

**NACC ORDERS BEACH CHAIRS CLEARED FROM KATA > PAGE 2**

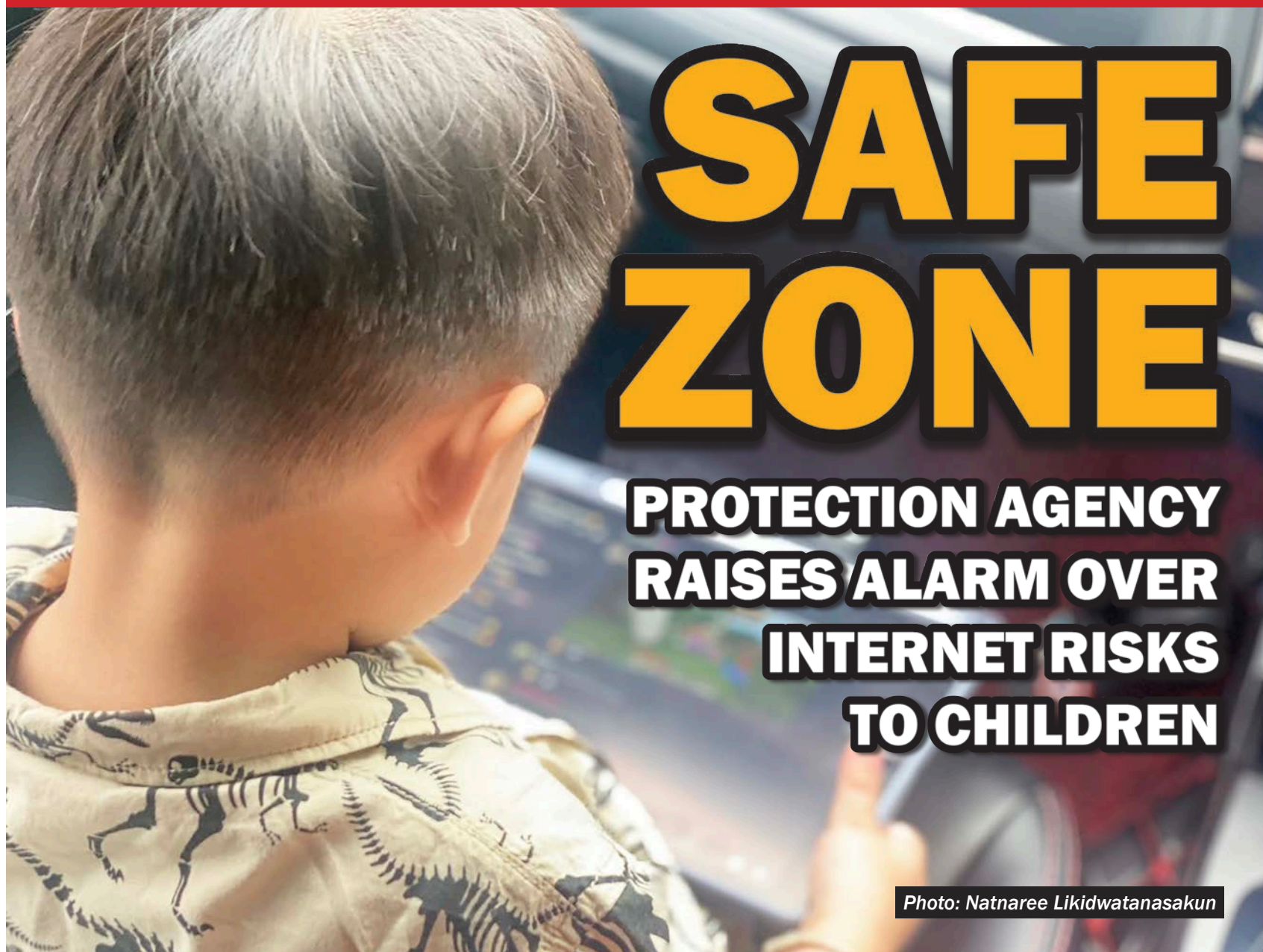


Photo: Natnaree Likidwatanasakun

**Natnaree Likidwatanasakun**  
reporter1@classactmedia.co.th

The greatest threat to children's safety today is not on the streets but online, according to Mattias Bjorkqvist, Executive Director of For Freedom International (FFI), a Phuket-based foundation combating human trafficking and exploitation.

"Parents are using mobile phones as a babysitting device, so children at a very young age are exposed to social media and materials they should not see," he said. "Since COVID-19, children's

online consumption has risen by 40% and remains high, leaving them more vulnerable to grooming, sexual extortion, and exploitation through live streaming."

Bjorkqvist said that victims of online exploitation often suffer deeper, longer-lasting trauma than those abused in person, as the evidence can be shared indefinitely.

Suicide risk among online exploitation victims is 10% higher because their images and videos may be shared for years without their control, he warned.

Bjorkqvist called on schools to make online threat awareness

training compulsory and to adopt robust child protection policies – and for parents to ensure schools follow through.

"Children nowadays are looking for acceptance and love online instead of from their parents," he said. "This needs to change – spend time with your children, teach them values, and show them love and acceptance."

**SHARP RISE**

Levi Khaewprakan, FFI's Social Department & Child Advocacy Center (CAC) Manager, confirmed that online crimes against children

have increased sharply, with predators luring victims into sharing intimate images, selling explicit clips, or engaging in sexualised role-playing through games.

"Offline crimes, such as kidnapping for labour, still occur but are less frequent. The higher rate this year is primarily online crimes," he said.

Children, he noted, often believe image-sharing is harmless and private. "Sometimes, sharing photos may not be physically abusive, but once leaked online, they leave a psychological scar and a permanent digital footprint."

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# News



**Mai Khao Beach gets sustainable boost > p5**



Photo: CIB

## Rawai bar faces raid over child prostitution

THE CENTRAL INVESTIGATION Bureau (CIB), through its Anti-Human Trafficking Division (AHTD), has arrested three people following a raid on a popular bar in Rawai allegedly involved in the prostitution of a 17-year-old girl and a transgender woman.

The arrests took place at a shop in Moo 7, Rawai, after an informant reported that minors were being offered for sexual services, the CIB explained in its report.

The operation was led by Lt Col Nattaphon Daowiang and officers from CSD Division 5.

Police confirmed the reports, identifying a fee of B2,500 per person plus a B500 "bar fine".

An undercover officer posed as a customer, paying for services before signalling the arrest team. Officers took into custody 'Ms Niracha', 50, the bar owner, along with 'Mr Pornchai', 21, and 'Mr Somjai, 21', both staff at the bar.

Police seized B5,000 in marked banknotes used in the sting operation. A 17-year-old girl and a transgender woman were rescued from the premises.

The suspects were sent to the Crime Suppression Division's Investigation Division 5 for further legal proceedings.

*The Phuket News*

## Children face online risk

*Continued from page 1*

He described a troubling case in Thalang involving a fifth-grade student who became a middleman in sexual exploitation due to family and financial pressures.

Mr Levi also warned that parents wrongly assume children are safer indoors. "We've seen cases where children sent obscene content while their parents were in the same room, unaware of the danger," he said.

### ONLINE EXPOSURE

Narupol Nakwatchara, Head of Data Analysis at FFI, said most exploitation cases now happen on platforms like Discord, where livestreams and self-recordings give predators easy access.

"Most cases involve ignorance and misunderstanding... leading to victimisation," he said. "Some victims share images within 15 minutes of chatting to a stranger."

In Phuket, there are currently 40-50 cases involving boys and around 20 involving girls, with 58% of victims coerced through blackmail or threats. Mr Narupol said many children see image-sharing as a quick way to earn money, with few independent media outlets warning of the risks.

He stressed the need for collaboration between schools, parents, child services and the media to raise awareness. "Schools, parent groups, and youth groups are welcome to contact us for prevention education," he added.

Over the past five years, FFI has reached more than 18,000 children, visiting 35 schools in the last year alone. Their outreach shows many



For Freedom International holds an awareness event for young students. Photo: For Freedom International

children struggle to distinguish reality from virtual gaming worlds – including violent and sexualised role-play.

Beyond prevention, FFI runs a residential home and vocational training programme for children at risk. Overseen by Viyada Bjorkqvist, the centre houses seven to eight children at a time, offering both practical skills and academic education.

"For those over 18, we help them find employment in Phuket. Those under 18 continue receiving care, psychological support, and life skills training," she said. Many children remain in care for up to two years, particularly if returning home would put them in danger.

Domestic violence, she added, remains one of the strongest risk factors for

exploitation. "If the family is in conflict, it's easy for parents to exploit their children, leading to illegal activities such as drug use," she warned.

### TRAFFICKING

Communication and Development Associate Jariya Kaoropwongchai highlighted the wider trafficking problem. In 2024 alone, Thailand recorded 379 human trafficking cases involving 517 victims – 294 of them children. More than half were boys, and most cases occurred online.

The number of victims has risen steadily from 319 in 2021. Last year saw 227 cases of online sexual exploitation, alongside 115 other sexual exploitation cases.

FFI works closely with national law enforcement and social services, building

child-friendly interview rooms in Phuket, Krabi, Songkhla, and Bangkok to help secure justice. The foundation also provides long-term vocational training in baking, salon work, English, and life skills, as well as internships for older teens.

"Children spend their free time communicating through apps and games, which makes them more vulnerable to deception," Jariya said. "When parents are busy and hand over their phones, it's like giving a criminal direct access to them."

For Freedom International says the challenge is growing – but so is its determination to fight back. "Even though the environment changes, the scar in the heart of the children is clear," Mr Levi said. "We want them to know they are not alone."

## NACC orders beach chairs cleared from Kata

THE PHUKET OFFICE OF the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC Phuket) has given Karon Municipality 15 days to remove all beach chairs from Kata Beach – warning that failure to act will trigger legal proceedings.

The order was delivered by NACC Phuket Director Suwat Saowarat during a meeting with Karon Mayor and local officials on Aug 15, attended

by officers from the Anti-Corruption Division of the Phuket Provincial Office and other agencies.

An on-site inspection of Kata Beach followed the meeting, where officials confirmed the beach chairs were encroaching on public land reserved for shared use.

Karon Municipality has since issued written notices to the chair operators, ordering them to

demolish any structures and remove all property from the beach within 15 days. Those who ignore the order will face "strict legal action", officials warned.

Mr Suwat said NACC Phuket had also given recommendations to the municipality, heard its concerns and instructed all officials to adhere rigidly to the law.

"NACC Phuket will continue to monitor, follow up, observe



Photo: NACC Phuket

and take action within our authority," NACC Phuket stated

in its report on the inspection. *Natnaree Likidwatanasakun*



# Legal tactics delay Eva Beach demolition

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Legal manoeuvres have once again stalled the demolition of the controversial Eva Beach project in Rawai, as a fresh lawsuit has forced the long-running case back before the Administrative Court.

The dispute, which has dragged on for more than a decade, centres on a luxury vacation home development built on Rawai's beachfront.

Thailand's Supreme Administrative Court ruled in September 2023 that the project was constructed unlawfully, but despite demolition orders, enforcement has yet to take place.

Officials now admit that successive lawsuits filed by different buyers of the development have delayed action, with each new case reopening old disputes under new arguments.

"The court has accepted a new lawsuit from a second buyer," confirmed Natthakrit Phonphet, Deputy Chief of the Phuket Provincial Natural Resources and Environment Office (MNRE Phuket). "They are citing different coastal conditions compared with when the first EIA was approved. The result is that the case returns to court once again."

Mr Natthakrit described the



strategy as a way of "buying time through legal procedure," effectively freezing enforcement of the demolition orders that were supposed to have been carried out months ago.

The Eva Beach project has been a flashpoint in Rawai for years. Back in the early 2010s, a buyer launched legal action against Rawai Municipality and the Phuket EIA committee, arguing that the development had been illegally approved.

The litigation ultimately reached the Supreme Administrative Court, which upheld a 2017 Nakhon Sri Thammarat Administrative Court decision. That ruling found that Rawai Mayor Aroon Solos and the EIA committee at that time had acted unlawfully and negligently in issuing the building permits.

The court detailed multiple

violations, including buildings that exceeded legal height limits, improper spacing between structures, construction of facilities and landscaping on public land, and the use of permits that had been issued incorrectly. The developer, Eva Group, was ordered to remove the offending buildings.

The final judgement, delivered on Sept 15, 2023, under case number Aor 1465/2566 (2023), left no doubt: the project could not stand in its current form.

Yet, almost two years later, the structures remain in place. Each new lawsuit has slowed enforcement, keeping the matter tied up in court and frustrating local residents who have followed the case closely.

The latest round of litigation emerged during the 6<sup>th</sup>/2025 meeting of Phuket's Expert

Committee on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) reports, convened at the MNRE Phuket office last week.

The committee acknowledged the Administrative Court's acceptance of the new case and resolved to appoint a legal advisor from MNRE Phuket to represent the committee in the proceedings.

For officials, the legal setback comes just as Phuket authorities are trying to streamline EIA screening for new developments. The meeting last week was originally intended to expedite review of large-scale residential and hotel projects while ensuring compliance with environmental law.

Chaired by Phuket Vice Governor Samawit Suphanphai, the session brought together MNRE Phuket Chief Surasak Anusorn, government officials, private-sector representatives and independent experts.

At the meeting officials and private sector representatives reviewed four major projects currently seeking approval: the Hennessy Residence condominium (conversion) by Art Property Co Ltd; the Banyan Tree Beach Residence Kianda condominium by Laguna Grande Co Ltd; the Charoensin Thani Dome Prai project extension by Charoensin Asset Co Ltd; and the Thavorn

Beach Village & Spa hotel extension, also by Charoensin Asset Co Ltd.

Vice Governor Samawit stressed that despite the legal complications surrounding Eva Beach, Phuket's EIA process remains focused on balancing development with environmental responsibility.

"The meeting was conducted with transparency, with participation from all relevant sectors," he said. "Our aim is to ensure that economic development, land use and environmental conservation progress together in a sustainable way."

That balance has long been a challenge in Phuket, where pressure from investors in tourism and real estate frequently collides with concerns about coastal preservation, water resources and local community rights.

The Eva Beach saga, in particular, has become a cautionary tale – a case study in how flawed approvals, weak enforcement and protracted legal manoeuvres can undermine environmental regulations.

For now, the beachfront properties at Rawai remain standing, but the courts may yet decide their fate once again. How quickly any demolition order will finally be enforced, however, remains far from clear.

## Landfill crisis worsens as capacity exceeded

THE SAPHAN HIN landfill has exceeded its 800,000-tonne capacity, with waste continuing to pour in from across the island, prompting urgent calls for action from Phuket City Mayor Suphot La-ongphet.

The landfill, operated under Phuket City Municipality, receives refuse from all local administrative organisations in the province. Mayor Suphot said the mounting waste, combined with limited space, budget and equipment, has intensified problems with foul odours, flies and other environmental impacts.

"Phuket is in crisis," he warned, adding that without more funding, some of the waste could end up being returned to the landfill even after partial disposal.

For fiscal 2025, central government funding has been approved to dismantle 100,000 tonnes of old waste, with the private sector assisting in removing another 200,000 tonnes, Mayor Suphot explained.

However, about 500,000 tonnes still remain. The Phuket Provincial Adminis-



trative Organisation (PPAO) has committed B30 million, and Phuket City Municipality will allocate B10mn more to remove an additional 100,000 tonnes, he added.

Compounding the problem is the high cost of acquiring government land for waste management projects. Mayor Suphot noted that the Royal Forest Department requires nearly B70mn in compensation for reforestation and maintenance when forest areas are used, placing a heavy strain on provincial budgets.

The rainy season is also making operations more difficult, with wet ground and standing water hindering waste sorting and transport.

The mayor stressed that

long-term success depends on reducing waste at the source through proper separation, especially of organic waste, which causes the worst odours and liquid seepage.

"If we separate waste at home, we can cut the amount going into the landfill by up to 60%," he said. "Every piece of waste starts with our hands. If we separate it at the source, it will greatly reduce the burden on machinery, landfill space, and the government budget."

Mayor Suphot urged the public, private sector and all levels of government to join forces in tackling the problem, saying, "This is not just a municipal issue – it's a responsibility we all share." *The Phuket News*

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The Phuket News

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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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Wind 4 m/s

TUE AUGUST 26

High: +35°  
Low: +28°

Wind 4 m/s

WED AUGUST 27

High: +37°  
Low: +28°

Wind 4 m/s

THU AUGUST 28

High: +36°  
Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

## Man killed in fiery motorbike crash

A 23-YEAR-OLD PHUKET man was killed when his motorbike slammed into the back of an 18-wheeled cement truck on the bypass road early Monday morning (Aug 18).

Phuket City Police were called to the scene, on the southbound lanes near the Premium Outlet mall, at about 1am.

At the scene, officers found the wreckage of a Phuket-registered motorbike that had rear-ended the cement truck and burst into flames.

The rider, named by police only as Atthaphon Boonyuak, 23, originally from Nongkhai, was thrown into the far-right lane and died at the scene.

Witnesses told police that the cement truck had been travelling normally when the motorbike came speeding from behind and struck the rear of the truck with great force.

Restaurant staff nearby attempted to control the fire as the wreckage burned in the middle of the road.

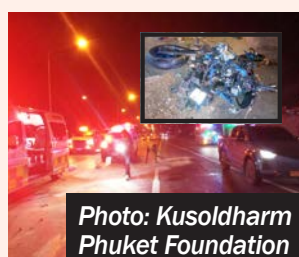


Photo: Kusoldharm Phuket Foundation

As the blaze was being dealt with, an Isuzu pickup travelling in the middle lane collided with the burning wreckage. Moments later, a black pickup, of unknown make and licence plate, drove through the far-right lane and ran over the victim's leg before fleeing the scene.

A witness confirmed that both pickup trucks were travelling at high speed when the collisions occurred. The Isuzu pickup remained at the scene, while the black pickup fled without stopping to assist.

At last report, police were reviewing nearby CCTV footage in a bid to identify the driver of the black pickup and bring them to justice.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Tourists charged for bike rental beating

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Director-General of the Department of Provincial Administration, Nirat Phongsithaworn, has ordered the Kathu District Chief to immediately investigate a social media post showing Arab tourists attacking a Thai motorbike rental operator in Patong.

Mr Nirat said the post raised concerns about potential impacts on tourism, DOPA Phuket told *The Phuket News*.

Kathu District Chief Akkaraphon Suthirak Chittsuphap, accompanied by the Deputy District Chief of Patong Police Station and members of the Kathu District unit of the Volunteer Defense Corps (OrSor), reviewed the incident and followed up on Patong Police Station's legal proceedings on Aug 14, Kathu District Office reported.

According to the investigation, the incident occurred at Rolling Stone All Tour on Soi Patong Center, Phra Metta Rd, Patong, at around 9pm on



Photo: Kathu District Office

Sunday, Aug 10.

An Arab tourist had rented a Honda X-ADV 750cc motorcycle and requested a test ride. During the ride, an accident occurred that damaged the motorcycle. The shop demanded B50,000 in compensation, but the tourist offered only B10,000, said the report.

An argument escalated into a physical altercation. The tourist called five friends to intervene, resulting in a brawl. A witness clarified that reports claiming 20 tourists were involved were inaccurate; most bystanders were not part of the fight.

The Thai motorbike rental operators suffered injuries and was hospital-

ised after the gang assault.

Patong Police Chief Pol Col Chalermchai Hirasawat and Pol Lt Col Chittawan Pengkaew, the investigating officer, confirmed that assault charges have been filed against six foreign nationals.

The Immigration Bureau has temporarily suspended their travels while the investigation continues, pending medical reports.

Additionally, an Arab tourist has filed a counter-report alleging assault by a Thai individual.

The Kathu District Chief said the case will be closely monitored and updates will be provided to the Director-General of the Department of Provincial Administration.

## Python rescued from Chalong garden

A 4.5-METRE RETICULATED python was safely captured from a garden in Chalong last Saturday night (Aug 16), after residents discovered the giant snake hiding beneath a pallet.

The call for help came at about 9pm, when British volunteer first responder Vincent 'Vinnie' Modell, of the Kusoldharm Foundation Patong branch – and also known locally as the 'Snake Guy in Phuket' – was dispatched to the property.

Homeowners, who were left shaken by the discovery, said the python was suspected of already having eaten up to four cats in the area.

Locals initially offered to kill the reptile by beheading it, but the property owners refused, opting instead for a humane rescue.

Mr Modell said the capture took only about three minutes.



Screenshot: Vincent Modell

The python is now to be handed over to a Thai animal foundation for safekeeping.

Mr Modell regularly shares updates of his rescues through his Facebook page, 'Snake Guy in Phuket'. *The Phuket News*

## Russian arrested for firearms charges

PHUKET IMMIGRATION officers have arrested a 27-year-old Russian man wanted on a criminal warrant for firearms trafficking back to his home country after fleeing Bangkok to hide in Phuket.

The suspect was wanted on a warrant issued by the Phra Khanong Criminal Court in Bangkok on July 31, reported Phuket Immigration.

The warrant for his arrest was for joint possession of a firearm without a license.

Authorities tracked the suspect to Phuket, where he was reportedly residing while evading law enforcement. Officers coordinated to have him report to Phuket Immigration. Upon his arrival, they presented the warrant and immediately took him into custody, Phuket Immigration explained.

The suspect, not named in the report by Phuket Immigration, initially denied all charges. He has since been transferred to investi-



Photo: Phuket Immigration

gators for legal proceedings. Officials are coordinating with the Russian Embassy regarding further action.

The Immigration Bureau, under Pol Lt General Panumas Boonyalak, emphasised that addressing foreign nationals involved in illegal work, transnational crimes and activities that threaten public safety is a top priority.

The Bureau said the move also reinforces its aim to safeguard tourism, prevent organised crime and ensure confidence and safety for visitors in Phuket. *The Phuket News*



# Monsoon beach cleaning gets a boost

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

**M**ai Khao resorts and government organisations have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Sustainable Maikhao Foundation to preserve the marine ecosystem of Mai Khao Beach by hiring a beach cleaning team through to November.

The initiative was launched in late July with a ceremony attended by government officials, hotel general managers and associates, NGO representatives and volunteers. Thalang District Chief Siwat Rawangkun formally opened the event, which featured speeches from Arjun Channa, General Manager of JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa, and Jirarat Ninpradub, General Manager of Le Meridien Phuket Mai Khao Beach.

Guests also met the three full-time beach cleaners employed under the program, who were commended by Michelle Mouillé, founder of the Sustainable Maikhao Foundation, and Ekorn Phiraponramet, the project coordinator.

The alliance is spearheaded by the Sustainable Maikhao Foundation, a Thai non-profit that connects the private sector, government agencies and community



Recyclables for sorting. Photo: Anantara

members through environmental action and education.

Partners include Anantara Mai Khao Phuket Villas, Anantara Vacation Club, JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa, Marriott Vacation Club, SALA Phuket Mai Khao Beach Resort, Renaissance Phuket Resort & Spa, Melia Phuket Mai Khao, Le Meridien Phuket Mai Khao Beach, Maikhao Dream Villa Resort & Spa, Maikhao Palm Beach Resort, Coriacea Boutique Resort, alongside the Mai Khao Tambon Administrative Organisation (OrBorTor), Sirinat National Park and the Mai Khao Marine Turtle

Foundation.

“Environmental stewardship is a core value at Anantara Mai Khao Phuket Villas,” said Serge Cuypers, General Manager at Anantara Mai Khao Phuket Villas. “We are proud to take part in a project that aligns with our sustainability goals and commitment to environmental preservation. It also reinforces our ongoing efforts to support the local community in protecting and sustaining this unique destination.”

The ‘Monsoon Beach Cleaning Team’ project has already removed 2.5 metric

tonnes of rubbish in just one month from the 4.6-kilometre designated cleaning zones. The project doesn’t stop at collection. After every cleanup, waste is sorted into 16 categories so that recyclables can be recovered and materials repurposed. Up to date, nearly one metric tonne of the rubbish removed has been cleaned and sent to recycling projects. The aim is to move beyond simply removing rubbish and instead address the root issues of waste reduction, reuse and recycling.

“We hope that this project will inspire other communities to work together on finding solutions to the growing negative environmental impacts facing ecosystems in Phuket and beyond,” said Michelle with deep conviction.

Since its establishment in 2020, the Sustainable Maikhao Foundation has built a strong record in coastal conservation through beach cleanups, eco-educational workshops, recycling drives and corporate social responsibility activities. In partnership with hotels, schools and community groups, it has removed more than 27 metric tonnes of waste from eight beaches and two islands in Phuket and Phang Nga, with the support of over 8,000 volunteers. The

foundation is proud to say that 10 metric tonnes of this waste has been sent to recycling projects.

The foundation’s goals for the next decade are ambitious: collect 50 metric tonnes of waste by 2030 and establish a Recycling & Learning Center. The centre will serve as a hub for environmental education, showcasing innovative recycling techniques and offering training programs for residents, students and hospitality workers.

The ‘Mai Khao as One’ initiative is being hailed as a model for how tourism, conservation and community action can work in unison. By aligning the resources of luxury resorts with grassroots environmental efforts, the alliance is demonstrating that economic development and ecological preservation can go hand in hand.

Sustainable Maikhao Foundation is open to collaborating with other communities in greater Phuket to initiate similar projects with the aim of preserving our island’s diminishing natural resources

For more information, contact Michelle at [sustainablemaikhao@gmail.com](mailto:sustainablemaikhao@gmail.com).

Facebook: Sustainable Mai Khao.

Instagram: [sustainable.maikhao](https://www.instagram.com/sustainable.maikhao).

Website: [www.sustainablemaikhao.foundation.org](http://www.sustainablemaikhao.foundation.org)

## Flight instructor dies after ultralight crash

A PHUKET FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR has died following an ultralight aircraft crash during a training flight in Pa Khlok last Sunday afternoon (Aug 17).

The accident happened at about 4pm on the Muang Mai – Pa Klok Road, directly in front of Phuket Airport.

Initial reports confirmed that instructor Surasak ‘Khun O’ Chana, about 40, and his student, Russian national Sergei Razukov, 36, were both injured and taken to Thalang Hospital. Surasak suffered a broken ankle and a head injury, while Mr Razukov also sustained a head injury. Both men were reported to be conscious when rescued.

However, in a statement later posted online, Flying Phuket, the official Facebook page of the Phuket Flying Club, which operates out of Phuket Airpark, confirmed that Mr Surasak had succumbed to his injuries.

“Regarding yesterday’s incident, our team would like to express our deepest condolences for the passing of Khun O, our airport manager and flight instructor, and wish him peace,” the group said.

“The cause of the accident is still under investigation, so we cannot provide further details. The flight instructor he was training at the time of the accident is safe,” the statement added.

The club said funeral arrangements will be announced once confirmed and thanked the community for the outpouring of support.

Mr Surasak, affectionately known as ‘Khun O’, was well known among Phuket’s flying community, with many tributes shared online since news of his passing.



Photo: Phuket Flying

“It’s very sad to read about this. Please receive my sincere condolences. He was such a great guy,” wrote one friend.

“Oh no, so sad to hear this terrible news! Blue skies to our dear friend Oh, my sincerest condolences to family, friends and Amy,” posted another.

Thalang Police confirmed that the ultralight took off from Phuket Airpark at about 2pm and crashed two hours later. The aircraft has been impounded for inspection, while witnesses are being questioned as part of the investigation.

Readers have since pointed out that the aircraft involved was an ultralight, not a paramotor as initially reported. While both fall under the category of light aviation, ultralights are fixed-wing aircraft subject to specific regulatory limits, whereas paramotors use a paraglider wing with a backpack-mounted engine.

At last report, Thalang Police Chief Pol Col Nikorn Chuthong said relevant agencies have been notified to investigate the cause of the crash. *The Phuket News*

## INVITATION

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# Banks swiftly follow rate cut

Bangkok Post

Local banks have responded swiftly to the Bank of Thailand's policy rate cut, reducing their lending interest rates.

The six domestic systemically important banks, comprising Bangkok Bank (BBL), Krungthai Bank (KTB), Kasikornbank, Siam Commercial Bank, Bank of Ayudhya (Krungsri) and TMBThanachart Bank, on Aug 14 announced reductions of their prime lending interest rates across the board by 0.25 percentage points just one day after the central bank's policy rate cut on Aug 13.

Chaiyavit Anuchitworawong, senior executive vice-president of BBL, said the adjustment aligns with the regulator's rate cut, supporting economic growth by stimulating domestic investment and consumption.

He said lower interest rates would help ease the financial burden on all customer segments, especially those affected by the US tariffs, both directly and indirectly.

BBL's new lending rates are 6.50% for the minimum loan rate (MLR), 6.75% for the minimum overdraft rate (MOR) and 6.65% for the minimum retail rate (MRR).

KTB president Payong Srivanich said the bank's decision is meant to help customers adapt to challenges stemming from global production restructuring, supply chain shifts and intensifying competition, while also addressing pressing domestic structural issues.

"In the face of a perfect storm of domestic structural issues and a rapidly changing global trade landscape, urgent reforms are needed to boost competitiveness, raise incomes and ensure efficient resource allocation. KTB is ready to support this transition," he said.

KTB, the country's second-largest bank, lowered its MLR to 6.50%, MOR to 6.62% and MRR to 7.045%.

Kenichi Yamato, president and chief executive of Krungsri, said the bank is cutting lending rates by 0.25 percentage points per year across all customer



segments, in line with the central bank's monetary easing.

He said the move is intended to foster a financial environment that supports business adaptation, reduces funding costs and alleviates debt burdens. Krungsri's revised MLR, MOR and MRR are 6.75%, 6.725% and 6.87%, respectively.

The Bank of Thailand's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted unanimously on Aug 13 to lower the

policy rate by 25 basis points (bps) to 1.50%, effective immediately.

MPC secretary Sakka-pop Panyanukul said the committee wants monetary policy to be more accommodative to ensure financial conditions remain conducive to business adjustment, easing the burden on vulnerable groups such as small and medium-sized enterprises and low-income households.

In this current easing cycle, the central bank has lowered the policy rate four times by 100 bps starting in October last year, followed by cuts in February, April and August this year, each by 25 bps. The MPC left the rate unchanged at its June meeting.

Two state-owned banks, Government Housing (GH) Bank and Government Savings Bank (GSB), also announced reductions to their lending rates following the policy rate cut.

GSB promoted a reduction of 25 bps on Aug 14 for all lending rates – MRR, MLR and MOR – reducing them to 6.295%, 6.325% and 6.095%, respectively, effective today.

"This means GSB's lending rates in all three categories remain the lowest in the system compared with large commercial banks," said Veerachai Amorntakolsuwech, first senior executive vice-president and acting president of GSB.

He said this rate cut is intended to ease financial burdens, increase liquidity and support the adjustment

of both entrepreneurs and the general public. This move continues the bank's earlier relief measures, which had already included two rounds of loan rate cuts in 2025 to mitigate financial costs and stimulate broader economic recovery.

GH Bank also announced a reduction of 0.25 percentage points to its MRR, lowering it to 6.245%, effective Aug 14.

GH Bank president Kamonpop Veerapala said the bank's decision to reduce the MRR by 25 bps per year is aimed at alleviating the debt burden of retail customers, who are the bank's primary client base.

The reduction will lower monthly instalment payments, helping customers maintain sufficient funds for living expenses, he said.

As for other lending rates, the bank's MLR for prime corporate term loans remains at 6.10% per year, while the MOR for prime overdraft facilities stands at 6.00% per year – both among the lowest in the market, said Mr Kamonpop.

## Hotels certified '3C'

HOTELS ACROSS PHUKET, Krabi and Phang Nga have received safety certifications under the 'Clean Hotel with 3Cs: Clean Bed, Clean Air, Clean Food' project, aimed at promoting safe and sustainable tourism in the region.

The award ceremony took place at the Royal Phuket City Hotel on Aug 14. Phuket Vice Governor Samawit Suphanphai welcomed Dr Yongyot Thamvuthi, Director-General of the Department of Medical Sciences, who presided over the event.

Certificates were presented to hotels that passed inspections for bedbugs, Legionella and norovirus. Also in attendance were Thassanee Chunpradab, Director of the Medical Sciences Center 11/1 Phuket office as well as network partners, hotel operators and local officials.

Mr Samawit said Phuket continues to attract large numbers of Thai and international tourists, recording 6,759,550 visitors in the first half of 2025, generating B258.19 billion in revenue and an average hotel occupancy rate of 79.5%.

He added that the 3C project aims to improve hotel quality, build tourist confidence and



Photo: PR Phuket

support safe, sustainable tourism along the Andaman coast.

Dr Yongyot explained that the project involves monitoring hotels for bedbugs, Legionella and norovirus, as well as inspecting kitchen hygiene and water quality.

In its first phase, 160 hotels passed the criteria, with a second phase underway for another 40 properties. Lessons learned will guide future implementations, he said.

Phuket Regional Medical Sciences Center 11/1 continues to work with hotel operators and network agencies to raise accommodation standards and ensure visitor safety, explained an official report of the event.

Hotels wishing to participate can contact the centre at 076-600119-21. *The Phuket News*

## Thai tourism momentum weakening

THAILAND'S TOURISM business could be slow for the remainder of the year, as the country faces more intense competition from Vietnam and South Korea, which are offering visa exemptions to more markets, say industry executives.

As well, they say, the domestic co-payment subsidy scheme did not effectively improve revenue for half of the participating Thai hotels.

South Korea recently announced a visa-free policy for Chinese tour groups starting in September, ahead of the Golden Week holidays in October. Vietnam has expanded visa-free entry to 12 more markets, including Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland, bringing the total to 39 markets.

Thailand has an extensive visa-free policy that covers 93 countries, but it will become less effective unless the government addresses the country's unsafe image and promotes new tourism products and attractions more actively, said Thanapol Cheewarattanaporn, president of the Association of Thai Travel Agents (Atta).

Despite border tensions with Cambodia and the attack on two Malaysian tourists in Bangkok



Photo: Bangkok Post

on Aug 8, he said the government has been slow to reassure tourists about safety or take action to instil confidence in prospective travellers.

Negative sentiment about Thailand has spread on overseas social media, said Mr Thanapol, making it very hard to reach the government's goal of 35 million foreign arrivals this year.

Atta plans to hold roadshows next month in Taiwan and India in an effort to restore tourism confidence.

As of Aug 10, Thailand had welcomed 20.2mn arrivals, down 6.9% year-on-year, with 2.8mn Chinese the largest market. However, Chinese arrivals are down about 30%, because of safety concerns as well as growing interest in other destinations.

Vietnam has been a big beneficiary of the shift, recording 12.2mn foreign arrivals during the first seven

months, a gain of 22.5% from a year earlier, driven by 3.1mn Chinese and 2.5mn South Koreans. Da Nang alone has already welcomed 1mn South Korean tourists.

Morakot Kuldilok, president of the eastern chapter of the Thai Hotels Association (THA), said many tour groups, particularly from Russia, Europe and India, have shifted their trips from Pattaya to Vietnam due to newer, cheaper properties.

A five-star hotel in Vietnam may cost half the price as a similar-tier property in Pattaya, she said.

Ms Morakot said the government should act faster to combat obstacles, such as the strong baht, which has increased hotel prices by 5-7%.

According to a July survey by the THA of 126 hotels in Thailand, 47% said the domestic tourism co-payment scheme would not increase their revenue, while 28% expected revenue to increase by no more than 5%.

Some hotels in the East forecast a revenue increase of 6-10%, with Chon Buri the top destination, projected to have roughly 48,000 bookings out of the 300,000 allocated for major cities. *Bangkok Post*



# Cambodian landmine saga to be presented to the UN

## BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

Thailand is stepping up its response to Cambodia's alleged use of landmines along the border by invoking mechanisms under the Ottawa Convention and inviting international observers to witness the situation firsthand.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Nikorndej Balankura said on Monday (Aug 18) Thailand has lodged formal protests against Cambodia, notified ASEAN chair Malaysia and mobilised its UN ambassadors in Geneva and New York.

He added that Thailand will initiate formal proceedings under the Ottawa Convention, of which Cambodia is a signatory, before its annual meeting in December.

"This is intended to highlight Cambodia's violation of the Convention and to exert pressure through the Committee on



Anti-personnel landmines removed from areas near the Thai-Cambodian border along the lower northeast of Thailand on Aug 15. Photo: Royal Thai Army

Cooperative Compliance," Mr Nikorndej said.

Mr Nikorndej also confirmed that a field visit for the General Border Committee's Interim Observer Team (IOT) to Ubon Ratchathani, Si Sa Ket and Surin, organised by the Royal Thai Armed Forces, was scheduled to take place on Wednesday.

The IOT, established during the Extraordinary GBC meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Aug 7, includes 14 military attachés from various ASEAN countries.

The delegation were to visit an operations centre, observe field activities and

inspect sites where Thai soldiers and civilians were harmed by landmines allegedly planted by Cambodian forces.

"This will allow the IOT to witness verifiable evidence firsthand and convey the truth of Cambodia's violations to the international community, countering disinformation and fabricated narratives," Mr Nikorndej said.

### INVADING THAI TERRITORY

Meanwhile, Royal Thai Army (RTA) spokesman Maj Gen Winthai Suvaree said on Monday that Cambodia is using its civilian

population to invade Thai territory in the eastern border province of Sa Kaeo.

Cambodians were building housing beyond the allocated refugee zone in Ban Nong Chan of tambon Non Mak Mun in Khok Sung district, Sa Kaeo, explained the official.

He said Thailand set up a humanitarian refugee area there to help Cambodian victims fleeing internal conflict in 1977.

When the conflict inside Cambodia ended some Cambodian refugees there refused to leave. The Cambodian government then also claimed the area was Cambodian soil and supported its citizens settling there and pressing further into Thai territory.

Thailand had been protesting against this invasion since 2014, but to no avail, Maj Gen Winthai said.

"Thailand's past humanitarian aid and generosity towards our neighbour should not be used by Cambodia unfairly," Maj Gen Winthai concluded.

## Sick princess suffers 'severe' blood infection

### BANGKOK

KING MAHA VAJIRALONGKORN's eldest daughter, who has been gravely ill in hospital for more than two years, has suffered a "severe" blood infection, the palace said last Friday (Aug 15).

Princess Bajrakitiyabha Mahidol has been unconscious in hospital since falling ill with a heart condition in December 2022 during a military dog training session at Nakhon Ratchasima.

A statement from the Bureau of the Royal Household gave the first update on the princess's condition in more than two years.

"The doctors have reported that the Princess' lungs and kidneys have been functioning with support from medical devices and medication," the statement said.

"From Aug 9, 2025, the medical team detected a severe infection in the bloodstream, leading them to administer antibiotics and medication to stimulate



Princess Bajrakitiyabha Mahidol. Photo: Bangkok Post

blood pressure in order to maintain stable levels."

Doctors will continue to monitor her condition and provide treatment, the statement said.

Known in Thailand as "Princess Bha", the 46-year-old is the eldest daughter of King Maha Vajiralongkorn and the only child from his first marriage.

Educated in Britain, the United States and Thailand, Bajrakitiyabha has held a number of positions with the United Nations and has campaigned for better treatment of women in prisons.

She is seen as close to her father, and was appointed to a senior role in his bodyguard command a year before her hospitalisation.

AFP

## Pheu Thai rallies to back besieged PM

### BANGKOK

THE PHEU THAI PARTY ON Monday (Aug 18) gave its full backing to suspended Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra ahead of the Constitutional Court's ruling on a leaked audio clip and dismissed as highly unlikely the possibility of the Bhumjaithai Party rejoining the coalition even if a leadership change occurred.

Pheu Thai list-MP and chief government whip Visuth Chainaroon said party MPs are unconcerned about the Aug 29 ruling and have full confidence that Ms Paetongtarn's comments, made during a private phone call with Cambodian Senate President Hun Sen, were intended to protect national interests and preserve peace amid heightening tensions.

He said that morale within the party remains strong and there is no need for a backup plan because Ms Paetongtarn acted in good faith and she would receive justice.

The Pheu Thai veteran downplayed legal concerns, saying the conversation in question was outside formal negotiations and that security along the Thai-Cambodian border situation is supervised by the military.



Suspended Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra has received her party's backing. Photo: Bangkok Post

According to Mr Visuth, even in the worst-case scenario, Pheu Thai would retain the premiership, leaving only a very slim chance for the Bhumjaithai Party to be brought back into the government.

If Ms Paetongtarn is removed from the post by the court ruling, the selection process for a new prime minister will begin. Pheu Thai still has one more prime ministerial candidate, Chaikasem Nitisiri, on the list to be nominated for a House vote.

**ETHICAL MISCONDUCT** Digital Economy and Society Minister and Pheu Thai veteran

Prasert Jantararungthong on Monday denied speculation that Ms Paetongtarn is preparing to step down as premier.

It is believed that a resignation ahead of the ruling would give the court no grounds to proceed with the case. If the case is dropped, Ms Paetongtarn could escape being found guilty of ethical misconduct.

The controversy stems from a recording circulated online on June 18 of a conversation allegedly between Ms Paetongtarn and Hun Sen.

In it, Ms Paetongtarn appeared to make critical comments about the commander of the Second Army Region and repeatedly sought to appease Hun Sen, even expressing her willingness to yield to his demands.

In a written clarification submitted to the court on Aug 14, Ms Paetongtarn addressed a particularly contentious remark in the clip: "If there's anything you want, just let me know. I'll take care of it."

She claimed the words were part of her negotiating technique, not an improper offer of favours as she sought to appease Hun Sen, a personal friend of her father's. The two families have since fallen out over the clip row.

Bangkok Post

## Government given failing grade on anti-corruption

### BANGKOK

THE ANTI-CORRUPTION Organisation of Thailand (ACT) has criticised the Paetongtarn Shinawatra administration's first year in power as lacking a clear direction, effective mechanisms and a genuine commitment to tackle corruption.

Despite numerous plans such as legalising casinos, the B10,000 digital cash handout, a B157 billion economic stimulus plan and proposals to host more music festivals, many people still view these as unreliable political ploys, ACT president Mana Nimitmongkol said on Aug 14.

He argued that such mistrust stems from the rampant corruption in Thailand and the government's failure to show it is serious about suppressing this scourge, despite a plan announced to improve the nation's score in the annual Corruption Perceptions Index from 34 currently to at least 57.

State anti-corruption mechanisms have weakened over the past two years, with the government discontinuing bodies like the Anti-Corruption Opera-



Photo: Bangkok Post

tion Centre, said Mr Mana.

The government also tends to respond to crises irresponsibly – by ordering agencies to identify culprits – rather than conducting transparent investigations and addressing root causes to prevent recurrence, evident in the case of the collapsed State Audit Office (SAO) building during an earthquake on Mar 28, he added.

Ultimately, there has been no progress in the bureaucracy or legal reforms to tackle the root cause of graft as promised, said Mr Mana.

He added that the government has ignored recommendations from the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) on recurring problems such as school milk fraud, hospital drug procurement and highway bribes.

Bangkok Post



# Materialist perfection

When love is just a deal... until it's not

Materialistic: Chris Evans (left), Dakota Johnson and Pedro Pascal. Photo: IMDb

David Griffiths

One of the powers of cinema is the way that it is able to put audience members through a range of different emotions. We all cried when Bambi realised that his mother had died and we all celebrated when The Death Star was destroyed. What is not normal though is the emotionally journey that brand-new

romantic drama *Materialists* puts you through while watching it.

Written and directed by Celine Song (*Past Lives*) *Materialists* centres around the life of Lucy (Dakota Johnson – *Fifty Shades of Grey*). Lucy works for a dating agency where most of her clients are selfish narcissists looking for partners who are well and truly out of their league. Despite that, Lucy has produced one of the best 'marriage' records at the agency after getting several couples that she placed together to tie the knot.

While Lucy seems horrified at the wants and needs of most of her clients her own beliefs on what a relationship should entail also seem warped. She almost seems proud of the fact that she thinks that a relationship, especially a marriage, should be like a business deal. And when she describes what a perfect relationship should entail not once does she even mention the word love.

At the wedding of one of her clients Lucy meets rich business-man Harry (Pedro Pascal – *The Fantastic Four: First Steps*) and almost immediately begins one of these 'business-deal relationships' where she fawns over his apartment and belongings, and dates entail talking about what each 'brings to the table.'

Just as her relationship with Harry begins her ex-boyfriend John (Chris Evans – *The Avengers*) comes back into her life. John is the opposite of Harry – he is a down-on-his-luck actor who is forced to live in a crazy share-house and is constantly scraping by. The irony is that Lucy actually has fun whenever she catches up with him.

It is also Lucy that is the centre of why as an audience member you'll be taken on a bit of an emotional roller-coaster when you are watching the film. To be perfectly honest, when we are first introduced to Lucy, her clients and their shared ideals I actually found myself feeling really repulsed. I was interested in the plot but I found her character so unlikable that I was honestly hating her.

## Life-changing

At that time what was saving the film for me was the brilliantly written screenplay by Celine Song that was so well written I found myself hanging off every word that the characters spoke. This is one of those films where a dialogue-driven scene can be just suspenseful as an intense thriller.

Then something beautiful began to happen as I stuck with the film. The true power of Song's screenplay started to come to the fore. As the film went on, the events that were happening around her were beginning to mature Lucy as a character. As she matured her thoughts and beliefs began to change and soon I found that she was becoming a likable character.

In the early stages of *Materialists* there is no way I would have expected to leave this cinema happy with how things turned out – yet somehow Song's amazing screenplay completely changed by thoughts and ideas on a character and had me leaving the cinema after the credits not only happy but in the belief that this is one of the best films that I will see in 2025. I don't think I have experienced a screenplay with the power to do that for quite some time.

Elevating the power of that screenplay are the performances of the cast. Johnson is brilliant playing the different 'layers' of Lucy. She shows a true gift as she takes Lucy through this life-changing journey and brings Song's words to screen.

Pascal also becomes one of those actors that can say just as much with a facial expression than he came with a page of words with this film. His character is largely broody and dead-pan throughout the film but Pascal has a way of showing Harry's hidden emotions with a simple expression or gesture.

Then there is Evans who plays the character that most people will warm to straight-away. Again, though his character is put through an emotional wringer and Evans brings his character's inner turmoil to the screen in such a way that he reminds Hollywood that he can do more than just action films.

There will be very few films that hit screens this year with a screenplay as brilliant as *Materialists*. Celine Song reminds us that romance films don't have to be goofy, bland affairs that quickly lose their appeal. If you love well-written dramas this is one film you don't want to miss this year.

*Materialists* opens in Phuket on Aug 28 August and is yet to be classified. 5/5 Stars

David Griffiths has been working as a film journalist for over 25 years. That time has seen him work in radio, television and in print. He currently hosts a film podcast called *The Popcorn Conspiracy*. He is also a Rotten Tomatoes accredited reviewer and is an alternate judge for the Golden Globes Awards. You can follow him at Facebook: [SubcultureEntertainmentAus](#).

**WINDOW ON PHUKET**

**The October/November 2025 hard copy issue goes to print very soon**

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# Twilight Sky Restaurant & Bar is a Kata gem

Amy Bensema

Located at the SIS Kata Resort, Twilight Sky Restaurant & Bar is a chic dining venue that offers outstanding views across Kata Beach from its al fresco terrace. A great spot to catch the sunset, the restaurant and bar has a laidback vibe, friendly service team and a wonderful menu of delectable choices. If you are looking for a place for a romantic date night or to gather with friends, Twilight Sky Restaurant & Bar ticks all of the boxes in the Kata neighbourhood.

The Twilight Sky Restaurant & Bar has a new chef who was eager to give his recommendations. Based on those, we ordered the Peking Duck Salad, Tuna Tartare, Cajun Salmon Fillet and the 250 gramme Grilled Australian Beef Striploin Steak. As we waited for our meal, we admired our surroundings and took plenty of photographs of the sun setting over Kata Beach.

When the meal arrived, it was impossible to miss how beautifully each of the dishes was plated. I am a huge fan of culinary creativity, and an even bigger fan of an aesthetic plate, so props to the chef and his team for thinking outside of the box.

Served on a plush pink Himalayan salt block, the Tuna Tartare tossed with capers, onions and pickled cucumbers was out of this world. Scooped up with crispy rounds of bread, the flavours of the Tuna Tartare were both citrusy and creamy while the dish was melt-in-your-



Photos: Twilight Sky Restaurant & Bar

mouth fresh. I highly recommend trying this when you dine at Twilight Sky.

## Flavour burst

The Cajun Salmon Fillet was perfectly seasoned and served on a bed of guacamole and tomato salsa. The salmon was crispy on the outside and moist on the inside, while the guacamole and tomato salsa really gave it an extra flavour burst. The salmon isn't spicy, but the taste was extremely fresh and light.

Colourful and full of flavour, the Peking Duck Salad is made from tender slices of roasted duck tossed with cucumber, red chili and a sesame oil dressing. This salad is truly excep-

tional, featuring simple ingredients that, when mixed, produce elevated flavours.

We ordered the 250 gramme Grilled Australian Striploin Steak grilled medium. It was served with grilled root vegetables, French fries and three sauces – red wine sauce, Dijon mustard and pepper sauce. The steak is grain-fed for 150 days; it was extremely moist and tender. The portion is big enough for two and, as a side note, the red wine sauce truly added a subtle hint of flavour.

All in all, our meal was one of the best hotel-based restaurant and bar meals I've had in quite some time. The food was fantastic, and you cannot fault Twilight Sky's location. The interiors of



the restaurant are vibrant and classy while the al fresco terrace is the perfect spot to look across Kata Beach and admire the sunset.

Twilight Sky Bar & Restaurant is open daily and offers very affordable prices from a menu loaded with a variety of Asian, Thai and international favourites. Follow their socials for daily specials and curated events.

## Twilight Sky Bar & Restaurant

Opening times: 6am-10pm

Reservation: 076 609 555

[www.thesiskata.com/dining-in-style/twilight-sky/](http://www.thesiskata.com/dining-in-style/twilight-sky/)

Parking is available on-site at The SIS Kata Resort.

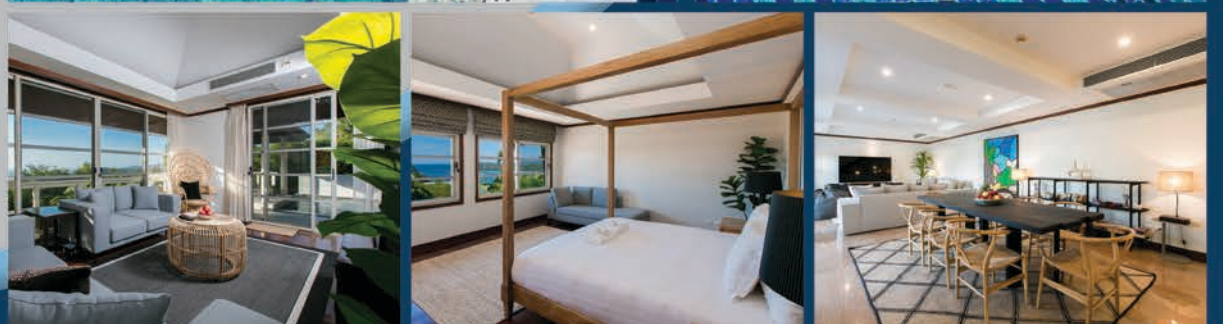
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### POP QUIZ

- What plant does the Colorado beetle attack?
- Christopher Cockerel invented what?
- To where in France do the sick make pilgrimages?
- La Giaconda is better known as what?
- In which city was Alexander Graham Bell born in 1847?

Answers below, centre

### Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

- Iraqi port
- Pain in the neck
- Spring dance
- Rehem
- Cork's country
- "\_\_\_ of the Lock" by Pope
- International \_\_\_
- Lease
- Branch of molecular science
- Global positioning meas.
- "Middlemarch" author
- Backgammon equipment
- Word of support
- Red ink amount
- Nigerian language
- Crackerjack
- Female chaperone
- Roundtable
- Like this puzzle
- Reed section member
- Atlantic catch
- Georgetown hoopster
- "48\_\_\_"
- Match parts
- Camp craft

Down

- Thai money
- Burn soother
- Leave speechless
- Flea market deal
- Circus site
- Stand up to
- Dead letters?
- Fit for farming
- Bottled spirits
- Chatters idly
- Don Juan
- Oil grp.
- Grid
- Columbus Day mo.
- Bill's partner in love

- Dump
- Profundity
- Gem State
- Rabbit
- Groove-billed \_\_\_
- Reserved
- Condescending one
- Beach particles
- Microbrewery output
- Funny
- Twosome
- Play for a sap
- Starve
- It keeps an eye on TV
- Boss
- Disreputable, slangily
- PIN requester
- Civil rights org.
- Paternity identifier
- Brilliant success
- Conflict
- Circle overhead?
- Auth. unknown
- Holiday \_\_\_
- Philistine
- Gay Talese's "\_\_\_ the Sons"
- Regards
- Hurt

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14					15				16			
17					18				19			
20							21					
		22				23						
24	25	26			27				28	29	30	31
32				33	34			35	36			
37			38					39				
40							41				42	
43						44				45		
				46	47	48			49	50		
51	52	53						54			55	56
58							59					
60					61				62			
63					64				65			

Visit: [www.ilovecrosswords.com](http://www.ilovecrosswords.com)

### SUDOKU

Easy

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

### Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

1) Potato; 2) Hovercraft; 3) Lourdes; 4) Mona Lisa; 5) Edinburgh

### Solutions to last week's puzzles:

S	A	L	P	A	T	S	A	R	M	A	G	E		
A	L	I	A	S	W	I	N	Y	O	R	E	S		
C	O	L	D	H	E	A	R	T	E	D	N	E	S	
S	E	T	S	P	I	E	R	P	U	K	A	S		
B	A	D	D	I	E	L	A	I	E					
A	L	O	O	F	E	A	S	Y	E	A	T			
W	A	R	M	I	N	G	T	H	E	B	E	N	C	H
L	E	Y	O	G	E	E	A	L	O	N	E			
A	F	T												
S	T	O	N	E	S	P	O	I	L					
C	R	U	S	T		M	A	R	L	S	I	Z	E	
H	O	T	W	A	T	E	R	B	O	T	T	L	E	S
W	O	R	E	S	A	K	I							
A	P	E	R		P	R	A	T						

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

### GOT YOUR NUMBER

**1**  
mile per hour is the average speed of the Greenland shark, *Somniosus microcephalus* (meaning roughly 'sleepy small head').

**12**  
years old is the age Morgan Freeman first started acting, when he was forced into a drama competition as a punishment for teasing a girl in his class.

**35**  
percent of the world's population has 20/20 vision.

**43**  
percent of Americans say they have assigned seats in their living rooms.

**1 million**  
Mexicans were deported from the US during the Great Depression. An estimated 60% of them were US citizens.

Source: *Uberfacts*

### ISLAND VIEW

Lotus in bloom. Photo by Sutharat Khaodee

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

### This week in history

**Aug 22, 1654**  
Jacob Barsimson arrives in New Amsterdam. He is the first known Jewish immigrant to America.

**Aug 23, 1973**  
A bank robbery gone wrong in Stockholm, Sweden, turns into a hostage crisis; over the next five days the hostages begin to sympathise with their captors, leading to the term "Stockholm syndrome".

**Aug 24, 1991**  
Ukraine declares itself independent from the Soviet Union.

**Aug 25, 1609**  
Galileo Galilei demonstrates his first telescope to Venetian lawmakers.

**Aug 26, 2009**  
Kidnapping victim Jaycee Dugard is discovered alive in California after being missing for over 18 years. Her captors, Phillip and Nancy Garrido are apprehended.

Jaycee Dugard.

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**Aug 28, 1955**  
Black teenager Emmett Till is lynched in Mississippi for whistling at a white woman, galvanizing the nascent civil rights movement. Source: *Wikipedia*



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**FRI**

**22**  
AUGUST


**22 AUG**  
17:00 - 18:00

**JOINT CHAMBERS PHUKET MEMBERS BRIEFING ON**  
**"Funding Strategies for the Phuket Real Estate & Hospitality Industry:**  
 Traditional, Digital, and Governance-Driven Approaches"

**Friday, 22nd August 2025**  
 17:00 - 18:00 hrs.  
 Tabak & Phakob,  
 Angsana Laguna Phuket



**Free of Charge**  
 for AustCham members, partner Chambers members,  
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 and students who join Phuket Sundowners



# **Joint Chambers Phuket Members Briefing**

Before Phuket Sundowners — AustCham Thailand, in collaboration with Australian Alumni and 11 foreign chambers of commerce in Thailand, including AMCHAM, BCCT, BeLuThai, CanCham, FTCC, GTCC, NTCC, NZTCC, Phuket Chamber of Commerce, SATCC, and SweCham., Joint Chambers Phuket Members Briefing on "Funding Strategies for the Phuket Real Estate & Hospitality industry: Traditional, Digital, and Governance-Driven Approaches". This event is scheduled to take place 17.00 - 18.00 hrs., at Angsana Laguna Phuket Resort. Free of charge for attendees who join Phuket Sundowners. Reservations - office@austcham thailand.com

**FRI**

**22**  
AUGUST

**friday 22nd august**  
 4pm - 8pm



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**24**  
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**25**  
AUGUST



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**27**  
AUGUST



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**31**  
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# **Couture for a Cause at Solis Beach Club**

Solis Beach Club, Phuket Veterans Association & The Phuket News have come together to create a fashion show in aid of the Thai-Cambodia Relief Appeal. Tickets include a welcome drink and post show canapes. Fashion show, Raffle, Designer Brands on sale, Live music. Solis Beach club, Bangtao Beach, 099 192 9288

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**5**  
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# **Grow Boating Evening - Sept 2025**

We look forward to seeing you at the Grow Boating Evening at the Isola restaurant at the Royal Phuket Marina from 5pm. Our drinks sponsor for the evening will be Royal Phuket Marina. See [royalphuketmarina.com/marina](http://royalphuketmarina.com/marina) There will be a delicious buffet sponsored by Isola Restaurant for all attendees. Come and join in the fun, everyone is welcome and there is no entry fee. Find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket/>

**FRI**

**12**  
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Make sure to bring lots of business cards, as getting to know each other is what PBN is all about. A small entry fee, THB 500 per person, that includes the first 3 drinks and pizza. Location - Oasis Bar, Koh Kaew, starting 5pm. Register your attendance here or call Jason - 086 479 7471.

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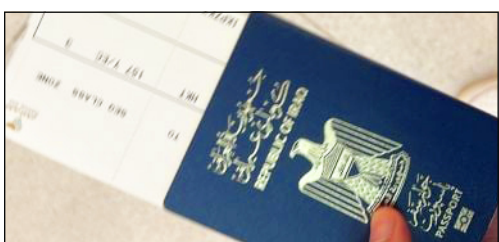
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## FAREWELL TO A PAGEANT OF BEAUTY

Angsana Laguna Phuket Shines at Miss Universe Thailand 2025 Farewell Party. Where celestial gowns met sea breezes, Angsana Laguna Phuket hosted a lively farewell celebration for Miss Universe Thailand 2025, a heart-led evening of beauty, culture and togetherness on Phuket's Andaman shore.

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# Phuket hosts Toyota Gazoo Racing event

## MOTORSPORTS

THE STREETS OF Saphan Hin hosted the latest edition of the hugely-popular Toyota Gazoo Racing event last weekend (Aug 16-17).

The two-day racing event kicked off on Saturday afternoon at 2:30pm with an opening ceremony at Saphan Hin Park overseen by Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat who was joined by Noriaki Yamashita, President of Toyota Motor Thailand; Rewat Areerob, President of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO); and Phuket Town Mayor Supachok La-ongphet.

In his opening remarks, Governor Sophon explained how the event not only offers an exciting live sports experience to local residents and visitors but also serves as a significant boost to the local economy, with estimates of more than B80 million generated for local businesses.

He also extended praise to the organisers for their



Photo: PR Phuket

efforts in “planning such an event in relation to regulations, safety measures, public health care and collaboration between all sectors”.

“I would like to thank Toyota Motor Thailand for its role in elevating Thai motorsports to the international stage, and all Phuket residents for being such gracious hosts,” added Governor Sophon.

A total of 57 Toyota racing cars lined up to open the event, driven by professional and celebrity racers including Pete Thongchua, Thai Tossamit, Zani, Miya and Pai.

Naruchit Kiatmaneesri of TD Racing by SP Auto won the overall race, with Kittisak Seangsalak of BKC x Voltronic By House Of Cars x Vangarg Garage taking second spot and Pongsatorn Ownon of KM Racing team third.

*The Phuket News*

# Thai spikers ready for Worlds

## VOLLEYBALL

Bangkok Post

Thailand have no injury concerns for the upcoming FIVB Women's World Championship after the players came through the SEA V-League tournament in Vietnam unscathed.

The 2025 World Championship will take place in Thailand for the first time starting today (Aug 22) until Sept 7, with the preliminary phase to be held in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Nakhon Ratchasima and Phuket.

Thailand are in Pool A along with the Netherlands, Sweden and Egypt for the championship.

Coach Kiatipong Ratchatakringengkrai said there were no injury worries after the SEA V-League tournament where Thailand lost to Vietnam 3-2 in the final on Aug 10 in Ninh Binh.

“It's good that our players did not pick up any injuries at the SEA V-League tournament in Vietnam. What we have to look into and improve is our game plan for the upcoming World Championship,” said the coach.

“Chatchu-on [Moksri] played well, while the likes of Wimonrat [Thanaphan], Hattaya [Bamrungsuk] and Thatdao [Nuekjang] have all regained their fitness.

“Now we have to focus on our game plan, and how we will approach



Thailand are in Pool A along with Egypt, Sweden and the Netherlands at the FIVB Women's World Championship. Photo: volleyballworld.com

the matches against Egypt, Sweden and Netherlands in the pool phase of the World Championship,” he added.

This year's World Championship will feature 32 teams, divided into eight pools of four.

The top two teams from each pool will advance to the knockout round.

The pool phase will take place in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Nakhon Ratchasima and Phuket, while Bangkok's Indoor Stadium at Hua Mark will host matches from the last 16 onwards.

Thailand played in the World Championship six times in 1998, 2002, 2010, 2014, 2018 and 2022. Their best result was in 2018 when they finished in 13<sup>th</sup> place in the 24-team tournament.

## CONTROVERSY

Meanwhile, controversy has emerged among Thai volleyball fans, questioning the promotional banners for the Championship which they say do not

reflect the image of a host nation.

Many of the banners are reported to be simple vinyl signs despite a previously approved government budget of over B1.124 billion for hosting the event. The event is projected to generate an estimated B8.435bn in economic value.

Fans have voiced concerns on social media that the promotions are unsuitable for a host nation, consisting only of ordinary vinyl signs and lacking LED displays in prominent locations such as BTS and MRT stations or busy city centres.

In comparison, the FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship Philippines 2025 highlights the stark difference in presentation between the two major events.

Somporn Chaibangyang, President of the Thailand Volleyball Association (TVA), said on July 21 there was still a budget shortfall despite the government and related agencies having approved funds.

# Tawit charges to Asian Mixed victory

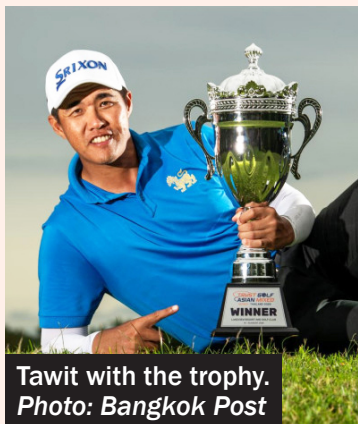
## GOLF

TAWIT POLTHAI CAPTURED his second professional title with a two-stroke triumph over Taiwan's Wang Weihsuan in the final round of the B5 million TrustGolf Asian Mixed Match 2 at Lake View Resort and Golf Club in Cha-am, Phetchaburi, last Saturday (Aug 16).

The 31-year-old from Chanthaburi delivered a flawless performance, carding seven birdies en route to a spectacular 64. His bogey-free round sealed the win at 18-under 195 on the par-71 layout.

Starting the final round two shots adrift of Wang, Tawit produced a superb charge with five birdies in the first 13 holes to close in on the overnight leader. A precise birdie putt on the par-4 14<sup>th</sup> proved decisive, as Wang stumbled with his first bogey of the day to slip two shots behind.

Both players added another birdie coming home, but Tawit held firm to seal a two-stroke triumph and celebrate his



Tawit with the trophy. Photo: Bangkok Post

maiden victory on home soil.

This marks Tawit's second career win, following his maiden title at the Selangor Masters on the Asian Development Tour in Malaysia earlier this year.

With the victory, Tawit not only pockets the winner's cheque of B750,000 but also earns full playing rights on the Taiwan PGA Tour.

Wang signed off with a 68 to finish at 16-under 197, while Thai Suteepat Prateptienchai, who fired a low round 62 for a 198 total, finished third. First match champion Thanyakorn Krongpha also finished at 198.

*Bangkok Post*

# Safety first at Women's World Cup

## RUGBY

MOUTHGUARDS THAT light up to indicate a player has suffered a significant head impact will be used at the Women's Rugby World Cup, officials have announced.

Mouthguards will flash red if the impact is severe enough to potentially cause a concussion. The referee will then stop play and the player will leave the field for a head injury assessment. The aim is to introduce the system into all top-flight rugby.

Dr Eanna Falvey, the chief medical officer at World Rugby, said on Aug 11 every player at the Women's World Cup, which starts today (Aug 22), will wear the mouthguards, apart from two who wear braces.

He added that in the men's game around 85% of players wear so-called “smart mouthguards”, which are not compulsory.

The mouthguards measure how much a player's head moves and rotates in a collision. When it registers an acceleration above a set limit, it will flash.

World Rugby data indicates that while concussion rates are similar in women's and men's rugby, “head acceleration” events are significantly less likely for female players.



Australia's Faliki Pohiva (left) and Samantha Wood tackle Caryl Cox (centre) of Wales in a Test in Sydney on Aug 1. Photo: AFP

World Rugby brought in the “instrumented mouthguard” at the women's international tournament in 2023 before introducing it globally the following year.

Dr Lindsay Starling, World Rugby's science and medical manager, speaking alongside Falvey at a Twickenham press conference on Aug 12, said the aim was to help players rather than merely accumulate information.

## FOUL PLAY

“The data set that has grown over the last year is huge,” Dr Starling said.

“So now it's actually making sure that it doesn't just become a data collection exercise but we

actually understand what that data means and then start putting things in place for players such that they are actually benefiting from the data that's being collected.”

Starling added mouthguards could help identify foul play, although she warned: “What everybody needs to understand that, in the same way, a player can get concussed from a pretty small head impact, foul play (can take place) without registering anything substantial.”

Head injuries have become an issue in rugby union as the game has become increasingly physical in the professional era.

A group of nearly 300 former players, including England World Cup-winners Steve Thompson and Phil Vickery, launched legal action over brain injuries in December 2023.

The players allege World Rugby, the Welsh Rugby Union and England's Rugby Football Union failed to establish reasonable measures to protect their health and safety.

Thompson and ex-Wales star Alix Popham have both revealed they suffer from early-onset dementia.

Injuries from head blows are said to have caused other disorders including motor neurone disease, epilepsy and Parkinson's disease.

*AFP*



# Premier League back with a bang

FOOTBALL

AFP

Title challengers Liverpool, Manchester City and Arsenal all made winning starts but in contrasting fashion on the first weekend of the Premier League season.

Defending champions Liverpool needed late drama to beat Bournemouth 4-2 on an emotional night at Anfield on Friday (Aug 15) where tributes were held for former player Diogo Jota, who tragically lost his life in a car accident last month.

Hugo Ekitike scored and provided an assist for Cody Gakpo on his Premier League debut for the Reds before Antoine Semenyo's double levelled the score. Late strikes from Mohamed Salah and Federico Chiesa ensured the defending champions got off to a winning start although there were too many worrying moments for manager Arne Slot to be overly content.

More reinforcements at both ends of the pitch look set to follow as Liverpool



Hugo Ekitike receives a hug after scoring on his Premier League debut for Liverpool. Photo: AFP

pursue Newcastle striker Alexander Isak and Crystal Palace centre-back Marc Guehi.

However, Slot must find the formula to prevent his side being wide open on the counter-attack as a worrying trend from pre-season and the Community Shield continued into competitive action.

Elsewhere, Arsenal's quest for Premier League glory also started positively as Riccardo Calafiori's goal

beat Manchester United 1-0 on Sunday.

The Gunners were far from impressive at Old Trafford but earned a huge three points thanks to a glaring error from United's stand-in goalkeeper Altay Bayindir who flapped at Declan Rice's corner on 13 minutes, presenting Calafiori with the simple task of heading into an empty net.

"Big result," said Arteta.

"First game of the season at Old Trafford when you feel they are building something."

United gave debuts to all of their new £200 million (B8.7 billion) attacking trident of Matheus Cunha, Bryan Mbeumo and Benjamin Sesko but could not find a way past the Premier League's best defence for the past two seasons.

Chelsea suffered a Club

World Cup hangover as they were kept at bay by FA Cup winners Palace who were denied an early opener when Eberechi Eze's free-kick was ruled out by a VAR review for Marc Guehi obstructing the Chelsea wall.

## STUNNING DEBUT

Manchester City's failure to defend the title after winning it for the previous four seasons has prompted a major overhaul from manager Pep Guardiola and his new look team strolled to a 4-0 win against Wolves at Molineux.

Erling Haaland scored twice but it was new £45mn signing from AC Milan Tijjani Reijnders who stole the show with a stunning debut as he scored and had a hand in City's other three goals. Another City new boy Rayan Cherki rounded off the scoring.

"We knew he is a top signing for the coming years for City," said Guardiola about Dutch international Reijnders. "Lovely guy and has made an impact from day one."

Chris Wood struck twice either side of Dan Ndoye's

debut goal for Nottingham Forest as they beat Brentford 3-1, while Aston Villa and Newcastle played out a 0-0 draw.

Tottenham manager Thomas Frank enjoyed a "dream" home debut with a 3-0 win over Burnley, with Richarlison scoring twice and Brennan Johnson the third.

"Perfect start or dream start. A good performance against a difficult opponent. I will just enjoy it and I hope the players, the club and the fans enjoy it because that is important," Frank said afterwards.

For the past two seasons, all three promoted teams have gone down. However, Sunderland made the perfect start to attempting to buck that trend with a 3-0 victory over hapless West Ham.

Fulham's Rodrigo Muniz struck in the 96<sup>th</sup> minute to salvage a 1-1 draw at Brighton after Matt O'Riley's penalty put the Seagulls in front, while Leeds United marked their return to the top flight with a 1-0 win against Everton courtesy of Lukas Nmecha's late penalty.

## Phuket kickboxers shine in national competition

KICKBOXING

PHUKET ATHLETES SHONE AT THE recent Thailand Kickboxing Championship 2025 in Bangkok where they won a total of 31 medals and finished as top-placed team overall.

Taking place between Aug 8-10 at the Bangkok Arena Sports Center in the nation's capital, male and female athletes from a number of gyms across Phuket came together as one team to collectively win 18 gold medals, eight silver and five bronze, capping a remarkable team performance in the process.

Additionally, they were awarded three separate accolades for outstanding individual athletes and three awards for outstanding coaches.

Among the gold medal winners were: Sadayu Wichitnawi in the under 37 kilogramme weight class in the 13-15 age group; Thanatchaporn Inchuran (-47kg, 13-15 age); Suphannara Phusawang (-42kg, 10-12 age); Phattharakon Sripraphan (-47kg, 10-12 age); Phakorn Rojanabunyapak (-60kg, 10-12 age); Silawut Chernchom and Kornpongkrai Petcharuangkun (both -84kg, 16-18 age); Sasisoom Kaewsri (-50kg, 19-40 age); Sirithap Longphimai (-71kg, 19-40 age); Tasanai Nonthasai (-74kg, 19-40 age); Phikanes Sukyik (-63kg, 19-40 age); Thanapha Pisin (-65kg, 19-40 age); Saifah Khruaphanit (-55kg, 19-40 age); Jirayu Kittiwongwiwat (-94kg, 19-40 age);



Photo: PR Phuket

and Siriroj Silchaithan (-69kg, 19-40 age)

Silver medals went to: Thananya Pisin (-60kg, 19-40 age); Udomsap Saraphong (-57kg, 19-40 age); Sakson Chanpitak (-57kg, 16-18 age); Saifah Kruaphanit and Rapiphat Ropkrob (both -69kg, 19-40 age); and Suphannara Phusawang and Silawut Cheunchom (both -47kg, 13-15 age).

Bronze medals went to: Udomsap Saraphong (-57kg, 19-40 age); Thanatchaporn Inchuran (-24kg, 7-9 age); Khattiya Chanyotha (-47kg, 13-15 age); and Parichat Klinhom (-46kg, 13-15 age).

Team Phuket were under the management of: Thammawat Wongcharoenyos, President of the Phuket Provincial Sports Association; Nathakorn Yaemrungruang, President of the Phuket Kickboxing Club; Yutthana Sripraphan, Club Secretary of the Phuket Kickboxing Club; and selected kickboxing coaches.

Mr Thammawat said after the tournament he was extremely proud of all the athletes and coaches for their hard work, dedication and team work in helping Phuket secure first place overall on the medal count. *The Phuket News*

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# Sport

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# TOP DOGS

## Southern Soi Dogs win AFL clash at ACG

Players pose for the camera ahead of the Aug 9 AFL contest at the Alan Cooke Ground. Photo: Jacob King

### AFL

Andrew McMillan

Phuket hosted another close and entertaining game of Australian Rules Football (AFL) on Saturday, Aug 9, at the Alan Cooke Ground (ACG) in Thalung ahead of the upcoming AFL Asia Championship.

Similar to an earlier encounter staged at the ACG on July 5, the teams facing off were The Phuket Power and The Southern Soi Dogs. Once again, both teams were bustling with new players, mostly rugby converts together with some locals aspiring to play in Thailand's men's and women's AFL teams at the upcoming AFL Asia Championship at the Thai Polo and Equestrian Club in Chonburi next Saturday (Aug 30).

Teams were selected from the players that turned up on the day but they remained closely associated with the line-ups from the close encounter on July 5 as 30 players took to the field to run, tackle, pass, block and kick goals.

The Phuket Power side featured the tallest player on the ground, Alex Stones, with strong running coming from Thai representative Billy Costaglou as

well as Matt Stenning, Craig Morgan, Alex Sears and Craig Wright.

The team also boasted some elite female talent with three of Thailand's current Asia Cup champions, Bee, Natt and Nan in addition to Thailand football squad member Kob.

The Southern Soi Dogs had Thai representatives in Josh Linthorne, Tantai Theampipop and Jacob King, together with Asian Cup Champion Nitt Wetherell and members of Thailand's current AFL squad, Luke Slobin, Chris Smith, Joy Leaper and Emma Farmer-Wright.

### INACCURACY

Aided by a stiff breeze and taller ruckmen, the Phuket Power jumped out of the blocks kicking 5 goals to 1 goal in the first quarter. Tan had his hands full laying tackles as Power players seamlessly extracted the ball from every stoppage. Billy, Alex Sears, Matt and James all hit the scoreboard.

The tables turned in the second quarter with the Soi Dogs giving Linthorne and King a run in the middle. The Power struggled to get the ball out of

defence while the Soi Dogs peppered the goals. Inaccuracy was the only reason the Soi Dogs trailed by a goal at half-time.

Both teams found a rhythm in the third quarter as less free kicks were paid for throwing the ball and sloppy tackles. Slobin and Joy Leaper found plenty of space in the forward areas so Morgan moved into defense to minimise the damage of the Doggies repeat forward entries.

The Soi Dogs Trained by a goal coming into the last quarter with the wind favouring their end. Unable to stop King from getting his hands on the ball, the Soi Dogs overran the Power, meaning the final score read Soi Dogs 9 goals, 7 behinds (61) versus the Phuket Power's 9 goals, 1 behind (55).

For the Soi Dogs Jacob King, Josh Linthorne, Tantai Teampipop, Emma Farmer-Wright and Joy Leaper all shone, while Alex Stones, Billy Costaglou, Matt Stenning, Craig Morgan, Alex Sears and Sojirat Pradisorn were the standouts for the Power.

With the game taking place only a fortnight before the AFL Asian Championship, this was the last chance for local players to secure match practice and stake

their claim for a spot in Thailand's strong teams. A total of 16 nations in Asia will be represented at the tournament with Thailand fielding a men's and women's division 1 team alongside a division 2 women's and division 3 men's team. Making the cut for the Thai sides from Phuket so far are eight men and eight women.

### DIVERSE

Last month's match on July 5 saw the first full AFL line-up to grace the ACG this year. Several Phuket Vagabonds rugby players enjoyed their first game of AFL, with their size, speed and competitiveness mixed with the occasional throw making for great entertainment. Proving how diverse the sport is in Phuket, the game attracted three female players of Russian descent playing their first match of AFL.

During the match, Alex Stones gave the Power first access to the ball with his height in the ruck, while Tan's defensive efforts were outstanding. Jacob King dominated in the middle of the ground, running around the Soi Dogs and kicking 4 of their 9 goals. Nat McMillan kicked her first goal and Ben Williams, Cillian O'Neill and Lee Stone were solid in

defence for the Power.

The Soi Dogs slipped behind each quarter despite some tidy defense from Luke Slobin and hard running from Emma Williams. At the start of the last quarter the Doggies were down by 4 goals. The big guns were switched into the middle and Josh Linthorne showed his class. Andrew McMillan was the beneficiary of the midfielders hard work kicking 3 goals but the Power hung on for a 3 point win.

The Phuket Power play a few local matches each year and new players, sponsors and spectators are always welcome. The team feeds players into the Thailand Tigers men's and women's teams as well as the indigenous Thailand Serpents sides, of which the ladies are the current Asia Cup Champions.

Each year the Thailand Tigers host the Phuket Masters (over 35s) at the ACG. This year the tournament will be held on Oct 25 with teams from Indonesia, Singapore, Australia and Bangkok taking on the Phuket Power.

If you would like to learn more about AFL in Phuket, you can visit the Phuket Power Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/PhuketPowerAFL>