

**LONG HOLIDAY BRINGS B2.34BN TOURISM BOOST > PAGE 6**

# SHUTTERED

## MORE THAN 200 SMALL HOTELS FORECLOSED OVER UNPAID LOANS

Small hotel owners are appealing for help in being allowed to re-open. Photo: PR Phuket

The Phuket News  
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Owners and operators of small hotels have appealed to Deputy Prime Minister Wissanu Krea-ngam for help now that more than 200 small hotels that have not been allowed to legally open have been seized in foreclosure motions for failure to pay loans.

Deputy Prime Minister Wissanu was in Phuket last week in his capacity as President of the Office of the Public Sector Development Commission

(OPDC). He was joined on his visit to Patong on July 12 by Assoc Prof Waraporn Samkoset, Chairperson of the OPDC sub-committee assigned to evaluate the promotion and development of high-quality tourism in Patong.

The officials were met by a group of about 80 small hotel operators led by Manosit Jangjob, Acting President of the Phuket Boutique Accommodation Consortium (BAC).

The group met at the parking lot behind Krung Thai Bank in Patong, then moved to show the Deputy Prime

Minister some of the hotels that had been foreclosed.

The group pointed out that small hotel operators were still suffering under the current economic conditions, and had been since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020.

“As a result, at least 200 small hotels in Patong were subject to confiscation cases and sold at auction,” Mr Manosit said.

“Therefore, he would like the government to help. We request a waiver to allow the opening of the [small] hotels and help to resolve

the problematic law, which has been demanded for a long time because we are in a lot of trouble with the hotels forced to close due to COVID,” he added.

“As a result, there are no tourists, no income, and unlicensed hotels have to be closed, resulting in no money to pay the banks,” Mr Moanosit said.

“Potential investors don’t want to take over the hotels because some people who have had their assets seized still have to pay their debts,” he added.

“Let the government have mercy...

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# News



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## Small hotels appeal for reprieve

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...on us, not just be conducive to large hotels," Mr Manosit said.

The issue had been presented to the relevant agencies many times, Mr Manosit added.

Deputy Prime Minister Wissanu said he was aware of the situation and confirmed that he had received specific information from many small hotel operators in the same situation.

"Therefore, I would like to urgently take care of this matter, because now there are quite a number of business operators who have already been affected. The subcommittee is processing dozens of other submissions, of which all information has been requested and received in order to summarise and present to the Prime Minister as the next step," he said.



Deputy PM Wissanu hears firsthand the plight of small hotel operators in Patong. Photo: PR Phuket

### ASSISTANCE

Following the visit to Patong by Deputy PM Wissanu state news agency NNT, not local public relations channels, reported Phuket Vice Governor Pichet Panapong "clarifying" that assistance is currently being provided to hotel businesses in Phuket that were forced to close, but mostly due to illegal construction on public land.

Vice Governor Pichet stated that currently, 860 small hotels are permitted to open legally in Phuket, while 994 hotels were found to have violated regulations and must be rectified.

He did not clarify exactly how many hotels were actually currently open and receiving guests.

Some of the hotels were discovered to be built in prohibited areas

such as national parks, SorPorKor agricultural land or designated zones in ministerial city planning regulations, the report said.

"According to reports, 53% of the businesses violated building control laws, with the violation commonly related to environmental issues," the report added.

Meanwhile, around 6% of the hotels were found in breach of hotel and city planning regulations which disqualified them from getting state welfare and loans for their businesses.

Only 91 of the 994 small hotels had fixed "their problems", while the remaining 903 hotels that hadn't are struggling and are in need of government assistance, the report said.

According to Vice Governor Pichet, provincial officials have ap-

proached the Interior Ministry's Land Department for assistance because some residents had purchased condo units with the intention of converting them into hotels.

However, the law requires that the building first be cleared of any condo or housing estate registrations before it can be converted into a hotel. The request must be approved by all members of the housing estate.

### HOTEL ACT

In an effort to increase hotel rooms and customers, Vice Governor Pichet also mentioned a law revision that would require a minimum of 10 hotel rooms and 30 customers as a requirement for hotel registration.

Vice Governor Pichet added that authorities understand the plight of

"these people" but the process of revising certain laws to help will take time, said the report.

"The Department of Provincial Administration, which oversees the implementation of hotel laws, is working to help these people, as well as businesses that are facing similar problems in other provinces in Thailand," the report said.

The report by NNT omitted an explanation that under the Hotel Act all accommodation owners with venues with five or more rooms that are rented out at daily rates must be registered as hotels and the site must comply with the required building regulations for hotels – definitions that small hotel operators have for years been pleading for the government to revise, especially following the advent of global accommodation booking powerhouse Airbnb.

Members of the Phuket Boutique Accommodation Consortium last year filed another formal request pleading for the government to extend an amnesty initiated in 2016 to upgrade their hotels in order to be registered under the Hotel Act. The amnesty expired on Aug 18 last year.

The issue of small accommodation venues that do not not comply with the Hotel Act came to a head in May 2018 when the Prachuap Khiri Khan Provincial Court ruled that two separate condo owners were guilty of breaching the Hotel Act by renting out their properties at daily or even weekly rates.

The bookings for the condos were made through Airbnb, which in 2018 launched its campaign to work with local officials to have small accom-

modation venues brought into the fold to finally become legal.

The issue was never completely resolved, despite the Department of Local Administration entering an official partnership with Airbnb.

"Through the partnership, Airbnb and the Ministry of Interior's DOLA will work together to train local provincial officials on hospitality, hosting and compliance standards; and onboard existing homestays onto Airbnb's global platform," Airbnb announced at the time.

In November 2019, Airbnb announced its 'best practices principles' for regulations on short-term rentals, which included:

- Simple and online national-level registration: A simple, swift and online registration system for short-term accommodation to ensure compliance and promote high safety standards.

- Differentiated regulation: A differentiated – rather than one-size-fits-all – approach to regulation which distinguishes between the various types of short-term accommodation activity. For example, regulations should differentiate between someone sharing a room in their home, their own home occasionally or someone with a vacation rental for full commercial purpose.

- Industry-wide approach: There should be an industry-wide approach to regulation and close cooperation between all industry participants and regulators in implementing regulations.

Regardless, the definitions used in the Hotel Act have remained unchanged, leaving many small accommodation venue operators illegal.

## Random drug tests for airport taxi drivers

OFFICIALS AT PHUKET International Airport have launched a campaign to conduct random drug testing on taxi drivers at the key tourism facility in the hope of having the airport declared a "White Airport" and boost confidence among tourists that they are getting a "clean" driver.

Drivers gathered at the parking lot for international buses at the airport on Monday (July 18) for their tests.

Monchai Tanode, General Manager of Phuket International Airport, presided over the opening ceremony of the campaign, which he explained was a collaboration between Airports of

Thailand (AoT) management at Phuket Airport with Tourist Police, Sakhu Police and the Phuket Provincial Transport Office.

"The campaign is to ensure the safety of tourists using taxis and buses at Phuket Airport," he said.

Under the campaign, AoT Phuket staff will conduct random urine tests on drivers at the airport. Drivers who test negative will receive a star sticker marked "White Airport". The sticker will also specify the license plate number of the vehicle and the driver's name to deter imposters, Mr Monchai said.

However, it was not clarified exactly which drugs the

drivers are tested for, or what happens to any drivers who test positive for drug use.

"In addition to creating safety and confidence in using a taxi service, the campaign is also to prevent and deter people from exploiting tourists or visitors at Phuket Airport," Mr Monchai said.

Mr Monchai said passenger throughput at the airport was only about 30% of pre-pandemic levels, but noted that was an improvement.

"Since the government canceled the Thailand Pass system, the number of tourists has increased by about 40-45%. The total is about 20,000 people per day, comprising about 12,000 domestic pas-

sengers and 8,000 international passengers per day," he said.

The largest group of inbound visitors was "probably" those arriving from the Middle East, Mr Monchai said.

According to Phuket Immigration at the airport, 4,209 international arrivals landed in Phuket on Sunday (July 17). From May 1 to July 17, the most popular nationalities among international visitors were from India (72,455), Australia (26,348), Singapore (25,974), the UK (16,143) and Malaysia (12,092).

"There are now approximately 90-100 domestic flights per day, both inbound and outbound. As for international flights, there are about



Photo: PR Phuket

60 daily flights a day," Mr Monchai said.

"Before the COVID crisis, there were about 350-400 flights per day," he said.

However, Mr Monchai noted, "There are still airlines from India requesting to add more flights to Phuket."

"It is expected that from now on the tourism situation will improve accordingly,

especially during the high season to come [at the end of the year]," Mr Monchai said.

"It is predicted that there will be 70-80% of tourists coming in compared to the number of tourists who had arrived in Phuket before the COVID-19 pandemic," he concluded.

*The Phuket News*



# Brit among surf drownings

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A British man from London on his honeymoon in Phuket was one of two tourists who drowned in dangerous surf at Kata Noi Beach last week as lifeguards carried out rescues at main beaches all along Phuket's west coast.

British national Ali Mohammed Mian, 33, was pronounced dead at Chalong Hospital after lifeguards had pulled him from the water at Kata Noi late afternoon on July 14.

Mr Mian was one of two drownings at Kata Noi that Lt Col Kittipong Noopeng, Deputy Chief of the Karon Police, was notified of at about 5pm.

Lifeguards at Kata Noi Beach reported that the first person they had pulled from the water was Thai tourist Surasit Phonglaohaphan, a 55-year-old doctor from Chiang Mai.

Mr Surasit had checked in at a local hotel at Kata Noi only earlier that day, indicating that it was likely his first day of holiday in Phuket, Tourist Police reported.



Rescuers continue resuscitation efforts on Kata Noi Beach. Photo: Karon Municipality

Mr Sursait was pulled from the water unconscious and unresponsive. Lifeguards were unable to detect a pulse and administered CPR on the beach until an EMS unit arrived to speed him to Chalong Hospital, where he was formally pronounced dead.

British tourist Mr Mian had checked into a local hotel at Kata Noi on July 12. He was on his honeymoon, police reported.

He, too, was pulled from

the water unconscious and unresponsive. Despite efforts by lifeguards, Mr Mian was also pronounced dead on arrival at Chalong Hospital.

Both men had ignored red flags posted on the beach and entered the water where strong waves and rip currents made swimming too dangerous to swim, and both were swept away from the shore, lifeguards reported.

Meanwhile, two more tourists were rescued at nearby

Kata Beach at about 6:10pm that same day. The two, a man and a woman, both aged about 30-40 years old, both survived their rescues and were taken to Chalong Hospital for treatment, lifeguards there reported.

Lifeguards at Patong Beach reported rescuing three tourists after they were swept away from the beach by strong rip currents. All three were safe, lifeguards confirmed.

## PATROL BOOST

Following the two drownings and spate of rescues, Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew called on lifeguards to ramp up their efforts to protect tourists at Phuket beaches while strong waves and rip currents continued to plague the island's west coast.

During an inspection of lifeguards' efforts at Patong Beach last Friday (July 15), Governor Narong called on all government agencies to step up efforts to protect tourists.

"This is the [southwest] monsoon season when the waves are strong, and we are aiming to invite tourists to come to Phuket and have fun, and not have any unpleasant incidents," Governor Narong said.

"All sectors and all relevant officials have been ordered to take care of tourists as best as possible," he said.

## CLEAR WARNING

Lifeguards for weeks have been calling for all beachgoers to swim only in safe-swimming zones where yellow-red flags have been posted.

Lifeguards have especially called on tourists to

not enter the water where red no-swimming flags have been posted along the beach.

Many tourists have taken to enjoying the beach despite the recent heavy weather, said Patong Beach chief lifeguard Somprasong Saengchat.

"Most of them are tourists, mostly from India, Australia and Arab countries. They come to enjoy activities, such as going for a swim, riding a jet-ski, parasailing and jogging. Some of them still come to sunbathe," he said.

Mr Somprasong admitted that weather warnings and advisories issued by agencies sometimes do not correspond to the actual local conditions on the beach. "Sometimes the weather conditions announced refer to areas out to sea, while people can still come to enjoy the beach," he said.

Regardless, lifeguards have been stationed at various points along the beach to warn tourists, Mr Somprasong noted.

"Most of them are co-operating very well, but we are still warning tourists not to swim in areas where red flags are posted because it is dangerous to swim in those areas," he said.

## Family, colleagues praise 'hero'

FAMILY AND COLLEAGUES OF A Thai doctor from Chiang Mai who drowned in dangerous surf at Kata Noi Beach on July 14 have praised him as a hero and man of courage who they believe would not have hesitated to sacrifice himself to help others.

Surasit Phonglaohaphan, otherwise known as Dr Toh, was pulled from the water by lifeguards along with British tourist, Ali Mohammed Mian, who was in Phuket on his honeymoon.

Both had reportedly ignored the red flags on the beach warning of strong waves and rip currents which made swimming too dangerous, and both were swept away from the shore, lifeguards reported.

Dr Toh, 55, and Mr Mian, 33, were pulled from the water unconscious and unresponsive. Lifeguards were unable to detect a pulse and administered CPR on the beach until an EMS unit arrived and took the men to Chalong Hospital. Both were pronounced dead on arrival.

It was not clear whether both got into difficulty in the water separately or whether one of the men had attempted to help the other. Authorities have offered no official comment to this effect although one regular reader of *The Phuket News* present at the beach at the time of the incident did comment she saw Mr Mian attempting to help Dr Toh after he got into trouble and "as lifeguards were too slow".

"They were both swimming between red and yellow flags when they were swept out and across the beach. I witnessed the whole event," the observer said.



Family and colleagues said Dr Toh was a keen runner in his spare time. Photo: Supplied

Dr Toh's family and colleagues, however, say they would not be surprised if it had been the other way round and it was he that had attempted to help Mr Mian and he subsequently died as a result.

Dr Toh was a specialist at Lampang Hospital Social Medicine Group who instinctively helped others, an unnamed member of his family said.

The 55-year-old was a kind, caring, selfless individual who got along well with everyone he met, the family member added. He was also a keep-fit fanatic who, when he wasn't working, would regularly be found running, to the extent that he received the nickname "Dr Running".

Dr Toh's body was transferred to his hometown where a merit-making ceremony was held for him at Wat Suan Dok, Mueang District, Lampang Province.

Eakkapop Thongtub

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THU JULY 28



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## Kathu Cultural Festival returns

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After a two-year absence due to the COVID-19 pandemic causing cancellation, the Kathu Cultural Festival returned to the streets last weekend.

The 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the festival, held last Friday through Sunday (July 15-17), was officially opened by Phuket Vice Governor Amnuay Phinsuwan at a specially constructed stage area in front of the Kathu Municipality Building.

Joining V/Gov Amnuay were the Mayor of Kathu Chaianan Suthikul, government officials and other related officials.

Mr Chaianan stated he was delighted to welcome the festival back for its 12<sup>th</sup> year, especially after the two-year hiatus brought about by the pandemic.

"The festival allows us to honour and continue the culture and traditions of the beautiful area of Kathu while generating income for local business through tourism," he said.

"It further allows us to showcase and celebrate the local Kathu food



culture, dress and community."

Mr Chaianan added that the last time the festival was held, in 2020, it received recognition in the form of an official award from the King Prajadhikok Institute for public participation, one of 16 awards nationwide.



Photo: Kathu Municipality

The festival showcased street food and beverages, arts and crafts and saw performances from local artists.

There was also a cultural show focused on paying homage and respect to ancestors as well as an exhibition honouring His Majesty the King.

Mr Amnuay echoed the senti-

ments of Mr Chaianan, stressing how important the event was in helping boost the local community and economy, both culturally and economically.

"The most important thing is that the people of Thailand are happy and have a good quality of life," he said.

## Privy Councillor Dapong visits PRU

PRIVY COUNCILOR GEN Dapong Rattanasuwan visited Phuket Rajabhat University (PRU) on Monday (July 18) to attend a meeting explaining the university's current operations and strategies for developing education courses on the campus.

The Privy Council is responsible for offering advice to His Majesty The King if solicited, and other duties as specified in the Constitution. Members of the Privy Council are selected by HM The King.

Joining the meeting was Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew along with PRU President Asst Prof Dr Hiran Prasarnkan, university administrators and faculty members.

Dr Hiran noted that the previous update on PRU's implementation of its "Strategic Project Operations" was presented to Gen Dapong on Sept 28 last year via an online meeting.

"Phuket Rajabhat University is still committed to developing the university to always serve the community and the local area. With the situation returning to almost normal after the COVID-19 pandemic, Phuket Rajabhat University can carry out its educational tasks through strong engagement with



Gen Dapong at PRU on Monday (July 18). Photo: PR Phuket

the community through various networks," Dr Hiran said.

Dr Hiran also pointed out that a key mission of Phuket Rajabhat University in teacher production and development remained unchanged. "This has been part of the university's identity ever since it began as the Phuket Teachers College," he added.

During his visit, Gen Dapong was given a tour of the facilities on site, including a "computer lab" used for teaching digital media courses.

The Phuket News



Photos taken by Phuket City Police at the scene of the home invasion and gunfight on May 23.

## Three arrested for Koh Kaew home invasion, shootout

CRIME SUPPRESSION DIVISION (CSD) officers have confirmed the arrests of three more suspects wanted for their role in a home invasion and shooting incident at Koh Kaew in May.

The CSD in a release last week announced the arrests of "Mr Sulaiman", 26; "Mr Komsan", 28; and "Mr Surasak", 32.

The release did not give the family names of any other suspects, or reveal where and when the three were arrested.

All three faces charges of attempted murder, "jointly invading the dwelling with weapons or committing an offense together as two or more people at night", illegal possession of a firearm and ammunition, and carrying a firearm in a public area

without permission or reasonable cause.

The release noted that all three were wanted on arrest warrants issued by Phuket Provincial Court in May, following the home invasion at the Habitia Koh Kaew housing estate on May 23.

One of the assailants taking part in the home invasion, Manoon Songlert, 43, from Nakhon Sri Thammarat, was shot in the right foot in the incident.

Manoon was among the gang of assailants who entered the house in the estate in the hope of shooting another man, who no longer lived there.

When "Mr Su" (not his real name) returned home to find the gang of men, including Manoon, in his home threatening his wife, Mr Su pulled out his own revolver and shot at the gang members, driving them off with a gunfight in the residential area. Eakkapop Thongtub



# Turtle chokes to death on plastic, washes ashore

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A Hawksbill sea turtle that had choked to death on plastic was found washed ashore at Mai Khao Beach last week.

Winai Sae-ew, Village Headman of Moo 4, Mai Khao, at the northern end of the island, was notified by a lifeguard at Mai Khao Beach at about 8am on July 11 that a dead turtle had been found washed ashore by the strong waves that were pounding the west coast of the island.

Mr Winai arrived at the beach to confirm the find, and learned firsthand that the turtle had been dead for some time and had begun to decompose.

Sorasak Rananan, chief of Sirinath National Park and fellow park officers were called and soon arrived to examine the remains of the turtle.

The park officers found a piece of plastic still protruding from the turtle's mouth. The plastic had become lodged in the turtle's throat.

The officers measured the turtle before burying it near the beachfront.

Later that same day, at about 1:30pm, lifeguards at Mai Khao Beach discovered another turtle, this one a small hatchling that had been pushed ashore by the strong surf.

The baby turtle was handed over to officers from Sirinath National Park



Sorasak Rananan, chief of Sirinath National Park, with the turtle that had choked to death on plastic. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

to care for until the hatchling is strong enough to be released back to the sea.

## DOLPHIN DIES

Elsewhere, a wounded striped dolphin rescued from shallow water at Patong Beach late last Sunday afternoon (July 17) later succumbed to its dire health condition, marine life experts at the Siritharn Rare Marine Life Rescue Center at Cape Panwa have confirmed.

Lifeguards at the beach were alerted at about 5:20pm that a young dolphin had been found in distress in shallow water near the bridge at the southern end of Patong Beach.

Soon after, lifeguards as well as

Patong Police and Kusoidharm rescue workers were at the scene. Marine biologists at the Siritharn Rare Marine Life Rescue Center, based at Ao Makham on Phuket's east coast, also soon arrived.

The marine life experts checked the dolphin for obvious signs of injury and found a wound on its tail. Coordinated efforts then saw the young dolphin brought ashore and rushed it to the Siritharn Rare Marine Life Rescue Center.

Marine biologists at the centre later confirmed that the dolphin had died. At time of press details of any infections the dolphin may have been suffering or how serious the wound on the tail was had yet to be announced.



Photo: Phuket City Municipality

## Stop dumping trash in canals, mayor of Phuket Town urges

PUBLIC WORKS ON clearing and improving water flow in canals has resulted in good results in the three flood-prone areas in Phuket Town, Phuket City Mayor Saroj Angkanapilas has announced.

The three key areas are on Amphur Rd near the intersection on the way to Koh Siray, in Samkong and along Sakdidet Rd, Mr Saroj said last week.

"Despite heavy rain during the past week, there have been no problems of flooding in the areas," he said.

Phuket City Municipality targeted the three areas as local residents had been repeatedly affected by the canals overflowing during periods of heavy rain, Mr Saroj explained.

Mr Saroj gave specific thanks to the Phuket Governor. "He has regularly visited the areas to help take care of the flooding problem in Phuket Municipality," he said.

He also thanked the provincial office of the Department

of Public Works and Town & Country Planning.

"All relevant authorities rushed to resolve the problem in the three key areas, which are now considered very successful," Mr Saroj said.

The coordinated efforts saw the canals being cleared of all natural – and unnatural – debris.

"The canals were dredged and unused beams were removed for better water flow, which helped to resolve the problem," he said.

Mayor Saroj noted that Phuket City officials were monitoring other areas to help prevent flooding, and were continually removing trash from the canals to reduce the amount of waste impeding water flow.

"We ask all residents to use the bins that the municipality has available to reduce the amount of waste [found in the canals]," Mr Saroj said.

The Phuket News

## Heavy weather downs trees, dumps marine trash on Patong

HEAVY STORM WEATHER ACROSS Phuket last week downed trees onto homes in Kamala, washed a deluge of marine trash and debris onto Patong Beach and has been blamed for a section of roadside retaining wall collapsing in Koh Kaew.

Strong waves pounded the west coast last week, dumping piles of debris onto Patong Beach. Among the debris were discarded fishing nets. Local business operators along the beach helped to gather the debris for the safety of visitors and to keep the beach clean.

In Kamala, strong winds brought down trees and branches on July 12, landing on power cables and people's houses. No injuries or serious damage were reported.

Emergency officers were called to homes near the Lay Seafood restaurant, where a tree had fallen onto the roof of one house and a large branch had fallen onto motorcycles parked outside.

Officers were also called to clear a fallen tree that blocked the road in Soi Police Station and in Naka Village in Moo 6, Kamala, and in Soi Nam Tok, Kathu.

Udomporn Kan, chief of the Phuket Provincial office of the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM-Phuket), and Jutha Duamlak, Chief of the Kamala Tambon Administrative Organisation (OrBorTor), both joined the emergency workers clearing the debris to inspect the damage done.

Mr Jutha said that emergency workers had been called to five areas in Kamala where strong winds had brought down trees and



A pile of marine debris sits piled up on Patong Beach. Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

large branches which had fallen on to homes and brought down power poles.

Officers had been assigned to assess the damage to the homes and provide assistance to those directly affected, Mr Jutha said, adding that the Phuket Governor had issued a notice expressly ordering officials to care for people affected by the heavy weather in recent days.

Meanwhile, motorists heading southbound along Thepkrasattri Rd from Koh Kaew into Rassada have been urged to exercise caution after a section of retaining wall on the hill north of Phuket Bus Terminal 2 collapsed last Sunday (July 17). The collapse was attributed to the heavy rains that doused Phuket over the preceding two weeks.

No lanes were closed following the collapse and no injuries were reported.

At last report repairs to the collapsed section of the retaining wall section had yet to begin. Eakkapop Thongtub

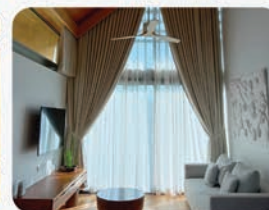


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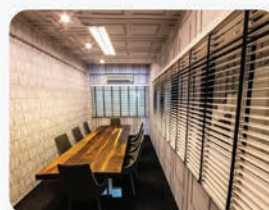
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The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The five-day 'long weekend' from July 13-17 boosted average occupancy at hotels across Phuket to 60% and was expected to generate more than B2.34 billion for the island, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Phuket office chief Nanthasiri Ronnasiri has announced.

The average occupancy rate before the five-day holiday was about 44.46%, Ms Nanthasiri said last Friday (July 15).

"This is expected to increase to as high as 60% because most Thai tourists prefer to book at the last minute, with most staying on average of 2.49 nights," she added.

In total approximately 196,870 tourists are expected to visit Phuket during the holidays, she added.

"They are expected to generate an estimated B2.34294bn," she said.

Bookings indicated that the peak occupancy period would be from Wednesday through July 13-15, Ms Nanthasiri said.

"Some hotels have bookings as high as 60-80%, especially in leading tourist areas such as Patong Beach, Kamala Beach,



Tourists enjoy Phuket Town over the long holiday. Photo: PR Phuket

Surin Beach, Kata Beach, Karon Beach, and others," she added.

Projecting from figures provided by Phuket airport, at least 28,189 foreign travellers will be arriving on 160 flights during the holidays, Ms Nanthasiri said.

"The number of domestic travellers is estimated at 32,656 people

arriving on 277 flights, giving a load factor of about 60-100%," she added.

The arrivals will be providing a much-welcomed boost to the island's economy, despite high inflation, spurred on by rising fuel costs, in Thailand, she said.

However, Ms Nanthasiri said

that price rises were stabilising and more tourists were coming to Phuket – factors she attributed to successful national government policies.

"As a result, the trend has been a growth in the number of tourists from India and Middle East countries during this period," she said.

Ms Nanthasiri recognised the current labour shortage ready to serve the tourism industry.

"Overall, Phuket tourism is recovering. As a result, the demand for tourism workers has increased accordingly, causing the current problem of a labour shortage in many positions," she said.

"It is expected that this problem will become more severe during the tourism high season at the end of the year," Ms Nanthasiri noted.

Provinces in the southern region are also seeing increasingly more visitors, with the Thai Hotels Association's Southern Chapter reporting that occupancy rates in Krabi and Phang Nga were around 30% over the weekend, reported state news agency NNT.

Trang province meanwhile reported the highest occupancy rate at about 60%, while Songkhla – which shares a border with Malaysia – saw similar rates to Krabi and Phang Nga at around 30%.

Suksit Suwandittakul, president of the Thai Hotels Association's Southern Chapter, said the high occupancy rate in Trang had been mostly attributable to domestic visitors travelling in groups, while most tourists in Songkhla came from Malaysia.



Photo: NNT

## Migrant workers needed: Chamber

THE THAI CHAMBER of Commerce (TCC) has emphasised the need for more migrant workers in various sectors to help the Thai economy recover from the pandemic.

TCC Vice Chairman Paj Aramwattananont last week said there was a high demand for workers in labour-intensive sectors such as agricultural goods and food processing for exports, construction, tourism and services.

However, he emphasised that factors such as issues in migrant home countries and competition for workers from other nations are impeding worker recruitment and thus slowing Thailand's economic recovery.

The vice chairman estimated that the Kingdom would require at least 3-4

million migrant workers to get its economy moving forward.

According to Pairoj Chotikasathien, head of the Labour Ministry's employment department, there are currently 2.5mn documented migrant workers from Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar.

To address the shortage, the Cabinet has approved labour management plans that include allowing documented workers to stay until February 2025.

Undocumented workers will also be permitted to register and work until the same date.

He added that with improved labour plans and the arrival of more workers, Thailand could see nearly 3mn migrant laborers by the end of the year. NNT

## Asia Pacific hotel investment up 33% year-on-year

RECOVERY IN ASIA Pacific's hotel sector continued to accelerate in 2022 with investment volumes for the first half of the year totaling US\$6.8 billion, reports international property broker and consultancy JLL.

According to JLL data and analysis, investments in the first half of 2022 represent 33% growth year-on-year and an 11.9% increase on 2019, demonstrating a return to pre-pandemic levels of capital deployment into the Asia Pacific hotels sector.

In total, there were 75 transactions in the first half of 2022, down 20.2% year-on-year and 33% on the first half of 2019 numbers, Jll noted in a recent release.

However, the total number of rooms transacted during the first six months of 2022 was 19,822, representing an increase of 29.9% versus the first half of 2021 and 9.4% during the pre-pandemic period in 2019.

"The increase in deal activity was influenced by a spike in portfolio transactions as institutional investors sitting on dry powder seek to deploy their capital more efficiently," the report noted.

However, according to



Photo: JLL

JLL, ongoing momentum will likely be challenged by growing macroeconomic and geopolitical headwinds in the second half of 2022.

"The resilience of Asia Pacific's hospitality sector and reopening of borders have accelerated further in 2022, with pandemic-induced pent-up corporate and leisure demand ensuring that travel demand will soon be on par with pre-COVID levels," said Nihat Ercan, Senior Managing Director, Head of Investment Sales, Asia Pacific, JLL Hotels & Hospitality Group.

"As a result, the two-year lull in investment activity has largely subsided, demonstrated by record levels of capital raised for deals across Asia Pacific gateway markets and resort destinations," he added.

Investment activity was spread across various Asia Pacific markets as the opening

of borders ensured that many markets transitioned from reliance on domestic demand towards inbound leisure and corporate business. However, the conflux of current favourable travel market conditions and the longer-term economic outlook is creating a disconnect between buyers' and sellers' expectations around pricing, the report noted.

From an investment volume standpoint, Japan (\$1.8bn), Korea (\$1.7bn) and Greater China including Hong Kong (\$1.6bn) received the most capital in the first half of 2022.

Singapore (\$899.7 million), Maldives (\$205.5mn) and Indonesia (\$159.6mn) continued to recover strongly. Activity in Australia (\$145.5mn) and Thailand (\$37.7mn) was more subdued but will likely be bolstered in the second half due to numerous marquee deals closing, the report added.

"A more sustainable recovery in travel will intensify the largest challenge faced by many investors of successfully deploying capital into investment grade products across the region," said Mike Batchelor, CEO, Asia Pacific, JLL Hotels & Hospitality Group.

"We remain steadfast in our conviction that total Asia Pacific hotel investment volume will cross the \$10bn mark despite the scarcity of assets coupled with macro and geopolitical headwinds that will continue to influence capital activity," he added.

JLL analysis and research noted that in Thailand more hotels entering the market as sellers were under increasing pressure to sell. While buyers were actively looking, they were opportunistic in their pricing and more conservative when making offers on properties.

There are numerous private equity funds and family offices currently active in the Thailand hotel market and JLL noted an increase in foreign interest with the lifting of travel restrictions. JLL forecast transaction volumes in Thailand to reach close to \$300mn for full year 2022.

The Phuket News



# COVID-19 vaccine drive 'saved half a million'

## BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

A research team from Mahidol University has estimated that the government's COVID-19 vaccination campaign over the past two years prevented nearly 490,000 deaths.

The team based their work on a mathematic modelling carried out by the MRC Centre for Global Infectious Disease Analysis in 185 countries from when the first vaccinations were administered in 2021 until July 3, 2022.

Charin Modchange, the research team leader from Mahidol University's Faculty of Science, said that the analysis suggested that 490,000 additional lives would have been lost if no vaccines had been distributed.

The MRC's data had estimated that worldwide vaccination programmes prevented 14.4 million deaths from the disease between Dec 8, 2020 and Dec 8, 2021.

"Our team also ran the [MRC's] mathematical model



A woman is vaccinated against COVID-19 at the Bang Sue Grand Station in Bangkok on July 11. Photo: Apichart Jinakul

and the outcome was rather significantly interesting. We found that the death rate in Thailand is below 0.1%, which is very close to that of seasonal flu," he said.

Earlier on Monday (July 18), the Department of Disease Control chief, Dr Opas Karnkawinpong, had said that Omicron's BA.4/BA.5 sub-variant produces less severe symptoms than the previous variant, Delta, adding that the high number of booster shots given to people has also been an important factor in reducing the number of deaths as well

as the severity of symptoms.

Dr Opas said the ministry will keep a close watch on daily infections after the long weekend, insisting that universal prevention and vaccination measures are important to limit transmission.

"We still recommend that the elderly, people living with chronic diseases and pregnant women should receive booster shots as fast as possible," he said.

"We have also found that the death toll in these groups is higher among those who receive booster vaccinations

late, so we are recommending that anyone who falls under the high-risk category has a booster every three months."

He further added that the first 7,000 doses of the Long-Acting Antibody (LAAB) combination from AstraZeneca is expected to arrive next week for patients living with kidney disease and/or in need of an organ transplant.

According to AstraZeneca, its long-acting antibody combination has been recommended for marketing authorisation in the European Union (EU) as a means of pre-exposure prophylaxis (prevention) of COVID-19 in a broad population of adults and adolescents aged 12 years and older weighing at least 40kg.

The company is going to apply for Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval in Thailand for the drug to be used to treat the disease.

The country registered 18 more COVID-19 fatalities and 2,125 new cases admitted to hospital during the previous 24 hours, the Public Health Ministry announced on Tuesday morning (July 19).



Tourists pack the beach in front of local nightspots on Koh Pha-ngan for the Full Moon Party last Friday night (July 15). Photo: Supapong Chaolan

## Full Moon Party draws 20,000 to Koh Pha-ngan

### SURAT THANI

THE POPULAR FULL Moon Party on Koh Pha-ngan drew about 20,000 tourists last Friday night (July 15).

Hotels on Koh Pha-ngan, particularly along Haad Rin beach in tambon Ban Tai where the party is held each month, enjoyed full bookings.

The beach was packed with Thai and foreign revellers, numbering about 20,000. About 98% of the visitors were foreigners.

Many foreign tourists began leaving the island just north of Koh Samui for other tourist sites the following day, while Thai tourists prepared to return to work after a long holiday weekend.

Tawich Somwang, chairman of a business group on Haad Rin beach, said most of the foreign visitors to Koh Pha-ngan were

from European countries.

However, he said he had noticed more tourists from the Middle East including Saudi Arabia and Oman, since Thailand and Saudi Arabia restored long-suspended diplomatic relations.

Many years ago, he said, many Saudis were regular visitors to Koh Pha-ngan. But that all changed in 1989 after the theft of gems from the home of a Saudi prince, and subsequent murders of Saudis in Thailand, led to a break in diplomatic and other ties that lasted until this year.

The return of visitors from Saudi Arabia is helping to boost tourism on Koh Pha-ngan, he said, adding that more Indian travellers are also coming to the island.

The next Full Moon Party will be held on Aug 12.

Bangkok Post

## Thai democracy activists targeted by Pegasus spyware, says report

### BANGKOK

DOZENS OF THAI DEMOCRACY activists were targeted by the controversial Israeli spyware known as Pegasus during the height of intense anti-government protests, according to an international digital rights group report.

Massive demonstrations engulfed Bangkok two years ago as thousands called for greater civil freedoms, as well as a loosening of the strict lese majeste laws that prevent any criticism of the monarchy.

The report by Canadian cybersecurity watchdog Citizen Lab in partnership with Thai groups iLaw and DigitalReach, identified some 30 activists, academics, lawyers and NGO workers – mostly connected to civil rights organisations – whose mobile devices were affected.

"The infections occurred from October 2020 to November 2021, coinciding with a period of widespread pro-democracy protests, and predominantly targeted key figures in the pro-democracy movement," the report stated.

Pegasus software, created by Israeli firm NSO Group, can extract data and activate cameras or microphones once it has successfully infiltrated a mobile device.

The report stops short of saying definitively who was behind the use of the spyware, though it notes that NSO Group says they only sell the technology to governments.



Among those targeted was activist and monarchy critic Panusaya Sithijirawattanakul. Photo: AFP

"It can be circumstantially concluded that the use of Pegasus against dissidents would be of significant benefit to the Thai government," Thai NGO iLaw said.

Among those targeted, Citizen Lab said, were the lese majeste lawyer Arnon Nampa, protest leader Panusaya Sithijirawattanakul and activist Jatupat Boonpattaraksa.

Panusaya is currently on bail and facing 10 royal defamation charges, while Jatupat was denied bail earlier this year after also being charged with insulting the monarchy.

Those affected were tipped off in November 2021 when Apple sent out a notification informing them their devices had been targeted by state-backed attacks.

It is the latest such case of the Israeli software being used to surveil dissidents.

The NSO Group is currently being sued in the US by Apple, which alleges the firm's spyware was used to infiltrate a number of iPhones worldwide. AFP

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# Prize model for sustainability

By Mariia Dabizha

The One Phuket Sustainability Fair & Lean On Me Live Fest 2 held at Phuket Boat Lagoon last month was a collaborative sustainability and charity event that helped to raise awareness of people in need and the environment.

There were many activities devoted to the theme of pollution in Phuket and around the world. There was also the Phuket SWAPSHOP, an eco-goods fair, a healthy vegan food market and live music. This was one of the biggest eco-events' our island has seen, and we hope these events become regular.

Additionally, the fair hosted an art competition among Phuket schools. Children are our future and many schools on the island have special eco-programmes and activities. International School Phuket – ISP, which pays special attention to the cause of ecology, won the contest. At the competition, the ISP ECO – Team presented their sculpture “Teacher and Student” to symbolise hope for the future.

As well as having Ecology lessons at ISP School, they have an eco-committee formed by the children interested in environmental issues. All year round there is a donation station on the school grounds, parents and staff regularly donate items to people in need and co-operate with Phuket volunteers. At the end of the school year there was a trip



Photo: Andrea Edwards / One Phuket

to a village close to the sea in Rawai.

The eco direction at ISP is headed by Eco-coordinator and teacher Sarha Robinson with the support of school founder Iris Vesi. When teacher Sarha heard about the contest, she invited the children from the eco-committee to participate. The contest required them to make a sculpture from waste, trash and beach clean-ups. The sculpture had a base 1.5 metres square, and featured two figures, an adult and a child, with the adult standing nearly two metres tall. It was not an easy task.

And guess what? They did it. Though mentored by school staff, the students designed and built this piece themselves.

“This is our art sculpture that we’ve

entered in the competition and this sculpture represents hope. It was built out of reclaimed materials and we made it using natural materials,” said Leti, a Year 6 graduate.

“It represents a teacher and a student who realise how much plastic is around them. The light bulb represents an idea. And the student is aware of the whole situation,” she adds.

Milo, a Year 6 graduate, explained, “We used household items to create these two sculptures. And if you’re sure you’re not going to use things like that anymore, you can always use them to create art. You can use different household things, especially plastic, to create sculptures. We, here at ISP, are aware and have an idea of how much plastic

waste is actually on our beaches. So almost all of this stuff is from household items or from beach cleanups that we’ve done.”

The students were gifted some very interesting conservation-focused and sustainability-driven prizes. These included a Phuket Nature Elephant Reserve Educational Tour and Blue Tree Precious Plastics workshop, which they all attended together.

Teacher Sarha, as one of the co-coordinators of the Phuket SWAPSHOP together with a colleague and friend Sinead Lynch, revealed there will be more sustainable charity events and opportunities to raise ecological awareness here in Phuket.

“The island is ready! With more and more eyes on the impact that we have on our beautiful world today, working with eco-conscious groups of young people is very inspiring,” says Sarha.

“We need to treasure and embrace these opportunities to make a real and significant difference with them. As adults we can collaborate, as educators we can mentor, and as consumers we can change our habits.”

*Mariia Dabizha is Marketing Manager at International School Phuket – ISP. To be a part of the great work they do at ISP, you can visit the school or website for more information. To visit Phuket’s next sustainability event, visit OZO Resort Kata Beach for SWAP Royale, to be held on Saturday, Aug 13, from 2-6pm.*



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# Pride or Prejudice?

What Thailand's upcoming bills and amendments have in store for same-sex partners

By Jak Chokesikarin, Associate, Silk Legal

Three bills on same-sex unions passed their first hearing in parliament on June 15, moving Thailand closer to granting legal recognition to same-sex couples. While there was some criticism of some of the bills, it was largely regarded as a step in the right direction. Given that the bills propose different approaches to same-sex partnerships, it is also worth noting that these bills may be revised or even consolidated in the future.

## The Life Partnership Bill (Cabinet)

The Life Partnership Bill will allow same-sex couples to form a 'life partnership', and will work with the Cabinet's amendments to the Civil and Commercial Code to extend many of the rights and obligations given to same-sex couples, including a minimum age of 17, one partner being Thai and both partners being of sound mind. Polygamy and relations between blood relatives are prohibited.

Registration must be consensual and partnerships registered under duress, or for misusing state benefits, will be voided. Partners found not living together will have their partnership cancelled.

Regarding property, the bill draws from what is already set out under the Civil and Commercial Code, namely the distinction between personal property and conjugal property. While it does not provide specific details about obtaining consent, it can be assumed that any legal act conducted by a partner concerning joint property must be done with consent from the other.

The bill also gives same-sex partners the right to



Photo: AFP

adopt children and inherit the properties of deceased partners. It also grants them the authority to act on behalf of their victimised partners during criminal cases.

## The Life Partnership Bill (Democrat Party)

The rights and obligations afforded to same-sex couples under this bill are largely identical to those proposed by the Cabinet, with differences primarily focused on terminologies and orders.

## The Civil and Commercial Code Amendment (Move Forward Party)

The amendments proposed by the Move Forward Party aim to extend marital rights and obligations under the Civil and Commercial Code to same-sex couples, arguing that the current limitations are unconstitutional and constitute unfair gender discrimination.

Many of the provisions align with the principles

provided by the two other bills, particularly around consent and one partner being Thai. It also bears similar provisions regarding prohibitions, joint assets, adoption, inheritance, the right to terminate the partnership, as well as the power to legally act on behalf of the partner.

Nonetheless, the amendments also bear significant differences, notably increasing the minimum age to 18 years old and changing the definition of marriage from that between a "male and female" to two "persons".

## Observations

Several questions remain, particularly whether a foreign partner would be entitled to a stay visa, whether unions registered outside Thailand would be recognised, as well as conjugal tax and probate issues. It also calls into question the procedures for separation, particularly around child custody and alimony.

Moreover, the creation of a separate union that does not give the same matrimonial rights and obligations as opposite-sex couples is discriminatory, with critics pointing out that proceeding with this would be contrary to regulators' purported intention of providing equal rights to same-sex couples.

Another issue is same-sex couples expected to pay a maximum fee of B1,000 compared with B200 for opposite-sex couples to register their partnership under the Cabinet's bill, on top of B1,000 per person for miscellaneous costs. A rationale has yet to be provided.

Whether the Thai government will choose to redefine marriage or create a separate union remains to be seen, and it may take some time before we can say with certainty whether the government's moves are motivated by pride rather than prejudice.

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POP QUIZ

- 1. What does the famous Mexican drug lord nickname 'El Chapo' mean?
- 2. How long was the longest ever tennis match in Grand Slam history?
- 3. Name the colours of the Google logo, in order.
- 4. What was first ever Western-made film to air on television in North Korea?
- 5. What is the second largest island in Thailand?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Hard

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

- 1. Ninny
- 4. Exploits
- 9. Addition symbol
- 14. Kind of dog
- 15. Remove a brooch
- 16. Category of arachnids
- 17. Breakfast order
- 20. Protection
- 21. Sealed
- 22. Day of the month
- 23. Stuffing
- 24. College major
- 27. Flatten
- 29. Affirm
- 30. "\_\_\_ true!"
- 33. Lead provider
- 36. Agreement
- 37. Leno and Walters, for example
- 40. Wake-up call?
- 41. Tear
- 42. "\_\_\_ a chance"
- 43. Blood pigment
- 44. K follower
- 46. Referendum choice
- 47. Desk item
- 51. Vandalizes, in a way
- 55. Small green parrot
- 56. Plastic wrap, for short

- 57. Comics villain
- 61. Opinion
- 62. Entanglement
- 63. Sharp turn
- 64. It's a wrap
- 65. Pluto's alias
- 66. German spa

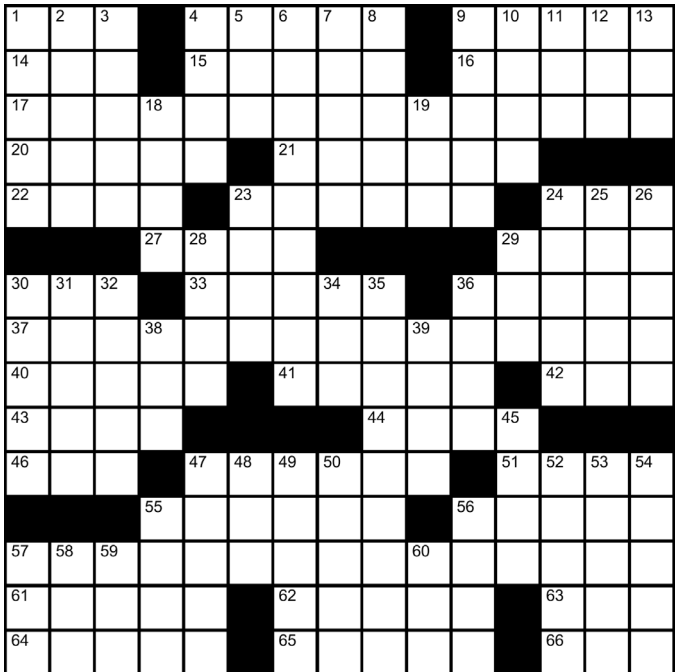
Down

- 1. Very, in music
- 2. Pivoted
- 3. "The Playboy of the Western World" author
- 4. Secures with a rope
- 5. One-striper: Abbr.
- 6. Piquance
- 7. Like some currents
- 8. Fishhook line
- 9. Pungent condiment
- 10. Breezed through
- 11. Make fun of
- 12. Joule fraction
- 13. Woody Herman's "\_\_\_ Autumn"
- 18. Not yet final, at law
- 19. It has strings attached
- 23. Central points
- 24. Winged
- 25. Taking it back to

- the old-school?
- 26. Rendezvous
- 28. Common request
- 29. Social worker?
- 30. Restive
- 31. Titter
- 32. Diets
- 34. Barely beat
- 35. Hag-ridden
- 36. Mouse manipulator
- 38. Palindromic conjunction
- 39. Approximate
- 45. Overflow
- 47. Play too broadly
- 48. Showed
- 49. Alchemical solvent
- 50. Balkan capital
- 52. Underplay
- 53. Twilight, old-style
- 54. Numbers
- 55. Malaria symptom
- 56. Eur. think tank
- 57. Trash
- 58. It's stranded
- 59. Natl. Humor Month
- 60. Cast

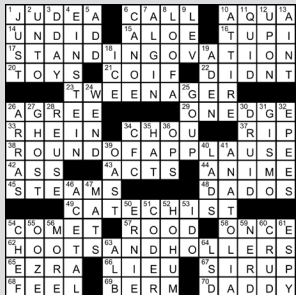
Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) Shorty; 2) 11 hours, 5 minutes (John Isner vs Nicolas Pietrangeli, played over three days at Wimbledon, 2010); 3) Blue; 4) Bend It Like Beckham; 5) Koh Samui.



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

2.5

petabytes (or 2.5 million gigabytes) is the estimated storage capacity of the human brain.

99.9

percent of all species that have ever existed on Earth are now extinct.

416

days how long the average person spends in the bathroom in their lifetime.

500,000

new Facebook profiles are created every day. That's six new profiles every second.

16

million

people living today are thought to be direct descendants of Genghis Khan.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Tranquil beach at Koh Yao Yai. Photo by Olga Kozulina

Got an unusual or particularly beautiful picture of Phuket? Email it to [execeditor@classactmedia.co.th](mailto:execeditor@classactmedia.co.th)

This week in history

July 22, 2011

A bomb blast targeting government buildings in Oslo followed by a massacre at a youth camp on Utøya island are orchestrated and carried out by a neo-Nazi. In total, 77 people are killed and more than 300 are injured.

July 23, 1921

The Communist Party of China (CPC) is established by Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao at the founding National Congress.

July 24, 1911

American Hiram Bingham III re-discovers Machu Picchu, 'the Lost City of the Incas', and makes its existence public. In 2007, it's named as one of the new seven wonders of the world.

July 25, 1965

Bob Dylan goes electric at the Newport Folk Festival, signalling a major change in folk and rock music.



Hiram Bingham at Espiritu Pampa ruins in Peru, 1911.

July 26, 1953

Fidel Castro leads an unsuccessful

attack on the Moncada Barracks, thus sparking the Cuban Revolution.

July 27, 1890

Vincent van Gogh shoots himself. The bullet cannot be removed and he dies 30 hours later.

July 28, 2005

The Provisional Irish Republican Army calls an end to its 30-year-long armed campaign in Northern Ireland. Source: Wikipedia



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FRI

5 AUG



**Grow Boating Evening**

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food buffet sponsored by the Boardwalk Bistro for all attendees. Beef Bank will also have a special price promotion on their delicious beef and if you are still hungry then there will be burgers for just 100 baht. 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. We hope to see you there and if you know anyone you think would be interested in coming, please invite them along. A special thanks to our Media Partners The Phuket News, Live 89.5 Radio and Phuket News TV

THU

11 AUG



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## Dechapol, Sapsiree smash Chinese pair to win Singapore Open

### BADMINTON

MIXED DOUBLES STARS Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Sapsiree Taerattanachai claimed their second title of the year and 14<sup>th</sup> overall after winning the US\$370,000 (B13,320,000) BWF Singapore Open last Sunday (July 17).

Top seeds Dechapol and Sapsiree took just 37 minutes to defeat third seeds Wang Yilyu and Huang Dongping of China 21-12, 21-17 in the final of the World Tour Super 500 event at Singapore Indoor Stadium.

The Thais retained the title they won the last time the tournament was held in 2019. The event was not held in 2020 and 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Dechapol and Sapsiree, who are currently ranked second in the world, took home the winners' cheque worth \$29,230.

Thai badminton chief Khunying Patama Leeswadtrakul congratulated the winning duo.

"I would like to congratulate Dechapol and Sapsiree for winning their second Singa-



Dechapol (left) and Sapsiree with their trophies after winning the 2022 Singapore Open. Photo: Badminton Association of Thailand

pore Open title," said Patama.

"It was also their third straight victory over Wang Yilyu and Huang Dongping, the fourth-ranked pair.

"They played a very good match today. And this victory will be a great boost for their confidence heading into the world championships which will be held in Japan next month [Aug 22-28]," she added.

Indonesia's Anthony Ginting beat Japan's Kodai Naraoka in the Singapore Open men's singles final last Sunday while Pusaria V. Sindhu triumphed over China's Wang Zhi Yi in the women's singles final. *Bangkok Post*

## Smith wins British Open after stunning final surge

### GOLF

AFP

Australian Cameron Smith won the 150<sup>th</sup> British Open at St Andrews last Sunday (July 17) after a stunning final round of 64 saw him overtake favourite Rory McIlroy on a dramatic day at the Old Course to claim his first major title with a 20-under-par total.

Smith began the day four shots off the lead but his eight-under-par fourth round allowed him to finish a shot clear of Cameron Young of the United States, with a frustrated McIlroy ending another stroke back in third after a 70.

World number six Smith knew something special was needed for him to win the Claret Jug and he duly delivered with eight birdies – including five in a row from the 10<sup>th</sup> – and not a single dropped shot.

McIlroy was two shots clear and in control at the turn in his final round, but then, just ahead of him, Smith set off on his birdie surge and the pendulum swung definitively his way.

At the age of 28, Smith is the first Australian in almost three decades to win the British Open since Greg Norman claimed his second Claret Jug at Royal St George's in 1993.

The Brisbane native with the trade-



Cameron Smith poses with the Claret Jug. Photo: AFP

mark mullet is also the third Australian to win the Open at the home of golf, after Peter Thomson in 1955 and Kel Nagle, who won the Open in 1960.

"To win an Open Championship in itself is going to be a golfer's highlight but to do it around St Andrews is unbelievable," he said after his victory.

Smith's 20-under-par total of 268 is the lowest winning score in an Open at St Andrews, bettering the performance of Tiger Woods, who won on 19-under in 2000.

In stark contrast to Smith, McIlroy was left to rue a series of missed birdie putts, while Viktor Hovland – who had shared the overnight lead on 16-under – faded badly to shoot a 74.

That left the door open for one of the chasing pack and Smith took full advantage thanks to his incredible performance on the back nine.

As well as the birdies he showed nerves of steel to save par at the 17<sup>th</sup>, the legendary Road Hole.

Yet he needed his final birdie on 18 as his playing partner Young produced an eagle to finish with a 65 and end on 19-under.

A play-off was avoided and Smith could celebrate his first major after he finished tied third at this year's Masters, a tournament in which he also came second in 2020.

Previously his biggest win had come at the Players Championship in March.

## Thai spikers look to World Championships

### VOLLEYBALL

THAILAND'S CAMPAIGN IN THE Volleyball Women's Nations League (VNL) may have ended in defeat to Turkey in the quarter-finals last Thursday (July 14), yet the squad remained upbeat ahead of the upcoming 2022 FIVB Volleyball Women's World Championship.

The Thais took the first set 25-23 in Ankara before surrendering the next three sets 25-15, 25-18, 25-21 to the hosts.

It was the first time that the Thais have reached the Nations League finals since the event began in 2018, although they played in the final stages a couple of times when the tournament was known as the World Grand Prix.

"Finalist for the first time in history. Still a long way to go. Proud of all representatives of our Thai national team... see you again at the World Championships," the team's official Twitter page posted.

"We played very well tonight. But they were a better team," commented Thai captain Pornpun Guedpard after the defeat.

Pornpun admitted the team had weaknesses to fix and they would regroup with better strength for the World Championship, which is being co-hosted by the Netherlands and Poland from Sept 23 to Oct 16.

"We have seen many flaws during the VNL tournament. The team will be much stronger in two months," she said.



The Thai team still smiling despite defeat in Turkey. Photo: Volleyball of Thailand

After returning home, the players will return to play for their clubs before reporting for a training camp on July 26 ahead of the World Championships.

Thailand coach Danai Sriwatcharamethakul thanked all team members and Thai fans for their support which carried them to the knock-out phase for the first time.

However, he stated the players needed to improve skills and tactics for the biggest tournament in September.

"The girls have met world-class teams," the coach said of the VNL finals. "We have to admit that we could not match up with them in some areas," he added.

Italy won the tournament after beating Brazil in Sunday's final 25-23, 25-22, 25-22.

Serbia finished in third place after defeating the hosts Turkey in the bronze medal match 27-25, 25-17, 26-24.

*The Phuket News*

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# Sterling signing ushers in the new Chelsea era

## FOOTBALL

AFP

Raheem Sterling officially joined Chelsea last Wednesday (July 13), ending the England international's successful seven-year spell at Manchester City.

The 27-year-old forward signed a five year contract for a fee reported to be £50 million (B.1 billion) and became Chelsea's first signing since Todd Boehly's consortium bought the club on May 30.

"England star Raheem Sterling has joined Chelsea from Manchester City on a five-year contract," said Chelsea in a statement.

Sterling had earlier pre-empted his move by posting a goodbye message on social media saying he left City as a "man" having arrived from Liverpool as a 20-year-old.

However, once the signing became official Sterling – who is with Chelsea on their pre-season tour of the United States – turned his attention to what he hopes to achieve under Thomas Tuchel.



Raheem Sterling warming up for former club Manchester City as Phil Foden watches on. Photo: AFP

"I've obviously achieved a lot in my career so far, but there is still so much more to achieve and I'm really looking forward to doing that in a Chelsea shirt, under Thomas's management," said Sterling.

"London is my home and where it all started for me, and it's amazing I now have the opportunity to play in front of friends and family week in, week out at Stamford Bridge."

Sterling, capped 77 times by England, won four Premier

League titles among nine major trophies since joining City from Liverpool in 2015.

A key player in the early years of Pep Guardiola's reign at City, Sterling scored 131 goals in 337 appearances for the current English champions.

However, his regular place in the starting line-up at City came increasingly under threat from the signing of Jack Grealish for a Premier League record £100 million last year, plus the emergence

of Phil Foden from the club's academy.

Sterling will be joined at Stamford Bridge for the new season by Napoli defender Kalidou Koulibaly.

A £34 million deal has been agreed between the clubs for the 31-year-old centre-back.

Chelsea were in need of defensive reinforcements after Antonio Rudiger and Andreas Christensen left as free agents to join Real Madrid and Barcelona respectively.

Meanwhile, Sterling's old teammate Riyad Mahrez has signed a two-year contract extension with the Premier League champions.

Since arriving from Leicester for £60 million in 2018, Mahrez has made 189 appearances, scored 63 goals and provided 45 assists. The 31-year-old has won three Premier League titles, three League Cups and one FA Cup with City.

"I'm very happy to sign the new deal. I have enjoyed every single minute of my time here. It's a pleasure to be part of such an incredible club," Mahrez said.



Photo: Sports Association of Phuket

## Bang Tao Beach Run helping local community get back on its feet

### BADMINTON

THE 2022 BANG TAO BEACH Run took place last Sunday (July 17) as part of an ongoing project by authorities to help stimulate the local economy and revitalise tourism.

The President of the Phuket Sports Association Tham-mawat Wongchareonyot presided over the opening ceremony and officially started the race at around 7am in cool, breezy conditions.

Mr Thammawat was joined by Warin Khaothong, Secretary General of the Phuket Sports Association, at the race inauguration.

Both officials handed out awards and prizes at the end of the race to competitors who took part in a 5km Fun Run and a 10km Mini Marathon. Additionally, all participants

received a commemorative medal and a T-shirt from the occasion.

Participants were classified based on age across four categories: open to all ages, 30-39 years old, 40-49 years old and 50 years and over. All age classifications covered both male and female runners.

The race was planned by the Cherno Talay Tambon Administrative Organisation in cooperation with the Phuket Provincial Tourism and Sports Office as part of an ongoing project to help local communities still reeling from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and its detrimental impact on tourist numbers visiting the island.

The project is also focused on promoting the merits of good health of local citizens by encouraging more people to exercise. *The Phuket News*

## Great start for Ten Hag as United win Bangkok battle

### FOOTBALL

ERIK TEN HAG SAID HE WAS "SATISFIED" after getting off to a perfect start as Manchester United manager, but insisted he would not be getting carried away after a 4-0 thumping of arch-rivals Liverpool in a pre-season friendly in Thailand last Tuesday (July 12).

United started strongly against an unfamiliar Liverpool line-up, cruising to a 3-0 half-time lead through goals from Jadon Sancho, Fred and Anthony Martial at Bangkok's Rajamangala Stadium.

Both managers made wholesale substitutions throughout the 90 minutes and Jurgen Klopp's stronger second-half Liverpool line-up dominated possession before Facundo Pellistri grabbed United's fourth on the break, 14 minutes from time.

It gave Ten Hag and his new side a morale-boosting win in their first warm-up outing ahead of the new Premier League campaign beginning next month.

"I am satisfied today," said Dutchman Ten Hag, who took the reins at Old Trafford less than two months ago.

"We have started to build a team and I am happy with the first game," he added.

"It will take a lot of time. I have seen a lot of mistakes. Liverpool played three teams, they were not at their strongest. We will not overestimate this result."

Liverpool were unlucky not to get on



Manchester United's Bruno Fernandes (left) and manager Erik Ten Hag (right) with the trophy after the win over Liverpool in Bangkok. Photo: AFP

the scoresheet, hitting the woodwork three times after Sancho opened the scoring in the 12th minute.

Fred's instinctive, measured chip over the Liverpool goalkeeper Allison Becker extended the lead in the 30th minute before man-of-the-match Martial made it 3-0 three minutes later.

"The game came up a bit early for us. But I saw some good things," said Klopp. "That is just the start of the pre-season. It is all a learning process and we are at the start of it."

United followed up their victory in Bangkok with a 4-1 win over Melbourne Victory at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Friday (July 15) while Liverpool defeated Crystal Palace 2-0 in Singapore. *AFP*

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# Sport



**Spikers vow to learn from defeat > p14**

## STAR SAILOR

### Thai youth wins world title in Turkey



Weka on his way to victory during the final day of sailing in Bodrum, Turkey, on July 7. Photo: Sports Association of Thailand

#### SAILING

Ben Tirebuck  
editor3@classactmedia.co.th

**T**hai sailor Weka Bhanubandh delivered a storming final day of fleet racing to win the individual youth category at the 2022 Arkas Optimist World Championship in Turkey on July 7.

The sailing tournament for single-handed dinghies was held from June 27 to July 7 and saw 276 youth sailors from 61 countries compete.

The famed white houses of Bodrum provided the iconic background as high

winds made for perfect sailing conditions which gave the participants an unforgettable experience throughout the week-long competition.

Weka, 15, started the final day in sixth place behind race leader Danyil Mykhailichenko of Ukraine in first place, Sweden's Henric Wigforss in second and James Pine of the United States in third.

However, indifferent form from many of the top sailors saw the Thai youngster turn on the style and leapfrog five places to finish in top spot and claim the gold medal with a total of 96 points from his 12 races across the week-long competition.

Weka edged Pine by one point to take the top prize, with the American securing the silver medal. Italy's Francesco Carrieri finished in third to claim the bronze medal.

Also representing Thailand at the event were Chanathip Thongklam, who finished 28<sup>th</sup>, Nawatorn Suphaumphonwit, who finished 60<sup>th</sup>, Pitipoom Charoenphon, who finished 78<sup>th</sup> and Phacharapun Ongkaloy, who finished 79<sup>th</sup>.

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha congratulated the entire team for their performance in Turkey, saying he was proud that they had helped boost Thailand's reputation on the global stage. He

further thanked the coaches and associated agencies for their support and emphasised that the government is always willing to assist in the development of youngsters in sport to provide them the chance to achieve their goals and become future champions.

Turkey's Medine Havva Tatlican won the girl's race, followed by Chrysoula Kanelou Kokkinaki of Greece and Joana Freitas of Brazil.

The award ceremony on the final day took place at the historic Bodrum Castle, one of the city's most well-known historical monuments.

Weka's win followed on from the excellent form he and

his compatriots demonstrated at the Trofeo Marco Rizzotti warm-up match in Italy on May 19-22, in which all of the five Thai sailors competing finished in the top five places, for which they received the tournament's Fair Play Award.

Weka had previously won the Thailand Optimist National Championship and European Optimist Championship in 2020. Last year he won the 2021 Optimist Asian & Oceanian Championship before securing top spot in the Admiral's Youth Cup 2021 at the Royal Varuna Yacht Club in Pattaya.

After the win in Pattaya he told the *Bangkok Post*,

"I am really happy with my performance this year. I've trained many hours and put in lots of effort into my training to get this far.

"I believe if you put enough time and effort into reaching a goal, you could accomplish that goal or at least feel happy with your results. Now I am aiming to qualify for the World Championships and eventually reach the world podium. I am working hard towards making it all happen."

Weka's hard work and determination certainly paid off as he achieved that goal and took his place as the winner on the podium in Bodrum on July 7.

## Two-week school athletics competition hailed a success

#### ALL SPORTS

THE CURTAIN WAS BROUGHT down last Thursday (July 14) on the two-week festival of sport activities created for local schools across Phuket known as the '2022 Phuket Student Athletics Competition'.

Rewat Areerob, President of Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO), oversaw the 4pm closing ceremony at Surakul Stadium where a marching band from Satree Phuket School performed.

Mr Rewat and fellow dignitaries then distributed medals and trophies to the winners before the PPAO

chief congratulated the organisers and all the students who took part in the competition that ran from July 1-14.

"Congratulations to all the athletes who have received awards for their achievements in the competition during the last two weeks," Mr Rewat said.

"Congratulations also to all those that took part. Regardless of the outcome, it is the values of sportmanship, love, unity, acceptance and forgiveness that matter most," he added.

"The competition has also been an excellent platform to showcase how important it is to encourage youngsters to pursue a healthy



Photo: The Sports Association of Phuket

lifestyle, so congratulations also to all those involved in organising the event."

A total of 13 sports competitions were arranged during the two-week period, including athletics, football, futsal, swimming, basketball, 3x3 basketball, badminton, petanque,

tennis, sepak takraw, table tennis, volleyball and beach volleyball.

More than 3,000 people were involved, including officials, controllers, teachers and students/athletes from a total of 30 schools across Phuket.

The PPAO confirmed on June 30 that they had donated B2.7 million to support the competition which they also hoped would help promote Phuket as an attractive sports-tourism destination.

Joining Mr Rewat at the closing ceremony were officials from the Phuket Sports Association, including President Thammawat Wongcharoenyot, Vice President Prachan Pachantabutr, Treasurer

Chinnasit Channarong and Executive Committee Member Suphachai Petchkong.

Also present were PPAO Vice Presidents Anuparp Vejvanichsanong and Thiwat Seedokboob and Ratchadaphon Oin of the Phuket Tourism and Sports office.

Ms Ratchadaphon commented, "The 2022 Phuket Student Athletics Competition received great support from the PPAO under the leadership of Mr Rewat Areerob which, with additional cooperation from government agencies, educational institutions, local government organisations and the private sector, meant the event was a great success in every aspect." *The Phuket News*