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SAFETY FIRST

MARINE INDUSTRY SETS SIGHTS ON IMPROVED SAFETY

A boat carrying tourists sank off Koh Hei last week. Photo: Phuket Marine Office

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

More than 130 key figures signed a commitment to improve safety in Phuket's marine tour industry at the first-ever Phuket Marine Safety Event held at Phuket Boat Lagoon in Koh Kaew on Monday (Jan 15).

The event marked a significant milestone for the industry, with Phuket Governor Sophon Suwanarat present.

The gathering witnessed a unified pledge from marine industry operators to actively tackle safety concerns, cultivating a conducive and secure atmosphere for marine tourism in Phuket.

A pivotal accomplishment was marked with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between key stakeholders. The document outlined the terms and understanding essential for 'United Commitment to Improved Marine Safety'. The scope of the commitment encompasses crucial areas such as drug testing, life jacket requirements, comprehensive boat crew training and rescue planning.

"This marks a crucial initial stage in the planned transformations to the industry's approach to maritime safety. Acknowledging the significance of a harmonised strategy towards marine safety, this event marked the inaugural occasion where such a diverse spectrum of marine industry stakeholders were united through coordination

and collaboration," said a release after the event.

Shaun Stenning, owner of 5 Star Marine, expressed his thoughts on the event, stating, "The purpose of the event was to have the whole industry come together to create a wave of change by committing to a new safety standard in Phuket, endorsed by the Provincial Government. I am delighted that everyone pulled together from all walks of the marine industry in order to show their support for future safety."

The collective initiative aims not only to address immediate concerns but also to establish a framework for ongoing collaboration and continuous improvement in marine safety standards.

"By fostering a culture of responsibility and adherence to best practices, the marine industry in Phuket endeavours to create a safer and more secure environment for both operators and visitors alike," the release noted.

BY ORDER

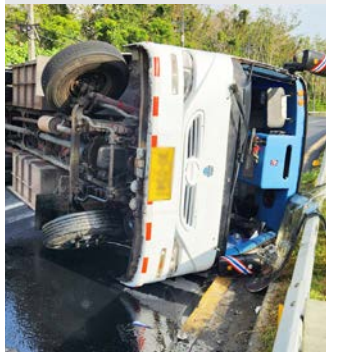
The push to improve marine tour and boat safety has been spurred by the 'Apirak 89' tour speedboat crash at Koh Maithon on Dec 31 that killed a 5-year-old Russian girl and seriously injured five others.

The 'Apirak 89' was returning to Chalong Pier with seven Russian tourists on board when it slammed into rocks at Koh Maiton.

In response to the accident,...

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Tourists injured as day-trip bus overturns



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Nathan Lowry, master of the flowride waves



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PHUKET'S QUALITY TILE BOUTIQUE

execeditor@classactmedia.co.th

News



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New push for marine safety

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...Governor Sophon has ordered the establishment of a dedicated 'marine safety center'. The initiative, announced during a meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall on Jan 11, aims to address safety concerns in the wake of the tragic incident.

The Royal Thai Navy Third Area Command, headquartered at Cape Panwa, will oversee operations at the 'Phuket Province Maritime Tourist Security Command Center', said an official report of the meeting.

The command center will consist of various departments, each headed by key figures responsible for specific aspects of maritime safety.

Among the agencies to play key roles in the operation of the centre are the Phuket Marine Office; the Phuket office of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE Phuket); the Phuket branch of the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM-Phuket); the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO); and the Phuket office of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MoTS Phuket).

A vice governor will be assigned the role of investigating business operators, the report said.

During the meeting on Jan 11, each agency was tasked with developing an incident response plan, ensuring preparedness at every level. Emphasis was placed on creating a comprehensive plan to prevent and assist victims of



Governor Sophon signs the MoU at the maritime safety event on Monday (Jan 15). Photo: 5 Star Marine

marine tourism disasters.

The collaborative effort aims to streamline communication and operational guidelines across all sectors, fostering a unified approach to maritime defence and effective disaster response at sea, said the report.

The move comes as part of a broader strategy to enhance safety measures and restore confidence in the tourism image of Phuket, the report added.

ILLEGAL OPERATOR

While officials and Shaun Stenning of 5 Star Marine were working on a

collective effort to improve safety in Phuket's marine tour industry, a speedboat being used illegally to operate as tour provider sank off Koh Hei (Coral Island) on Jan 9.

The Phuket Marine Office confirmed that no people were injured in the incident.

The boat, named 'Martini', was taking six Russian tourists on a day trip when it sank near Nam Bo Bay on the west side of Koh Hei at about 3:50pm.

The boat departed from Chalong Bay Marina pier at 9:40am, with planned stops including Koh Maithon and the Racha islands,

reported Phuket Marine Chief Natchapong Pranit.

The sinking occurred while the boat owner and operator, Chakri Kaenkhong, 31, was mooring at Nam Bo Koh Hei Bay, Mr Pranit said.

On board at the time were nine people: six Russians, including four boys aged 4, 9 and 14 years old; along with Mr Chakri and his crew, Amarin Danadee, 17, and Phattharapon Kothalin, 44.

Mr Chakri explained that the primary cause of the sinking was water entering the engine room due to a leaking water pipe. Despite the crew's efforts, the water entered

too quickly for the crew to pump it out in time, leading to the boat sinking, he said.

Fortunately, at the time of the incident, the weather was normal, and wind and waves were calm, Mr Chakri added.

The nearby vessel 'Panwa Princess' rendered assistance in rescuing all tourists and the boat crew. The rescued individuals were safely delivered to the pier of Cape Panwa Hotel in Wichit, where they received assistance.

All passengers and crew members emerged unharmed from the incident, and there was no oil leak detected in the area where the boat sank, Mr Natchapong said.

The tourists were later taken to the hotels in Karon, where they were staying, he added.

The boat registration had not expired, and the ship operator's certificate was still valid, Mr Natchapong confirmed.

However, the vessel lacked an engine operator or engine operator licence.

The boat was also found to be used for the wrong purpose, violating conditions outlined in the boat licence, he added.

The Phuket Marine Office will "take legal action to the fullest extent concerning these violations", Mr Natchapong said.

Lighted buoys marking the sunken boat's location would remain in place around the wreck until the boat had been salvaged, he added.

Officials launch measures to counter informal loan debts

TO ADDRESS THE RISING issue of informal debt problems, the Phuket Provincial Office has launched its now-monthly 'Debt Resolution Market'.

The first Debt Resolution Market was held at Phuket Provincial Hall last Sunday (Jan 14). The event is to be every second Sunday of the month, said Subchacha Intharit, Director of the Phuket Provincial Damrongdhama Center (Phuket Provincial Ombudsman's Office).

This initiative aims to foster debtor-creditor engagements, facilitate debt mediation negotiations, and bring debtors into the banking system, all while promoting vocational training to create additional careers and increase income, thereby enhancing the ability of debtors to repay their debts, Mr Subchacha said.

The initiative received sup-



People in debt receive assistance at the event. Photo: PR Phuket

port from the Government Savings Bank and the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives of Phuket Province, with officials offering knowledge and participating in the debt mediation process. Cooperation was also extended by government agencies, including the

Phuket Provincial Labor Office, Phuket Provincial Employment Office, Phuket Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office, and Phuket Provincial Community Development Office, providing career counselling to debtors, he added.

Phuket Governor Sophon Suwanarat explained that the Phuket Provincial Office had also established its 'Center for Solving Informal Debt' on Dec 1.

As of Jan 12, the centre had seen 604 applications for assistance registered, involving 490 creditors and a total debt amounting to B26,696,954.67, he noted.

In response, 227 debts had entered the negotiation process, with six creditors opting for mediation. A substantial breakthrough had already been achieved, Governor Sophon said, with 85 debtors successfully negotiating a total debt reduction of B1.033 million.

"The event was not just a one-time effort. Phuket Province [the provincial government] is committed to organising the debt relief market activities on a monthly basis. This ongoing commitment aligns with the government's policy to continually

assist debtors and creditors, ensuring they engage in the debt mediation negotiation process regularly," Gov Sophon said.

Governor Sophon also clarified the government's policy, emphasising debt reconciliation rather than forgiveness. "The focus is on bringing debtors into the banking system, ensuring operational guidelines are comprehensive, especially regarding debtors' occupations and income," he said.

"The Phuket Provincial Debt Resolution Market signifies a crucial step forward in addressing long-term debt problems within the province. With the collaborative efforts of various stakeholders, the initiative aims to bring as much debt as possible into the system, providing financial relief and sustainable solutions for the community," Governor Sophon concluded.

The Phuket News

Search finds Omuras, but no 'Nong Thalang'

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The search for Omura's whales off Phuket by a team of experts from the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR) last week found several of the rare marine creatures in local waters, but has failed to find the albino Omura's whale that prompted the search.

Pol Gen Patcharawat Wongsuwan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE), ordered the search after several sightings of Omura whales were reported in the area (see *The Phuket News*, page 1, Jan 12), the DMCR reported through a Facebook post on Jan 10.

DMCR Director-General Dr Pinsak Suraswadi appointed Dr Kongkiat Kittiwattanawong, a specialist in research on marine and coastal ecosystems, and Wissanu Chaengjai, Director of Marine and Coastal Resources Office Region 10 office (Krabi), to lead the fieldwork, the DMCR noted.



Photo: DMCR

The team, comprising officials from various marine research centres, used three survey methods to collect comprehensive data on the Omura whales. In addition to using their own boat and a drone to conduct the search, the officers also stopped and asked local fishing boats in the area for any reported sightings.

The DMCR themselves covered the area from lower Phang Nga Bay to the upper region of Racha Yai Islands, spanning approximately 200 square kilometres.

The drone was used to survey from the area south of Laem Promthep, to the

northern part of Racha Yai Island to Koh Hei, just a few kilometres southeast of Phuket.

The results of the three-day operation revealed significant findings, the DMCR reported.

In total, the DMCR search team reported finding four to six Omura whales in the lower Phang Nga Bay area, at locations between Koh Maithon, Phi Phi Island and the Racha Islands, with tourist boats contributing two additional sightings.

The first sighting occurred on the west side of Phi Phi Island, where officials from the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Con-

servation (DNP) encountered a whale breathing and moving swiftly along the current around noon.

The second sighting involved a nine-metre-long Omura whale on the eastern side of Koh Maiton. The officials followed the whale for 30 minutes, observing its normal swimming and feeding behaviour.

In the third sighting, a team discovered four Omura whales behind Koh Hei, engaging in various activities near boats. Officials collected water samples to study using eDNA techniques and Photo ID data to classify and compare their identities, aiming to provide insights into the population.

The mission concluded at 4pm on Jan 9 as the team provide assistance to a boat carrying tourists sinking off Koh Hei (see page 2.).

Despite the successful sightings of normal-coloured Omura whales, none of the three instances revealed the presence of the elusive white Omura whale, now called 'Nong Thalang', the DMCR noted.

Chinese tourists injured as day-trip bus overturns

A BUS CARRYING 17 Chinese tourists overturned in Tha Chatchai, at the northern end of Phuket, on Tuesday morning (Jan 16) as they were heading to Phang Nga for a boat trip to the Similan Islands.



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

Police were notified of the accident at 8:10am. Officers, including Pol Lt Col Akaraphon Sriwilai of the Tha Chatchai Police, and rescue workers from the Kusuldham Foundation soon arrived at the scene. Joining them was an emergency response unit from the Mai Khao Tambon Administrative Organisation (OrBorTor).

Police and emergency responders arrived to find the white Hino bus on its side, sprawled across two lanes on Thepkasattri Rd northbound with its windshield pushed out onto the central reservation.

The bus, registered in Buriram, was carrying 17 Chinese tourists, officials reported.

Of the 17 tourists on board, two men were seriously injured. The remain-

ing six men, eight women and one child also suffered injuries in the accident.

All 17 were taken to Thalang Hospital.

Police explained that the bus was taking the tourists from Phuket town to Thap Lamu Pier in Phang Nga, where they were to board a boat to the Similan Islands.

The accident occurred on a curve known to be a blackspot for accidents. Warning signs have been posted to urge drivers to reduce speed before the curve.

Officers surmised that the bus was travelling too fast to negotiate the curve safely, and overturned.

Tha Chatchai Police are continuing their investigation into the accident while Tourist Police continue to assist the tourists at Thalang Hospital.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Kathu elects new mayor

WANNAYUT 'BENG' SUTHIKUL HAS been declared the unofficial winner of the election held last Sunday (Jan 14) for the office of Kathu Mayor.

Rattana Labthanaphong, Election Director of Kathu Municipality, declared the results last Sunday night.

The 25 polling stations set up throughout Tambon Kathu were open for voting from 8am to 5pm. Many residents turned out to cast their ballots, and voting went smoothly, Ms Rattana said.

Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat and Kathu District Chief Theeraphong Chuaychu both visited several polling stations during the day to observe the election underway, she added.

Of the 22,023 registered voters in the tambon, 9,830 voters presented themselves to request ballots, with 9,288 eligible votes counted and the remainder comprising 211 spoiled ballots and 305 ballots left blank.

Mr Wannayut of the Rak Kathu team, who was number 2 on the ballot, secured 4,786 votes, Ms Rattana confirmed.

Of the other two candidates, Nippon Bamrunthin, number 1 on the ballot, secured 3,854 votes and Mrs Phansupa Chotirasamechai, number 3 on the ballot, secured 648 votes, she said.

At last report the election results remained unofficial, as they had yet to be confirmed by the Phuket branch of the Election Commission of Thailand (PEC).

The PEC had also yet to report any formal complaints filed over the election



Wannayut Suthikul (right) with a supporter indicating 'Number 2' on the ballot. Image: Rak Kathu

results or how the election was conducted.

Meanwhile, the Phuket Provincial Administration Organisation (PPAO) last Sunday issued a reminder that another election is to be held in Tambon Kathu this Sunday (Jan 21), this time to elect the PPAO councilor for PPAO Kathu Area 1.

The areas to be affected by polling this Sunday are Kathu Moo 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7.

In accordance with election law, there will be a ban on the sale of alcohol in those areas from 6pm Saturday night (Jan 20) through to 6pm Sunday night (Jan 21).

There are two candidates contesting the PPAO seat for Kathu Area 1: Wichai Kiattansakul and Peera Sukyiran, both residents of Moo 2, Kathu.

There will be 16 polling stations set up throughout the subdistrict. Those, too, will be open from 8am to 5pm for residents to cast votes. *The Phuket News*

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CONTACT US

editor@classactmedia.co.th 076 612 550

PURIYA BEAVAN
Editor**CHRIS HUSTED**
Executive Editor
084 307 7408
execeditor@classactmedia.co.th**BEN TIREBUCK**
News / Sport Editor
061 806 8132
editor3@classactmedia.co.th**CHUTHARAT 'UM' PLERIN**
Thai Editor
088 766 1615
thai@classactmedia.co.th**JASON BEAVAN**
General Manager
086 479 7471
gm@classactmedia.co.th**SIRIPORN (NOK) SEANGMAS**
Sales Support
086 479 7470
sales@classactmedia.co.th**NIRAVIT 'MOS' VORAVANITCHA**
THANAPONG 'OAK' KHAO-AMPHAI PHAN
Graphic designersThe Phuket News
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Wind 11 m/s

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Low: +27°
Wind 11 m/s

SUN DECEMBER 21

High: +31°
Low: +27°
Wind 11 m/s

MON DECEMBER 22

High: +31°
Low: +27°
Wind 4 m/s

TUE DECEMBER 23

High: +32°
Low: +27°
Wind 4 m/s

WED DECEMBER 24

High: +30°
Low: +27°
Wind 4 m/s

THU DECEMBER 25

High: +30°
Low: +27°
Wind 4 m/s

Motorbike taxi driver stabbed to death

A FIGHT BETWEEN TWO motorbike taxi drivers in Patong has left one dead and the other taking himself to hospital for a stab wound to his leg.

Pol Lt Phakpoom Rojanawiphak of Patong Police was informed of the incident by the 191 Provincial Police Station hotline at 12:05pm on Jan 11.

Patong Police Chief Pol Col Chalermchai Hirsawat was informed of the incident and joined responding officers, near the Government Savings Bank near Khok Makhm Intersection on Phra Barami Rd.

At the scene, officers found a motorbike taxi driver collapsed unconscious in a chair. He had been stabbed three times under the right breast.

The motorbike taxi driver, later identified as Samanmart Ueanoth, 61, originally from Phetchaburi and locally known as 'Uncle Mit', was rushed to Patong Hospital, but later was pronounced dead from his injuries.

Witnesses told police that the other motorbike taxi driver involved in the fight, Thawatchai Kaewsamsri, 41, from Phatthalung, was



Photo: Patong Police

last seen driving himself to Patong Hospital.

Samanmart and Thawatchai both worked for the same motorbike taxi group, called a 'win' in Thai, and both had been seen fighting before, mostly over Samanmart drinking alcohol while waiting for passengers, witnesses said.

The final fight was reportedly over customers being refused.

According to one witness, Samanmart was seen holding a knife, then Thawatchai kicked him.

Samanmart then stabbed Thawatchai, presumably in the leg. Thawatchai then grabbed the knife and stabbed Samanmart.

Officers sealed off the area while they continued their investigation. At time of press, police had yet to reveal more details about the case, and were yet to confirm whether or not Thawatchai was in custody.

Eakkapop Thongtub



A tsunami detection buoy in the Andaman Sea that stopped sending signals is brought back by the navy for repairs. Photo: Royal Thai Navy

Faulty buoy has no impact on tsunami warning, dept says

Bangkok Post

The country's tsunami early warning system remains up and running despite a fault being detected in one of the tsunami buoys deployed in the Andaman Sea earlier this month.

The buoy, Station 23461, located 340 kilometres north-west of Phuket, stopped sending signals on Jan 3, reported the Foundation of National Disaster Warning Council last week.

The foundation said the fault might render Thailand vulnerable should an earthquake generate a tsunami in the area.

The Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) took to Facebook

on Jan 8 to explain that the buoy stopped sending signals because it was out of position.

In the post, the department assured the fault will not have an impact on the country's tsunami early warning system. It said the system receives data from multiple buoys in the area, as well as other agencies, including the Royal Thai Navy's Hydrographic Department.

"Our tsunami buoys also share information with other agencies both at home and abroad," the department wrote.

The information is used to create a tsunami model, which authorities hope will boost the ability of officials to generate early warnings for six provinces along the Andaman coast, namely Sa-

tun, Trang, Krabi, Phang Nga, Ranong and Phuket when an earthquake with a tsunami potential strikes.

The department also posted that its officials, with the support of naval personnel, have successfully pulled the buoy from the sea for repairs, and the department has now bought a replacement from the US, which will be delivered to Thailand in March.

However, the new tsunami buoy will not be immediately installed, as it is necessary to avoid adverse weather and sea conditions during the monsoon season across the Andaman Sea, which occurs between July and October. Installation must be carried out by foreign experts, according to the department.

Colombian arrested for bag snatch

POLICE HAVE ARRESTED a Colombian man for committing a bag snatch from a Russian woman in Patong last Friday (Jan 12).

Russian tourist, Karolina Rusaleeva, 35, reported to Patong Police at 11:45pm last Friday that she had been a victim of a bag snatch at the entrance of Soi Suk Charoen off Phra Mettha Rd.

Ms Rusaleeva was walking from a nearby 7-Eleven store back to her hotel room when a man rode past her on a motorbike and snatched her shoulder bag.

Police tracked down the culprit, unnamed in the police report, and arrested him at Sweet Leaf marijuana shop in Patong the next day (Jan 13). Officers recovered the stolen items during a subsequent search of his rented room at a small hotel in Karon.

Among the items recovered were the shoulder bag, Airpod



Photo: Patong Police

headphones, Ms Rusaleeva's Russian driver's license, B3,000 in cash, a silver necklace and a silver ring.

Officers also seized as evidence the shirt, shorts, shoes and red half-face helmet worn by the Colombian while committing the bag snatch.

Police also seized the black, Phuket-registered Honda Click motorbike used to commit the theft.

Patong Police confirmed that the Colombian man was to be charged with "snatching property by using a vehicle to facilitate the commission of an offense or taking that property or to escape arrest."

Eakkapop Thongtub

Maid arrested for stealing B140k

PATONG POLICE HAVE ARRESTED a hotel maid for stealing B140,000 in cash from foreign guests. Known victims include a man from Sweden and two brothers from Cyprus.

The first theft was reported to Patong Police on Dec 27 by Ahmad Alasadi, a Swedish national. The man stated that US\$700 (around B24,500) disappeared from his room at The Great Hotel on Sirirat Rd, Patong Police explained in a post on Facebook.

On Jan 6, Konstantinos Marinou and Michajis Marionou reported two more thefts. The two brothers from Cyprus told officers that both lost B55,000 each in suspected thefts from their rooms at The Great Hotel.

During crime scene inspections, Patong Police officers noticed that a hotel maid – Ms Hla Hla Win, 27, from Myanmar – behaved suspiciously. The woman tried to hide upon seeing officials.

On Jan 11, Ms Hla Hla Win was



Myanmar national Hla Hla Win was arrested for three thefts committed at a hotel in Patong where she worked. Photo: Patong Police

arrested at a rental accommodation on Soi Nanai 1 in Patong. Confronted by officials, the woman admitted to stealing the money, reported by Patong Police as B140,000 in total.

Ms Hla Hla Win explained that she had spent the cash to buy jewellery from different shops. Police seized from the suspect two gold necklaces, two gold bracelets and two gold rings – all with "warranty cards" from the shops.

The suspect was taken to Patong Police Station and charged accordingly, officials reported without revealing the exact charges. *The Phuket News*

Public forums held to target coastal erosion

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning (DPT) has held two public meetings seeking feedback and suggestions from local residents regarding coastal erosion.

The first public meeting was held in Mai Khao on Jan 9, to address coastal erosion at Sai Kaew Beach, and the second public meeting was held at Patong Municipality School on Jan 10, this time concerning coastal erosion at Kalim Beach, north of Patong.

The meeting in Patong was presided over by Phuket Vice Governor Sattha Thongkam and organised in collaboration with consulting firms Makro Consultants Co Ltd. and Boonpanya Technology Co Ltd.

Also joining the event were DPT officials Surat Phongsanit and Jaruwit Satianrangsarit as well as Patong Mayor Chalerm Sak Maneesri.

The event was designed to foster community engagement



Photo: Patong Municipality

and involve stakeholders in the decision-making process related to the DPT project to stave off coastal erosion in key areas along the Andaman coast.

Organisers highlighted the importance of collaboration with the community, emphasising the need for public input on the proposed feasibility study and detailed design aimed at systematically resolving coastal erosion issues in the identified areas.

The project, spanning the upper Andaman Sea main beach group system, is set to address the challenges faced by the Kalim Beach coastal area.

Two meetings were scheduled in order to provide the community comprehensive information about the project to combat coastal erosion, its objectives, historical context and the steps involved. Additionally, the sessions aimed to serve as a platform for gathering opinions, concerns and suggestions from the public, said an official report of the meeting.

Vice Governor Mr Sattha stressed the importance of the meeting, emphasising a focus on participatory processes to foster mutual understanding between agencies and stakeholders. He expressed optimism that this collabora-

tive effort would lead to a well-informed and inclusive solution for the coastal erosion issues at Kalim Beach, said the report.

The key objectives of the meeting included disseminating information about the project, discussing the necessity and history, outlining the project's essence and operation details, and presenting various options, complete with their advantages and disadvantages. The scope and guidelines of the study, along with measures to prevent and correct environmental impacts, were also discussed.

Participants were encouraged to share their opinions and suggestions during the meeting, with an overarching goal of creating a unified and efficient strategy to systematically address coastal erosion in the identified areas.

The authorities remain committed to actively involving the community in the decision-making process to ensure the project's success and benefit the local population, the official report concluded.

Phuket mourns death of much-loved expat

HAROLD SCHWARZ, founder and chef of Phuket's renowned restaurant Tatonka, in Cherg Talay, has passed away. He was just 55 years old.

"With great sadness, I have to let you all know that Harold has unexpectedly passed away yesterday," Harold's wife, Khun Yen, announced through a post on Facebook last Saturday (Jan 13).

"He was such a kind and lovely man and will be so very much missed. Harold had been my soulmate, best friend and everything to me. The thought of life without him is, although unbearable, I am very fortunate to have shared the last 30 wonderful years with him.

"Indeed I have lost his physical presence, but he will stay forever in my heart. The memories which you all have been part of at some time in our years past will help me through this difficult time. And Harold's beloved Tatonka, with our strong team behind it, will continue as he always wished it to be," Khun Yen wrote.

"Thank you all for your unwavering support then and now, and all your encouraging messages. I receive them all with much appreciation.



Harold Schwarz. March 7, 1968 – January 12, 2024

"There will be a funeral for him when all formality is cleared. Once the arrangement is fixed, I will let you know on this page," Khun Yen concluded.

Harold, originally from Lenggries, Germany, made Phuket his home in the 1990s. He opened Tatonka in October 1996, with the restaurant celebrating 27 years in October last year.

Over the decades Harold made Tatonka more of an institution, and his friendly personality saw him much loved by people near and far, with many people making sure they stopped by to visit him when they could, regardless of whether they lived on the island or were travelling from abroad.

The announcement of Harold's passing has prompted an outpouring of condolences online. *The Phuket News*

DMCR warns of Pelagia jellyfish

THE DEPARTMENT OF MARINE and Coastal Resources (DMCR) has issued a safety reminder following the discovery of stinging jellyfish from the Pelagiidae family in Phuket. The stingers were found last week in the Cape Panwa area.

Upon notification by Pullman Panwa Beach Resort staff, marine wildlife officials from the DMCR visited the small beach near the resort and collected "samples" of jellyfish. The marine creatures were identified as Pelagia sp, belonging to the Pelagiidae family.

According to the World Register of Marine Species, the only properly recognized jellyfish in the genus Pelagia is Pelagia noctiluca, commonly known as the mauve stinger, purple stinger, purple jellyfish, and luminous jellyfish, among other names. The DMCR referred to it in the report as "fire jellyfish".

Pelagia noctiluca is found worldwide in tropical and warm temperate seas. It is a relatively small jellyfish, with adults having a bell diameter of three to 12cm. The colour ranges from mauve and purple to pink and yellow. Pelagia noctiluca is bioluminescent, producing low light visible in the dark.

Pelagia noctiluca is known to sting with both its tentacles and the bell. Even recently dead, stranded individuals can sting. The sting causes pain that typically lasts one to two weeks, but there have been no known fatalities, according to research.

Following the discovery of the jellyfish on Phuket's eastern coast, the DMCR repeated its basic safety warning for beachgoers



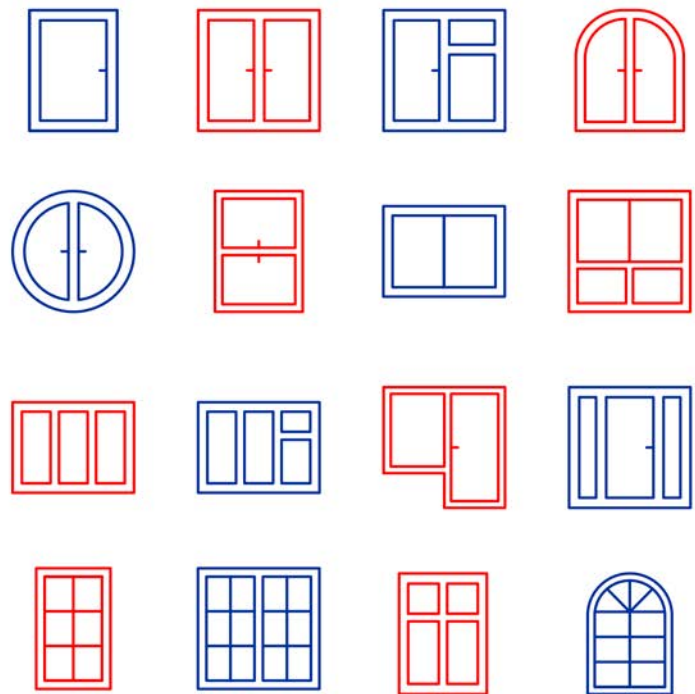
The DMCR confirmed the discovery of Pelagia jellyfish in Phuket. Photo: DMCR

regarding possible stings. When supplemented with the previous advice from Phuket lifeguards, the recommendations are as follows:

1. Contact a lifeguard on the beach, request assistance and follow the lifeguard's advice.
2. Wash any remaining stinging cells from your skin with seawater. Do not use fresh water for this.
3. Apply vinegar to the affected area by pouring it for at least 30 seconds. Do not rub or massage the area.
4. See a medical specialist at a local hospital or clinic. In case of severe symptoms, call 1669 immediately.
5. If the stung person is unresponsive, not breathing and has no pulse, call an ambulance and provide CPR until rescue workers arrive. *The Phuket News*



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Migrant worker rights in focus

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Phuket Employment Office last week launched a series of events to inform employers of foreign workers of the new minimum wage rate in Phuket of B370 a day and to raise awareness of the law regarding the hiring of migrant workers in a bid to stem human trafficking.

The employment law 'awareness conference', held on Jan 11, followed Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat just two days earlier explaining to Move Forward MP for Bangkok Sasinan Thamnithinan and Kanwee Suebsaeng, Vice Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Law, Justice, and Human Rights, what Phuket officials were doing to address migrant worker issues.

The meeting on Jan 9 followed a raid in Tambon Thepkrasattri last month which saw 30 Chinese men arrested for working illegally in the country. That raid prompted police to begin an investigation into whether the 30 Chinese nationals were victims of human trafficking.

A subsequent raid in the Layan area of Cherg Talay on Dec 27 saw 28 Chinese nationals, including one woman, arrested for working illegally at the site of a major hotel under construction.



Move Forward MP for Bangkok Sasinan Thamnithinan at the meeting at Provincial Hall last week. Photos: PR Phuket



The issue involved "complexities", Governor Sophon noted.

Phuket Vice Governor Sattha Thongkham presided over the conference held at the Phuket Merlin Hotel in Phuket Town on Jan 11, branded as the launch of the "Project to enhance awareness of employers/foreign worker establishments and Phuket Province network partner organisations".

This initiative marked the first of its kind and was set to bring about a positive impact on the local community, said an official report of the event.

During the event, Phichit Singthongkam, Chief of the Phuket Employment Office,

confirmed that a total of 10,631 employers/establishments in Phuket currently employ 61,485 foreign workers, predominantly hailing from Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.

The data also revealed a significant influx of 58,418 foreign workers imported under the ministerial resolution on July 5, 2022, with an additional 2,451 people under the MOU system and 616 under the Cabinet resolution on March 15, 2022.

Mr Phichit also confirmed that of the 61,485 migrant workers known to be on the island, there were 60,163 from Myanmar (97.84%), 912 from

Laos, 266 from Cambodia and 144 from Vietnam.

Acknowledging the vital role played by unskilled foreign workers in sectors facing labour shortages, the initiative sought to address challenges associated with their employment, Mr Pichet said.

"The project aims to enhance understanding among employers, enterprises, community leaders, and local officials regarding foreign work management guidelines. This includes educating stakeholders on regulations, procedures for work permits, penalties as per the Emergency Decree on Management of Foreigners' Work B.E. 2017, and other

related aspects," he noted.

As part of the awareness campaign, at the event speakers from the Phuket Provincial Employment Office, Immigration, and Social Security Office provided explanations of compliance with immigration laws, visa processing, extension of stay, and the benefits of foreigners and employers entering the social security system.

Key lecturers from the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office, including the Directors of Vachira Phuket Hospital, Thalang Hospital and Patong Hospital, also explained required health checks, health insurance for foreign workers and various

regulations.

"The comprehensive program aims to equip stakeholders with the necessary tools to navigate the complexities of managing foreign labour effectively," Mr Pichit said.

"The Phuket Provincial Employment Office emphasises that the initiative is a proactive step towards revitalising the local economy by ensuring the efficient integration of foreign workers while safeguarding the interests of both employers and employees. This collaborative effort is anticipated to pave the way for a more sustainable and harmonious work environment in Phuket Province," he concluded.



Alcohol sales in Thailand have been banned from 2pm to 5pm since 1972. Photo: Bangkok Post

Lift 2-5pm booze ban so tourists spend more, complain less: restaurateurs

RESTAURATEURS HAVE proposed that Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin lift the suspension of alcohol sales in the afternoon because visitors are complaining.

Sorathep Rojpotjanaruch, head of the Restaurant Business Club, sent an open letter to Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin to ask the government to lift the ban on sales of alcohol every day between

2pm and 5pm.

According to the letter, the three-hour prohibition has been in place since 1972 and is problematic for eatery operators because foreign customers frequently ask them to explain why they can't order a drink during the afternoon.

The restriction is outdated, Mr Sorathep wrote, and revoking it would sup-

port the restaurant sector, economic growth and the government's campaigns to increase tourism-related revenue.

The alcohol sales restriction was introduced more than five decades ago – reportedly to stop some government officials from partying and drinking in the afternoon.

Bangkok Post



Photo: Bangkok Post

Government planning to launch new Muay Thai visa for foreigners

THE GOVERNMENT PLANS to introduce a special visa for foreign tourists who want to visit Thailand to practise Muay Thai, it has been announced.

The proposed visa will allow such tourists to stay for up to 90 days to complete their course.

Pimol Srivikorn, an adviser to the prime minister and chairman of the government's subcommittee for driving

sports-related activities, said members decided at a meeting last Friday (Jan 12) to promote Muay Thai as one of the country's so-called soft powers.

With a tourist visa, a foreigner can stay in Thailand for up to 60 days but with a special visa for learning Muay Thai, they could stay for 90 days, he said.

The government will set a

standard level to be attained at the classes and also certification for Muay Thai teachers so the national fighting art can be accurately disseminated around the world, he said.

In addition, the government will promote Muay Thai through the NowMuayThai.com website, a platform for foreigners interested in the sport, to choose courses around Thailand. Bangkok Post

Army drug rehab plan sparks rights concerns

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

A government initiative to open rehabilitation centres for drug addicts, also known as rakjai centres, in 52 army barracks nationwide is sparking human rights concerns among civil society groups.

Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin has previously highlighted drug problems in the country and the government's plan to use military premises to provide drug rehabilitation programmes.

Since then, Defence Minister Sutin Klungsang has decided that the centres will initially assist 4,414 drug addicts in 85 districts of 30 provinces via 60, 90 or 120-day treatment options.

However, military-style drug rehabilitation methods have raised abuse concerns.

Thissadee Sawangying, director of the Health and Opportunity Network, said the Civil Development Center, a military-run rehab centre, has long existed and served as a



The proposed move to use military premises to provide drug rehabilitation programmes has drawn widespread criticism. Photo: Bangkok Post

facility for people convicted of illegal drug use, who are then monitored by the military.

However, she expressed concern about mistreatment of certain patients such as those suffering from mental illness and transwomen, with the latter often treated as servants by their male counterparts.

She urged the government to come up with a clear list of criteria for enrolling drug addicts into the programme to enhance transparency and allow the civil sector to perform checks and balances.

Also, she said drug rehabilitation must be voluntary,

based on universal harm reduction values and human rights principles.

"It is still a question why the military has to take charge of dealing with drug use while it is actually not the role of the military to do so," she said.

Gloria Lai, regional director of the International Drug Policy Consortium, also raised concerns, saying the military are not health experts and should not be involved in the delivery of health services to the public.

Ms Lai praised Thailand's efforts to reduce harm under its new Narcotic Codes. How-

ever, she said she is concerned compulsory treatment is still in place for drug users.

Not all people who use drugs need treatment, only those who are willing, she said.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, about 10% of drug users may experience dependency or usage problems.

"I think harm reduction, if you are going to make it voluntary, means you have to allow people a degree of freedom and liberty to choose what they like," she said.

"You think of those who have diabetes, high cholesterol or high blood pressure, for example," she said.

"It is up to them to choose whether they seek health services or not.

"If you are going to use a health-led approach, that means you cannot criminalise the activity any more."

People can be discouraged from taking drugs without the need for compulsion, in the same way that public safety campaigns discourage people from smoking or drinking to excess, she said.

Officials sued for lost B2bn deposit on huge gloves order

BANGKOK

THE PUBLIC Warehouse Organisation (PWO) is suing its former chief and six other officials for return of a B2 billion deposit made on a B112bn purchase of rubber gloves which were not delivered during the COVID-19 pandemic.

PWO director Kriangsak Prateepvisut said on Monday (Jan 15) that prosecutors had already been asked to take legal action against the seven officials. The Comptroller-General's Department held the seven responsible for the damage to the project, which was for the procurement of 500 million rubber gloves.

Mr Kriangsak said the department fingered the officials last month. They had withdrawn B2bn from the PWO's account to pay the deposit to the contracted supplier. The seven targeted officials included former acting PWO director Pol Col Rungroj Puttiyaphiwat.

Criminal action was also underway. Assets had been impounded from the

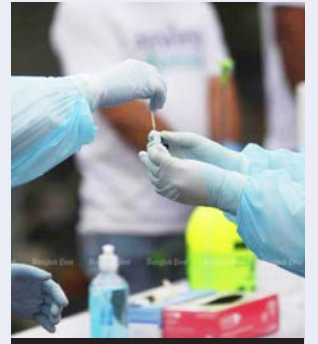


Photo: Bangkok Post

suspects and included land, luxury cars and motorcycles and expensive watches and bags.

Pol Col Rungroj earlier denied any corruption and said he had expected the 2020 procurement project to make a profit for the organisation.

The deposit was paid to Guardian Gloves Co, the contracted supplier, which received orders from the PWO to supply rubber gloves which were in high demand during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the deposit, the PWO never received a single pair of gloves and the organisation cancelled the contract.

Bangkok Post

Phang Nga sites confirmed to contain high lithium content

PHANG NGA

TWO MAJOR LITHIUM DEPOSITS IN Phang Nga have been confirmed by a Thai geochemistry expert to have a higher content of lithium than many other key deposits in the world, it was confirmed on Jan 12.

Asst Prof Alongkot Fanka, a petrology and geochemistry expert at Chulalongkorn University, said that the lithium sites in the southern province are two of the world's most abundant deposits in terms of lithium-bearing minerals.

The average lithium content found in Phang Nga is about 0.4%, which is considered better than counterparts found in other parts of the world, he said.

Asst Prof Alongkot said lithium deposits come from the crystallisation of magma on the Earth's crust and are related to granite – commonly found in the South.

He added that the lithium deposits in Phang Nga are also associated with tin deposits in the area.

His finding backs a statement made by the Ministry of Industry that Thailand's lithium deposits have good potential to serve the government's plan of making the country a hub to make electric vehicles and parts.

Previously, on Jan 3, Aditad Vasinonta, acting deputy director-general of the Department of Primary Industries and Mines, said



Phang Nga province. Photo: Bangkok Post

that the department had granted a license for lithium exploration in three sites in Takua Thung district of Phang Nga.

In one exploration site called Ruangkiat, at least 14.8 million tonnes of lithium (with 0.45% lithium oxide) were found. In another exploration site called Bang Etu, an estimation of the lithium volume was in progress, according to Mr Aditad.

If granted a lithium-mining licence, the Ruangkiat site alone would be able to serve at least 1 million electric vehicles that use a 50kWh lithium battery, he said.

"As the government is trying to attract new EV manufacturers to come and build their production base in Thailand, plenty of lithium sources will help make the government's bid highly likely to be successful," he said.

Mr Aditad said that the department is speeding up the process for lithium exploration and is looking forward to granting new lithium mining licences as soon as possible. Bangkok Post



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Rajabhat Fair set to return

The Phuket News

editor1@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket Rajabhat University's annual 'Rajabhat Fair' will return this year, from today through to Jan 28, with expectations of generating more than B30 million for the local grassroots economy and raise money for educational scholarships.

Chada Thaiseth, Deputy Minister of Interior, is set to preside over the opening ceremony on Jan 19, it was announced at a press conference held at the university, north of Phuket Town, last week.

The Rajabhat Fair is a collaborative effort between Phuket Rajabhat University and the Phuket Rajabhat University Business Promotion Committee (KHS), explained Dr Manop Chachiyo, Vice President of the university,

The event, set to take place at the Phuket Rajabhat University Auditorium, aims to generate income for scholarships and support university development. It will also showcase the university's academic and local development projects.

Additionally, booths selling OTOP (One Tambon, One Product) products from across Thailand will be set up, aligning with electric vehicle innovation events, amusement parks, and lucky draw activities, he added.



Dancers take to the stage at the event last week announcing that the annual Rajabhat Fair will be held from Jan 19-80. Photo: PR Phuket

"The Rajabhat Fair is positioned as a major event for the beginning of 2024, combining academic presentations, local development showcases, and tourism activities. The fair is anticipated to draw attendees from Phuket and neighbouring provinces, as well as both Thai and international tourists," Dr Manop said.

"The fair will feature booths showcasing renowned OTOP products from around the country, organised by the

Thai OTOP Company for Society. The fair will also feature academic presentations, local development displays, and various activities such as workshops, competitions, and exhibitions," he said.

Visitors can expect to see presentations on AI technology for education, Smart Farmer management, short courses for developing professional skills in tourism, and demonstrations of modern educational technology in

science and agriculture. The fair aims to celebrate arts, culture, and local wisdom, Dr Manop noted.

"In addition to the academic and developmental aspects, attendees will have the opportunity to explore a motor show, enjoy performance activities, and participate in exciting contests to win prizes," he said.

Vice-Chancellor Dr Bunsuphap Tanday expressed gratitude on behalf of the organisers for the collaborative efforts in developing the university in multiple dimensions.

Dr Wiphaphan Kusuwan, Chairman of the Phuket Rajabhat University Business Promotion Committee (KHS), emphasised the mission of promoting scholarships for those in need, creating educational opportunities, and fostering educational equality.

"The Rajabhat Fair serves as a platform to showcase the university's work and progress to the public, expanding networks for future collaborations and supporting the university's development through additional activities," he said.

The fair is expected to not only provide entertainment but also create a significant impact on the local economy. The Rajabhat Fair aims to generate more than B30mn for the grassroots economy, channelling it towards scholarships and contributing to sustainable social development," Dr Wiphaphan added.



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January/February 2024 issue

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Anyone But You

David Griffiths

When it comes to modern day filmmakers who impress their audience, director Will Gluck's name may not be one that springs straight to mind – but perhaps it should. Since making his filmmaking debut back in 2009 with the outrageously funny *'Fired Up'*, Gluck has been one of those filmmakers that makes it awfully hard to pick exactly what kind of project he is going to work on next.

With comedy hits like *Friends With Benefits* and *Easy A* under his belt, Gluck then surprised cinema lovers with a lacklustre remake of the hit musical *Annie*. Realistically that was probably a classic that should never have been remade, but Gluck soon made up for that error of judgment but delivering two films that instantly became family classics – *Peter Rabbit* and its sequel *Peter Rabbit: The Runaway*.

Now Gluck returns to his roots with a brand new romantic comedy – *Anyone But You* – which technically is a modern day telling of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Plotwise everything kicks off after the ill-fated meeting between the successful Ben (Glen Powell – *Top Gun: Maverick*) and the confused-about-life Bea (Sydney Sweeney – *Euphoria*). They seem perfect for each other but things

sour in the morning when Bea sneaks out and then hears an angry Ben venting his spleen to his best friend, Pete (GaTa – *Dave*).

Flashforward to a few years later and the pair are forced to spend time with each other at the wedding of Bea's sister, Halle (Hadley Robinson – *Little Women*), and Pete's sister, Claudia (Alexandra Shipp – *Dark Phoenix*), in Australia.

And if seeing each other and having to deal with the chemistry and awkwardness that the encounter brings is not enough, there is added pressure as Ben has to deal with coming face to face with his ex-girlfriend Margaret (Charlee Fraser – *Tom Ford: Boys & Girls*).

Then just to turn the heat up a little more the parents of the brides, Leo (Dermot Mulroney – *My Best Friend's Wedding*), Innies (Rachel Griffiths – *Muriel's Wedding*), Roger (Bryan Brown – *Cocktail*) and Carol (Michelle Hurd – *Star Trek: Picard*), put so much pressure on them that Ben and Bea decided to fake a relationship just to get everything to settle down.

Anyone But You is far from the classic comedies that Will Gluck made early on in his career, but it is still a film that you will find that you will thoroughly enjoy by watching it. The key to making it work as a film is to get the audience to fall in love with Ben and Bea and that is exactly what the screenplay, co-written by first-time feature writer Ilana Wolpert, does. Both



Glen Powell and Sydney Sweeney in *Anyone But You* (2023). Image: IMDB

characters are easily likable and even though we see the 'bad side' of what happens between them you can't help but hope that things mend themselves.

The film is also made up of the kind of comedy that will appeal to most audience members. You will laugh throughout and in a surprise for a modern-day romantic comedy the humour is not crass. Instead, it borderlines on the more believable side of things in a way that actually enhances the laughs and makes the film even more likable.

The cast also seem to lap up the opportunity to make this film enjoyable. There is genuine chemistry between Sydney Sweeney and Glen Powell, which just adds to the believability of the film, while it is obvious that screen legend Bryan Brown fully embraces the chance to do comedy. Sure a lot of the scenes that involve comedy for him seem a little cheesy but they are guaranteed to have the audience giggling as well.

Those who are willing to give *Anyone But You* a go will also be treated to

some stunning cinematography by Danny Ruhlmann (*The Raven*) that makes the Australian beaches around Sydney a must visit on everybody's travel lists. The setting of this film at times feels like it becomes another character and very much part of the plot.

Anyone But You is certainly not the film of the year but it is a film that fans of romantic comedies are quickly going to warm to. The performances of Sydney Sweeney and Glen Powell will have audiences warming to their characters very quickly in a story that is both humorous and believable.

Anyone But You is currently screening in Phuket and is rated '15'.

3/5 Stars

David Griffiths has been working as a film and music reviewer for over 20 years. That time has seen him work in radio, television and in print. He is also an accredited reviewer for Rotten Tomatoes. You can follow him at www.facebook.com/subcultureentertainmentaus

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POP QUIZ

- Which Thai monarchs are featured on the reverse side of the latest B1,000 banknote?
- Can hippos swim?
- The four 'Little Women' of the classic novel of the same name are Beth, Jo, Amy and who?
- In which year was the machine gun invented?
- Where was Donald Trump born?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Medium

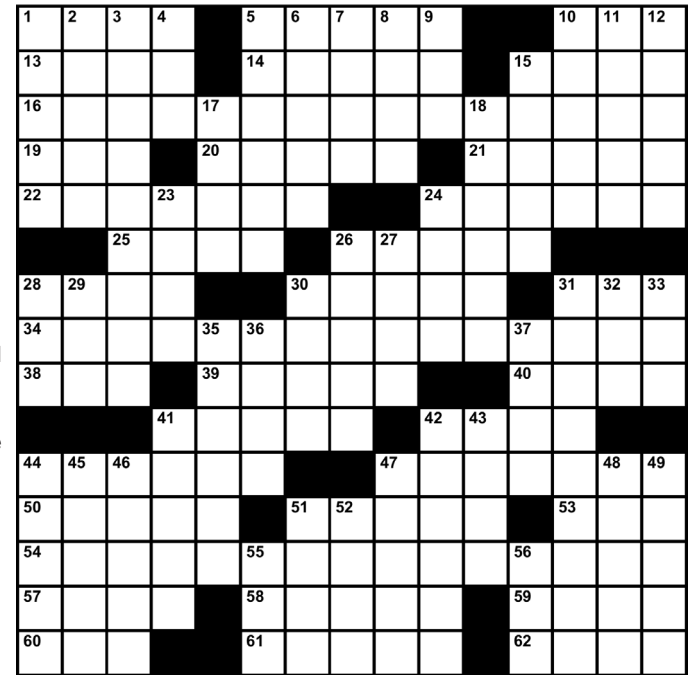
		8		9	1			
	6		4				8	
		1	2			4		5
3						6	7	
4								8
	2	6						4
8		5			9	3		
	7				5		1	
			7	1		8		

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across**
- Sandwich bread
 - Mike holder
 - Trophy
 - C or B followers
 - Showing fear
 - Ancient marketplaces
 - Puzzling impressions
 - Overturn
 - Some are inert
 - Chips in
 - Regal
 - Slothful
 - Manipulates
 - Fountain orders
 - Earthenware pot
 - Angry looks: var.
 - ___ chi ch'uan
 - Deja vu, e.g.
 - Photographer Goldin
 - Sporting surprise
 - Fedora feature
 - Dull
 - Tournament passes
 - Come unglued
 - Be together
 - New Mexico's state flower
- Down**
- Deals
 - Indigenous Canadian
 - Tent material
 - Champ of 10/30/74
 - Peers
 - Not neat and clean
 - Bistro
 - Barely manages, with "out"
 - Cataract site
 - 1,000 escudos
 - Prods
 - Out of style
 - Conclusion
 - S-shaped curve
- Across**
- Attack locale
 - Your and my
 - Unusual atmosphere
 - Frigg's husband
 - Type of wrestling
 - Stallion's mate
 - Cut
 - Torch's misdeed
 - Gravity-powered vehicle
- Down**
- Trendy
 - Peter, e.g.
 - Gumbo ingredient
 - Brooklyn's ___ Island
 - Dethrone
 - Fess (up)
 - Meadow
 - Lacking
 - Twisted or turned
 - Blackbird
 - Doctrine: suffix
 - Fruit-bearing tree
 - Detect
 - Surefooted goat
 - Pie choice
 - Sweet treat
 - Himalayan legend
 - Disinfectant brand
 - Better
 - Money substitute
 - Band
 - Bolivian capital
 - In a tough spot
 - Alarm
 - Butts into
 - Fed. property manager
 - Printers' widths

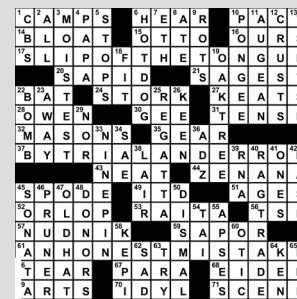
Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

(1) King Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX) and King Maha Vajiralongkorn (Rama X); (2) No; (3) Meg; (4) 1884; (5) New York (Jamaica Hospital, Queens)



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

6

people in the US die from alcohol poisoning every day.

88

percent of New Year's resolutions fail.

250

percent is how much using a warm air dryer after washing your hands can increase the bacterial count on your hands.

666

is the sum of all the numbers on a roulette wheel.

370,000

tons of wood are burned each year in pizza ovens in São Paulo, Brazil, becoming a surprisingly significant source of pollution.

62.5 trillion

US dollars per gram is how much antimatter costs, the most expensive material on the planet.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Sunrise at Saphan Hin. Photo by Sutharat Khaodee

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

This week in history

Jan 19, 1997

Yasser Arafat returns to Hebron after more than 30 years and joins celebrations over the handover of the last Israeli-controlled West Bank city.

Jan 20, 1225

The first English parliament to include not only Lords but also representatives of the major towns holds its first meeting in the Palace

of Westminster, now commonly known as the 'Houses of Parliament'.

Jan 21, 1911

Henri Rougier wins the first Monte Carlo Rally in a Turcat-Méry 25 Hp.

Jan 22, 1901

Queen Victoria dies, and Edward VII is proclaimed King of the United Kingdom.



Queen Victoria, 1819–1901.

Jan 23, 1556

The deadliest earthquake in history, the Shaanxi earthquake, hits China. The death toll may

have been as high as 830,000.

Jan 24, 1972

Japanese Sgt Shoichi Yokoi is found hiding in a Guam jungle, where he had been since the end of World War II.

Jan 25, 1924

The 1924 Winter Olympics opens in Chamonix, in the French Alps, inaugurating the Winter Olympic Games. Source: Wikipedia

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Grow Boating Evening

We look forward to seeing you at the Grow Boating Evening at the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar at the Phuket Boat Lagoon from 5pm on Friday the 2nd of February. We are delighted to announce that our drinks sponsor for the evening will be the Thailand Marine Guide. The Thailand Marine Guide is a tool for yacht owners arriving in Thailand and those residing here. See thailandmarineguide.com There will be a delicious buffet sponsored by the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar for all attendees and as always, all your favourite beverages will be available from the bar. Come and join in the fun, everyone is welcome and there is no entry fee. If you know anyone you think would be interested in coming, please invite them along. Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket Grow Boating is kindly supported by our media partner The Phuket News, Live 89.5 radio and Phuket News TV. See www.thepuketnews.com

MON 22 JAN



Monday BBQ Night

6 PM onwards: All you can eat BBQ buffet cooked to order. Beef, Pork, Chicken, Burgers, Sausages, Fish, Prawns & Squids, salad buffet and veggies, Choice of potatoes, cold and hot sauces, Bread, Buns & garlic bread. We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 395 baht P.P. Kids under 12 years old: 195 baht P.P. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/shakersphuket Oliver, Shakers restaurant 98/18 Vises Road, Rawai 83130, 081 891 4381



Reginald D Hunter Stand up

We start 2024 with legendary US/UK comedian Reginald D. Hunter! You have seen him on QI, Live at the Apollo, and on his own series for the BBC: Songs of the South and Songs of the Border. Now you get to see him LIVE doing a full comedy set at Phuket Marriott Resort & Spa, Merlin Beach. Free for hotel guests, THB 1,000 on the door for non hotel guests. Phuket Marriott Resort & Spa, Merlin Beach

WED 24 JAN



Wednesday BBQ Night

6 PM onwards: All you can eat BBQ buffet cooked to order. Beef, Pork, Chicken, Burgers, Sausages, Fish, Prawns & Squids, salad buffet and veggies, Choice of potatoes, cold and hot sauces, bread, buns & garlic bread. We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 395 baht P.P. Kids under 12 years old: 195 baht P.P. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/shakersphuket Oliver, Shakers restaurant 98/18 Vises Road, Rawai 83130, 081 891 4381

THU 25 JAN



FTI Green Fair 2024

Organised by the Phuket Thai Industries, and held at Robinson Chalong Phuket Mall, the event will

showcase electric vehicle innovations of all types, motorcycles to the trucks. Solar cell panels and other renewable energy innovations, and financial consulting, all emphasizing the use of clean energy and preserving the environment.



Stand Up with Reginald D Hunter

We start 2024 with legendary US/UK comedian Reginald D. Hunter! You have seen him on QI, Live at the Apollo, and on his own series for the BBC: Songs of the South and Songs of the Border. Now you get to see him LIVE doing a full comedy set at the Junkyard Theatre in Phuket! Tickets at www.junkyardtheatre.com/eve

WED 31 JAN

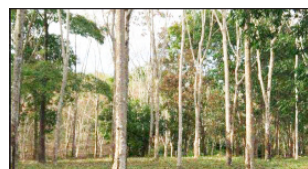


Phuket Jewelry Fair 2024

Phuket Chamber of Commerce will host the Phuket Jewelry Fair during 31 January to 4th of February 2024. Held at the Floresta Mini Convention Hall Central Phuket, visitors will enjoy the jewels and gems gallery by the leading Phuket brand jewelry, a Diamonds & Ruby Fashion Show, seminar from The Gem and Jewelry Institute of Thailand (G.I.T), plus free real gems verification by G.I.T. For more info please visit picphuket.com/phuketjewelryfair

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The Lai Thai Condominiums is a 4 star condominium project located in central Ao Nang, 700 meters to Ao Nang Beach in Krabi's central tourist district. There are multiple types of units for sale: Studio- 40 sq meters - starting at 5 million baht One Bedroom - 60 square meters starting at 7 million baht Two bedroom - 95- 120 square meters starting at 11.5 million baht Penthouses - 145 - 155 square meters starting at 15 million baht The project operates under a full hotel license and offers a rental management program, with 24 hour security and Reception. To see all the facilities go to www.laithai-resort.com and for more information contact info@laithai-resort.com



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CLASSIFIEDS

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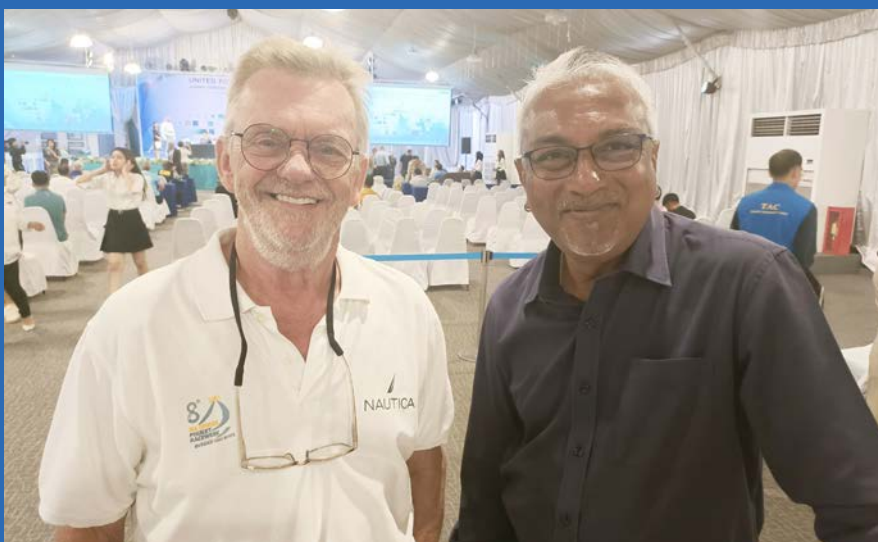
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UNITED FOR MARINE SAFETY

A wide range of Phuket government departments including the Phuket Governor, Vice Governor, Marine Department and many more joined hundreds of local marine and tourism operators in committing to new safety standards in the Phuket marine industry. The event was held at the White House at Phuket Boat Lagoon on the evening of Jan 15 and saw everyone in the room agree that changes need to be made now.



Suvichaya secures spot at Honda LPGA Thailand

GOLF

AMATEUR STAR SUVICHAYA Vinijchaitham has earned the privilege to participate in the Honda LPGA Thailand 2024 and compete alongside 72 of the world's top women golfers at Siam Country Club Old Course in Pattaya next month.

Suvichaya, 17, won the two-day Honda LPGA Thailand 2024 National Qualifiers at Siam Country Club Rolling Hills in Pattaya on Jan 11 to secure qualification for the leading event which takes place between Feb 22-25.

The Khon Kaen native took the lead in the first round and secured the championship with a total score of nine-under-par on the second day.

Alisa Inprasit secured second place with a total score of eight-under-par.

"I am overjoyed and incredibly proud to see my dreams come true," said an elated Suvichaya following her win.



Suvichaya. Photo: Bangkok Post

"The competitive journey has been remarkable, and I extend my thanks to the Honda LPGA Thailand for consistently offering a platform for Thai golfers to participate in the top-notch competition.

"Looking ahead to the Honda LPGA Thailand 2024 next month, I am committed to giving my best performance and enjoying the game to the fullest. Being given this opportunity to compete is truly a memorable and valuable experience for me," she added.

The Honda LPGA Thailand 2024 National Qualifiers is a part of the 'Road to Honda LPGA Thailand' initiative, which is aimed at promoting the development of golf among youth and emerging players.

Bangkok Post

Hong Kong Sevens set for final stadium bow

RUGBY SEVENS

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

In its final staging at the iconic Hong Kong Stadium before a move to the new Kai Tak Sports Park stadium in 2025, the renowned Cathay / HSBC Hong Kong Sevens returns to its roots in welcoming teams from across Asia to the world's biggest rugby party from Apr 5-7.

The Hong Kong Sevens has a long and proud history of featuring the top men's teams in Asian sevens and the 2024 Melrose Shield men's competition will be no different, featuring the sevens teams of China, Japan and hosts Hong Kong. The women's Melrose Shield tournament will feature China, Hong Kong, China and Thailand.

The competitions will take the format of a six-match, round-robin tournaments interspersed throughout the three-day Hong Kong Sevens that will keep fans on the edge of their seats, while also returning Asian rugby to the fore of the world's most famous Sevens tournament.

In recognition of their shared global sevens legacies, Hong Kong China Rugby and Melrose RFC, the birthplace of Sevens in Scotland, will exchange trophies for their respective famed rugby sevens tournaments.



This year's Hong Kong Sevens takes place on Apr 5-7. Photo: Supplied

The trophies for the men's and women's teams in Hong Kong will be named the Melrose Shields, while the Hong Kong Shield will be presented to the shield winner of the U18s Sevens competition at Melrose with the Jim Telfer Cup already awarded to the tournament champions.

Hong Kong and Japan are perennial participants dating back to the first Hong Kong Sevens in 1976, while China joined the Hong Kong Sevens party in 1998 and will be making their first appearance in the stadium since 2012.

In the women's competition, Thailand will feature in a Hong Kong Sevens weekend for the first time in the tournament's 47-year history.

After Hong Kong, China's men's seven edged Japan in the final minute for Asian Games gold last September, Japan turned the tables in similar fashion at November's Olympic qualifiers – setting

up an enticing decider at Asia Rugby's most historic sevens tournament.

All of the Melrose Shield teams will relish the opportunity for a competitive hit-out in front of 40,000 cheering fans in Hong Kong.

"The team are excited to be appearing inside the Stadium once again and I am also looking forward to coaching them at one of the world's great rugby occasions," said new China women's coach Andy Vilks, who was part of England's cup-winning squad in Hong Kong in 2006.

"The support from the crowds they received last April has helped build their self-belief and fuelled our progress at the Asian Games and at the Olympic Qualifiers and the girls are hungry for more competitive opportunities," he added.

For more information about the tournament, visit: www.hksevens.com.

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10.3 Km. MINIMARATHON
21.5 Km. HALF MARATHON

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FEBRUARY 2024

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Page : ประชาสัมพันธ์เทศบาลตำบลวิชิต Facebook : กองการศึกษา ทอ.วิชิต

Photo: PR Phuket

Wichit set to host 16th annual run

RUNNING

KEEN RUNNERS AND amateurs alike have been invited to join the upcoming annual Wichit run, scheduled to take place on Sunday, Feb 4.

The 16th edition of the hugely popular event will offer something for all by incorporating a 4-kilometre fun run, a 10.3km mini marathon and a 21.5km half marathon.

Organisers confirmed in a post on Facebook on Jan 12 that all three races will

begin at Suan Sriphuwanat in Village No. 1, Wichit, although a specific start time was not provided in the post.

There are entrance fees attached to all three race categories as follows: fun run B250; mini marathon B300; and half marathon B450.

Medals and trophies will be distributed to finishers in all three race categories although exact details on this were not specified when the announcement of the event was made.

Registration is now open and can be done at: <https://sites.google.com/view/running-wichit>

vichit.

Participants can collect their race T-shirts and bibs between Feb 1-2 at the 2nd floor of the Education Division of the Wichit Subdistrict Municipality and on Feb 3 at Suan Sri Phuwanat between the hours of 9am and 6pm.

More information can be accessed at the Wichit Education Division Facebook page, via Line at @709zpgzz or by calling 076-525100 ext 170-173 during standard business hours.

The Phuket News

Nighttime run confirmed

MARATHON

ORGANISERS HAVE confirmed a nighttime fun run and mini marathon will take place in Talat Yai next month to encourage increased exercise among local residents.

Taking place at Suan Luang (Rama IX Park) Park on Saturday, Feb 24, the event will incorporate a 3.6 kilometre fun run and a 10.5km mini marathon.

The fun run will be mixed and open to both male and female competitors, divided into age specific categories: under 19 years old; 20-29 years of age; 30-34 years of age; 35-39 years of age; 40-44 years of age; 45-49 years of age; 50-54 years of age; 55-59 years of age; and 60 years of age and above.

The mini marathon is divided into male and female competition defined by age groups as follows for men: under 19 years old; 20-29 years of age; 30-34 years of age; 35-39 years of age; 40-44 years of age; 45-49 years of age; 50-54 years of age; 55-59 years of age; 60-64 years of age; and 60 years of age and above.

The mini marathon is di-

การแข่งขัน เดิน-วิ่ง
DISCOVER PHUKET NIGHT RUN 2024

วันที่ 24 กุมภาพันธ์ 2567 เวลา 21:00 เป็นต้นไป ณ สวนเฉลิมพระเกียรติ 72 พรรษา นารายณ์ (ลานมังกร)

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สมัครออนไลน์: <https://soft.events/run/discover-phuket-night-run>

Photo: Sports Association of Phuket

vided into the following age groups for female competitors: under 19 years old; 20-29 years of age; 30-34 years of age; 35-39 years of age; 40-44 years of age; 45-49 years of age; 50-54 years of age; 55 years of age and above.

There will be trophies distributed to the top five finishers in each age category of the fun run and both male and female categories of the mini marathon. There will also be cash prizes in each age category in the men's and women's mini marathon of B3,000 for first place, B2,000 for second place and B1,000

for third place.

The entry fee per competitor for the fun run is B300 and B350 for the mini marathon and both will start at 9:30pm.

Once registered participants can collect their race shirt and bib from the Youth Center Building at the Saphan Hin sports center on Feb 22-23 between 9am and 7pm.

Registration is now open at: <https://soft.events/run/discover-phuket-night-run>.

For more information contact Mr King on 087-419-1015, LINE ID: @softevents, Facebook: Softevents.

The Phuket News

De Bruyne masterclass inspires City to victory

FOOTBALL

AFP

Pep Guardiola said Manchester City showed the heart of champions to fight back to beat Newcastle 3-2 last Saturday (Jan 13) thanks to a Kevin De Bruyne masterclass on his return to Premier League action.

The Belgian came off the bench to score and set up Oscar Bobb's stoppage-time winner to announce his comeback from a five-month injury layoff in style.

Victory takes City up to second in the table, two points behind Liverpool, and ominously poised to strike when they return from a two-week winter break, by which point Erling Haaland may be fit to join De Bruyne in terrorising opposition defences.

"That was really good, sometimes it is better winning that way," said Guardiola.

"We played with a huge personality. They showed me they want to be there, to fight until the end that they want to retain the title.

"When Kevin has the ball and we have runners, Kevin is unique in the world but the finish by Oscar, I am so, so happy for him," added Guardiola.

It was Newcastle's sixth defeat in their last seven Premier League games which may have realistically ended their hopes of a top-four finish as they slip to 10th, still 11 points adrift of the Champions



De Bruyne celebrates his goal. Photo: AFP

League places.

In last Saturday's other game Chelsea overcame Fulham 1-0 in the west London derby thanks to a first-half penalty by Cole Palmer, a result which sees the Blues climb into ninth place in the table.

On Sunday Manchester United failed to welcome the club's new co-owner Jim Ratcliffe to Old Trafford with a win as Tottenham twice came from behind to claim a 2-2 draw.

Ratcliffe was in attendance for the first time since agreeing a deal to take a 25% stake of the English giants for US\$1.3 billion (B57.8bn).

Both Rasmus Hojlund and Marcus Rashford struck for United in the first half, either side of Richarlison's equaliser, before Rodrigo Bentancur's strike in the

first minute of the second half levelled the scores once more.

A point moves Tottenham level with north London rivals Arsenal, just outside the top four only on goal difference.

But they will be the happier with the draw as they remain eight points ahead of United, who edge up to seventh.

"Outstanding performance given the challenges we had to put a team out," said Tottenham boss Ange Postecoglou, who was missing captain Son Heung-min, who is away at the Asian Cup, among five first-team regulars who were absent.

In Sunday's other game Everton drew 0-0 with Aston Villa, a result that leaves Villa in third place level on points with Manchester City and Everton in 17th place, a point above the relegation zone.



The Thai team in training in Doha. Photo: Bangkok Post

War Elephants confident going into Asian Cup

FOOTBALL

THAILAND MIDFIELDER Sarach Yooyen on Sunday (Jan 14) claimed that the War Elephants were in good spirits ahead of their Asian Cup Group F opener against Kyrgyzstan in Doha on Tuesday.

Thailand will also take on Oman and former champions Saudi Arabia with the top two from each of the six groups reaching the last 16, along with the four best third-placed teams.

"Right now, every player is nearly 100% ready for the first match and everyone is eager to play in this competition," said Sarach.

"Our goal in this tournament is to qualify for the knockout phase. This is a major

Asian event and every player is keen to put in best effort."

Teammate Supachok Sarachat added that the team he and the entire team have confidence in coach Masatada Ishii.

"I have worked with Ishii at Buriram United... he is a very good coach," said Supachok.

"He pays a lot attention to details. He also makes an extra effort make players understand every bit of his plan.

"We have the confidence but I think we have to accept that we are not in the same league as the top Asian teams.

"However, we have the ability to put up a fight and that is what we are going to do here in this tournament.

"We are very keen to leave a lasting impression on everyone and I hope we will succeed in doing that." Bangkok Post

Stars to gather in Hua Hin for Thai Open

TENNIS

ORGANISERS CONFIRMED on Jan 10 that the WTA-sanctioned tournament will take place from Jan 29-Feb 4 at Arena Hua Hin.

China's Zhu Lin could have a tough time defending her Thailand Open crown this year as the field is studied with big names like Poland's Magda Linette and former world No.2 Paula Badosa of Spain.

Former deputy prime minister of Thailand and honorary chairman of the country's tennis association Suwat Liptapanlop told a press conference in Bangkok on Jan 10 that a number of top-ranked players would be taking part in this year's event.

"Besides defending champion Zhu Lin, Poland's world No.24 Magda Linette, who was a semi-finalist at the Australian Open last year, and former world No.2 Paula Badosa of Spain have confirmed their participation in the tournament," said Suwat.

"The other top players



Zhu Lin poses with the trophy after winning the tournament last year. Photo: Bangkok Post

in the event will be Wang Xinyu, Maria Tatjana, Sherif Mayar, Yulia Putintseva and Anna Karolina Schmiedlova.

"Hua Hin is a major tourist attraction and Thailand Open has traditionally attracted some world-class players in the past. This is the fourth edition of the tournament which be televised live to the world.

"Once again this year, the organisers will arrange special activities to showcase the Thai culture, cuisines and the country's martial arts."

Thailand's former world No.9 in men's singles rankings Paradorn Srichaphan will act as the organising director of the tournament.



Paradorn said: "This year, we will be granting some of the talented Thai tennis players wildcards to take part in the event.


"They include 19-year-old Lanlana Tararudee, who is ranked No.258 in the world. She has been given a wildcard to the main draw.

"Three players have been given the wildcards to the qualifying round. They are Thasaporn Naklo (No.415), Thai-Russian Viera Deeperm (No.2,041) and Lydea Podkorichanee, another Thai-Russian player.

"We hope these players will gain good experience from the event."

Bangkok Post



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Sport



Iconic stadium hosts its final HK7s > p14

GOING WITH THE FLOW

Nathan riding the flowriding wave

Nathan in action at the Bangkok Flow Wars last year. Photo: Supplied

FLOWRIDING

Ben Tirebuck
editor3@classactmedia.co.th

Flowriding as a sport has exploded in popularity in recent times and one particular young Phuket resident has truly been riding the wave.

Flowriding incorporates elements of traditional surfing, snowboarding, wakeboarding and skateboarding and takes place in a customised facility that pumps water at pace to replicate a wave.

Partaking in flowboarding, participants will stand upon the board, similar to traditional surfing, while bodyboarding will see the participant kneeling or in a drop-knee position.

Nathan Lowry first stepped onto a surf simulation board at

the popular Surf House venue at Patong Beach back in 2017 when he was just 11 years old and has been transfixed with the sport ever since.

“I went with a friend, just to take a look and have some fun, not really knowing what to expect,” Nathan, now 17, recalls.

“However, almost immediately it grabbed a hold of me – it was so exciting and enjoyable and I very quickly became a regular there.”

In doing so Nathan got to know the instructors well, some of whom were part of the official Surf House Phuket Team who had competed in both the annual Asian Flow Tours (AFT) and World Championships.

As he continued to develop and hone his skills, Nathan advanced to competition, com-

ing third in the junior category at the Pattaya leg of the AFT qualifiers in 2018 and second in the junior division of the AFT Grand Finals in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the same year.

However, despite such progress, he was eager to become part of the Surf House Phuket Team and grab a bigger piece of the action. Being the only non-Thai though meant he had to work extra hard to prove himself, eventually doing so after completing a series of especially challenging flow tricks that comprised ‘the test’. Unfazed and determined, he succeeded and managed to secure a place on the team and was soon competing with them in the AFT in Thailand and Malaysia.

MAKING HIS MARK
A British citizen, Nathan was

born in Bahrain and has lived in Thailand since late 2008. In 2019 he turned professional in both flowboarding and bodyboarding and immediately made his mark at international level by finishing first place in both the men’s open bodyboard and open flowboard categories at the AFT Grand Finals in Chongqing, China.

That same year he finished 1st in the men’s flowboard open and 2nd in the men’s bodyboard open classes at the AFT qualifiers in Kuala Lumpur, while managing to grab top spot in both classes at the AFT Singapore qualifiers at Wave House, Sentosa Beach.

COVID-19 enforced a break in competition, but Nathan soon was back on the board and competing again as soon as possible.

In 2021 he also took up

surfskating, a form of skateboarding that replicates the experience of surfing on dry land, finishing in 3rd place in the men’s open class at the Blue Tree Skate Park Competition and becoming a team rider for Shaka Shaka Skate Park Phuket shortly after.

Last year Nathan became a team rider for Aquaflow USA, competing in both the Bangkok Flow Wars (1st place open flowboard, 2nd place pro flowboard, and 2nd place pro bodyboard) and the Splash Mania Surf Battle in Malaysia (1st place pro flowboard and 2nd place pro bodyboard). He also received invaluable flowboard sponsorship from Aquaflow USA in the process as part of the deal.

Unsurprisingly Nathan is keen to pursue a career in the flowriding leisure industry and is currently applying to

study sports coaching and development at a UK college. One day he aspires to work on major cruise liners, many of which now have flowrider wave facilities onboard.

“I am thankful to everyone that has helped, supported and encouraged me along the way to help me get to where I am and where I one day hope to be,” he adds. “My family, friends, colleagues, sponsors and the team at Surf Day Phuket (formerly Surf House) who have contributed regular practice sessions to enable me to enhance my performance and reach my current level.”

It is this humble and respectful attitude that has seen Nathan develop from the early days to where he now stands and there is little doubt there is still much more ahead for the young man.

ONE Championship fighter Aminipour dies in Phuket crash

PHUKET

POLICE CONFIRMED THAT ONE Championship Muay Thai fighter Fariyar Aminipour passed away following a motorcycle accident in Phuket on the morning of Jan 11.

The highly-rated 23-year-old Iranian national, who trained at the Tiger Muay Thai & MMA Training Camp on Soi Ta-ia in Chalong, was involved in an incident near the exit of the tunnel on Chao Fa West Rd in Rawai around 8am.

Pol Lt Col Wiriyaphong

Srinuanpan from Chalong Police Station was notified of the accident and proceeded to the scene shortly afterwards to discover Aminipour’s body laying stricken on the road and a damaged Yamaha big bike nearby.

Aminipour had endured a heavy injury to his head and was rushed by ambulance to Chalong Hospital, where he received emergency medical treatment but was later pronounced dead.

Police revealed initial investigations suggest Aminipour lost control of the bike and collided with the curb before crashing.

Photos of the accident scene taken by a passerby suggest Amin-

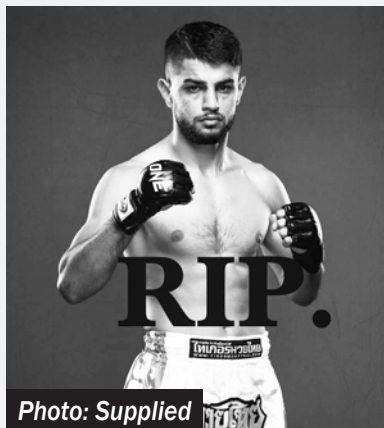


Photo: Supplied

ipour had suffered serious head trauma in the incident.

Aminipour had fought five times for ONE Championship, Asia’s larg-

est sports media property, winning four of his bouts.

His most recent contest was on Dec 22 last year when he suffered a loss to Kulabdam Sor Jor Piek Uthai on the undercard of Tawanchai vs Superbon at ONE Friday Fights 46 at Lumpinee Stadium in Bangkok.

Tributes immediately appeared on social media channels following the confirmation of Aminipour’s passing, with Muay Thai Authority posting on Facebook: “So sad to hear about the loss Nak Muay Fariyar Aminipour – Our condolences to his family, partners and Iranian community. You will be remembered, rest in peace warrior.”

Aminipour’s gym Tiger Muay Thai took to Instagram to pay tribute to “the extremely talented” fighter who would be “missed greatly and will remain in all of our thoughts”.

“At only 23 years old, lion-hearted Fariyar had already accomplished so much, and was well on track to achieving his dream of becoming a ONE world champion. Gone far, far too soon due to a tragic accident,” the Instagram post said.

ONE Championship CEO Chatri Sityodtong confirmed last Sunday (Jan 14) that the company would pay the B350,000 costs to repatriate Aminipour’s body back to Iran.

The Phuket News