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HAZY DAYS

The view over one of Phuket's key beaches at 6:38am on Tuesday (Apr 18). Photo: Phuket Info Center

OFFICIALS BLAME 'NATURAL PHENOMENON' AS ISLAND SMOTHERED BY SMOG

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket Governor Narong Woonciw last Sunday (Apr 16) assured that the heavy smog that had plagued Phuket for days was starting to clear, and advised that people could safely enjoy outdoor activities.

At the meeting on Sunday Governor Narong said that the unclear air was a natural phenomenon in the summer.

"It is not a problem of PM 2.5 dust and [he] has ordered the relevant agencies to closely monitor the situation," said an official report.

Regardless, the Phuket Info Center, operated under the Phuket branch of the ministry of Interior, less than 24 hours later on Monday posted photos proving otherwise. One image, taken from CCTV, showed heavy smog at 6:30am on Monday, and another posted later showed the headlands at Patong very unclear as seen from Patong Beach at 8:30am.

Governor Narong recognised the poor air quality had raised concerns among many people, especially regarding PM 2.5 dust.

"But from checking the data with the Southern Meteorological Center on the west coast, it is known that the weather in Phuket is still in good

condition," he said.

"It is not a problem of PM 2.5 dust at all, but a natural phenomenon in the summer which is about to change into the rainy season," he added, according to the official report.

"Therefore, I do not want people to worry. People can still engage in various outdoor activities due to the condition of the area of Phuket, which will have wind blowing all the time.

"In addition, Phuket is a tourist city and a residential area, not an agricultural area, so there isn't much burning, and no hot spots of concern have been found [on the island], and I have instructed relevant agencies to closely monitor the situation,"

Governor Narong continued.

"It is expected that such characteristics and part of this may be due to climate change," he said.

Despite his assurances, Governor Narong himself still urged people with health issues to remain vigilant for ill effects on their health brought on by the smog, even according to the official report of the meeting.

"The health of people at risk such as children, the elderly, pregnant women and patients with congenital diseases in the group of respiratory diseases and cardiovascular disease should be monitored. If there are initial symptoms such as coughing, difficulty breathing, eye irritation,...

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Phuket athletes star at National Youth Games



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News



Revellers step up for Songkran water fights > p5

American stomped at Rawai pub

Eakkapop Thongtub
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Chalong Police have denied that they are stalling their investigation into an American tourist being stomped on the face by a security staffer at the Laguna Plaza bar complex on Wiset Rd in Rawai.

The response came not in an official signed statement, but in an unsigned post on the Phuket Provincial Police official Facebook page on Monday (Apr 17).

According to the post, the response was issued after national news channel “Thairath TV” broadcast a report last Sunday (Apr 16) in which the American tourist, Bryce Alan Terzian, 33, went public to explain the incident – and confirmed that after seven days Chalong Police he had not received any reports of progress in the case.

It was Mr Terzian’s first trip to Thailand.

Of note, despite taking seven days and being called out on national Thai TV over lack of action in the case, the Phuket Provincial Police post on Monday came less than 12 hours after the Thairath news program was broadcast, at about 7:25pm on Sunday (Apr 16).

Mr Terzian reported the incident to Chalong Police on Apr 9, police admitted in the post.

According to the post, Mr



A CCTV image of the incident, which Chalong Police said they could not even request without a medical report confirming the American’s injuries. Image: Supplied

Terzian said that the incident occurred at the “Laguna bar” (“ร้านลาгуน่าบาร์”) in Rawai at about 4am.

However, the “Laguna bar” shut down and reopened with a grand opening ‘Red Party’ in August last year. The nightclub is now named “Club Zhu”, though police have yet to use that name to identify the location.

According to police, there was an argument with the DJ and there was an altercation resulting in Mr Terzian being dragged away by security staff.

“After that, one security guard [later named by police as Prasert Madsatun] attacked Mr Terzian until he was in-

jured, therefore leading to the complaint for investigators at Chalong Police Station to track down the perpetrators to prosecute the law,” the post said.

During the assault, the nightclub security staffer stomped on Mr Terzian’s face, breaking his nose, police explained.

According to the post by Phuket Provincial Police, Chalong Police after a week were still waiting for a medical report to confirm the extent of injuries to Mr Terzian.

According to the post, Chalong Police could not proceed further with their investigation until they had

received the medical report confirming the injuries suffered by Mr Terzian.

Further, Chalong Police officers claimed they were unable to even request CCTV footage of the incident until they received the medical report – despite CCTV videos of the incident already spreading online.

“We are in the process of accelerating following up on physical examination results in order to issue a summons or request approval for the issuance of an arrest warrant for the accused in order to prosecute according to the law, Including collecting evidence such as closed-circuit televi-

sion cameras (CCTV) inside the store [sic] to prove whether there were other illegal acts or not,” the post by Phuket Provincial Police said.

Of note, the report by police publicly revealed Mr Terzian’s passport number. However, in addition to not correctly publicly identifying the venue where the stomping took place, initially did not name any of the suspects the police were allegedly investigating.

Also of note, Chalong Police – and consequently Phuket Provincial Police – expressed no interest in investigating why the “Laguna bar” was open at 4am.

With details of the incident, and the role Chalong Police had played so far in the investigation, police late on Monday announced that they magically now had the medical report in hand.

Mr Terzian and Mr Prasert had also presented themselves at Chalong Police Station, where the “parties voluntarily entered the criminal mediation process”, according to police.

Police on Tuesday (Apr 18) said that Mr Terzian had not suffered a broken nose, as claimed in the original report. According to Chalong Police, Mr Terzian suffered only scratches on his left leg and was “cured” within one day.

Police also claimed that Mr Terzian had admitted that he was drunk during the incident, while Mr Prasert

said that he was only trying to stop Mr Terzian [from doing something], despite fellow nightclub security staffers already leaving Mr Terzian alone.

Chalong Police as of Tuesday claimed that the altercation was yet another ‘misunderstanding’, resulting from a ‘miscommunication’ – like nearly every incident that police in Phuket want to disregard as soon as possible.

According to Chalong Police, Mr Terzian as of Monday waived his right to any damages resulting from him being stomped on the face.

For his action of stomping on Mr Terzian’s face, an act in Western countries that is treated seriously as it can be fatal, Chalong Police fined Mr Prasert B1,000 for ‘physical assault’

If police are to be believed, officers have now, within 36 hours of the story going nationwide on a Thai news channel, allegedly checked the operating licences of the “Laguna bar”, which remember does not exist.

Regardless, police on Tuesday said they were somehow able to confirm that the bar had applied for a licence (not specified), but had not yet had its application approved.

For this infraction, police reportedly charged the operator of the bar with operating an entertainment avenue without a permit. The amount of the fine was not revealed.

Officials say ‘all safe’ over haze, but issue health warnings for at-risk

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...the duration of outdoor activities should be reduced for health care during this period,” he said.

Of note, the official government report of the air quality last Sunday presented screenshots from the government-operated Air4Thai air-quality monitoring platform, showing all green and yellow indicators for Phuket.

Air4Thai stood alone in its assessment of Phuket’s recent air quality, with all other major air-quality monitoring platforms, including the Swiss-based IQAir, as



Photo: The Phuket News

presented by the Phuket Info Center on Monday, showing red, light red and orange warning indicators for the island.

HEALTH WARNINGS
Governor Narong’s positive outlook for clearer skies last

Sunday came just one day after Wanchai Chanlao from the Pollution Control Department and independent volunteer academics from The Phuket Warning Friends Network gathered in Phuket Town to take official readings via the Air4thai app.

The readings revealed small particles less than 10 microns (PM10) measured at 41 micrograms per cubic metre resulting in moderate quality which can affect the health of at-risk people, including children, the elderly, pregnant women and patients with respiratory diseases.

Mr Wanchai urged people to consider minimising activities in areas particularly affected by the smog and to wear a facemask or cloth to cover the nose when necessary. Such warm conditions posed serious health threats including heat stroke, he added.

Mr Wanchai commented

that the poor air quality meant visibility was reduced significantly and making out the coastline or sea from elevated viewpoints across the island was “problematic”. He added that tourists still continued to gather at popular spots to take photographs of the scenery although only a few were wearing facemasks.

The cause of the smog was largely due to low-pressure heat cover that had increased temperature readings in certain areas to 50°C, a sizeable increase from the 40-41°C in previous days, he said.

According to forecasts from the Thai Meteorological De-

partment the heat wave and resulting smoggy conditions were likely to last another week.

Warnings were issued to at-risk groups to be mindful and watch out for their health. Anyone experiencing a persistent cough, difficulty breathing, tightness of or chest pain, irregular heart-beat, nausea, lethargy more than usual, headaches or eye irritation should reduce their time spent outside and should consult a doctor.

Protective hygienic facemasks and cover for the nose when leaving the house were also recommended.

Five dead in 'Seven Days'

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket officials have recognised 51 road accidents resulting in five deaths and 51 people injured during the 'Seven Days of Danger' road and water safety campaign for Songkran 2023, which concluded at midnight Monday night (Apr 17).

The official report for the campaign came from the Phuket office of the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM-Phuket) and was released on the Public Relations Phuket Facebook page Tuesday morning (Apr 18).

Of the five killed during the campaign, which began last Tuesday (Apr 11), four were males and one was female, said the report. No other details of the deadly accidents were reported.

The report also marked the deaths and injuries during the 24-hour period of Apr 17, Day 7 of the campaign. There were seven accidents resulting in seven people injured (two males, five females), but no deaths during Apr 17, said the report.

Last year, Phuket officials recognised four deaths and 28 people injured in 32 accidents during the Songkran Thai New Year holidays.

National road safety agency Thai Road Safety Committee (ThaiRSC)



Foreigners ride through a police checkpoint on Phra Baramee Rd, heading towards Patong. Photo: PR Phuket

reported zero deaths but 52 people injured in road accidents in Phuket on Apr 17. As of Tuesday afternoon, ThaiRSC recognised zero deaths but 22 people injured in road accidents already.

ThaiRSC reported on Tuesday that so far this year 46 people had died and 7,086 people were injured in accidents on the island's roads.

As of Tuesday, Phuket Police and related officials involved in the 'Seven Days' campaign had yet to release any details of the accidents that occurred during the 'Seven Days' or the arrests made by police during the campaign.

Forty-seven had died and 7,092 people had been injured in road ac-

cidents on the island since the year began, reported ThaiRSC.

The agency also marked that Phuket suffered no deaths and 52 people injured in road accidents on Monday (Apr 17).

Nationwide, 42 people died and 2,040 people were injured in road accidents throughout the country as of Monday (Apr 17).

According to ThaiRSC, 4,818 people had died and 244,246 people had been injured in road accidents in Thailand since the start of the year.

GOVERNOR TARGETS TOURIST DEATHS ON MOTORBIKES
Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew

chaired a meeting on Apr 12 to focus on the problem of rental operators renting out motorbikes to tourists who end up killed or maimed in motorbike accidents while on holiday in Phuket.

The aim of the meeting was to expedite efforts to resolve the problem, especially concerning motorbike operators renting out motorbikes to tourists after an increase in accidents, said an official report of the meeting.

Present for the meeting were Phuket Vice Governor Anupap Rodkwan Yodrabam, and Udomporn Kan, Head of Phuket Provincial office of the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM-Phuket), together with heads of relevant government agencies, said the report.

At the meeting representatives from the Prince of Songkla University, Phuket campus presented statistics showing that road accidents in Phuket involving tourists were "quite high", with tourists increasingly involved in accidents where the tourists were injured or killed.

Governor Narong said that the meeting discussed this time, to listen to opinions of relevant government agencies whether in the provincial transport, police, public health, disaster prevention and mitigation And other agencies to find solutions to the problem of road accidents that have

become increasingly statistically,

As of the time of the meeting (on Apr 12), in the previous two days four people, tourists among them, had died in road accidents, with motorbikes being the most common vehicle involved.

Of note, only one day earlier Phuket officials, namely from the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM), reported zero deaths in Phuket from road accidents during the first day of the 'Seven Days' safety campaign.

While feedback and opinions from those present were heard at the meeting, the only result of the meeting was the same action that officials are already supposed to be taking: ensuring that rental operators do not rent vehicles out to tourists who do not have the correct licence.

People renting motorbikes without the correct licence were "unskilled, causing the accident", said the report of the meeting.

"The province must have a way to solve problems by enforcing the law. Tourists who rent vehicles from rental operators must have a driver's license, etc," the report said.

"The province will set up a committee to come up with an action plan to solve the problem to see concrete results and be able to reduce accidents for both tourists and local residents," the report concluded.

Baan & Beyond assures cracked pylons pose no risk to safety

THE GENERAL MANAGER of Baan & Beyond ('BnB') on the bypass road, Samrit Poonchum, has assured that there is no danger to the building after a second cracked pylon at the store was found last week.

The second cracked pylon is structural, and will be repaired immediately after Songkran, Mr Samrit said.

The assurance followed Mr Samrit on Apr 10 explaining that a cracked pillar in the car park area on the second level of the shopping outlet was only cosmetic, and covered a drain.

Asked by *The Phuket News* about a second pillar also appearing to be cracked within metres of the 'cosmetic pillar', Mr Samrit on Apr 11 said that the maintenance team had noticed the second cracked pillar when performing repairs to the first pillar.

"They removed some of the concrete and found exposed metal pointing out of it," Mr Samrit said.



The second cracked pylon is structural, but poses no danger to the integrity of the main building, Mr Samrit said. Screenshot: Supplied

"It is a structural pylon, so they covered it with wooden sheets to wait for another team responsible for the structure to come and fix it after Songkran," he added.

Mr Samrit emphasised that even though the cracked pylon provides structural support, it is for an extension to the building.

"It is not one of the main

pillars, so it does not affect the foundation of the building," he said.

Mr Samrit assured there were no other pylons at the building showing cracks or other signs of stress.

"There are only these two [pylons cracked]. I ordered the maintenance team to check the whole building yesterday," he said.

The Phuket News



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PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

www.foreca.com

FRI APRIL 21



High: +30°

Low: +27°

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SAT APRIL 22



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Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

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High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

MON APRIL 24



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

TUE APRIL 25



High: +32°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

WED APRIL 26



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

THU APRIL 27



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s



Photo: Cherng Talay Police

Hotel kitchen worker stabbed by co-worker

POLICE ARE INVESTIGATING WHAT led to a kitchen porter being fatally stabbed by a co-worker in the car park of a well-known hotel in Cherng Talay on Songkran Day (Apr 13).

Cherng Talay Police Chief Pol Col Chalermchai Hersawat was informed of the incident at about 4:30pm, reported the Phuket Info Center.

Cherng Talay Police Deputy Commanders Pol Lt Col Sutham Ratanasawangwong and Pol Lt Col Satit Nurit with fellow officers rushed to the hotel, which police did not name.

Officers apprehended the perpetrator, referred to by police only as "Mr Yut" (not his real name), a 20-year-old who also worked in the hotel kitchen, in the car park in front of the hotel.

Blood stains were found on the ground, and police recovered a 15-inch long sharp knife.

Officers noted that Mr Yut was wearing a pink polo shirt, blue denim shorts and black sneakers worn at the time of the crime.

Police referred to the kitchen worker who was stabbed as 23-year-old "Mr Rung" (not his real name).

Mr Rung had been stabbed once in the stomach, he was rushed to Thalang Hospital, but pronounced dead on arrival.

Mr Yut was taken to Cherng Talay Police Station for questioning and presented with a preliminary charge of murder, confirmed the Phuket Info Center report.

Officers believe the stabbing was the result of an ongoing conflict between the two men, but were continuing their investigation, the report noted. *The Phuket News*

Tourists face court duty if caught using 'illegal' taxis

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO) has reissued a notice threatening 'illegal' taxi drivers with fines of up to B100,000 or even up to five years in jail if caught.

The notice was posted late on Apr 11, as Phuket entered the Songkran holiday period, when Phuket was expected to reap more than B4.5 billion from tourists.

In a rarity for the PLTO, the notice was posted in both Thai and English.

The English version, verbatim, in full, is as follows:

Announcement of the Phuket Transport Office

Subject: Using a private car to hire illegally

According to information from social media and complain about the use of personal cars to hire and pick up passengers illegally has caused controversy, that causes trouble, and affects to the occupation of legal public transport operators affects the image and reputation of the country, Phuket is known as a world-class tourist city.

Phuket Provincial Land Transport Office would like to announce for acknowledgment as follows:

Using a private car to carry passengers by hire illegally whether contracting the service through an application or by any



Officers last week arrested 10 drivers at the airport. Image: PLTO

means, if an offense is found, the Phuket Provincial Transport Office will proceed according to the regulations and consider penalties as provided by law in all cases. In the case of an offense under the Transport Act B.E. 2522 (1979), will be considered to be sent to the investigating officer to prosecute in accordance with the legal process (The statutory penalty rate is up to 5 years imprisonment or a fine from 20,000 to 100,000 Baht, or both.)

Passengers should choose to hire a legal car. If choosing an illegal car, the passenger may not be covered in the event of an accident, or it may not be convenient by wasting their travel time and may be required to testify in court if the driver is detained and arraigned. However can search for public car information as follows:

1) Website of the Phuket Provincial Land Transport Office at

<https://pkt.dlt.go.th/>

2) Facebook page anunnu-väänina (The Phuket Transport Office)

3) Line Official of the Phuket Provincial Land Transport Office (ID: @704jhnxb)

4) The Land Transport Department Hotline 1584.

To report a guilty or inconvenient being exploited, etc. from using public transport able to report the offense through the Public Transport Passenger Protection Center Hotline 1584 or LINE @1584DLT

Announcement Date 5 September 2022

(Mr Atcha Buachan)

Phuket Provincial Transport

There was no explanation of why a notice issued in September was repeated last week.

The notice also made no mention of specifically which taxi drivers would be deemed illegal.

FARANG AFFAIRS

By Stephff

<https://farangaffairs.com>

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Youngsters win PPAO byelections

THE ELECTION COMMISSION of Thailand Phuket office (ECT Phuket) has confirmed the two winners in the byelections held across parts of northern Phuket on Apr 9 to select new members of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) council.

Phongsakorn Punyawai, a 25-year-old resident of Moo 3, Sakhu, as the sole candidate was elected to represent PPAO Constituency 5

He received 3,852 votes, enough by election law to secure the seat despite running uncontested.

Constituency 5 comprises Thepkasattri Moo 3; Sakhu Moo 2, 3, 4, 8 and 11; and Cherng Talay Moo 6. Constituency 6 comprises all of Tambon Mai Khao as well



Andaman Kruepanich (left), 27, and **Phongsakorn Punyawai**, 25. Photos: via Facebook

as Thepkasattri Moo 5, 6, 9 and 10.

Andaman Kruepanich, a 27-year-old resident of Moo 5, Thepkasattri, who drew number 1 on the ballot, was elected to represent PPAO Constituency 6 after she received 3,275 votes.

Orapin Acheivasuk, Director of the ECT Phuket office, on Apr 10 confirmed the election results as legal, and formally valid.

The Phuket News

Splashing out on Songkran

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

For the first time in three years tens of thousands of people turned out to enjoy Songkran on the streets across Phuket on Apr 13.

Thousands took to Bangla Rd in Patong in the heat to engage in water fights, as traffic jammed the main beach road (Thaweewong Rd) and Rath-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd. Police were present to help regulate traffic and warned that CCTV throughout the town was being monitored closely to protect against security and safety incidents.

Thousands more joined the 'No L' ('no alcohol') zone on Dibuk Rd in Phuket Town, where Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew officiated the grand opening of the event, which featured live concerts by Thai stars Khao Jirayu, retrospect and SDF as well as DJ Husky & MC Tmo, among others.

Water play returned to other key areas including Saphan Hin and Soi Ta-iad in Chalong, where water fights were kept fun and family conscious, with special care for little children obvious all along the street. Many Thai visitors joined the melee by driving along the small street, and police made regular patrols, though not always making it through dry.

Thousands more joined the events at Karon, Rawai, Chong Talay and further north along the west coast.

More minor events to celebrate Songkran continued across the island throughout the day while Central Festival



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

shopping mall held live concerts each night through to last Sunday night (Apr 16), with tens of thousands of revellers arriving to enjoy the live entertainment.

WATER BLESSINGS

Governor Narong first ushered in official Songkran Thai New Year celebrations in Phuket at the Chartered Bank House on Damrong Rd in Phuket Town on Apr 11 by leading a ceremony to pour water on a Buddha statue and offer water blessings to the elderly.

The historical house, which had been abandoned for decades, is the former official residence of the manager of the Chartered Bank in Phuket, and recently underwent a B28 million renovation.

Joined by his wife Boonwadee Woonciew, who serves as the President of the Phuket Red Cross Society, Governor Narong led dozens of Phuket's

top-ranking officials at the ceremony, which was followed by the sharing of food as part of the 'Together We Share' policy, and a handful of cultural shows.

The house is now ready to serve as another tourist attraction of Phuket, noted an official report of the ceremony.

The Sino-Portuguese style structure and newly landscaped surrounds are "ready to open for the public to use together", the report said.

Meanwhile, more than 1,200 people turned out to join an event held to honour senior citizens in the Wichit area on Apr 11, including the pouring of water over the hands of elderly local residents as part of traditional Songkran festivities.

Leading the event, held at the Taphao Yai Building in Mool, Wichit, was Wichit Mayor Kreeha Chotiwitpipat joined by Buranan Chumrak, President of the Wisdom Valued Club in Wichit.

Phuket Bike Week revs back into town

PHUKET BIKE WEEK will return to Patong on April 28-30, bringing in excess of an estimated 5,000 big bikes and more than 30,000 tourists to the island, organisers have announced.

The event is hoped to generate more than B300 million for the local economy, organisers said at a press launch held at Queen Sirikit Park in Phuket Town on Apr 8.

Present to announce the event were Wittaya Singkala, President of the Phuket Bike Week Association, along with Phuket Vice Governor Danai Sunantarod; Lertchai Wangtrakuldee, Director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Phuket office; and Patong Mayor Chalerm Sak Maneesri.

Celebrating the event's 27th anniversary, this year's event will be held under the theme "Cowboy on the Beach" and be held at its traditional home of Loma Park on the Patong beachfront.

As usual, Bike Week will feature a host of activities and entertainment, including the popular big bike and classic car display, motorbike 'beauty contests' in various



Photo: PR Phuket

categories, a Rock Music Challenge, the Miss Phuket Bike Week 2023 contest, a cowboy/cowgirl costume contest, a tattoo contest and the well known sand sculpture contest, among many more activities.

Leading artists such as Carabao, Pong Hin Lek Fai, Job To Do and many other rock bands will be providing live stage show concerts.

There will also be exhibition booths for vendors of motorcycle accessories and local food booths, as well as CSR activities by bikers to promote safe driving and obeying traffic rules. Bikers will also take part in environmental activities to plant trees and raise money for various charities.

For full details of the event, visit PhuketBikeWeek.com

The Phuket News

Police weed out illegal cannabis sellers

OFFICIALS HAVE ARRESTED A MAN in Patong who was illegally producing and distributing cannabis-related products. Officers warned that harsh punishments will be enforced on anyone operating similarly without the appropriate licence.

The raid occurred at a stall on Soi Banzan, opposite the Jungceylon Mall in Patong, on Songkran night (Apr 13).

Phuket Provincial Health Office (PPHO) Chief Dr Kusak Kukkiattikoon accompanied by PPHO 'professional pharmacist' Phutachat Sangpraphan joined Patong Police Chief Col Sujin Nilbdee in conducting the raid after complaints had been made of smelly smoke causing a nuisance to passersby and local businesses.

The stall owner was identified as 43-year-old Prem Pitiraksakul, who it was revealed was operating without the correct license.

Mr Prem was offering a wide range of cannabis-related products, including two separate jars containing a bouquet of marijuana flowers, one weighing about 20 grams which he was selling for B100 per gram and another weighing approximately five grams that he was selling at B1,000 per gram. Additionally, he was offering ready-rolled marijuana cigarettes at B100 each, of which the authorities said they seized seven in total.

According to the police report Mr Prem was arrested, charged with "distribution of controlled herbs (marijuana bouquets) without permission" and taken to Patong Police Station for further questioning and legal action.



Photo: Phuket Info Center

Following Mr Prem's arrest police reiterated that any public sale of marijuana in Phuket must be done so under strict licence laws and that they will be closely monitoring the situation elsewhere moving forward.

Police also warned the public that cannabis must be consumed in appropriately designated areas and that the smoke can become a serious nuisance to those nearby. Section 28 of the Public Health Act B.E. 2535 can be enforced in this regard if the business and premises owners and/or customers do not comply. Violation of the law can result in a three-month jail term, a fine of up to B25,000, or both.

The authorities also reiterated that any restaurants or vendors using marijuana in their cooking must display clear signs on the menu stating so, while also providing clear recommendations and guidelines on suitable consumption of marijuana products.

These requirements are stipulated in Section 38 of the Public Health Act B.E. 2535 and offenders can face up to six months in jail or a fine up to B50,000, or both.

The Phuket News



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No bids for Patong Tunnel

THE EXPRESSWAY AUTHORITY OF THAILAND (EXAT) will consider bundling the Patong Tunnel project with the project to build the Muang Mai – Koh Kaew – Kathu Expressway after no bids were entered by any contractor to build the Patong Tunnel project alone.

The procurement process began on Dec 19, with 13 companies entering formal expressions of interest, EXAT reported last week.

In December, EXAT Governor Surachet Laopoolsuk explained that the total project budget is B17.811 billion, consisting of land ownership and building compensation costs of approximately B5.792bn, already approved by Cabinet.

Under the terms offered, construction costs were expected to total B8.878bn, and construction supervision to cost about B215mn, and operating and maintenance costs were forecast to cost about B3.142bn.

The deadline for submitting bids for the Patong Tunnel was Apr 7. However, EXAT has now confirmed, "It appears that no private entity has submitted an offer to invest in the project."

The lack of any bids was expected to be due to eco-



Image: EXAT

nomie conditions "caused by various situations, such as the long-term impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, and the protracted Russo-Ukrainian War, resulting in higher interest rates," the agency noted.

The economic factors have affected the cost of construction from the original estimate of B8.878 billion in 2021, with construction costs now expected to be 10% higher.

"The result has been the private sector deciding not to invest in the project as it should be, with road infrastructure in Phuket to support Phuket participating in the selection to host the Specialised Expo 2028," EXAT noted.

"EXAT will consider reviewing the project implementation, possibly implementing the Kathu-Patong Expressway in conjunction with the Muang Mai – Koh Kaew – Kathu Expressway combined into one project to incentivise the private sector to be more interested in co-investing," EXAT noted. *The Phuket News*

Songkran to deliver big holiday boost

Bangkok Post

Officials expect visitors to Phuket during the Songkran Festival to exceed those of 2019, with numbers 30% higher than before the pandemic, while authorities believe local tourism will generate B4.5 billion in revenue.

Lertchai Wangtrakuldee, Director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Phuket Office, said on Apr 10 that over 100,000 hotel rooms in Phuket had been booked for Songkran week – about 85% of room vacancies.

"It is expected that 4.5 billion baht's worth of revenue will be generated during that period.

"Even though tourists from Europe and the US are returning to their countries, domestic tourists are flocking to Phuket," he said.

He added that the number of visitors during the Thai New Year holiday would exceed the level in 2019 prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, incentivised by the government's 'We Travel Together' tourism promotion campaign.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is currently conducting the fifth phase of the government's 'We Travel Together' domestic tourism promotion campaign. It began in March and runs until the end of April.



Tourists relax on a beach in Phuket. Photo: Achadthaya Chuennira / file

The campaign received cabinet approval with a budget of B2.016bn. Under the programme, the government provides subsidies equivalent to 40% of room rates, capped at B3,600 per room per night. A total of 560,000 room subsidies are available, each with a B600 voucher for travellers to spend on food or services.

Tourists can reserve hotel rooms under this campaign until April 27, while the last day of the promotion ends on April 30.

Despite local tourism having fully recovered, Mr Lertchai said Phuket will strive for high-end tourists to earn greater revenue through their spending. The top-three nationalities visiting Phuket

are Russians, Chinese and Indians, respectively, he added.

Mr Lertchai also said that Phuket had prepared water-splashing events in many areas, such as at Phuket's Central Department Store, Limelight Avenue Department Store and its famous beaches.

Meanwhile, in Phang Nga, reports claim that the resort town has welcomed an overwhelming number of Thai and foreign tourists who have flocked to the Similan and Surin islands.

TAT Phang Nga Office director, Uthit Limsakul, said hotel occupancy in the province was expected to hit 80% during the long holiday, mainly booked by tourists from Germany, Sweden and Israel.

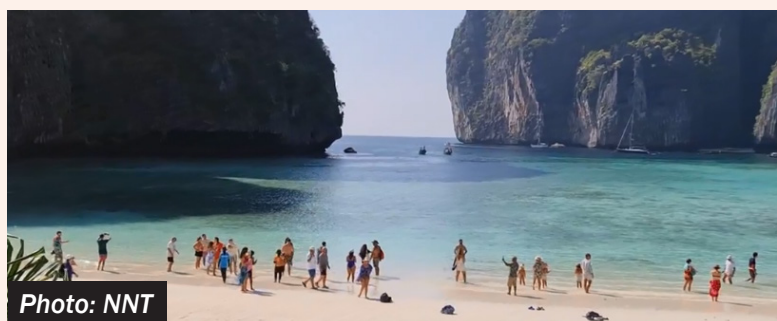


Photo: NNT

Phi Phi Island entry fees surge

THE E-TICKETING SYSTEM introduced by Thailand's Department of National Parks, Wildlife, and Plant Conservation (DNP) in July 2020 has led to a 20-30% increase in revenue from entry fees to the Phi Phi islands.

The DNP reports that the system has generated an average of B1 million per day, totaling B137mn to date.

The islands receive approximately 4,000 visitors a day, with the majority being Russian and European tourists.

Despite the success of the e-ticketing system, the chief of Hat Noppharat Thara-Mu Ko Phi-Phi National Park has noted issues with e-ticket verification due to poor telephone signals.

Additionally, tourists traveling to other islands such as Ko Phi and Phi Phi Don cannot use the e-ticketing system due to weak signal strength.

DNP Chief Atthaphon Char-

oenchansa aims to promote e-tickets for entry fees to all national parks within two years.

The pandemic led to the Hat Noppharat Thara Mu Ko Phi Phi National Park's closure for two years, resulting in environmental improvements and the restoration of the ecological system on several islands. One example is Maya Bay, where several black-tipped reef sharks have returned.

In September 2020, Thailand's five national parks announced a 100% increase in entrance fees for their attractions. Depending on the park, entrance fees range from B300-400 for adults and B150-200 for children**.

** Of note, the Thai version of the same report by NNT did not mention park entry fees. The Phuket News was informed by Thai visitors who entered the park last weekend that the entry fee was B20 for Thai children and B40 for Thai adults. NNT

TAT optimistic about reaching long-haul market target throughout 2023

STRONGER AIR TRAFFIC in the summer, with a projection of more than 98,000 flights, should help each long-haul market to exceed 1 million visitors by the end of this year, according to the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT).

Siripakorn Cheawsamoot, TAT deputy governor for Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas, said 98,625 flights scheduled between April and October exceeded the flight capacity of the previous cool season.

Typically the cool season is the busiest period of the year, particularly for long-haul markets, he noted.

Mr Siripakorn said these figures helped confirm that even though the average airfare remained considerably higher than before COVID-19, tourism demand still kept growing from the final quarter of last year and first quarter of this year.

"The number of flights in the past winter schedule resumed to just 60-70% of the corresponding period in 2019. However, the sign for summer was more positive as the resumption rate has improved to 70-80% of 2019's summer schedule," said Mr Siripakorn.

With the goal to help carriers boost the average load factor to 80%, he said the agency is preparing to extend cooperation with domestic



A tourist poses for a photograph with the 'Songkran' sign at Suvarnabhumi airport, which has seen an increase in traffic during the Songkran festival of 2023. Photo: Wichan Charoenkiatpakul / Bangkok Post

airlines to create more seamless connectivity with international airlines.

He said many international carriers have expressed interest in a code-share partnership with airlines in Thailand to enable passengers to be issued tickets just one time and connect without having to buy separate domestic tickets upon arrival.

The TAT will also sign a letter of intent with Eva Air to strengthen tourism promotional plans via the extensive global network of the airline, which has the potential to bring more direct flights from long-haul markets to Thailand.

Mr Siripakorn said TAT's eight offices in Europe and the Middle East and three offices in the US were

tasked with the mission to bring at least 1mn travellers each to Thailand this year, and more seat capacity will help them achieve that target.

In 2019, most offices in Europe surpassed that mark, with the London and Paris offices securing more than 1.2mn tourists each, while the Moscow office brought more than 1.5mn Russians and visitors from the Commonwealth of Independent States to Thailand.

The offices in Rome, Stockholm, Prague and Dubai which have a smaller market size will be paired to strengthen promotions. Each pair of offices should reach the target of 1mn tourists by the end of this year as well.

He said if those offices can recover by only 80%, it would be enough to contribute 40% revenue to Thai tourism this year.

Some markets even have high potential to match the same level in 2019, such as Russia which had already tallied 591,002 travellers as of Apr 5. This market contributed 1.48mn tourists in 2019.

Mr Siripakorn, one of two contenders for the new TAT governor, said he is confident his 33-year experience with the agency could help steer the industry to a full recovery from the pandemic's impact.

Bangkok Post

Chiang Mai residents sue Prayut over haze

CHIANG MAI

Bangkok Post

About 1,700 residents of Chiang Mai province have filed a lawsuit at the Administrative Court against Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha and two state agencies over their failure to resolve the recurring haze in the North, which they claim is shortening their lives by five years.

Around 60 people representing the plaintiffs appeared at the Administrative Court on Apr 11 to file the lawsuit, which accused Gen Prayut, along with the National Environmental Board and the Securities and Exchange Commission of failing to act to reform contract farming which has been going on for years.

The representatives, who include activists, local residents, as well as academics from Chiang Mai University and other experts, said 727 people signed the petition backing the lawsuit over the weekend at Chiang Mai University's Faculty of Law, while 980 signed up online.



Wildfires continue to rage and create problems in many parts of the country. Photo: Bangkok Post

Prayut is accused of failing to exercise his power under the Enhancement and Conservation of National Environmental Quality Act to solve the problem, one of the unnamed plaintiffs said.

The National Environmental Board was also accused of failing to effectively implement the national plan to tackle particulate matter pollution introduced in 2019.

In addition, they said, the Securities and Exchange Commission should be held responsible for failing to examine the sources of ultrafine dust pollution within the supply chains

of major listed companies to help solve the problem.

Dr Rangarit Kanchanawanit, from Chiang Mai University's Faculty of Medicine, said the health of people living in urban areas is at risk from being exposed to unsafe levels of fine particulate matter measuring 2.5 micrometres in diameter or less (PM2.5) all year long.

Repeated and sustained exposure to PM2.5 pollutants raise the risk of lung cancer, heart disease and strokes, in addition to shortening people's lifespan by up to five years.

"We want to see the government change its policies

to show strong political will and not just be considerate towards corporations. This could save millions of people from illnesses," he said.

Chatchawal Thongdeelt of the Breath Council said the PM2.5 problem is only worsening with each passing year, so the government needs to implement both short- and long-term solutions to reduce air pollution.

"The root cause is burning, both in forests and on maize plantations... Political parties and the new government must prioritise this issue and implement effective solutions," he said.

Meanwhile, wildfires continued to rage in many parts of the North and the southern province of Yala province on Monday (Apr 17).

PM2.5 levels surpassed the "safety" threshold of 50 microgrammes per cubic metre in Krabi, Satun and Yala, according to data published on www.airthai.in.th, prompting complaints of eye irritation and respiratory problems from locals and a health warning from local officials.

B1mn reward for info on election cheats

BANGKOK

THE ELECTION COMMISSION (EC) is offering up to B1 million to anyone who can provide evidence of electoral corruption including vote buying.

The office of the EC issued a statement last Friday (Apr 14) announcing the launch of a new online service via its Ta Sapparot (pineapple eyes) mobile app through which members of the public can anonymously give details of alleged fraud, vote buying or gift-giving in exchange for votes.

The app is available for both Android and iOS mobile phones, according to the EC.

Besides the app, the EC has also opened other channels for people to submit complaints including via the phone numbers 02-141-8860, 02-141-8579 and 02-141-8858 and the EC's own 1444 hotline number.

The EC will offer cash rewards for tipoffs starting from B100,000 going all the way to B1mn, based on the importance of the evidence to a conviction.

Meanwhile, EC secretary-



Campaign posters in Bangkok. Photo: Bangkok Post

general Sawaeng Boonmee last Friday monitored the transfer of ballots and equipment to 66 countries for advanced voting in 94 cities.

Narong Boonsatheanwong, deputy director-general of the Consular Affairs Department, and Pongsathorn Wisetsuwan, deputy managing director of Thailand Post, also oversaw the transfer at Thailand Post's headquarters in Bangkok.

Mr Sawaeng said party-list ballots are green while constituency ballots are purple. A total of 115,139 Thais registered for advance voting overseas from Mar 25 to Apr 9. Of them, 109,442 registered via the internet and the rest registered at district or local registration offices.

Bangkok Post

Nationwide watch for COVID after mask-free Songkran

BANGKOK

HEALTH OFFICIALS NATIONWIDE have been ordered to watch for new COVID-19 outbreaks and clusters, and prepare medication and equipment for inpatients, in the wake of Songkran festivities.

Health permanent secretary Opas Karnkawinpong said on Monday (Apr 17) that medical and health personnel were instructed to keep local communities informed, encourage annual vaccination against COVID-19 and ensure adequate medical supplies and equipment were on hand and hospital beds available for severely ill COVID-19 patients.

Samples must be taken from patients who die after COVID infection, for examination for virus strains, and all severe cases and fatalities investigated, he said.

During this year's Songkran festival, crowds gathered for outside activities and family get-togethers without wearing face masks. That posed a higher risk of transmission and a likely increase in new cases, Dr Opas explained.

Songkran revellers should monitor their health for seven days and stay clear of elderly people and others with underlying illnesses. If they feel ill, they should take an antigen test, he added.

People were still advised to wear face masks in crowded places and get an annual vaccine shot. People whose antibodies could not be stimulated should be treated with a long-acting antibody (LAAB).

Dr Supakit Sirilak, director-general of the Department of Medical Sciences, said



Songkran revellers on Khao San Road on Apr 15. Photo: Bangkok Post

Omicron remained the dominant variant of COVID-19 and its XBB.1.16 subvariant should be dominant in the future.

There was no evidence the new subvariant was more severe than the currently dominant Omicron subvariants in terms of antibody avoidance and symptoms, he said.

Meanwhile, it was revealed on Monday there were a total of 2,008 traffic accidents nationwide during the first six days of the 'Seven Days of Danger' road and water safety campaign for Songkran 2023.

Chotenarin Kerdson, permanent secretary from the Interior Ministry, said that 236 lives were lost and 2,005 injuries recorded during the six-day span between Apr 11-16.

No further details were available at time of press pertaining to the final day of the campaign although, according to ThaiRSC, a further 42 people died and 2,040 people were injured in road accidents throughout the country on the final day of Apr 17.

Additional reporting by
The Phuket News

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Photo: Nattha Thepbamrung



The catch of the day

Nattha Thepbamrung
life@classactmedia.co.th

The scene is a familiar one. It is early morning and under a bright blue sky the local fishermen are bringing their boats ashore at Nai Yang Beach. Their wives and other family members are there to greet them and help unload the catch of the day.

The fish is then hustled to the 'Ch-

ing Pla Market' on the beachfront nearby, where people eager in anticipation are waiting to buy the fish from them.

The market is open every day, officially from 6am to 10am, but regulars – both Thais and foreigners – know that to get the fish they want, and sometimes any at all, they need to be quick. The name of the market itself is a giveaway, with "ching" being the Thai word for the verb to snatch or to grab at eagerly.

The 'Ching Pla Market' is a com-

munity effort started by the Phuket Fisheries Office late last year to help support local fisherfolk's incomes – and that it does.

Sukij Plodbut, 34, comes from a long line of fishermen. A member of the Sirinat Fishing Community, he now owns five boats, all called 'Roong Suriya', that supply the Ching Pla Market every morning with his family and fellow local fishermen.

"I have been fishing for more than 20 years. My family lives in the Nai Yang area, and I was taken out to sea to fish when I was very young," Sukij explains.

"One of my uncles is here," he says, pointing to a man in a yellow shirt. "That is the uncle who took me out fishing when I was so young, and he still goes fishing with me today. I like fishing and it has always been what we love most," he adds.

The flotilla of local fishing boats sets out from Nai Yang at about 3am to 4am each day, Sukij explains. "We head out about 20 kilometres offshore and come back to Nai Yang Beach at about 8am to 9am in the morning, depending on the day," he says.

"There are about 30 fishing boats here at Nai Yang Beach, and I have five. For me, the boats I have are to support my family, my relatives and our friends. We switch who goes out fishing every day when we are free from our other main jobs," he says.

"We usually get a lot of fish after the monsoon, around the beginning of October or November onwards. Some days we do not get any fish, and other days we might land 100 kilos.

"During the monsoon season, we wait for the weather to be mild. If the wind safely allows it, and if it is possible to leave the shore, we set out crab gillnets as the monsoon season is the best time to catch crabs."

But a good day is landing a lot of fish, Sukij notes: "For me, it is simple. When I catch a lot of fish, it is an impressive day already," he says.

"We mostly find Indian mackerel, yellowtail fusilier, hardtail scad and grouper. Today, we also found sea catfish and trevally, but the biggest I caught was a mullet. It was 18-19 kilos. I got a few of them during the last monsoon season as the monsoon is the best time to catch them. Mullet is rare to find [compared with other fishes

at the market] and it is expensive," Sukij explains.

As already mentioned, fishing is not enough to support a family. Sukij has a day job refuelling aircraft at Phuket International Airport to support himself and his family. When he gets the chance, or if his work hours allow it, he heads out on the fishing boats to join his friends and family doing what they love most.

However, Phuket's growing tourism industry and rate of development are not making his job any easier.

"The wastewater released into the sea has been affecting our local fishing lifestyle.

"There is a lot of seaweed in the water these days at many locations on the sea and that makes it more difficult to fish," Sukij says.

"On the days that we find a lot of contamination in the seawater, just like today, we find much less fish. The polluted water makes them disappear," he adds.

Sukij says that he, as with every other member of the Sirinat Fishing Community, is very aware of the environmental impact of fishing. Together they incorporate that awareness into their practices while still preserving traditional fishing methods.

"The community regularly meets with the aim of protecting the authentic fishing culture that is friendly to the marine ecology," he explains.

"The community is trying to preserve the local fishing methods, and recently we had a meeting to tell all the fishermen the list of protected fish that we must release if we find them in our catch," he adds.

"We are trying to preserve the local fishing culture by having this fishing community. However, the number of fishermen is decreasing. Fewer and fewer young people want to become fishermen these days," he notes.

The growing popularity and success of the Ching Pla Market at Nai Yang Beach is a welcome development, Sukij says appreciatively.

"The market has become a tourism attraction. It is very good for us that we do not have to go out and look for a place to sell our fish. For me, I only sell at the market. The fish is brought ashore and taken straight to the stalls, and the fish disappear very quickly," he says with a smile.



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Chef Daniele Figini
From Made In Italy

Donating wheelchairs for those in need

Joanna Matlub

Over the past year Living Waters Phuket Foundation (LWPF) has donated more than 2,500 wheelchairs to the Thai Red Cross Society. This mobility project is part of a nationwide, strategic initiative to help fund the purchase of wheelchairs for use in hospitals, clinics and centres across Thailand to assist those with mobility challenges.

Giving the gift of mobility via wheelchair donations was brought in by LWPF as a tool for promoting equality, independence and social inclusion, for people around Thailand with disabilities or limited mobility. Working with the Thai Red Cross Society was a natural fit, especially given this organisation's aim to endeavour to alleviate human suffering, promote international humanitarian law and provide health services to the most vulnerable among children, women and the elderly.

The latest batch of 200 wheelchairs, which were delivered and distributed in March, went to Ayutthaya, some 80 kilometres north of Bangkok. The Thai Red Cross Society once again were on hand to help with distribution efforts to hospitals and medical centres in this area after receiving these medical supplies.

Southern Thailand has already received around 1,300 donated wheelchairs for those in need to areas such as Phuket, Phang Nga, Krabi, Trang and Ranong. In central Thailand, Bangkok



Photo: Living Waters Phuket

and the surrounding areas received almost 1,000 units, with around 300 going to Chiang Mai and the other regions in Northern Thailand.

Shaun Stenning, founder of Living Waters Phuket Foundation, commented, "Many communities across Thailand lack access to basic healthcare and mobility aids."

He continued to make his point on the importance of these donations, "Wheelchairs provide not only mobility, but also accessibility to essential services including healthcare and education, which they could not get to without."

LWPF is driving this effort to help people gain a feeling of independence by enabling them to move around and perform everyday chores without assistance. This in itself can significantly enhance quality of life and enable people

to become more involved in their communities. The Foundation also aims to break down barriers and encourage social inclusion by making it easier for people with disabilities or mobility challenges to leave their residences and engage in community life.

Employment is another driving factor behind this initiative; those with disabilities who now have access to wheelchairs may get the opportunity to work and earn a living, with the longer-term goal of helping to improve economic conditions.

This donation is a natural extension to Living Waters Phuket Foundation's work on medical supply and mobility projects across Thailand, including post trauma medical equipment donations.

The Foundation works to unite the efforts of registered charities,

foundations, private companies and government organisations, to provide strategic and credible aid for projects around essential relief areas including sustainable food security, education, healthcare, renewable energy and environmental issues.



LIVING WATERS

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POP QUIZ

1. Which is bigger: Thailand or the US State of Texas?
2. Which World War I flying ace has a Grand Slam tennis stadium named after him?
3. What name was given to the Mongol kingdom that ruled much of Central Asia and Eastern Europe, in the 13th and 14th centuries?
4. Where were the first Commonwealth Games held?
5. What did Niklas Zennstrom and Janus Friis co-found together in 2003?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Medium

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			8	7			3	5
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2	4			8	5			
					6			

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across
1. Second baseman?
 5. In this way
 9. Comics sound
 14. Locks
 15. Anahat ____
 16. Come in second
 17. Sight from Taormina
 18. Magazine type
 19. Dog-____
 20. Jay Ferguson hit
 23. Start of a cheer
 24. Burn up
 25. When calm arrives
 32. Nescient
 34. Belgium village
 35. So out it's in
 36. Lassie portrayer
 37. Bilked
 39. Yeanling producer
 40. Type of shirt or jacket
 42. Perfectly fine
 45. Gaudy scarf
 46. Smoke
 47. Faint flash on the horizon
 54. Argus-eyed
 56. Just lying around
 57. TV's "American ____"
- Down
1. Sharpen
 2. Biblical verb
 3. Hokkaido native
 4. Manhattan ____
 5. Compose
 6. Appointed time
 7. Unattractive tangelo?
 8. Exhausts
 9. Catches, in a way
 10. Krypton, e.g.
 11. Piecrust ingredient
 12. One in a suit
 13. Poet Hughes
 21. "Likewise"
 22. Dissembled
 25. Doctor
 26. Move, in a way
 27. Start of a refrain
28. "____ bells!"
29. Woody
 30. They may be seeded
 31. Kind of room
 32. Organic compound
 33. Time piece
 37. Blue eyes or baldness, e.g.
 38. Taking a side
 40. ____ room
 41. Tell tale activity
 43. Old World herbs
 44. Col. Sanders feature
 47. Cord fiber
 48. American journalist Lisa
 49. It may be fixed
 50. ____ rock
 51. Footnote word
 52. Astronomer's sighting
 53. Secluded spot
 54. Electric ____
 55. Pathet ____

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

Garros: 3 Golden Horde; 4) Hamilton, Canada (1930); 5) Skype
1) Texas (432,264 sq km, Thailand is 513,120 sq km); 2) Roland

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
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54	55					56						57		
58						59						60		
61						62						63		

Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

P	L	U	G	P	A	S	T	E	C	U	S	P
E	U	R	O	A	L	P	H	A	V	A	N	N
A	X	E	L	S	T	I	R	S	C	A	I	N
R	E	A	D	S	T	A	R	O	T	C	A	R
D	I	A	R	Y	H	O	M	E	Y			
R	E	R	U	N	S	O	P	U	S			
A	P	E	S	G	A	M	E	R	U	S	E	
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L	E	S	E	H	A	R	D	Y	A	W	A	Y
E	V	E	R	A	N	G	E	L	N	E	A	P
T	E	D	S	W	H	O	R	L	E	R	N	E

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

1

drop of human blood travels 60,000 miles (96,560km) through the body every day

26

years ago Ethan Zuckerman created pop-up ads. In 2014, he issued an apology for creating the 'internet's original sin'

350

calories per day can be burned by simply maintaining good posture

4,743

serial killers worldwide were identified by the FBI as active between 1900 and 2016; 3,204 of them were from the US

599 million

US dollars was the net worth of Wall Street trader and convicted sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein at the time of his arrest in July 2019

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Nai Harn sunset. Photo by Apichet Pardit

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

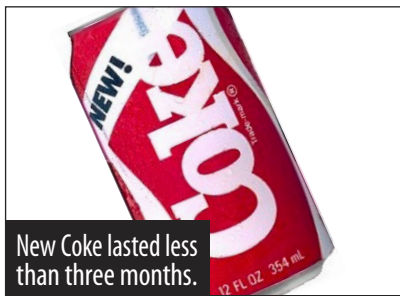
This week in history

April 21, 1782

The city of Rattanakosin, now known internationally as Bangkok, is founded on the eastern bank of the Chao Phraya River by King Buddha Yodfa Chulaloke (Rama I).

April 22, 1529

The Treaty of Zaragoza divides the eastern hemisphere between Spain and Portugal along a line 297.5 leagues or 17° east of the Moluccas.



New Coke lasted less than three months.

April 23, 1985

Coca-Cola changes its formula and releases a new brand "New Coke". The response is overwhelmingly negative, and the original formula is back on the market in less than three months.

April 24, 1993

A bomb planted and detonated by the IRA devastates the Bishopsgate area of central London.

April 25, 1916

Anzac Day is commemorated for the first time on the first anniversary of the landing at ANZAC Cove.

April 26, 1564

Playwright William Shakespeare is baptised in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, England. His actual date of actual birth remains unknown.

April 27, 1667

John Milton, blind and impoverished, sells the copyright of Paradise Lost for £10.

Source: Wikipedia

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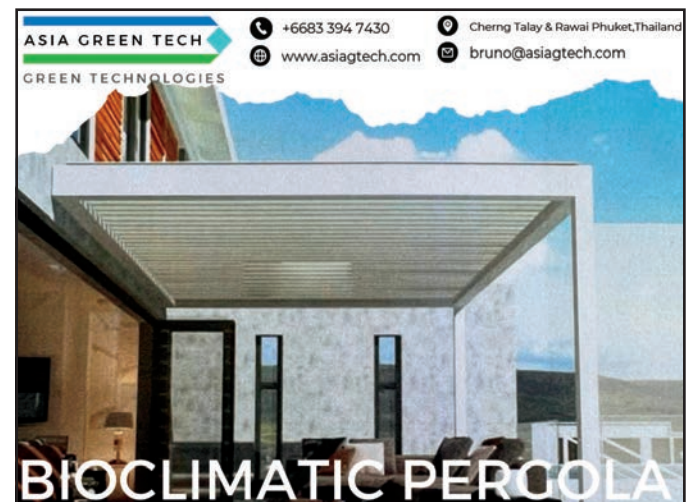
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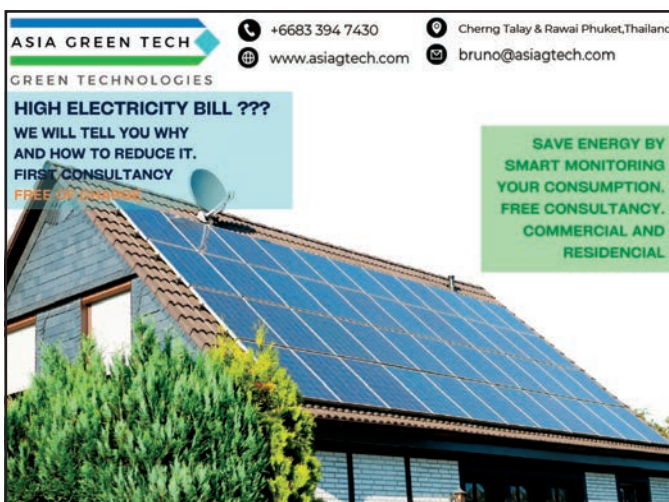
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FRI

28 APR



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SAT

6 MAY



Friendly 15s Rugby

The Full Moon Brewworks Friendly 15s will feature the Phuket Vagabonds playing host to a touring team from the Hong Kong on 6th May 2023. The match is currently scheduled to be played at The British International School from 4pm. Post game celebrations will be held at proud sponsors The Local Beach Bar Bang Tao with a plenty of beverages, barbecue and banter!



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SONGKRAN 2023





The tournament was last played in 2019. Photo: Supplied

Phuket International Cricket Sixes returns

CRICKET

AFTER A THREE-YEAR COVID-enforced sabbatical, the Asian Cricket Sixes Tournament (ACST) Phuket International Cricket Sixes has returned to Phuket.

A total of 14 teams are taking to the field at the Alan Cooke Ground (ACG) in Thalang for the four-day tournament which began yesterday (Apr 20) and runs until Sunday (Apr 23).

While the teams will be battling hard to emerge as the overall winners, the tournament is also an opportunity for old friendships to reacquainted and new friendships to be forged, on and off the pitch, organisers said.

Many old favourites have returned looking to

become heroes in what has been an eagerly awaited event, one which promises to showcase some excellent cricket action.

The sides will initially play in an open round before being placed in separate competitions to play for honours, depending on their seedings.

Social events will also feature as participants enjoy the surroundings of Bang Tao each evening before retiring to the Arinara, Best Western and Sunwing resorts, who are jointly the official tournament hotels.

Play starts each day at the ACG around 9:30am and food and refreshments will be available all day long. Spectators are welcome to come along and catch the action. Admission is free. *The Phuket News*

Asean Rugby Sevens joy for dominant Thai women

RUGBY

The Phuket News
editor3@classactmedia.co.th

Thailand's women's rugby team won the Southeast Asian (SEA) Sevens tournament in Singapore on Apr 9 after they defeated the hosts in their own back yard by a score of 22-7.

The commanding performance and result means the team remain the number one ranked side in Asean, having won every tournament they have entered in the Asean region.

The result also meant the side remain ranked as the third best team in the Asia region in the women's rugby sevens game.

Pol Lt Col Kulthorn Prachuabmoh, President of the Rugby Football Association of Thailand under the Royal Patronage of His Majesty the King, extended his congratulations to the team following the win at the Singapore National Stadium on Apr 9.

Shortly after their win the headed off to the World Rugby Sevens Challenger Series 2023 in Stellenbosch, South Africa, which takes place over the course of this weekend (Apr 20-22) and next weekend (Apr 28-30).

The women's challenger series has 12 national teams competing, with the winner gaining direct entry to the



The victorious Thai women's rugby sevens team in Singapore. Photo: Sports Association of Phuket

2023-24 World Rugby Sevens series.

The SEA Sevens tournament was played alongside the HSBC World Rugby Sevens series with Taiwan beating Malaysia 17-14 in the men's final on the same day as Thailand's women beat Singapore.

New Zealand followed up their success at the Hong Kong Sevens on Apr 2 to win the HSBC Singapore Sevens and secure their place at the Paris 2024 Olympics in the process.

The Kiwis beat Argentina 19-17 in Singapore to extend their lead at the top of the 2023 standings with only

two rounds left to play in Toulouse, France, and London.

Fiji claimed the bronze medal in a thrilling 24-19 win over Samoa.

"To qualify for Paris means everything to us," said New Zealand head coach Clark Laidlaw.

"The first thing this year is to qualify for the Olympics. Everybody talks about it, but you have to be there to have a crack so we're super happy we've managed to do that and win another final. Now we look ahead to France and London to try to win the World Series."

Rins wins at Grand Prix of the Americas after Bagnaia blunder

MOTO GP

ALEX RINS WON LAST Sunday's (Apr 16) attritional Grand Prix of the Americas in Austin, Texas, following a blunder from Ducati's MotoGP world champion Francesco Bagnaia.

Rins capitalised on a fall from leader and pole-sitter Bagnaia to claim the third leg of the season and end Honda's long winless run.

Luca Marini (Ducati-VR46) took second with Fabio Quartararo (Yamaha) in third.

Bagnaia left the showpiece race in Austin pointless as Marco Bezzecchi, who finished sixth, extended his lead at the top of the riders' standings.

Rins, a winner for Suzuki at the circuit in 2019, was gifted the lead before the halfway stage of the 20-lap race when Bagnaia's bike hit the Texan tarmac.

Second to Bagnaia in the sprint 24 hours earlier, Rins controlled the race perfectly from that moment on for his



Alex Rins. Photo: AFP

sixth win in motorcycling's premier class and his first for his new team.

"I'm very happy, and so proud of the team," said Rins, beaming from beneath a traditional Texan cowboy hat.

Bezzecchi takes an 11-point lead over Bagnaia to the fourth race of the season in Spain at the end of the month.

Rins, 27, moves up to third, six points behind Bagnaia, for whom this blunder followed the one he made when nailed on for second in Argentina in the last race.

Spanish teenager Pedro Acosta won the Moto2 race, with fellow teenager and compatriot Ivan Ortola claiming the Moto3 honours in his first career win.

AFP

Batsaikhan, Lee win Tour of Thailand

CYCLING

MONGOLIA'S TEGSHBAYAR Batsaikhan was crowned the overall champion of the Tour of Thailand 2023 in Rayong province on Apr 6.

The Roojai Online Insurance (ROI) rider finished the six-stage race, covering 1,032.90 kilometres, with a total time of 23:38.00 hours.

The winner received the trophy graciously donated by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.

Batsaikhan's compatriot Jambalamts Sainbayar of TSG was second overall in 23:38.42 while Japan's Yuma Koishi was third in 23:38.43.

The best placed Thai rider was Ratchanon Yaowarat of Thailand Continental Cycling Team (TCC) in 15th place in 23:40.32.

Sarawut Sirironnachai of Thailand Continental Cycling Team (TCC) was awarded the victory in the 167.3km sixth and final stage, which started from Chanthaburi, with a time of 3:48.52.

Malaysia's Saleh Mohd Harri of Terengganu Polygon Cycling Team, who was the first rider to cross the finish line on the final day, was dis-



Tegshbayar Batsaikhan on the podium. Photo: Bangkok Post



Lee Eun-Hee celebrates her win. Photo: Bangkok Post

qualified for not maintaining the route.

Dutch cyclist Raymond Kreder of JCL Team Ukyo placed second and Patomob Phonarjthan of Thailand National Team won sealed the win for third place, both finishing in the same time as the stage winner.

The Indonesian National Team was the best in the general classification and Asean team category after finishing in 71:00.09.

GLEE FOR LEE

In the Women's Tour of Thailand South Korea's Lee Eun-Hee won the third and final stage to capture the overall title on Apr 10.

Lee crossed the finish line of the 89km route in 2:18.39 ahead of Indonesia's Ayustina Delia Priatna and Malaysia's

Nur Aisyah Mohamad Zubir. Thai cyclist Chaniporn Batriya came in fourth at 2:18.41.

Lee won the overall title with a total time of 6:02.38. Zubir was second (6:02.43) and Priatna third (6:02.44).

Lee won the trophy graciously donated by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.

Indonesia were the best team with a time of 18:10.12, followed by South Korea and Malaysia at the same time.

Decha Hemkrasri, president of the Thai Cycling Association, said the tournament was a success without a major accident.

Several Southeast Asian riders used the tournament as a venue to prepare for the SEA Games to be held in Cambodia next month. *Bangkok Post*

Gunners feel title race pressure

FOOTBALL

AFP

Arsenal's bid to win the Premier League for the first time since 2004 is in danger of imploding, but manager Mikel Arteta remains adamant the leaders can cope with the pressure of the title race.

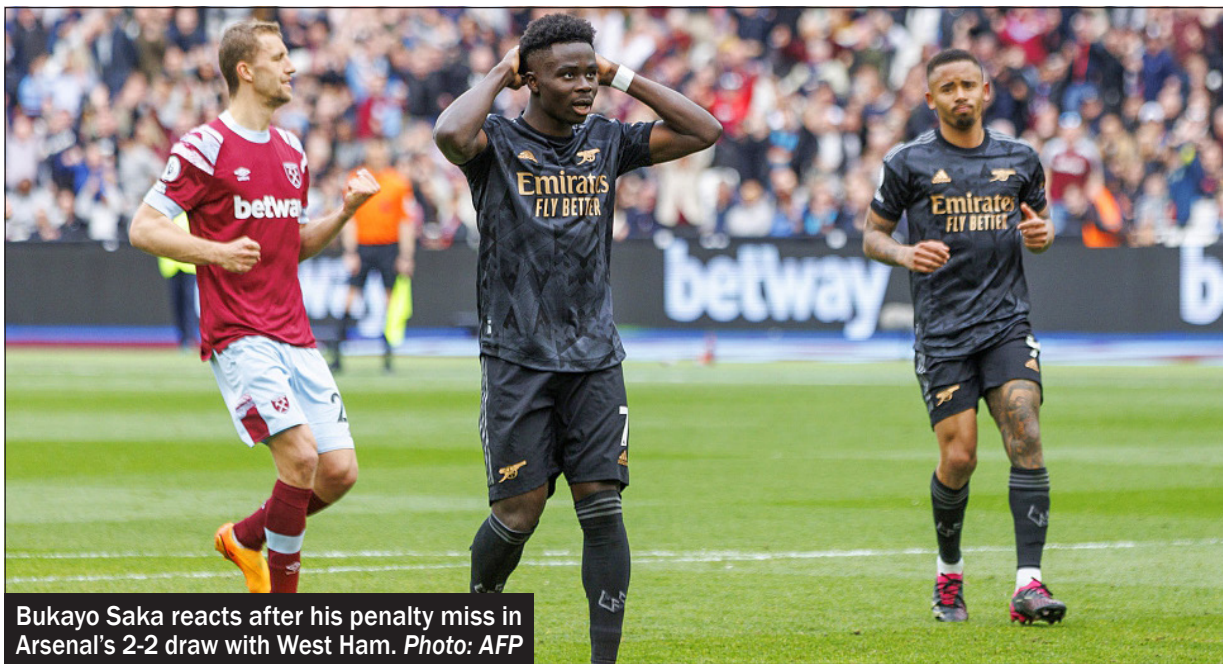
Arteta's side blew a two-goal lead for a second successive game as West Ham hit back to snatch a 2-2 draw at the London Stadium last Sunday (Apr 16).

After squandering the same advantage in the previous weekend's 2-2 draw at Liverpool, the Gunners once again paid the price for taking their foot off the gas, with Bukayo Saka missing a second-half penalty that would have sealed the win.

Although Arsenal are four points clear of second-placed Manchester City, it is the champions who have all the momentum heading into the final weeks of a gripping title battle.

With a home game against Arsenal looming on Apr 26, City know they will be crowned champions if they win their last eight games.

Ominously for Arsenal, Pep Guardiola's men have already beaten them twice this season, winning 3-1 at the Emirates Stadium in the league in February, just weeks after knocking the Gunners out of



Bukayo Saka reacts after his penalty miss in Arsenal's 2-2 draw with West Ham. Photo: AFP

the FA Cup with a 1-0 victory in Manchester.

For Arsenal to no longer be in control of their own destiny is a bitter pill for Arteta to swallow after the north Londoners' long spell at the top this term.

But he refuses to accept it was the tension of being chased so relentlessly by City that provoked the calamitous results.

"I'm certain it is not the pressure. It is we misunderstood what was needed in that moment," he said.

"You have to have more composure to finish the game. When

you drop your level so quickly the game is there for the opponent."

Before the summit meeting with City, Arsenal host Southampton this evening (Apr 21).

A victory over bottom-of-the-table Saints would move Arsenal seven points clear of City, who don't play in the league until next weekend due to their FA Cup semi-final against Sheffield United tomorrow.

Fuelled by Erling Haaland's record-breaking goal-spree, City – winners of their last 10 games in all competitions – have the edge in the remaining matches after the Arsenal showdown.

Their toughest tests could come on trips to Fulham and Brentford, although their progress in the Champions League might also pose a distraction.

Arsenal's trickiest fixtures could be a daunting visit to Newcastle and a home game against in-form Brighton, while a London derby against struggling Chelsea can't be taken for granted.

RED-HOT FORM

Elsewhere, Manchester United moved into third place after a comfortable 2-0 win at Nottingham Forest last Sunday, with goals from

Antony and Diogo Dalot.

They replace Newcastle United, who were soundly beaten 3-0 at Aston Villa last Saturday. Unai Emery's Villa are still six points off the top four, but are in red-hot form after a seventh win in eight games, with Ollie Watkins, who has now scored 11 goals in 12 matches, netting a brace.

Newcastle had won their previous five games to climb to third but barely laid a glove on Villa to leave Eddie Howe's men looking over their shoulders.

Tottenham had the chance to move into the top four but blew it as Bournemouth took a potentially decisive step towards survival with an impressive 3-2 win.

Brighton boosted their chances of European football with a 2-1 win at Chelsea to prolong Frank Lampard's wait for a first victory since returning to Stamford Bridge as interim manager.

Crystal Palace and Wolves edged towards safety as Eberechi Eze scored twice for Palace in a 2-0 win against Southampton and Wolves beat Brentford 2-0.

Everton remain outside the relegation zone only on goal difference after suffering a terrible day with a 3-1 loss at home to Fulham.

Merseyside rivals Liverpool, however, recorded a 6-1 demolition job at Leeds United on Monday.

FIFA predicts 2023 women's World Cup will be 'watershed' moment

FOOTBALL

FIFA HAS PREDICTED the women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand will be a "watershed" moment that propels the game to another level, with the target to eventually rival the men's version.

Women's football is already enjoying a surge in popularity in some countries, and the tournament looks set to spark further global interest.

With 90 days until kick-off, FIFA's chief women's football officer Sarai Bareman said that more than 2 billion viewers were expected to tune in, double the previous tournament in France, won by the United States.

Record attendance is also predicted, with 650,000 tickets already snapped up.

Bareman said she believed the event would be a major turning point and a driver for social change, creating role models for young girls and helping promote gender equality.



US women's players celebrate after winning the 2019 Women's World Cup in France. Photo: AFP

"People will be saying, 'That was the watershed moment that changed everything and took the game to the next level,'" she said.

"And that's in every aspect – commercially, participation, popularity and growth.

"I think people will really look back and choose the women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand as that watershed moment where the growth, which is already exponential, just took off to the absolute next level."

Bareman, a New Zealand-born former Samoan international, said the ultimate goal was to grow the tournament to rival the men's and get females on equal

footing in terms of pay.

"We know the men's World Cup is the primary source of revenue for FIFA and football, and that generates in excess of \$US5 billion (£172bn) per edition, and that's a clear target for women's football," she said.

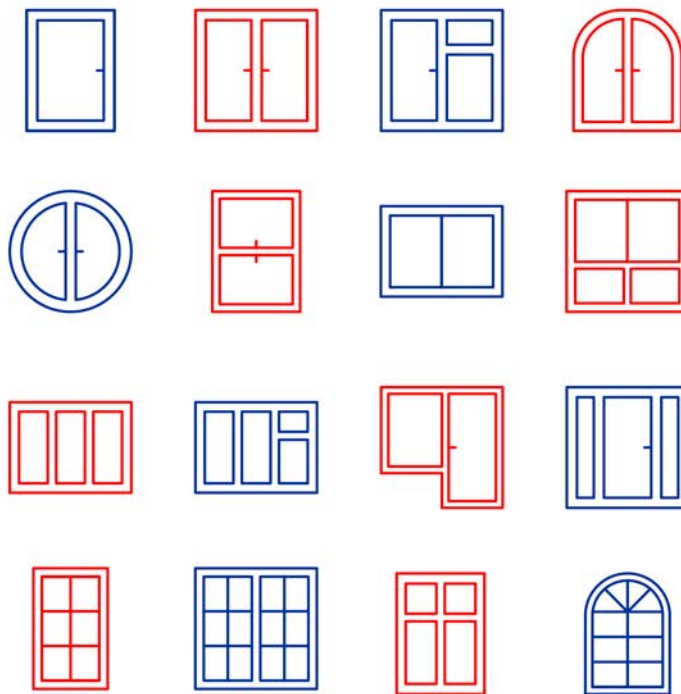
"We want to get to that level. The first World Cup for men was in 1930, it wasn't until 61 years later the first women's World Cup was introduced, we're still in our infancy as a product.

"But we have to look at what's happening in the men's game as an inspiration and a target, for me it's got to be in the billions and we have to keep pushing until we get to that level."

AFP



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Sport

editor3@classactmedia.co.th



Thai women boss Asean Sevens > p14

FUTURE STARS



Phuket athletes shine at Youth Games

Some of the medal-winning athletes from Phuket province at the 38th National Youth Games in Nakhon Sawan. Photo: Sports Association of Phuket

NATIONAL YOUTH GAMES

Ben Tirebuck
editor3@classactmedia.co.th

Young athletes from Phuket have been lauded after performing admirably at the recent National Youth Games where they collectively claimed an impressive 53-medal haul.

Their overall team performance placed Phuket as fourth best-ranked province in the south and 17th nationally at the 38th edition of the tournament, which was held in Nakhon Sawan, 240 kilometres north of Bangkok, from Mar 25 to Apr 4, with a total of 16,346 athletes and officials involved.

Participating across a wide range of sporting disciplines, the young Phuketians bagged 12 gold medals, 11 silver and 30 bronze.

The 46 selected sports included taekwondo, futsal, handball, various categories of wushu, jiu-jitsu, judo,

skateboarding, rugby, weightlifting, cricket, badminton and tennis, among others.

“The youth athletes representing Phuket performed excellently and exceeded all the goals set prior to the competition,” commented Damrong Chaisena, Phuket Office Director from the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT).

“Each and every athlete can be extremely proud of his and her performance and look forward to the future with great confidence.

“All of us at the Sports Authority of Thailand Phuket Office send our sincere congratulations to all of the youngsters who competed and won medals to make the province of Phuket very proud,” Mr Damrong added.

An official gala ceremony to celebrate the achievements will be organised shortly, Mr Damrong explained, adding that cash prizes will be distributed to every athlete who won a medal.

He also revealed that the SAT

Phuket office and various public and private sector entities had collaborated to fund the trip, with almost B1.5 million spent on the participating athletes and their coaching staff.

MEDAL HAUL

The first athletes to win medals for Phuket were the men’s tennis team on Mar 25. The team, which won bronze, consisted of Patchara Suklian, Thinpat Thientawat, Naphat Yuphan, Wachirawit Singhakarn, Tintin Chinpiset Yacht and Chawin Limmanakul.

On Mar 28 Phakin Mutitakul won gold in Nangun Wushu martial arts, while Tacharat Phimonphan won silver in the Nanquan Wushu category. Phakin followed this up two days later by winning his second gold in the art of Nantau, a Wushu sword discipline.

Also on Mar 28 the women’s Poomsae team, consisting of Ketiwa Praipruk, Yokmanee Boonrit and Tassanee Boonchuay, won bronze.

Poomsae, a Korean discipline, sees a defined pattern of defense-and-attack taekwondo techniques linked together into a sequence.

Other medalists included Sukrita Kisin, who won silver in the women’s Jiu-Jitsu 52kg weight class and Kit-tipit Prawn, who won a gold medal in Motocross on Mar 31.

Phachara Suklian and Wachirawit Singhakarn won a bronze medal in the men’s doubles tennis on Apr 2, while Nichapat Laoprasertsiri secured bronze in the Jian Su Wushu sword discipline and Petch Craft won bronze in Qing Su Wushu. On Apr 3 Phacharaphol Singkara won gold in the men’s skateboarding, while bronze medals went to Krittaphol Phutong in the skate run category and Patcharanai Suksomboon who won three bronze medals across different categories, including best skateboarding trick.

On the final day of competition further bronze medals were won by Nattapon Chancharoensin in Chang Quan Wushu, Nattapon

Chancharoensin in Jian Su Wushu and Thacharat Pimonphan in the Nantau Wushu class.

The closing ceremony on Apr 4 was presided over by Kongsak Yodmanee, SAT Governor, who was joined by Chayan Sirimas, Governor of Nakhon Sawan Province, and selected dignitaries.

Mr Kongsak declared the tournament a huge success that will go a long way to helping all of the competing athletes develop their skills for future competition. He extended further thanks to officials from Nakhon Sawan province for organising such a successful event, in addition to various public and private sector entities who helped support the event, economically and logistically.

To officially mark the conclusion of the Games the national youth sports flag was handed over to representatives from Ratchaburi province, where the 39th edition of the tournament is scheduled to be held between Mar 21-31, 2024.

Over 8,000 runners expected for 2023 Supersports Laguna Phuket Marathon

MARATHON

THE SUPERSPORTS LAGUNA Phuket Marathon is set to welcome over 8,000 runners from more than 40 countries on June 10-11, organisers have confirmed.

Held at Laguna Phuket, the award-winning Supersports Laguna Phuket Marathon is one of the longest-running international sports events on Phuket, a popular choice for families and elite runners alike, which is driving the island’s resurgence as a world-class sports tourism destination.

Internationally-certified by IAAF AIMS (Association of International Marathons and Distance Races) and

a qualifying event for the Boston Marathon, the Supersports Laguna Phuket Marathon is organised by GAA Events and has set the gold standard for 17 years.

From children and families, to age-groupers and top talent across Thailand and from overseas, the Supersports Laguna Phuket Marathon attracts participants of all ages and abilities with its popular two day format and festival atmosphere at the start and finish line at Laguna Grove.

The famously scenic course takes runners past local villages, fruit plantations and through the beachfront Sirinath National Park. A twist to the popular two day format sees the 2 kilometre kids run, 5km and 10.5km runs take place on



The Apr 6 press conference announcing the race. Photo: Supersports Laguna Phuket Marathon

the morning of Saturday, June 10th, and the 21.0975km Half Marathon (21.0975km), 42.195km Marathon Relay and 42.195km Marathon on the morning of the following day, Sunday, June 11th.

The popular race attracted over 7,000 participants as it returned to

Phuket last year after a two-year absence due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Entries are looking strong with thousands already confirmed from across Thailand and overseas,” commented Charlie Jung, Assistant Race Director, GAA Events, organiser of the Supersports Laguna Phuket Marathon at a press conference at Central Festival in Kathu on Apr 6.

“What’s particularly encouraging this year is the return of interest from international participants. The pandemic limited international travel and as Phuket sees a resurgence in international arrivals we are also seeing growing interest amongst overseas runners and their families wanting to combine a run with a

holiday in Phuket,” he added.

Paul Wilson, VP, Deputy Managing Director, Laguna Phuket, said: “We have partnered with Supersports Laguna Phuket Marathon since the very beginning and work closely with the local community each year to ensure the benefits are dispersed.

“Through Laguna Phuket Foundation’s Children First Fund (CFF), we support more than 400 underprivileged children in seven orphanages in Phuket and we encourage all runners and spectators to help make a difference by supporting our efforts.”

For more information visit: www.phuketmarathon.com. Registrations can be made at <https://www.phuketmarathon.com/registration>.

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