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NO LEEWAY AS TRAFFIC POLICE TARGET UNLICENSED

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huket police have pivoted their efforts to make the island's roads safer by tarforeign and Thai - even fining those who apply to renew their licence but are not allowed to renew it before the licence expires.

The Phuket News this week not until July 24. confirmed that a local driver was fined B1,000 for driving with an booked a renewal appointment more than two weeks before the expiry date, and the earliest slot available was nearly three months later.

The driver was stopped at a checkpoint operated by Wichit Police. Upon inspection, officers found that his licence had expired on Apr 23.

The man showed evidence that geting unlicensed drivers, both he had booked a renewal appointment on Apr 7, 16 days before the expiry. However, the earliest available session at the Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO) was

HARD LINE

expired licence, even though he had Despite this, Wichit Police fined him to do so. for driving with an expired licence. Asked why, Wichit Police Chief Pol Col Somsak Thongkliang took the simplest understanding of the law.

"You can renew your licence three to six months before it expires," he said. "If you don't do it in time, it's still a violation of the law. Even if you are already booking, even with evidence, does not change the fact that you are driving without a valid licence."

PLTO Chief Adcha Buachan admitted what everyone else already knows - that delays in renewing licences in Phuket are common, taking drivers' months to get the opportunity from the PLTO

Mr Adcha said the problem was due to overwhelming demand and limited capacity. We handle 300-400 bookings a day, and we're still

not keeping up," he said. "The number of exam rooms, instructors and testing equipment is simply not enough to serve Phuket's real population, including the large hidden population and foreign residents."

Asked about complaints that many people are now going to neighbouring provinces such as Phang Nga and Krabi to renew their licence, Mr Adcha said, "We are aware of this. Our resources are limited, and we've asked the central office in Bangkok to approve more branches in Phuket, but so far it hasn't happened,"

In response to allegations that driver's licence agents are booking...

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Police target unlicensed drivers

Phuket News

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...out all the slots to give the earliest slots to their own customers, Mr Adcha deflected from the actual question asked.

"Those agents only help with training and documents that need to be prepared. People still have to come in person to get their licence and make bookings like everyone else," he said.

"Under current law, drivers can renew their licence up to three months in advance or within one year after it expires. "However, with wait times as long as three months, drivers are advised to book as early as possible to avoid falling into legal trouble," he added.

While saying that drivers' had up to one year to renew their licence, Mr Adcha avoided making any comment on the Phuket driver being fined B1,000 despite already booking to renew his licence with the PLTO.

NEW FOCUS

According to Phuket Provincial Police Deputy Commander Pol Col Phatsakorn Sonthikun, the fine could have been as much as B2,000.

"Authorities now check for valid driving licenses at road checkpoints. If the license is invalid or missing, the vehicle is impounded and both the driver and rental company face a maximum fine of B2,000," he told The Phuket News.

Phuket Provincial Police recorded a total of 5,058 traffic violations between Apr 18 and May 15, with driving without a license topping the list at 3,995



cases, noted Pol Col Phatsakorn, who also serves as Chairman of the Phuket Provincial Road Safety Committee.

The top offenses during the period also included not wearing a helmet (672), running red lights (110), unsafe motorbike modifications (93), drunk driving (60), driving against traffic (47), not wearing seatbelts (40), unsafe overtaking (32) and using mobile phones while driving (9).

According to the report cited by Pol Col Phatsakorn, Phuket Town recorded the highest number of traffic offenses at 1,426 cases, followed by Patong (1,031), Chalong (667) and Karon (575).

Other areas included Kathu (441), Wichit (356), Cherng Talay (271), Thalang (214), and Tha Chatchai (27). Smaller areas such as Sakhu and Kamala saw fewer violations, with 18 and 32 cases respectively.

Focusing solely on driving without a license, Phuket Town again led with 1,076 cases, followed by Patong (861), Chalong (593), Karon (514), Kathu (370), Wichit (257), Cherng Talay and Thalang (145 each), Tha Chatchai (14), Sakhu (11) and Kamala (9).

Pol Col Phatsakorn believes the efforts to improve road safety by targetting unlicensed drivers are working. From Jan 1 to May 21, a span of 141 days, Phuket recorded 42 road fatalities and 11,874 injuries - giving an average of 84 injuries each day and one death every three days.

"This effort has contributed to a drop in the road death rate compared with last year's 148 fatalities and over 25,000 injuries [for all of 2024]," he said.

FOREIGNERS

Pol Col Phatsakorn emphasised that foreign tourists, especially Russian nationals in the first ranking of the number of fatalities, are frequently involved in traffic accidents.

Common issues include renting vehicles without licenses or sufficient driving skills.

"We've seen tourists crash on their own, hit locals or go off-road and die," he said.

"So we've launched a project since late last year to educate car

rental shops, run public campaigns via consulates, and push out warnings through roadside signage and online media."

The Phuket News notes that Phuket police have been running such campaigns for many years, but with little effect on the toll of deaths and injuries on the island's

To that end, Pol Col Phatsakorn explained that soon a new 'Safety App' - a digital system that tracks rental vehicles and alerts car owners when their vehicles are involved in violations will be launched.

"The app will be launched this August. The app helps officers identify which shops rented vehicles to unlicensed drivers, allowing for quicker legal action," he explained.

"The system will register Phuket's 197 [legally registered] car rental shops and more than 2,000 vehicles. When a violation occurs, the app identifies the responsible rental agency and alerts both the police and the company," Pol Col Phatsakorn said..

"It ensures we can track which shop rented the vehicle illegally and hold them accountable. This will speed up investigations and deter shops from renting to unlicensed drivers."

The app will also connect with schools. If a student is stopped for a violation, the system will notify their institution, triggering disciplinary actions such as warnings or behaviour score adjustments and cultivating traffic rules within students, Pol Col Phatsakorn added.

POINTS

The driver's licence points system launched in 2023 - which has points automatically deducted for traffic violations – is active and in use, Pol Col Phatsakorn also confirmed.

PLTO Chief Mr Adcha confirmed that between January and April this year, police recorded 5,922 cases involving drunk driving or failure to wear a helmet.

"The system has the same 12 points per driver's licence, with deductions for violations," he said. "One-point deductions apply to minor offenses such as not wearing a seatbelt or helmet, using a mobile phone while driving, speeding, or failing to stop at a pedestrian crossing.

"More serious violations, like running red lights or driving while a licence is suspended, result in two-point deductions," he added.

"Offenses such as drunk driving, hit-and-run incidents, or reckless behaviour under the influence of drugs can lead to three or four points being deducted," Mr Adcha continued.

If a driver's points reach zero, their licence is suspended for 90 days. After one year, the 12 points are restored automatically. Alternatively, drivers can attend Department of Land Transport training courses to reclaim points sooner up to 12 points depending on the training duration and test results, he said.

Mr Adcha added that people can check how many points they have left on their licences at https://ptm.police.go.th/eTicket/ or through the mobile app 'KHUB DEE'.

Tourists warned of dangerous surf PHUKET TOURIST southwest monsoon season highlighted that red flags Kazakhstani tourist followed the drowning of

Police have urged beach-goers to obey the red 'no swimming' flags and to enter the water only where it is safe to do so and where lifeguards are on duty.

The appeal for swimmers to be aware of the dangers of Phuket's surf came after three tourists drowned at Phuket beaches in just two days last week.

The Phuket Tourist Police issued the renewed call for all visitors to strictly follow beach safety guidelines as the

brings dangerous swimming conditions to the island's popular beaches.

In their warning, the Phuket Tourist Police stressed the importance of following lifeguard instructions at all times. Lifeguards are stationed along Phuket's beaches to monitor conditions and provide immediate assistance when necessary.

"Please listen to the advice of the lifeguards," the Phuket Tourist Police notice read. "Your cooperation ensures everyone's safety."

posted on the beach signal hazardous conditions, such as strong currents and rough seas, where swimming is strictly prohibited.

Tourists were reminded that these warnings are issued to prevent accidents and save lives.

To enhance safety, swimming is only allowed in clearly marked zones where lifeguards can easily monitor swimmers and respond quickly if help is needed. Phuket Tourist Police noted.

The beach safety Phuket Tourist Police warning follows 41-year-old

Yevgeniy Ksheminskiy being pulled from the water unconscious at Kata Beach shortly before 4pm on June 11. Despite rescue efforts and CPR performed both at the scene and later at Chalong Hospital, he was pronounced dead.

Less than 30 minutes later, a second drowning was reported at Bang Tao Beach. A woman, believed to be around 40 years old, was also found unconscious in the surf. She was rushed to Thalang Hospital but could not be revived.

The two fatalities in restricted areas, as rough

Albanian tourist Daniela Idrizi, 41, at Karon Beach on June 10. She had arrived on the island earlier that day with her husband and went swimming shortly after checking into a local hotel. Lifeguards found her body about an hour after she was reported missing.

Authorities say all three drownings occurred despite red 'no swimming' flags being posted on the beaches.

The drownings prompted lifeguards to urge tourists to stay out of the water



seas and strong rip currents pose serious risks, even to experienced swimmers.

At Patong, Phuket's busiest beach, lifeguards reported rescuing seven people from the surf in a single day last week, with two requiring hospital treatment.

The Phuket News





Bomb threat mars Air India flight

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bomb threat forced an Air India flight **L**bound for New Delhi to make an emergency landing at Phuket International Airport last Friday morning (June 13), triggering a full-scale emergency response and the temporary detention of one Indian national for question-

The incident unfolded around 9:30 a.m when the Flight Control Center of Aeronautical Radio of Thailand notified Phuket Airport that a threatening message had been discovered onboard Air India flight AI 379. The aircraft, operating on the Phuket-Delhi (HKT-DEL) route, was carrying 156 passengers at the time.

According to reports, the threat was found in the aircraft's lavatory shortly after takeoff. The note, handwritten on a piece of paper, read "F*** you all bombs," prompting the crew to immediately alert the pilot and follow security protocol. While the nature of the threat was not shared



with passengers at the time, the pilot informed them that the plane was experiencing a minor technical issue and would be returning to

As the aircraft circled in the air. Phuket Airport activated its Airport Contingency Plan for bomb threats and set up an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to coordinate the response. The plane was instructed to land at parking bay 99, a of the incident, passengers remote location away from the main terminal and other aircraft, to minimize risk.

Upon landing, a full security operation swung into action. All 156 passen-

gers were safely disembarked and transported by bus to a designated Passenger Holding Area near gates 81-82. Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams from the Royal Thai Police carried out a detailed inspection of the aircraft and all luggage. Officials confirmed that no explosives or suspicious objects were found during the search.

Despite the seriousness remained largely calm throughout the ordeal. A prominent Phuket-based real estate and hotel businessman who was on the flight said the plane had circled for nearly two hours before landing, which raised concerns but did not cause panic. He said the passengers were not informed of the bomb threat until much later. After passing additional security checks, he and most passengers continued their journey to India as scheduled.

However, one male passenger chose not to reboard the flight. That man, identified by police as 52-year-old Indian national Sanjay Bhartia, was taken into custody for questioning. According to authorities, Mr Bhartia had exhibited unusual behaviour

checked in for the flight reportedly speaking as if he was traveling with flying alone.

Phuket Provincial Police, led by Deputy Commander Pol Col Akanit Danpitaksan and Sakhu Police Chief Pol Col Salan Tantisankun, brought Mr the airport's police subdivi-

Officials from the Phuket Tourist Assistance Center were called in to assist with language interpretation during the teams collected handwriting samples to compare against the threatening note found also taken from members of the flight crew.

At a press conference later that day, Monchai Taonode, General Manager of Phuket Airport, confirmed that after a full inspection, no credible threat was found.

Air India representatives, along with airport officials, announced that the flight was cleared for depar-

from the moment he ture and successfully resumed its journey at 4:15pm appearing nervous and with 155 passengers on board.

Although Mr Bhartia someone else, despite was questioned in connection with the incident, officials clarified that no formal charges had been filed.

The airline has since launched an internal investigation and has narrowed its Bhartia in for questioning at focus to two passenger groups: those seated near the lavatories and a family who had a dispute over seating arrangements. No further details of the case have not been released.

Airport GM Mr Moninterrogation, while forensic chai emphasised that the incident did not disrupt other operations and that Phuket International Airport onboard. Statements were remained committed to maintaining the highest standards of passenger safety and emergency preparedness.

> The Royal Thai Police and the Immigration Bureau are reportedly cooperating with international authorities and the airline to determine whether the threat was a hoax or part of a more serious attempt to disrupt civil aviation.

Police drop probe into deadly Kata landslide

ILLEGAL CONSTRUCTION AT THE Big Buddha viewpoint is no longer considered a primary cause of the deadly landslide in Kata in August last year, which killed 13 people, and does not meet the criteria for a negligence charge, Pol Lt Col Ekkasak Kwanwan, Senior Inspector (Investigation) at Karon Police Station, has told The Phuket News.

"We have already questioned the relevant experts from the Department of Mineral Resources Region 4 office. The geotechnical officials concluded that the landslide was a natural event," Pol Lt Col Ekkasak said.

differently from the initial letter, stating that the area was already classified as high-risk and prone to landslides, essentially a natural disaster," he kept repeating.

"They noted that around 90% of the mountains in Phuket have similar steep and Helmut Duerrast from the Geophysics unstable terrain. The landslide occurred in a red zone, officially marked as a high-risk area," he added.

"The challenge with this case is that it was not a straightforward negligence case. Multiple factors were involved – heavy rain, old and unstable soil, the steepness of the slope," Pol Lt Col Ekkasak continued.

"Unlike a car accident, there's no clear liable party. After reviewing the geological forward," she said. assessments, we can no longer treat this simply as a case of negligence," he said.

Regarding any concerns about corruption in the case, Pol Lt Col Ekkasak



stated, "I want to make it clear that there is no corruption involved in this investigation. We are strictly following the evidence and expert assessments at every step."

CIVIL COURT

The Phuket Bar Association is preparing to "They explained their findings meet with victims on June 22 to assess damage and begin preparing a civil lawsuit.

> Association President Rungnapa Phutkaew said expert involvement is the only way forward.

> "We're grateful that experts like Dr Research Center at Prince of Songkla University in Hat Yai are among the few professionals still monitoring the case. Recently, he visited the site and shared his assessment," she shared.

> "At this point, they are our only hope to prove whether construction played a direct role," she told The Phuket News.

"We're frustrated. Nothing is moving

Ms Rungnapa said victims now gather official documentation to support compensation claims.

Natnaree Likidwatanasakun

















NIRAVIT 'MOS' VORAVANITCHA









Phuket News













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PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST



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Low: +27°







www.foreca.com

Body of missing American found

THE BODY OF MISSing 28-year-old American man Dane Johnson was found among mangroves at Koh Raet, off Phuket's east coast, at about on June 12, bringing a tragic end to a multi-day search

Mr Johnson's body was found at about 2pm on the southern shores of Koh Raet, some 3.5 nautical miles (6.4km) Enforcement Command from where he was last Center Region 3 (Thai seen aboard his uncle's yacht, 'Demarest'.

Mr Johnson had been missing since early June 8, when he was reported overboard from the 'Demarest', anchored near Naka Island at the Donsakul, Director of time.

According to reports, Mr Johnson had recently arrived in Thailand after undergoing personal rehabilitation for depression in the US.

The alarm was raised after the 1465 maritime emergency hotline was informed of Mr Johnson's disappearance at around 4am last Sunday. Despite an immediate response by



local police and marine authorities, no trace of him was found that day.

The Thai Maritime MECC 3), based at Cape Panwa, on Phuket's east coast, led the extensive search operation with support from multiple

Vice Admiral Suwat Thai MECC 3, deployed patrol vessel T.272, along with jet skis and equipment provided by the Phuket Marine Office, to cover the waters north of Naka Island.

Thai MECC 3 confirmed that the body will be transported ashore for a full examination to determine the cause of death.

Eakkapop Thongtub

NACC files charges over Kamala encroachment

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¬he Phuket Provincial Office of the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC Phuket) says it is continuing its investigation into encroachment on the Kamala National Forest Reserve as part of ongoing efforts to combat corruption and protect public land.

Office, led by Director Suwat Saowarat, announced on June 12 that the third 'Watch & Voice' activity under the 'STRONG -Sufficiency Economy Against Corruption' project was held at its Chao Fah Road office on May 30.

The session was conducted in collaboration with members of the Phuket STRONG Club and officers from the Anti-Corruption

No reason was given as came more than a month

up on a previous site inspection carried out on Oct 17, 2024, when officials

The Phuket NACC Protection Unit 2 (Phuket). Kathu Police and the Phuket STRONG Club discovered illegal land clearing activities within the Kamala Mountain National Forest Reserve in Kathu District. the announcement said.

> According to reports from the Forest Protection Unit, six plots of land had been illegally cleared.

Legal proceedings have already been initiated for four of these plots, with cases filed at Kathu Police Station. The remaining two to why the announcement plots are still being surveyed and assessed for environmental damage, The meeting followed NACC Phuket explained.

Sorasak Rananan. Director of the Phuket Forestry Center, confirmed from the NACC, Forest that reports for these final two plots have now been submitted to investigators, who are in the process of collecting further evidence before filing criminal charges.

Photo: NACC Phuket

During the session, participants exchanged additional information gathered from the site, noting that a significant number of large and small trees had been felled, with logs found both burned and stockpiled for future burn-

Officers also discovered small shelters and makeshift water systems, including PVC piping, installed at the scene, Mr Sorasak said.

The Phuket Forestry Center pledged to take firm legal action against those responsible.

Two injured by garden explosive

TWO PEOPLE SUFFERED minor injuries when a homemade explosive device, disguised as a giant garland, detonated in a garden in Ratsada last Friday afternoon (June 13).

The incident was reported to Phuket police around 5:35pm. Officers from Phuket City Police, along with forensic and bomb disposal teams, rushed to the scene in front of a house on Ratsadanuson Rd.

Upon arrival, police discovered remnants of four self-assembled explosive devices submerged in water inside car tires. The bomb squad safely retrieved the materials for forensic examination. Two people, identified as relatives of the homeowner, sustained minor shrapnel wounds to their legs.

According to the homeowner, he initially found five suspicious black objects placed inside old car



tyres next to his relative's house. Thinking they were harmless, he moved them in front of his own house. Moments later, his brother-in-law and sister inspected the bags more closely, causing one of the devices to explode.

Investigators later reviewed CCTV footage from last Thursday (June 12), which showed four teenagers arriving on motorcycles and placing the suspected explosive devices under the tree before fleeing the scene.

Police said they were working urgently to identify and apprehend the suspects involved.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Russian 'fake doctor' caught

A 33-YEAR-OLD RUSSIAN woman has been arrested for providing illegal medical treatments, including drug injections, without a license.

The arrest followed a sting operation by Tourist Police after receiving online reports of unlicensed medical services being offered to foreigners. The suspect, identified as Viktoriia Freimark. had advertised herself as a doctor online, offering treatments to cure various ailments, including

Officers from the Tourist Police Bureau's Investigation Division 2 posed as customers and contacted her via WhatsApp to book a treatment. A meeting was arranged at a rented room in Phuket Town on June 12.

At around 9pm, Ms Freimark arrived and accepted a B6,000 fee. As she prepared to administer an injection, police revealed their identities and placed her under arrest.



She confessed to not holding any medical or work licenses and said she was contacted by another Russian, identified only as "Ms Marina," who arranged the appointments through social media. Ms Freimark admitted to giving similar treatments on two or three occasions.

Police seized 47 items of medical supplies and drugs as evidence.

Ms Freimark faces several charges related to unlicensed medical practice and working illegally in Thailand.

The Phuket News





MP probes school scam

The Phuket News editor@classactmedia.co.th

uthorities are investigating alleged links between a Chinese criminal network and a private international school in Phuket, following complaints from victims who claim they were defrauded out of over B40 million in a student visa scam.

Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee on June 11 accompanied victims representing a private company, referred to as 'Company B', to meet with Pol Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum, Commander of Phuket Provincial Police.

The victims allege that a woman, identified only as 'Ms Patcharin', deceived them into investing in a fraudulent visa application scheme which has seen little progress in the local police investigation.

Initial discussions revealed that one of the board members of the school, identified only as 'International School A', may have connections to a Chinese mafia group, with related complaints already filed at Chalong Police Station.



MP Chalermpong warned that such scams not only financially damage individuals but also tarnish Phuket's image as a safe destination for tourists and investors. He urged anyone seeking to invest in visa or labour-related services to always contact the relevant authorities directly.

Company records show that 'School A' is registered as a private international school for pre-primary education, with a registered capital of B20 million and joint Thai-Chinese ownership, MP Chalermpong said

Although 'School A' has publicly distanced itself from Ms Patcharin, victims

allege that she played an active role in school operations, including organising training sessions, managing visa documentation for students and soliciting investments from potential backers, MP Chalermpong explained.

uncovered that, aside from the visa scam, one of the accused individuals may have used nominee arrangements to circumvent Thai laws governing foreign ownership.

Evidence indicates that the suspect held the position of third director at 'School A' and also established 'Company B', which

offered legal advisory services and had the authority to sign and stamp official documents.

MP Chalermpong noted that investigations were ongoing.

After the meeting, Maj Gen Sinlert explained that the case had been handed over to the Chalong Police to investigate.

"This case is not complicated," he said. "Police officers will investigate the financial transactions, gather information and collect evidence to identify those involved."

He explained that student visa applications should be submitted directly through official agencies, not through brokers or

"Using brokers can lead The investigation also to false claims, such as promises to expedite the process by preparing documents or by claiming to have connections that can guarantee approval," he added.

"This creates opportunities for scammers to exploit applicants, causing harm to both employers and the country's reputation," Maj Gen Sinlert said.

Marking 'Pride for All'

THE PHUKET PROVINcial Social Development and Human Security Office last week held a seminar aimed at promoting awareness and understanding of gender equality and diversity.

World is Equal: Awareness, Awareness, Awareness of Gender Equality (Pride for All)', took place at the Seabed Grand Hotel in Wichit on June 12, with Phuket Vice Governor Samawit Suphanphai presiding over the opening ceremony.

Joining Mr Samawit were Sompit Srikhamhaeng, head of the Phuket Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office, as well as representatives from family networks, volunteer groups, community development centres, government agencies, community organisations and the general public. A total of 70 participants attended.

The programme was organised as part of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security's efforts to advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5, which focuses on



The event, titled 'Our achieving gender equality and empowering all individuals, regardless of race, gender, religion or political beliefs, noted an official report of the event.

> Vice Governor Samawit described the project as both valuable and essential, highlighting its role in fostering greater awareness of gender equality and diversity - core principles of human rights that ensure everyone is entitled to the same freedoms, rights and opportunities.

He expressed his gratitude to all participating agencies for their commitment to supporting the initiative and recognizing the importance of promoting gender equality in society.

The event aimed to encourage participants to gain a deeper, more accurate understanding of gender equality and diversity, helping to lay the groundwork for a more inclusive society, he added.

The Phuket News

Officials stifled over landfill odour

PHUKET CITY MUNIcipality is moving to address the growing problem of foul odours coming from the landfill at the Phuket Waste Disposal Center at Saphan hin, which have intensified during the ongoing rainy season.

With over 1,200 tonnes of garbage arriving at the facility each day, the wet conditions have worsened the smell, causing concern among local residents and visitors, Phuket City Municipality explained in a report posted online.

The situation has become more challenging as landfills No. 4 and No. 5 are now receiving additional waste due to the temporary closure of the center's second incinerator for repairs.

visit, Phuket City Mayor odours. Heavy rainfall Suphot La-ongphet, accompanied by Phuket caused water to wash City Municipality Chief through garbage delivered Administrative Officer by collection trucks, (Palad) Chalermporn worsening the problem. Piyanarongroj, Engineer-



Yuthana Kanchanaphak and municipal staff, assessed the site and discussed possible solutions.

Officials are now working on plans to adjust the landfill area and construct drainage canals to help control water accumulation that contrib-On a recent inspection utes to the spread of residents and tourists over the past week has

Mayor Suphot said. ing Office Director acknowledged the strain

on the waste management system, with roughly 700-800 tonnes of excess waste currently being diverted to the incinerator each day. He called for public cooperation to help ease the burden on the disposal center.

"We are asking both across Phuket to help reduce the amount of waste, particularly organic waste, which poses significant challenges for disposal," Mayor Suphot

The Phuket News



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Jetstar Asia closure rattles Krabi

Bangkok Post

ourism operators in Krabi are bracing for the impact of Qantas Group's decision to permanently shut down Jetstar Asia, its Singapore-based budget airline, amid concerns the move could reduce tourist arrivals from one of the province's most important short-haul markets.

Qantas announced on June 11 that Jetstar Asia will cease operations on July 31, 2025, as part of what it described as a "strategic restructure" of its business. The closure will result in 500 job losses in Singapore, with staff receiving redundancy packages and support in finding new employment. The airline's fleet of 13 Airbus A320 aircraft will be progressively redeployed to Australia and New Zealand, creating more than 100 new jobs in those markets.

The decision comes after Jetstar Asia struggled with escalating operational costs. According to Qantas, supplier costs for the airline have increased by as much as 200%, while airport fees and other aviation charges have continued to climb, making the carrier's business model unsustainable. Jetstar Asia was expected to post an underlying loss of AUS\$35



million (B742mn) in this financial year prior to the decision to shut

"Despite our best efforts to offset these rising costs, they are expected to continue into the foreseeable future, putting unsustainable pressure on Jetstar Asia's ability to offer low fares," Qantas Group CEO Vanessa Hudson said in a statement.

Jetstar Asia was a key player in the region's low-cost airline market, operating flights to 16 destinations across Asia, including Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Japan and Australia. In Thailand, the airline maintained regular services to major tourist hubs, operating up to 15 return flights

weekly to Phuket, 28 to Bangkok, and four to Krabi.

The closure of Jetstar Asia leaves Scoot as the sole operator providing direct flights between Singapore and Krabi. According to the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Jetstar Asia operated 18 flights on the Krabi-Singapore route in May, while Scoot offered 45 flights during the same period.

Krabi tourism businesses are particularly concerned about the loss of Jetstar Asia's service, as Singapore has long been one of the province's top international markets. Last year, Singapore ranked as Krabi's second-largest source of foreign visitors after Malaysia, according to data from the Krabi Immigration Office. In the first four months of this year, Singapore was the fifth-largest source market, following Malaysia, Sweden, the United Kingdom

"Singaporean tourists are very important to Krabi. They are generally high-spending visitors who prefer to stay in four- and five-star hotels, dine at quality restaurants, and engage in various activities," said Chaiyaphat Wasoonthara, president of the Krabi Tourism Association. "The loss of Jetstar Asia could create a short-term gap, but we are already working to attract more visitors from other markets."

To reduce its reliance on any one market, Krabi has been actively diversifying its source markets. This year, the province has already welcomed new direct flights from Mumbai and Bangalore in India operated by IndiGo. In the coming months, inaugural flights from Air Arabia and Etihad Airways are scheduled to begin, targeting tourists from the Middle East and Europe.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand is also taking steps to manage the impact of Jetstar Asia's closure. TAT Deputy Governor for International Marketing (Asia and South Pacific), Pattaraanong Na Chiangmai, said the agency is in discussions with other airlines to fill the gap and increase capacity on short-haul routes to Thailand.

"Although Jetstar Asia's closure is unfortunate, it is not expected to derail our overall tourism targets," Pattaraanong said. "Singapore remains one of our most important short-haul markets, and we continue to see healthy demand from there."

According to TAT, around 400,000 Singaporean tourists have visited Thailand so far this year. The agency remains confident that the target of 1.15 million Singaporean arrivals for 2025 will still be met, exceeding the 1 million recorded last year. On average, Singaporean tourists spend about B7,500 per day during their stay, which typically lasts 5.5 days.

Jetstar Asia's shutdown was jointly decided by Oantas and Westbrook Investments, which owns the remaining 51% of the airline. Qantas emphasized that the closure will not affect Jetstar Airways' domestic and international operations in Australia and New Zealand, nor will it impact Jetstar Japan.

Passengers affected by the shutdown are being offered refunds for cancelled flights, Qantas confirmed.



King Power in airport spat

KING POWER DUTY FREE CO IS seeking the termination of a contract with Airports of Thailand Plc (AoT) for its duty-free business at five international airports in an announcement that has sent AoT shares into a dive.

AoT shares fell 7.8% last Friday (June 13) following an announcement by Thai duty-free retailer King Power that it intends to shutter three of its airport stores, pointing to the steadily declining economy and heightened rental fees.

The announcement last Friday wiped B36 billion from AoT's stock value by Friday afternoon. After talks on Monday (June 16), AoT said that King Power had informed it of its intention to cancel the two four-year terms from 2015 to 2023. contract to operate duty-free shops at five airports: Suvarnabhumi, Don Mueang, Chiang Mai, Phuket and Hat Yai.

The company cited the impacts on its business from the government's decision to lower levies on wine; a continued drop in tourists, especially from China due to safety concerns; the COVID-19 pandemic; and geopolitical and trade wars.

The announcement by AoT on Monday caused its own stock to plunge further, closing at B28.50, down B1.25 or 4.20% in the morning session.

The airport operator has now lost 50% of its value since the start of the year and is currently at its lowest valuation in a decade.

The move by King Power Corp follows Nitinai Sirismatthakarn being



appointed the new chief executive officer on June 4, replacing Aiyawatt Srivaddhanaprabha, who moved to the role of executive chairman.

Mr Nitinai was the AoT president for

Dome Kunprayoonsawad, an analyst on the aviation sector at Pi Securities, said on the company's YouTube programme on Monday that he did not expect King Power to walk away from the duty-free business at the five airports.

King Power only wanted to renegotiate the existing contract with the airport agency and expected its talks with AoT to find a way out on the issue, Mr Dome said.

King Power anticipated more air travellers at Suvarnabhumi after the pandemic and the operation of its satellite, Sat-1 to serve more passengers, he added.

King Power won the bid to operate duty-free shops at Thailand's international airports in 2019. Bangkok Post





Thai PM stands strong on Cambodia border dispute

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

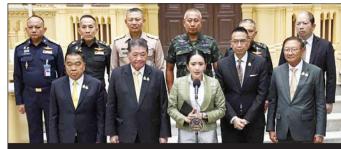
hailand is a strong and united country and will not tolerate maltreatment, accusations and threats to its sovereignty, Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra declared on Monday (June 16), as the territorial dispute with Cambodia dragged on.

She also lambasted Cambodia for sending messages using social media instead of through official channels.

The prime minister was speaking after meeting with senior security officials at her official residence, Phitsanolok House, in Bangkok.

The session followed a meeting of the Thai-Cambodian Joint Boundary Commission in Phnom Penh over the weekend.

"Thailand is united. We will not tolerate maltreatment, accusations or threats from any party. Our country also has dignity. Our country is also strong," Ms Paetongtarn said.



PM Paetongtarn Shinawatra (centre) speaks after meeting senior security officials in Bangkok on Monday (June 16). Photo: Bangkok Post

message, stabbing her index finger forward at each sen-

Her strong comments followed reports that Cambodian Senate President Hun Sen had threatened to close all border crossings with Thailand to block the entry of Thai goods unless Bangkok restored normal border opening hours within

A reporter asked for her reaction to the possibility of Cambodia launching an information operation against Thailand.

"That kind of communication does no good for either country. Information is often released even though the two

She emphasised her sides earlier agreed to wait for conclusions," Ms Pae-

tongtarn said.

"Regarding its posts, Cambodia must consider the interests of both Thai and Cambodian people. The announcement about closing the border right away affects both Thais and Cambodians. We are concerned about trade and the supply of fruit and vegetables," she added.

Ms Paetongtarn said unprofessional communications from Cambodia had a negative impact on both Thai and Cambodian people.

The prime minister said Thailand did not close the border with Cambodia but decided to reschedule border opening hours because

long-range weapons were increasingly being deployed near the border.

"We must reschedule border opening hours because there are people in both countries. If the opening hours were not rescheduled and there was an accident, the damage would be great," the prime minister said.

Ms Paetongtarn said she proposed to her Cambodian counterpart that Thai and Cambodian military representatives attend a Regional Border Committee (RBC) meeting to explain their respective positions.

"The armed forces and the government share the same stance, that our sovereignty must be protected. We are working out ways to prevent clashes and losses while safeguarding our sovereignty," the prime minister said.

Speaking separately, Lt Gen Boonsin Paadklang, commander of the 2nd Army Region, said the RBC meeting is expected to take place on June 27-28 to discuss troop withdrawals to further reduce tension.

Anutin breaks silence on Bhumjaithai concerns

BANGKOK

BHUMJAITHAI Party (BJT) executives say the Election Commission's move to summon them over alleged collusion in the Senate election might signal a bid to dissolve the party.

Charnvirakul admitted on Monday (June 16) that he was among the key party figures summoned by the Election Commission (EC) to hear the collusion accusations related to last year's Senate election process.

He said the move was coalition.

senior party members were called in by the EC, Anutin, also Interior Minister, said he was the prominent party figure referred to and the summons had been delivered to his residence in Buri Ram.

received specific details



regarding his supposed involvement in the alleged vote-rigging, noting Party leader Anutin that he would need legal counsel and he would fully cooperate with the

> Anutin was reportedly among 20 people in the latest batch summoned by the election body, bringing the total number of people called to 164.

"If you ask whether "political", but didn't it's political, I believe it signal a split in the is," said Anutin. "As for who it came from or how Amid reports that it began, people in political circles already know... except that we can't speak openly about

"We will fight through legal means. No matter what, it must stay within the framework of the law. I am confident we've He said he has not done nothing wrong," he said. Bangkok Post

Weed policy shift gets thumbs-down

BANGKOK

THREE YEARS AFTER THAILAND decriminalised cannabis, health and civil society experts are raising concerns over public health and inadequate regulations which accompanied the move.

At a recent public forum health groups and academic outlets came together to assess the outcomes of the cannabis liberalisation policy.

While cannabis has medical benefits in specific contexts such as palliative care and managing nausea from chemotherapy, widespread liberalisation had serious unintended consequences, said Assoc Prof Rasmon Kalavasiri, director of the Centre for Addiction Studies (CADS).

A joint study by CADS, Thammasat University and Chulalongkorn University found a sharp rise in recreational cannabis use, particularly among Thai youth, she said, adding that usage among 18- to 19-vear-olds increased 10-fold from 0.9% in 2019 to 9.7% in 2022.

Assoc Prof Rasmon also highlighted a surge in cannabis-related health issues, with national health data showing more patients seeking treatment for conditions such as psychosis and acute cannabis intoxication.

In 2023 alone, the economic burden of cannabis-related healthcare costs was estimated at over B15.8 billion.

The proliferation of cannabis shops, now numbering nearly 18,000 with licences, and many more operating illegally, has outpaced regulatory oversight, said Assoc Prof Rasmon.



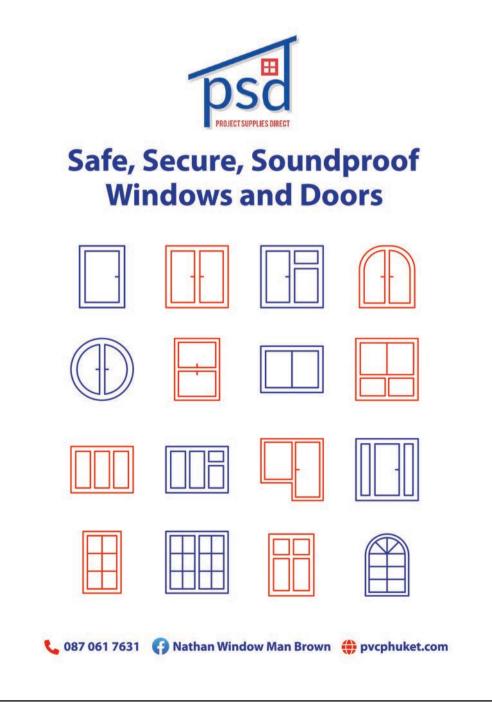
An international backlash has also grown with several countries issuing travel advisories warning citizens against consuming cannabis in Thailand or attempting to bring cannabis products back

Some legal experts, meanwhile, have pointed to a policy vacuum that emerged following a 2022 Ministry of Public Health decree removing cannabis from the narcotics list without enacting a corresponding control law.

This effectively opened the door to widespread recreational use without adequate safeguards, while later attempts to classify cannabis as a controlled herb have proven insufficient.

Civil society networks have submitted over 20,000 signatures in support of a proposed cannabis and hemp control bill, now under review in parliament, to address these concerns.

The bill seeks to limit cannabis use to medical purposes, regulate its distribution and promote scientific research while protecting vulnerable groups, especially youth. Bangkok Post





Life in the F1 fast lane

David Griffiths

ne of the most spectacular sporting leagues in the universe is the world of F1 car racing. Made famous over the years by names such as Ayrton Senna, Michael Schumacher and Lewis Hamilton F1 is a sport embraced by millions of fans around the world. The lure of the sport seems to come from the fact that it mixes prestige with danger and speed in a high-octane world that only the most skilled drivers are allowed to take part in.

Now that world is coming to the big screen in a way that this sport has never been captured before. Starring Brad Pitt, Javier Bardem, Damson Idris and Kerry Condon and directed by Top Gun: Maverick director Joseph Kosinski, F1 is one of the most eagerly anticipated movies of 2025 and recently we were lucky enough to sit down for a chat with Kosinski to learn how this epic film was put together.

"Well, I think like a lot of people during COVID, I found myself starting to watch the races," says Kosinski when asked where the idea for F1 originally came from. "Then I found this great television show called *Drive to* Survive, and I found that it's an incredibly unique sport in that your teammate is also your, in many ways, your greatest competition.

"For me, that makes for a great drama. I also loved how the first season of the show focused on the last place teams, the underdogs rather than the Ferrari, the Mercedes, the Red Bull, the teams that you see at the front of the pack. And I thought that there was an interesting story to be told about an underdog team in trying to not win the championship, but just trying to win one race against these titans of the sport. So that's where it started. And lucky for me, I had a contact who was in Formula One that I could reach out to, so I did."

As Kosinski showed us all with Top *Gun: Maverick* he is a director that not only knows how to capture speed for the big screen but he also has an unique way of making the audience feel like they are part of the action. He once again wanted to do that for F1but, as we soon learned, that took a huge commitment.

"Well, the first thing I did was I reached out to Lewis Hamilton and obviously he lives that sport every day," he explains. "He's one of the greatest of all time and asked him to be my partner on making this film. So having Lewis gave me this incredible in into this world, and one of the people he introduced me to was Toto Wolf, the team principal of Mercedes. And I started talking with them about wanting to capture the speed of this sport, and it was actually Toto who came up with the idea of taking a real race car and and working the cameras into that. So we did that.

"We actually bought six F2 cars, real F2 race cars and worked with Mercedes AMG, the Formula One team and their engineers to build real race cars that could carry our camera equipment recorders and transmitters for making this film. So every time you see Brad or Damson driving this movie, they're driving on their own in one of these real race cars on a real F1 track."

Through working with the F1 teams Kosinski soon learned that behind every driver is a massive amount of people whose work puts the cars on the track each weekend, and soon he wanted them to be part of F1 as well.

"Yeah, the drivers are certainly the face and they're there in the car every weekend, but there literally are thousands of people at the factory working on these cars, putting them together the day of the race," says Kosinski. "So that was the other aspect that I wanted this film to capture, not just the story of the drivers, but also the engineers, the team principles, the

team owners, all the people who bring this sport to life and put that car on the track every weekend."

When you look at the trailer for F1one of the first things that hits you as an audience is how natural the film looks. In order to achieve that feel Kosinski decided the only way to do it was to put the stars of the film actually in the cars and then film on race weekends, but of course that needed a lot of things to fall into place.

"Brad and Damson are both driving in this film and in order to get them into these race cars, it required literally months of training," Kosinski says. "But the first day was really fun. It was me, Brad and Lewis Hamilton at the track together, all of us jumping in cars and driving each other around in sports cars. I'll never forget having Lewis Hamilton as a driving instructor, but what Lewis was really interested in was seeing whether Brad knew how to drive, right? Because if Brad can't drive, this whole film wasn't going to work. And what Lewis was very happy to discover was that Brad had a lot of just natural ability right from the start; he's just a very talented, naturally gifted driver, which for Lewis after that first meeting gave him a lot of confidence that we might have a shot at pulling this

"Brad just had that natural feel for grip in the car and what we're doing on this film is dangerous," he continues. "So yeah, you have to be fearless, and when you see Brad driving, that's not acting. He's really concentrating on keeping that car on the track and out of the wall during all those scenes. So that's something that you just can't fake. I hope the audience feels that when they watch the movie."

Then came the big question: How did Kosinski and his team manage to film during actual Grand Prix weekends?

"The tracks, the location is one thing, but on Race Weekend, it just be-

comes this whole different world," he says with a smile. "It's like a traveling circus. So we couldn't just shoot at the track without the race going on. It would've been the wrong dynamic. So we were actually there on race weekend with hundreds of thousands of people watching us finding these time slots between practice and qualifying, that Formula One graciously afforded us. We'd get these 10 or 15 minute slots where we'd have to have Brad and Damson ready in the cars, warmed up with hot tires ready to go, and as soon as practice ended, they would pull out onto the track.

"We'd have 24, 30 cameras ready, rolling, and I'd have to shoot these scenes in these very short, intense, high-speed windows. But the crowd you're seeing was really there in the stands. I don't think the crowd realised that Brad Pitt was in the car that was in front of them. And so there was definitely this heightened quality to every race.

"We were also shooting dramatic scenes on the grid before races, so it was a very unique way of working rather than having a whole day to shoot a scene like you normally would on a movie. We had these nine or 10 minute slots, so it was like a live stage play, but in front of hundreds of thousands of people shooting at 180 miles an hour, literally. So it was an adrenaline rush every weekend, but what we captured is something you can't fake, you can't stage."

F1 hits Phuket screens on the June 26 and is rated PG-13.

David Griffiths has been working as a film journalist for over 25 years. That time has seen him work in radio, television and in print. He currently $hosts\ a\ film\ podcast\ called\ The\ Popcorn$ Conspiracy. He is also a Rotten Tomatoes accredited reviewer and is an alternate judge for the Golden Globes Awards. You can follow him at ${\it Facebook: Subculture Entertain ment Aus.}$





Worth 1,000 words - Al image generation gets real



THE AI EDGE

ou've messed around creating images in AI. They could be useful for work, for social media and it's fun too. But the results were hit-and-miss. Not ready for prime time, you thought. That was a while ago and now you've stopped experimenting.

If this describes you, read on, because AI image generation has quietly advanced in leaps and bounds in 2025. Agency-grade images can now be created natively in the big models like ChatGPT and Gemini and it'll be a matter of months before video follows suit.

But you need the right prompts to unlock all this goodness. In this column, we look and the best tools, tips and hacks to generate jaw-dropping images with AI.

First, tools. The big news for image generation this year was OpenAI bundling the best-of-class DALL-E 3 image generator into ChatGPT itself. You can now generate some of the very best images natively without having to mess around with bespoke AIs like Midjourney, Firefly or Canva.

This was an instant hit for Open AI, as users flocked to, for some reason, make Studio Ghibli-style images of their favourite meme. "Our GPUs are melting," said CEO Sam Altman on X.



To see how good image generation has got, see the above picture. The image on the left was created with the prompt, "a photorealistic image of an astronaut riding a horse" in DALL·E 2 in 2023. The image on the right was created with the same prompt in Chat-GPT o4 today.

Google soon followed suit, incorporating its next-generation Imagen 4 image generation engine into Gemini. It also recently added its awesome Veo 3 video generation AI for Pro subscribers in the US. Sadly, it's only available for the US\$250-per-month (B8,000) Ultra tier in Thailand at the moment, though this will surely change.

What about prompts? The advice here is that your prompt should define the style – photorealistic, steampunk, impressionist - and mood, such as

whimsical or hard-hitting. You can specify a colour palette and lighting. If you are creating a complex image, try splitting prompts into foreground, midground and background and the relationship between objects.

Most usefully – as this column always bangs on about - your results will improve radically if you make an initial stab at your image, then iterate, refine and repeat.

You can sharpen your prompt by adding missing details – or simply scold the AI to do better. Wharton's Ethan Mollick proved the point in a hilarious X.com thread where he asked ChatGPT to create "the perfect butternut squash". Unsatisfied with the first draft, he prompted five more times: "Make the squash more perfect... perfect the squash further. The squash

must be perfect... more perfect... yes, now we are getting there. Perfect it further... once more, my friend." And, incredibly, the final image was indeed a perfect squash.

What about video generation? Expect huge changes by the end of the year. We already mentioned Gemini's Veo 3. OpenAI's Sora is in private beta and will soon be incorporated into Chat-GPT. Other standout tools include Pictory, for turning long-form text into social media-friendly clips, Synthesia for avatar-based presentation videos and Runway's Gen-2, which excels at scene transitions and user-friendly editing. Meta's CM3-Video and Adobe's Firefly Video (beta) also deliver professional-grade outputs.

As with images, prompts matter: specify scene length, camera angles, lighting, and mood ("cinematic dusk", "handheld documentary style"). Start small – two to three seconds of motion – then expand through iteration. Use storyboards or reference frames to guide the progression. With video, you still need to be patient: it remains resource-intensive, so plan for a few passes to achieve polished, jaw-dropping results.

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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Katamanda is one of Phuket's most renowned luxury resorts, within walking distance to Kata Noi and Kata beaches. The resort has a club house, gymnasium, tennis court, onsite management office and 24 hour security. Expertly run by CBRE, this villa would make a fabulous family home or an excellent investment property.

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- 1. What was Christopher Latham Scholes' invention of 1868?
- 2. On average, giant pandas poo 40 times a day. True or false?
- 3. What was the first vegetable ever to be grown in space?
- 4. What is the meaning of "fn" on your computer keyboard?
- 5. Who was the highest paid athlete in the world during the

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Medium

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

1. Bent

5. Body shop fig. 8. Red shade

14. Portion receiver 16. Ancient meeting

places

17. Takes an extended stroll

21. Calculus calculations

25. Vermin 27. Greek earth

goddess: Var.

31. Fails to act 34. Kind of mark

35. Big time 36. Discompose

37. Quarrels

40. Insect stage 44. Holiday quaff 45. Hospital directive

49. Does the best one can 53. Old Icelandic

literary work 54. Boot

55. Certain berth 56. It's inspired

57. The other woman 59. Turns upside down 68. Persian Gulf country 29. Fingers

69. With pleasure

70. Operatives 71. Annex

72. Spicy Mexican sauce

Down 1. Catch 2. U.N. workers' grp.

3. Bass, for one 19. Battle of Britain grp. 4. Brillo rival 20. Discouraging words 5. Mount SW of

Messina 6. Certain bottom 7. Abbr. to the left of

a number 8. River craft 9. Roe

10. Column's

counterpart 11. 401(k) alternative

12. Mineo of "Exodus" 56. Passage 13. Cry in cartoons

15. Body 18. Erstwhile

21. Venom source 22. ___ Rancho (suburb of Albuquerque) 23. List ender

24. Pump 26. Game divisions

27. Prattle 28. Bibliophilic suffix 30. Hair color

5) Cristiano Ronaldo (US\$275 million) 1) Typewriter; 2) True; 3) Potato; 4) Function;

32. Bottom line

33. Eats

37. Boozehound

38. Low slope

39. Freudian topic 40. Fury

41. Kind of pie 42. Conjunction

43. Fed. construction

overseer 45. Dadaist

46. Dope

47. Air hero 48. A pop

50. Boosts

51. 100 cents

52. Risked, in days of old

58. See 23-Down

59. Cousin of reggae 60. Harbor craft

61. Shock's partner

62. Indian bread

63. Franco-Spanish botanist

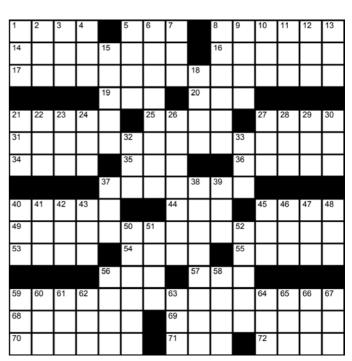
64. Alter, in a way

65. Shogun's capital 66. Pledge of

Allegiance ender

67. Salon supply

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



GOT YOUR NUMBER

the number of Billboard #1 hits Elvis Presley had in his career.

folds are in a chef's hat.

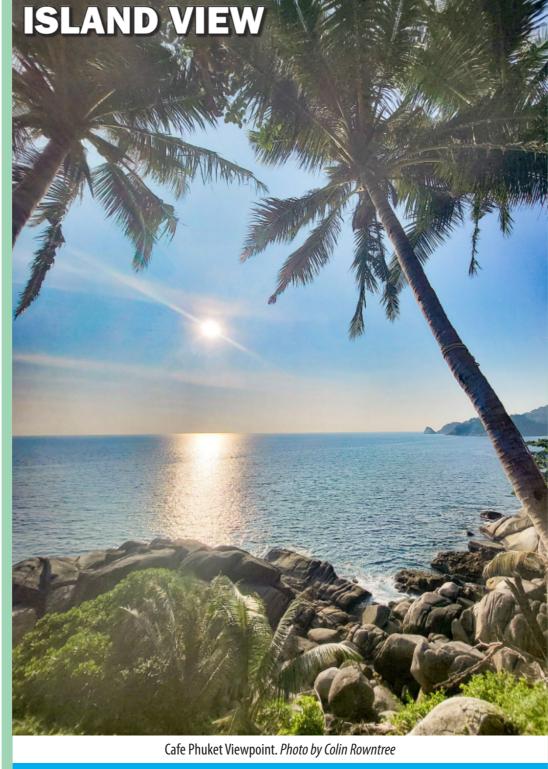
the year the first 'Batman' comic book was published.

people in the United States have a last name that starts with their first name - more than 25% of those are John Johnson.

488

social media comments a year are fabricated by China's government to distract its citizens from bad news and political debates, said a Harvard study in 2016.

Source: Today.com

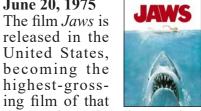


Got an unusual or particularly beautiful picture of Phuket? Email it to execeditor@classactmedia.co.th

This week in history

June 20, 1975 The film Jaws is

released in the United States, becoming the highest-gross-



time and starting the trend of films known as "summer blockbusters".

June 21, 2004

SpaceShipOne becomes the first privately funded spaceplane to achieve spaceflight.

June 22, 1633

The Holy Office in Rome forces Galileo Galilei to recant his view that the Sun, not the Earth, is the centre of the Universe in the form he presented it in, after heated controversy.

June 23, 1972

U.S. President Richard Nixon and White House Chief of Staff H. R. Haldeman are taped talking about illegally using the CIA to obstruct the FBI's investigation into the Watergate break-ins.

June 24, 1939

Siam is renamed Thailand by Plaek Phibunsongkhram, the country's third prime minister.

June 25, 1848

A photograph of the June Days uprising in France becomes the first known instance of photojournalism.

June 26, 1906

The first Grand Prix motor race is held at Le Mans.

Source: Wikipedia





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Trades & Services

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MARINE SERVICES





















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Friday Mussels Night

6 PM onwards: Belgian style mussels served with French Fries. All you can eat. Your choice, Your style: Mariniere, Selected drinks, Provencale, Garlic & cream, Creamy curry, Blue cheese or Thai style We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 325 baht P.P. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/ shakersphuket Oliver, Shakers restaurant 98/18 Vises Road, Rawai 83130, 081 891 4381





Sunday Roast

12PM - 9PM: All you can eat Sunday Roast Buffet Beef, Pork & Capon chicken - Cauliflower, Broccoli, Peas, Carrots, Fried mushrooms, Grilled Tomatoes -Yorkshire pudding - Roasted Potatoes, Mashed Potatoes - Gravy, Mushroom sauce, Horse raddish, Mint Sauce. We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 350 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







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



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



Skål Goes Naughty -**Bali Nights in Patong**

Our host of the month of June, Peter Koch, extends a warm invitation to all Skålleagues for an evening of Bali-inspired flavours & Patong vibes at Naughty Nuri's, Phuket. Get ready for a sizzling evening of fun, flavours and friendship. Naughty Nuri's Patong will be serving up their legendary Indonesian specialties and the world-famous ribs that have built a cult following around the globe. Registration from 6pm. Members B1,200 - Non-Members B1,600 Bookings - contact@skalphuket.org





Grow Boating Evening – July 2025

We look forward to seeing you at the Grow Boating Evening at the Isola restaurant at the Royal Phuket Marina from 5pm. Drinks sponsor for the evening will be the Royal Phuket Marina. Royal Phuket Marina is a distinguished world-class destination combining luxury waterfront living with a state-of-the-art marina. See royalphuketmarina.com/marina There will be a delicious buffet sponsored by Isola Restaurant for all attendees. Come and join in the fun, everyone is welcome and there is no entry fee. More info at facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket

JULY



100 Legends Summer Ball 2025

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



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PHUKET BUSINESS NETWORKING - JUNE 2025

Held at The Oasis Bar in Koh Kaew on Friday, June 13, a small but enthusiastic group took advantage of the networking opportunities that continued late in the night. Visit facebook.com/Phuket Business networking to find out about their future events.





Kubica wins at Le Mans

MOTORSPORTS

FORMER FORMULA One driver Robert Kubica has long since tackled the demons of a near-fatal accident 14 years ago but last Sunday's (June 15) victory in the 24 Hours of Le Mans is arguably his greatest achievement yet.

The 40-year-old Pole roared to victory in his bright yellow "privateer" Ferrari to give the Italian marque a third consecutive win in the most famous endurance race in the

In a thrilling 93rd edition of the race, which saw the top four separated by just over 20 seconds going into the final 15 minutes, Kubica and his AF Corse codrivers Philip Hanson and Ye Yifei (#83) finished just 14.084s ahead of a Porsche (#6) driven by Kevin Estre, Matt Campbell and which made him the first Laurens Vanthoor.

F1's brightest prospects other achievements when he won the 2008



Canada Grand Prix but a harrowing accident in a rally in Andorra in 2011 almost cost him his life.

Trapped upside down in his car before being freed and whisked to hospital, Kubica suffered several serious injuries and underwent a partial amputation of his right forearm.

He returned to racing cars, however, winning the WRC2 championship and taking part in sports car races. In 2017 he moved back into F1, testing for Renault before racing for Williams in 2019.

But last Sunday's win, Pole ever to win Le Kubica was one of Mans, tops any of his behind the wheel. AFP

Russell triumphs in Canada

FORMULA ONE

eorge Russell secured Merrcedes' first win of the season In the Canadian Grand Prix last Sunday (June 15) as McLaren's championship-chasing drivers crashed in the final laps of an intriguing and

The 27-year-old Briton beat close rival and four-time world champion Max Verstappen of Red Bull by 0.228 seconds under the safety car to claim his fourth career victory with his teenage Mercedes team-mate Kimi Antonelli finishing third.

The 18-year-old Italian rookie became the third-youngest podium finisher in Formula One history, showing composure in resisting late intense late pressure from championship leader Oscar Piastri of McLaren, who survived a collision with team-mate Lando Norris, on his way to fourth.

That ensured he extended his lead in the drivers' standings to 22 points ahead of Norris who crashed into him on lap 67 of the 70-lap race, breaking his front wing as he attempted to pass on the straight.

"Yep, I'm sorry," said Norris of his crash with Piastri. "It's all my bad, all my fault. Unlucky, sorry. Stupid from me."

Charles Leclerc finished fifth ahead of Ferrari team-mate Lewis



Hamilton, Fernando Alonso of Aston Martin and Sauber's Nico Hulkenberg.

Esteban Ocon finished ninth for Haas, marking their 200th race with a solid points finish, ahead of Carlos Sainz for Williams.

Only five seconds separated the top four as they began a furious final 10-lap dash to the flag that resulted in the McLarens battling wheel-to-wheel for fourth place near the end when Norris hit the rear of his team-mate's car and crashed out of the race.

'STRESSFUL'

Russell was delighted to deliver his team's first win since the Las Vegas Grand Prix last year.

"It's amazing to be back on the top step. The last time was Vegas and last year here felt like it was a victory lost. But today we obviously got the victory thanks to that incredible pole lap and I am so happy to see Kimi on the podium as well."

Verstappen was quick to congratulate both Mercedes drivers.

"It was quite a good race although we were struggling on the tyres in the first two stints. We had an aggressive strategy and we managed to hang in there. And this was the maximum possible for us today."

Antonelli was greeted enthusiastically by the big crowd at the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve with his name chanted as he took his podium place.

"It was so stressful," he said. "But I am super happy! I had a good start, managed to jump to P3, and just stayed up there in the front. I am so happy to bring this podium

Patama named BAT honorary life president

BADMINTON

KHUNYING PATAMA Leeswadtrakul has been named honorary life president of the Badminton Association of Thailand (BAT).

Patama, president of the Badminton World Federation (BWF) and a member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), stepped down as BAT chief last month after being confirmed for the BWF top job in April.

Air Chief Marshal Monthon Satchukorn, who was the BAT first vice-president, has been named as Patama's successor.

He received 59 votes from all the members who took part in the provisional presidential election and will serve in post until 2028.

"It is such an honour and I would like to thank everyone who has faith in me to serve as the new



president of the Badminton Association of Thailand," Air Chief Marshal Monthon said, reflecting on his new

continuous from Khunying Patama and the previous committee. Rest assured that I am always open to receiving useful suggestions and comments. I believe we will be able to find ways to develop Thai badminton together."

Patama believes Air Chief Marshal Monthon is the right man for the

"Air Chief Marshal "The work will be Monthon Satchukorn is very suitable for the position of the president of the Badminton Association of Thailand because he has been working with the association for many years and knows the internal problems very well." Bangkok Post

Spaun wins first major at US Open

GOLF

J.J. SPAUN ACHIEVED HIS DREAM of winning his first major golf title by capturing the US Open last Sunday (June 15). Doing it with a 65-foot birdie putt on the last hole was pure magic.

Spaun birdied four of the last seven holes to win at Oakmont, firing a two-over 72 to defeat Scotland's Robert MacIntyre by two strokes, clinching matters with his stunning putt at the 72nd hole.

"Just to finish it off like that is just a dream," Spaun said. "You watch other people do it... you see crazy moments. To have my own moment like that at this championship, I'll never forget this moment for the rest of my life."

Spaun drove the par-four 17th green to set up the tap-in birdie that put him ahead to stay, joining a list of birdie-birdie finishers to win the US Open that includes Jack Nicklaus, Ben Hogan, Tom Watson and Jon Rahm.

"It's definitely like a storybook, fairytale ending, kind of underdog fighting back, not giving up, never quitting," Spaun said. "With the rain and everything and then the putt, you couldn't write a better story. I'm just so fortunate to be on the receiving end of that."

Spaun, whose only prior PGA Tour win was the 2022 Texas Open, was a runner-up at the Cognizant Classic and Players Championship this year, losing a playoff to second-ranked Rory McIlroy at the latter.

Spaun made bogevs on five of the first six holes, including the first three, and birdied four of the last seven.



"As bad as things were going, I tried to just continue to dig deep. I've been doing it my whole life."

Spaun has been resilient. In 2018 he was diagnosed with one type of diabetes but treatment was ineffective. In 2021, he found he had been misdiagnosed and had another type of diabetes.

On Sunday morning, he made an early trip for medicine.

"My daughter had a stomach bug and was vomiting all night long," Spaun said. "Kind of a rough start to the morning. I'm not blaming that on my start, but it kind of fit the mold of what was going on, the chaos."

A 96-minute storm delay was crucial, allowing Spaun to reset after his miserable

"That break was actually the key for me to winning this tournament," he said. That and his monster 65-foot birdie putt at the

"I was just in shock, disbelief that it went in and it was over," Spaun said. "I couldn't even believe what I witnessed when that went in." AFP





Is Club World Cup a step too far?

FOOTBALL

■IFA's expanded Club ◀ World Cup, which kicked off in the United States last Saturday (June 14), is a controversial addition to the global football calendar and one that could have a far-reaching impact on the sport in the years to come.

The 32-team tournament, with US\$1 billion (B32.4bn) in prize money on offer, has been crammed into an already overloaded schedule leading to concerns it will push elite players to breaking point.

It also threatens to upset the balance of domestic and continental club competitions, giving competing teams huge financial advantages over rivals.

Consider the leading clubs in Europe, which is sending 12 teams including Champions League winners Paris Saint-Germain, Real Madrid, Manchester City and Chelsea.

The chances are high that some will go deep into the Club World Cup, with a



maximum of seven games to be played up to the July 13 final.

The riches on offer are extraordinary, up to a possible \$125 million for the top-performing European

"The Club World Cup model affects the ecosystem of national leagues, especially in Europe," Javier Tebas, the president of Spain's La Liga, told radio station Cadena Cope.

Liverpool and Barcelona will not be in the United

on the cash prizes, they will be able to give players a much-needed rest.

huge impact and it will give Liverpool and Arsenal a huge advantage in the next season to not be there," said England manager Thomas Tuchel when asked about the consequences for the Premier League.

LAVISH SUMS

But while the likes of Those clubs are already among the world's wealthiest without taking into

States and so will miss out account the sums being lavished by FIFA, but what about teams elsewhere.

It will become harder for "I think it will have a clubs in South Africa to challenge Mamelodi Sundowns once they leave with a guaranteed minimum of almost \$10mn - the equivalent of the prize money for winning nine domestic titles.

> The amateurs of Auckland City already dominate in Oceania before being handed over \$3.5mn just as an appearance fee.

> > But if taking part here will

be perhaps the ultimate career just adds to the demands on those at top clubs.

The introduction of the competition was met with opposition in Europe, and global players union FIFPro has warned that the wellbeing of many of its members is being threatened by the huge workload they face.

TOO MANY GAMES?

Portugal midfielder Vitinha has played 52 matches for PSG this season, including the Champions League final win over Inter Milan on May 31.

eight games for Portugal, including the Nations League finals last week. Now he is off to the United States with PSG, with potentially no holiday until mid-July.

The next French season is then due to start in mid-August, at the same time as the Premier League and La Liga.

And at the end of next season Vitinha should be back in North America with Portugal at the expanded 48-team World Cup.

Such demands on highlight for their players, it leading stars are why player unions in Europe last year raised the threat of strike action in a bid to cut down on the number of matches.

> Meanwhile, domestic leagues do not see why they should change to accommodate FIFA's new tournament.

> "International organisations and especially FIFA have increased the number of matches they organise, so now we have a calendar that is beyond saturation," said Mathieu Moreuil of the Premier League.

Other competitions are being devalued because the There have also been Club World Cup is taking place at the same time, like the CONCACAF Gold Cup, also being played in the United States.

> USA coach Mauricio Pochettino is unable to call on leading players like Weston McKennie and Timothy Weah because they are at the Club World Cup with Juventus.

"That is the circumstance that we have and we need to adapt," said former PSG and Spurs manager Pochettino.

War Elephants suffer Asian **Cup setback in Ashgabat**

FOOTBALL

THAILAND WENT down to Turkmenistan 3-1 in a key qualification match for the 2026 AFC Asian Cup in Ashgabat on June 10.

The victory saw hosts Turkmenistan open up a three-point lead at the top of the Group D standings, with a maximum of six points from two games.

Thailand are second with three points while Sri Lanka, who defeated Taiwan 3-1 in Colombo on June 10, are third with Masatada Ishii during a three as well.

Only the winners of ence. the six groups in the qualifying tournament will join conceded the first goal the 18 countries who have already qualified for the finals in Saudi Arabia.

The defeat in Ashgabat was pivotal as it came against a team seen as the War Elephants' main spot in the group.



playing. They have about at the Ashgabat Stadium 8-9 players that come did not help Thailand's from the same club so cause on the night. their understanding of the game was good. This created problems for us," said Thailand coach post-match press confer-

"It is true that we very quickly but we played well during the first half. We just have to accept that Turkmenistan's defence was strong, so we couldn't score," he added.

competition for the top Chanathip Songkrasin admitted the team did not "I think Turkmenistan play well but also pointed

had a clear method of out that the artificial pitch

"Of course, the artificial pitch was a problem for our team but I have to say that we did not play well today," he said.

Thailand, who beat Sri Lanka in their first game in March, will have backto-back qualifiers against Taiwan in October, with the first game at home on Oct 9 and the second match away five days

Ishii's men will now Thailand captain turn their focus to the 51st King's Cup preparation which takes place in September. Bangkok Post





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Thais suffer AFC Asian Cup setback > p15



RUGBY

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he Alan Cook Ground (ACG) in Thalang welcomed a number of teams from near and afar on the weekend of June 6-7 for another hugely successful Phuket International Rugby 11s tournament.

Heavy monsoon storms and continual downpours scattered the week in the lead up to the event, suggesting for perfect rugby playing conditions as day one got underway with the Athena Siam Coffin Dodgers Over-35s and One Foot in the Grave Over-45s Vets tournaments.

It was last year's Coffin Dodgers runners up, Pronto Rugby UK, who started proceedings with a hard fought 10-0 win over tournament debutants Kamesenryu Rugby Club from Japan, while the aptly named Muddy Buffalos were unlucky to go down 7-0 to the Prebbleton Dinos and the home team, Phuket Viagrabonds, came through 10-5 against a plucky Chiang Mai Cobras side.

In round two matches the Kiwis Dinos side were unlucky to go down to Pronto UK 7-5 whilst the Buffalos got the better of the Kamesenryu 7-0, while The Viagrabonds went down to the Dubai Barbarians 14-0.

With the weather showing signs of clearing up and the sun beginning to shine through between the showers, the Pronto lads took control of their group with a 19-5 win over the Muddy B's, whilst the Dinos and Kamesenryu played out an entertaining 14-14 draw. The CNX Cobras went down 7-0 to a classy Dubai Baba's side, before bouncing back to defeat the Dinos 5-0 in their quarter-final, while Dubai had a strong showing against Kamesenryu 31-5.

In the semi-finals, Pronto Rugby just scraped through, beating the Phuket Viagrabonds 7-0, whilst CNX Cobras went down to the Dubai Baba's side, 19-0

In the Bowl final the Kiwi Prebbleton Dinos were too strong for the Muddy Buffalos, winning 12-0, as the Chiang Mai Cobras won the plate by the same score against the Viagrabonds.

The Cup final was a torrid affair with Pronto Rugby and the Dubai Baba's giving no quarter.

Ultimately, in a topsy turvy, high-quality game, Ponto Rugby came out on top 14-7 to win the trophy that eluded them last year.

SILVERBACKS AND WRINKLIES

The One Foot in the Grave Over-45s started with an all-Japanese encounter as the Asian Japanese Dragons took on Kamesenryu, with the latter winning 15-5. They would then go on to lose against last year's winners the Taipei Silverbacks 12-5 before taking out the San Miguel Wanderers Wrinklies 5-0 in a tight game to

reach the cup semi-finals.

The HKFC Vintage Gents lost to the Prebbleton Dinos of New Zealand 24-12 before bouncing back and beating the Moorabbin Rams 17-5 from Australia in the next game. They then defeated pre-tournaments favourites the KL Tigers 14-12 before overcoming Kamesenryu 10-5 in the semi-final, while the Prebbleton Dinos won all their group games to storm to the semi-final where they overcame the Taipei Silverbacks 10-0.

The San Miguel Wanderers Wrinklies were Shield winners against the KL Tigers, while the Moorabbin Rams won the Bowl and the impressive Kamesenryu RFC won the Plate.

The Prebbleton Dino's side were clear favourites going into the Cup final but the Vintage Gents held strong, displaying solid defence and pace out wide to ultimately score twice and win the cup 12-0.

The first game of the day in the women's division saw the Bangkok Bangers Belles defeat tournament debutantes Amblers Old Girls 17-0, with the latter featuring a triple mother-daughter combo in Marisse and TeHana De Klerk, Angel and Bree Portugal and Erica and Dylanne Savage.

Southerners Ladies and HKFC Ice & Fire played out a 5-5 draw in game two ahead of the Bangers Belles beating the Southerners Ladies 5-0 before the Belles were held 0-0 by HKFC Ice & Fire and the Amblers Old Girls went down 17-0 to the Southerners.

The Southerners then brushed HKFC aside 19-0 in the first semi-final, with the Belles defeating the Amblers in the other

The Belles dominated the final with the smaller Southerners having no answer to the power game and, despite the final score of 27-0 not truly reflective of the game, the Belles ran out deserved winners and 2025 Womens' Champions, while the Amblers won the Plate.

INTRICATE

The UUDS Tuskers, a team of Sri Lankan and Fijian expats based in the UAE, took on local side Phang Nga Rugby Club to start the men's open tournament in Group A, with the former showing their experience and class against a much younger side to coast to a 40-0 win.

The Tuskers then went undefeated in their group before beating the Chiang Mai Cobras 19-0 in the semi-final to book a final place.

Also in Group A were the Peak Baba's, a rugby academy from Hong Kong making their competition debut, who showed good form to finish second, whilst Seoul Survivors from Korea and the Phang Nga lads filled out the minor positions.

In Group B, Pronto Rugby UK topped the group unbeaten, with the CNX Cobras finishing a creditable second by virtue of a one-point score differential over the Phuket Vagabonds, with the Groote Eylandte Mudchooks from

Australia propping up the group.

In the minor finals, the Groote Eylandt Mudchooks took the Shield, and the Seoul Survivors defeated the Phuket Vagabonds to win the Bowl. The Plate final was a close game with Pronto Rugby UK just getting over the line 5-0 against an ever-improving Chiang Mai Cobras team.

The Cup final saw the Peak Baba's up against the UUDS Tuskers with both teams putting on a show. The Tuskers went hard from the start and their flowing rugby, offloads and intricate passing saw them take the lead in a dominant first half performance.

The Peak lads came out strong in the second half to reduce the deficit before the Tuskers turned on the style to secure a final score of 28-12 and the trophy.

A fitting end to a weekend that had it all, from torrential rain to sunshine, excitement on and off the pitch, and a wonderful show performance by the Asia Center Foundation scholarship for children, thanking all their sponsors and the wider rugby community.

Dates for the 2026 Phuket International Rugby 11s will be announced in due course.

If you are interested in finding out more or sponsoring a child or making a donation, contact Roelien Muller at the Asia Center Foundation on roemuthai@gmail.

