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UNDER WATER



A woman is helped across floodwater to safety in Phuket Town. Photo: PR Phuket

THOUSANDS AFFECTED AS HEAVY RAINS CAUSE FLOODS ACROSS THE ISLAND

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Emergency services were scrambled as more than 6,000 people and 1,850 households were affected by floods across Phuket last Sunday, which one Phuket Town resident described as the worst seen in 30 years.

One elderly resident in Srisoonthorn, another area heavily affected by flooding, said it was the worst he had seen in 50 years.

The warning shot came as Patong flooded within hours during heavy downpours last Thursday night (Oct

13). Main roads and streets throughout the town became impassable for traffic. Patong Police Station flooded yet again.

After a 48-hour reprieve, marked by passing heavy thundershowers scattered across the island, the heavens opened again by 3am last Sunday (Oct 16), unleashing torrential rain that flooded the heart of Phuket Town and many lowland areas in Srisoonthorn and Thepkasattri.

Thepkasattri Rd, the main road down the centre of the island, became impassable to traffic at several locations in the northern half of the island, bringing traffic to a standstill.

Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO) Chief Adcha Buachan reported that although some interprovincial bus services were delayed, all services were continuing as usual.

At Phuket International Airport, however, while some flights were delayed where possible to allow passengers extra time to make it to the airport, hundreds of travellers found themselves unable to make their flights.

Airport and airline staff were required to assist passengers in securing seats on alternative flights, with some airlines offering replacement tickets, and others offering refunds.

Meanwhile, rescue teams were

deployed to stricken communities to assist people stranded by rising floodwaters.

In total, 6,080 people living in 1,850 households were directly affected by the floods, the Phuket Provincial office of the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM-Phuket) reported to Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew.

Across the three districts – Muang, Kathu and Thalang – 80 communities/villages in 16 tambon (subdistricts), were impacted by the floods.

There were no injuries or deaths as a result of the floods, DDPM-Phuket noted...

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News



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Floods bring the island to standstill

Continued from page 1

In Thalang District, 2,800 people of 950 households in 29 communities/villages spread across six subdistricts, have been affected.

In Kathu District, 280 people of 100 households in 11 communities/villages across three subdistricts, have been affected.

In Mueang District, 3,000 people of 800 households in 40 communities/villages across seven subdistricts, have been affected.

As of time of press, DDPM-Phuket had yet to give an estimated value of the damage done by the floods.

Five major roads and three bridges suffered damage by the floods. Electrical and water supply systems were affected by landslides, DDPM-Phuket said in its damage assessment.

A major landslide struck across the Patong-Kamala road (Route 4030) on Kuan Yak hill at the southern end of Kamala.

By mid-afternoon last Sunday, officials had confirmed that one lane on the main road into Kamala from Patong had reopened after workers cleared much of the mud, trees and other debris from the landslide.

Despite workers' best efforts, the road remained closed to traffic travelling from Patong to Kamala throughout Monday for safety reasons. More heavy rain was making the remaining earth on the roadside slope unstable, officials said.

"We will not allow cars coming from Patong to use the Khuan Yak route," the officials said.



Thepkasattri Rd last Sunday morning (Oct 16). Photo: PLTO

The landslide also brought down two power poles. Power was restored to the area within hours. No injuries were reported in the incident, officials confirmed.

The decision to keep the road closed until further notice, forcing motorists from Patong to travel all the way to the centre of the island and back again to reach Kamala, was made by consensus by the Highways Phuket Highways Office, Kamala Police and the Kamala Tambon Administration Organisation (OrBorTor), officials explained.

Another landslide across the Kathu-Koh Kaew Rd was cleared and reopened to traffic by late Monday.

PROVIDING ASSISTANCE

Local government organisations (municipalities and OrBorTor) and other agencies mobilised personnel and resources to provide assistance.

DDPM-Phuket deployed large pumps to hard-hit areas to remove what floodwaters they can from lowland residential areas and major roads.

Disaster personnel coordinated with local community

leaders to assist in clearing any mud and debris from landslide sites.

Relief shelters for flood victims were set up at four locations: Wat Thepkasattri in Baan Don, Thalang; the Kamala OrBorTor offices; Kathu Municipal School 2 in Baan Kathu; and Phibun Sawasdee Municipal School in Phuket Town.

Officials from the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO) were deployed to provide assistance to those unable to make it to a hospital.

In addition to hundreds of DDPM officers, more than 220 police and scores of other local officials tasked with providing assistance, 150 personnel from the Royal Thai Navy Third Area Command, based at Cape Panwa, joined the efforts to help people in need, DDPM-Phuket reported.

The Phuket Chapter of the Red Cross had provided 100 packs of sanitary items and 100 items of clothing to flood victims, the report noted.

The Phuket branch of the Kusoldharm Foundation was given special mention for emergency assistance quickly provided to people in distress,

by providing rescue workers to evacuate people in need, as well as essential equipment including rubber dinghies.

PHUKET TOWN

In Phuket Town, Somyot Pathan, President of the Phuket Old Town Tourism Community Enterprise and a lifelong resident of Phuket Town, called the flooding in Phuket Town the worst seen in 30 years.

"For as long as I can remember, there has never been a flood in the Old Town area. Previously we have seen small floods where water has been waiting to make its way into the drains, but this is much more," he said.

"We have seen a lot of rainfall over the past few days, Phuket Town is where water flows from many surrounding areas," he added.

The Thai Meteorological Department (TMD) recorded 115.4mm of rainfall in the Phuket Town area throughout the 24 hours of last Saturday (Oct 15). A further 136.4mm of rainfall plagued the town the next day.

Mr Somyot said the slow easing of the floodwaters in Phuket Town was also depend-

ent on the sea level, which he said had just passed a period at its highest.

"The situation is expected to improve, and now people from all sectors of the community are working together. Let's hurry to pump water out of the area," said Mr Somyot.

Phuket City Mayor Saroj Angkhanapilas said that a rescue centre had been set up in Phuket Town to provide shelter and assistance to those affected by the floods.

"As for the current water situation, we must admit that we still can't manage the water levels in all areas, because there are many areas heavily affected," Mayor Saroj said.

Among the areas inundated with floodwater were the iconic Standard Chartered Intersection in the heart of Phuket Town, as well as many streets in the Old Town area.

"I have to apologise to the people, our brothers and sisters, as well for the problems right now. There is still water flowing into the area in large quantities, mostly from continuous rainfall in nearby areas," he continued.

Mayor Saroj also warned people to beware fast-moving water as it drained from hard-hit areas.

MOPPING UP

Phuket Governor Narong Woonciw, in the hope of the heavy downpours easing, last Sunday night ordered officials across the island to organise mass cleanup efforts, branded as "Big Cleaning", to be carried out on Monday (Oct 17).

However, while many areas, including Phuket Town, saw floodwater easing late

Sunday, Monday saw more than 238mm of rainfall soak the island, reported the Southern Western Meteorological Center, located near Phuket airport.

The continuing rainfall topped up areas where floodwater had yet to drain, and dampened cleanup efforts.

As of Monday, the total rainfall for Phuket so far this year had already reached 2,152.7mm, the TMD-Phuket centre reported.

RISING FEARS

The volume of rainfall during the period saw the waters rise to dangerously high levels at Phuket's three main reservoirs, Phuket Irrigation Office Chief Thammanoon Bamrungpetch said on Monday.

Excess water at the reservoir was already being released, but at a slow rate. If the volume of water flowing entering the reservoirs continued at its current rate as of Monday, his office would have no choice but to increase the volume of water being discharged, Mr Thammanoon said.

"It will be necessary to release water [from the reservoirs] for the stability of the dams and for public safety, which is the primary concern," he said.

Water can be emptied from Bang Wad by either natural overflow over the spillway or by a drainage system installed with pipes under the dam.

"Staff have to closely observe and assess the situation and control the amount of water discharged at all times in order not to affect the area at the end of the dam," Mr Thammanoon said.

Long weekend hoped to bring Phuket B2bn tourism boost

JUST ONE DAY BEFORE THE floods began last Sunday (Oct 16), Nanthasiri Ronnasiri, Director of the Phuket office of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), estimated that the four day weekend from Oct 13-16 was expected to boost tourism revenues for the island by some B2 billion.

According to bookings data collected by her office, 152,691 visitors were expected to arrive in Phuket over the long weekend, Ms Nanthasiri said.

In total, 24,370 international



Photo: PR Phuket

passengers were booked to arrive on 137 flights operated by 29 airlines. A further 28,038 domestic passengers were booked to arrive on 217 flights operated by seven

domestic airlines, she said.

The load factor for the flights arriving over the four days ranged from 70%-90%, Ms Nanthasiri added.

Altogether, the volume of tourists landing on the island over the break was expected to generate about B2.19bn, Ms Nanthasiri said.

However, the room occupancy rate during the four days was still expected to remain fairly low, at 39.16%, with the average room stay hovering at about 2.3 nights per person, she added.

Phuket's beaches remained a

key attraction, as did the Sino-Portuguese style buildings in Phuket Town, Ms Nanthasiri said.

"Tourists are coming to swim in the sea and walk along the beach. There are beach guards to take care of the safety of tourists at every beach," she said.

"In Phuket Town, in addition to seeing the beauty of the local architecture, people also come for shopping, to buy local products and souvenirs," she added.

The island's piers were busy with visitors visiting local islands, Ms Nanthasiri noted.

"Especially Chalong Pier, which has both Thai and foreign tourists embarking on boat trips to the nearby islands, such as Coral Island, Racha Island, among others," she said.

However, since the floods struck last Sunday, Ms Nanthasiri at time of press had yet to revise the B2bn estimate.

Regardless, in between heavy downpours, as soon as the floodwaters receded in the heart of Phuket Town tourists on Monday (Oct 17) took to the streets to enjoy the sights. *The Phuket News*

'Fake cocaine' touts arrested

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Patong Police have arrested two men who worked as venue touts on Bangla Rd on drugs charges. The men have been named as involved in the attack on an American tourist on the popular nightlife street late last month.

Armed with a search warrant, officers raided an unregistered room in Soi Phra Baramee, off Phra Metta Rd, Patong, at 7pm on Oct 11, said a statement by Phuket Provincial Police.

At the room officers placed three people under arrest. The statement named the two men as "Mr Sunthorn", 48, from Pattani, and "Mr Areefun", 25, from Narathiwat. Their family names were withheld.

Also arrested at the room was Ms Toiyaya (family name also withheld), 44, from Narathiwat.

Officers found and seized 89 tablets of methamphetamine (ya bah) and two bags containing 0.29 grammes of crystal meth (ya ice), said the statement.

The three were taken to Patong Police Station and



The arrest photo by Phuket Provincial Police showed Sunthorn and Areefun with a third man, not named and his role in the case not explained. Photo: Phuket Provincial Police

charged with joint possession of a Category I narcotic with intent to sell, the statement added.

Patong Police Chief Col Sujin Nilabadee said that Sunthorn and Areefun were both touts working on Bangla Rd, and both were suspects under investigation for "jointly injuring others, causing physical or mental harm (attacking tourists)", the statement confirmed.

The statement added that officers conducting the raid also found tabs of green-yellow capsules of the painkiller Anadol, which contains Tramadol.

The two used the powder from the capsules to deceive

tourists and sell it to them as cocaine.

Five such packs were found, Col Sujin said.

However, the statement neglected to confirm what charges Sunthorn and Areefun would face for the attack on the American tourist on Bangla Rd in the early hours of Sept 28.

The American man injured in the attack was Rakkan Gassim Algassim, 35, from Pennsylvania. He was accompanied by Russian national Alena Mukhieva, 24, at the time of the attack.

Mr Algassim was assaulted about halfway along Bangla Rd in front of a bar that was closed at the time.

Police were first alerted to the incident at 3:30am.

Mr Algassim suffered multiple contusions to his face and body, and a deep laceration to the middle finger on his left hand that required hospital treatment.

DITHERING

The statement by the Phuket Provincial Police defended police action in the case, saying the police were not ignoring drugs being sold openly to tourists on Bangla Rd, with full knowledge by the police.

The statement made specific mention of a post on the 'Khao Jung, Phuket Province' ("Real News, Phuket") Facebook group accusing

police that: "...drugs are found all along Bangla. Especially cocaine is sold like crazy. The officers have known for a long time but have not done anything. If they are still together like this, Bangla Road only listens and breaks. There is a video clip. Notice that this motorcyclist is selling cocaine in Bangla Road..."

The allegation, complete with a video clip, was posted online on Sept 17.

However, no action was reported by police as taken until after American tourist Mr Algassim was attacked 10 days later.

Of note, the attack on Mr Algassim was reported to embassy officials in Bangkok.

Regardless, the statement by Phuket Provincial Police was branded as a "Clarification of the case: Arresting a gang selling drugs and selling cocaine (fake) to tourists in Soi Bangla, Patong Police Station area" – not as the arrest of the suspects wanted for the attack on Mr Algassim.

The statement repeated that the Sept 17 post online accusing police of allowing drugs to be sold openly on Bangla Rd was brought to the attention of Phuket Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Sermphan Sirikong, who in turn ordered Patong Police Chief Col Sujin Nilabadee to take action and investigate the claims.

More tourists caught in taxi turf wars

THE BEHAVIOUR OF PHUKET TAXI drivers made headlines again last week after a female driver of a metered taxi posted a video of her being threatened for picking up passengers from a well-known hotel in Kata.

The incident was witnessed by foreign tourists who were getting into the metered taxi when the confrontation started.

The news became public after a video of the conflict was posted on a popular local social media channel on Oct 13. In the clip, a man is heard talking angrily to a female taximeter driver while she picks up two foreign tourists in front of the Katathani Phuket Beach Resort on Kata Noi Beach in Karon.

The car is a red and yellow Phuket metered taxi, officially allowed to work anywhere on the island, including Phuket International Airport. The Toyota sedan bears an SHA Plus certification sticker as well as the 1584 complaints hotline sticker and the driver's phone number enabling it to identify the driver as a legal service provider.

The conversation develops in Thai language. A man, not seen in the clip, tells the female driver that she "should not come here again as there is already a local taxi queue in this place" to serve customers.

The female driver asks if it is the hotel forbidding picking up passengers, but only gets accusations of stealing other drivers' customers.

"That's right, there is a queue here. What if I would be stealing guests from



A female taxi driver received verbal threats for picking up foreign tourists from an "award winning luxury Phuket hotel" where "there is already a queue". Photo: Supplied

your queue?" the man says.

"If you don't believe me, try and come to pick customers here again," he threatens.

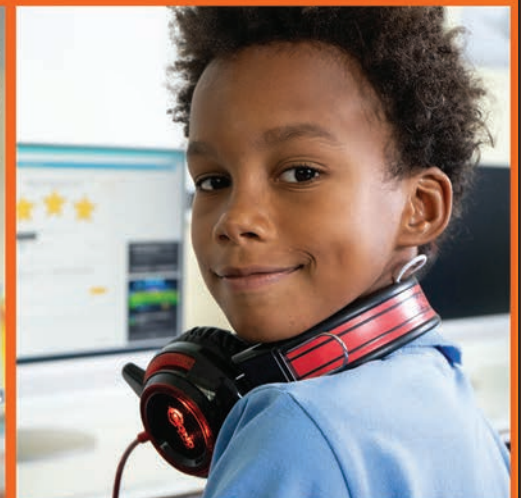
Speaking to reporters after the incident, the female taxi driver explained that the confrontation happened at around 11am on Oct 13. The woman said that she had been working as a Phuket taxi driver for 15 years and never had had any incidents of this kind before at Katathani or anywhere else.

The woman proceeded to say that she did not find the case serious and thus did not report it to any officials. Yet, she would report it if it happens again.

"Usually it is up to the customer to choose whether to use a hotel car or a metered taxi. It's good that nothing serious happened this time, the man just shouted at me and forbade me to pick up passengers at the aforementioned hotel again," the driver said. Eakkapop Thongtub

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PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

www.foreca.com

FRI OCTOBER 21



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

SAT OCTOBER 22



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

SUN OCTOBER 23



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

MON OCTOBER 24



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

TUE OCTOBER 25



High: +32°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

WED OCTOBER 26



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

THU OCTOBER 27



High: +30°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

Food handouts continue

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Phuket branch of the Scholars for Sustainment Foundation organised thousands of food handouts to vulnerable communities across the island last Friday (Oct 14) under a campaign to mark World Food Day.

At the main campaign location, at Saphan Hin, 1,700 meals were handed out to people in need, with many hundreds more handed out at similar events held across the island.

In Karon, Karon Municipality, led by Deputy Mayor Jaroon Udomkitwiboon, oversaw the handing out of 500 meals in boxes in front of the municipality offices.

Joining the occasion were Karon Municipality Council Chairman Trin Thipmongkol, members of the Karon



Photo: Phuket City Municipality

Municipality Children and Youth Council, along with officials from the Phuket Office of Social Development and Human Security and other government agencies.

In Rawai, officials from Rawai Municipality, led by Mayor Aroon Solos, oversaw the handing out of 450 meals

in boxes. A similar collection of officials from various government agencies were also present for the occasion.

The Rawai event was held at Rawai Pier, near the sea gypsy village.

All meals handed out were approved as halal to ensure no segments of the community

would be left out.

The Scholars for Sustainment Foundation in Thailand ramped up their food rescue efforts in Phuket amid the height of the tourism shutdown during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The foundation describes its mission as "to enhance the

food system in the country to minimize needless loss of surplus food and improve food equity by redistributing high quality surplus food from food related businesses such as hotels, grocers, restaurants, and other suppliers to communities in need in Bangkok, Phuket, Hua Hin, Chiang Mai and other places in the country every day."

To date, Scholars of Sustainment Thailand programmes have rescued approximately 2 million kilograms of surplus food, served 8.7mn meals to 426 communities, and reduced 3.9mn kilograms of CO₂ creation if the food were wasted in landfills, the foundation notes on its website.

The food handouts in Phuket continued the foundation's efforts to help people in need, specifically helping those still suffering dire financial hardship. (See *Island Scene* on page 13.)



Photo: Kamala OrBorTor

Dead young turtle washes ashore at Kamala Beach

LOCAL RESIDENTS found the remains of a young green turtle washed up on Kamala Beach last week.

Dr Pathompong Jongchit, of the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR) Research and Development Center of the Andaman Sea, said the centre was informed of the discovery at about 8am on Oct 12.

The centre was informed by Kamala Tambon Administrative Organisation (OrBorTor) after a local resident had informed them, Dr Pathompong said.

DMCR officers collected the remains of the turtle, which was described as a young turtle that weighed about 10kg.

The turtle's remains

were in an advanced stage of decomposition, Dr Pathompong said.

DMCR officers at the research centre will examine the remains in the hope of confirming what caused the turtle's death, he added.

"During this monsoon season, there are strong winds and cases like this will be found continually in the Phuket area," Dr Pathompong said.

Not mentioned by officials in reporting the dead turtle found was that only four days earlier (Oct 8) Karon Municipality led a mass turtle release event at Karon beach coordinated with the assistance of the Royal Thai Navy 'turtle hatchery' programme.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Reckless driver flees as police give chase through rush hour traffic

A MAN HAS BEEN CHARGED WITH reckless driving after a police chase south of the Heroines Monument last week.

Thalang Police on Oct 12 reported they were notified at about 5:30pm by the 191 emergency hotline of a man who was driving dangerously, braking heavily in order for other vehicles to run into the back of him.

The vehicle reported as being driven dangerously was described as a white Toyota Hilux pickup travelling northbound through Koh Kaew towards the Heroines Monument.

Capt Sumon Jitwirat of Thalang Police instructed traffic police on duty in the area to intercept the vehicle.

Officers at the Heroines Monument saw the white pickup and waved the driver to pull over. The driver ignored them, and instead turned the pickup around and sped off towards Phuket Town.

Lt Suthee Maneesing and other officers gave chase, finally catching up with the pickup at the U-turn in front of Wat Tha Reua.

However, by that time the driver had left the pickup in the middle of the road at the U-turn point. He had locked the doors and fled on a motorbike being driven by a passer-by, police reported.

Capt Sumon arrived at the scene and called for a tow truck to remove the pickup and have it taken back to Thalang Police Station.

While the tow truck was making its way past the Heroines Monument through very slow-moving traffic, the driver of the pickup ran out onto the road to prevent the



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

tow truck from continuing its journey.

The man shouted they were not allowed to take his vehicle and that he would report it as stolen.

Lt Suthee, still on the case, approached the man and explained the law to him, and instructed the tow truck to pull over in front of the Robinson Lifestyle Thalang shopping mall.

The man then started to calm down, and finally admitted to the allegations against him, police said.

The man and the pickup were then escorted to Thalang Police Station, where the man was charged with reckless driving and parking a vehicle in a manner that obstructs traffic, police reported.

Police gave no further explanations for the man's behaviour, made no mention of testing for alcohol or drugs, and specifically did not name the man in their reports.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Airport taxi driver banned over drug use, road rage

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

A Phuket taxi driver has had his licence revoked after testing positive for drug use following a road rage incident in Kathu last week.

Kornphithak Assuwan of the Phuket Provincial Land Transport Office (PLTO) confirmed the news at Kathu Police Station on Oct 11, announced a report by the Phuket office of the Public Relations Department (PR Phuket).

The taxi driver was named as Jirasak Raiyai, 33.

Referring to Jirasak as a "public service driver", Mr Kornphithak recognised that the incident became known after a video clip of Jirasak's behaviour was posted online.

Jirasak's licence had been revoked due to evidence of substance abuse, he said.

Jirasak also will be fined no more than B5,000 for the vulgar language he used during the incident, he added.

Kathu Police Chief Col Rungrit Ratanaphakdi confirmed that Jirasak has been



Photo: PR Phuket

charged after testing positive for a Category 1 narcotic (methamphetamine).

Jirasak has also been charged with operating a vehicle while under the influence.

The video posted online showed Jirasak abusing a man who had asked him to calm down after he abused drivers of other vehicles for not getting out of his way while they were waiting at a red light at the busy Si Kor Intersection in Kathu.

The man who recorded the video, Passakorn Sirichuchot,

Mr Passakorn pointed out that the people of Phuket didn't want to let such behaviour destroy the image of the Phuket people, so he called the police.

The taxi driver, angered further, exited his vehicle and unloaded a tirade of vulgar abuse at Mr Passakorn before getting back in his taxi, shouting obscenities about Mr Passakorn's mother then driving off.

"The taxi driver was in a hurry. He was trying to push through the red light, but there were other vehicles in front of

him," Mr Passakorn later told reporters.

Jirasak was trying to turn left towards Phuket Town, but the lane was blocked by vehicles waiting for the red light, he added.

"He opened his window and scolded the drivers in the other cars. There was a motorbike in front of him, and he moved his car to push the motorbike out of the way. The motorbike driver moved his motorbike, but then other cars still blocked his way," he continued.

"I cautioned him, and told him that he was being obnoxious, but he just replied angrily and shouted, 'I'm a Phuket person'," he added.

Of note, the statements to the press by police and the PLTO made no mention of the random drug tests on taxi drivers operating at Phuket airport launched in July in the hope of having the airport declared a "White Airport" to boost confidence among tourists that they are getting a "clean" driver.

Additional reporting by
Eakkapop Thongtub

Armed standoff at housing estate

PHUKET PROVINCIAL Police have responded to a call online to recognise an incident last week that saw a police officer from Phang Nga blockading the entrance to a housing estate in Thalang and roaming the streets with a gun.

A statement issued by Phuket Provincial Police reported that Phuket Provincial Police Commander Pol Maj Gen Sermphan Sirikong was notified of the situation at about 8:30am on Oct 10.

A man had blocked the entrance to the housing estate with a pickup truck and was walking the streets while holding a handgun. Police were told that the man appeared to be under the influence of drugs.

Officers were called in to seal off the area and surround the house that the man, who police named only as Lt C.P. Pontakorn (family name withheld), an officer currently serving at a police station in Phang Nga province. Police obtained a warrant to enter the man's home at about 3:30pm.

Pontakorn's parents arrived to talk their son into surrendering, which he did at about 5pm.

Not noted in the statement



Police at the scene last week (Oct 10). Photo: Phuket Provincial Police

but marked in other reports online was that Pontakorn was found with a handgun loaded with seven bullets and a further eight bullets in his pocket. The statement did mark that a search of the home found no more illegal items.

Pontakorn was taken to Thalang Police Station and charged with carrying a firearm in a public area without permission, the statement confirmed.

He was tested for drug use, but the results of the drug test results were not mentioned in the statement.

The end of the statement finally recognised that Pontakorn "may have fired shots, possibly into the air".

Pontakorn will face police disciplinary action, the statement assured. *The Phuket News*

Officials consider temporary home for Heroines Monument

TALKS ARE UNDERWAY REGARDING the temporary relocation of the Heroines Monument while construction work takes place on Thepkasattri Road in Srisoonthorn.

Officials met at Phuket Provincial Hall on Oct 12 to start discussions on a suitable location for the monument to be enshrined while construction work takes place on the B2 billion project to build a three-lane underpass under the Heroines Monument to alleviate traffic in the area.

Construction is expected to begin in 2024, and the underpass to open for service in 2027.

Phuket Vice Governor Amnuay Pinsuwan led the talks and was joined by Phra Achan Sittchawit Supatipanno, Abbot of Phra Nang Sang Temple, Sutha Prateep Na Thalang, Member of the House of Representatives of Phuket, along with heads of relevant government agencies and representatives from the private sector.

It was stressed that the temporary relocation of the statue must be to an area in the Thalang district although no details were provided on possible location.

It was also confirmed that repair and restoration works would take place on the statue while it is in its temporary home.

The underpass is planned to be three lanes wide under the monument along Thepkasattri Rd.

Two lanes of the lanes will be northbound, with each lane 3.25 metres wide, and one lane will be southbound, 4.5m wide.

At the ground level there will be two lanes on each side, with each lane 2.1m to 2.7m wide, and the plan is to "maintain a two-lane



Photo: PR Phuket

roundabout around the monument along with designing a traffic signal system at intersections for safety," stated a survey and report conducted by the Bureau of Surveying and Design under the Department of Highways in July.

"When the project is completed, it will increase the efficiency of traveling to be more convenient, faster and safer, while Increasing the elegance of the important landmark monument as well as promoting tourism of Phuket," the report concluded.

The redesign plans include raising the monument itself by 90cm amid a garden forecourt where visitors can come to pay their respects.

Access to the monument will be by walkways leading to the Robinson department store on the northwest corner of the intersection and to the closed jewellery retail centre (the building that looks like a museum) on the southeast corner of the intersection.

Stairs and elevators will be installed to make visiting the shrine accessible to all people, and a hall will be built to showcase the tale of the island's Heroines. *The Phuket News*

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Health centre gets B5bn nod

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Cabinet has approved more than B5.1 billion to build the 'Andaman International Health Center' on the 141-rai site in Mai Khao, at the northern end of Phuket.

The Cabinet approved the funds, precisely B5,116,262,532 in total, at its meeting on Oct 11, reported the official minutes of the Cabinet meeting.

The bulk of the B5.1bn will be spent on building a brand-new international hospital, the Songklanagarind Hospital Phuket, for B4,762,262,532.

A further B212.5 million will be spent on the 'International Health and Science College', marked as a "building renovation" project.

The final B141.5mn will be spent creating the 'International Wellness Center' and the 'Digital Dental Center Songklanagarind', also marked as a "building renovation" project.

The funds are to be allocated over five years, as follows:

2023 – B1,291,049,290

2024 – B1,656,586,967

2025 – B1,476,662,940

2026 – B498,152,458

2027 – B193,810,877

The decision follows the



The project is expected to boost tourism revenues by B62 billion a year, said MHESI Minister Dr Anek Laothamatas. Photo: MHESI

Cabinet approving the project in principle on Sept 19, 2020, amid the height of the COVID-19 lockdowns.

The decision at that time "prompted the Prince of Songkla University to proceed with the preparation of the Andaman International Health Center project details such as work plans, financial plans, operational plans, etc," the Cabinet noted.

The official objectives of the project were given as:

- to be a place for producing personnel in health sciences such as doctors, nurses, dentists, pharmacists, medical technicians; alternative medicine, etc;

- to be a research facility for academic development to solve public health problems in the Andaman provinces;

- to reduce costs for people in the Andaman province group in dealing with care, examination and treatment of complex diseases;

- to build confidence among people and foreigners [sic]; and
- to generate income from health tourism.

The official budget request proposal was submitted by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (MHESI) and the Prince of Songkla University Phuket Campus.

The Cabinet marked that

the project was approved following the Ministry of Public Health signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Prince of Songkla University, which operates Songklanagarind Hospital in Hat Yai, Songkhla province.

Songklanagarind Hospital is a university teaching hospital affiliated to the Faculty of Medicine of Prince of Songkla University in Hat Yai.

It is not to be confused with Songkhla Hospital, also in Hat Yai, which is operated by the Ministry of Public Health.

The Minister of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (MHESI), Prof Dr Anek Laothamatas,

has praised the approval for the project, touting it as a medical teaching centre providing cost-effective services to people living in the Andaman provinces.

"The goal is to produce health science personnel such as doctors, nurses, dentists, pharmacists, medical technicians, to develop and provide alternative medicine, and be a place for academic research in medicine and public health," he said.

"The hospital will be a 300-bed tertiary and specialised medical facility focusing on precision medical services, telemedicine and treating complex diseases," Dr Anek added.

"There is a referral system between the hospitals in the Andaman area, together capable of providing services to at least 12,500 tertiary complex patients per year and in terms of outpatients not less than 300,000 people per year, which can help reduce the cost [of treatment] for people in the area," he said.

"This will build confidence among people and tourists in coming to travel to the Andaman [region] and to Thailand," he added.

"It will also help generate

income from health tourism. It will also offer premium international tourist services and become the first modern dental center in the South, in addition to taking care of the health of Thai people," he continued.

"The project will be able to generate direct income from medical treatment for foreigners of not less than B1.6bn a year and not less than B300mn a year from dental services," Dr Anek added.

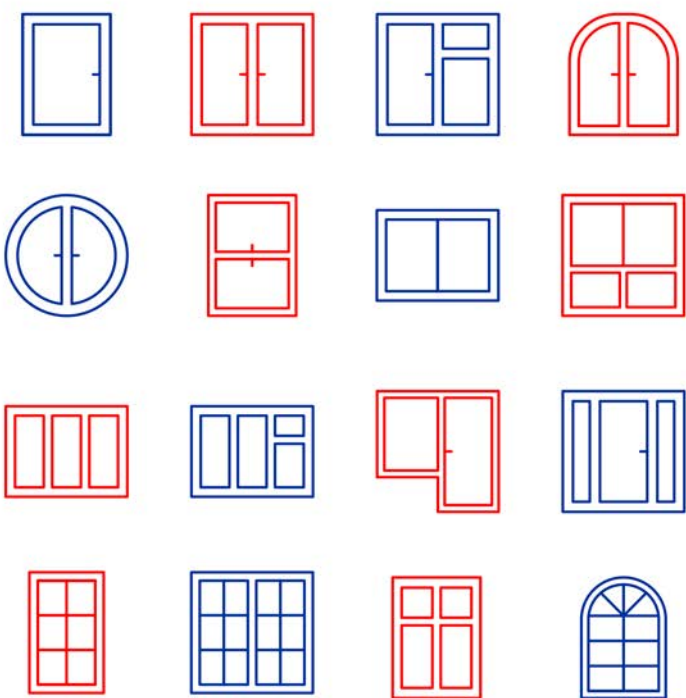
In total, the project is expected to boost the value of tourism in the Andaman area with an increase of approximately B62 billion a year, Dr Anek said.

MHESI Permanent Secretary Sirirung Songsivilai, M.D., Ph.D, who also serves as Secretary-General of National Research Council of Thailand, explained the project as a way of producing enough medical and public health personnel to meet the needs of the Andaman area.

"This will close the gap in the medical treatment problems of the Andaman area in the past, as well as promote the service industry and tourism for both Thai and foreign tourists," he said.



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Phuket to host 'TBEX Asia 2022'

THAILAND IS READY to welcome the world's travel bloggers, content creators and influencers to TBEX Asia 2022, to be held in Phuket and neighbouring provinces from Nov 15-18 with the theme 'Diversity of the South: Phuket and Beyond'.

The staging of TBEX Asia 2022 follows Thailand's full reopening to international tourism with travellers to the Kingdom no longer having to show proof of vaccination or ATK test results, and being able to enjoy a longer length of stay, which came into effect on Oct 1.

The TBEX Asia 2022 theme reflects precious art, cultural diversity, a variety of destinations and activities, and the Southern Thailand lifestyle, particularly that of Phuket, explained the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) in a release last week.

"TBEX Asia 2022 is a fantastic opportunity for travel bloggers and influencers the world over to reconnect in person post-pandemic and see some of the wonderful travel experiences – existing and new

Image: TAT



– on offer in Thailand. The Kingdom is again welcoming visitors with open arms with the 'Visit Thailand Year 2022-2023: Amazing New Chapters' campaign," TAT Governor Yuthasak Supasorn said.

The event will be the second time Thailand has hosted the TBEX, having hosted the first Asian edition of the show in 2015 in Bangkok, which drew nearly 700 participants from around the world and generated resulting exposure to over 142 million people.

The main venue for TBEX Asia 2022 will be Angsana Laguna Phuket, located at Asia's first integrated resort Laguna Phuket on Bang Tao Bay.

The event programme

for the four days of Nov 15-18 comprises a variety of Pre-BEX tour programmes and the conference itself, including a workshop, keynote addresses, breakout sessions and speed networking.

On Nov 19, the various two-night/three-day fam trips to destinations beyond Phuket will begin, to Songkhla and Phatthalung, Krabi, Phang Nga, Bangkok, Chiang Mai and Lampang.

Registration to TBEX Asia 2022 for content creators (producers of blogs, videos, podcasts and traditional media) and DMOs, tour operators, hoteliers, OTAs, travel brands and PR and marketing suppliers can be completed at www.tbexcon.com/Asia-2022

The Phuket News

Na Klang massacre site 'will not be demolished'

NONG BUA LAM PHU

Bangkok Post

The Uthai Sawan Tambon Administrative Organisation (TAO) in Nong Bua Lamphu will not demolish the child development centre in Na Klang district where 22 children and two teachers were killed by a former policeman.

"It is not true that the facility will be demolished as rumours claim, because it is state property," Uthai Sawan TAO chairman Danaichok Boonsom said last Friday (Oct 14).

"Many people, including myself, have proposed that the nursery be renovated in order to facilitate it being turned into a memorial museum."

The centre will later be cleaned up after the funeral rites, he said.

Somnuek Thongtalai, deputy chairman of Uthai Sawan TAO, said the TAO is waiting to discuss with parents, communities and related officials to determine the fate of the centre.

"The centre may also be



Duenphen Srinamburi, who lost her four-year-old grandson in the fatal attack, weeps outside the nursery in Na Klang. Photo: AFP

relocated elsewhere, but this decision will take around a month to be made," Mr Somnuek said.

The attack occurred on Oct 6 by former policeman Panya Khamrab. Following the massacre at the centre, Panya returned home where he killed his wife and son before taking his own life. Panya carried out the attack with a knife and a legally acquired gun.

Panya's mother expressed deep regret for what her son had done, saying on Oct 13

that she offered apologies to the victims' families and that she planned to visit each family to say sorry in person.

"I would like to apologise to everyone for my son's actions. I am truly and deeply sorry. I'll pay a visit and offer my apologies to every family when I am less distressed. I am very sorry," she said in a recorded video message. She is currently staying in Udon Thani with another son.

The attack has prompted the Interior Ministry to pledge

it will toughen its gun possession and drug laws.

Speaking on Oct 12 Interior Minister Anupong Paojinda said the government would require tougher qualifications for new gun owners, as well as ramping up checks on existing firearm holders.

"Our new qualification will include mental health reports, we will be examining whether we need proof from doctors," he said.

Gun applicants are already required to undergo a background check and must present a valid reason for ownership – such as hunting or self-defence.

"For example, if officials want to possess a gun, their supervisors have to ratify that that individual has no record of alcohol abuse or bad temper," Anupong said.

Village leaders or local officials will play a role in granting the tougher gun licenses, he added.

Currently gun owners do not have to reapply for licenses during the lifetime of a firearm.

Additional reporting by AFP



Photo: Apichart Jinakul

Phone use must now be handsfree if driving

BANGKOK

MOTORISTS USING A mobile phone must use a handsfree wireless connection under a new police regulation now in force nationwide, government deputy spokeswoman Tipanan Sirichana warned last Friday (Oct 14).

Ms Tipanan said making handsfree connection mandatory is intended to reduce accidents, injuries and loss of life resulting from motorists using mobile phones while driving.

A Royal Thai Police Office announcement issued under Section 43 (9) of the Land Traffic Act of 1979, which prohibits drivers from using a telephone or a communication radio, except with auxiliary

equipment to enable them to talk without holding the telephone, took effect on Oct 7, she said.

Drivers are allowed to use mobile phones while at the wheel on the condition they must have a wireless connection device or a speaker phone affixed, so they do not have to hold the phone.

The wireless connector must be fitted to the front of the vehicle and must not obstruct the driver's view. A driver needing to operate a mobile phone manually must park the vehicle before doing so.

Violators are liable to a fine of between B400-1,000.

The announcement is subject to a review after five years in use, based on opinions from the public. Bangkok Post

Tham Luang cave re-opens

CHIANG RAI

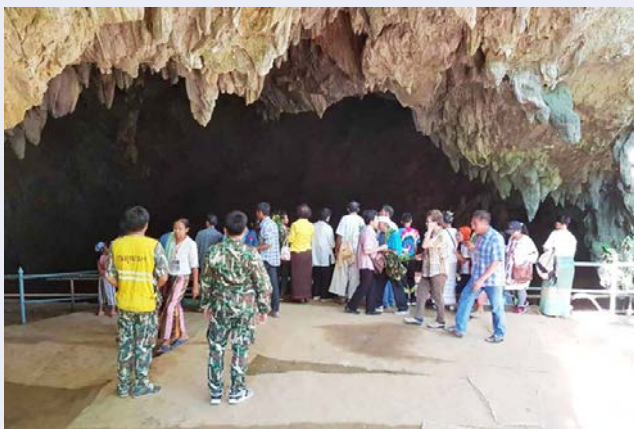
THE THAM LUANG CAVE complex in Khun Nam Nang Non forest park that came to worldwide attention in a cave rescue mission in 2018 re-opened to tourists last Sunday (Oct 16) after a three-and-a-half month closure.

Narongpol Kid-an, chief of Mae Sai district, led a merit-making ceremony ahead of the reopening of the cave complex, which was closed from July 1 until last Saturday during the monsoon season.

Tham Luang park drew many visitors after the dramatic rescue operation in July 2018 involving a junior association football team and their assistant coach who spent 17 days trapped in the complex.

Despite the many visitors since, the cave complex was closed several times during the COVID-19 pandemic to help tame virus outbreaks. Authorities took the opportunity to improve the site for the reopening.

As the cave complex reo-



Tourists queue at the cave Tham Luang cave complex in October 2019. Photo: Chinpat Chaimon

pened last Saturday, so did tram services which shuttle tourists free of charge. In addition to the cave complex, a natural pond known as Sa Morakot is also now open.

The site underwent re-landscaping during the closure which includes an access road linking Tham Luang to Sa Morakot and a new walkway to accommodate the elderly and people with disabilities.

An exhibition about the rescue mission is held in front of the cave while a sculpture, created by national artist Chalermchai Kositpipat, of Petty Officer 1st class Saman Kunan, 37,

also known as "Ja Sam", who died during the mission, is on display.

Twelve boys aged 11-16 and their 25-year-old football coach entered the site on June 23, 2018 and were almost immediately trapped by rapidly rising floodwater.

They were rescued from the cave between July 8-10 in a mission that involved Thai Navy Seals, international cave diving experts and many other rescuers and experts from various fields. There have since been plenty of movies and documentaries covering the high-risk rescue operation.

Bangkok Post



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Scraping the barrel

A cautionary tale for our times

The plot now boasts an assortment of banana palms as well as tamarind, coconut, mango, cashew, mangosteen, neem, rambutan and papaya, among other local plants, but it will take many years for the land to recover from the topsoil scraped from its surface. Photo: Patrick Campbell



GREEN THOUGHTS

Patrick Campbell

Ever since I started to write for the late-lamented 'Phuket Gazette', I have endeavoured, from time to time, to address what I consider to be the burning issue *de nos jours* – namely the continuing and, as I see it, irreversible destruction of our planet's natural resources.

Sadly we are all culpable, whether it be my Thai partner's insistence on putting everything edible in plastic bags, apparently to discourage armies of invisible ants, my new neighbour's construction of a six-storey condo on a postage stamp of land next to my house, or the indiscriminate 'fly-tipping' of garbage down each and every by-way. Am I holier than thou? Alas, no. Confession time looms...

I have a piece of land next to my house which I bought, under duress more than a decade ago, because a developer was eyeing it covetously. The envisaged apartment block would have obliterated my sea view. The fallow plot, unsold and now left to its own natural devices, went through the usual tropical transmogrifications – first, neat grass, then coarse bunch grasses, sedges and low ground-hugging weeds such as wedelia. These were in turn supplanted by evergreen shrubs that included calotropis, wrightia and thevetia, and then by scrubland trees such as acacia, macaranga, leptospermum and saraca. In next to no time, the whole area had been annexed by trees, themselves hosts to tropical vines and lianas, a dense drapery over the burgeoning sylvan outlines. In the tropics, vegetation riots. I had to decide. I could either leave the whole area to its own devices, continue to abandon it to nature and allow it to become a fully-fledged jungle, or I could take drastic action.

After much soul-searching, I summoned the backhoe. I hate hacking down trees for all sorts of reasons, from the aesthetic to the practical. Trees not only look good, they do good and they do you good – by sequestering carbon, pumping out oxygen, storing water in their roots and preventing erosion by binding the topsoil. I put all that to the back of my mind.

So the man came with the backhoe and grubbed up all the trees, some already four metres tall, and unceremoniously dumped them, roots waving goodbye, in the back of waiting lorries. And here's the rub. I had anticipated

some loss of top soil, but nothing on the scale I witnessed. As each tousled and mangled root system was deposited, it was accompanied by a liberal quantity of precious topsoil. The operator made no attempt either to shake the roots free of clinging topsoil, or to avoid shovelling up loads of loam with each giant scoop of the backhoe. At the end of the operation – and it took 14 truck loads to carry away the spoil – my land, probably untillied for centuries, had been scoured and scraped.

Topsoil is a precious commodity anywhere, but especially on islands such as Phuket. Why? Because there is so little of it around. In part, that is because it is naturally sparse in these locations. Look at any excavation and you will see a tell-tale layer of dark topsoil a mere eight to 10 centimetres thick. To compound the problem, this earthy veneer has endured a number of assaults: first from tin miners who gouged the surface, then by rubber planters who replaced 60% of the virgin jungle with neat rows of *havea brasiliensis*, and more recently by tourists who have flocked to this once emerald isle. The result – a rash of resorts and apartment blocks.

However, the main reason why topsoil is so valued is because it contains almost all the elements essential for healthy plant life. It is where earthworms tunnel away, churning out nutritious casts, it is where the macronutrients of nitrogen, phosphate, potassium and magnesium are all normally present as assimilable salts. And rich in organic material, topsoil is normally friable and workable. Unlike the denser substrate of sand, clay or rock, it allows delicate plant rootlets to invade its pores. It takes 500 years to replenish one inch of this miraculous loam. At a stroke, I had obliterated four or five centimetres of this fragile, life-enhancing layer.

What transpired – literally in my own backyard – is a microcosm of a problem that besets our planet. This process of erosion, this abrading of topsoil, has been going on all over the world. Such a harsh process not only scrapes off the top layer of earth, it dries out and exposes to the elements what little is left.

Dust bowls around the world are testament to this. To take one notorious example. In the 1930s a combination of severe droughts and farming malpractices motivated by greed, led to the erosion of vast acreages of land in the American Prairies. Farmers not only destroyed what trees were there, but more crucially, and aided by new and efficient farm machinery, they 'tractored' and deep-ploughed exist-

ing grasslands that had been grazed by bison for aeons. No longer anchored by tree or tough grass roots, exposed to desiccating winds, the churned-up soil was blown away in vast clouds. On April 14, 1935, and on a day afterwards known to locals as 'Black Sunday', 20 'black blizzards' swept across the Great Plains, obliterating the sun and reducing visibility to a few feet. What remained was a lunar landscape which could support only minimal crops. Families – see Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* – were forced to jump in their 'jalopies' and migrate west to California. In all, 500,000 Americans were rendered homeless.

What have we learnt? Not enough. Maybe less dramatically than in '30s Oklahoma, homo sapiens have inexorably created similar problems in other parts of the globe. A map of the world's loss of primal vegetation shows Brazil, Indonesia and equatorial Africa as ongoing offenders. In these developing countries, the predicament has been largely caused by wholesale and unscrupulous clearance of land, especially virgin jungle, often by burning, and the consequent leaching away of the exposed soil by heavy tropical rains. Climate change, the harbinger of both floods and droughts, has not helped.

So what is being done to avoid a cataclysm, a world famine of more than biblical proportions? The answer, perhaps a surprising one, is more than you might expect. As cultivable land disappears as a consequence of chronic misuse and urbanisation, new land, reclaimed from the wild, is pressed into service. Between 1960 and the late 1990s for example, land supporting cultivable crops increased by about 11%. In addition, the yield of these crops was massively increased, thanks not only to the use of pesticides and herbicides, but to the development of genetically modified strains. These so-called GM varieties have doubled or even trebled yields. More resistant to insect damage or viral depredation, they have helped, at least in theory, to arrest the indiscriminate over-use of toxic chemicals, and to control plant diseases. In Hawaii, the papaya industry was on its knees, threatened by a virus which had already decimated output. Scientists developed a new GM papaya called the Rainbow. It stopped the virus in its tracks. Now Hawaii exports papayas.

But the writing is still on the wall – and in mile-high letters. By 2050, the world's population is expected to have grown from a current 7.7 billion to 9.1bn. Down on previous estimates, it is still an extremely alarming figure.

There is still far too little sustainable agricultural practice, too much land being exploited for short-term gain, and then cast away like a well-worn glove. Despite GM crops and more efficient husbandry, we are still using far too many chemical fertilisers, herbicides and pesticides, 90% of which end up polluting our rivers and oceans, poisoning fish, creating algal blooms and upsetting the precarious balance of nature. How well are we dealing with a plastic glut so severe that the stuff will bulk larger in our seas than fish by mid-century? There has been no concerted global response to climate change. Perhaps most worrying of all is the obliteration of our forests and jungles, our natural habitats. How long does it take to replace 10 towering teak trees? Or 1,000 mahoganies? Or just one Javan rhinoceros?

I come back to my own little tale. What happened to me in Phuket is a tiny instance of what is happening, and will continue to happen, worldwide. And it is a truly global concern. In the past, civilizations came, flourished and declined – usually as a result of their own excesses – without the rest of the world being much bothered, much less directly affected. The issues were not global issues. Today they are. It is no longer a case of saying: 'That is none of my business' or 'It doesn't affect me'. It does...

I have since tried to redress the balance in my own neck of the woods. How? By replanting my denuded plot with fruit trees and edible plants. It now boasts 18 banana palms, as well as tamarind, coconut, mango, cashew, mangosteen, neem, rambutan and papaya. There are clumps of lemon grass, herbs and sweet potatoes. And the grass in between is regularly mowed. And yet I cannot avoid the naked truth. I am supposed to be an environmentalist, a nature lover. Yet I tore down trees and destroyed the top soil – like an Oklahoma bully-boy, or a Brazilian Bolsonaro. I have tried to make amends of a sort, but the land will not fully recover in my lifetime, or that of my grandchildren. *Mea culpa.*

Dr Patrick Campbell can be contacted at his home Camelot, located at 59/84 Soi Saiyuan 13; Rawai; Phuket 83130. Tel:66 076613227 (landline), 065-5012326 or 085-7827551 (mobile). His book *The Tropic Gardener, an indispensable guide to plants and their cultivation in Thailand*, is available from Seng Ho bookshop in Phuket Town or Delish in Rawai, or arrange a copy to be delivered by emailing him at drpaccampbell@gmail.com

Your part in climate change



SUSTAINABLY YOURS

Palmer Owyong

In our previous article, we looked at things that the government can do to prepare Phuket for Climate Change. In this article, we'll look at things that you can do in your daily life to help mitigate and adapt to it.

Things You Can Do

Transportation – Public transport in Phuket is lacking, but single vehicles are clogging our roads and polluting the air. One way of alleviating this congestion is through the use of carpools, in which drivers share their cars with passengers going the same way.

For adults, a great app to use is GrabHitch which allows drivers to share their cars and expenses with passengers going to the same destination or who share a similar route. This differs from the regular Grab ride-hailing app, or other apps like Lyft or Uber in that it's generally 20-40% cheaper, is designed for daily commuting, and the drivers are just regular people looking to cut down on costs, not professional drivers trying to earn a living.

For school-related carpools, there is Tribe, which allows schools to set up rideshares between trusted parents without the confusing chain of emails and text messages. It also allows you to know who is driving and who the passengers are and their destination.

Food and Biodiversity – Recent studies say that global food production is responsible for one-third of all greenhouse gas emissions, with meat and dairy producing about 65% of emissions from food while providing just 18% of our calories. According to Joseph Poore, from the University of Oxford, "A vegan diet is



Simply cutting back on aircon use, or even switching to air coolers instead, can save you money on power bills and help the environment.
Photo: The Phuket News

probably the single biggest way to reduce your impact on planet Earth, not just greenhouse gases, but global acidification, eutrophication, land use and water use."

A simple way to reduce your impact is to cut down on your meat and dairy consumption by eating them only on the weekends. This is known as being a week-day vegan. It's a simple guideline to follow, that can substantially reduce your carbon footprint, and even improve your health.

Another way to help fight climate change is to replace the grass lawn in your front and back yards with a garden and/or native species of plants. Not only will this provide you with some food, but it will attract pollinators like bees and butterflies, which are important for biodiversity and for creating a resilient ecosystem.

Fortunately, you don't need a lot of space. Studies show that small yards or even plants on the balcony of

an apartment or a porch can help improve biodiversity in urban settings.

Another way to help protect pollinators is to buy foods that are grown without synthetic pesticides and fertilisers, which poison birds, insects and other wildlife and end up getting washed out into the ocean, where they can cause algal blooms or poison fish. The Phuket Farmer's Club is a good place to get your fruits and vegetables, not only do they deliver to your doorstep, but they can even help you to set up a garden.

Staying Cool – The way air conditioning works is by removing the heat and humidity from the indoor air and returning cool dry air, while transferring the unwanted heat and humidity outside. So, while the room inside of your house gets cooler the outside temperature rises by as much as 1°C. Air conditioners also use chemical refrigerants that emit climate-warming greenhouse gases. This creates a vicious cycle in which the temperature rises, causing us to use more air con, which leads to higher temperatures.

One simple solution is to get an inexpensive air cooler. These are fans with water that you can put ice packs into. While they aren't as effective as air conditioning, they consume 75-80% less electricity and don't use polluting chemical coolants. They aren't as effective in humid climates as they are in dry ones, they can still reduce the temperature by 2-3°C. You can combine these with living walls and plants in your house which will not only cool the room but also clean the air. While these may not eliminate your air-con use, they can at least reduce it by getting you through the hottest parts of the day.

While we may not be able to stop climate change, by making simple, inexpensive changes to our lifestyles we can at least mitigate some of the damage and prevent it from getting worse.

Palmer Owyong is an environmental activist working with the Kamala Green Club and the Global Sustainability Hub.



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POP QUIZ

1. What was Alcatraz Island, famed for its prison, named after?

2. Who was the first woman in space?

3. In Japan, what are 'kattobashi'?

4. How old was famed Nigeria's royal tortoise Alagba when she died?

5. How long does it take sunlight to travel to Earth?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Easy

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

1. Spiny-leafed plant

5. Barker

9. Abalone

14. Erode

15. Banish

17. Sources of learning

19. Guitar accessory

20. ___ wine

21. City districts

24. Haliatus albicillas

25. Verb tense, in Classical Greek

26. Adroitness

30. Shadow

31. Ranee's garment

32. Source of learning

39. Vouchsafe

40. Bazaar

41. Makes blue

44. Eire's capital

46. Apple's apple, e.g.

47. Cranelike bird

48. Defenseless, in a way

52. Furtive summons

53. Source of learning

58. Easier to use

59. Della's creator

60. Wedge-shaped

bones

61. Go around in circles

62. Singer Lou

Down

1. Piercer

2. "Fantasy Island" prop

3. Dolt

4. Upright

5. Bombshell, so to speak

6. Fairs

7. Way to go?

8. Enrich

9. Assayers' stuff

10. Mouthwashes

11. Functionaries

12. Forever, poetically

13. Lies

16. Backgammon impossibility

18. Vittles

21. U.N. agency

22. Icy coating

23. Keystone State

port

26. Large canines

27. Unyielding

28. Without precedent

29. Unagi, at a sushi bar

31. Excoriate

33. Unpaired

34. ___ simple

35. Acerbate

36. Hill's partner

37. Unrelenting

38. Valle del Bove locale

41. State bordering Arizona

42. Mushroom adjective

43. House feature

44. Catch sight of

45. Comic villainess

46. Steers into the wind

47. Spat, var.

49. Authority

50. Age

51. Strike

54. Completed

55. Hackles

56. Motivation for

Manolete

57. Dime novelist

Buntline

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) Pelicans; 2) Cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova (June 16, 1963); 3) Broken baseball bats reused as chopsticks; 4) 344 years old; 5) Eight minutes, 20 seconds

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
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60						61					62			

Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

B	A	N	S		D	A	D	S	P	R	I	T			
A	L	E	E		B	U	R	R	P	L	A	N	E		
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4	3	1	5	6	2	7	9	8
2	5	8	9	7	1	3	6	4
9	6	7	3	8	4	1	5	2
6	9	4	2	1	5	8	3	7
1	2	5	7	3	8	6	4	9
7	8	3	4	9	6	2	1	5
5	7	2	1	4	3	9	8	6
8	1	9	6	5	7	4	2	3
3	4	6	8	2	9	5	7	1

GOT YOUR NUMBER

2

Grammy Awards have been awarded to former President Barack Obama for his spoken word albums.

34

percent of American parents say their favourite child is... their pet.

1,860

litres of fuel are used per hour by a fully loaded Airbus A320 at cruise altitude.

122,906

US dollars is the average annual salary for a Google employee.

2.1 billion

US dollars is roughly how much Pablo Escobar lost each year to rats and the natural elements destroying his stores of cash, or it was just lost.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Storm hovers over Boat Lagoon. Photo by David Samuelson

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

This week in history

October 21, 1879

Thomas Edison applies for a patent for his design for an incandescent light bulb. His version outstrips earlier versions by other inventors at the time.

October 22, 2001

Grand Theft Auto III is released, popularising a genre of open-world, action-adventure video games, while spurring controversy around violence in video games.

October 23, 425

Valentinian III is elevated as Roman emperor at the age of six. His reign, which continued until 455, was marked by the ongoing collapse of the Western Empire.

October 24, 1947

Famed animator Walt Disney testifies before the House Un-American Activities Committee, naming Disney employees he believes to be communists.

October 25, 1945

Fifty years of Japanese admin-

istration of Taiwan formally ends when the Republic of China assumes control.

October 26, 1977

Ali Maow Maalin, the last natural case of smallpox, develops a rash in Somalia. The World Health Organization considers this to be the anniversary of the eradication of smallpox.

October 27, 2014

Britain withdraws from Afghanistan at the end of Operation Herrick, after 12 years, four months and seven days.

Source: Wikipedia

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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

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**Rotary Club - Weekly Meeting**

Come join Rotary Club of Patong Beach's Tuesday dinner meeting at Four points by Sheraton Patong. October's speaker lineup: Oct 04 - Dinner Out - Baan Ar-Jor, Maikhao, Oct 11 - Jazon Edouard - HeadStart International School Phuket Expansion, Oct 18 - Pual Merry & Kimmy Upatising - Inclusion World Championship for Sailing, Sat 29 OCT District Governor La-Or Chinda Official visit. Email club Sec. Hans at info@rotarypatong.org to register.

**Join the Race of Legends – Laguna Phuket Triathlon 2022**

LPT is back and you have ONLY 2 MONTHS left to register for this renowned race in Laguna Phuket. Choose your favorite option between Individual or Team Triathlon, Sprint Triathlon, and Duathlon. When you sign up for the race, you have access to special promotions in all #LagunaPhuket hotels, within walking distance from the race venue! BOOK YOUR ROOM NOW, rates from only THB 2,000 a night, including breakfast for two. Use the code: LPT2022 Event date: Sunday 20 November 2022 Book your hotel & race at your door step Sign up now: https://www.lagunaphukettri.com, Giulia.B@lagunaphuket.com

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Did you know that we have an active social networking group on Phuket specifically for veterans of military service and the emergency services? Phuket Veterans provide a social networking opportunity, as well as further support when things go wrong. Along with this, Phuket Veterans train often to support the local emergency services and the Department for Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) in preparation for the next crisis to hit this island. The qualifications that were achieved during service may have expired, but the skill sets are still there. Don't worry, the training is light and generally takes place near a pub. As well as full (free) membership, families of members are offered associate membership too. Commitment and participation is entirely up to the individual members. If you are a military veteran or were a member of the emergency services, and you are interested in meeting some likeminded people here on Phuket, Phuket Veterans are keen to hear from you. Contact Steve on 089 5870819 or see www.phuketveterans.com for more information.

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‘LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND’ – WORLD FOOD DAY 2022

Scholars of Sustenance Foundation (SOS) Phuket delivered 907kg of good-quality surplus foods from S&P, Mister Donut, Tops, CPF, Family Mart and hotels from across the island on October 14. SOS Phuket passed on the surplus food through the Food Conservation Program to Saphan Ruam Community, Juvenile Observation and Protection Center in Phuket and Sri Chumphaban Foundation. The people in these communities have low incomes, and high unemployment. From all the surplus foods, they convert it was to 3,809 meals for the community population of 1,646 people.

If anyone is interested in donating surplus food or products near the date indicated on the product's label, you can ask for more information and reach us at SOS Phuket 081 950 8711. Or Make a donation to SOS Phuket, Kasikornbank, Account Number: 098-3-86146-6, Account Name: Scholars of Sustenance.

SOS Phuket has been working with the Phuket Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office, the Provincial Administrative Organisation, village health and Social Development and Human Security volunteers. All volunteers join together to arrange all forms of preparation for the villagers to support each other.



Thai rider wins World Jet Ski Championship

WATER SPORTS

THAILAND'S NATIONAL jet ski team were congratulated on their return to Bangkok last Friday (Oct 14) after Kiratikon Pewngam won the World Jet Ski Championship in the United States.

The team was welcomed at Suvarnabhumi Airport by Pipat Ratchakitprakarn, Minister of Tourism and Sports, Kongsak Yodmanee, Governor of the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT) and Sanit Vorapanya, President of the Jet Ski Association of Thailand.

A total of 33 nations competed at the "WGP #1 World Series 2022" at Lake Havasu, Arizona on Oct 4 after two years of postponement due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thai athletes Kiratikon Pewngam, Pittipong Kiatkamolkul and Chanapa Fruit competed in the 1,100cc engine category across three separate races.

Kiratikon performed expertly to claim the overall



Kiratikon (right). Photo: SAT

championship with Pittipong finishing in 3rd place and Chanapa in 5th.

"I'm delighted to be able to win in this category that I class as my speciality," Kiratikon said after securing his win. "Thank you to my coach Attthaphon Khunsa, my family and all the fans for all their support."

Mr Kongsak said the win can help elevate the sport within Thailand and encourage the next generation of water sports enthusiasts to follow suit.

The next round of the Jet Ski World Championship is scheduled to take place in Pattaya between Dec 14-18 and it is hoped fans will turn out to cheer on the Thai competitors.

The Phuket News

Red Bull found guilty of breaching F1 cost cap

FORMULA ONE

AFP

Two-time world champion Max Verstappen's Red Bull Formula One team exceeded the budget cap for the 2021 season, the International Automobile Federation (FIA) said on Oct 10, adding that the offence was a "minor violation".

Aston Martin was also found in breach of F1 financial rules, the FIA announced, adding that any punishment would be decided at a later date.

"We note the findings by the FIA of 'minor overspend breaches'... with surprise and disappointment," tweeted Red Bull.

The cap came into effect last season and was set at US\$145 million (B5.5 billion). It is intended to limit spending to make the sport viable and also to close the competitive gap between big and small teams. Mercedes, Ferrari and Red Bull were particularly affected.

Even so, Verstappen ended the season by edging Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes to win a first world title.

The FIA said it was "currently determining the appropriate course of action to be taken".

A "minor overspend breach", the statement said, is less than 5% of a team's total cap and can "result in financial pen-



Red Bull were surprised and disappointed at the FIA findings. Photo: AFP

alties and/or minor sporting penalties."

Red Bull insisted on Twitter that they had not broken the rules.

"We need to carefully review the FIA's findings as our belief remains that the relevant costs are under the 2021 cost cap amount."

The FIA said its 'Cost Cap Administration' had finished a review of the financial documentation submitted by each team for 2021 and "issued certificates of compliance to seven of the 10".

The third exception was Williams, where there had been a problem with "a previous procedural breach" which the team had "remediated" in a "timely, cooperative and transparent manner".

The statement stressed that because the season under review was the first with a cost cap, the FIA had limited itself "to reviewing the submissions made by the competitors and that no full formal

investigations were launched."

The statement said that the first option for the Cost Cap Administration was to agree a settlement with the team involved.

If the two sides are unable to reach an agreement, or if the team is not in favour of seeking an agreement, it can refer the dispute to a panel of six to 12 judges elected by the FIA general assembly.

"Despite all the conjecture and positioning of others, there is of course a process under the regulations with the FIA which we will respectfully follow while we consider all the options available to us," said Red Bull.

The statement added that "the regulations are highly complex, reflecting the complexity of the sport as a whole".

It also said that all the teams "acted at all times in a spirit of good faith and cooperation throughout the process".

Kiwis and Canucks join England in Rugby World Cup last eight

RUGBY

NEW ZEALAND AND Canada joined England in guaranteeing themselves berths in the women's Rugby World Cup quarter-finals with contrasting wins in Auckland last Sunday (Oct 16).

Canada used forward power to suffocate Italy 22-12 before tournament hosts New Zealand unleashed a high-octane brand in a 56-12 demolition of Wales.

The two performances came a day after England used pressure rugby to beat stubborn fourth seeds France 13-7 as the three top-ranked nations rose to the top of their pools through two rounds of matches.

The weekend ended on a thrilling note when Fiji scored a try in the final minute to upset South Africa 21-17 to secure their first win in tournament history.

Flyhalf Libbie Janse van Rensburg put South Africa three points ahead with a penalty four minutes from



Canada's Sophie de Goede (left) in action during her team's win against Italy. Photo: AFP

the end but Fiji snatched victory with a try to No.8 Karalaina Naisewa, prompting colourful celebrations.

Both of those teams can still secure a quarter-final berth in the last round of pool play. Fiji face France tomorrow (Oct 22) while South Africa play England on Sunday.

England, New Zealand and Canada have already booked tickets to the knockout phase with 100% records.

England cemented their status as favourites to win the tournament as Emily Scarratt scored all the points, including their lone try, as they extended their unbeaten run to 27 matches. AFP

Namibia stun Sri Lanka in T20 World Cup 'historic day' opener

CRICKET

JAN FRYLINCK SMASHED 44 RUNS and took two wickets as Namibia hammered Asia Cup champions Sri Lanka by 55 runs to cause a major upset in the opening match of the Twenty20 World Cup last Sunday (Oct 16).

The left-handed Frylinck and JJ Smit, who made an unbeaten 31, lifted Namibia to 163-7 with their 69-run seventh-wicket stand after being invited to bat first in Geelong, Australia.

Sri Lanka were then bowled out for 108 in 19 overs with David Wiese, Frylinck, Bernard Scholtz and Ben Shikongo taking two wickets each in the team's first of three opening-round matches.

The African minnows are on course for a second straight Super 12 place after achieving the feat on their T20 World Cup debut last year in the United Arab Emirates.

"Incredible journey, last year was a special experience for us. We've started a great win, but a lot of work to do throughout this tournament still," skipper Gerhard Erasmus said after the stunning win.

"It's been a historic day for us. The opening day has been quite special but we want to kick on from here and qualify for the Super 12 stage. We understand the bigger picture as well."

Cricket icon and India's batting great Sachin Tendulkar tweeted: "Namibia has told the cricketing world today... 'Nam' yaad rakhna! (remember the name!)"

Former Sri Lanka captain Sanath Jayas-



Namibia's Jan Frylinck in action during the shock win against Sri Lanka. Photo: AFP

uriya backed the team to bounce back and make the Super 12 stage.

"Disappointing result. However, this team has come back from defeat before. Let's regroup and win from here first target is to qualify. Come on boys let's do this!" Jayasuriya wrote on Twitter.

The upsets continued on Monday as Scotland, ranked 15th in the world, defeated two-time winners West Indies.

Scotland opener George Munsey hit an unbeaten 66 from 53 balls as his team made 160-5.

The Windies lost by 42 runs after poor batting saw them bowled out for 118.

"It is a special win for us," said Scotland captain Richard Berrington. "A lot of hard work has gone into getting us to this point in the last 12 months."

"I'm extremely proud of the boys for going out there tonight and showing off our skills."

Elsewhere Zimbabwe beat Ireland by 31 runs and the Netherlands edged out the United Arab Emirates by three wickets. AFP

Salah still has eyes on title

FOOTBALL

AFP

Mohamed Salah said Liverpool are not giving up on the Premier League title after the Egyptian's strike in a 1-0 win inflicted Manchester City's first defeat of the season last Sunday (Oct 16).

At time of press, the Reds are still 10 points behind City and 14 adrift of leaders Arsenal, but kickstarted their season with just a third league win of the campaign.

"Personally I love to play always for a title," said Salah. "In my head I am going to fight for it, but we need to focus more and take one game at a time."

Jurgen Klopp was sent off in the closing stages as he lost the plot with the officials for refusing to award Salah a free-kick.

But City were also left fuming at referee Anthony Taylor after he disallowed Phil Foden's strike early in the second half after a VAR review spotted an Erling Haaland foul on Fabinho.

"This is Anfield," said City boss Pep Guardiola, who was targeted by coins thrown from the crowd in the aftermath of the disallowed goal.

"The referee spoke with my assistant and Jurgen before the game and said 'Today I won't make soft



Liverpool's Mohamad Salah (right) scored the decisive goal against Manchester City last Sunday (Oct 16) and vows the title race is not over yet. Photo: AFP

fouls' and all the game was play on, play on, play on, except the goal we scored."

For all their achievements under Guardiola, City are still to master Anfield in front of a crowd as Liverpool's proud unbeaten home league record with fans in attendance dating back to 2017 goes on.

The Reds have caused City more problems than anyone else in England over the past five years and belied the form of both sides heading into the game.

After missing a gilt-edged chance only moments earlier, Salah out-muscled Joao Cancelo in the 76th minute to latch onto Alisson's long ball and keep his cool to slot past Ederson and inflict the champions' first league defeat since February.

With City losing, Arsenal managed to stretch their lead at the top to four points after a hard fought win against Leeds United.

Bukayo Saka slammed home emphatically 10 minutes before the interval at Elland Road as Mike

Arteta's Arsenal won for the ninth time in 10 league games this season to reach 27 points.

Leeds substitute Patrick Bamford missed a penalty and his side had another spot-kick decision in stoppage time, initially awarded by referee Chris Kavanagh, overturned after a VAR intervention.

At time of press Tottenham remain level with City on 27 points after Harry Kane's penalty and a late Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg strike saw them beat Everton 2-0.

Chelsea beat Aston Villa 2-0 courtesy of two goals from Mason Mount plus an inspired performance from goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga who made a series of stunning saves. It was Chelsea's fourth consecutive league win since Graham Potter was appointed manager.

Cristiano Ronaldo was handed just his second start of the Premier League season for Manchester United against Newcastle but could not add to his tally of 700 club goals in a fiery 0-0 draw at Old Trafford.

United rued two squandered late chances to win the game, with Fred and substitute Marcus Rashford both guilty.

"In the end we could – we should – have scored the winning goal," said United manager Erik ten Hag. "We deserved the win."

Elsewhere, Leicester edged off the bottom of the Premier League despite a goalless draw with Crystal Palace as Nottingham Forest lost 0-1 at Wolves. Forest, who have taken just one point from their past seven games, could have snatched a draw but Brendan Johnson missed a second-half penalty.

Fulham and Bournemouth fought out an entertaining 2-2 draw at Craven Cottage, Southampton and West Ham drew 1-1 and Brentford defeated Brighton 2-0 thanks to a brace from England forward Ivan Toney.

Win SEA Games or you're gone, Prawit warns FAT chief

FOOTBALL

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER Prawit Wongsuwon has given an ultimatum to Football Association of Thailand (FAT) president Pol Gen Somyot Poompanmoung, saying he should be sacked if the Thai team fail to lift the trophy at the next Southeast Asian Games.

Gen Prawit delivered the stern warning during a meeting of the National Olympic Committee of Thailand on Oct 11 with representatives of the FAT among the attendants.

"Our football team cannot afford to lose at the SEA Games," Gen Prawit, who is the committee chairman, said at the meeting.

"If the team lose, the FAT president will be dismissed," he warned. "Please bear this in mind."

The War Elephants won the AFF Suzuki Cup last year, but they showed mediocre performances since then.

The team failed to claim



Football Association of Thailand president Somyot Poompanmoung has been delivered a stern ultimatum. Photo: Bangkok Post

the SEA Games men's football gold medal after they lost to host Vietnam in May. The team also had to settle for third place at the King's Cup in Chiang Mai last month.

The 32nd SEA Games will be held in Cambodia in May next year.

Gen Prawit urged the FAT to redeem the confidence of Thai fans in their team.

"The FAT must make Thai people proud of the Thai football team again," he said.

Somyot said at the meeting on Oct 11 that he was not under pressure from the deputy prime minister's remark and will use it as a motivation to lead the team to success.

Somyot said he did not cling to his position and would not stand in the way of his successor.

"I have to thank Gen Prawit for his guidance, and I am willing to take it," said the former national police chief.

Bangkok Post

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Sport



Magic Mo says title race is not over > p15

MARKS, SET, GO!

Laguna Phuket Triathlon returns

Photo: Laguna Phuket

TRIATHLON

The Phuket News
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After a one-year pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Asia's longest running triathlon – the Laguna Phuket Triathlon – is back and will host 1,200 athletes from 38 countries for its 28th edition on Sunday Nov 20, 2022.

Dubbed “The Race of Legends”, Laguna Phuket Triathlon is famous for its challenging and scenic course which starts and finishes at the premier integrated destination, Laguna Phuket.

The unique race format includes a 1.8km swim in the Andaman Sea and freshwater lagoon, a 50km bike with challenging climbs and descents, and a 12km run along country lanes.

Other race distances include LPT Sprint (0.5km swim, 20km bike, 6km run) and Laguna Phuket Duathlon (4km run, 50km bike, 12km run).

Having put Phuket on the map as a sports tourism destination, Laguna Phuket Triathlon has won many accolades including being ranked in the top 10 of The World's Greatest Tri Swims by 220 Triathlon Magazine (UK) two years ago and being placed 5th on the 10

Best Triathlons in the World list, by Let's Do This (UK).

Over its 28-year history, Laguna Phuket Triathlon has welcomed many of the world's top professionals, including former Ironman world champions Chris McCormack (AUS) and Jan Frodeno (GER), Belinda Granger (AUS), Ruedi Wild (SUI) and Chris Lieto (USA), to name just a few.

Lining up in this year's Pro field are Michael Realert (GER), Ryan Christian (AUS), Baptiste Neveau (FRA), Emma Pallant (GBR), Dimity-Lee Duke (AUS), Amelia Watkinson (NZL) and Holly Lawrence (USA), amongst others.

In the Elite field, top Thai

talent Jaray Jearanai is eager to defend his title while 2020 winner and SEA games Silver medallist Inge Prasetyo from Indonesia is looking to reclaim her title.

Others to watch include Thai actor and singer Somchai Kemglad (aka Tao Somchai), Tewin Surachredkai (Top), and Muay Thai star Sombat Banchamek (aka Buakaw) who will be competing as part of Singha All Star Tri.

“Laguna Phuket extends its warm welcome to all participants competing in the longest-running triathlon event in Asia and an event that has helped to promote Phuket as a top sporting destination

around the world for almost 30 years,” commented Prapa Hemmin, Director of Corporate Events & Partnerships, Laguna Resorts & Hotels Public Company Limited.

“From its inception, Laguna Phuket Triathlon has been a hit event with athletes from all walks of life. The genuinely warm reception they receive from the local community during the competition makes the event special for so many and we are looking forward to welcoming amateur and professional triathletes from around the world to enjoy the event this year while creating memorable Phuket experiences,” she added.

Laguna Phuket Triathlon is collaborating with Pan Pan Kan (Cycle to Share) project – a charity ride that raises money for social issues in Thai society. Pan Pan Kan 2023 will involve a 1,000km ride over seven days and working with Taejai.com and Together Foundation the event will raise awareness for the need of better access to sports for physically and mentally challenged athletes, as well as promote diversity and inclusiveness.

To sign up for any of the race distances and for more information, visit Laguna Phuket Triathlon's official website www.lagunaphukettri.com.

Mai Khao hosts fundraising bike race for local schools

CYCLING

AUTHORITIES IN MAI KHAO have announced a fundraising bicycle ride will be held on Sunday (Oct 23) to help purchase essential supplies for five local schools in the area.

“Phuket Rally Bike Mai Khao No. 1” is an initiative founded by the Mai Khao Tambon Administrative Organisation (OrBorTor) in collaboration with private sector company AKKA Group.

The 40km race will apply international road racing rules and predominantly take place on smooth road surfaces, with the designated

starting point at Mai Khao Beach. Participants will follow a route that takes them back to the starting point on three occasions with the final occasion classified as the finish line.

The route has yet to be publicly revealed although it has been confirmed that participants are to be given a map which will allow them to navigate the course. The map will be compact and easy to read while cycling and will therefore not hinder performance, organisers explained.

Additionally, it was revealed that a series of fun themed games will also be introduced along the route as part of the race.



Photo: PR Phuket

The exact nature of the games will be revealed on the day and they are designed to enhance the participant's overall enjoyment, organisers said.

The race is open to everyone, with students from various schools in the Mai Khao area expected to

participate in the competition.

The event was announced at a press conference last Saturday (Oct 15) overseen by Narong Singkhala, head of the Mai Khao OrBorTor, who was joined by Akkarachai Srichannon, chairman of AKKA Group.

Mr Narong explained that the majority of the funds raised from the bike race will go towards purchasing much needed supplies for local schools, including sports equipment. The five schools to receive assistance include Hongyok Bamrung School, Baan Mai Khao School, Baan Tha Chatchai School, Ban Khoen School and Baan Mak Prok School, he said.

A portion of the funds would go towards purchasing respiratory equipment and medical oxygen supplies which would be held at the Mai Khao OrBorTor office and made available to local residents, if and when required.

Finally, the event will help provide a much-needed boost to the local economy and continue the ongoing promotion of Mai Khao, and Phuket, on a broader scale as an attractive venue for sports-related activities, said Mr Narong.

Registration can be done at Pikgo Cafe in Saphan Hin or Coriacea Boutique Resort at Mai Khao Beach. For more information call 063-360-1881.

The Phuket News