

AMERICAN CAUGHT MOLESTING HORSES > PAGE 4

CRAZY DAYS



นายโสภณ สุวรรณรัตน์
ผู้ว่าราชการจังหวัดภูเก็ต

MAIN: Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat delivering his message to 'respect the law' on Monday (Mar 18). Photo: PR Phuket. INSET: One of the Day brothers wrestles the handgun from the Chalong Traffic Police officer. Image: Thapapong Trs

KIWI BROTHERS ASSAULT POLICE OFFICER, REMOVE HIS HANDGUN

Eakkapop Thongtub
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New Zealand brothers Hamish and Oscar Day, 36 and 38, are facing no less than five charges each after they assaulted a police officer, with one of the men disarming the officer of his handgun.

The gun fired during the altercation, but thankfully no people were injured.

The incident occurred about 4:10pm last Saturday (Mar 16), Phuket Provincial Police Commander Pol Maj

Gen Sinlert Sukhum confirmed at a press conference at Phuket Provincial Police Headquarters in Phuket Town on Monday (Mar 18). Joining the press conference was Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat.

The two men were speeding on motorbikes along Chao Fa East Rd in Chalong. They ignored an order from Chalong Traffic Police officer Lt Somsak Noo-iad to pull over, prompting Lt Somsak to give pursuit, Maj Gen Sinlert explained.

The men were forced to a stop, and in the ensuing altercation one

of the men forced Lt Somsak to the ground and took his handgun, while the other took his phone to delete any photos or videos recorded by the officer.

However, reinforcements from Chalong Police Station soon arrived and both Kiwis were placed under arrest.

Although not specifically stated in the initial police report of the incident, it appeared Lt Somsak had discovered neither of the Kiwi men had a driver's licence when they were stopped.

The Days reportedly offered a bribe, which Lt Somsak declined and which resulted in their angry response.

Both men as of Monday were in detention at Phuket Provincial Court, Maj Gen Sinlert confirmed.

Maj Gen Sinlert confirmed that the Days each face charges of conspiracy to commit robbery; working together to fight or obstruct officials from performing their duties; participating in physically attacking officials performing their duties; attempting to bribe an official; and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

NEWS PAGE 5

Nui Beach to be cleared again, charges pending



LIFE PAGE 9

The real story of Phuket Heroine the 'Lady Chan'



SPORT PAGE 16

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News



Woman wins
B30mn on
lottery > p5

Cherng Talay drive-by shooter surrenders

AN 18-YEAR-OLD MAN wanted for the fatal shooting of a 21-year-old man at a petrol station in Cherng Talay last Friday night (Mar 15) has surrendered to police.

Kiattisak 'Gus' Thawornphon, 18, presented himself at Cherng Talay Police Station last Sunday (Mar 17).

He was placed under arrest and immediately taken into the police station for questioning. Kiattisak was already wanted on an arrest warrant issued by the Phuket Provincial Court for murder.

According to police, Kiattisak confessed to the shooting. He also gave the location of the gun and Honda Scoopy motorbike used to carry out the attack. Police officers soon recovered both the gun and the motorbike, which had been dumped in the Layan area.

Cherng Talay Police were called to the Caltex petrol station on the Baan Don-Cherng Talay Road, in Baan Pasak, shortly after 10pm, where a police report said an unnamed assailant fatally shot Thiraphat Suksrimuaeng, a 21-year-old resident of Pa Khlok.

Pol Lt Suthirak Chuthong was informed of the incident before Pol Col Weeraphong

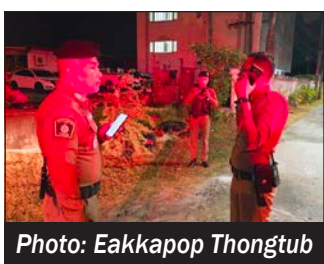


Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

Rakkhito and colleagues then proceeded to the scene. On arrival, officers found the body of Mr Thiraphat on the grass verge near the petrol station. He had been shot through the back of his left shoulder, and was still conscious.

Medics arrived and rushed Mr Thiraphat to Thalang Hospital. Due to the serious extent of his injury, he was then rushed to Vachira Phuket Hospital, but pronounced dead shortly after arriving.

Narathip Chidchiew, 22, told police that before the incident he, Mr Thiraphat and two other friends had attended a funeral at Baan Don Temple.

Afterwards, the four headed to Mr Narathip's house at Baan Khok Tanod. Mr Thiraphat said he was tired and so planned to head home.

So far police have not revealed any motive for the shooting.

Eakkapop Thongtub

DSI ramps up Fehr probe

The Phuket News
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Pol Lt Col Yutthana Praedam, Acting Director-General of the Department of Special Investigation (DSI), arrived in Phuket last week to be briefed on the agency's investigation into the elephant park operated by Swiss expat Urs Fehr and his wife, Khanuengnit, and the land that his rented luxury villa is on.

The aim of the visit, on Mar 14, was "to investigate the facts and integrate work with local agencies in the case of preventing and suppressing offenses according to Alien Business Operations Act 1999 and cases of invasion of public land", said an official report.

Pol Lt Col Yutthana met with the multiagency task force set up to investigate the cases at the Phuket Tourism and Sports office. Joining the meeting were officers from the DSI Security Cases Division, Department of Business Development, Department of Tourism, Tourist Police and Phuket Immigration.

The task force has set its sights on nine specific points to be investigated regarding the elephant park and its related foundation,



Photo: PR Phuket

and the land that the luxury villa estate at Cape Yamu in Pa Khlok where Fehr allegedly kicked a woman doctor. Fehr mistakenly believed the doctor and her friend were trespassing; the location was later confirmed to be on public land.

Regarding the Green Elephant Sanctuary Park in Cherng Talay, officers will check the investment structure to determine whether any of the shareholders are

nominees, and to ensure that foreign ownership does not exceed 49%, and whether the company confirms to the Foreign Business Act and laws regulating tourism businesses in Thailand.

Meanwhile, the operations of the Green Elephant Wildlife foundation now registered in the name of Fehr's wife will also be investigated.

The foundation is registered as non-profit organisation, Pol Lt Col Yutthana said.

Of note, Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat has already confirmed that officials have requested that the foundation be dissolved.

Regarding the land at Cape Yamu, officers will investigate the land documents used to claim ownership of the land, namely the evolution of the land ownership from a SorKor 1 document to a Nor-Sor3 Gor. Officers will check for any discrepancies, Pol Lt Col Yutthana said.

All foreigners called on to 'respect the law'

Continued from page 1
...driving without a driver's license.

"We have coordinated with Phuket Immigration to request Immigration Division 6 revoke their 'visas' [permits to stay] and we have requested that the court deny bail," Maj Gen Sinlert said.

Both men have denied all charges against them, he added.

Lt Somsak suffered only minor injuries and was discharged from hospital on Monday to recuperate at home.

VIDEO

Widely shared across social media channels was a video of the incident, which appeared to have been recorded by bystanders.

In the video a woman can be heard saying, "You

stop, you stop. He have gun. You stop."

One of the men can be heard replying, "The policeman was trying to attack us."

The video showed Hamish Day standing at the roadside watching as his brother Oscar forced Lt Somsak to the ground.

"He's trying to kill him," another voice can be heard shouting, although it is unclear who it was directed at.

As Oscar Day attempts to separate himself from the officer, Hamish Day can be seen moving closer with a mobile phone pointed at the men on the ground as if trying to video the pair.

Then in another frame, Hamish Day can be seen approaching the pair on the ground holding an automatic pistol in an open-handed fashion as if offering it.

In another part of the

video, the Day brothers can be seen standing at the roadside next to two motorcycles facing the police officer as reinforcements arrive.

HOLIDAY

The brothers' parents, millionaire business and property owners Laurence and Katrina Day, asked for calm and privacy in the aftermath of the high-profile incident, especially after the video of the incident was broadcast on Thai television.

The Day brothers were on holiday in Phuket when the incident occurred, father Mr Day told the *NZ Herald*.

"It's very, very concerning," Laurence Day. "The family is distraught. We're praying for a good outcome... Who would have ever expected this? Just a couple of kids on a tourist trip."

Both men had their own

families, including children, in New Zealand who were deeply concerned for their wellbeing, he added.

SINGAPORE SLAP

The Days incident came only days after Singaporean national Lim Jia Jie was apprehended for driving his motorcycle in Cherng Talay without a helmet or license.

When reprimanded by police and issued with a fine, Lim threw the money in the police officer's face before punching him in the back of the head. Lim was subsequently charged for his outburst.

'RESPECT THE LAW'

Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat on Monday called on all foreigners to 'respect the law'.

"As a result of the incident, legal action has been taken. Strict action must be taken



Phuket Police Chief Maj Gen Sinlert noted 95 foreigners have been deported since Oct 1 last year. Photo: PR Phuket

against foreigners who commit crimes in the area," Governor Sophon said.

"Foreigners traveling into Phuket must respect the law, and promote a good image of tourism," he added.

Phuket Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Sinlert noted that since Oct 1 last year, 95 foreigners had been deported by having their permit to stay revoked.

The foreigners deported comprised 41 Chinese, 28 Myanmar nationals, eight Russians, five Indians, three Australians, two Moroccans, two British nationals and five "others"

The offences ranged from attempted murder (one case), resisting arrest and obstructing an officer (six cases), theft (six cases) and 23 convictions for drugs.



Deputy PM Anutin on Bangla Rd last week. Photo: PR Phuket

Anutin: 'Don't spoil it'

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Anutin Charnvirakul, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, on Bangla Rd in Patong last week made his remit clear in the ongoing crackdown on foreigners caught breaking the law in Phuket: "Don't let a few bad people spoil it."

"It is safe to travel to Phuket. Do not allow bad people, who are a small minority, to spoil it. We request that all parties adhere to the principles and strictly follow the law for the peace of society," Anutin declared on Bangla Rd on Mar 14.

"We will not allow the case of only a few bad people to create the stereotype that Phuket is dangerous. Personally, I'm not afraid of the

mafia. I'm afraid of [mafia] becoming free [to operate]," he added.

Regarding the incident and ongoing investigations involving Swiss expat Urs Fehr, Anutin said, "What happened was the behaviour of a few people, but wherever it happens, we will handle it. You can see that recently it was done. We withdrew the visa. An appeal was submitted to the Ministry of Interior. There is no need to appeal, it's a waste of time, better to go home.

"If there is a case where foreigners cause another incident, the Governor of Phuket and the Phuket Provincial Police Commander will definitely take action," he added..

"Thailand has the potential to take care of and welcome tourists from around the world, and [through tour-

ism] can generate enormous income for Thai people. And the duty of the authorities with the cooperation of all sectors is to make tourists feel safe, so they are not taken advantage of, with Thai people being a good host," he concluded.

Anutin joined a briefing led by Patong Police Chief Pol Col Chalermchai Hirsawat at the tourist security system 'Command and Control Center' for Bangla Rd on Thursday evening.

There are 26 CCTV cameras along the busy nightlife street, covering the entire area. Patong Municipality plans to increase the number of CCTV cameras to enhance safety for tourists, the Deputy PM was told.

After the meeting, Anutin inspected Bangla Rd and spoke with tourists, local officials and operators of

pubs, bars and other nightlife venues.

Joining the Deputy PM for the briefing and the tour of Bangla were Orasit Samphantharat, Director-General of the Department of Provincial Administration (DOPA); Chaiwat Chuenkosoom, Director-General of the Community Development Department; and Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat.

Also joining the tour were Phuket Provincial Police Commander Pol Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum,

Patong Mayor Chalernsak Maneesri, DOPA Special Operations personnel, officers from the Phuket Provincial Administrative Special Operations Team, the Patong Police Special Operations Unit as well as Phuket Provincial Police, Patong Police and Phuket Tourist Police.



Photo: PR Phuket

Patong plans three-day party for Songkran

OFFICIAL CELEBRATIONS in Patong for the Thai New Year Songkran festival will this year continue for three days for the first time.

Patong officials held a press conference on Friday (Mar 15) to outline plans for this year's Songkran Festival celebrations.

Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat oversaw the press conference, which was held at 5pm at Bangla Plaza at Patong Beach, to share details on the "Songkran Music Festival On The Beach 2024", to be held Apr 12-14.

Governor Sophon was joined by selected officials from Patong municipality, including Patong Mayor Chalernsak Maneesri, along with Phuket MP Chalermphong Saengdee, Patong Police Chief Pol Maj Gen Chalermchai Hirsawat, Patong Entertainment Business Association (PEBA) President Weerawit Kreuasombat, The Prism Co Ltd CEO Kan Prachamporn and Phuket Bike Week Association President Amarin Saranyasakul.

Governor Sophon explained that public and private sector entities are collaborating to make the Songkran Festival in Patong one that appeals to and attracts a significant number of people not only locally but throughout Thailand and the rest of the world.

This year will be the first where there is a three-day Songkran water splashing event in Patong, from Friday, Apr 12 through Sunday, Apr 14, with the official festival opening ceremony taking place on Saturday, Apr 13.

There will be a number of exciting activities taking place throughout the festival, predominantly at Bangla Plaza, including extensive water splashing fun, a Thai dance procession and performance, live musical entertainment from groups and prominent DJs, live traditional Thai dance and music performances and merit-making opportunities by offering dried food to monks and the pouring of water to ask for blessings from elders.

The Phuket News

Russian man slain in Chalong, prime suspect flees the country

POLICE ARE TRYING TO track down a prime suspect in the killing of a 41-year-old Russian man whose body was found at a house in Chalong last week.

The prime suspect is believed to have already fled the country.

Police were called to the house in Soi Sai Nam Yen (or Soi Chao Fa 67), in Moo 6, Chalong, at 11:10am on Mar 13.

At the house, officers found the body of Artur Mkhitarian, 41, on the floor beside marijuana plants being grown at the home. He had suffered a fatal stab wound to the neck.

Officers noted signs of a struggle at the home, and estimated that Mr Mkhitarian had died some eight to 10 hours before



his body was found.

The alarm was raised by Mr Mkhitarian's wife, Anna, who filed a report to police after her husband had been missing for two days.

Police tracked down his rental

car through the car's GPS, and found it parked near the home.

Neighbours confirmed they had heard an argument at house on the night of Mar 12, but were not able to understand it and did not intervene.

Police noted that Mr Mkhitarian arrived in Phuket on visa exemption status on Jan 28 and was permitted to stay until Apr 26. He was initially registered as staying at Laguna Park in Chalong Talay.

His wife, Ms Anna, 32, told police that her husband had come to live in Thailand, along with his parents and two children, all living in Chalong. She last saw him around 5pm on Mar 12.

Police confirmed that Tajikistan national Bakhtovar Murozoda was renting the house where Mr Mkhitarian's body was found.

Subsequent investigation by police, including witness testimony and CCTV footage in the area of the Chalong property before and after the incident, suggest that Murozoda

was the only other person present when it occurred.

It showed that Murozoda had entered the house alone and that Mr Mkhitarian had done likewise sometime after. The CCTV footage then also showed Murozoda leaving the property alone with no sign of Mkhitarian.

Murozoda boarded a Turkish Airlines flight from Phuket to Istanbul on the night of Mar 12.

Police have been issued an arrest warrant for Murozoda and have liaised with Interpol in an effort to track the prime suspect for the offense of "intentionally killing another person" according to Section 288 of the Thai Criminal Code.

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THU MARCH 28



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Photo: CIB

Tour speedboat captains charged for onboard meth

TWO TOUR SPEEDBOAT captains operating boats to Phi Phi Island and Haad Nopparat Thara Beach in Krabi have been arrested after being found with methamphetamine pills (ya bah) on board.

The first arrest was off Phi Phi Island Pier, reported the Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) last week.

Working with Krabi Marine Police, the officers noticed the speedboat being tied up to a mooring buoy, preparing to receive tourists. The officers asked to dock the boat so they could check the required permits.

The helmsman and mechanic appeared flustered, so the officers asked to search the vessel.

The search found five ya bah tablets hidden on board. 'Mr Sombat' identified himself as the owner,

the CIB reported.

The second arrest was off Nopparat Thara Beach Pier in Krabi, where officers acting on a tip-off boarded one of the dozens of boats lined up to receive tourists.

The officers, who had been told that the "person in charge of the boat was using amphetamines", conducted a search of the boat and found four ya bah pills on board. 'Mr Charin' claimed to be the owner.

The officers also checked the required permits and licences for the boat and crew.

Marine Police took Sombat to the Phi Phi Police Station to be charged and Charin to the Ao Nang Police Station to be charged.

Both men were charged with illegal possession of a Category 1 narcotic.

The Phuket News

American caught molesting horses

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Thalang Police are investigating a complaint, supported by CCTV footage, of a 19-year-old American man committing indecent acts with horses at a stable in Pa Khlok.

Chatcharo Lek-Awut, 50, and his wife, Ms Praphada, 43, the owners of the stable, in Moo 4, Soi Bang Sai, Pa Khlok, first reported the ongoing incidents with Thalang Police last month.

The report, on Feb 5, was received by Thalang Police Chief Pol Col Nikorn Chuthong and Deputy Chief Pol Lt Col Yuttaphon Watthaseth.

The couple explained that they knew the young man from seeing him in the area. They thought he just loved horses and first saw him interacting with them when they took the horses into a nearby rubber plantation to graze last year.

However, he was seen inserting his hand into the vagina of the horse Nong Mali, a dwarf horse that was nine months pregnant at the time. Nong Mali appeared to have contracted an infection and the unborn foal was



CCTV image: Supplied

aborted last year.

The second horse the American is accused of interfering with is Nong Gina. The incident happened last month, but Nong Gina was not pregnant and there appeared to be no physical effect from the incident.

Most recently, the third horse to be subjected to the indecent act was Nong Noon on Mar 10. Nong Noon is more than four months pregnant, and the couple are concerned that she too will suffer a miscarriage.

The man was seen entering the stable at about 4pm to 5pm, said Mr Chatcharo.

CCTV footage showed the man interacting with horses in

the stable, and on at least two occasions inserting his hand into the female horse's vagina.

"What are we supposed to do?" Ms Praphada asked reporters.

Pol Lt Col Yuttaphon Watthaseth of the Thalang Police, fellow investigators and officials from the Phuket Tourist Assistance Center (TAC) visited the home of the man and spoke with his father, who was shocked when shown the CCTV footage.

Through the father, an appointment was made for the son to come to Thalang Police Station last Saturday (Mar 16). However, at time of press no details of that meeting had been made public.

Man stabbed with scissors in Patong domestic dispute

A THAI MAN WAS URGENTLY transported to Patong Hospital last Friday (Mar 15) after being stabbed with scissors by his wife during a domestic dispute.

Patong Police and Kusoldharm Rescue Foundation at 12.30pm were alerted to a situation requiring urgent medical attention following an altercation between a man and his wife.

On arrival, police officers and first responders discovered a Thai male suffering from a stab wound to his stomach. The victim received initial assistance at the scene before being taken to Patong Hospital. The severity of his injuries were not reported.

A report by Kusoldharm Patong did not disclose the names of the victim or his wife. The incident location was specified only as "Soi 7",

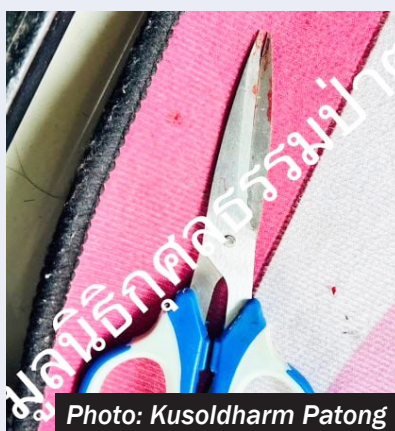


Photo: Kusoldharm Patong

without further details on the street name. Nothing was reported about the circumstances of the incident.

Photos by Kusoldharm Patong captured the presence of Patong Traffic Police officers at the scene. As of 3:30pm, Patong Police Station has not issued any statements regarding the incident. *The Phuket News*

Police hunt Patong panty thief

PATONG POLICE ARE HOPING to track down a panty thief who made off with more than 20 items of women's underwear in a single theft.

The news became public after a CCTV video of the man carrying out the panty raid was shared widely across local social media channels last week.

The woman whose underwear was stolen, who asked to be called only 'Ms Ja' (not her real name), 42, told reporters that the incident happened about 11:20pm on Mar 3.

The man, wearing a blue T-shirt and black shorts, stole about seven bras worth B800 and about 15 pairs of panties worth B1,000 from the area in front of her rented room. The under garments were left out to dry.

Ms Ja said she filed a complaint with Patong Police over the incident.

"This is very troubling. I don't dare hang my underwear in front of the room again, fearing they will be stolen again," she said.

Ms Ja said that since she reported



The man was caught on CCTV carrying out the panty raid. Image: Supplied

her underwear being stolen, others have come forward to confirm that they too had their underwear stolen.

"We want the police to catch the culprit, because this has created a lot of anxiety and annoyance for all the people living here," Ms Ja said.

Patong Police confirmed they are checking CCTV footage from the area in the hope of tracking down the thief.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Nui Beach to be cleared

The Phuket News
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The illegal occupier of Nui Beach will be given no more than 45 days to remove structures built on the land, authorities have confirmed.

More than 50 structures have been identified on the site, officials noted.

“Authorities will be issuing demolition warnings with a 30-45 day deadline for removal. Failure to comply will result in the government removing the structures and charging all related expenses to the encroachers,” confirmed state news agency NNT.

The deadline for removing the illegal structures followed a raid at Nui Beach by more than 100 officers on Mar 12, led by Bannaruk Sermthong, Deputy Director-General of the Royal Forest Department.

Armed with a search warrant issued by the Phuket Provincial Court, Mr Bannaruk and the raid party, including leading officers from the Royal Forest Department (RFD), Region 8 Police and Karon Police, arrived to inspect the site.

The aim was to survey the area “claimed by private parties” and the newly built



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

structures that now stand there – despite the notorious Nui Beach Club being demolished by the Royal Thai Navy in 2020.

Mr Bannaruk explained that the total area claimed by “private parties” covered an area of 18 rai 2 ngan 78 square wah. The land in the area is either under the protection of the Royal Forest Department or is SorPorKor land managed by the Agricultural Land Reform Office (Alro), he said.

If the operators of the long-standing beach business are found to be trespassing on public land, they will be

prosecuted, Mr Bannaruk assured.

Many new buildings had been built at the site, and the “operator” charged people B100 each to be allowed to access the beach, Mr Bannaruk explained.

The practice is not new for Phuket locals, as the “entrance fee” had been levied for decades before the Navy finally took action to uphold a court order to demolish the Nui Beach Club in 2020.

However, the practice had returned, Mr Bannaruk noted.

“Previously, there had been an order to demolish 16

buildings that were constructed without permission. But today it turns out that there are many additional buildings built from the original. It is open as a restaurant and viewpoint,” Mr Bannaruk told the media present, representing many national news channels.

“In this matter, the court has already decided on the land rights at Nui Beach, but government officials in the area continue to receive benefits,” Mr Bannaruk said, openly accusing local officials of corruption.

Many “time-wasting games” had been played in delaying the clearing out of the business at Nui Beach, he added, including repeatedly filing formal requests for the RFD Region 12 branch to review the survey of the area that deemed the business to be illegally on state land, and even for the boundary of the Nakkerd Protected Forest Reserve to be redrawn.

“Moreover, there was also intimidation to make people in the area afraid,” Mr Bannaruk added.

“The problem of ownership of beachfront land in Phuket has spread widely and there have been complaints from many areas of Phuket,” he said.



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

Chalong woman wins B30mn on lottery app

A 44-YEAR-OLD WOMAN living in Chalong has won B30 million on the national government lottery.

The woman, Naranun Ruchichaiyapat, made the news public last Sunday (Mar 17) after Panthawat ‘Not’ Nakwisut, CEO of the lottery ticket app Lottery Plus, arrived to present her with the B30 million in cash.

Ms Naranun, who goes by the nickname ‘Nara’, thanked Mr Panthawat. “When Khun Not called me personally, I knew I had won,” she told reporters.

Ms Naranun explained she had bought five tickets with the number 997626 through the Lottery Plus app.

Of the number she had chosen, Ms Naranun said that she thought of the number 26 when she was at a petrol station near Chumphon. She was on her way to see her

son in Nong Bua Lamphu at the time.

The first thing Ms Naranun will do with her winnings is to pay off her sister’s car. She will also buy a house.

However, Ms Naranun said she will keep on working. Her mother passed away when she was young, and her father lives in Nong Bua Lumphu, where he raised her son while she worked.

Ms Naranun said she called her father to tell him the good news.

“I waited for a few hours [before telling him]. I was afraid that he would be shocked and then slowly let the people in the village know.

“After all, the whole of Nong Bua Lamphu will be having a party in its country style. Anyone passing by will stop by to eat in our country style celebrations,” she said.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Phuket Town Mayor urges residents to conserve water

PHUKET TOWN MAYOR SAROJ Angkanapilas has assured that Phuket City Municipality has enough water supply to see residents through the rest of the dry season, but has urged residents to conserve water use where they can.

Mayor Saroj said that Phuket Municipality is making preparations incase the lack of rain continues, but noted that the municipality’s water reserves currently stood at 80% full.

“It is expected that this should be sufficient to produce tap water and serve the Phuket Municipality area,” he said.

“On average, the municipality’s tap production capacity is 31,000 cubic metres per day, but for the sake of caution Phuket City Municipality is undertaking a three-pronged strategy to help avoid any water shortages,” he added.

First and foremost was a public awareness campaign for people in the municipal area to use water economically, Mayor Saroj said.

“If you find a broken pipe, a leaking pipe, or a pipe seeping water, please report it immediately so we can hurry to repair it to reduce unnecessary waste of tap water,” he said.

The second approach was to manage water adequately to meet demand, Mayor Saroj added.

“If the amount of raw water is not enough, it will be necessary to reduce water



Photo: PR Phuket

production capacity. We must be ready to reduce pressure in the water distribution system. In some areas the water supply may be weak at certain times,” he warned.

The third strategy was to prepare manpower and water trucks to distribute water to people in areas suffering from water shortages, Mayor Saroj noted.

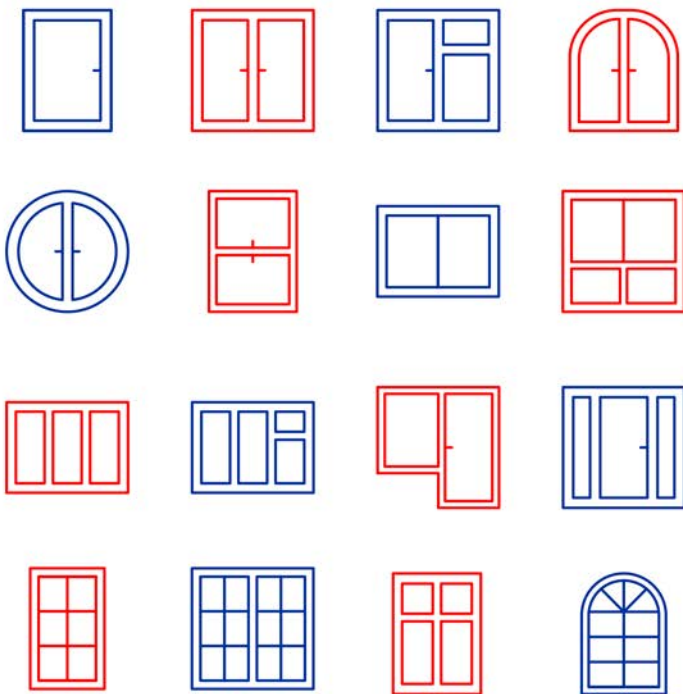
“Two water distribution points have been set up: one at the Office of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation 1 branch on Kra Rd, and the other at the Office of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation 2 branch in Soi Phaniang,” he said.

“Regardless, we ask for cooperation from the public to help use water economically. Use every drop of water wisely, and if you see a water leak or broken pipe please notify the Phuket City Municipality Waterworks Division by calling 076-211130. The line is open 24 hours a day,” Mayor Saroj said.

People suffering water outages in the Phuket City Municipality area were urged to call the municipality’s Emergency Operations Center by calling 199 or 1132, or 076-21111. *The Phuket News*



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Patong businesses defend refusing Thais

WEERAWIT KREUASOMBAT, President of the Patong Entertainment Business Association (PEBA), has defended businesses in Phuket's busiest tourism town against accusations online that some local businesses have refused to serve Thai people.

The practice was not widespread, and some operators, including nightlife venue operators and car and motorbike rental shops, had good reason not to serve some people, whether Thai or not, Mr Weerawit told the press on Mar 13.

However, the accusations online had greatly affected the tourism image of Patong, Mr Weerawit said.

"There are nearly 200 entertainment venues on Soi Bangla, and more than 300 in total throughout Patong," he said.

"I admit some venues do not allow Thai people to enter at certain times. This may be a time when the venue is holding a special event [closed to the public], or people are not carrying their ID card.

"We must be more stringent because it was previously discovered that fake ID cards



PEBA President Mr Weerawit. Photo: Patong Municipality

had been used," he added.

Of note, the heightened ID checks came as part of the ramped up security measures agreed to as part of the move to allow nightlife venues in specified areas to remain open to 4am.

Regarding car and motorbike shops refusing to rent vehicles to Thais, Mr Weerawit said, "There are a lot of these shops, and I admit that some shops do not rent vehicles to Thais.

"This is because they have already lost their vehicles to such customers, or the Thai customer presented fake ID," he continued.

Last year, more than 100 rental vehicles were reported missing, Mr Weerawit noted.

Mr Weerawit assured that local businesses in Patong were willing and ready to serve all tourists, both Thai and foreign. *The Phuket News*

Domestic airlines to cut Songkran fares

Bangkok Post

Six airlines will add 104 flights and give a discount of about 20% on early morning and late night domestic flights during the Songkran holidays as an economy option for travellers, according to the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT). CAAT deputy director-general Sarun Benjanirut said the move is in response to Transport Minister Suriya Juangruangreangkit's recent call for lower airfares during festivals to help ease the problem of expensive tickets for domestic flights.

The CAAT held a meeting on Feb 28 with six airlines – Thai Airways (THAI), Thai AirAsia, Bangkok Airways, Thai LionAir, NokAir and Thai Vietjet – to discuss the high price of airfares.

Mr Sarun said these airlines have agreed to operate 104 extra flights, which will provide 17,874 additional seats, on April 11, 12, 15 and 16 to destinations including Phuket, Chiang Mai, Samui, Ubon



Suvarnabhumi airport packed with travellers ahead of the busy Songkran holidays in April last year. Photo: Wichan Charoenkiatpakul / Bangkok Post

Ratchathani, Udon Thani and Khon Kaen.

"Many of these flights will operate outside normal flight hours, either in the early morning or late at night, and so the fares will be lowered to attract travellers," he said, adding the discount would be around 20% and be offered as an economy option for Songkran travel.

He said the airlines have already submitted their requests to operate the extra flights to

the CAAT, with booking for these extra seats expected to be up and running on Tuesday.

According to the CAAT deputy director-general, travellers are advised to plan their trips and make bookings several weeks in advance to ensure availability and affordable prices. They are also advised to book via the airlines' websites as the prices are regulated and monitored by the CAAT, with a ceiling on prices for each route.

The Transport Ministry predicts about 15.45 million people will travel by public transport from April 11-17 this year, with interprovincial buses likely to remain the favourite mode of transport for those who head off to the provinces.

Mr Suriya said he had instructed relevant agencies to make preparations for the upcoming holiday to ensure safe and convenient travel and step up measures to minimise road accidents.

Rapipan Wannapintu, Vice President of Transport Co, which operates interprovincial bus services, said about 4,200 trips for Apr 9-11 and 4,000 trips for April 15-17 had been arranged, and the Department of Land Transport has been asked to allow the bus operators to use 900 extra buses to accommodate travellers.

The Department of Labour Welfare and Protection is urging the private sector to grant Apr 12 as an extra day off for employees after the Cabinet recently declared Apr 12 a special government holiday.






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Deputy police chief facing illegal gambling suspension

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

National police chief Pol Gen Torsak Suvimol said on Monday (Mar 18) that his deputy Surachate Hakparn may be suspended due to a probe into the latter's alleged involvement in an online gambling network and the case would be concluded before the chief's retirement this September.

Pol Gen Torsak said that Pol Gen Surachate, aka Big Joke, had been summoned and was scheduled to appear at Tao Poon police station yesterday (Mar 21) in connection with the investigation into the BNK Master network of gambling websites.

Police from Thung Song Hong station placed the notice from Metropolitan Police Division 2 at the residence of Pol Gen Surachate on Soi Vibhavadi 60 Road in Bangkok's Laksi district on Sunday.

Initially police could not enter the housing estate because its security guards demanded they show the notice. Police refused to show



Deputy national police chief Pol Gen Surachate Hakparn at the Royal Thai Police Office on Mar 13. Photo: Bangkok Post

the document.

After police warned the security guards that they would be charged with obstruction to the officers' mission, they were admitted. The negotiation took about 20 minutes.

A police source said that national police chief Pol Gen Torsak Suvimol was informed of the notice and agreed with the legal action.

If a second notice is sent and Pol Gen Surachate fails to show up, he will face an

arrest warrant and be suspended from duty, Pol Gen Torsak said.

The national police chief acknowledged the argument from Pol Gen Surachate that the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) had taken over from the police the online Minnie gambling network case in which Pol Gen Surachate was a suspect.

However, Pol Gen Torsak said that police interrogators summoned Pol Gen Surachate

on another case, this one concerning the BNK Master online gambling network.

Pol Gen Surachate was suspected of money laundering in both cases, he said.

The police chief said the case of Pol Gen Surachate should be concluded before his retirement. Pol Gen Torsak will retire at the end of September this year. It was reported that Pol Gen Surachate is the leading candidate to succeed Pol Gen Torsak.

Pol Gen Torsak said there was no attempt to persecute Pol Gen Surachate and that every action was based on witnesses and evidence.

Meanwhile, Pol Gen Surachate said he had not examined the details of the summons posted at his residence because he was accompanying Cabinet ministers in the North.

He insisted on his innocence but refused to answer when reporters asked if he had phoned Pol Gen Torsak to discuss the cases against him.

On Sunday Pol Gen Surachate said he would find out if the summons was legally issued.

Thailand introduces AI to combat depression

BANGKOK

THAILAND IS PIONEERING the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to offer a lifeline to those grappling with depression and suicidal thoughts.

The innovative AI DMIND technology, now part of the National Health Security Office's (NHSO) Line service, provides immediate mental health assessments to users and is the result of a collaboration between Chulalongkorn University's Faculties of Medicine and Engineering, the NHSO, and the Department of Mental Health.

AI DMIND is designed to identify early signs of depression and suicidal ideation by analysing voice recordings from the department's mental health hotline database, facilitating faster intervention for those in need.

When users undergo assessment via the NHSO's 1323 hotline, a team of psychologists is immediately informed who then contact the individuals to further evaluate their situation and direct them to suitable care or emergency services, if necessary.

Chulalongkorn's Faculty of



Photo: NNT

Medicine Deputy Dean, Prof. Dr Nijasri Charnnarong, highlighted the growing disparity between the increasing number of mental health patients and the limited availability of specialised healthcare professionals.

She pointed out that mental health diagnoses nearly doubled from 2015 to 2021, with last year witnessing up to 1.5 million people over the age of 15 diagnosed with depression.

Only a third of these individuals have accessed the necessary treatment, Prof Nijasri said.

If you or anyone you know is in need of emotional support and counselling, please contact the Samaritans of Thailand at their 24-hour hotline 02-113-6789 (English & Thai) or the Thai Mental Health Hotline at 1323 (Thai). NNT

Nationwide Songkran splash sites to be strictly booze-free

BANGKOK

RULES WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED to make water-splashing venues nationwide completely free of alcohol during the Songkran festival next month.

A complete alcohol ban will be enforced at all Songkran venues for the entire festival period, the alcoholic beverage control committee said on Mar 12.

The official Songkran public holiday lasts from Apr 13-17 but the "World Songkran Festival" will be staged from Apr 1-21 to boost tourism.

The alcohol ban will be rigidly enforced with special attention paid to ensure that minors cannot access booze and sales elsewhere will not take place outside the permitted hours.

Public Health Minister Cholnan Srikaew, who chaired a meeting of the committee on Mar 11, said that alcohol control guidelines suggested by the Department of Disease Control and related bodies were all approved.

The guidelines represent part of a new phase of the national alcoholic beverage control scheme (2022-27), intended to bring down casualties from road accidents.

As most accidents were the result of drunk driving, Dr Cholnan provincial governors and local authorities to designate alcohol-free zones for Songkran revellers in order to maintain public safety and order.

Citing data from Apr 11-17 last year, he



People enjoy Songkran in Bangkok last year. Photo: Bangkok Post

said that road accidents caused a total of 4,340 casualties, including 252 deaths, with 502 of the injured and dead reported to be under 20 years old. Most accidents occurred on secondary rather than main roads.

Preventive measures will be intensified this year in local communities to prevent drunk-driving accidents. Road checkpoints will also be beefed up.

Motorists and motorcyclists involved in road accidents will be subjected to breathalyser or blood tests.

Motorists under 20 caught driving under the influence with a blood alcohol level in excess of 20 milligrammes will face an investigation to identify the seller of the booze they consumed. The seller could be prosecuted, officials said.

Those on probation for drunk driving-related offences, and who are arrested for repeating the same crime, will be sent immediately for rehabilitation at facilities run by the the Ministry of Public Health, Dr Cholnan said. Bangkok Post

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'You just got a golden shower!'



GLOBETROTTER

Todd Miller

I knew it was a dangerous position as I stood at the base of a towering tree. Head tilted back, I observed a chimpanzee and her toddler stationed on a high branch directly above. It was an unobstructed backside view. After a morning of dispirited trekking in Uganda's Kibale National Park, I was willing to take any view.

As I snapped photos in rapid fire and watched mother and child hang out, I started to think about the downside of my position. The chimps were straight above me. My thoughts focused not on the probability of nature's calling, but on the speed of my reflexes. Could I react in a sudden second?

At that moment, right on cue, this was no longer a theoretical question. "The baby chimp is laughing at you," chuckled my otherwise 'Very Stern Ranger-guide'. "You just got a golden shower!"

Chimpanzees are our closest living relatives. They share almost 99% of our DNA – and apparently, our scatological humour too.

Uganda holds many global superlatives: It is home to the world's most powerful waterfall, at Murchison Falls, where I discovered that Ernest Hemingway survived two air crashes on two consecutive days. Uganda is home to all Big Five game. But the primates steal the show. Uganda hosts one of the planet's biggest concentrations of primates.

Kibale National Park, in the southwestern part of the country, has only about 1% of the world's population of our genetic cousins, but the highest population in Uganda. The trekking itself is tame, mostly in flat woods. Groups no larger than eight people are led by two armed rangers. Each group is permitted to spend one hour with the chimpanzees. Soon after we started the trek we diverged from the well-defined trail as we pursued one of Kibale's four chimpanzee communities that have habituated to human presence. Although we saw many chimps at a distance, some who performed treetop acrobatics, the clock didn't start ticking until we were near a community. That's when I got the golden shower.

The chimp trek was a trial run for the much more demanding gorilla trek in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, near Uganda's borders with Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. There's zero hyperbole in its name. This is a dense forest with large hardwoods and extensive strands of bamboo on steep slopes, which makes Bwindi an ideal habitat for mountain gorillas.

About half of the world's population of mountain gorillas are located here. But trekking can be hardcore, as I would soon learn. Fewer than half of the gorilla families at Bwindi are habituated to humans, and I was assigned a trek to observe the Kyaguriro family, wherever they might be. Our mission was to find them.

INTO THE JUNGLE

Our group of eight trekkers was led by a ranger carrying a machete, ac-



companied by three armed escorts. The rangers are armed to protect against wild elephants, and the guide kept pointing to me indicators that suggested an elephant had recently been in the area. We were looking for a gorilla family that was on the move, and this family didn't conform to trails or schedules or care about the tourists who shelled out big bucks for a trekking permit. The gorillas bulldoze and meander their way through the forest. So did we.

Periodically our ranger would communicate with the 'scout team' – a group of trackers who set off earlier that morning to locate and shadow the gorilla family – by vocalising a primate call. Sometimes the trackers would respond with their own vocalisations. It seemed like a jungle version of the kid's game 'Marco Polo' that enabled us to navigate toward the trackers using audible signals. The tracker's responses were becoming more and more faint, as we trudged up and down the mountain.

It was hot. The foliage was thick and high. We spent hours trekking aimlessly in search of our gorilla family. I was increasingly convinced our unrelenting guide was a lunatic. And very lost.

But then, in a plot twist that I did not see coming, we suddenly intersected with the trackers. Just like that, the trackers stood in front of us with a look that I interpreted as, what took you so long? At that point the armed escorts stayed behind. Everyone else put on face masks and set off to meet the gorillas.

The protocols for gorilla interaction are strictly enforced. In addition to the face mask rule (we're so genetically close to the gorillas they can catch our diseases), there are rules governing our distance, behaviour and time in the primate's presence. For example, should a gorilla charge you, the rule is to squat and stand your ground. Whatever you do, we were told, don't run.

That's easier said than done, I learned from experience, after a female charged us.

Not long after surviving the female charge, a silverback beat his chest while storming quickly through the forest not far from where our group was positioned. He was forcefully demonstrating who's boss. No contest there.

Of all the images that I carry from the gorilla encounters, my favourite is the mental memory of a playful child piggybacking on his mother, cheekily checking us out, while mom foraged.

Is this gorilla trekking good for

the gorillas? There's not a consensus among conservationists, but it appears that tourism has had a positive impact on Bwindi. Before the creation of the National Park in 1991, poaching was the number one threat to the mountain gorilla population. Tourism provides an economic lifeline to the villages in the vicinity, which mitigates the incentive to poach. The mountain gorilla is still highly endangered, with a global population just over 1,000. But that number has doubled in the past 30 years. The trend is encouraging.

RWANDA LUXE

After my thrilling but treacherous trek in the impenetrable forest, I crossed the busy border into Rwanda and headed to Volcanoes National Park for two very different hikes. My national park experiences in Uganda were rugged and raw. My experience at Volcanoes was at the other end of the spectrum. In Volcanoes National Park's main reception area, one can enjoy a complimentary high-end coffee bar, Dave Brubeck tunes in the background and individual electrical outlets above the urinals in the men's room. It's jungle luxe.

Dian Fossey spent the last 30 years of her life studying the mountain gorillas in Rwanda. After my own gorilla encounter, I wanted to get some texture on her dedication to this animal. There's a swanky multimedia museum in the area funded by Ellen DeGeneres which displays Fossey's cabin and tells her story, but I wanted to go deeper.

Going deeper meant going higher. Once again, I put on my hiking boots, and with a guide and three armed escorts (the threat here is a solitary buffalo), we ploughed up the mountain, through the mud. Fossey chose to locate her research centre and camp in a high valley between two volcanoes. It's a beautiful location next to a creek which provides fresh water. But the whole area is a mud pit. You can sink knee-deep if you step in the wrong spot. I can't imagine wading through that mud in the rainy season. I trekked back down the mountain with so much more appreciation for what she sacrificed and endured. But I suspect from Fossey's perspective, it was neither a sacrifice nor endurance.

I ventured to Volcanoes National Park in search of the golden monkey, a sub-species only found in the Virunga volcanic mountains of Central Africa and known for its vibrant colouring. In my view, it's the most attractive and

photogenic monkey species, and I was hopeful that I would be able to get a close-up shot on my trek. Turns out I got too close. The monkeys, who live in social groups of up to 30 individuals, came to us. A community was tearing up a vegetable garden, just outside the park's forest border. Golden monkeys were everywhere.

One golden monkey sauntered toward me and plopped between my legs as I stood stiffly, unsure what the protocols said about such a close encounter – so much for the rule to stay at least eight metres away. The monkey had found his happy place between my legs. Walk backward slowly, a ranger advised me.

The mischievous monkey didn't follow.

Essential information: These treks were part of a 12-day private, guided overland journey orchestrated by Ovacado Adventures from Kampala, Uganda, to Kigali, Rwanda, via six national parks. In addition to the primate and Fossey treks, in Uganda I also did multiple game drives at Murchison and Mburu National Parks, and on-foot rhino tracking at Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary. In total I spotted all Big Five game in Uganda. In Rwanda I observed the singing fishermen on Lake Kivu and a canopy walk at Nyungwe National Park, Africa's largest rainforest. In Kigali I stayed at the Hotel des Mille Collines, popularly known as the Hotel Rwanda, which today does not bear any trace of the hotel's difficult history.

Qatar Airways links Phuket with Kigali with a one-stop connection via Doha, but the Doha-Kigali route is a codeshare operated by Air Rwanda. Many nationalities visiting any combination of Uganda, Rwanda and/or Kenya can enter on a single East Africa visa. My original plan was to also visit Burundi, but a week prior to departure the Burundi government closed its border with Rwanda. Flexibility and adaptability are essential qualities for any traveller in Africa.

Adventurer and author Todd Miller has cycled across two continents and visited all seven. He authored the Amazon bestseller 'ENRICH: Create Wealth in Time, Money, and Meaning', lauded by Forbes, USA Today, Entrepreneur, and other global media. Todd has contributed to Fast Company, Newsweek and dozens of podcasts on work-life topics, and resides at Natai Beach. Visit: Enrich101.com

The tale of Lady Chan

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The annual Phuket Heroines Festival concluded last Friday night (Mar 15), with Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat playing the traditional role of the provincial Governor in the historical drama re-enacting the victory led by Phuket's famed Heroines over Burmese invaders in 1785.

The festival began on Mar 13, marking the 239th anniversary of 'Thalang Victory Day'. Minister of Culture Serm-sak Phongpanich was present for the celebrations at Thalang Memorial Field (also called 'Thalang Victory Field') in Baan Rieng, Tambon Thepkasattri.

Also present for the occasion were Phuket Vice Governor Norasak Suk-somboon and other high-ranking Phuket officials, along with Rewat Areerob, President of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO), which organises the annual event each year.

Thousands of people turned out for the extravaganza, especially the light and sound show and the historical drama recounting the tale of Phuket's Heroines, Thao Thep Kasattri and Thao Sri Soonthorn, forever remembered in Phuket and honoured by the Heroines Monument on Thepkasattri Rd.

The celebrations are held each year to honour the descendants of the two Heroines and "those who performed heroic deeds with courage, sacrificed life and blood, to protect the land of Phuket", Governor Sophon noted.

In addition to the historical drama and light and sound show, which includes a fireworks display, many people also turn out at the event for the hundreds of local vendors set up to serve a wide range of local dishes and delicacies, and a host of other activities held as part of the celebrations showcasing local ways of life during the period.

INVASION

The Nine Armies' War started in 1785 when the Burmese, taking advantage of internal strife and the overthrowing of King Taksin in Siam, invaded the country with forces numbering approximately 150,000 soldiers, divided into nine army groups.

One of those armies marched straight for Thalang, then the largest town in Phuket, and laid siege to it. During that time, the Governor of Thalang and the only person on the island with the authority to organise the town's defenses, passed away in the most untimely manner.

With the town in danger of being sacked, the governor's wife, now a recent widow, Lady Chan, along with her sister, Khun Mook, rallied the town's fighting men and organised the defense of Thalang.

After five weeks of siege, Burmese supplies were dwindling fast. Lady Chan's deception in making the Burmese think that her fort had a lot more men than it actually did, made the Burmese reluctant to launch a full scale attack. They retreated soon after, leaving Thalang's townspeople victorious against all odds.



Photo: PR Phuket

Lady Chan and her sister, Khun Mook became local heroines and the pair are still deeply revered in Phuket today.

In the aftermath of the invasion, the Burmese withdrew from the different regions of Siam. The defense of Thalang was one of the many heroic stories that emerged from this period in Thailand's history. King Rama I bestowed noble titles upon many of the war heroes to show his appreciation for their bravery in defending the country.

After the war, towards the end of 1785, King Rama I appointed Phraya Surintha Raja as his viceroy to the Siamese towns on the west coast. He also appointed Thongpun Na Thalang as the new Governor of Thalang, giving him the title of Phraya Narong Ruengrit.

Lady Chan was bestowed the title of Thao Thepkasattri, the highest noble rank a non-royal woman can achieve. Her sister, Khun Mook, was bestowed a similar title and became known as Thao Srisoonthorn.

The promotion of Thongpun as Governor of Thalang did not sit well with Lady Chan and her close friend, Phraya Thukkrak. Thongpun and Phraya Thukkrak had always been at odds with each other over the governorship of the town. Lady Chan had always supported Phraya Thukkrak, but since the appointment was the will of the King, neither Lady Chan nor Phraya Thukkrak could oppose the decision.

According to the Thalang Letters, after the appointment of Thongpun as Governor, Lady Chan and Phraya Thukkrak led a group of townspeople who were loyal to them out of Thalang Town and migrated south to Baan Sappam, away from Thongpun's authority. There the migrants proceeded to set up a tin mine around the new settlement under Phraya Thukkrak and Lady Chan's leadership.

FRIENDS

In the year 1787, Lady Chan heard that Francis Light, an English captain who was an old friend of hers had successfully acquired Penang as a trading post for the British East India Company.

Capt Francis Light had lived and traded in Phuket for several years. His house was located in Baan Tha Rua, south of where the Heroines Monument stands today. Light left Phuket before the Burmese invasion. He was one of the first to spot the approaching Burmese army and warned Lady Chan of the imminent threat to the island.

After the war was over, Light offered to start up trade with Phuket again. However, Lady Chan asked the captain

not to trade or provide any European goods to Thalang in exchange for tin. The war had left Thalang's coffers empty and trade was needed badly, but Lady Chan had her plans to oust Thongpun from Thalang's governorship.

Instead she asked Capt Light to trade directly with her new settlement at Baan Sappam. The post-war crisis that the Governor of Thalang was facing was soon exacerbated when the British, under Capt Light refused to trade with them, instead directing all European cargo to Baan Sappam.

Thongpun found it increasingly more difficult to send the required tin tributes to the royal treasuries in Bangkok as was mandated by the King. In contrast, Lady Chan and Phraya Thukkrak had plenty of tin reserves to trade for

foreign goods and they occasionally sent rich tributes to the King's treasuries.

Thongpun's only solution to raise money was to dig through some old unsettled accounts. He demanded Lady Chan pay for the debt her husband, the previous governor, had owed to the crown. Despite her heroic feats and sacrifice in defending Thalang, the King's treasuries had always reminded Lady Chan of her obligations to pay off her husband's debt.

This time Lady Chan obliged by asking Capt Light to prepare for her a cargo of rare and expensive European goods that she personally took with her to Bangkok to present to King Rama I.

In 1791 Lady Chan also presented her daughter, Thong, as consort to King Rama I. Thong was accepted into the palace, as one of King Rama I's wives. She was bestowed the title of Chao Chom Manda Thong when she bore a daughter (Princess Ubol) for the King.

Lady Chan was not only a local heroine who helped defend Phuket through one of its darkest times, through her feud with the Governor of Thalang, she also helped establish a rival settlement that would one day grow to become Phuket Town as we know it today.

By Anand Singh

This article was reprinted with kind permission from Anand Singh. Anand is an avid Phuket historian and can be contacted at anands@dynastyfood.co.th

Where to eat

in PHUKET

March/April 2024 issue

an IMAGE asia publication March-April 2024 /phuket.wheretoeat

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Photo from The Kata Rocks Clubhouse (p38)

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POP QUIZ

1. Where was Hollywood actor Cillian Murphy born?

2. In 1960, which country experienced the most powerful earthquake ever recorded?

3. A tablespoon measure in the UK contains a volume of exactly how many millilitres?

4. What was Mary Read famous for during the early 18th century?

5. The bombardment of which sea fort started the American Civil War?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Medium

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

1. Abandon

5. Hockey ____

9. Dyed fabric

14. Cry softly

15. Mixed bag

16. Bridal path

17. Contrary to what is expected

20. Like some yogurt

21. Kind of beetle

22. Sing

23. Social or Hindu ending

24. ____ be nice if ...

27. Salinger title

36. Reproductive cells

37. All's opposite

38. Freeze

39. Blair or McCartney

42. Chinese dynasty

43. Column base

44. Senegal's capital

45. Work units

47. Summer wear

48. Dangerous one

52. Down

53. Boot part

54. Kind of truck

57. Fleur-de-____

60. Walkie follower

64. Indulge in youthful adventure

68. Say "y'all," say

Down

1. Reach across

2. Justice Black

3. Liveliness

4. Godlike

5. Some federal employees

6. In the preceding month

7. Give as an example

8. Former German chancellor

9. Snare

10. It's mostly nitrogen

11. Winter Palace resident

12. Pelvic parts

13. Clark of the Daily Planet

18. Car until 1957

19. Give off

25. Michael Moore's "Downsize ____!"

26. Houston ____

27. Winter ailments

28. Birdy

29. Japanese verse

form

30. Second crop

31. Like helium

32. Whinny

33. Intestine parts

34. Holidays

35. Foils

40. East Indian trees

41. Geometric figure

46. Compromises

49. Loafing

50. Egg on

51. Put in more bullets

54. No longer mint

55. Game you can't play left-handed

56. Disappointment, in London

58. Cruise stopover

59. Influence

61. Send to the canvas

62. Gossip tidbit

63. In ____ (existing)

65. "____ to Joy"

66. Aussie outlaw Kelly

67. Elvis Presley's "____ Lost You"

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

(1) Fort Sumter (near Charleston, South Carolina)

(2) Chile (9.4-9.6M); (3) 15ml; (4) Piracy;

(5) Cork, Ireland; (6) Prince William Sound in Alaska, the Exxon Valdez spills 240,000 barrels (38,000 cubic metres) of crude oil after running aground.

(7) Robert the Bruce becomes King of Scots (Scotland).

(8) Saladin, a Sunni Muslim of Kurdish ethnicity, becomes

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13	
14					15					16					
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64			65	66				67							
68							69					70			
71							72						73		

Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

-0.2

magnitude earthquakes release the energy equivalent to 30 matches being lit.

10

hours on average is how long people slept every night before the invention of the light bulb.

15

US dollars is how much Robert Frost was paid for his first published poem in 1894 – the equivalent of \$458 today.

39

percent of people in their 20s achieve their New Year resolutions each year, while 14% of people over 50 achieve theirs, according to a study.

110,000

bees were removed from Rockwood Hospital in Cardiff in 2016 after honey started dripping from the ceiling.

4 billion

years in the future, the Milky Way will merge with the Andromeda galaxy.

Source: Ubertacts

ISLAND VIEW

Enjoying the shade at Kamala. Photo by Sutharat Khaodee

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

This week in history

Mar 22, 1906

The first England vs France rugby union match ('Le Crunch') is played at at Parc des Princes in Paris. England wins 8–35.

Mar 23, 1801

Tsar Paul I of Russia is struck with a sword, then strangled, and finally trampled to death inside his bedroom at St Michael's Castle, Saint Petersburg.

Mar 24, 1989

In Prince William Sound in Alaska, the Exxon Valdez spills 240,000 barrels (38,000 cubic metres) of crude oil after running aground.

Mar 25, 1306

Robert the Bruce becomes King of Scots (Scotland).

Mar 26, 1169

Saladin, a Sunni Muslim of Kurdish ethnicity, becomes

Mar 27, 1915

'Typhoid Mary' Mallon, the

first healthy carrier of the disease ever identified in the United States, is put in quarantine, where she would remain for the rest of her life.

Mar 28, 1979

A coolant leak at the Three Mile Island's Unit 2 nuclear reactor outside Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in the US, leads to the core overheating and a partial meltdown.

Source: Wikipedia

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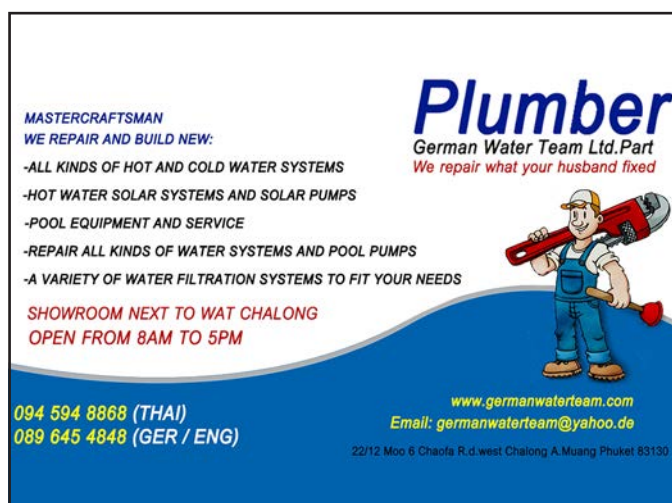
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FRI 22 MAR



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Wednesday BBQ Night

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

**Help the Children Charity Gala**

Help the Children Charity Gala on 5 April 2024, 7:00 pm, at the Junkyard Theatre. This gala is supporting the Rotary Club of Patong Beach charity efforts. Delicious Food, Extraordinary Music, Great Fun. The music will feature the vocals of Pjæ and Rannze. Tickets are 5,550 THB each or a table of 6 for 33,000 THB. The dress code is colourful. Tickets are available by contacting us at rotaryhelpthechildren@gmail.com rotaryhelpthechildren@gmail.com

**Grow Boating Evening**

We look forward to seeing you at the Grow Boating Evening at the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar at the Phuket Boat Lagoon from 5pm on Friday the 5th of April 2024. We are delighted to announce that our drinks sponsor for the evening will be Henri Captain. See https://henri-captain.com/. There will be a delicious buffet sponsored by the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar for all attendees and as always, all your favourite beverages will be available from the bar. Come and join in the fun, everyone is welcome and there is no entry fee and if you know anyone you think would be interested in coming, please invite them along. To join our mailing list please click http://eepurl.com/c9UJib Find us on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket/ Grow Boating is kindly supported by our media partner The Phuket News and Phuket Live Radio - Live 89.5 See www.thephuketnews.com

SAT 23 MAR

**Phuket's Best Burger 8 – BURGERFEST**

Asia's BIGGEST burger event. Burgers, Drinks, and Live music. Who needs anything else? Come and try over 35 different burgers from all over Phuket. Meat, Vegetarian and Vegan options. Help choose who has Phuket's Best Burger by voting for your favourite. It's not only burgers that are on show though, with craft drinks, ice cream, live music, children's entertainment and so much more making Phuket's Best Burger perfect for the whole family. Saturday, March 23 from 4pm at the stunning Blue Tree Lagoon, it will be an event NOT to be missed.

MON 25 MAR



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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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Friday April 5th, 2024 1-4 pm
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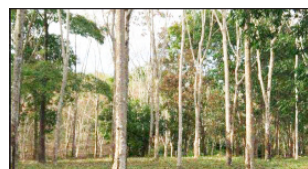
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Experience "Your Heart, Our Care", our inaugural event in the Empowering Expat Series. Join us for High Tea Networking as we delve into heart-healthy living and Bangkok Hospital Phuket's support for expats. Let's empower together! Date: Friday, April 5, 2024. Time: 1-4 pm Location: Laguna Lifestyle Hub Phuket, Canal Village Expatriate Marketing and CRM, Thanasikan.Ki@bsi.bdms.co.th, 076-361888 ext 3555

SAT 6 APR

**ABBA Pool Party**

Join us in celebrating the 50th anniversary of ABBA's Eurovision victory at the ultimate party. DJ KEN will spin infectious beats from that disco era. Experience a spectacular 'Dancing Queen' drag show that will leave you in awe. Dress to impress in your ABBA-inspired costumes and compete for the coveted "Best Costume Prize." Get ready for a night of non-stop fun and nostalgia! Date: Saturday, April 6, 2024 Time: 7.30 pm till late Location: Firefly Pool & Restaurant **EARLY BIRD TICKETS AVAILABLE NOW -10% OFF** Prive membership gets 15% discount - Mediterranean buffet THB 2,900++. Limited seating. Pre-booking highly recommended. Make a reservation: pavilionshotels.com/phuket/abba-pool-party-at-firefly/

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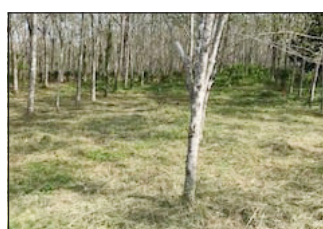
2014 Honda Mobilio 7-seater, 44,000 miles (71,000km) one-owner (foreigner) garage, automatic, non-smokers dealer-serviced, great condition. 275,000 THB. Gary, Bang Muang, Phang Nga, gsoden75@gmail.com

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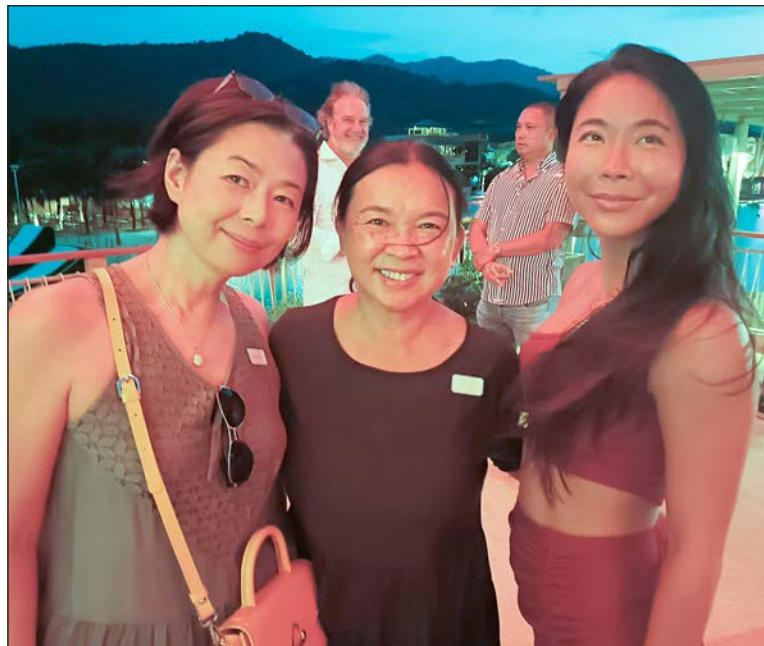
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SKÅL INTERNATIONAL PHUKET DINNER - MARCH

An amazing evening of camaraderie and culinary delights at Blue Tree Phuket on Mar 14. Starting with sunset drinks at the Sunset Cafe from 6pm, guests were then escorted to the enchanting forest setting where an exquisite menu tantalised taste buds. Skål International is an Association of Travel and Tourism Professionals that encourages and creates a network of contacts around the world. To find out more visit facebook.com/SkalPhuket





PM Srettha meets with Formula E executives in Chiang Mai on Mar 17. Photo: Government House

Chiang Mai in frame for Formula E debut

FORMULA E

THE GOVERNMENT plans to host world-renowned electric-car racing championship series Formula E no later than Feb 15 next year, Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin said last Sunday (Mar 17). Speaking after meeting representatives from Formula E in Chiang Mai, Mr Srettha said the sports event is expected to take place early next year to help promote tourism in the province.

Two potential venues for a race in the series are Rajapruek Royal Park and the 700th Anniversary Chiang Mai Stadium, he said.

Officially known as the ABB FIA Formula E World Championship, Formula E was launched in Beijing in

2014 and later earned FIA world championship status.

Sunday's meeting followed a previous one between Mr Srettha and Formula E executives during the premier's recent trip to Germany and France.

Formula E executives had expressed interest in Thailand as a potential site for the series, with a plan to explore an area in Chiang Mai as the venue.

The PM said that hosting Formula E would coincide with the government's policy to promote the country as a manufacturing hub for electric vehicles.

He added that Formula E will rejuvenate tourism in Chiang Mai and draw a new group of visitors to a province famous for its rich arts and culture. *Bangkok Post*

GOLF

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

South Korea's Lee Yewon emerged victorious on the final day of play last Sunday (Mar 17) to win the inaugural US\$650,000 (approx B22.75 million) Blue Canyon Ladies Championship in Phuket.

The 21-year-old shot a 4 under par 68 for a total of 9 under par 207 after three days of competition at the Blue Canyon Country Club to secure the trophy and US\$117,000 in prize money.

Yewon, ranked 35th in the world and 1st in the Korean Ladies Professional Golf Association (KLPGA), finished ahead of Choi Min-kyung by one stroke, while Lee Jeyeong secured third place.

Day two leader Bang Shin-sil finished in joint fourth-place alongside several other players, including Park Minji, Kim Woojeong, Park Ju young and Lee jung min.

The victory marked Yewon's fourth trophy on the



Lee Yewon with the winner's trophy. Photo: Supplied

KLPGA Tour, adding to her three wins last season which saw her gain the number one spot in the KLPGA Order of Merit for 2023.

"I'm happy to clinch this title, although I feel there's room for improvement," said Yewon after yesterday's win. "The fairways are quite narrow, so my strategy was to consistently find them and keep the ball in play."

Despite finding the water on the 14th hole, Yewon managed to compose herself in the heat and secure two crucial birdies on the 15th and 18th holes to get back on

track and in contention for the trophy.

"I felt more at ease from that point onwards, although I didn't anticipate winning outright. It's truly an honour to triumph here in Thailand. I've always wanted to visit Phuket, but I never imagined it would be this hot," said Yewon, who explained her favourite Thai food dish is Pad Thai.

Panrai Meesomath was the best performing Thai player, finishing tied in 17th place with a total of 3 under par 213.

"I'm reasonably pleased with my performance this week, finishing three under

par, although I know I could have done better if I hadn't faltered in the final few holes," said the 19-year-old Chonburi native.

"However, playing alongside South Korean players has been a valuable learning experience. They exhibit remarkable mental resilience and can quickly recover from mistakes," added Phannarai, who will focus primarily on tournaments in Taiwan and China this year.

The awards ceremony was overseen by Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat who distributed trophies and prize money to the players.

Governor Sophon was joined by several dignitaries, including Praphan Asawaaree, Chairman of the Executive Committee of Blue Canyon Country Club, and Kim Sun-mi, Vice President of the KLPGA Tour.

The competition will return next year as a three-year agreement between Blue Canyon Country Club and the KLPGA to host the tournament from 2024 to 2026 has been agreed.

Massa takes legal action against F1 over lost 2008 world title

FORMULA ONE

FORMER FERRARI driver Felipe Massa has filed a lawsuit against Formula One in London's High Court seeking damages for missing out on the 2008 world championship title.

Brazilian Massa, 42, lost out to Lewis Hamilton by just a single point in a season where the sport was rocked by the 'crashgate' scandal at the Singapore Grand Prix.

Renault staged a win for Fernando Alonso by ordering Nelson Piquet Jr to crash in their other car.

Ferrari's Massa, leading at the time of Piquet's smash, finished 13th, before losing the championship by the finest of margins.

Piquet revealed the following season that he was under instruction by his bosses to deliberately crash.

Massa has also brought proceedings against governing body the FIA, and the sport's former supremo Bernie Ecclestone.



Massa at the Brazilian Grand Prix in 2022. Photo: AFP

He is reportedly seeking £62 million (B2.8 billion) in damages to reflect the difference in salary, as well as sponsorship and commercial opportunities he would have received as a world champion.

Ecclestone confessed in an interview last year that according to the rules, the results from Singapore race should not have stood for the championship standings

and as a result, Massa would have been declared champion.

Massa did not win another F1 race after 2008 and suffered a near-fatal head injury at the 2009 Hungarian Grand Prix.

However, he returned to the sport and continued racing with Ferrari and then Williams until 2017.

AFP

Ireland hold onto Six Nations

RUGBY

IRELAND RETAINED THEIR Six Nations title with a hard-fought 17-13 win over Scotland last Saturday (Mar 16).

Irish hopes of back-to-back Grand Slams had been dashed by the previous week's dramatic 23-22 loss to England at Twickenham.

But Ireland knew that if they avoided defeat, or secured two bonus points, against a Scotland side fresh from a 31-29 defeat by Italy in Rome, they would keep hold of the title.

The Scots produced a mammoth defensive effort in Dublin that threatened to frustrate Ireland, before tries by Dan Sheehan and Andrew Porter eventually proved enough for the hosts.

"It was a war of attrition," said Ireland coach Andy Farrell.

"I am delighted for the lads as back-to-back titles is very difficult to achieve."

France finished in second place after edging England 33-31 in a thrilling final match.

England outscored France four tries to three in a see-saw encounter in Lyon before Thomas Ramos landed a 79th



Ireland's Robbie Henshaw (centre) in action against Scotland last Saturday (Mar 16). Photo: AFP

minute penalty to complete a match haul of 18 points and secure the win for the hosts.

England ended the tournament with three wins and two defeats after three successive Six Nations featuring just two victories apiece.

Wales finished bottom of the Six Nations for the first time since 2003 – when they also lost all five matches – after a 24-21 defeat by Italy in Cardiff.

The tournament white-wash prompted Wales coach Warren Gatland to offer his resignation, even though the 60-year-old New Zealander is contracted until the 2027 World Cup in Australia.

Asked if he wanted to see

out his current deal, Gatland, whose first spell as Wales boss yielded four Six Nations titles, including three Grand Slams, and two World Cup semi-finals, added: "Yes, absolutely. But I can promise you we'll go away and review this really carefully."

Italy, however deserved their win after scoring fine tries through Monty Ioane and Lorenzo Pani to lead 18-0 until the 65th minute, before a late Wales rally flattered the hosts.

Victory meant Italy had their best Six Nations season return of two wins and a draw as they avoided a ninth straight tournament 'wooden spoon'. *AFP*

FA Cup dream on for Sky Blues

FOOTBALL

The Phuket News

Manchester City will face Chelsea and Manchester United face off against Championship side Coventry City in this year's FA Cup semi-finals, after a series of frenetic quarter-final matches last weekend.

Coventry made their first semi-final since 1987 after a thrilling 3-2 win against Wolverhampton Wanderers last Saturday (Mar 16).

The Sky Blues were not given much of a chance against a much fancied Tottenham Hotspur side in the '87 final but went on to defy the odds and lift the trophy and will start this season's semi-final against United as underdogs.

Despite taking the lead in the 59th minute, the Championship side looked to have blown their chance to reach Wembley when Wolves themselves scored twice in the final seven minutes of the 90.

However, Ellis Simms' second goal of the match levelled in the 97th minute before he teed up Haji Wright to fire into the corner three minutes later.

"Immensely proud. It's really hard to put into words really," said an elated Coventry boss Mark Robins.

The Sky Blues will face Erik Ten Hag's United who managed to defeat Liverpool and stop the Reds' hopes of a quadruple in the process, with Amad Diallo's late winner edging a classic game 4-3 after extra-time.

Two goals in three minutes from



Coventry's Milan van Ewijk (left) and Josh Eccles celebrate their historic FA Cup semi-final win against Wolves last Saturday (Mar 16). Photo: AFP

Alexis Mac Allister and Mohamed Salah towards the end of the first half had swung the game in Liverpool's favour after Scott McTominay opened the scoring in the 10th minute.

Antony's first goal at Old Trafford for more than a year kept United alive and sent the game into extra-time before Harvey Elliott once again put Liverpool in front.

Marcus Rashford, who had missed a glorious chance to win the tie deep into injury time, made amends by drilling home to make it 3-3 before Diallo's 120th minute winner.

United trail Liverpool by 17 points in the Premier League and, having made an early exit from both the Champions League and League Cup, the pressure is on Ten Hag if he is to remain in charge for a third season.

Manchester City cruised past a tired looking Newcastle 2-0 with Bernardo Silva scoring two deflected goals.

Pep Guardiola's side remain in contention to repeat last season's historic Treble of Champions League, Premier League and FA Cup and are the first side in FA Cup history to reach six successive FA Cup semi-finals.

Chelsea suffered a scare against Leicester to finally triumph 4-2 after extra time but made very hard work of it.

The hosts led comfortably at 2-0 until Axel Disasi scored a comedy own goal from 35 yards out to breathe life into the tie in the 51st minute before Stephy Mavididi curled in an exquisite equaliser.

Substitutes Carney Chukwuemeka and Noni Madueke snatched victory for the Blues after Foxes' defender Callum Doyle was sent off.



Muniz scores. Photo: AFP

Spurs wobble at the Cottage

FOOTBALL

IN A TRUNCATED ROUND of fixtures due to the FA Cup, Tottenham Hotspur saw their hopes of Champions League football next season dented as they lost 3-0 at Fulham at Craven Cottage last Saturday (Mar 16).

Chasing a fourth place finish in the Premier League, Spurs were outclassed and fell to a Sasa Lukic goal and a Rodrigo Muniz brace.

It means Ange Postecoglou's side remain in fifth place on 53 points, 3 points off Aston Villa, who have played a game more.

Villa drew 1-1 at West Ham on Sunday, Michail Antonio scoring his first goal since August in the 29th minute to put the Hammers ahead before Nicolo Zaniolo rescued a point for the Villains in the 19th minute.

Elsewhere Burnley boosted

their slim survival hopes with a nervy 2-1 win over 10-man Brentford at Turf Moor on Saturday.

The Bees had Sergio Reguilón sent off in just the 8th minute, with Jacob Bruun Larsen successfully dispatching the subsequent penalty, before David Datro Fofana doubled the score. Kristoffer Ajer notched a late consolation goal for Brentford.

In Saturday's other game Luton scored an 89th minute equaliser to draw 1-1 with Nottingham Forest.

However, Forest were deducted 4 points on Monday by an independent commission who found the club guilty of breaching Premier League profit and sustainability rules.

The points reduction means Forest slip into the relegation zone on 21 points with Luton one place above them on 22 points with nine games left to play for each team.

The Phuket News

Samui set for major beach volleyball comp

VOLLEYBALL

THE TOURISM AUTHORITY of Thailand (TAT) and Amazing Thailand have confirmed that the 6th annual TAT Samui Open Beach Volleyball Tournament will be held in Koh Samui between Mar 29-31.

The hugely popular international tournament, to be held at SEEN Beach Club on Chaweng Beach, promises to attract a large crowd of participants and spectators alike while providing a major boost for sports tourism in southern Thailand.

The now fully registered tournament will see 88 teams with 130 athletes and 28 countries, with 80% of the athletes from overseas and 20% Thai and foreign nationals.

Tournament winners stand to win prize money of B100,000, in addition to trophies, medals, sponsor vouchers, volleyball gear and apparel.

The tournament will consist of three days play with teams competing in four divisions: men's 2x2;



Photo: Biggs Island Productions

women's 2x2; mixed team 2x2; and quads 4x4.

Entry for spectators is free across all three days of competition. In addition to the game play itself, entertainment comes in the form of live musical entertainment from DJs, concession stands, after-parties and volleyball merchandise.

Each day's play runs from 9am until 6pm, with the semi-finals and finals on Mar 31 starting from 1pm. The tournament is scheduled to finish on the Sunday (Mar 31) at 6pm whereby a closing celebration party will be held at SEEN Beach Club.

The tournament is partnering with 'HUB Beach Volleyball' Camp from Australia to offer a 3-day training camp prior to the event which former Olympic

volleyball silver medalist David McKenzie will oversee as the head coach.

The international event, the biggest event of its type to date, is presented by TAT, organised by Biggs Island Productions (BIP), hosted by SEEN Beach Club/Avani Hotel Chaweng and supported by Koh Samui Municipality (Tessaban).

"We are proud to promote beach volleyball in South East Asia and on Koh Samui and to hold this annual event on our beautiful island," commented TAT Director Kate Kanokkittika on announcing the event.

For questions and general information contact: info@BiggsIslandProductions.com, Tel/WhatsApp: +66 898 737 172.

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PHUKETHON IS ON!



Popular running event expects big turnout

Organisers announce this year's Phukethon event at the Mar 13 press conference. Photo: Phukethon Fest

RUNNING

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The hugely popular Phukethon marathon and running event has been confirmed to return to Phuket shores for a fifth edition, with over 20,000 participants from 25 different countries expected to participate.

A press conference was held at Provincial Hall on Mar 13 to officially announce the event, chaired by Phuket Vice Governor Norasak Suk-somboon, who was joined by Damrong Chaisena, Director of the Sports Authority of Thailand's Phuket office,

Thammawat Wongcharoenyot, head of the Phuket Sports Association, Boonperm Inthanapasat, President of the Thai International Fairs and Festivals Promotion Trade Association (TIEFA), and related government officials.

The event, to be held on the weekend of May 18-19 at Saphan Hin Park in Wichit, offers race categories to cater for participants of all ages and fitness levels, including a half marathon of 21.1 kilometres, a 10km half marathon and a 5k fun run, which combines walking and running and is geared towards more family fun participation.

This year also sees a new feature with the 10km and

5km park relay races which involves teams of four and two people competing.

In addition to the actual running events themselves there will be a variety of food and beverage stalls offering delicious local produce as well as stalls offering recognised sporting brand goods, local handicrafts and gifts and numerous live entertainment acts.

'PHUKET GO GREEN' Environmental responsibility is a key theme at this year's event, being staged under the slogan 'Phuket Go Green', where participants are being asked to be fully mindful of their environmental impact on Phuket before, during and

after the race.

Runners are being asked to bring their own drinking receptacles while there will be a specific focus on reducing the use of plastic such as cups and bags with people urged to bring their own cloth or tote bags to the event.

Participants and spectators are also being asked to consider their choice of transport to the event by using public transport, bicycles or car-sharing as an option instead of motorbikes, which cause significant noise and air pollution.

Phukethon also incorporates charitable and social responsibility, with proceeds from the event being donated towards local community

projects, healthcare casuses or environmental initiatives.

Organisers explained at the press conference that over 20,000 people from over 25 countries are expected to join the occasion, which is anticipated to generate over B200 million for the local economy.

The first 900 registrants stand to receive a Phukethon limited edition T-shirt worth B450. Similarly, those who can show proof of participation in a minimum of two Phukethon events since the inaugural 2017 edition will receive a special commemorative turtle-shaped coin worth B900 and a discount for any friends they refer and who sign up for this year's event.

The event is being organised in partnership with several public and private sector entities, including Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO), the SAT Phuket office, RunRio Thailand, Spartan Thailand, L'Etape Thailand by Tour de France, TIEFA and the Thai Mass Sports Organisers Trade Association (TMPSA).

All race distances are certified by the Athletic Association of Thailand (AAT), the Asian Athletics Association (AAA), and the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF).

For more information on the event and how register visit the Phukethon Fest Facebook.

Three days of top class cycling at the Tour of Phuket

CYCLING

OVER 200 ELITE AND AMATEUR cycling enthusiasts from more than 32 different countries converged onto Phuket on the weekend of Mar 8-10 to compete in the 8th annual edition of the hugely popular Tour of Phuket long-distance bicycle race.

Showcasing parts of Phuket island and the beautiful Phang Nga Bay, athletes were challenged over three stages, including a 6.4-kilometre individual time trial on day one followed by 150km

and 128km road races on day two and day three respectively.

Taking out the general classification elite male category was Muhammad Syelhan Nurrahmat from Malaysia. In the women's, defending champion and Phuket-based Australian Dimity-Lee Duke from Phuket's Z-Coaching won the sprint, King of the Mountain (KOM) and overall general classification category.

"Three days of full mental focus and taking out tactics from my back pocket when required. Some may call it the game of chess on wheels! I call it defending my title in back



Photo: Tour of Phuket

back years. Thanks to all who provided on course support and made this event possible!" a delighted Dimity-Lee posted on Facebook following her impressive feat.

Phuket-based athletes Louisa Middldich from Z-Coaching and

Xavier Lecourt from Baracuda teams were also able to celebrate top five positions in their respective categories.

Singapore-based organiser Pablo Toribio from Cycosports expressed his delight at a extremely successful event and stated he is already looking forward to attracting even more local cycling enthusiasts to future events.

With the ongoing assistance from local police in Phuket, the support of the Tourism Authority of Thailand and official certification from the Bicycle Sports Association of Thailand, the next Tour of Phuket

is certain be a safe and fun event for all involved, he said.

As the Cycosports website explains, the three-day race "not only tests your endurance but also offers a captivating journey through the breathtaking landscapes of Phuket and Phang Nga, providing an unforgettable cycling experience."

Dates for the 2025 Tour of Phuket will be revealed in due course. More information can be accessed at the Tour of Phuket Facebook page and the Cycosports website, where an extensive gallery of photographs from this year's event can also be found. *The Phuket News*