait and it will circle around again normally with the less experienced divers puffing and blowing behind it.

To the north of Koh Bon is the island of Koh Tachai and the Surin Islands national park. Koh Tachai itself offers great snorkelling and scuba diving. Again, white sandy bays and shallow reefs, all teeming with life. Turtles drifting by. Here, it's possible to find the manta rays and also the largest fish in the world's oceans today: the whale shark. This is a totally harmless shark that is a surface filter feeder, eating krill, crab and fish larvae, small schooling fish, and jellyfish. These are a



real treat to see and are pretty common in these waters from October to April, with December to February the best months to see both the whale shark and manta ray.

There is another dive site called Richelieu Rock just north of Koh Tachai that was listed as one of the top dive sites in the world by National Geographic, so that just shows the quality of the diving and snorkelling in this area and is well worth a visit.

As to scuba diving, the best way to experience these stunning islands is on a liveaboard trip. These range from an overnight trip that will take in the Similan islands only or as far north as Koh Bon on certain days. Then there are trips of three days up to seven days that will take in all the Similan Islands and Surin Islands have to offer. I always find the four-day or five-day trip is the best as it covers all the best dive sites without becoming too exhausting.

These trips give you a very relaxing cruise in a stunning location with some of the best diving and snorkelling you will find anywhere. For more details and weather forecasts (in early or late season) just pop in at any of the many scuba diving shops located around the island as they can have some great last-minute deals for walk-in customers.

Being that these national parks reopened on Tuesday (Oct 15) and will remain open through to May 15 next year, I thought I just had to add them to the stunning natural sights you can see from Phuket.

*Simon Lomas is an expat who has been living in Phuket for more than 12 years, and takes enjoying nature and the island's surroundings to heart.*

**The December/January 2025 hard copy issue goes to print very soon**

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# POP QUIZ

- Do wild cacti (cactus plants) grow in the Sahara?
- Do goldfish have stomachs?
- Which *Grease* song starts, 'Summer lovin' had me a blast'?
- The Pyrenees mountains separates which two countries?
- Which Spanish monarchs sponsored the first voyage of Christopher Columbus?

Answers below, centre

## Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

- Pushed out
- Pile of loose stones
- Mooch
- Attire
- U.S. military decoration
- Method
- In alignment
- Beetle type
- Ryan of "When Harry Met Sally"
- "Gunsmoke" bartender
- Distress
- Ethnic group in Belgium
- Italian savant
- Cognizant of
- Titled ones
- "Shoo!"
- Fruit part
- Edits
- Tags
- Fat letters
- Magazine revenue source
- Mass communication?
- Dry
- Corpulent plus
- Meritorious foreigner

may be proclaimed this

- Brought out
- Seesawed
- Payback
- Losers

Down

- Goes (for)
- Thai currency
- Arborist's concern
- Turnpike turnoff
- Applies
- Impersonated
- Touch down time perhaps
- Mississippi \_\_\_\_
- Gas up
- Belong
- Experienced
- Stand-up comic, White
- Blood letters
- The "p" of m.p.h.
- "Carmina Burana" composer
- Musical finale
- Parsley or sage
- Mix together
- Look up to
- Some trick-or-treaters

- Most of Libya
- Declared
- Single-celled organisms
- "This means \_\_\_\_!"
- Method
- "Naked Maja" painter
- Getting on
- "\_\_\_\_ Brockovich"
- TV judge of note
- Raises
- Bordeaux product
- Harangue
- Blend
- Inner shrine
- Sgt. Snorkel's dog
- Frame used for burials
- "The Snowy Day" author \_\_\_\_ Jack Keats
- Caught sight of
- Expires
- Lyndon Johnson dog
- Lyrical lines
- Center
- Rina starters
- Mil. rank
- Possessive pronoun

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15								16					
17								18					
19							20						
21	22									23	24	25	
26	27	28		29				30			31		
32			33				34			35			
36								37	38	39			
40								41					
42				43	44	45		46				47	
48				49			50						
51										52	53	54	55
56	57	58	59	60				61	62				
63								64					
65								66					

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

## Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

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

## GOT YOUR NUMBER

# 1

in 3,748,067 are the odds of you being attacked and killed by a shark.

# 30

minutes is all it took for Sting to write 'Every Breath You Take' after he woke up with the line "Every breath you take, I'll be watching you" in his head.

# 80

times heavier is the Earth than the Moon.

# 150


Hertz is how high human screams spike – the higher the pitch, the more terrifying the scream is perceived by other people.

# 1 sextillion

(one thousand trillion) supercomputers would be required to store all the DNA in the world.

Source: Uberfacts

## ISLAND VIEW



Phang Nga afar, the view from Pak Phra Beach. Photo by Jessa Baco

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

## This week in history

**Oct 18, 1867**  
United States takes possession of Alaska after purchasing it from Russia for \$7.2 million. Celebrated annually in the state as Alaska Day.

**Oct 19, 1453**  
The Hundred Years' War ends with the French recapture of Bordeaux, leaving English control only of Calais.

**Oct 20, 1720**  
Caribbean pirate Calico Jack (John Rackham) is captured by the Royal Navy and later convicted of piracy and hanged at Port Royal. Jack's first mate, Karl Starling, designed the Jolly Roger flag, a skull with crossed swords.

**Oct 21, 2021**  
A shooting occurs on the set of the film 'Rust', in which actor Alec Baldwin discharged a prop weapon which had been loaded, killing the director of photography, Halyna Hutchins, and injuring director Joel Souza.

**Oct 22, 1962**  
US President John F. Kennedy announces that American reconnaissance planes have discovered Soviet nuclear weapons in Cuba, and orders a naval 'quarantine' of the Communist nation.

**Oct 23, 1991**  
Signing of the Paris Peace Accords which ended the Cambodian-Vietnamese War. Commemorated as a public holiday in Cambodia.

**Oct 24, 1946**  
A camera on board the V-2 No. 13 rocket takes the first photograph of the Earth from outer space, at an altitude of 105km.



Alec Baldwin on the set of 'Rust'. Photo: Santa Fe County Sheriff's Office

Source: Wikipedia



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FRI

18 OCT



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SUN

20 OCT



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WED

23 OCT



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FRI

1 NOV



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SAT

19 OCT



REGGAE WAVES

SAT | 19 OCT | 7PM


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MON

21 OCT



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011-891 4381

www.shakersphuket.com

shakersphuket@gmail.com

FB: shakersphuket

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SAT

26 OCT



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TUE

5 NOV



**Melbourne Cup 2024 at Casa Boho**

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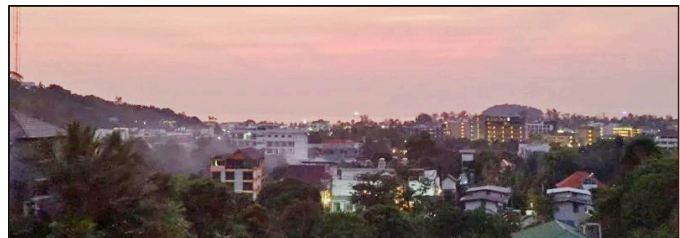


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FRI

8 NOV



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2nd Friday every month

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## CHARITY SPAGHETTI EVENING AT VIKING RAWAI

A great show of support on Saturday, Oct 12, at the Viking Rawai for our courageous Paralympic sailors. After their incredible success, winning gold and bronze at the Asian Championship in Hong Kong, they are now set to defend their titles at the King's Cup held in Phuket later this year. Disabled Sailing Thailand and Sailability Phuket rely entirely on private donations to continue their work. All profits from the evening went towards covering the association's operating costs. Couldn't attend but want to donate? Then visit [facebook.com/disabledsailingthailand](https://facebook.com/disabledsailingthailand)





# Wimbledon line judges replaced by technology

## TENNIS

WIMBLEDON HAS announced that it is scrapping its iconic line judges in favour of electronic line-calling from 2025, changing the face of the grass-court tournament.

Smartly dressed umpires and line judges are as much part of the 147-year-old Grand Slam as strawberries and cream and the all-white kit that players must wear.

But Wimbledon has now fallen into line with other tournaments around the world, saying the move is to “balance tradition and innovation”.

The men’s ATP Tour in 2023 announced the tour-wide adoption of electronic line-calling (ELC) from 2025 in a move to “optimise accuracy and consistency across tournaments”, with the women’s WTA Tour moving in the same direction.

The technology is used at the Australian Open and US Open, though the French Open remains an outlier among the four Grand Slams.



Photo: AFP

The All England Club announced it would make the switch to live ELC from next year.

“The officiating technology will be in place for all Championships and qualifying match courts and cover the ‘out’ and ‘fault’ calls that have previously been made by line umpires,” it said in a Oct 9 statement.

Since 2007, Hawk-Eye has assisted the officials at Wimbledon on certain courts, with players able to challenge line calls.

“The decision to introduce live electronic line calling at the Championships was made following a significant period of consideration and consultation,” said All England Club chief executive Sally Bolton.

AFP

# Game, set and match for Nadal

## TENNIS

AFP

Rafael Nadal has announced he will retire at the end of the season in a tennis career which brought 22 Grand Slam titles, global respect and inspired epic, iconic rivalries with Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic.

“I am retiring from professional tennis,” Nadal said in a video on social media on Oct 10.

“It is obviously a difficult decision, one that has taken me some time to make. But in this life everything has a beginning and an end.”

The 38-year-old Spaniard is set to end his two decades as a professional with 92 titles and prize money alone of \$135 million (B4.5 billion), indisputably one of the greatest tennis players in history.

“What a career, Rafa! I always hoped this day would never come,” said 20-time Grand Slam champion Federer.

“Thank you for the unforgettable memories and all your incredible achievements in the game we love. It’s been an absolute honour!”

Djokovic, the holder of a men’s record 24 Grand Slams, said Nadal’s legacy “will live forever”.

“Your tenacity, dedication, fighting spirit is going to be taught for decades,” said the Serb.



Rafael Nadal has confirmed his retirement from tennis. Photo: AFP

## EMOTIONAL

After being limited to four matches in 2023, Nadal returned from a year out in January but missed the Australian Open with a muscle tear.

He made his comeback at Barcelona in April and reached his first final in two years on the clay of Bastad in July.

Nadal though lost in the first round of the French Open to Alexander Zverev, making an emotional goodbye to Grand Slam tennis, before he was swept aside by Djokovic at the Olympics.

His last appearance was a doubles quarter-final loss alongside Carlos Alcaraz at the Paris Games.

“Thank you so much for being an example on every level, your legacy is incomparable,” Alcaraz wrote on social media.

Nadal’s farewell will come next

month in Malaga, teaming up again with Alcaraz in the Spain squad as he bids to sign off with a sixth Davis Cup triumph.

“I think it’s the appropriate time to put an end to a career that has been long and much more successful than I could have ever imagined,” said Nadal whose world ranking has slumped to 158.

Nadal dominated the French Open where he won 14 of his majors, his first arriving just days after his 19<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2005, his last in 2022 briefly making him the event’s oldest champion before Djokovic broke the record.

He lost just five times in 118 French Open and Olympic matches at Roland Garros.

He was also a four-time champion at the US Open and a two-time winner at both the Australian Open and Wimbledon.

# Rattanon wins Macao Open

## GOLF

THAILAND’S RATTANON WAN-nasrichan swept to a brilliant wire-to-wire victory in the US\$1 million (B33mn) SJM Macao Open last Sunday (Oct 13) for his first victory on the Asian Tour in seven years.

On a beautiful sunny day at Macau Golf & Country Club, the 29-year-old confidently completed arguably the finest week of his career by firing a four-under-par 66 to finish the tournament on 20 under and pocket the winner’s cheque of US\$180,000 (B5.9 million).

Players from Thailand made it a clean sweep of the top three positions, with Gunn Charoenkul finishing second, two shots back following a 67, and Poosit Suppramai third, another two strokes behind, after a 64.

Current Asian Tour Order of Merit leader John Catlin from the United States returned a 65 to share fourth with Filipino Miguel Tabuena on 15 under.

Rattanon had a one-shot lead over Gunn at the start of the day and it never looked like he would surrender the lead. His nickname is ‘Fluke’ but it was all skill as he pulled away from the pack. He had a four-shot lead over playing partner Gunn at turn, which moved to five after he birdied 10, and by the time they reached 18 the cushion was three.



Rattanon. Photo: Paul Lakatos

Rattanon reached the green in two to ensure there would be no dramatic collapse and he could afford the luxury of a three putt, after missing a six-footer for birdie. Gunn made birdie there to close the gap.

Rattanon has won once before on the Asian Tour, at the Thailand Open in 2017, and is also a winner on the Asian Development Tour, claiming the 2015 Taifong Open.

Rattanon said he felt finishing fourth in the Mercuries Taiwan Masters the previous week did wonders for his confidence while he also clearly benefitted from having his girlfriend Manuschaya ‘Minnie’ Zeemakorn, a Thai LPGA Tour player, caddy for him.

He added: “She’s helped me a lot about life and golf. In life we stay together, we eat together, and we enjoy that life. That’s why it’s made it fun for me to play golf.” *Asian Tour*

# Developing talent through local rugby camps



## THE GLOBAL RUGBY COACH

THE PHUKET VAGABONDS rugby camp takes place from Monday to Friday next week (Oct 21-25) at the Alan Cooke Ground (ACG) in Thalang.

Rugby camps are a fantastic way to introduce youngsters to the sport and help them develop as players. Indeed, many global superstars fell in love with rugby at similar camps.

The Vagabonds rugby camp will run from 9am to 3pm each day, catering for aspiring players in the 6-12 age bracket. The camps are an exciting experience with lots of action and good fun.

If you are interested in sending your son or daughter visit the Phuket Vagabonds Rugby Academy Facebook page for more information. As the Vagabonds say, “come and unleash your inner athlete.”

Looking further ahead to next year there will be a rugby development camp for teenage girls at the Berde Claude International School (BCIS) in Phuket, tentatively in July



Photo: Phuket Vagabonds Rugby Academy

or August but dates yet to be fully confirmed.

BCIS is an International School Partnership campus and boasts some of the best sporting facilities in South-east Asia, including the Paris St Germain football program, swimming, gymnastics, snow skiing and now a rugby development camp for girls.

Advice can be given for those travelling from overseas on travel and accommodation arrangements. For more information contact camp director Jason Bray on +60 11 1640 2463 or therugbyloversguideasia@gmail.com.

I am delighted to say that I will be serving as coaching consultant at the

BCIS camp. I have held many coaching positions over the years, including coach of the NSW Waratahs, Director of Coaching at Eastern Suburbs Sydney and Head of Elite Player Development at the Leicester Tigers U21s.

Now based in Phuket, I am keen to lend my expertise and continue to help the game of rugby grow locally and regionally, leveraging four key facets for successful rugby development: tactical, technical, physical and mental.

I hope to welcome many aspiring young players to the camp next year. As I always say, “Every female International player was a 12-year-old girl once.”



# War Elephants win King's Cup

## FOOTBALL

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

A last-gasp goal from captain Chanathip Songkrasin saw Thailand edge Syria 2-1 to win the King's Cup Championship in Songkhla on Monday (Oct 14).

In a hard fought match, Ekanit Panya gave the War Elephants the lead in the 44<sup>th</sup> minute to send the majority of the 24,121 crowd at Tinsulanon Stadium into joyous raptures.

However, it appeared Syria's Spanish manager José Lana shared some choice words with his team during the half time break as they came out for the second half with much more purpose in their play.

This was evident when a misplaced pass from Thailand's Sasalak Haiprachon allowed Ezequiel Naim Ham to equalise for Syria in the 53<sup>rd</sup> minute.

The game then became a very tight affair, with scoring chances for both sides at a minimum before Chanathip snatched victory for the home side with a 91<sup>st</sup> minute winner.

The win meant Thailand, coached by Japanese Masatada Ishii, captured the trophy for the first time since 2017 and for the 16<sup>th</sup> time overall since 1976.

Victory in what was the 50<sup>th</sup> edition of the hugely popular tournament was also the first time Thailand had won the Cup playing outside of Bangkok.



"We had opportunities to finish the game several times but were unable to take them," commented man of the match Chanathip after the game.

"Ultimately it's about whether we fight or not and we did. This team represents a new generation of players and I must thank all my teammates," he added.

Playmaker Chanathip, nicknamed 'Messi J' after Argentina star Lionel Messi, also paid tribute to the Thai fans whose support he claimed help boost the players morale and inspired them to the win.

It was a sentiment shared by coach Ishii. "The fans cheering for us, whether in the stadium or watching on TV, played a crucial role in helping us perform well. I must thank everyone who came to cheer, giving the players energy to play throughout the game,"

said the Japanese.

President of the Football Association of Thailand Nualphan Lamsam, affectionally known as 'Madam Pang', announced that the Thai squad would receive a B5 million bonus for their triumph, an increase on the previously announced B3mn.

The victory follows on from Thailand finishing as runners-up to Australia in the ASEAN Under-16 Boys' Championship in Indonesia 2024 in July, suggesting progress is being made under Ms Nualphan, who took office at the start of this year.

The King's Cup tournament was first played in 1968, with three invitational teams joining hosts Thailand. In this edition, Thailand defeated the Philippines 3-1 in their first game last Friday (Oct 11), while Syria beat Tajikistan 1-0 on the same day.

# PAFC appoints new coach

## FOOTBALL

PHUKET ANDAMAN FC (PAFC) is aiming to blast off and climb the league table following the international break, and they are putting their faith in new head coach, Phuwanart Saengsri, to pilot them to success.

Nicknamed 'Tum', the experienced A-licensed coach joins the club from Trang FC. A former Air Force United player, coach Tum brings a wealth of knowledge and a proven track record to PAFC, who are currently grounded at the bottom of the league after losing three and drawing one of their opening four games in Thai League 3.

The club is eager to leave behind a turbulent period that saw the departure of former 'Coach Go' amidst controversy and public accusations aimed at the club's ownership on Oct 6. Now, with coach Tum at the helm, they are determined to shift focus back to the pitch and begin their ascent up the league table.

His first game was at home against Pattani FC on Wednesday (Oct 16) before



a tough trip to former club Trang FC on Sunday. Securing points in both games will be vital for PAFC as they aim to escape the gravitational pull of the relegation zone.

PAFC fans will be hoping that coach Tum's arrival will bring a renewed sense of stability and inject much-needed rocket fuel into the team's performance as they head into this crucial phase of the season.

Will he be the man to guide them back to orbit? Only time will tell.

Simon Causton

# From boom to budgeting as reality bites for Saudi football

## FOOTBALL

A BILLION-DOLLAR binge which brought some of football's biggest names to Saudi Arabia's modest league has given way to a more cautious phase, with spending down dramatically this year.

After a jaw-dropping 2023, when Cristiano Ronaldo led a parade of largely ageing superstars to the oil-rich, conservative monarchy, Saudi transfer spending slumped from \$957 million (B32 billion) to \$431mn in the latest window.

On any given weekend Ronaldo and Karim Benzema, with six Ballons d'Or between them, can now be seen in the Saudi Pro League, with N'Golo Kante, Sadio Mane and the injured Neymar among a host of other top players.

But their ranks have barely swelled this season, with Brentford's Ivan Toney the most notable addition when he signed for Al Ahli.

The Saudi Pro League, the second biggest spender



... it's now a question of how do you sustain that?"

The oil-fuelled Saudi football project has drawn comparisons with the Chinese Super League, which imported players on exorbitant salaries until team owners went bust as the Chinese economy fizzled.

But with Saudi Arabia the sole bidder for the 2034 World Cup, and desperate to re-model itself as a tourism and business magnet before global oil demand falls for good, there is probably more to come from the Pro League.

"There are more considered and strategic ways to address the challenges of talent acquisition, which one senses the Saudis are now contemplating," said Simon Chadwick, professor of sport and geopolitical economy at France's SKEMA Business School.

"The expensive, lavish signings are not over forever, though it seems unlikely we will be seeing an occurrence like 2023 on a regular basis," AFP

in the summer of 2023, behind only the English Premier League, dropped to sixth this year, trailing the 'Big Five' European competitions that it aims to rival.

According to analysts, Saudi officials are assessing the commercial returns of their record outlay as Saudi Arabia's lavish drive to modernise its oil-reliant economy comes under budgetary strains.

"I think they achieved the purpose last year, they put themselves on the map, they put the league on the map," said James Dorsey, a senior fellow at the National University of Singapore's Middle East Institute.

"Someone like Ronaldo and others attract audiences.

# Klopp to return as head of Red Bull football operations

## FOOTBALL

FORMER LIVERPOOL manager Jurgen Klopp has a new role as head of football operations at Red Bull, which owns the RB Leipzig, Salzburg and New York clubs.

Klopp left Liverpool at the end of last season after nine years in charge, during which he rejuvenated the club and won the Premier League and Champions League.

The 57-year-old's new job with the Austrian energy drinks giant will not involve hands-on coaching.

According to a statement released by the company, "Klopp will not interfere in the day-to-day business of the clubs, but rather take on a higher-level strategic position."

Klopp himself said: "I see my role primarily as a mentor for the coaches and management of the Red Bull clubs.



"After nearly 25 years on the sideline, I couldn't be more excited to be involved in a project like this."

Klopp stressed his role was at "a global level" and added: "I want to develop, improve and support the incredible football talent that we have at our disposal.

"Together we can discover what is possible. I see my role primarily as a mentor for the coaches

and management of the Red Bull clubs but, ultimately, I am one part of an organisation that is unique, innovative and forward-looking. As I said, this could not excite me more.

"The role may have changed but my passion for football and the people who make the game what it is, has not."

He will start his tenure on Jan 1, 2025. AFP



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