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APP TRAP



The sticker that all app taxis must carry as part of the requirements for operating legally. Photo: Sukunya Sairaya



MP CONCERNED TAXI APPS MAY LURE PEOPLE INTO DEBT TO BECOME DRIVERS

The Phuket News
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Phuket MP Somchart Techaravorncharoen has raised concerns of people going into debt to get a car in the hope of making a living by being a taxi driver through a taxi app.

Mr Somchart expressed his concern in a post online after he presented a description of Phuket's public transport woes to Parliament last week.

"The most important problem with traffic jams right now is the availability of cheap apps, causing people to buy cars to use the app. Previously, there were already enough taxis. They all suffered from not having work to support each other,"

Mr Somchart said in a post online on Sept 13.

Citing official statistics from the Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO), the Phuket Info Center, which operates under the Phuket office of the Ministry of Interior, marked that as of Aug 31, 2023, there were 4,300 'green plate' taxis registered in Phuket.

There were a further 6,800 "non-regular buses" (public service vehicles with no fixed route, meaning cars, vans and buses issued 'yellow' licence plates), as well as 600 metered taxis, 514 tuk-tuks and now 1,100 private vehicles permitted to provide taxi services through taxi apps.

Mr Somchart noted that even making fares cheap, for which taxi apps are popular, might not be enough to

support local people, and that even though fares may be cheap, they might not encourage more people to use them.

"Look at the Patong bus. How many Thai people are there in the city? The fare is B40, but only Myanmar and Russian people use it," he said.

"And the fact that people in Phuket have their own cars is not because there are no public buses, but because they have the power to buy. And if you have a personal car, it's convenient. It's the same everywhere in the provinces," he said.

Mr Somchart last week also re-shared a warning by Adcha Buachan, Chief of the Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO), warning that the PLTO will pursue the maximum penalty

of up to five years in prison or a fine from B20,000 up to B100,000, or both, against any person found operating an illegal taxi.

The notice, originally signed and dated by Mr Adcha on Sept 5 last year, was later shared by the Phuket Info Center.

The notice was the same warning reissued in April, in Thai and English, ahead of the Songkran holidays.

POLICY BLAST

Mr Somchart's concern over the rise of taxi apps followed him last week presenting Phuket's public transport problems to Parliament as an example of what happens when a centralised government based in Bangkok focuses only on mega-investment projects.

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Road rage ends with taxi driver punched in face



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Phuket Tri Iyara triathlon makes impressive debut





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News

Tip-offs wanted to report bad foreigners

PHUKET IMMIGRATION has launched a tip-off hotline and an online form for people to report “bad foreigners” in their area.

The launch of the new channels for reporting came through an announcement posted online on Sept 9, one day after Phuket Immigration Chief Col Thanet Sukchai joined Phuket Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Sermphan Sirikiong at a press conference to address rising concerns of criminality among new arrivals of Russian nationals to the island.

“Have a problem? Can report very easily”, said the announcement, currently in Thai language only.

People were advised to report any incidents of possible law breaking involving foreigners via the Traffy Fondue app, an option that has been available for many months, though only last month was an English-language form made available through the official website.

Alternatively, people may report law-breaking foreigners by calling the hotline 096-0365485, said the announcement, which featured a photo of Phuket



Image: Phuket Immigration

Immigration Inspector Pol Lt Col Rangsinan Chanphet offering a salute.

A third option for reporting foreigners is now provided via a Google Form now available – in Thai language only, but easily translated using a translation app.

The form features several fields to be completed, including: Name-Surname of the informant; Informant’s phone number; Reason for report (Narcotics, Firearms, Overstay, Working without permission, etc); Crime scene; and District where the incident occurred.

“We ask the people of Phuket for their cooperation, especially those who know the whereabouts of wrongdoing by foreigners, to report information through the channels that the Phuket Provincial Immigration Office has opened again to receive reports directly,” said Phuket Immigration.

The Phuket News

Officials crack down on taxis, foreign businesses

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Phuket Immigration and the Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO) have launched a new crackdown on illegal tourism-related businesses. On Sept 11, Phuket Immigration officers visited Art Detailing Phuket Co Ltd on Chao Fa East Rd in Wichit, following a complaint about an illegally working Russian national.

Art Detailing Phuket presents itself as a branch of Russia-based firm Art Detailing Spb and claims to “have been providing car detailing services in Phuket for several years”, according to its website. However, the Thai company Art Detailing Phuket Co Ltd was registered only on May 1, 2023, according to the Department of Business Development. The company’s registered capital is stated as B2 million, enough for one work permit for a foreign national.

“The inspection revealed that the said foreigner had a valid work permit issued according to the law,” Phuket Immigration stated in its report. On Sept 12, officers in-



Phuket Immigration at Art Detailing Co Ltd. No work-related violations were reported as found. Photo: Phuket Immigration

spected another vehicle-related Russian business in Wichit, this time located opposite Makro on Wichit Songkram Rd. The raid also followed a tip-off.

During the inspection, officials checked the premises of Motorbike Sharing Co Ltd, established on June 29, 2023 with registered capital of B4 million. Also registered at the same address was It Easy International Co Ltd, a property business registered in 2013 with capital of B5 million.

At the premises, officials found one Thai employee and four foreigners from Russia and Kazakhstan, with the Russians all sharing the same family name.

Two Russians had Non-B visas allowing employment, while the third had a student visa. The man from Kazakhstan had a Non-B visa. Phuket Immigration reported finding no employment-related violations.

One of the Russians with a Non-B visa was charged with not registering foreign tenants as prescribed by the Immigration Act of 1979 and “recommended to strictly follow the Immigration Act of 1979 and other relevant laws”. Meanwhile, the PLTO last week reported two checks of local taxis. Officials focused on “investigating the illegal use of private cars for passenger pick-up” and

other potential violations of provincial taxi regulations. These latest reports were the first such reports since June.

On Sept 11, a checkpoint was set up near the entrance to Phuket International Airport, a standard location during the active “black taxi hunt” from February through June, and was conducted at the exact same location of the last reported check in June.

According to the PLTO, officials found four drivers providing taxi services in vehicles registered for personal use only. Officials did not elaborate on whether any foreigners were among the four.

“The cases have been referred to the PLTO for imposing fines and considering license suspensions for the violators, in accordance with the law,” reported the PLTO.

On Sept 14, officials set up a checkpoint in Kathu, also in a regular spot near what used to be known as the Thung Thong Police Box.

The inspection led to the apprehension of one driver of a green-plated taxi registered outside of Phuket. The driver would be referred to the PLTO for imposing fines and considering license suspension, according to the report.

MP Somchart presents Phuket’s traffic woes to Parliament

Continued from page 1

Mr Somchart was called on by the Move Forward Party on Sept 12 to respond to the new Cabinet’s transport policy, which he heavily criticised as focussing only on ‘mega-projects’, such as the high-speed rail project, and not addressing public transport issues faced by average people throughout the country.

The government’s transportation policy – now headed by Minister of Transport Suriya Juangroongruangkit, a former member of the military-aligned Palang Pracharath Party, but now a member of the Pheu Thai Party – made only a broad statements and focussed on big investment, but lacked public transportation development, Mr Somchart, MP for Phuket District 1, said.

“The problem lies here: It can be seen that government

policy focuses on investing large sums of money in large projects, but we do not see any policy that invests in public transportation systems that will really help with people’s travel,” Mr Somchart noted.

“So there is a question: Why is the tax money of the whole country to invest in large transportation infrastructure that they do not use. And why isn’t there more investment in public transport that they actually use every day?” he added. “If public transportation is of good quality It will help reduce daily travel expenses, causing tourism to reach local areas, and not only concentrated only in large cities,” he said.

Mr Somchart said the lack of public transportation forced people to have to struggle to have their own cars. “It does not reflect the prosperity of the country. It is people’s des-



peration in dealing with the country’s public transportation system.

“Some people even look down on rural people, saying that when they have money, they use it extravagantly to make a down payment on a motorcycle and pay it off in instalments, without understanding how difficult it is to not have a motorcycle in the countryside.

“And in some families having only one motorcycle is what they have to carry the lives of many people, the whole

family,” he said.

“The government must have a new attitude that a developed country doesn’t mean a country where poor people have cars. It is a country where rich people use public transportation,” he added.

PHUKET WOES

Mr Somchart pointed out that in Phuket there are only three bus lines that can be said to be of the same standard as buses in Bangkok. “All three lines originate at the airport to focus on serving tourists,” he said.

In comparison, while recognising the difference in population density, Singapore covers a similar area to Phuket in terms of size, but has ‘more than 100 times’ the standard bus routes that Phuket has, and has more than 5,000 bus stops. “In addition, there are many mass transit routes,” he said.

Referring back to Phuket, Mr Somchart noted, “Decades ago Phuket people saw schoolchildren riding the backs of songthaew. Fast forward to today, and those schoolchildren have become fathers, mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers, and they still see children – their grandchildren – riding on the back of a songthaew. Disabled people and elderly people with limited mobility can’t even use the service.

“The fact is that the public transportation system does not support all groups of people, it is not comprehensive, and it is insufficient.

“Plus, taxi and motorcycle taxi fares [in Phuket] are many times more expensive compared with Bangkok. As a result, Phuket people need to have their own cars, and this has resulted in problems with traffic jams. Parents waste work

time to take their children to school, or they have to buy a motorcycle for their children to use to go to school, and that increases the risk of accidents,” Mr Somchart said.

Speaking on building extra roads to alleviate traffic jams, Mr Somchart told Parliament, “Public roads are shared by everyone. The traffic jam problem is therefore not caused by any one person. Building additional roads, expressways and underpasses are only short-term relief. In the future, there will be traffic jams on expressways and underpasses, such as seen in Bangkok,” he added.

“A sustainable long-term solution is to make the mass transit system of high quality and comprehensive so that all groups of people can use it, even the rich, like examples in Singapore and Hong Kong,” he said.

Anger resolved after man punches taxi driver in face

Eakkapop Thongtub
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A man has been charged for his violent reaction to a green-plate taxi cutting him off on the road just south of the Darasamut Intersection last Saturday night (Sept 17).

Phuket Provincial Police last Sunday explained that both parties to the incident had presented themselves at Wichit Police Station earlier that day to apologise to each other.

The driver of the taxi, a white Pajero Sport registered in Bangkok, Teerapat Phuob, 38, originally from Kalasin, reported the incident to Wichit Police at 10:33pm last Saturday. Pol Lt Surachart Thongyai received the complaint.

The altercation occurred just minutes earlier, at about 10:17pm, Mr Teerapat told police. He had two French tourists in his taxi, who he had picked up at the Naka Weekend Market.

As he was approaching the entrance to the Darasamut Underpass, he needed the left



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

lane and was running out of space, so he moved across in front of one of two cars, a Mercedes-Benz. Mr Teerapat explained that he did not have time to signal his intention to suddenly change lanes, but said he flashed his hazard lights to say 'thank you' to the car behind.

Mr Teerapat made it only as far as in front of Wichit Songkhram School when the Mercedes-Benz collided into the taxi, then pulled in front of the taxi and came to an abrupt stop. The driver of the Mercedes-Benz, Weerayut Srimuang, exited his car and

walked up to the taxi and began verbally abusing Mr Teerapat for dangerously cutting across him. Weerayut's angry tirade was intense and explicit. Weerayut also repeatedly asked Teerapat if he "wanted to see a gun".

Teerapat repeatedly apologised, and pointed out that he had flashed his lights to say 'thank you'. Weerayut said he did not see that.

Dissatisfied with his discourse with Teerapat, Weerayut punched Teerapat in the face three times then stormed off.

Teerapat and Weerayuth

met at Wichit Police Station at about 3pm last Sunday to apologise to each other in front of the press for their parts in the incident.

Mr Teerapat said he was shocked "because this had never happened before". The tourists in the taxi were also shocked, he said.

He added that he didn't want to have "trouble with his work here", but said that he had to protect himself and that he has a family that he is responsible for and has to earn a living.

Weerayut apologised, saying the incident was a result of his short temper.

Regardless, Wichit Police Deputy Chief Pol Lt Col Surachart Thongyai confirmed that Weerayut now faced charges of assault, drunk driving and using threats to intimidate and cause fear among others.

Negotiations are still underway to determine what damages are to be paid. Mr Teerapat has filed a claim for damages of B100,000, which includes income lost while the taxi is off the road undergoing repairs.

Phuket prosecutors jailed for corruption

TWO FORMER PHUKET Public Prosecutors, Thamma 'Chinchot' Sornjai and Wanchat Chunhathanom, have been sentenced to jail after they were found guilty of demanding a bribe of B10 million to have charges dropped against a foreign-led developer for encroaching on Sirinath National Park.

Thamma was sentenced to 12 years in prison for soliciting the bribe, reported Isra news.

Thamma held the position of 'Expert Prosecutor' at the Office of Public Prosecution Region 8 and Chief of Phuket Provincial Public Prosecutor's Office at the time.

Wanchat, who was Provincial Prosecutor under the Phuket Provincial Office of the Attorney General (OAG) at the time, was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment for his role in supporting the bribe.

The Criminal Court for Corruption and Misconduct Cases Region 8 handed down its sentence on Sept 12, said OAG spokesperson Kosonwat Intuchanyong.

Key to the court handing down its verdict was an audio clip confirming the demand for B10mn to have the charges



Wanchat Chunhathanom, one of two former Phuket public prosecutors sentenced to jail for corruption. Photo: PR Phuket / file

dropped, Mr Kosonwat added.

Mr Thamma had offered the company representatives that he would persuade the Phuket Governor to not press charges against their company. He then met with the company representatives many times and asked for money, Niwatchai Kasemmongkol, spokesman for the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC), explained when the charges were first announced in 2020.

The Phuket Governor at that time was Phakaphong Tavipatana.

Both men have the right to appeal the verdict, and the sentence. Wanchat has reportedly already filed his appeal to the Supreme Administrative Court, and has filed a lawsuit for damages. *The Phuket News*

Tuk-tuk driver surrenders after hit-and-run on tourist in Patong

THE DRIVER OF A TUK-TUK IN PATONG who struck a tourist from Saudi Arabia and drove off in a hit-and-run on Sept 13 has presented himself to police.

The tuk-tuk driver, named only as 'Mr Eklak' (family name withheld), 37, had later presented himself at Patong Hospital to check on his victim and then presented himself at Patong Police Station, officials reported.

The incident happened in front of the Aspery Hotel on Haad Patong Rd at about 7:46pm, when the tuk-tuk Mr Eklak was driving struck 38-year-old Saudi Arabia national "Alotaibi, Meshari Midad N".

Mr Eklak, a resident of Patong, was returning from a resort on Thaweewong Rd when the accident happened. He tested negative for alcohol, but remained at Patong Police Station pending charges, said officials at last report of the incident.

A video showing the hit and run was posted online, showing the tourist walking along the footpath with friends.

While walking alongside his friends, the tourist stepped one foot onto the road and was struck by the tuk-tuk, sending him barrelling down the road, coming to a stop more than 10 metres from where he was struck.

Before hitting the tourist, the tuk-tuk had drifted very close to the side of the road. After hitting the tourist, the tuk-tuk did not slow down or stop. Instead, it continued



Image: Phuket Info Center

down the road.

The post exposing the hit and run said, "Come out and take responsibility for your driving."

"The injured person was bleeding from his mouth and ears. Luckily, the tourists together helped him before the ambulance arrived," the post continued.

In a separate incident, Phuket Tourist Police reported providing assistance to an Australian tourist, who was also struck by a car in Patong also on the night of Sept 13.

Responding to the incident were Phuket Tourist Police on patrol from Bangla Rd, joined by foreign volunteers.

The name of the tourist and the extent of his injuries were not reported.

In this incident the driver of the small car stopped immediately at the scene.

The Phuket News



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Foreigner in hospital after motorbike rear-ends car

A FOREIGN MAN last week was rushed to Patong Hospital after the scooter he was riding rear-ended a sedan, sending the rider flying into the car's rear window.



The man surviving the impact was credited his helmet. Photo: Rescue Team Volunteers Phuket

Police and rescue workers were alerted to the accident, on the Patong-Kamala road, at about 1pm on Sept 13. On arrival at the scene, police officers and first responders found a damaged scooter lying on the road and a damaged car parked nearby. The motorcycle had significant damage to its front, while the car's rear window was broken, and there was a substantial bump in the trunk area.

According to *Novosti Phuket*, *The Phuket News*' sister-newspaper in Russian language, one person was injured as the result of the accident – a foreign male was injured who was operating the scooter at the time of the collision. The website did not report the man's name, age or nationality.

The foreigner was provided first aid at the scene and taken to Patong Hospital for further treatment. The rider claimed "faulty brakes" as the cause of the accident, according to *Novosti Phuket*.

First responders from Rescue Team Volunteers Phuket were among the emergency workers providing assistance to the victim. According to the team's Facebook report, the man sustained injuries to his head and body but remained conscious and able to communicate.

"Helmets save lives. The rider was wearing a helmet, which likely saved his life. The rider didn't recall if it was his head that went through the back window, but based on the evidence, it appears so. The helmet looks untouched but it did its job. He [the injured] received stitches to the face, chin and leg, along with normal scrapes and skin loss associated with this type of accident," reported Rescue Team Volunteers Phuket. *The Phuket News*

Chinese B5.6bn fraud fugitive arrested at villa in Rawai

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A Chinese man has been arrested at a villa in Rawai on an outstanding warrant issued by the Chinese government marking him as wanted for forging documents to borrow the equivalent of B5.6 billion.

The arrest was announced at a press conference held at the Immigration Bureau headquarters in Nonthaburi on Sept 12, chaired by Immigration Bureau Chief Pol Lt Gen Phakphumiphath Sujjapan.

Around the beginning of September, the Immigration Bureau received notification from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China marking that a 55-year-old Chinese national, named in the report only as "Mr Gao" (not his real name), was wanted under an arrest warrant issued in the People's Republic of China.

The man was to be charged with creating false documents to borrow money illegally. The Chinese government had suffered more than 1.133bn yuan (about B5.6bn) in damages, and the man was believed to have fled to Thailand.

Immigration officers confirmed that Mr Gao had entered Thailand by arriving in Phuket on Sept 5. He had entered the country on Thailand Privilege



Photo: Immigration Bureau

Card and was granted a one-year permit-to-stay, until Sept 3, 2024.

The investigating officers then requested approval from the Commander-in-Chief of the Immigration Bureau, Pol Lt Gen Phakphumiphath, to revoke the man's permission to stay as he was a person for whom foreign government officials had issued an arrest warrant.

The investigating officers also requested that the man be placed on a 'watch list'.

The officers found Mr Gao living at a villa in Rawai (specific address not reported), and requested a warrant to search the premises.

A warrant was issued by the Phuket Provincial Court, which the officers executed and apparently then confirmed Mr Gao

was staying in the villa.

No illegal items were found in the search, but Mr Gao was taken into custody.

From their inspection, the officers discovered that Mr Gao had come to live with his relatives, the Immigration Bureau reported.

Mr Gao admitted to being the person wanted by the arrest warrant issued in China, Immigration officers also reported.

Mr Gao was then informed his permit to stay in Thailand had been revoked, and taken to Immigration Bureau Region 3 headquarters, in Bangkok, for further legal action.

The Immigration Bureau confirmed that Mr Gao had not committed any offences in Thailand.

FARANG AFFAIRS

By Stephff

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Wandering calf killed by car

LIVESTOCK WANDERING onto a road in Srisoonthorn last Saturday night (Sept 16) ended with a young cow being struck by a car and dying.

Pol Lt Thitiwat Asasingh of the Thalang Police was called to the scene, on the Thung Suea Khruan - Ban Don Road, at 8:30pm

He arrived to find local residents gathered over the body of the calf, estimated to have been six to eight months old.

Nearby was a Toyota Vios car registered in Nonthaburi askew by the side of the road. The car had sustained damage to its front right panels.

The driver of the car, 40-year-old Nigerian national Wisdom Chukwunonso Onwukwe, was uninjured in the accident.



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

He said he was driving along the road at about 50km/h when the cow ran out from the side of the road. The calf ran in front of the car, and he was unable to avoid hitting it.

Mr Onwukwe was asked to join officers at Thalang Police Station to provide his statement, while the car and the body of the calf were recovered.

Officers said they needed both as evidence in following up with the owner of the cow to pay for damages.

Eakkapop Thongtub

the Phuket News

MP questions safety of Chalong-Patong road

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Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee has vowed to raise in Parliament questions about the construction of the road over the hills from Chalong to Patong, built hastily last year as an alternative route after the landslide on Patong Hill.

MP Chalermpong, MP for Phuket District 2, inspected the road, which he called “Luang Phu Supha Road” (as it continues behind the famed temple), last Friday (Sept 15).

The key issues are road damage and the cost-effectiveness of construction, Mr Chalermpong said in a post online.

The road was built under a budget “of tens of millions of baht” after Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew last October declared the landslide on Patong Hill a “disaster”, Mr Chalermpong explained.

Though no people were injured or killed in the landslide, declaring the incident a “disaster” allowed access to the provincial disaster relief



Photo: Chalermpong Saengdee / Facebook

fund to pay for road improvements to alleviate the impact on essential traffic travelling to and from Patong, Phuket’s main tourism town.

The inspection revealed that the road condition was “seriously damaged” and “hardly usable”, Mr Chalermpong noted.

On the left side large tufts of vetiver grass was growing, on the right side some areas showed signs of slides.

The road surface was only about two to three centimetres

thick, Mr Chalermpong said.

“For this I will be submitting a question to Parliament to find a conclusion as quickly as possible,” Mr Chalermpong said.

FAST MOVES

Work on creating the new road began less than a week after the landslide on Patong Hill on Oct 19 last year.

Although the road remained crushed rock, less than four months later the road was already in use by people

by early March this year.

Tiwat Seedokbuab, Deputy President of Phuket Provincial Administration Organisation (PPAO), himself expressed concern for safety of people using the road, as several sections over the hills were very steep, and still just dirt.

The PPAO aimed to have the dirt sections of road covered with concrete, but faced budget issues and needed permission from the Phuket Provincial Forestry Office to have one section of road paved with asphalt, he said.

“In case of rain, the slopes can be dangerous for drivers,” Mr Tiwat admitted.

“Chalong Municipality and Patong Municipality will both have to file their requests to the PPAO for the budget to improve the steep sections of road in their areas. We have had a meeting about this already and we will look into how much each of them can support the construction cost and how much the PPAO will support the budget,” he added.

However, there has been no progress in making the road safer since March.

Crane crushes truck at construction of new mall

A CRANE TOPPLING AND crushing the cab of a truck at the new Robinson Lifestyle shopping mall under construction on Chao Fa East Rd in Chalong last week luckily resulted in no injuries.

The incident happened at about 1:30pm on Sept 13. The crane was believed to have toppled because it was lifting too much weight.

Photos of the scene showed the crane arm had come down across the front of the building, bringing down steel support structures with it. Large concrete supports, presumably waiting to be lifted into place, were on the ground in front of the crane.

The crane truck itself, brought in from Samut Prakan, had tipped fully, with all 12 wheels in the air.

The crane arm had landed on and crushed the driver’s side of the truck cab. The truck driver was standing nearby at the time, but his wife was still in the cab, sitting in the passenger seat. She escaped with no injuries.

The truck driver later told reporters that it was a miracle she was not hurt. He also gave praise to an amulet of Luang Pho Daeng of Wat Rae in Thai



Photo: Phuket Info Center

Mueang District, Phang Nga, that he carries at all times.

According to the report, the shopping mall was scheduled to open to the public on Wednesday (Sept 20).

Robinson Public Company Limited Head Office in Bangkok in its statement issued on Sept 14 noted, “The rescue team was ready and the team rushed to inspect the scene and found that only the crane and truck were slightly damaged. After the incident The team coordinated with the contractor to proceed with vehicle recovery and to clear the area within the period of just half an hour.

“However, Robinson Lifestyle Shopping Center is not complacent about the incident, and has strictly emphasised that contractors and related persons are to prevent this kind of incident from happening again.” *The Phuket News*

Foreign tourist rescued, revived at Patong Beach

A FOREIGN TOURIST CAUGHT IN a dangerous rip current at Patong Beach was brought back to shore by lifeguards and revived on Sept 11, with lifeguards praising doctors at Patong Hospital and Vachira Phuket Hospital for being able to keep the man alive.

Patong Surf Life Saving reported that two people had already been safely recovered from dangerous rip current at the beach when a third man was found unconscious in the water.

Red flags had been posted where it was deemed unsafe to swim, and lifeguards had already walked along the beach warning people that it was dangerous to enter the water in the areas marked by red flags. A ‘safe swim’ area had been marked by yellow-red flags.

Lifeguards brought the foreign man to shore at about 1:10pm, but he was unconscious and unresponsive. Lifeguards began CPR and continued until an ambulance arrived to rush him to Patong Hospital.

Lifeguards later learned that the foreign man had regained a stable pulse and had been transferred to Vachira Phuket Hospital in Phuket Town for further treatment.

Patong Surf Life Saving praised doctors at Patong Hospital for their efforts, and noted that the nursing support team were “extremely helpful”.

Also thanked for the help were Patong Municipality lifeguards, beach operators and employees, the Patong members of the Kusoldharm Foundation as well as Bussba,



Image: via Patong Surf Life Saving

or P’Kheaw, of Enterprise Massage Patong Beach, who recorded the rescue so that it could be shared.

The post marking the rescue was marked with hashtag: “#Miracles are real”.

Longstanding Patong lifeguard Julia Nontree also praised expert trainers for helping local lifeguards identify where dangerous rip currents are present so they can warn beachgoers and prevent more deaths.

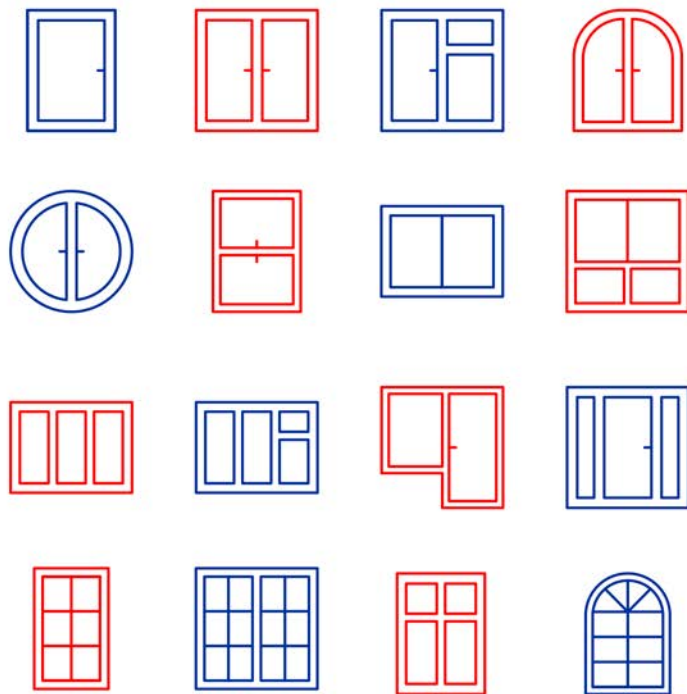
Lifeguards at Patong Beach rescued 84 people from dangerous rip currents in August alone, with three of those rescued needing to be rushed to hospital.

Throughout the month, the lifeguards also attended to various other incidents, including providing first aid for stings by sea creatures, injuries caused by sharp objects in the sand, accidents during water play, and fainting episodes.

During the month, they also helped clean oil off four tourists during the oil spill episode last month, and provided vital educational lectures on drowning prevention to Kindergarten 2 students at a local school in Patong. *The Phuket News*



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Phuket pushes health hub plan

Bangkok Post

Phuket's tourism and property development sectors have urged Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin to quickly consider their proposal for an Andaman Wellness Economic Corridor (AWC) to keep pace with the global trend in wellness and boost related investment and the tourism industry.

The call follows Mr Srettha's visit to Phuket and Phang Nga on Aug 25-26 after taking office to engage with locals and gather opinions from the private sector to explore ways of promoting tourism in the two provinces.

There, a group of businessmen led by Kan Prachumphan, CEO of the Beach Group and Andaman City Development Co, and head of an economic investment stimulation research project in Phuket, submitted the AWC proposal to him for consideration.

The AWC proposal initiated during the Prayut Chan-o-cha government says the corridor will be created in six Andaman provinces (Phuket, Krabi, Phang Nga, Ranong, Trang and Satun) in a similar manner to the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC).

It will help the economy recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and generate income in a wellness and medical tourism sector known for high growth potential.



Kan: Submits proposal

Phuket is a centre for the treatment of complex diseases, gender affirmation surgeries, spas in public and private hospitals, international conventions and exhibitions and has a world-class wellness centre.

Phang Nga is a marine tourist service hub in collaboration with the Sky Doctor service, has a claims centre for collecting medical expenses from foreigners to reduce bad debts and has developed a climate therapy treatment system for long-stay tourists including a dental centre.

Krabi promotes the development of the Klong Thom Spa. Trang is the food city hub and wellness destination hub in the Andaman area.

Satun will be developed as a long-term residence city. Ranong

has hot springs and spas for healing purposes.

"We do not want the prime minister to forget it. We want it to happen in the region as quickly as possible," Mr Kan said.

MORE DEVELOPMENT

Helping to pave the way for the AWC, Mr Kan said the government should increase funding to develop Phuket International Airport to handle an international tourist influx expected to reach around 18 million visitors by next year.

The government should also speed up a new airport in Khok Kloi, Phang Nga, he said. This airport project will be the catalyst to generate revenue in the region.

"I'm confident these Andaman provinces have the potential to serve as an aviation industry hub in the Southeast Asian region," he said.

As well as the airport development, he said the government should amend laws that obstruct the setting up of the AWC in the coastal provinces.

To draw more investors and tourists, Mr Kan suggested the government support Phuket's 'Sister City of Investment' policy to help promote finance and investment in the region to further develop real estate, hospitality, a mass transport system and a digital finance market on the island.

Phuket may consider cooperating with a city from China, Hong Kong or Singapore to develop its cable car project.

He also proposed the Transit Oriented Development and Land Bridge project to boost connectivity of the transport network in the Andaman region by developing the mass transit system and creating new landmarks with new technology.

For example, Phuket Old Town should develop its mass transit system to cater to visitors, together with creating a shopping zone and port, he said.

Phuket also plans to develop a labour market to serve as a 'Smart City'.

"Phuket is already considered a

'workation city' that is home to quality workers from all over the world whose skills are based on digital knowledge and service experience," Mr Kan said.

"Some foreigners in vacation groups originally planned a short-term stay on the island, before deciding to buy real estate for a long-term stay. This can also stimulate the economy," he said.

The government's free-visa policy and tourism promotion will help spur the purchase of real estate in Phuket and the Andaman provinces which will also boost people's income, he said. He urged the government to amend the law to allow foreigners to buy real estate.

NEW LAW FOR AWC PROPOSED

Thanapat Uttawarapong, an analyst from Andaman City Development, said setting up the AWC is not an easy task but the government cannot avoid it.

Mr Thanapat suggested the government pass a special law to remove legal obstacles that stand in the way.

"If we have the special law and the prime minister can establish the project, trials can be complete within two years," he said.

Meanwhile, a source said PM Srettha and his team are scheduled to visit Phuket and Phang Nga again on Sept 29-30.

New guest reporting system launched for landlords, hotels

IMMIGRATION OFFICES throughout the country have urged real estate owners and managers to register in the new online system for notification of foreign tenants which replaced the old one, starting on Sept 15.

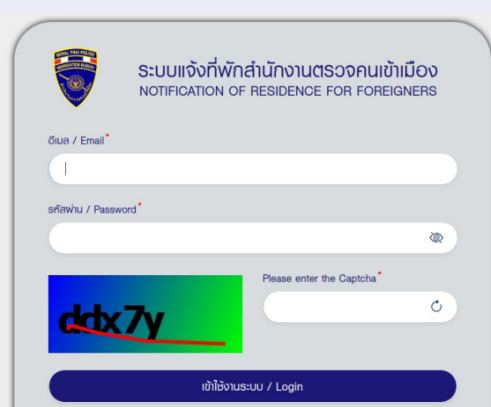
The registration requires submitting relevant documents but the approval will be automatic, immigration officials have assured.

All property owners who were already registered in the previous system must register again, said an announcement by Phuket Immigration posted online.

However, the system will automatically approve all previously registered users, the notice said.

The online system for property owners and manager to report foreigners staying at their premises applies to hotels, lodgings, guesthouses, resorts, etc, the Immigration notice said.

The new system can be used on computers, mobile phones and tablets, it provides quick feedback and



The login screen to register for the new online notification platform. Image: Screenshot

reduces the time to fill out reports.

The system also provides evidence to confirm every notification that property owners and managers have reported foreigners staying at their premises, the notice said.

It also provides an easy way for property owners and managers not avoid being fined for not reporting foreigners staying at their premises.

Section 38 of the Immigration Act mandates: "House owners, heads of household, landlords or man-

agers of hotels who accommodate foreign nationals on a temporary basis who stay in the kingdom legally, must notify the local immigration authorities within 24 hours from the time of arrival of the foreign national."

Section 77 of the Immigration Act stipulates: Whoever fails to comply with the provisions of Section 38 shall be punished by a fine not exceeding B2,000. If the person is a hotel manager, the punishment shall be by a fine from B2,000 to B10,000.

The Phuket News

Developers warned over unsold homes

KASIKORN RESEARCH CENTER HAS warned developers to be more cautious about launching new residential supply due to increasing amounts of unsold inventory, rising costs, and a declining population.

There are several challenges affecting the residential market, consisting of subdued purchasing demand derived from a slow recovery in purchasing power, soaring household debt, and persistently high interest rates on loans that are likely to continue to increase.

Due to these challenges, the centre suggested developers take a cautious approach when considering an investment in new residential projects.

Vichai Viratkapan, Acting Director-General of the Real Estate Information Center (REIC), said there were a total of 321,848 residential units worth a combined B1.44 trillion offered in Greater Bangkok and 27 major provinces nationwide.

Of this amount, 291,384 units worth B1.3 trillion remained unsold as of the end of June 2023, which rose by 2.4% and 4.2%, respectively, from the corresponding period last year.

The number of units newly sold in the second quarter of 2023 dropped by 27.7% to 57,516 units worth roughly B259 billion, a decline of 24.1%.

"The property market in the first half continued to grapple with various challenges. These encompassed the ongoing economic recovery, which had yet to reach full potential," said Mr Vichai.

He added that homebuyers' purchasing ability was also being impacted by rising interest rates, higher household debt levels exceeding 90% of GDP, and increased residential prices.

Kasikorn Research Center forecast that



People examine property deals up for grabs at a house and condo fair. Photo: House and Condo Show / Facebook

the number of residential units transferred in Greater Bangkok would decrease by 7.8% in 2023.

However, if various factors remained stable, transfers might have a growth of around 1.2% to 4.6% in 2024.

According to the centre, there was an imbalance between residential supply and demand in Greater Bangkok, resulting in an accumulation of unsold residential units of over 200,000 units for a period of more than six years, which might take up to three years to be sold.

The centre said developers should exercise caution when launching new projects, especially those with units priced at 3 million baht and above, as they currently had an unsold inventory of roughly 50% of the total units available for sale.

Besides, units priced at B10 million and above had a growing proportion of unsold units primarily due to several developers concentrating on development within this price range, resulting in a higher inventory of unsold units and a slowdown in sales volume.

Bangkok Post

PM orders sweeping tax review

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin has ordered the Finance Ministry to review the new land and building tax, as well as inheritance tax, in an effort to reduce income disparity.

After the Cabinet on Monday (Sept 18) appointed a new director-general of the Revenue Department, Mr Srettha, who is also Finance Minister, ordered the review.

In the case of inheritance tax, only around B200 million is collected each year, which is too small and seems to be symbolic.

"Many people might be dissatisfied that inheritance tax was brought into the discussion whenever there was a political change in the country," Mr Srettha said.

"However, income disparity still persists and the simple conception is that when one receives an income, regardless of the source, one must pay tax. This is also applicable to receiving an inheritance."

In addition, last Friday (Sept 15) the Revenue Department amended its notification



Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin ahead of Monday's (Sept 18) Cabinet meeting. Photo: Bangkok Post

regarding taxation on specified foreign-sourced income, effective from Jan 1, 2024.

The Revenue Department has ruled that a person who resides in Thailand for up to 180 days a year and earns overseas income from work or assets will be subject to personal income tax, according to Section 48 of the Revenue Code.

According to legal experts, the policy appears to have three specific targets:

residents trading in foreign stock markets through foreign brokerages, cryptocurrency traders, and Thais who have been exploiting a loophole that allowed them to bring foreign earnings into the country tax-free after keeping it in an offshore account for more than a calendar year.

"The principle of tax is that you must pay tax on income you earn from abroad no matter how you earn it and regardless of the tax year in

which the money is earned," said a Finance Ministry source who requested anonymity.

LOOPHOLE

The previous rule allowed residents with a foreign income to be taxed only if the money is remitted into Thailand in the same year in which it was earned. The tighter measure is meant to close the loophole of people deferring transfer of their overseas income to a different year.

The new rule will enable authorities to tax the foreign income of individuals in 2025. However, the new regulation also brings up questions about whether this is the most effective way to generate revenue for Thailand. There is concern among experts that the new policy may alienate private bankers and financial institutions, who might consider the regulatory environment in Thailand to be too uncertain or onerous.

From a socio-economic standpoint, the long-term effects of this policy might exacerbate existing income inequality in the country. The wealthiest individuals, equipped with resources and private banking services, could potentially evade these reporting requirements, exposing middle-class traders and those without the financial muscle and accountants to work around the system.

While the Revenue Department's new policy aims to increase revenue by closing existing tax loopholes, the potential fallout could be significant. The guidelines complicate the conduct of businesses, create barriers to effective enforcement,

and raise questions about their ultimate impact on the economic and social fabric of Thailand.

Another important issue raised in Monday's Cabinet meeting is promoting foreign direct investment, as it has a significant positive impact on GDP growth both over the long term and short term.

Mr Srettha will attempt to attract investment from some of the world's biggest companies during his trip to the US for the UN General Assembly next week. Discussions will focus on Thailand's competitiveness, investment opportunities and free-trade agreements, he said.

"Thailand's strength is its strategic location and well-developed infrastructure which includes international-standard airports and sea ports, a strong financial condition, world-class healthcare, and a great number of international schools and colleges," he said.

"Thailand is a kitchen of the world, providing a level of food security amid global food shortages. It is also a major world food exporter, including exporting halal food to Middle Eastern and African countries."

Pita resigns as MFP leader

BANGKOK

PITA LIMJAROENRAT HAS RESIGNED as leader of the Move Forward Party (MFP) to make way for his successor to take up the post of opposition leader.

Mr Pita conveyed his resignation message via his Facebook page last Friday (Sept 15), addressing it to all MFP members and the general public.

Mr Pita said that while the MFP boasts the largest number of MPs within the opposition bloc, he cannot accept the position of opposition leader due to his suspension by the Constitutional Court from performing his duties as an MP.

"The current constitution stipulates that the opposition leader must be an MP who leads the top opposition party, but I am still unable to fulfill my duties in the House of Representatives and won't be able to accept the role of opposition leader in the near future.

"After consulting with the executive committee and party MPs, we have concluded that the position of 'opposition leader' is of utmost importance in the parliamentary system, and the position should be undertaken by the main opposition party in the House of Representatives.

"In other words, the MFP should lead the opposition, which is responsible for keeping the government under scrutiny and checks and pushing for changes that are not included in the government's policies.

"I have decided to step down from my position as the MFP leader, allowing the party to select an MP capable of assuming the role of 'opposition leader' to replace me



Pita Limjaroenrat. Photo: Bangkok Post

as party leader."

The 43-year-old alumnus of Harvard Kennedy School of Government said that despite his resignation, he would still work for the MFP and the people to the best of his ability.

Mr Pita's announcement came after he was included on the TIME100 Next list of young global leaders to watch, according to Time magazine.

Mr Pita was the only Thai on the annual list of 100 people seen as defining the next generation of leadership around the world.

The list is divided into five categories: Artists, Phenoms, Innovators, Advocates and Leaders.

"The only thing more stunning than Pita Limjaroenrat's election victory was the radical agenda he ran on to achieve it," Time said.

However, it noted that "the byzantine nature of Thai democracy means Pita's path to power has been blocked by an unelected Senate and a flurry of legal challenges".

The magazine said Mr Pita remains optimistic about the future.

"I'm proud of what we have achieved," it quoted him as saying. "And we can do a lot more to provide checks and balances in parliament and speak on the behalf of the people." Bangkok Post

Government donates B1.5mn to Libyan flood relief effort

BANGKOK

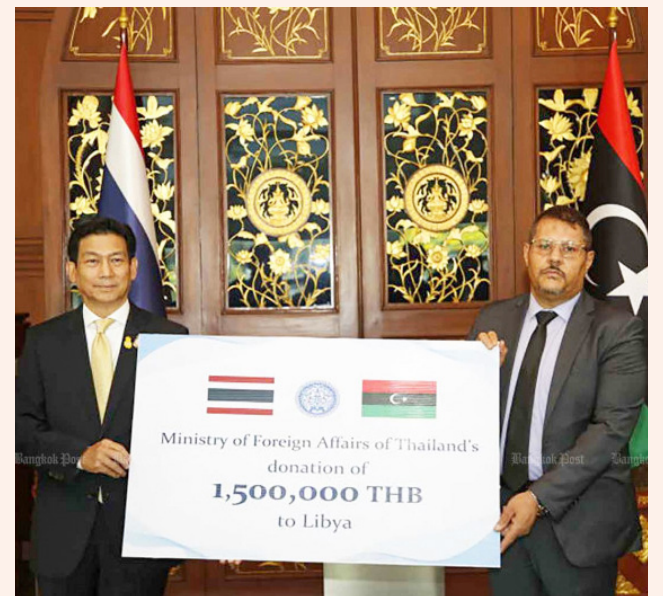
THE GOVERNMENT donated B1.5 million to relief efforts for the Libyan flood disaster on Monday (Sept 18).

The donation was presented to Ashoor Salem Ashoor Omran, the Charge d'affaires at the Libyan embassy at a ceremony at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Foreign Minister Parnpree Bahiddha-Nukara said the government would like to express its sincere condolences for the tragic loss that the Libyan government and people suffered from the deadly flood in northeastern Libya.

"This small token represents sincerity and goodwill, as well as the cordial ties between both countries," he said.

"I believe that the strong will and resilience of Libyans would allow the country to overcome all challenges during this time. Please reassure that Thailand will continue



Mr Parnpree (left) and Mr Omran. Photo: Bangkok Post

to be a true friend Libya can rely on," Mr Parnpree added.

He later said the Thai government was saddened by the flooding disaster and its effects on Libyans and that he told the Libyan charge d'affaires that Thailand would provide more assistance if it was wanted.

When asked about the charge d'affaires response, he said the envoy thanked the Thai government and

people for standing by them.

The disaster on Sept 10 when rising waters from Storm Daniel burst two upstream dams near Derna in the northeast of the country, sending a wall of water crashing into the city.

According to the latest UN death toll, at least 3,958 people died, more than 9,000 were missing and at least 40,000 people were displaced. Bangkok Post

Soi Dog marks 'Million' milestone

Soi Dog Foundation

A one-eyed stray puppy in Thailand has become the millionth animal to be neutered and vaccinated by animal welfare organisation Soi Dog Foundation.

Aptly named 'Million', the homeless puppy was taken in by one of the foundation's mobile sterilisation teams after she was found on the streets of Nakhon Si Thammarat, and soon after became the millionth animal to pass through its large-scale spay/neuter and vaccination programme since its founding in 2003.

It is the first time in history that this number of stray animals has been neutered and vaccinated by a single organisation.

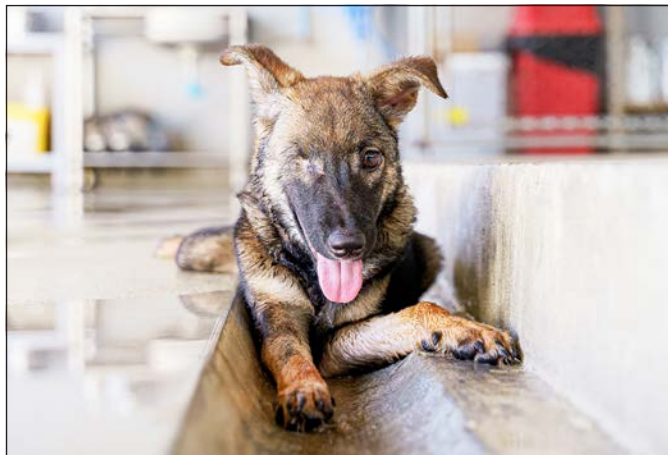
"This incredible achievement simply would not have been possible without the support of our donors around the world," said Soi Dog Foundation co-founder and president John Dalley MBE.

"Dogs like Million deserve so much better than to be born into short lives of suffering on the streets. It is, and has always been, our mission to get to the root cause of that suffering by means of sterilisation, and we are grateful to have supporters who wholeheartedly believe in that mission too," he added.

John and his late wife Gill, who hail from Yorkshire, UK, established Soi Dog Foundation in Phuket in order to address the overpopulation of stray dogs – known as 'soi' dogs – after retiring to the Thai island in 2003. From humble beginnings, it has steadily grown to become the largest stray animal welfare organisation in Southeast Asia and this year celebrates its 20th anniversary.

The foundation's spay/neuter and vaccination programme – known as its CNVR (Catch, Neuter, Vaccinate, Return) programme – has been at the forefront of its work from the very start.

The CNVR approach is widely recognised as the



Million, a one-eyed stray puppy from Nakhon Si Thammarat, was the millionth dog to be neutered and vaccinated by Soi Dog Foundation since its founding in 2003. Photo: Soi Dog Foundation

most humane and effective way of reducing the overpopulation of stray animals and stemming the spread of disease, including rabies.

"In our first three months, we managed to sterilise 175 animals and just over 1,200 the entire following year. Although those numbers sound small, as with anything in life you have to start somewhere," said John.

Fast-forward to today, and the foundation is now neutering and vaccinating more than 20,000 animals like Million every single month through its mobile teams and partner projects across Thailand. The programme has produced clear results in Phuket, where sustained efforts have reduced the stray population by over 90% and where disease control is such that the island is set to officially become Thailand's first rabies-free province.

Yearly surveys conducted by the International Companion Animal Management Coalition (ICAM) show similarly positive results in Greater Bangkok,

where the foundation has neutered and vaccinated over half a million animals. The large stray population in the capital is steadily declining, and a more compassionate attitude towards animals is being fostered by local communities.

Supporting these efforts in Greater Bangkok is Dogs Trust Worldwide – the international arm of the UK's largest dog welfare charity – who have funded half of the programme there since 2016.

Soi Dog Foundation receives no government funding to carry out its work and is solely dependent upon donations from kind individuals and grant-funding organisations like Dogs Trust Worldwide who share its passion for improving the lives of stray animals.

"We're so proud to have been an integral partner to the project in Bangkok since 2016," said Director of Dogs Trust Worldwide Karen Reed.

"We are committed to improving the lives of dogs and the relationship dogs have with the communities in which they live all around the world, so we know just how important this project continues to be for every single dog and cat.

"On behalf of everyone here at Dogs Trust Worldwide, we congratulate Soi Dog Foundation on reaching this milestone," she added.

Soi Dog Foundation also operates rescue, treatment, humane education and community outreach programmes from its shelter in Phuket. It was at the shelter's state-of-the-art dog hospital that Million herself underwent further surgery to remove her right eye which had been badly injured after she was hit by a car – sadly an all-too-common occurrence for stray dogs who are left to roam the streets freely.

With the stray dog population in Thailand sitting at an estimated 10-12 million, the foundation is committed to continuing to grow its CNVR programme, operating it in tandem with its other programmes which all form part of its holistic approach to enhancing animal welfare in Asia.

The November/December 2023 hard copy issue goes to print very soon

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Photo: Sala Phuket Mai Khao Beach

An unforgettable munch at Sala brunch

Ben Tirebuck

editor3@classactmedia.co.th

Weekend brunch has very much become a ritual amongst the expat community in Asia. Having savoured many myself, from Singapore to Tokyo, Hong Kong to Bangkok, I am hard pushed to find one that eclipses what is on offer at Sala Mai Khao Phuket.

The setting alone gives Sala a big advantage: nestled on the shore of the splendid Mai Khao Beach with lush tropical surroundings, it is a winner even before any delicacies have been served. Knowing that the occasion is limited, with only two remaining this year on the final Saturday of September and October respectively, only seems to heighten the occasion.

A cool ocean breeze greets my partner and I as we are seated at our shaded table, the four-piece band providing enjoyable live music at an appropriate volume. Knowing head chef Tony Wrigley's reputation precedes him, we tuck into our starters with great anticipation and are not disappointed. The Fine de Claire oysters, rock lobster, Chilean mussels, poached salmon and Andaman white prawns are a genuine taste sensation.

You are able to order as much as you wish from the menu throughout the day and an array of freshly prepared, delectable dishes are on offer. While tempted to also sample the delicious-sounding cold cut and cheese selection, the mini mezze and the fish finger sliders (a favourite of world heavyweight boxing champion Tyson Fury during his recent stay), we want to ensure we have room in our bellies for mains, so we begrudgingly decline.

The Murray Valley Angus Rib Eye honestly has to be tasted to be believed. Exquisitely cooked and favoured and very, very moreish! The Piri Piri Chicken and Goong Tod Nam Makam are also both fantastic but the Massaman Lamb Benedict is the real show-stopper. Braised lamb ragout, soft poached duck egg on toasted sourdough with massaman hollandaise sounds like it shouldn't work but believe me, it absolutely does. If you only choose one dish then this is the one. So good I ordered it twice. Truly superb!

For desert we sample a little of everything, meaning a smorgasbord including chocolate éclair, chocolate mousse, New York baked cheesecake, fresh strawberries, mango sticky rice parfait and cappuccino crème brûlée all find their way to our table and eager mouths.

While the food is undoubtedly of the

highest standard, it is the overall ambience created by the venue that makes brunch at Sala a truly memorable experience. The live music is fun and well pitched, the views are fantastic and the staff are as friendly and helpful as you are ever likely to find, with both head chef Tony and General Manager Anthony Van Sleuwen also cheerfully mingling with guests to further enhance the intimate vibe.

Anything of quality is often limited, and brunch at Sala is exactly that. If you want to indulge in a truly first-class afternoon of dining and entertainment in a tiny corner of paradise then mark Sept 30 or Oct 28 in your diaries, or else you will have to wait another six months. Better grab the chance now – you will not be disappointed.

For more details visit: Salahospitality.com/phuket

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POP QUIZ

1. Who in 2016 was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature ‘for having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition’?

2. Which rugby stadium, home of Ulster rugby, was formerly known as Ravenhill?

3. In which sort of building does Homer Simpson work?

4. ‘Nessun dorma’ is an aria from which opera?

5. Which of New York City’s five boroughs is home to JFK International Airport and LaGuardia Airport?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Hard

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

1. Big name in mapmaking

5. States of deep sleep

10. ___-mutton

14. On the safe side, at sea

15. Holdup

16. Let out

17. Losing in a boxing match

20. Scraps

21. Ilk

22. One-spots

24. Close-knit group

29. Enjoy a rebound romance, maybe

35. Marker letters

36. Ayatollah’s land

37. Sword handle

38. Once

40. Uncle Sam feature

41. Gulf V.I.P.

42. Celeb

43. Saclike structures

44. “We’re number ___!”

45. Making a commitment

50. Bowie’s last stand

51. Cast aspersions on

Down

1. X-ray units

2. ___ vera

3. Former Speaker Gingrich

4. ___ hygienist

5. Elect

6. Done, to Donne

7. Hand protector

8. Far from ruddy

9. Big first for a baby

10. “Seinfeld” uncle

11. It’ll never get off the ground

12. Kind of mill

13. Giant Giant

18. Central points

19. Anatomical sacs

23. Most artful

25. Turkish title

26. Inferior deity

52. Mishmash

56. Bologna home

60. Negative intuition

65. Milano moolah

66. Amber or umber

67. Catalina, e.g.

68. Jet black

69. Jabs, in a way

70. Small islands

27. Firing up

28. Main dish

29. Religious celebration

30. Relating to the trunk artery

31. Capital of Zambia

32. Spinachlike plant

33. Differs

34. Conclude

39. Barber’s job

40. Catch

46. Breakfast area

47. Certain tools

48. Cousin of a mandolin

49. Language family

53. Spank

54. Knowing, as a secret

55. Eye rakishly

57. A Simpson

58. With understanding

59. Long, long time

60. “Prince ___” (“Aladdin” song)

61. Anger, e.g.

62. Annoy

63. Aye’s opposite

64. Adversary

Answers to this week’s Pop Quiz:

(1) Bob Dylan; (2) Kingspan Stadium; (3) Nuclear Power Plant; (4) Turandot (by Giacomo Puccini); (5) Queens

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13	
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68					69								70		

Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week’s puzzles:

E	G	G	A	B	E	T	S	P	R	U	D	E		
L	E	A	X	E	R	I	C	D	O	Z	E	S		
M	I	S	S	I	N	G	T	H	E	P	O	I	N	T
S	M	E	L	T	I	C	E	D						
C	H	A	R	W	H	I	S	H	D	N	A			
H	A	S	A	P	O	I	N	T	O	F	V	I	E	W
A	S	K	L	O	F	T	L	A	P	E	L			
A	S	S	A	I	R	O	A	R	S	P	A			
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1	9	5	2	4	8	6	7	3
4	8	9	3	7	5	2	1	6
7	1	6	8	2	4	5	3	9
5	3	2	6	9	1	4	8	7
3	2	7	4	8	6	9	5	1
9	5	8	1	3	2	7	6	4
6	4	1	9	5	7	3	2	8

GOT YOUR NUMBER

5

minutes is how long female mayflies live for at most – just long enough to mate and lay eggs.

10

minutes is how long a standard hurricane takes to release more energy than all the nuclear weapons in the world combined.

40

percent of the world’s population contracted the ‘Spanish Flu’ in 1918, which killed more people than World War I.

66

percent of all the people who have ever lived past age 65 in the entire history of the world are alive today.

35,000

museums are located throughout the United States.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Birds at sunset. Photo by Chris Pahlman

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This week in history

Sept 22, 1979

A bright double-flash, resembling the detonation of a nuclear weapon, is observed near the Prince Edward Islands by a satellite overhead. The cause of the double-flash is never determined.

Sept 23, 1980

Bob Marley plays what would be the last concert of his life in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Diagnosed with acral lentiginous melanoma in 1977, he dies on May 11, 1981 in Miami at age 36.

Sept 24, 2007

Between 30,000 and 100,000 people take part in anti-government protests in Yangon, Burma, the largest in 20 years.

Sept 25, 1513

Spanish explorer Vasco Núñez de Balboa reaches what will become known as the Pacific Ocean.

Sept 26, 1973

Concorde makes its first non-stop crossing of the Atlantic in record-breaking time.

Sept 27, 1066

William the Conqueror and his army set sail from the mouth of the River Somme, beginning the Norman conquest of England.

Sept 28, 2014

Hong Kong protests: Benny Tai announces that Occupy Central is launched as Hong Kong’s government headquarters is being occupied by thousands of protesters. Hong Kong police resort to tear gas to disperse protesters but thousands remain.

Source: Wikipedia

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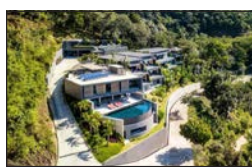
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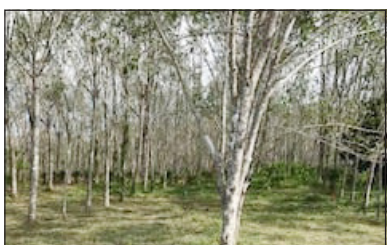
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UFE PHUKET SEPTEMBER NETWORKING EVENING

Another entertaining and well-attended UFE Phuket event held at Pickleball Phuket Club Kathu on Tuesday, Sept 12. Thanks to Kim's Cafe for the fantastic array of tasty treats.

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Aussies shocked by Fiji

RUGBY

AFP

Fiji produced the upset the Rugby World Cup needed last Sunday (Sept 17) in beating Australia to end almost seven decades of rugby pain at their hands while the 2019 finalists South Africa and England made it two wins from two.

The Fiji players described as “jackals” by their impressive coach Simon Raiwalui outmuscled the Wallabies to deservedly prevail 22-15 in a thrilling match that blows open Pool C.

It was the first time Fiji had ever beaten Australia at a World Cup and their impressive victory gives them a great chance of reaching the last eight for the first time since 2007, with their remaining matches against a robust Georgia and whipping boys Portugal.

Raiwalui said this was a new Fiji that can combine steel in the forward line with extravagant three-quarter play.

Rather than a “bunch of talented individuals,” this Fiji is a “team of talented players,”



Fiji's win is their first against Australia at a rugby World Cup. Photo: AFP

Raiwalui said.

Australia and coach Eddie Jones by contrast have it all to do if they are to avoid the ignominy of becoming the first Wallabies team to fail to reach the knockout stages.

Jones, who in his first spell in charge took Australia to the 2003 final only to lose to England in the dying seconds of extra-time, and his team

face a monumental test of character against Wales on Sunday (Sept 24).

BOX OFFICE RUGBY

Defending champions South Africa and England won in contrasting styles, the Springboks thrashing Romania 76-0 in Pool B while the English ground out a 34-12 win over Japan in Pool D.

South Africa's minds will switch quickly to tomorrow's (Sept 23) keenly awaited match with Six Nations Grand Slam champions Ireland which many believe will decide who tops the pool and who finishes second.

Awaiting the runners-up in the quarter-finals is likely to be host nation France with the winners of Pool B most

probably facing New Zealand.

England did not win over many neutral observers in their attritional win over Japan but for diehard supporters the style means little as they sit top of Pool D after two matches.

England fly-half George Ford, who contributed 14 points with the boot to go with his team's four tries, admitted it had hardly been box office rugby.

“Probably not the prettiest to watch and we had to build the game in a different way to get our points in the end, but I thought it was good discipline from the boys,” he said.

RECORD BREAKER

Johnny Sexton became Ireland's record points scorer as he notched 16 in their 59-16 romp over Tonga in the Rugby World Cup Pool B match on Saturday (Sept 16).

The 38-year-old moved to 1,090, seven more than previous holder Ronan O'Gara, setting it in style with a try he converted in the first half before sitting out the second half ahead of this weekend's clash with South Africa.

The Irish scored eight tries, man of the match Bundee

Aki scoring a second successive brace in front of 15,000 raucous Irish fans in Nantes.

Sexton said the record was “a lovely personal milestone” but insisted it was the progress of his team that was uppermost in his mind before they face the Springboks.

“I don't think it's about individual achievements, it's about getting the next win and keep building in this tournament,” he said.

“It's week-on-week in a World Cup. We're concentrating on a massive game next week.”

Also on Saturday Wales defeated Portugal 28-8 and Samoa beat Chile 43-10.

Meanwhile, live-wire scrum-half Cam Roigard had a field day to help New Zealand to an 11-try 71-3 thrashing of Namibia last Friday (Sept 22).

Roigard scored two tries and set up two more as fly-half Damian McKenzie bagged 26 points to kick start the All Blacks' tournament after an opening 27-13 loss to hosts France in Pool A.

“It's a good feeling getting the win today, especially after last week's result,” said All Blacks captain Ardie Savea.

Fun Run promotes health and awareness of cybercrime threat

RUNNING

THE COMMISSIONER of the Royal Thai Police (RTP) was in Phuket last Sunday (Sept 17) to inaugurate a fun run designed to promote health while raising awareness of the growing threat of cybercrime.

“There are approximately 800 cases of online crime detected by the RTP nationally every day,” Pol Gen Damrongsak Kittiprapas said in his opening remarks at the “Cyber Vaccinated Run 2023” at Saphan Hin Park.

“The most common offences involve fraudulent goods or services being offered, closely followed by attempts to trick people into investing or lending money. Such attempts are often coupled with call centre scams that attempt to intimidate the victim,” he added.

“We need to raise awareness of this kind of criminal activity. Do not believe everything you hear, take your time and check for credibility



Photo: PR Phuket

and do not transfer anything electronically or otherwise unless you are completely sure it is legal.

“This deterrent approach is what we term as a ‘cyber vaccine’ where we build a communal immunity to such criminals,” Pol Gen Damrongsak explained.

The run was split into three separate categories: an 11-kilometre run, a 5km run and a 3km run.

There was no entry fee for the event, although in order to qualify competitors had to sit an RTP “Cyber Vaccine Test” questionnaire with a pass rate of 35 correct answers from the total 40 questions required for race eligibility.

Organisers said that of the 1,744 people who took the test 1,735 people qualified and therefore participated.

The Phuket News

Sainz wins Singapore thriller

FORMULA ONE

CARLOS SAINZ HELD off the fast-finishing George Russell and Lewis Hamilton to win a thrilling Singapore Grand Prix and end Red Bull Racing's stronghold over the season last Sunday (Sept 17).

Sainz started the race from pole position and nailed his getaway to control the pace of the race, with teammate Charles Leclerc immediately behind him.

But an early safety car for Logan Sargeant's crashed Williams jumbled the order at the front when all bar three drivers made their pit stops.

Sainz retained the lead, but Leclerc's stop was delayed by traffic in the pit lane, dropping him to sixth and leaving the lead car exposed to Russell in the faster Mercedes.

Russell harried the Spaniard for the middle stint of the race, but Sainz was centimetre-perfect in his defensive work and refused to give the Briton a look at the lead.

It took a virtual safety car on lap 44 of 62 to enliven what had looked like a stalemate in the victory battle.

Russell and teammate Hamilton, then fourth, used



Sainz celebrates the win with his Ferrari team. Photo: AFP

the reduced field speed to pit for fresh mediums, betting that unleashing its car's true pace would be enough break the deadlock.

Both were immediately seconds quicker than the leader and on a trajectory for victory. Having dropped to fourth and fifth respectively, they made short work of Leclerc to shadow Lando Norris, who inherited second after their stops.

But with five laps to go Sainz understood the grave threat to his victory and played a clever tactical game to boost Norris's defence of second place.

The Spaniard slowed down to reduce his advantage to Norris to less than a second, gifting the McLaren driver DRS. With his rear wing flipped open, Norris had enough top speed to fend off the parries of Russell behind him.

Lap after lap the finely balanced dance of pace and

defence expertly held Norris in a bulwark, and when the chequered flag fell Sainz had secured himself a famous Ferrari victory.

“We have to be extremely proud of the weekend that we've put together,” he said. “We've had one opportunity this year to win the race, which was here in Singapore, and we nailed it.

“We didn't put a foot wrong all weekend. There was a lot of moments out there where we were a bit under pressure, and we kept it calm, we kept our plan, our strategy.”

Hamilton finished third to bring Mercedes 15 points, while Leclerc finished fourth, pipping Max Verstappen over the line by just 0.264 seconds.

Pierre Gasly, Oscar Piastri, Sergio Pérez, Liam Lawson and Kevin Magnussen rounded off the top ten places.

Michael Lamonato

Brighton rock United to extend spiralling crisis

FOOTBALL

AFP

Manchester United's crisis deepened as they slumped to a 3-1 home defeat against Brighton last Saturday (Sept 16).

The season is spiralling out of control for Erik ten Hag's United, who started the campaign in buoyant mood after ending their trophy drought and finishing third in the league last season.

Some fans dreamed of a long-overdue title challenge but instead they find themselves trailing leaders Manchester City by nine points after a third chastening defeat in five matches.

Goals from former United striker Danny Welbeck, Pascal Gross and substitute Joao Pedro made it 3-0, with Hannibal Mejbri's first United goal little consolation for the shell-shocked hosts.

"It is difficult in this period," said Ten Hag after the game. "It has not fallen on our side, but we will fight back



Manchester United's Casemiro (centre) reacts during the defeat 3-1 to Brighton last Saturday (Sept 16). Photo: AFP

and if we stick together, play as a team, stick to the rules, we will return."

The Dutchman, in his second season at Old Trafford, faces a huge job to save United's season, besieged by problems on and off the pitch.

Jadon Sancho has been exiled from first-team training after a public spat with the manager, while fellow forward Antony has been given a leave of absence to address domestic abuse allegations, which he denies.

However, despite the tur-

moil at Old Trafford, Brighton deserve huge credit for an outstanding display as they continue their impressive progression under Roberto De Zerbi – their fourth straight league win against United lifted them to third in the table.

Chelsea also find themselves in bother after a drab 0-0 draw against lowly Bournemouth left their fans booing the side as they left the pitch.

The Blues have made their second worst ever start to a Premier League campaign and, with just one win from

five league games, find themselves closer to the relegation zone than the top four.

Elsewhere defending champions Manchester City overcame West Ham 3-1 to maintain top spot in the table, while Liverpool won by the same scoreline against Wolves in Saturday's early kick-off.

Sheffield United looked to be on track for their first league victory of the season at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium thanks to Gustavo Hamer's 73rd minute goal.

However, Spurs grabbed an equaliser in the 98th minute when Richarlison headed home Ivan Perisic's corner and Dejan Kulusevski then scored the winner two minutes later.

Aston Villa scored three late goals to beat Crystal Palace 3-1, Arsenal overcame lowly Everton 1-0 while Fulham condemned Premier League new boys Luton to a fourth consecutive defeat as the Cottagers won 1-0.

Newcastle beat Brentford 1-0 at St James' Park to end a run of three successive defeats, while Nottingham Forest and Burnley drew 1-1 on Monday.



Thailand players celebrate after scoring against Malaysia. Photo: Bangkok Post

Perfect War Elephants seal Asian U23 Cup finals berth

FOOTBALL

THAILAND CLAIMED top spot in Group H of the 2024 AFC U23 Asian Cup qualifiers on Sept 12 after a 1-0 win over Malaysia to advance to the finals in Qatar.

A first-half strike from Yotsakon Burapha at Chonburi Stadium was enough to settle a tightly contested affair with both teams having plenty of chances.

Purachet Thodsanid burst down the right before supplying a cross for Yotsakon, who evaded his marker inside a packed box before neatly placing his headed attempt beyond the outstretched arms of Malaysia goalkeeper Sikh Izhaz Nazrel.

That goal secured a place for the Thais in the 2024 AFC U23 Asian Cup in Qatar from

Apr 15-May 3. The top three finishers at the finals will automatically qualify for the Olympic Games while the fourth-placed team will have a playoff with a team from African continent.

The War Elephants had a perfect run with three victories in as many games without conceding a goal.

Thailand U23 coach Issara Sritaro said: "We have achieved our target of claiming nine points and keeping a clean sheet in the event is a big bonus.

"The Malaysians were very determined and pressured us throughout the match but our players had the patience and got the goal."

The Philippines took the third spot in the group with three points while Bangladesh finished at the bottom after losing all their three matches.

Bangkok Post

Halep gets four-year doping ban

TENNIS

FORMER WORLD NUMBER one Simona Halep has been given a four-year suspension from tennis for two doping offences, the International Tennis Integrity Agency said on Sept 12.

Halep has been provisionally suspended since October last year after testing positive for the blood-boosting substance Roxadustat at the 2022 US Open.

And in May the two-time Grand Slam singles champion was charged with a second anti-doping breach relating to irregularities in her Athlete Biological Passport (ABP).

Both charges have been upheld by an independent tribunal.

The 31-year-old Romanian will not be able to play professional tennis again until Oct 6, 2026.

But soon after the ITIA statement was released, Halep announced she would appeal the decision, saying: "Today (Tuesday), a tribunal under the tennis anti-doping programme announced a tentative decision in my case. The last year has been the hardest match of my life, and unfortunately my



Halep claims she is innocent. Photo: AFP

fight continues.

"I have devoted my life to the beautiful game of tennis. I take the rules that govern our sport very seriously and take pride in the fact I have never knowingly or intentionally used any prohibited substance. I refused to accept their decision of a four-year ban. I intend to appeal to The Court of Arbitration for Sport."

An independent tribunal, which heard evidence from Halep, the winner of the 2018 French Open and 2019 Wimbledon singles titles, met in London on June 28-29.

On Sept 11, the tribunal – which also heard evidence from scientific experts and sifted through some 8,000

pages of evidence – confirmed it had found Halep had committed intentional violations under tennis's anti-doping programme.

One of these was the use of Roxadustat discovered in her urine sample at the 2022 US Open, with the other breach based on collection and analysis of 51 blood samples provided by Halep as part of the ABP programme.

While roxadustat is a substance that can be used legitimately to treat anaemia, it is also on the World Anti-Doping Agency banned list as it is considered a blood-doping agent, which increases haemoglobin and the production of red blood cells. AFP

New Zealand too strong for Thais in Davis Cup World Group clash

TENNIS

THAILAND LOST TO hosts New Zealand 3-1 in the Davis Cup World Group II tie at Invercargill last Saturday (Sept 16).

After losing both singles matches on the opening day, Pruchya Isaro and Wishaya Trongcharoenchaikul went down to Finn Reynolds and Artem Sitak 6-4, 6-2 in the doubles tie as New Zealand claimed the third point to win the tie.

Thai-Australian Maximus Jones won the third singles match against Isaac Becroft, who replaced New Zealand No.1 Rubin Statham, 6-3, 3-6, 10-8 to win a point for Thailand.

It was the first Davis Cup win for Jones, who made his debut in the tournament.

With the victory, New Zealand will compete in the 2024 World Group I playoff round while Thailand will compete in the 2024 World Group II playoff.

"Overall, the team did well but we have to accept



Kasidit Samrej. Photo: AFP

that New Zealand had the advantage of playing at home," said captain Thanakorn Srichaphan.

"Their experience showed during the match. Pruchya and Wishaya gave their all and tried to hold their service games but their opponents were simply on a higher level.

"However, we would like

to thank our supporters who came to cheer our team. We will try to stay in the World Group II when we play in the playoff next year," he added.

Thailand No.2 Kasidit Samrej was beaten 6-2, 7-6 (10/8) by Statham last Friday (Sept 15) while Jones lost to Ajeet Rai 6-1, 6-3 in the first and second singles matches.

Bangkok Post

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Sport



Fiji cause World Cup upset > p14

GOING NATIONAL

Vagabonds secure spot at national 7s playoffs

The Phuket Vagabonds post game. Photo: Kennes Sriwichai

RUGBY

Dan Ashburn / Santiago Lopez

Phuket Vagabonds RFC secured a deserved berth at the Thailand Rugby Union (TRU) National 7s playoffs following a determined performance at the TRU Southern 7s tournament held in Phang Nga on the weekend of Sept 9-10.

A competitive two days of rugby, played at the picturesque Phang Nga Provincial Stadium, resulted in the Vagabonds claiming the competition's crucial runners-up spot, ensuring an invitation to the prestigious national 7s playoffs, the venue and date of which has yet to be confirmed.

Facing tournament favourites Krabi RFC in their opening match on Sept 9, the Vagabonds combined structured defense with crunching tackles to keep the opposition attack at bay before exerting a spell of pressure that saw Daniil Komandir score and secure the win.

Shortly after was a friendly match against Phang Nga RFC where a tightly contested affair saw Alex Lampton score before Komandir broke through for a try in the closing moments.

The same fixture was contested the following day, although this time as a competitive game and in much more challenging conditions due to heavy rain overnight.

It appeared to be a case of déjà vu as the Vagabonds led by a single try going into the final minutes of the match, courtesy of skipper Paul Rothwell.

This time, however, Phang Nga threatened to turn the tables after a line break looked to have secured at least a draw, but an immense try-saving tackle from Dan Ashburn foiled opposition hopes and capped another deserving Vagabonds win to put them into the final.

The Vagabonds began the final game against Krabi wisely with forward ball control and solid tackling support before a yellow card sidelined

the influential Ben Williams, which would prove costly to the Phuket side.

Exploiting the player advantage, a breakaway Krabi try put greater pressure on the six-man Vagabonds side and, despite the herculean efforts of Rothwell, Komandir, Ivan Ustiv and Cameron Heyring, the Vagabonds were unable to respond.

The result meant Krabi claimed the Southern 7s title, although the runners-up place means the Vagabonds secured a place at the national 7s tournament later this year.

THE PROMISE OF YOUTH

The Phuket Vagabonds Junior Rugby Academy also had two teams participating at the tournament, including a full-contact U14 side and a mini rugby mixed U12 side.

The physical level of the tournament was slightly above what the young Phuket teams have previously experienced when they won their maiden tournament in Krabi last year, moving this year from U12 up to U14 level and the contrast in player

size proving somewhat intimidating.

The U14 team played very well, but unfortunately lost three influential players through injury and illness as the tournament progressed.

They fought valiantly in the third-fourth place playoff game but eventually succumbed to Yala's much heavier opposition, while the U12s made it to their section final, but they too could not overcome a more experienced Sainamyen Municipality School from Patong.

Despite not claiming any titles in this just their second tournament, a number of players stood out. Bertie Pinel was the U14 lead scorer and Jack McReadie demonstrated great mature leadership. Similarly Nataporn 'Nut' Nuan-prachuap and Pimlada 'Mook' Ronarith both excelled, the latter being the smallest girl on the field yet showing the biggest heart with her energy and fearless tackling.

The Academy coaches learned a great deal from the tournament on and off the field which they will look

to implement into future training sessions and into preparations for future competition.

Coach Ivan Ustiv was very proud of the academy team achievements, saying: "We are very happy with the strong effort our players put in until the last whistle. They showed great character by never giving up and now allowing their heads to drop."

Head of the Junior Academy, Santiago Lopez, made special mention to players' families and academy sponsors, thanking Phuket's Finest Properties, Tarn Tara Spa and OG Fightwear for their respective support which made the trip possible.

Academy coaching sessions for ages 5-16 are held at 9am every Saturday at the Alan Cooke Cooke (ACG) ground in Thalang.

For more information visit the Phuket Vagabonds Rugby or Phuket Vagabonds Junior Rugby Academy Facebook pages or www.acg-phuket.com

Additional reporting by Neil Quail

Strong show from Phuket athletes at Tri Iyara Triathlon

TRIATHLON

THE INAUGURAL TRI IYARA triathlon has been declared a huge success by organisers and athletes alike following the launch event in Phuket on the weekend of Sept 9-10.

The event at Sirinath National Park attracted over 500 athletes to contest the olympic race (10 kilometre run, 40km bike, 1,500-metre swim), sprint race (5km run, 21km bike, 750m swim) and duathlon (15km run, 40km bike, 1,500m swim).

Athletes from Jurgen Zack's

Phuket-based Z-Coaching triathlon training group fared particularly impressively with several high placed finishers across the three categories, despite heavy rainfall and challenging swimming conditions on the Sunday (Sept 10), the main day of competition.

In the men's olympic triathlon, 17-year-old Thai Tanadol 'Peem' Witsarutsin excelled to finish in second place with a time of 2 hours, 4 minutes and 26 seconds, just 1m 37s behind overall winner Abdallah Abushabab of Egypt.

Fellow Z-Coaching athlete Ronald Setiawan finished 4 minutes



Photo: Supplied

behind Tanadol in third place with Lam Quang Nhat in fourth, Jaray Jearanai in fifth, Rorie Masson eighth and Aaron Buchan 10th, all of whom train with Zack.

Z-Coaching athletes dominated the women's olympic event with

Australian Dimity-Lee Duke storming home with a time of 2h 9m and 59s, Inge Prasetyo second on 2h 23m 4s and Japan's Satowa Ota 26m and 45s behind her in third.

The presence of fellow Z-Coaching athletes in the top 10 was strong with Apple Shum in fourth place, Rachel Ireland, in what was her first ever triathlon, in fifth, Sabine Egger in seventh and Mimit Thanaphornphrom in ninth.

Renata Berliana of Z-Coaching won the women's sprint with an overall time of 1hr 12m 57s, with teammates Chiara Egger in fourth and Jenjira Mountford seventh, in

what was her first ever triathlon, while Do'dee Panchalard came third in the men's sprint.

Anan Suksrisin finished third in the men's duathlon while Marina Gorodetskaya secured seventh spot in the women's race, rounding off a fantastic day for athletes from Z-Coaching Phuket.

The organisers congratulated all athletes taking part for helping create a world-class event that they hope will be repeated many times in future.

Organisers similarly thanked all those that supported the event, including local Phuket residents.

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