

OFFICIALS READY TO LAUNCH 'BOAT TAXIS' > PAGE 2

PUMP IT



Photo: Max Ebb

PHUKET SPLASHING B100MN A DAY ON FUEL, WITH MOST BURNED IN TRAFFIC

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Phuket motorists are burning through more than 1 million litres of fuel every day, and that number is only going to get higher, the Chief of the Ministry of Energy Phuket office has warned.

According to figures obtained by *The Phuket News*, Phuket people spent B13.7 billion on gasoline and diesel in 2024 – about B37.534 million a day.

Last year, the entire country spent B36.5bn on fuel – about B100mn a day – meaning that Phuket motorists last year bought 37.5% of all fuel bought in the country.

Rattakorn Klinchan, Chief of the Phuket Energy Office, warned

that without better public transport, EV adoption and renewable energy, costs will only continue to climb as traffic congestion and tourist numbers increase.

“The rise in cars, residents and tourists is directly linked to higher fuel consumption,” he said. “Much of that fuel is literally being burned in traffic,” he added.

Phuket’s fuel consumption is dominated by gasoline, reflecting the high number of private vehicles on the island, unlike other provinces, which rely more on diesel, Mr Rattakorn noted.

In 2024, Phuket’s gasoline consumption reached 205 million litres while diesel consumption reached 190mn litres – giving a combined total of 561,643 litres a day. Motorists using alternative

fuel LPG burned through a total 22.2mn kg last year, Mr Rattakorn explained.

“Compared to 2023, gasoline use in 2024 increased by about 8%. It is difficult to calculate so far, but at this stage it looks like [overall fuel consumption in 2025] will increase by even more than 8%,” he added.

COSTS AND REVENUES

Fuel prices in Phuket are generally higher than in Bangkok, as all fuel on the island is brought to Phuket by truck, Mr Rattakorn also noted.

In Phuket, 95 petrol costs B34.04 per litre, while in Bangkok it costs B33.11, he said, citing figures from last week.

While the different types of petrol are only about B1 more

expensive than in the capital, altogether over a year the price difference does have a significant effect on per capita costs, he noted.

While Phuket motorists are paying at the pumps, local authorities get to use some of that money for their own purposes.

“Price structures include excise taxes, municipal taxes, energy conservation fund taxes, oil fund contributions, marketing fees and VAT, with the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) collecting an additional 4.54 satang per litre on gasoline and diesel sold in Phuket,” Mr Rattanakorn explained.

At the rates given, the PPAO last year alone received B9.3mn from gasoline sales and a further B8.626mn from diesel...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



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PHUKET'S QUALITY TILE BOUTIQUE

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News

Candidates register for Sakhu election

THE FIRST DAY OF registration for the Sakhu Tambon Administrative Organisation (OrBorTor) election saw a lively atmosphere on Monday (Sept 15), with two major teams entering the race to lead the subdistrict through what promises to be a closely watched contest.

At 8:30am, the meeting room on the third floor of the Sakhu OrBorTor office was filled with supporters, as the Phuket office of the Election Commission of Thailand (ECT Phuket) officially opened applications for candidates.

The strong turnout highlighted local residents' enthusiasm and interest in shaping the future of Sakhu, a key economic and tourism area in Thalang District.

Two high-profile candidates are contesting the position.

Pol Lt Ekkapoj Phangnga, leading 'Team Power Sakhu', has pledged to "open council affairs to the public" with policies focused on transparency, accountability and active citizen participation. His campaign proposes live broadcasts of council meetings and open hearings to ensure the public is involved at every stage.

His rival is veteran local politician Trin Panyawai, better known as 'Mayor Noi', who has previously served three terms as Sakhu OrBorTor Chief.

Running under 'Team Love Sakhu', Mr Trin has adopted the policy "Con-



Photo: PR Phuket

tinuing Work, Creating New Work," promising to build on existing projects while launching new initiatives to establish Sakhu as a "Subdistrict of Opportunity" through close collaboration with residents.

The election was triggered by Mr Trin's resignation from the top post in August, requiring the ECT Phuket to call a fresh vote within 60 days under the Local Election Act of 2019.

Candidate registration will remain open until Friday (Sept 19), from 8:30am to 4:30pm daily, at the Sakhu OrBorTor offices.

A lottery draw on Monday determined the ballot numbers: Pol Lt Ekkapoj's Team Power Sakhu was assigned No. 1, while Mr Trin's Team Love Sakhu will appear as No. 2. The announcement sparked cheers and celebrations from supporters on both sides.

Sakhu OrBorTor is responsible for areas from Phuket International Airport down to the border with Chermg Talay, and includes Nai Yang Beach.

Polling day has been set for Sunday, Oct 26.

The Phuket News

Burning through fuel

Continued from page 1

SUBSIDIES

As most long-term residents know, petrol and diesel prices in Thailand are relatively cheap compared with other places around the world, namely because of the often-overlooked 'Oil Fund'.

During her brief year in office, former Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra made great strides in reducing the Oil Fund deficit, abused by former administrations to falsely keep fuel costs down, from B95.333 billion in October last year to B22bn at the time she was removed from office earlier this month.

Mr Rattakorn explained that while diesel prices are directly controlled by subsidies from the Oil Fund, gasoline is not directly subsidised.

Instead, gasoline prices are directly controlled by government intervention by instructing PTT petrol stations to raise or lower prices. Other operators are forced to match price changes in order to remain competitive.

If and when deemed necessary, PTT receives what the government likes to call a "refund" – not a "subsidy" – as reparations for any losses incurred by the mandated price changes.

Regardless, fuel subsidies and consumption come at a high cost, Mr Rattakorn said.

"Traffic congestion, rising global oil prices and subsidies combine to put enormous financial pressure on the province and the Oil Fund," he explained.

"The island is served by 72 petrol stations, a high number for such a small province, reflecting its high-energy demands and tourist traffic," he added.

Explaining how much the subsidies cost the government, Mr Rattakorn noted, "The Thai government subsidises diesel to keep prices below B33 per litre. It is



Photo: The Phuket News

currently subsidised at B0.33 per litre... But after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, oil prices soared and the government was forced to subsidise diesel by as much as B2 per litre."

FREE FLOW

Large-scale road infrastructure projects are essential to ease traffic congestion and reduce wasted fuel, said Mr Rattakorn.

Projects such as the Muang Mai – Koh Kaew – Kathu Expressway (including the Patong Tunnel), the Pa Khlok road expansion and the decades-in-coming light rail system are intended to cut travel times and lower fuel demand, he explained.

"The project of expanding the roads helps reduce fuel consumption, but only modestly," Mr Rattakorn admitted. "If Phuket cannot implement a light rail or expand public transportation, building more roads will only provide limited relief."

"It does not guarantee that the number of cars and motorbikes on the roads will decrease, so the impact on fuel consumption and congestion will be small."

Decisions on whether to accelerate these projects are still ongoing, but Mr Rattakorn agrees that without faster implementation, traffic congestion and

fuel costs will continue to climb.

EV EASE

EV adoption is growing in Phuket, though challenges remain, Mr Rattakorn said. "Electric vehicles help cut fuel use and emissions, costing the average user around B2,000 per month compared to B5,000 for gasoline."

"Battery degradation and limited charging infrastructure are obstacles, but future developments with replaceable batteries will help," he said.

EV buses, in particular, are having a measurable impact. "Electric buses reduce diesel consumption and fuel subsidies, which is good for both the PPAO budget and the Oil Fund," Mr Rattakorn said.

However, he added, "EVs help lower fuel costs and emissions, but they do not solve traffic congestion alone. Expanding the EV bus fleet, along with affordable EV tuk-tuks and better route planning, is one of the most effective ways to reduce both congestion and overall fuel spending."

Public transport improvements are crucial, Mr Rattakorn said plainly. "Developing electric trains, buses and affordable EV tuk-tuks will reduce private vehicle use, congestion and fuel consumption," he concluded.

Officials start clearing red tape for 'boat taxis' along west coast

ATTTHAPHON CHAROENCHANSA, Director-General of the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP), was in Phuket last Friday (Sept 12) to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that will help clear the way to allow a 'boat taxi' service operate along Phuket's west coast.

The MoU was signed between Mr Attthaphon and Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat at an event at Phuket Provincial Hall.

The MoU aims to advance the Boat Taxi project, enhancing

the water public transport system, reducing traffic congestion, and increasing travel options for tourists and the public, said an official report of the event.

Also participated in the signing were Therdthai Kwanthong, Director of the DNP's Protected Area Management Office 5, and Natchapong Pranit, Director of the Phuket Marine Office, and other relevant agencies.

Representatives from the private sector were also present for the occasion, said the report.

The project aims to create a pilot route from Sirinat National Park, Nai Yang Beach, near Phuket



Photo: Phuket Marine Office

International Airport, to Patong Beach. The 16.7 nautical mile journey takes only 40 minutes, compared to the current 1.5-3 hour travel time by land during rush hours, the report noted.

The initial development of 14 port locations covers key tourist areas such as Nai Yang, Nai Thon,

Bang Tao, Kamala, Patong, Karon, Kata and Nai Harn beaches.

The project emphasizes convenient, safe, and environmentally friendly services, with safety monitoring measures such as monitoring boat routes via AIS, GPS, and VHF radios, said the report.

"The project continues to prioritize assessing ecological impacts, particularly sea turtle nesting areas, and ensuring legal mooring buoys and piers. Sirinat National Park has already submitted a permit application, and the Phuket Marine Office will submit the matter to the Phuket

Provincial Waterways Encroachment Review Committee on Sept 16, chaired by the Phuket Governor," the report added.

However, the western coast route will only operate during the high season – from November to April – due to southwest monsoon weather conditions.

The 'boat taxi' project has been on officials' agendas for many years. In 2014, the Cabinet approved a budget of B240 million to build a passenger jetty at the Phuket International Airport, allowing people to arrive by air and then travel on by boat to where they are staying. *The Phuket News*

Slain police officer honoured

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The Royal Bathing Ceremony for Pol Lt Prajak Thahanthai, the Phuket narcotics suppression officer killed in a shootout during a drug raid last week, was held at Wat Wichit Sangkharam (Wat Kuan) in Phuket Town on Sept 9, with senior police commanders, provincial leaders, colleagues and grieving relatives in attendance.

The ceremony at the Phra Khru Pariyatanuyut Hall was presided over by Phuket Vice Governor Adul Chuthong, together with senior commanders of Region 8 Police and Phuket Provincial Police.

Among them were Pol Maj Gen Saran Chamnanrat, Pol Maj Gen Wimon Phithakburapha, Pol Maj Gen Narongrit Dansuwan and Phuket Provincial Police Commander Pol Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum. Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) President Rewat Areerob and dozens of officers also paid their respects.

The atmosphere was filled with sorrow as relatives, including Pol Lt Prajak's six children, gathered to honour his life and service. Royal water was bestowed on his body and he was



Photo: PR Phuket

posthumously promoted seven ranks to Pol Lt Gen. He had earlier been awarded the Order of the Crown of Thailand, the highest honour in police service.

THE FATAL RAID

Pol Lt Prajak, 56, Deputy Inspector of Crime Suppression and Prevention at the Phuket Provincial Police Investigation Division, was fatally shot on Sept 8 while leading a raid on a drug trafficking gang hiding in a room at the Andaman Apartment complex on Soi Yai Chan in Wichit.

As officers entered the room, a suspect fled into the bathroom and refused to surrender. When police attempted to open the door, the man opened fire, striking Pol Lt Prajak in the chest. He later died of his injuries at Vachira Phuket Hospital.

The gunman, identified as 24-year-old drug dealer Somphon 'Tao' Kaewbamrung, was killed when police returned fire. Police have assured that the killing of the suspect will be properly investigated.

Two men and one woman

were arrested at the scene and taken to Phuket Provincial Police Headquarters for questioning.

The Royal Thai Police expressed condolences to Pol Lt Prajak's family and announced an initial B2.7 million welfare payment. His promotion to Police Lieutenant General was formally conferred on Sept 9.

Pol Maj Gen Saran Chamnanrat, Deputy Commander of Region 8 Police, attended the royal bathing ceremony as representative of National Police Chief Pol Gen Kittirat Phanphet. Ceremonies included a water-pouring rite at 3pm, the Royal Bathing Ceremony at 4pm, and evening prayers at 5pm.

LIFE AND SERVICE

Born in Trang Province on Sept 12, 1968, Pol Lt Prajak was the fifth of seven children of Mr Chuen (deceased) and Mrs Phin Thahanthai, who is now 90 years old. He first studied at Sawat Rattanaphimuk School before gaining a vocational certificate in welding from Trang Technical College. He later joined the 10th class of the Police Cadet Academy (Region 8 Police Training Centre).

He entered the police force on Feb 1, 1994, and served for more than 31 years, most recently as

Deputy Inspector in the Investigation Division. His career highlights included serving as a sergeant major in 2015 and later as platoon commander, before becoming deputy inspector in 2023. At the time of his death, he was earning a salary of B49,010 as a commissioned officer, Level 40.

Divorced, Pol Lt Prajak leaves behind six children: Katanyawara (22), Phatthathat (19), Khemharsorn (17), Katanyawalee (19), Kantaporn (8) and Kantapich (6).

Speaking to reporters outside Vachira Phuket Hospital, his eldest brother Kunanpong Thahanthai said the family was devastated, especially as their elderly mother could not travel to attend.

"I never expected my younger brother to die on the day of our family reunion to remember our grandparents, a traditional time of merit-making in southern Thailand," he said.

"But I am proud of him. He devoted himself to his duty and served the country with all his strength until his last moments. He was truly dedicated."

Following the ceremony in Phuket, his body was transported to his hometown in Tambon Na Yong Tai, Trang Province, for funeral rites at Wat Khok Phikun.

Minister to tackle drugs in Rawai Sea Gypsy community

JUSTICE MINISTER POL Col Thawee Sodsong has vowed stronger measures to tackle the persistent drug problem in the Sea Gypsy village in Rawai, while also addressing wider community issues of land, flooding and youth vulnerability.

Pol Col Thawee visited the community last Saturday (Sept 13) together with officials from the Office of the Narcotics Control Board, the Corrections Department, Phuket ISOC, Chalong Police, Rawai Municipality and other agencies.

"The drug problem here has been ongoing for years, despite strict enforcement and many arrests," Pol Col Thawee said. "It cannot be solved by law enforcement alone. We need treatment, rehabilitation, prevention and suppression to work together."

He stressed that strengthening the community through career opportunities, youth activities, and education was essential to reduce vulnerability.



Photo: PR Phuket

"Rawai's Sea Gypsy village is a traditional community with its own cultural identity, but it faces land issues, insecure incomes and limited opportunities. These conditions increase the risk of drug involvement, especially among youth as young as 12 and 13 years old," he said.

To help relieve hardship, the minister said he would request Corrections Department officials to assign well-behaved inmates to support community development activities. He also instructed related agencies to integrate efforts with local leaders and residents to build resilience against drugs and create long-term solutions.

Arrest figures underline the seriousness of the problem. From February to

September this year, officers in Muang District reported 29 drug arrests, seizing 1,747 methamphetamine pills (ya bah) and 20.74 grammes of crystal meth (ya ice). Chalong Police made 31 arrests, confiscating 1,701 meth pills and 114.28g of crystal meth.

Local leaders echoed the need for sustainable approaches. Panwong Hiran-chai, a village security officer, said Phuket's tourism-driven economy made income readily available, fuelling risky behaviour.

"Changing lifestyles cannot happen overnight. It requires ongoing promotion of community development, including activities that draw on our cultural identity and align with tourism," he said.

Pol Col Thawee reaffirmed his commitment: "The Sea Gypsy community must become a drug-free area. To achieve this, the government must take the issue seriously, not only with suppression but also by supporting the well-being of our people."

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PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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TUE SEPTEMBER 23



High: +35°
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Wind 4 m/s

WED SEPTEMBER 24



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Low: +28°
Wind 4 m/s

THU SEPTEMBER 25



High: +36°
Low: +27°
Wind 4 m/s

Safety ramped up after car sinks

HEIGHTENED SAFETY measures will be rolled out at Phuket Boat Lagoon after a foreign driver accidentally drove his car down a submerged slipway and into the marina basin during heavy rain last week.

A video of the incident went viral on social media Sept 9, showing the vehicle slowly sinking into the water.

The car, carrying a foreign driver and one passenger, was attempting to cross floodwater in heavy rain when it bypassed traffic cones and entered the hardstand area, normally reserved for boats being hauled out for maintenance.

Unaware that he had driven onto a yacht slipway, the driver continued forward and plunged into the water. Both the driver and passenger managed to escape with their belongings before the car sank. Staff later used a crane to recover the vehicle.

While many social media users criticised the driver for ignoring warning signs, others noted that a rising tide can make the ramp difficult to distinguish from a flooded road.

Phuket Marine Office Chief Natchapong Pranit told *The Phuket News* that Phuket Boat Lagoon is



Screenshot: Supplied

private property, meaning his office had no legal authority to take action.

Phuket Boat Lagoon management had explained that a female tourist in the back seat had urged the driver to continue through the floodwater, leading him directly onto the ramp, Mr Natchapong said.

Despite clear signage, the driver followed the instructions and drove into the marina, he added.

Phuket Boat Lagoon confirmed that it had the right to sue the driver and his passenger for breaching safety warnings but instead resolved the matter peacefully. The driver accepted responsibility and agreed to cover the damages, Mr Natchapong noted.

In response to the incident, Boat Lagoon has pledged to enhance safety by installing a barrier to prevent vehicles from mistakenly entering the slipway again, Mr Natchapong confirmed.

Natnaree Likidwanasakun

Patong Police tackle tuk-tuks illegal parking

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Patong Police have launched a campaign to deal with illegal parking by tuk-tuks and taxis along Patong's busy roads, where the drivers routinely stop in red-and-white no-parking zones and obstruct traffic.

The campaign is being carried out under the direction of Patong Police Chief Col Chalermchai Hirasawat, with oversight from Lt Col Somporn Surin of the Investigation Division and Lt Col Chamnan Sapsin of the Traffic Control Division. Day-to-day enforcement is led by Lt Jaruwat Thiamnakha and the Patong traffic unit.

On average, police issue tickets to 30-40 vehicles per day for parking in red-and-white zones, obstructing traffic or stopping in restricted areas. Officers say the workload is heavy, with around 500-600 tickets issued each month, yet many drivers quickly return to the same spots.

"Even if they pay the B500 fine, they come back and do it again," one officer



Photo: Patong Police

explained. "We try to be flexible if someone is just dropping off or picking up customers, but constant violations make it very difficult."

Residents have long complained about illegal parking on Patong's busy beach road, accusing police of failing to act. Officers counter that they are enforcing the law but face limitations: some say they cannot impound vehicles, and unpaid fines often require lengthy follow-up notices.

Traffic police say they are under pressure from all sides – residents demanding order, taxi and tuk-tuk drivers questioning Grab and 'black plate' cars (illegal taxis), and senior commanders pushing for results.

According to the law,

only motorcycle taxis are permitted to occupy fixed queue spaces, but Patong has designated 24 parking areas. In practice many are overcrowded, with drivers choosing to park in restricted zones. The drivers say that the lack of space "forces" them to do so.

"We want people to know the police are working," an officer said. "We just don't post about it online. The problem isn't a lack of enforcement – the issue is that the penalties are too light to deter repeat offenders."

While Patong Police officers *The Phuket News* spoke to urged drivers to respect traffic laws, they warned that stricter measures may be required at the legislative level to ease congestion on Patong's busiest roads.

Woman killed by ice truck

A 31-YEAR-OLD WOMAN was killed when her motorcycle was struck by an ice truck on Thepkasattri Rd in Srisoonthorn, Thalang, on Sept 10.

The accident occurred at about 7:50am near the Poon Tra Nok U-turn point on the outbound side of the road, Thalang Police reported.

The victim, named by police as Rattanaporn Bunchu, a local resident of Srisoonthorn, was pronounced dead at the scene.

Police said the truck, a Hino bearing Phuket licence plates, was being driven by 31-year-old Narong Chumkaew from Songkhla.

The vehicle reportedly lost control before colliding with Ms Rattanaporn's



Photo: Thalang Police

motorcycle and dragging it into a roadside power pole, which was also damaged in the crash.

Forensic officers and medical examiners conducted an initial examination at the scene, after which Ms Rattanaporn's body was taken to Thalang Hospital. Her relatives in Chumphon have been notified.

At last report the truck driver had been taken into custody while the investigation continued, Thalang Police confirmed.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Prize machines seized

THALANG DISTRICT OFFICIALS have shut down around 50 unlicensed claw machines across the district, warning venue operators they face prosecution if the machines are not removed.

The inspections, carried out from Sept 6-9, targeted convenience stores, shopping malls – including Robinson Lifestyle Thalang – and other venues, the Thalang District Office reported on Sept 12.

Each machine was immediately shut down, with official notices attached, and operators were given 15 days to remove them.

The responsible persons for each venue were fined B2,000 per machine under Ministry of Interior orders issued on Sept 2 to enforce the Gambling Act B.E. 2478 (1935).

"Operators must strictly follow the law. Those who continue running unlicensed claw machines after notification will face strict legal action," the Thalang District Office said in its report.

According to the office, claw



Photo: Thalang District Office

machines fall under List B, No. 28 of the Gambling Act, as the coin-operated games create a win-lose situation between the player and the operator, classifying them as gambling devices.

Running such games without a licence carries a penalty of up to two years in prison, a fine of B2,000, or both. However, the Ministry of Interior has instructed all provinces not to issue permits for claw machines and to strictly prohibit their operation, the Thalang District Office noted.

The Thalang District Office also warned that venue owners who provide space for such machines could face prosecution with the same penalties for indirectly promoting or supporting illegal gambling if they fail to remove them after being officially notified. *The Phuket News*

Cherng Talay amid boundary spat

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Manoch Panchalad, Chief of the Cherng Talay Tambon Administrative Organisation (OrBorTor), is fighting a legal claim against his office for issuing building permits for areas in Bang Tao that are contested as not in his area of jurisdiction.

The legal claim against Cherng Talay OrBorTor was filed by Cherng Talay Municipality, which is responsible for the Cherng Talay areas inland from the beach.

Central to the dispute is a series of conflicting official maps that show different boundaries for the two local administrations.

"The issue initially arose from a decree in 1963, which created Cherng Talay OrBorTor and designated which areas it was to manage," explained Cherng Talay Municipality Mayor Suniran Rachatapruek.

"The first map was drawn by the District Chief, who may not have visited the area when drawing it, or the equipment at that time may not have been advanced enough to produce accurate boundaries," he said.

"But the current problem isn't just about the land. I've seen that Cherng Talay OrBorTor never took care of Moo 1-4, while



Cherng Talay OrBorTor Chief Manoch Panchalad.
Photo: PR Phuket

Cherng Talay Municipality collects taxes and provides services for residents in those areas," Mr Suniran added.

He stressed that the municipality has been collecting taxes to fund water and electricity improvements, install utility poles, carry out repairs and provide other amenities.

"On behalf of Cherng Talay Municipality, I have filed a legal claim because this is an area we've managed since the beginning. The taxpayers know the municipality has been working to improve the area and address problems. Suddenly, the OrBorTor comes in and says, 'This is ours,' but it isn't," he argued.

"That area is [a source of]

municipal revenue. Cherng Talay OrBorTor has never looked after it. Since Chief Manoch has been appointed, he won't listen to or understand what we're saying," he said.

"I'll wait until January. We can't resolve this with him," Mr Suniran concluded, referring to the nationwide elections to be held early next year to elect new OrBorTor chiefs.

STEADFAST

Mr Manoch maintains Cherng Talay OrBorTor "overlaps with parts of the Cherng Talay OrBorTor's jurisdiction, creating uncertainty over which authority is responsible".

"While maps have been drawn

up to demarcate the boundaries, no consensus has been reached," he said.

"The OrBorTor covers six villages in total. It fully covers Moo 2 [Baan Bang Tao], Moo 3 [Baan Hat Surin], Moo 4 [Baan Pasak], Moo 5 [Baan Bang Tao Nok] and Moo 6 [Baan Khok Tanode], while also covering part of Moo 1 [Baan Cherng Talay] – the same village that falls under the municipality," Mr Manoch said.

"It seems like the boundaries described in the map don't match up. Some areas don't correspond when checked on site," he added.

Mr Manoch refused to respond directly as to whether Cherng Talay OrBorTor provides municipal services to residents in those areas – but did repeatedly say that his office has the right to issue building permits, and collect taxes from residents, in those areas.

LAST CHANCE

Phuket Vice Governor Samawit Suphanphai earlier this week chaired a meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall in the hope of resolving the dispute.

Mr Manoch and a team of officials from Cherng Talay OrBorTor were present, to present their case.

"Regarding taxes, anyone

applying for a permit should pay the taxes in that jurisdiction, so as not to burden the private sector or the public. Since we issued the permits, we should receive the taxes," Mr Manoch said.

"After the meeting, we concluded that the Vice Governor should file a complaint with the Ministry of Interior," he added.

While calling for a complaint to be filed with superiors, Mr Manoch still recognised the claim filed against his office.

The issue has now reached the Phuket Administrative Court (Black Case No. 10/2024), which is considering the case.

Vice Governor Samawit confirmed that he has forwarded the matter to the Ministry of Interior for consideration, following recommendations from the Provincial Public Works and Town & Country Planning Office.

The provincial committee has approved a proposal for a correction of the official map to be used to mark the boundaries of the two administrations. The committee emphasised the need for transparency and minimal disruption for local residents, said an official report of the meeting.

"The province will comply strictly with the Administrative Court's ruling once it is delivered," Vice Governor Samawit said.

U-turns get Rotary, 'Safer Roads' boost

A ROAD SAFETY INITIATIVE spearheaded by the Rotary District 3330 and Patong Rotary Club working with the UK-based Safer Roads Foundation (SRF) has delivered dramatic improvements on Phuket's busiest highway, cutting fatalities to zero in its trial area and slashing travel times.

The 'Safe & Seamless U-Turn' project on Thepkasattri Rd (Route 402) was formally handed over to Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat at Provincial Hall on Sept 11.

Tasane Silpabut, SRF's representative in Thailand, presented the project alongside local partners to the governor, who praised it as a model for nationwide adoption.

Route 402, the major road linking Phang Nga, Phuket International Airport and the island's main tourist areas, has long been known for its notorious blackspots. Between 2019 and 2024, more than 340 injuries and 30 deaths were recorded at just eight U-turns and the Heroines Monument.

To tackle the danger, the SRF joined forces with Patong Rotary, Rotary Club District 3330, ThaiHealth, the Phuket Accident Prevention Network and local agencies including the Phuket Highways Office, Phuket Provincial Police and the Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO).

The pilot project saw barriers and cones installed to separate U-turn traffic, while the Thalang (Ban Kian) intersection was closed to reduce congestion.



The measures have proved highly effective, said an official report of today's handover event.

Over the past four months, no fatalities have occurred in the test zone. Travel times from Muang Mai to Koh Kaew have been cut by around 10 minutes, while ambulance response times from Thalang Hospital have halved on key routes.

Public response has also been positive: 90.5% of people surveyed supported the changes, two-thirds said they felt safer, and 40% reported reduced travel time.

On the back of this success, the SRF has funded a B6.23 million permanent upgrade of the U-turns and the roads around the Heroines Monument.

"This project shows how international cooperation and community action can save lives," Governor Sophon said at the handover.

"It will not only improve safety and efficiency in Phuket, but also provide a model for other provinces across Thailand." *The Phuket News*

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Tougher alcohol advertising, sales rules

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Royal Gazette has published a Royal Command enacting the Alcohol Control Act (No. 2), B.E. 2568 (2025), introducing stricter rules on the advertising, marketing and sale of alcoholic beverages in Thailand.

The Act, granted by His Majesty King on Sept 6 and formally published on Sept 9, is to take effect 60 days after its publication.

The revised law replaces the original Alcohol Control Act of 2008, updating key definitions, strengthening restrictions on marketing, and expanding the powers of the National Alcohol Policy Committee, which will now be chaired by the Prime Minister.

Among the most significant changes are new prohibitions on advertising and promotional activities. The law bans:

Advertising alcoholic beverages except for factual information, knowledge or public information permitted under ministerial regulations.

- Use of brand names, logos or celebrities' reputations to promote alcohol consumption.

- Indirect advertising, such as branding non-alcoholic products with alcohol-related names or symbols.

- Sponsorship of social or community activities in ways that



Photo: Bangkok Post / file

encourage alcohol consumption.

- Publicising or broadcasting events or activities linked to prohibited promotions.

Violations of these provisions carry penalties ranging from administrative fines of up to B20,000 to criminal penalties of up to six months' imprisonment or fines of up to B500,000, depending on the offence. Repeat violations may incur daily fines of up to B50,000 until compliance is achieved.

The law also imposes harsher penalties for illegal sales. Anyone selling alcohol outside legal hours or to prohibited groups faces up to one year in prison, fines up to B100,000, or both.

In addition, the Act repeals outdated regulations, including a Revolutionary Council announcement from 1972 and a 2015 order by the National Council for Peace and Order that restricted certain entertainment venues.

The government said the updates are necessary to modernise the 2008 law, which has been in effect for more than 15 years, and to ensure alcohol control measures remain effective and relevant. The legislation also aims to strengthen support for treatment and rehabilitation of people with alcohol dependence or related problems.

Deputy Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai counter-signed the Royal Command.

The powers and duties of the Acting Minister, the powers and duties of the Office, the powers and duties of officials, and provisions regarding alcoholic beverage control, advertising, promotion and support for the treatment or rehabilitation of alcoholics or those with alcohol-related problems, to be appropriate for the current situation, Deputy PM Phumtham said.

"Furthermore, it is appropriate to establish provisions regarding

the prohibition period for the consumption of alcoholic beverages in places or areas where alcoholic beverages are sold, places or areas where alcoholic beverages are served for commercial purposes, and penalties," he said.

"This aims to ensure comprehensive and unified alcoholic beverage control measures, as well as to enhance law enforcement efficiency. Therefore, it is necessary to enact this Act," he added.

Dr Paul Crosio, of attorneys Formichella & Sritawat, noted, "As per Section 43, the existing ministerial regulations from the 2008 law remain in effect unless they conflict with this new amendment. The relevant ministries have one year from the effective date (which is 60 days after its publication on Sept 9, 2025) to issue new detailed regulations that will specify the exact rules and procedures under this new law."

However, a notice by the Ministry of Public Health, noted, "It will come into effect from November 8, 2025 onwards."

Dr Crosio in his analysis also noted, "Since 27 June 2025, following a new Prime Minister's Office Notification on alcohol sales hours, Thailand has allowed extended sales in specific venues:

- International Airports – Lounges, bars, and duty-free shops may now serve alcohol beyond previous time restrictions.

- Licensed Hotels – In-room service is now allowed 24/7.

- Licensed Entertainment Venues – Extended hours until 4 am in designated provinces.

- General Retail Stores – No change; original sale hours remain in effect.

Regarding advertising and promotion, Dr Crosio noted that the new Act "dramatically broadens the scope of prohibited activities", as follows:

New Definition: "Marketing communications" now explicitly includes public relations, news dissemination, creating brand image and sponsoring events.

- Sec 32/1: Bans all advertising except strictly defined "information".

- Sec 32/2: Bans using celebrities/influencers to induce consumption.

- Sec 32/3: Bans using alcoholic brand names/symbols on other products (e.g., soda, clothing).

- Sec 32/4 & 32/5: Bans Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities that promote the brand and bans publishing news about such activities.

Among some good news, as highlighted by Dr Crosio, is that: "Section 3 now clarifies the exemption. Now explicitly excludes 'beverages with an alcohol content of not more than 0.5 percent' (e.g., many kombuchas, alcohol-removed beers), alongside drugs and herbal products."

Phuket targets B550bn for high season

PHUKET IS SETTING AN AMBITIOUS tourism revenue target of 550 billion baht for the upcoming high season, with early indicators suggesting a strong recovery approaching pre-pandemic levels in 2019.

Phuket Tourist Association president Thaneth Tantipiriyakit said the overall tourism outlook looks promising, reports the *Bangkok Post*.

He cited the rise in direct international flights – including a possible increase from China – as a positive sign for the end of the year.

Association members say advance bookings for November to January are robust, with high demand from both European and Asian markets.

Occupancy rates across the island are expected to average about 90%, similar to last year.

Mr Thaneth said performance in the first seven months of this year is already approaching 2019 levels before the pandemic.

He said both the private sector and the Tourism Authority of Thailand are urging the government to focus not merely on visitor numbers but on attracting quality tourists.

Indicators such as the length of stay among European and Asian travellers have shown a big improvement.

Mr Thaneth said tourism revenue is



Photo: Achadthaya Chuenniran / Bangkok Post

projected at B550bn this year – a 10% increase from the B498bn earned last year.

By July, earnings had already surpassed B290bn, leaving a further B200bn within reach.

He acknowledged that visitor numbers are unlikely to exceed 2019 levels due to Phuket's infrastructure constraints.

He warned that overcrowding could undermine the island's appeal as a destination for health and wellness travel while also affecting local residents.

Mr Thaneth also expressed gratitude to the police for addressing traffic bottlenecks on Thepkasattri Rd, the island's main north-south artery.

Measures included closing U-turn points and intersections.

While such changes disrupted daily routines, testing data from police suggested that travel from Phuket Town to the airport between 9am and 3pm now takes about 40 minutes, Mr Thaneth said.

Bangkok Post

Industry sees flaws in proposed Hotel Act

THE THAI HOTELS Association (THA) has expressed concern about attempts to revise the Hotel Act, saying any changes must ensure that tourist safety will not be compromised and shoddy operations will face consequences.

The association does not believe the 2004 Hotel Act has any loopholes, said President Thienprasit Chaiyapattanun. The problem is ineffective law enforcement, he said.

The group earlier submitted its feedback on two proposed drafts of a revised Hotel Act to the drafters: the Council of State and the Pheu Thai Party. It now plans to submit letters to Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul and the secretary-general of the Office of the Council of State, reiterating those concerns.

"We are worried tourist safety will be compromised by loose regulation that allows unsafe or modified buildings to operate," said Mr Thienprasit.

Ever since Airbnb pioneered its model of



Photo: Nutthawat Wichieanbut

accommodation sharing, the hotel industry worldwide has faced growing challenges from properties that are not regulated to the same strict standards as hotels.

In recent years, lawmakers in Thailand have been working on new regulations to encourage operators of unlicensed accommodations, such as hostels and homestays, to enter the system.

Mr Thienprasit said both of the new drafts that the THA has reviewed do not meet its expectations, as the criteria for registering accommodations in the system are too loose.

A hotel or daily accommodation is a property where guests or tourists may be unfamiliar with its

safety guidelines and the building plan, according to the THA.

Therefore, an accommodation with more than eight rooms should strictly follow the safety measures under the 2023 ministerial regulation on hotel operation, and ministerial regulation No.55 issued pursuant to the Building Control Act, he said.

"Thailand's top priority should be to restore tourism confidence in safety at all costs," said Mr Thienprasit.

The draft should also require operators of all accommodation types, except those with eight rooms or less and up to 30 guests, to be a registered company or juristic person in order to collect the full tax rate, Mr Thienprasit explained.

The registration of accommodations should not overrule the law that forbids daily rental in housing estates or condos, which disturbs long-term residents and homebuyers, noted the THA through its own release. *Bangkok Post*

Pledge to end wrongful bank account freezes

BANGKOK
Bangkok Post

Senate committees have proposed measures to combat a wave of wrongful account freezes as part of an effort to eliminate “mule accounts”, which have been affecting innocent citizens.

The Senate’s Economic, Finance and Banking Committee, together with the Legal and Justice Committee, held a press conference on Monday (Sept 15) to address rising concerns over the freezing of bank accounts linked to crackdowns on so-called mule accounts.

Senator Palawat Tansiri, spokesperson for the economic committee, acknowledged that efforts to combat online fraud and dismantle mule accounts were necessary, but warned that innocent citizens and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) were being severely affected.

He noted that complex financial transactions, com-



A vendor displays a sign which says ‘cash only’ at her stall on Soi Itsaraphap 24 in Thonburi, Bangkok. Photo: Bangkok Post

mon among small traders, were increasingly caught in sweeping freezes.

“While freezing accounts quickly may disrupt illegal transfers, in many cases it traps the accounts of innocent people, causing serious disruptions to trade and cash flow,” Mr Palawat said.

He cited lengthy and complicated procedures to unfreeze accounts, inconsistent enforcement standards among officials, and rising uncertainty as obstacles.

The committees proposed short-, medium- and long-term solutions.

In the short term, clear,

standardised criteria should be established nationwide to identify mule accounts – not based solely on the number of accounts or frequency of transfers. In the medium term, it is important to strengthen cooperation between state agencies and private sector stakeholders. In the long term, a centralised platform should be created for reporting and verifying mule accounts.

The panels also called for a unified database to be built of suspicious accounts, with a system designed to enable affected individuals to file appeals and provide

explanations.

In Khon Kaen, local vendors expressed growing concerns that any money transfers to their bank accounts, which authorities deem irregular, could result in an immediate freeze, despite the accounts being used solely for customer transactions.

A durian and seafood vendor reported that 70–80% of daily sales are paid via bank transfers, making cash-only sales nearly impossible.

“If my account is frozen, I won’t be able to buy stock. The business would collapse,” she said, urging the government to “fix the problem at its root, not just patch over it.”

In Nakhon Ratchasima, a chicken-rice restaurant posted a sign reading: “Temporarily suspending transfers and QR payments until further notice.” The owner said that with customers coming from across the province and beyond, he could not guarantee that incoming transfers were clean.

Thaksin sentenced to one-year jail term

BANGKOK

THE SUPREME COURT ordered former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra to be jailed for one year on Sept 9, ruling he improperly served a 2023 prison term in hospital.

The 76-year-old billionaire had been sentenced to eight years for corruption and abuse of power after returning to the country in August 2023 following years spent living in exile.

But he never spent a night in a cell – whisked to a private hospital room, his sentence was reduced to one year by royal pardon, before he was freed in an early release scheme for elderly prisoners.

“Sending him to hospital was not legal, the defendant knows his sickness was not an urgent matter, and staying in hospital cannot count as a prison term,” said the ruling read out by a judge.

The court then ordered the issue of a warrant to take Thaksin to Bangkok Remand Prison before he was transferred to Klong



Thaksin heads to jail. Photo: Bangkok Post

Prem Central Prison where he will serve the prison term.

There the remand prison governor took him through the admission process required for all new inmates under standard operating procedures.

Warders verified his identity, made a record, searched him, checked his health condition and checked-in his belongings.

After the ruling, Thaksin said in a social media post that he accepted the court’s decision and was grateful for His Majesty the King’s great generosity in commuting his sentence to one year.

Bangkok Post

Cabinet list to go to King this week

BANGKOK

PRIME MINISTER ANUTIN Charnvirakul has confirmed the new Cabinet list is complete and will be submitted for royal endorsement within the week.

The policy statement has already been prepared and shared with coalition partners for review, with each party asked to examine the sections relevant to their ministerial portfolios and suggest revisions to remove potential obstacles to implementation, Anutin said on Monday (Sept 15).

Once approved, the new government will swiftly deliver its policy statement to parliament and begin official duties.

On the subject of Cabinet composition and whether any nominees failed eligibility checks, he declined to comment, jokingly citing a sore throat.

He also addressed progress on background checks, stating that the Cabinet list is “100% complete”, with only final verifications pending before submission to His Majesty the King.

Anutin later led an economic team in a meeting with the Federation of Thai Industries (FTI), where he discussed industrial challenges, border trade issues and Thailand’s strategic role in ASEAN.

He hammered home the need to strengthen Thailand’s position as a regional economic hub and acknowledged concerns over the Thai-Cambod-




Anutin. Photo: Bangkok Post

ian border, noting that reopening checkpoints would require both military and diplomatic coordination once the government is up and running.

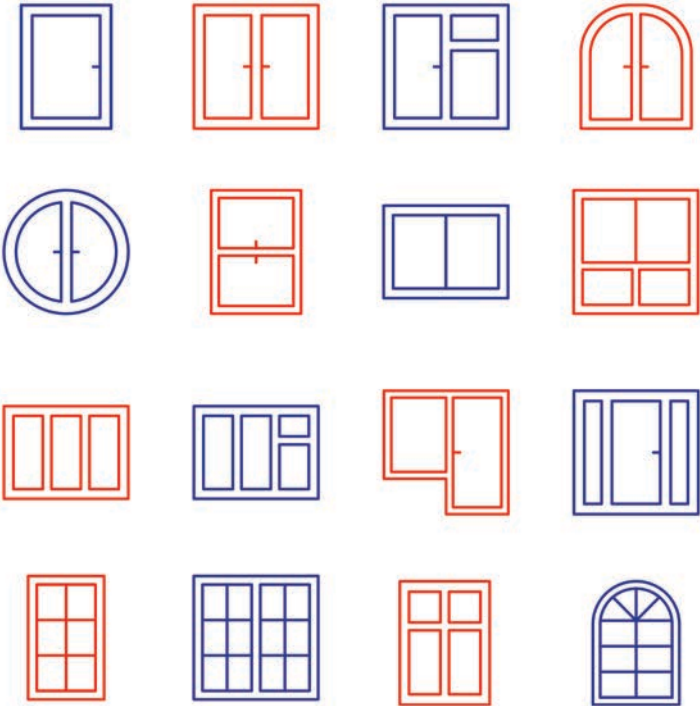
On the strengthening baht, Anutin said the issue must be addressed urgently. Regarding economic stimulus measures, he reiterated that while the government has not yet assumed full control, preparations are in place. “We’re ready behind the scenes. Once we officially take office, we’ll act immediately,” he said.


Asked about public expectations on the Khon La Krueng co-payment subsidy scheme, Anutin responded, “Yes, people can wait for it,” adding that the incoming finance minister will clarify plans once his administration begins.


On calls from a Senate committee to delay the Land Bridge project and work on inclusive consultations on the Southern Economic Corridor (SEC) bill, the prime minister said all perspectives will be considered. Bangkok Post




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Vinnie Modell: Phuket's Frontline Life Saver

Natnaree Likidwatanasakun
reporter1@classactmedia.co.th

For nearly a decade, Vinnie Modell, a volunteer rescuer, has been on the frontlines of Phuket's emergencies, facing everything from deadly snakes to serious accidents.

"A very long time ago, I came to Thailand. I had a motorbike accident. It was quite bad. I rolled maybe 15 times down the road. My first thought was, who's gonna help, to maybe speak English, completely bewildered," recalls Vinnie, reflecting on the experience that set him on a path to rescue work.

After his own accident, he began volunteering with Patong police for three and a half years. "Then I see the Kusoldham Phuket Foundation every time I work, and my Thai friend brought me here. And I worked with them," he said. Since then, Vinnie has become a familiar presence at accident scenes, snake rescues and beach emergencies across Phuket.

Life on scene

Working on Phuket's roads comes with constant danger. "People driving past the scene are often distracted. I've nearly been hit many times by motorbikes and cars. Drivers are focused on what's around them, not what's in front of them – cars, trucks, buses, motorbikes. It's a constant challenge because we have to watch the traffic instead of fully concentrating on the patient," he said.

Snakes, too, are a regular part of Vinnie's work. "'Jong Ang' [king cobra] was probably the most dangerous snake I've ever dealt with. I have been working and got bitten many times, but if you respect it and know what it can do, and what it can't do, you're normally safe," he said.

He recalls his first snake rescue as a lesson in patience and caution. "We got a call to catch a snake in Kamala. I had never dealt with snakes before. I stood



Vinnie Modell ready for action. Photo: Natnaree Likidwatanasakun

and pointed my flashlight at the snake around my feet, and I couldn't move. Then I went to learn about snakes. The important thing I learned is that the snake doesn't want to interact with me, I'm interacting with it. Every time you deal with a snake, you need to know it's going to protect itself; it may bite."

Warning tourists

Vinnie is also concerned about tourists underestimating the risks at Phuket beaches. "The problem is, foreign tourists don't listen to security guards. They think they know better. There's red flags saying, don't swim. And those tourists are going, why? Look, it's perfect. Even though the lifeguard says, rip current. And they don't listen because they know better."

He recounts tragic consequences of ignoring warnings: "Last year, a Thai doctor died on Karon Beach saving a tourist. Too much death. Most foreigners that day in Thailand are doing something stupid. People don't like honesty. They can't accept it's their fault."

Motivation and dedication

Despite nearly a decade of accidents, near-misses and snake bites, Vinnie remains driven by community and family. "If anything would motivate me, probably the

family in the Kusoldham Phuket Foundation. It's probably the reason I keep doing it," he said.

Whether on streets, beaches or in a dark house chasing a cobra, Vinnie's dedication continues to make Phuket safer for residents and tourists alike.

Volunteer rescue work comes at a personal price. Vinnie spends more than B200,000 each year on travel, and equipment. "I've spent B250,000 personally over the years," he said.

After nearly a decade, Vinnie's commitment shows no sign of slowing. "I'm not in this for money or fame. I just want to help," he said. He advises both tourists and locals to respect nature and heed safety warnings.

From snakes in homes and jungles to accidents on busy streets and underestimated beach currents, Vinnie has become a vital part of Phuket's safety network. His message is simple but powerful: respect rules and local culture.

Vinnie stresses that his work, and that of fellow volunteers, comes at no cost to those they rescue. However, the survival of the rescue service itself is under threat.

Our last-ditch attempt to save Rescue Team Volunteers Phuket & Snake Guy in Phuket:

"We have had a firm offer on the response car for B295,000. This will cover all debts and outstanding problems. But before we close the doors permanently, we are asking every one of our followers to make a donation. If each of you personally helps, we will be able to continue for many more years – already, we have been running for nine."

Donation details:

Kasikorn Bank (K-Bank)

Account No: 050-3-14570-7

Account Name: Vincent Cain Modell

For further information: WhatsApp 080-864-8092.
Facebook: Rescue Team Volunteers Phuket

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Photo from Jara's Restaurant (P)

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ChatGPT 5: The End of AI



THE AI EDGE

Joe Smith

Remember when AIs were going to improve themselves at the speed of light, achieve superintelligence and pave the world with data centres? That was supposed to happen about now.

But then, last month, ChatGPT 5 dropped like a dead albatross and suddenly all bets are off.

“Horrible”, “disaster” and “screwup” were some of the labels applied to the launch by outlets like *The Verge*, *Medium* and *Bloomberg Law*. The new model was so underwhelming that it made many rethink when, if ever, Artificial General Intelligence – the point at which AI will be better than humans at all intellectual tasks – will be reached. Redditors led a successful campaign to have the previously deleted GPT4 series models reinstated. In a world-first, OpenAI boss Sam Altman expressed contrition and admitted: “We totally screwed up.”

What was so bad about ChatGPT 5? One thing was its personality makeover that made it seem cold and uninterested in your stupid questions. And even though in theory it performed better on testing benchmarks, user experience was that GPT 5 responses were often superficial and full of hallucinations.

On closer examination, it seemed that the reason for this was that GPT 5 was optimised less to benefit all humanity – as promised in OpenAI’s mission statement – but more to save some green. At its core is a “router” that analyses your incoming prompt and directs it to the lightest, most computationally inexpensive model from OpenAI’s lineup that might



Image: Joe Smith

just satisfy your query. It will only give you access to its really intelligent models if you ask it a very hard question in a very clever way.

This “AI shrinkflation” naturally infuriated OpenAI’s paying customers. They believed they were paying for access to OpenAI’s most advanced model, but in reality, many of their queries were now being handled by a less capable, cheaper alternative.

The experience was so bad it gave credence to critics like Gary Markus who argue there are diminishing returns to the current AI development paradigm of scaling – that is, simply adding more data and computational power. He says that GPT 5 shows AI development has plateaued, and that a completely new architecture will be needed for AI to achieve AGI, if ever it does.

So is that it then – is the AI bust upon us? Will you get to keep your job after all?

No. It was up to the ever-sober *Economist* to put things in perspective. In a thorough analysis, it showed how ChatGPT 5’s performance improvements are exactly on trend, continuing the soaring rise in AI’s capabilities. That it feels underwhelming is more to do with users’ jacked expectations of revolutionary breakthroughs every few months.

Much of this hype can be laid at the door of Altman himself. Competitors will have taken some satisfaction in the knowledge that ChatGPT 5 fiasco will have users exploring alternatives. Another effect, some argue, may be the redirecting of attention from the abstract, pure-research goal of AGI to practical applications that might actually benefit all humanity. And considering the environmental and energy costs of AI, the development of more cost-effective systems has to be welcome, as long as the benefits are distributed.

Most tellingly, perhaps, one thing OpenAI’s disastrous roll-out of ChatGPT 5 didn’t do was dent investors’ enthusiasm. Tech stocks went up after the release. Much evidence supports the idea that these are overvalued, but the spigots keep flowing. Stanford University and *The Guardian* put US Big Tech and corporate investment in AI at well over half a trillion dollars this year. The AI juggernaut hurtles on.

So, don’t quit your day job just yet, but maybe after Christmas.

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



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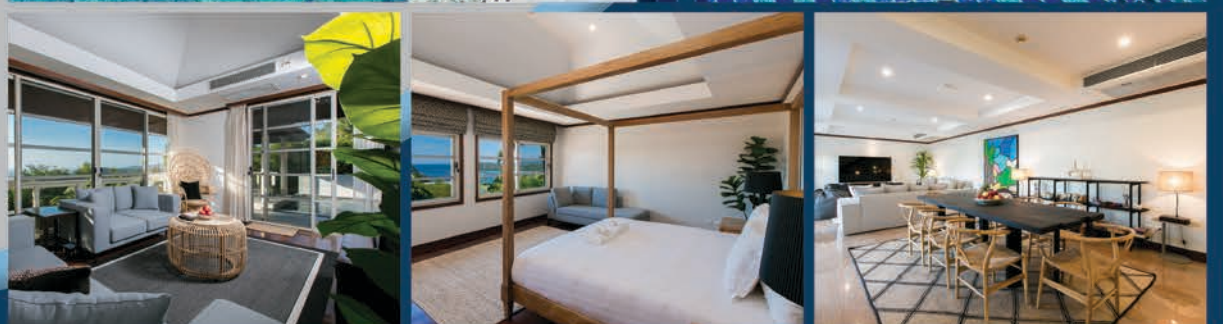
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POP QUIZ

1. What are the Sirocco, Mistral and Chinook?
2. Who, at USA customs declared, nothing but my genius?
3. What was the name of the plantation in 'Gone with the Wind'?
4. Who sailed in the 'Golden Hind'?
5. Which American state is nicknamed The Diamond State?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Hard

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

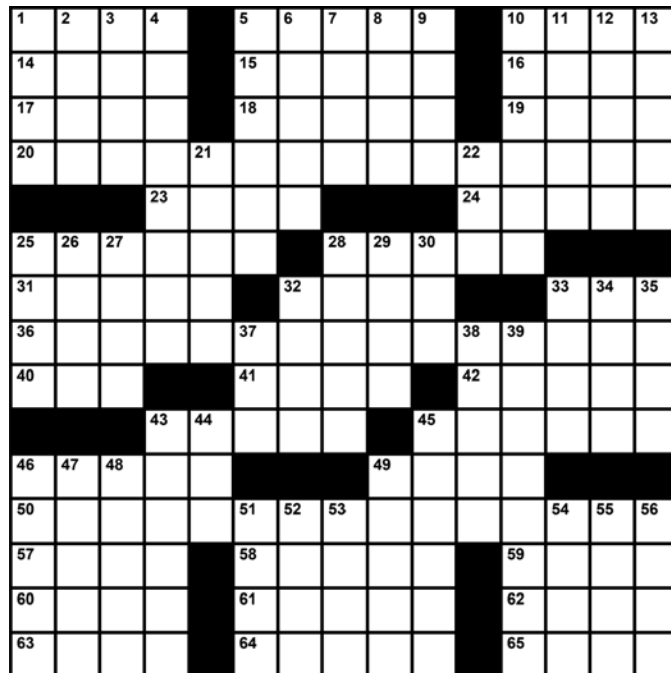
Across

1. ___ liquor
5. Fraternity letter
10. Good earth
14. Dwarf buffalo
15. Ne'er-do-well
16. Song for Carmen
17. Elusive creature
18. Indicated
19. Young salmon
20. Venus
23. Threshold
24. Down and out
25. Blotchy
28. Alter
31. Be of use to
32. Rich Little, e.g.
33. Spud bud
36. Pluto
40. Commercials
41. Put out
42. Bell sounds
43. Stumbled in speech
45. Senility
46. Bay window
49. Emanation
50. Mercury
57. Kuwaiti ruler

Down

1. Poet Angelou
2. Again
3. French novelist Pierre
4. Serious agitation
5. Comparison
6. Model
7. ___ rock
8. Department store department
9. Song and dance
10. Ran out
11. Electioneer
12. Put on
13. Get a wife
21. City in northern France
22. Lodge

25. Arp's art
26. Dedicated
27. Bridge call
28. Plant sucker
29. Butcher's stock
30. Go astray
32. Culmination
33. Pennsylvania city
34. Safecracker
35. Irish offshoot
37. Fine-grained wood
38. Be gaga over
39. Fortresses
43. Card game
44. Totality
45. Pressure
46. Manifest
47. Rival of Paris
48. Cake topper
49. In progress
51. Symbol
52. Exclusive
53. "___ Is It," Jackson film
54. "Doggone it!"
55. May event, for short
56. Latin infinitive



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

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

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14

percent is how much travel times were reduced in Los Angeles in 2013 when it became the first city to install traffic lights that make automatic adjustments based on car flow.

72

percent of US police officers claim that their poorly performing colleagues were not held accountable, according to a Pew Research Center survey in 2018.

450

kilograms is how much the heart of an adult blue whale weighs. It is about the size of a VW Beetle car.

7,300

percent more than the cost of sending the equivalent amount of data is what phone companies charge for sending texts.

360,000

lives were saved by the horror-movie 'SAW' franchise as people were able to donate blood in exchange for a free movie ticket. More than 120,000 pints of blood were donated.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Cape Panwa sunset. Photo by Marco Capriz

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

This week in history

Sept 19, 1970

Michael Eavis hosts the first Glastonbury Festival in Somerset, England.

Sept 20, 1946

The first Cannes Film Festival is held, having been delayed for seven years due to World War II.

Sept 21, 1170

Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland: The Kingdom of Dublin falls to Anglo-Norman invaders.

Sept 22, 1896

Queen Victoria surpasses her grandfather King George III as the longest reigning monarch in British history (later surpassed by her great-great-granddaughter Elizabeth II on Sept 9, 2015).

Sept 23, 2024

Israel launches airstrikes against Hezbollah targets in Lebanon, killing more than 490 people.

Sept 24, 1993

The Cambodian monarchy is restored, with Norodom Sihanouk as King.

Sept 25, 275

For the last time, the Roman Senate chooses an emperor; they elect 75-year-old Marcus Claudius Tacitus.

Source: Wikipedia



Marcus Claudius Tacitus.

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AFL Masters is confirmed for Phuket on October 25 from 9am at the ACG Cricket & Sports facility, Baan Liphon. This one day event features AFL teams from Indonesia, Singapore, Australia and Thailand. Players must be 35 years or older. Matches consist of 2 x 12 minutes halves with a final between the top sides to decide who raises the Pacific Cross Health Insurance AFL Andaman Cup. For more info visit facebook.com/ThailandTigers

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Asian Tour event in Cambodia axed over Thai border dispute

GOLF

THE ASIAN TOUR HAS cancelled next month's inaugural International Series Cambodia following the deadly border dispute with neighbouring Thailand.

Asia's golf governing body said on Sept 9 that the US\$2 million (B63mn) event at Chhun On Golf Club just outside Phnom Penh from Oct 9-12 had been axed.

"In light of recent developments in the region, and in consultation with our partners at the Royal Group, the International Series Cambodia presented by Royal Group tournament will not take place as planned," said Rahul Singh, the head of the International Series.

In July, tensions between Thailand and Cambodia spiralled into their deadliest military clashes in decades, with more than 40 people killed and 300,000 forced to flee their homes along the border.



Photo: AFP

Thailand and Cambodia's leaders agreed to an "unconditional" ceasefire at the end of July, after five days of combat along their jungle-clad frontier.

The Asian Tour has a large number of Thai players, with Sodom Kaewkanjana currently third on the Order of Merit.

"Our thoughts are with those affected during this complex time and we look forward to the opportunity to return when circumstances allow," said Singh.

The tournament was scheduled as the sixth of the Asian Tour's 10 elevated International Series events, which carry higher prize funds and attract leading players from LIV and other golf tours. *Asian Tour*

Patama wants Thailand on top

SEA GAMES

Bangkok Post

Top sports officials are confident Thailand can become the Southeast Asia Games overall medal champions as the Kingdom prepares to host the 33rd edition of the biennial tournament in December.

The last time Thailand finished on top of the SEA Games medals table was back in 2015 at the 28th edition in Singapore. Vietnam topped the podium in the last two tournaments in 2021 and 2023 in Hanoi and Phnom Penh, respectively.

Khunying Patama Leeswadtrakul, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) member and president of the Badminton World Federation (BWF), has outlined two major challenges for Thailand in the battle to bring back its regional sporting dominance: reclaiming the overall gold medal title and instilling a strong sense of national pride and hospitality among Thais.

Speaking at the academic seminar "SEA Games 2025 Thailand: Challenges Ahead" held at the Arnoma Grand Hotel last Friday (Sept 12), Patama said the upcoming Games, to be staged in Bangkok, Chonburi and Songkhla from Dec 9-20, will showcase new standards in sustainability, innovation and local identity.

Patama stressed that Thailand must return to the top of the medal standings for the first time in a decade, which requires an integrated effort



Khunying Patama Leeswadtrakul speaks during the seminar. Photo: Supplied

across all sporting federations, the Sports Authority of Thailand and centres of excellence.

Equally important, she said, is to "ignite the spirit of being a good host in the hearts of every Thai citizen" to ensure broad public support for the Games.

"I am confident that the 33rd SEA Games will impress and inspire ASEAN athletes and those who will watch the competition from around the world."

Dr Gongsak Yodmani, the governor of the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT), said after successfully hosting the 2025 FIVB Women's Volleyball World Championship, the focus has now shifted to the SEA Games preparations over the next three months.

"We have been working hard for a long time. There is a year-long training programme for the SEA Games athletes. These athletes have also been competing in international tournaments as part of the preparation. The assessment shows that they are very much ready for the Games," he said.

"This SEA Games will have 50 medal sports, which is a record, and three demonstration sports. We emphasise having only international sports and there are no traditional sports that give the host country an advantage like in the past.

"Our target is for Thailand to become overall medal champions and we also want to create value for the tournament," he added.

Former boxing world champion Hatton confirmed dead at 46

BOXING

BRITISH FORMER WORLD boxing champion Ricky Hatton was found dead at his home in Hyde, northwest England last Sunday (Sept 14).

"Officers were called by a member of the public to attend Bowlacre Road, Hyde, Tameside, at 6:45am where they found the body of a 46-year-old man. There are not currently believed to be any suspicious circumstances," Greater Manchester Police confirmed on Sunday, adding they were not treating the death as suspicious.

Hatton won world titles at light-welterweight and welterweight and his aggressive style made him one of the most popular British boxers of his generation.

Notable opponents including Kostya Tszyu, Floyd Mayweather and Manny Pacquiao.

Hatton was frank about the mental health problems he endured following his retirement from the ring.

In July, he announced he would make a return to boxing in a professional bout against Eisa Al Dah in Dubai in December.

Britain's former world heavyweight champion Tyson Fury paid tribute to Hatton.

"RIP to the legend Ricky Hatton may



Ricky Hatton. Photo: AFP

he RIP," Fury posted on Instagram. "There will only ever be 1 Ricky Hatton. Can't believe this so young."

Another former world champion, Britain's Amir Khan, described Hatton on X as a "mentor, warrior and one of Britain's greatest boxers".

Khan added: "As fighters, we tell ourselves we're strong – we train, we sweat, we take hits, we get up. But sometimes the hardest fight happens in silence, in the mind.

"Mental health isn't weakness. It's part of being human. And we must talk about it. We must reach out. We must lean on each other.

"Ricky, thank you for everything. For your fights, your moments of glory, your grit. Thank you for pushing us, showing us what's possible."

Matchroom Boxing said: "(We are) saddened to hear the news of Ricky Hatton's passing. Our thoughts and condolences are with Ricky's friends and family at this tragic time. There's only one Ricky Hatton." *AFP*

Courage and character yield results



THE GLOBAL RUGBY COACH

ELITE SPORT CAN PRODUCE spectacular performances by teams as well as individuals, with players and coaches needing boundless courage and character.

This was evident last Saturday (Sept 13) as South Africa coach Rassie Erasmus rang the changes and the young players responded for an impressive 43-10 win against New Zealand in Wellington.

The halftime score of 10-7 did not suggest an onslaught might be possible. However, momentum grew as the Springboks continued to score at will and the All Blacks simply could not cope, let alone slow it down.

All that is good about Rugby Union was on show, with fast-flowing action igniting the crowd before disbelief kicked in for the Kiwi supporters in the second half. There will be an immediate All Black reaction, and Australia might feel the backlash when they next meet on Sept 27. In the meantime, the soreness will permeate through each All Black until the courage and character resurface again.

Elsewhere, Argentina is producing some exhilarating rugby, scoring tries from all parts of the field. However, against Australia last Saturday it was the penalty kicking of Santiago Carreras, who kicked seven penalties and one conversion to see Argentina home to a 28-26 win in Sydney.

Los Pumas have improved at absorbing pressure as well as generating pressure, and



Cheslin Kolbe scores for South Africa. Photo: AFP

coach Felipe Contepomi very much has the look of a World Cup winner!

Australia is slowly emerging from troubled times and their international performances are improving. They are building resilience and belief. Young players are emerging and there is a never-say-die attitude. They currently lead the Championship although New Zealand away on Sept 27 is their next encounter, and some re-positioning may need to take place as a result.

The Global Rugby Coach, Mike Penistone, is a globally renowned professional rugby coach based in Phuket who is also an ambassador for the Asia Center Foundation, a charity for disadvantaged children. For more information visit: www.rugbycoachingconsultancy.com.

United left blue after derby loss

FOOTBALL

AFP

Erling Haaland struck twice as Manchester City inflicted another damaging defeat on Manchester United boss Ruben Amorim with a comprehensive 3-0 win last Sunday (Sept 14).

Phil Foden opened the scoring before Haaland took centre stage with a second-half double as City bounced back from two consecutive Premier League defeats.

United went into a derby ahead of City in the Premier League table for the first time in five years.

But that owed more to City's early season struggles than signs of progress for Amorim's men, who have taken just four points from their opening four games and been dumped out of the League Cup by fourth-tier Grimsby.

City fans goaded Amorim with chants of "sacked in the morning" in the closing stages.

The Portuguese is not in danger of an immediate dismissal, but his Premier League record now reads a dismal eight wins in 31 games.

Liverpool remain top of the table after a late Mohamed Salah penalty gave them a hard fought 1-0 win at Burnley.

Arne Slot opted not to include record-signing Alexander Isak in his squad at Turf Moor, aiming to ease the former Newcastle forward in gently.



Haaland (centre) celebrates scoring his team's second goal. Photo: AFP

Liverpool almost paid the price for their lack of cutting edge until Hannibal Mejbri's handball gave the champions a lifeline and Salah converted from the spot in the 95th minute to secure another late win.

Arsenal ensured Ange Postecoglou did not enjoy his return to north London in his first game as Nottingham Forest boss as the Gunners cruised to a 3-0 win on Saturday.

Martin Zubimendi was an unlikely hero, opening the scoring with a thunderous volley and heading in the third in between a goal from new striker Viktor Gyokeres.

Tottenham sit behind Arsenal only on goal difference after a three-goal blitz of 10-man West Ham, thanks to strikes from Pape Sarr, Lucas Bergvall and Micky Van de Ven after Tomas

Soucek was sent off for the Hammers.

Chelsea missed the chance to go top after Fabio Carvalho's goal in the 93rd minute salvaged a well-earned point for Brentford in a 2-2 draw, with substitute Cole Palmer and a blistering strike from Moises Caicedo on target for the Blues.

Nick Woltemade did his best to make Newcastle fans forget the departed Alexander Isak by scoring the only goal in a 1-0 win over Wolves on his debut while Bournemouth moved up to fourth after beating Brighton 2-1.

Leeds were undone by a 94th minute own goal by Gabriel Gudmundsson to lose 1-0 at Fulham while the matches between Crystal Palace and Sunderland and Everton against Aston Villa both ended in goalless stalemates.

Thais top group, seal U23 Asian Cup spot

FOOTBALL

THAILAND HAVE QUALIFIED for the 2026 AFC U23 Asian Cup finals in Saudi Arabia following a 2-1 victory over Malaysia on Sept 9.

The win at Thammasat Stadium left Thailand and Lebanon tied on seven points each with the former taking over the top spot on the basis of better goal-difference.

Both Thailand and Malaysia entered the rain-hit match with an even chance of clinching the top place in the group but Kakana Khamyok's double secured the win for the home side.

At stake in the qualifying tournaments across Asia were 15 places in the finals, to be filled by the 11 group winners and the four best runners-up overall, with first-time hosts Saudi Arabia completing the line-up for the Jan 7-25 finals.

Thailand national U23 team coach Thawatthai Damrong-ongtrakul was all praise for Kakana after the match.



Photo: Bangkok Post

"He is instrumental in our success in this tournament by both scoring and providing assists," said the coach.

"Our next target is the 2025 SEA Games, which we will be hosting in December. We will have two more training camps during the FIFA Days before the SEA Games," he added.

The 16 qualifiers for the AFC U23 Asian Cup finals are Jordan, Japan, Vietnam, Australia, Kyrgyzstan, Thailand, Iraq, Qatar, Iran, South Korea, Syria, China, Uzbekistan, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates and hosts Saudi Arabia.

The draw for the finals is scheduled for Oct 2.

Bangkok Post

Nuengrutai named new Chaba Kaew coach, targets SEA Games

FOOTBALL

THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION OF Thailand (FAT) has appointed Nuengrutai Srathongvian, a former Thailand international, as the new head coach of the national women's team.

The FAT officially announced Nuengrutai's appointment on Sept 9.

She will take over the reins of the Chaba Kaew with immediate effect and has been handed the task of guiding the team to the gold medal at the 2025 Southeast Asian Games (SEA Games), which Thailand will host at the end of this year.

The Chaba Kaew last won the SEA Games gold medal back at the 2013 tournament in Myanmar with Nuengrutai acting as their coach.

The FAT technical committee has ratified Nuengrutai's return as the Chaba Kaew coach, hoping she will deliver the country's first SEA Games women's football gold in 12 years.

The 53-year-old Nuengrutai, affectionately known as "Coach Nueng", is the first and only Thai woman to hold the AFC 'Pro' Licence.

As head coach, Nuengrutai created history by helping the Thai women's team qualify for two FIFA Women's World Cup finals in a row – 2015 in Canada and 2019 in France – when the



Nuengrutai. Photo: Bangkok Post

present FAT president Nualphan Lamsam was the Chaba Kaew team manager.

Nuengrutai recently helped the Thai national U20 team win the ASEAN U20 Women's Championship title in Vietnam earlier this year.

She also has experience with men's football, serving as an assistant coach of the national senior team when Mano Polking was the War Elephants' head coach.

In addition to representing her country at football Nuengrutai also played as a goalkeeper in field hockey for Thailand at national level, winning a gold medal at the 1995 SEA Games in Chiang Mai.

She will now be working as the head coach of both the Thai women's senior team and the women's U20 side.

The Chaba Kaew will host Bangladesh for a FIFA Day friendly in October this year. Bangkok Post

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Sport



Mo late show keeps Reds on top > p15



The Phuket Vagabonds in KL. Photo: Anthony van Sleeuwen

RUGBY

Anthony van Sleeuwen

With local competition currently hard to come by, thoughts of an international tour had been enticing the Phuket Vagabonds Executive Committee for some time. Listed as a “to do” item at the most recent Annual General Meeting, it was time to make those ambitions a reality. Enter the Kuala Lumpur Tigers Fest 2025 on the weekend of Aug 30-31 – a celebration of rugby, fitness, music, food and fun!

And what a festival it was. This inaugural event proved an exceptionally well organised weekend of competitive rugby for the fortunate participants. With multiple fields hosting 10-a-side rugby, touch rugby, netball and fitness competitions, supported by an excellent array of food and beverage choices, live music and DJs, the bar had been set for a very high standard, and the on-field action didn’t disappoint.

A hardy squad of 13 or so Vagabonds were joined by talented members of the Bangkok Bangers and KL Tigers to put together an ambitious squad for the weekend’s challenge. Due to extensive Air Asia delays, the team had little opportunity for a Friday night social gathering, ensuring an unusually clear headed and motivated squad stepped on to the pitch for Saturday morning’s first match against a youthful Saigon Gecko’s.

It didn’t take long for the Vagabonds to find form, with their customary heavy contact and direct running putting them in good position for early points with Anthony van Sleeuwen breaking a multiple season try drought and finding a way under the posts from the back of a penalty tap and some quality ball speed.

With the forwards showing the way, the rapid wheels of the backline soon got involved with Alex Sears finding his way to the line after brushing multiple

defenders, whilst new man James Warwick opened his account to send the Vagabonds off to a flying start with a 21-0 victory.

Next up, rivals from the north, the Chiang Mai Cobras, who have had the better of the Vagabonds in recent tournaments. Once again, the Cobras shot out to a quick start, scoring early through their talented outside backs. However, buoyed by their earlier performance, the Vagabonds kept their heads up and went to work with some forward play in the middle of the pitch opening space on the outside for ageless captain Dan Ashburn to crash over in the corner. Two more tries from Sears followed and the Vagabonds pushed to close out the match with a 3 try to 1 lead. Fortunately, despite a last minute length of the field try from the Cobras, the Vagabonds held on for the win, 19-14.

DRUBBING

Whilst encouraged by the early performances, it was clear from tournament results that the next

matches were going to be a significant step up. The Kuala Lumpur teams were fielding exceptionally strong (perhaps semi-professional?) squads and racking up serious scores against their opponents. And so, the Phuket team’s jubilation was short lived as the KL Tigers etched up an 40-0 drubbing of the local lads. It was clear the competition would close out with a two tier structure of those in the running and those just making up the numbers.

With that in mind, and with the regular tour challenge of a mounting injury toll on day two, the Vagabonds opted to drop game one in the Cup finals, and put their best effort into the Plate race. Alas, the sore buddies and impaired livers were not able to overcome another talented KL team and a dubious penalty count. Despite tour virgin and resident Mohican Craig Wright crossing the line, the Vagabonds lost to the KL Cobras 26-5.

The 3rd and 4th place Plate play off saw a gentlemanly agreement

between two legendary social clubs, the Vababonds and the Pig Athletic Club take it to the water with a boat race to decide the victor. Despite their formidable adversary, the Vagabonds’ exceptional form in this arena saw them come out on top and close out the tournament with a final victory.

To a man, the KL Tigers Fest touring party for 2025 all agreed it was an exceptional tour, one to be repeated in 2026. Although, a quick head count and age review has the veterans tournament firmly in sight.

For now, it’s back to the training paddock until November where the Vagabonds will send a squad to the big city, Bangkok, for the Royal Bangkok Sport Club 10s. Sure to be another epic tour.

If you would like more information on the Phuket Vagabonds or playing rugby in Phuket at all ages reach out to www.phuketvagabonds.com or find them on the socials at facebook.com/vagabondsrugby.

Lobsters off to a losing start but optimism remains high

FOOTBALL

IT MAY BE A NEW SEASON under a new regime but the result on the opening weekend of the season had a decidedly familiar feel for Phuket Andaman FC.

Travelling to Trang United last Saturday (Sept 13) for the opening game of the 2025/26 BYD Dolphin League 3, the Lobsters fell to a 3-1 defeat.

However, despite the disappointment of the result optimism is generally high that

the team can improve on last season’s campaign which saw them narrowly avoid relegation thanks to a late winner in the final game of the season.

This was evident when the club held an official press conference at the Robinson Lifestyle shopping mall in Thalang on Sept 10, hosted by club president Thammawat Wongcharoenyot, ahead of the new season kick-off.

Mr Thammawat, who also serves as the head of the Sports Association of Phuket, explained

that the club’s main goal is to restore and build trust among the fans so as to help develop the club into a stronger and more professional entity that can proudly represent Phuket province.

Mr Thammawat added that he and fellow club directors are confident that the team has the potential to collectively achieve these goals in the short and long term.

The team, which comprises seven Thai nationals, foreign players and emerging young

talent, will be led this coming season by captain Patapi Thiamtan, who is joined by new signings Pathavi Thiamtan, Coulibaly Chomana, Mohamed Kouadio and Saroj Chitrsena.

The Sept 10 event also served as the official launch of the new kit for the 2025-2026 season. Three different kits were unveiled, including a home and away strip and a goalkeeper’s jersey. Several players showcased the new strip and received a warm ovation from fans at the event.



Photo: Phuket Andaman FC Facebook

Next up for the Lobsters is a game against Krabi FC tomorrow (Sept 20) at the Phang Nga Provincial Administrative Organisation Stadium, kick-off 3:30pm.

The Phuket News