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BUILD ON

Photo: MNRE Phuket

BALI CONSTRUCTION BAN NOT ON THE CARDS FOR PHUKET

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Not one of Phuket's leading figures are willing to propose a temporary ban on any new construction, similar to what local residents in Bali are calling for, to help preserve Phuket's fast-disappearing green areas.

Like Phuket, Bali's biggest money earner by far is tourism. But anxious about runaway tourism, local residents are calling for a slowdown in new construction projects. In response, Indonesian authorities recently announced plans for a two-year moratorium on building hotels, villas and nightclubs.

While the ban was supposed to come into effect in early October,

the ban remains in hiatus and has yet to be confirmed by the new Indonesian government.

BOOM

Similar to Bali, Phuket's construction boom over the past 12 months has been staggering, and nowhere else has the boom been more evident than in Bang Tao, Cherng Talay, where *The Phuket News* continues to receive constant reports of green areas being cleared to make way for new construction.

In November last year, Bill Barnett, Managing Director of hospitality consultancy C9 Hotelworks, noted that Phuket's once-quiet beachside west coast community of Bang Tao was experiencing an "unparalleled surge in real estate development".

According to research by C9 Hotelworks at the time, there were 7,842 condominium units in the "supply pipeline". Added to the supply influx were just over 2,400 upscale and luxury homes, which equated to a pipeline of more than 10,000 residential units in the market.

Those new units started coming onstream this year, marking a record-breaking year for new units, especially villa sales.

According to the Real Estate Information Center (REIC), villas, mostly purchased by foreigners, reached record highs across all metrics, with significant half-on-half increases in every category.

In the first half of 2024, the number of villas surged to 1,175

units, rising 383% from the second half of last year. Similarly, the value of new supply climbed to B38.3 billion, up 272% from the previous period, REIC reported earlier this month.

As new supply expanded, the total supply of villas surged to 2,261 units worth B84.5bn in the first half of 2024, compared with 1,288 units valued at B58.6bn in the second half of 2023 – the first time supply exceeded 1,000 units.

'TOO DIFFICULT'

Yet, despite growing concern that the explosive growth in construction in popular areas such as Bang Tao will only diminish the island's attractiveness to tourists, and eventually drag down the values of the new properties being sold...

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Officials ramp up protection for dugongs



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Butterflies take flight as rains begin to ease



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Laguna Phuket Triathlon sees mega turnout



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News



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Slowing sprawl 'too difficult'

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...local leading figures say that any attempt to slow construction would be "too difficult".

Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat simply declined to comment on the issue.

Natthakrit Phonphet, Deputy Director of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Phuket office (MNRE Phuket), which is the government office responsible for protecting Phuket's environment, said the matter was "out of our hands".

"To freeze construction and development in Phuket... is beyond the province's authority," Mr Natthakrit said.

"To make a law like [the one proposed] in Bali, we need to consider the government first. Right now, our government is focused on boosting the economy. Phuket generates hundreds of billions of baht in income for the country. They probably wouldn't do the same thing as Bali.

"Tourism is Thailand's main source of income. If we were to limit construction or temporarily stop construction, especially in a world-class tourist city like

Phuket [sic], I think it would be very difficult for the government to do," he added.

Thaneth Tantipiriyakij, President of the Phuket Tourist Association, who agreed that Phuket needed a balance between construction growth and environmental protection, noted that Phuket provincial officials do not have the authority to issue a 'freeze' on any new construction.

"Phuket must rely on central power for everything... We cannot make local laws to enforce in our own areas," he said.

"For instance, even trying to adjust common areas or change building height and slope can get complicated. Plus, the real estate sector may not support changes inspired by Bali," he added.

"There are many things we'd like to do and agree on that way, but some aren't possible because of central government restrictions," Mr Thaneth said.

Mr Thaneth also underscored the region's sustainability efforts, including the goal to become a certified Green Destination by 2026 under the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC).



Photo: MNRE Phuket

"I think Phuket has tried to amend some laws, such as increasing the height of buildings and reducing the horizontal area," Mr Thaneth continued.

"But when there was a flood and landslide a few months ago, the private sector discussed adjusting the law on slope," he explained.

Among the notable problems Phuket is experiencing with the expansion of construction is that Phuket is developing "horizontally, not vertically," Mr Thaneth said.

"Especially in areas with scenic sea views," he noted. "From this problem, local people see that Phuket has limited space. And after the incident in Karon that resulted in deaths, Phuket has

started to have wake-up calls," he added.

TALK TALK

Manoch Phanchalard, Chief of Cherng Talay Tambon Administrative Organisation (OrBorTor), which is responsible for the area covering Bang Tao, plainly admits many construction projects are underway in his area.

"Currently, there are many commercial projects being built in coastal areas. There are more than 10 projects such as condominiums, villas and hotels in Cherng Talay," Mr Manoch said.

"To truly implement sustainable development, we need multi-sector discussions to balance residential, commercial and

environmental needs," he noted.

"I think it can be viewed from two perspectives: a perspective studying the law of Bali, and another perspective is the perspective of businessmen, developers, real estate businesses who have invested or have land in their hands and want to develop," he added.

"In Thailand it is difficult to freeze construction because there needs to be discussions among many sectors to find a balance. Because there are currently two types of construction in the coastal area: one is residential construction and the other is commercial construction and services such as condominiums, villas, inviting tourists to live there," he said.

USE THE LAW

To Mr Natthakrit, Deputy Director of the MNRE Phuket office, the one thing officials can do right now is simply enforce the existing law.

"Rather than seeking new laws, we should focus on strictly enforcing the rules we already have," he said.

"Currently, based on my

inspections and those of the Phuket MNRE Office, 90% of projects are not complying with these regulations and laws.

"Every measure, law or issue related to construction is overseen by local government agencies responsible for different areas... We have to ask ourselves: is the issue with the law itself, or with the people? Right now, the problem lies with human error and non-compliance with the law," Mr Natthakrit added.

"Saying we need to freeze or stop construction won't solve other problems. Instead, we need people and local governments to strictly enforce the current laws, with local governments playing a key role in inspecting every stage of construction and development.

"Right now, if nothing is done, no one will inspect. Sometimes, we only inspect when a problem has already happened," Mr Natthakrit explained.

"I think we need to start by strictly enforcing existing regulations. If we don't, nature will continue to deteriorate, and in a few years, the situation could be much worse," he concluded.

Phuket honours global road safety campaign

A SPECIAL COM-memorative service in memory of people who lost their lives in road accidents in Phuket was held last Sunday (Nov 17) at Wat Wichit Sangkharam, otherwise known as Wat Kuan, in Phuket Town.

The service was part of the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, a global initiative that promotes road safety while paying respects to those killed in road accidents throughout the world.

The service at Way Kuan had a specific focus on making Phuket a 'safe travel city' by promoting the wearing of helmets on motorcycles at all times.

More than 300 helmets were distributed

to educational institutions at the event which will be passed onto pupils in due course.

The service also highlighted general road safety measures within the community, urging cooperation and support by families to prevent and reduce losses from road accidents in Phuket.

The ceremony was overseen by Phra Khru Pariyatanuyut, Advisor to the Abbot of Talat Yai Subdistrict, who was joined by: Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat and his wife Ms Busadee, President of the Phuket Red Cross Society and President of the Phuket Provincial branch of the Ministry of Interior Interior Housewives Association; Phuket Vice Gov-

ernor Adul Chuthong; Worasit Phutjib, Mueang District Chief; Sopon Thongsai, Head of the Phuket Provincial Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Office (DDPM Phuket); as well as representatives from the Phuket Provincial Road Safety Center Committee, Rotary Clubs, and network agencies from the public and private sectors.

Governor Sophon outlined how the government of Phuket Province has prioritised the prevention and reduction of road accidents by striving to integrate cooperation from all sectors to implement the goals of the Road Safety Master Plan 2022-2027, which aims to reduce the number of deaths from road accidents in Phuket

Province to no more than 94 per year and reduce serious injuries to no more than 1,314 within the same timeframe.

However, Governor Sophon also emphasised that the issue of road accidents in Phuket is still a significantly negative one, especially among children and youngsters, a demographic that has been specifically targeted with the importance helmet wearing safety campaign.

DDPM Phuket Chief Mr Sopon said that Phuket is an important tourist destination where road accidents are still the leading cause of death.

In 2023, there were 168 deaths and so far this year (from Jan 1 to Nov 15) there have been 159 deaths,



Photo: PR Phuket

of which 37 were foreigners, he explained.

This is why the ceremony was so important, he added, in not only commemorating those who lost their lives on Phuket roads but by stressing the importance of adhering to strict road safety measures to reduce and ultimately prevent further losses.

World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims is a United Nations led initiative held on the third Sunday of November each year with the goal of providing a

platform for road traffic victims and their families to:

- Remember all people killed and seriously injured on the roads
- Acknowledge the crucial work of the emergency services
- Draw attention to the generally trivial legal response to culpable road deaths and injuries and advocate for an appropriately serious response
- Advocate for better support for road traffic victims and victim families. *The Phuket News*

Dugongs get more protection

The Phuket News

editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat has set up a working group to take care of dugongs after finding more than 30 migrating into the area.

Governor Sophon announced the news at a meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall on Nov 12 joined by Pinsak Suraswadi, Director-General of the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR).

"The DMCR has marked out the area where the dugongs live and issued an announcement via the Phuket offices of the Marine Department, the Department of Fisheries and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) to inform the public, especially fishermen and business operators," Governor Sophon explained.

"Whether they operate speedboats or jet-skis, they need to know in which areas must be used with special caution, especially fishermen, so they know which areas are prohibited from setting nets in order to prevent dugongs from getting caught and dying

"This requires cooperation from all coastal fishermen, people living along the coast and the



Dugong protection zones have been mapped out. Photo: DMCR

general public in order to help take care of and conserve the family of dugongs," he added.

A LINE group called 'Rak Dugong Phuket' has been set up so people can communicate together to know more about the dugongs and what action is being taken to preserve their safety, Governor Sophon noted.

"The DMCR itself will start planting seagrass and finding other types of vegetation that can be used as substitutes, which is currently being tested and has yielded quite a bit of results," Governor Sophon said.

"In the future, there will be a pen built in the sea to take care of sick animals so they can be kept in a restricted area while

they are being taken care of," he added.

"Therefore, I would like to ask the public to help keep an eye out [for dugongs in the area], especially fishermen as well as business operators who conduct various activities in the sea.

"Let's help take care of and conserve our dugongs," Governor Sophon said.

There are currently 30 dugongs that have migrated into Phuket waters, Governor Sophon confirmed.

"Right now, we are going to name 30 of them. We have to name them all and try to look at their physical characteristics. Experts may need to know the physical characteristics and give

each one a name so that we know their location," he added.

"I think one indicator is that the dugongs are here, which means that our area is still fertile. Due to climate change, seagrass in many provinces, mostly in Trang Province, has died and rotted.

"I have just seen some of the dugongs and some of them are so thin that I could see their spines. They were very thin. This means they have not eaten for a long time and alternative food is hard to find.

"Last year, the province [meaning 'Phuket'] had the opportunity to plant sea grass in this plot of forest. The results were good on this side. So I talked with the director-general of the DMCR that we should plant more. We may have to plant the seedlings first and then plant them in the sea to provide food," Governor Sophon explained.

DMCR Director-General Pinsak said that the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment has ordered the DMCR to work with the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) to come down to Phuket and work with local officials to help manage the dugong issue, which he said was "currently a

crisis for dugongs in Thailand, which are protected animals".

"Quite a lot have died, especially this year, 33 of them. Therefore, it is necessary to work together to expedite the protection of the dugong herd and to have appropriate food for them, especially the seagrass problem.

"Today, the DMCR, the MNRE and the provincial governor have an idea to use the Rawai model that the province has done quite successfully, which has declared the area as protected and reduce threats to dugongs that migrate in," Mr Pinsak said.

"This is whether it is about boats, making boundaries, promoting the issue to the public and reducing threats from fishing, and to expand the area in Pa Khlok, where there are more than 20-30 dugongs," he continued.

"It has been predicted that in about four to five months that Trang and Krabi provinces will have insufficient food sources for dugongs to survive. The target areas where the dugongs will come are Phuket and Phang Nga.

"We are closely monitoring where they go and how many there are, and we are also publicising to the local communities to let them know that the dugongs will come," Mr Pinsak said.

Officials ramp up landfill expansion

PHUKET CITY MUNICIPALITY is expediting landfill management at the Phuket Provincial Waste Disposal Center at Saphan Hin to prepare for a surge in waste volumes during the upcoming tourism high season.

Deputy Mayor Suphot La-onghphet visited key waste disposal sites at the landfill on Monday (Nov 18) to monitor progress and ensure the community remains unaffected by the operations.

Deputy Mayor Suphot inspected waste management at Pits 4 and 5, following the closure of Pit 3 last Thursday (Nov 15). The closure aims to prevent odour issues impacting neighbourhoods near the landfill site.

During his visit, he also engaged with residents of the Saphan Hin Village community, explaining the municipality's waste management strategies. Residents reportedly expressed understanding and support for the efforts.

The municipality, in collaboration with local administrative organisations, is focusing on im-



Photo: Phuket City Municipality

proving waste handling processes to address the current 400-500 tonnes of daily excess waste sent to incineration or landfills.

This figure is expected to rise significantly as tourist numbers increase during the high season.

Deputy Mayor Suphot has previously noted that waste from local government bodies and businesses across Phuket is already pouring in at roughly 1,400 tonnes a day.

However, the island's single incinerator can only

burn 700 tonnes per day, resulting in an overflow of around 400-500 tonnes sent to landfills – beyond their current capacity.

The rise in waste is attributed to Phuket's growing tourism sector and the expansion of local businesses and households.

Deputy Mayor Suphot has urged residents and visitors to reduce waste at the source, especially by separating organic waste, to alleviate pressure on the incinerator and landfills.

The Phuket News

Headless dugong found floating off Phuket coast

MARINE LIFE EXPERTS are investigating the death of an adult male dugong whose decapitated body was discovered floating near the coast of Baan Bang Rong, Pa Khlok, off Phuket's east coast, on Nov 14.

Local residents reported the discovery to Thalang Police, who in turn informed the Marine and Coastal Resources Research Center (Upper Andaman Sea) at Cape Panwa, which operates under the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR).

The dugong, measuring 223cm in length (not including the head) and weighing approximately 250kg, was found in a severely decomposed state.

Officials noted that the animal's body condition was thin, scoring 2 out of 5 on the body condition scale.

Closer inspection revealed cut marks around the neck, where the head



Photo: Marine and Coastal Resources Research Center (Upper Andaman Sea)

had been removed, with the first cervical vertebrae severed.

Additional abrasions, strangle marks on the right fin, and barnacle growth were noted on its back, indicating prolonged time in the water.

DMCR officers had the

carcass transported to the Marine and Coastal Resources Research Center, where they will conduct an autopsy in the hope of uncovering further details about dugong's death and whether foul play was involved.

Eakkapong Thongtub

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Officer injured as knife-wielding man storms into police station

Eakkapop Thongtub
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Police have arrested a Phang Nga man for storming into Tha Chatchai Police Station, at the northern tip of Phuket, and attacking a police officer on duty with a knife.

The incident occurred in the early hours of last Sunday (Nov 17), police confirmed.

The man, later identified as Chuaib Phongthin, 48, from Phang Nga, entered the police station shortly after 2:50am apparently in a "state of distress".

He kicked open the door of an office, and Pol Lt Col Akkarapol Siwilai, an investigating officer on duty, attempted to intervene.

Chuaib attacked Pol Lt Col Akkarapol Siwilai with a knife, leaving him with injuries above his left eyebrow and on his left arm.

Chuaib then fled the scene.



Screenshot: CCTV / Tha Chatchai Police

Pol Lt Col Akkarapol Siwilai was taken to Bangkok Hospital Siroj where his wounds required eight stitches in total to close.

Police later discovered Chuaib had been involved in an accident in Phang Nga and admitted to Phang Nga Hospital. Officers from Tha Chatchai Police soon arrived at the hospital and placed Chuaib under arrest.

According to Phuket Provincial Police Commander Pol Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum the attack stemmed from an earlier case.

On Nov 8, Chuaib was arrested on an outstanding warrant related to property damage. Last Saturday (Nov 16), Chuaib and his relatives returned to the police station, questioning the legality of his arrest. Chuaib and his

relatives were told that Chuaib was arrested on an outstanding warrant.

During this visit, Chuaib reportedly became agitated and "delusional", and started yelling, police said.

At the request of officers at the station, Chuaib's family took Chuaib for some form of treatment at Thalang Hospital, police reported.

Hours later, Chuaib returned to the station with a knife, leading to the attack on Pol Lt Col Akkarapol.

After Chuaib's subsequent arrest in Phang Nga, police discovered he had a history of mental health treatment, as confirmed by his relatives, Pol Maj Gen Sinlert said.

Region 8 Police Commander Pol Lt Gen Surapong Thanomchit is aware of the incident, and Pol Maj Gen Sinlert said he has personally overseen the investigation. He had visited Pol Lt Col Akkarapol to offer support.

"The officer's condition is stable, and we expect him to be discharged from the hospital soon," Pol Maj Gen Sinlert said.

Chuaib has been charged with attempted murder of an officer on duty and with causing damage to government property.

He remains in custody as police continue their investigation.

Patong Police arrest men for assaulting tourist in burglary

POLICE IN PATONG HAVE apprehended two suspects, including a man known as 'Bank Soi Lao', for breaking into a tourist's room and assaulting him, leaving the victim injured.

The two men, named by police only as 'Mr Kittipong' (Bank Soi Lao), 27, and 'Mr P', 23, were arrested at about 4:30pm on Nov 13.

Of all places, the two men were arrested in the parking lot at Phuket Provincial Court on Ranong Rd in Phuket Town. Police did not explain why the two suspects were there.

Both were wanted on an arrest warrant issued by Phuket Provincial Court on Nov 12, police confirmed.

Among the charges listed on the warrant were theft at night-time, using a vehicle to facilitate the crime, breaking and entering, and causing physical harm, police reported.

According to police, the men



Photo: Patong Police

allegedly broke into a tourist's room, assaulted him and then fled the scene. The incident left the tourist with injuries. The location of the assault was not given in the brief report by police.

Following their arrest, both suspects were taken to the Patong Police Station to face legal proceedings, Patong Police confirmed. Eakkapop Thongtub

African women arrested for prostitution on Bangla

PHUKET IMMIGRATION officers have arrested four women from Uganda and Tanzania for offering solicitation services in the popular tourist area of Soi Bangla, Patong.

Acting on a tip-off, the officers first monitored the women's behaviour, and once convinced the women were soliciting male foreign tourists, moved in and made their arrests.

The women arrested were identified as Ms Kembabazi, 34, from Uganda; Ms Nancige, 27, from Uganda; Ms Ajambo, 22, from Uganda; and Ms. Sangana, 29, from Tanzania.

The women confessed to soliciting foreign men, police confirmed, and were informed of their charges under Thailand's Prostitution Prevention and Suppression Act B.E. 2539.

The act prohibits public solicitation and harassment for prostitution in any manner deemed open, embarrassing, or disruptive.

The women were taken to the Phuket branch of the Ministry of



Photo: Phuket Immigration

Social Development and Human Security to be fined for soliciting, and their visas have since been revoked by the Phuket Immigration Office, officers confirmed.

Officials confirmed the four women will be deported.

Phuket Immigration in its report emphasised its commitment to rigorous enforcement of immigration laws, the Employment Act, and related statutes, aiming to deter similar activities in popular tourist areas.

Phuket Immigration also urged all foreign residents and accommodation providers to ensure timely reporting of guest stays, as outlined in Sections 37 and 38 of the Immigration Act B.E. 2522, to aid in effective monitoring and ensure visitor safety. Eakkapop Thongtub

'Opal Suchata' shines at Miss Universe finals

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket's Suchata 'Opal' Chuangsri has placed 3rd runner-up at the Miss Universe finals held in Mexico City.

The announcement came at 11am last Sunday morning (Saturday night, Mexico time).

Miss Denmark Victoria Kjaer Theilvig was crowned Miss Universe 2024, with Miss Nigeria Chidimma Adetshina and Miss Mexico Maria Fernanda Beltran as first and second runners-up.

Miss Suchata was crowned Miss Universe Thailand in July. The 21-year-old is native of Phuket province. Her family runs a hotel on the island.

Fluent in Thai, English and Chinese, Miss Suchata pursued Chinese studies at Triam Udom Suksa School and is now a graduate in political science with a focus on International Relations at Thammasat University.

Miss Suchata has strongly campaigned to promote



Photo: Miss Universe

breast cancer awareness and highlight its impact on women worldwide after she had surgery to remove a benign breast lump when she was just 16.

At the Miss Universe finals, Miss Suchata wore a gown highlighting Thai traditional culture. The dress was "a stunning tribute to Thep Kinnaree, designed by Rian Fernandez with the opulence of gold and the purity of white", Miss Universe Thailand explained in a post online.

This year saw a record-breaking 125 entrants from around the globe take part in the international pageant.

For the final round, the Top 5 candidates were given the same question: "This universe has inspired generations of women. What is your message to the ones watching you right now?"

Miss Suchata's answer was: "One message I would like to give them is to always believe and to always have hope working on my

project opal. I work along breast cancer patients and doctor. We all know that it is a hard thing to overcome this disease, but what I can feel is everyone has hope and everyone believes that tomorrow will be a better day as long as you believe your power is infinite. And as long as you have hope, your spirits and your power will shine. Thank you."

After the finals Miss Suchata posted a message to her supporters: "No regrets, only pride in being the best representative," she wrote.

"Thank you to all Thais who have always supported us. Opal and all Thai teams are very grateful for the power of us Thais... From now on, Opal believes that there are still many Thai women who will make us proud. Please keep believing, don't lose hope, because Opal has never lost hope in the word Thailand."

Miss Suchata received high praise from across the country, with an outpouring of congratulations and support.

Autistic boy, 10, rescued from well

A DRAMATIC RESCUE unfolded when a 10-year-old autistic boy and a man who tried to save him were both trapped in a seven-metre-deep well in Wichit last Friday (Nov 15).

Rescue workers from the Kusoldharm Foundation were called to the scene, a house in Baan Borrae, at 12:30pm.

The boy accidentally fell into the well, located at a construction site in front of his home, which is being renovated into a shop.

A relative, a 30-year-old man, attempted to climb down and rescue him but was also unable to get out.

Rescue workers arrived and began pumping water out of the narrow, one-metre-wide well.

After nearly two hours of intense efforts, both were safely pulled out.

The boy had sustained a head injury and required three stitches. He was administered first aid before being transported to Vachira Phuket Hospital. Doctors have advised monitoring him closely for 24 hours.

The boy's father



Photo: Kusoldharm Foundation Phuket

explained that his son, who has autism and is non-verbal, often explores the area around their home. The well was covered with a cement sheet that had a crack, which gave way when Nong stepped on it.

"The relative who tried to help couldn't lift him out, so we called the Kusoldharm rescue team. We are thankful for their quick action and dedication," the father said.

The rescue operation has drawn praise for its success in preventing a tragedy.

Local authorities are urging residents to secure potentially hazardous areas, especially near construction sites, to avoid similar incidents in the future.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Man drowns while collecting coins from krathong floats

A MYANMAR MAN DROWNED AT the Bang Maruan reservoir in Srisoonthorn while attempting to retrieve coins from Loy Krathong floats early last Saturday (Nov 15).

Pol Capt Thitiwat Asasingh of the Thalang Police was notified of the incident at 3:40am.

The reservoir had served as the venue for the Loy Krathong festival in the surrounding Srisoonthorn area.

Witnesses told police they had seen a man who appeared to be in his early 30s sitting on the edge of the reservoir looking for coins that had been left on floats in the water as part of the cultural festival.

Witness accounts, including that of a local security guard, further explained that the man then took off his shoes and left them with his mobile phone on the bank of the reservoir before walking into the water.

Shortly after, however, the man disappeared under water in what witnesses believe was a sudden drop in depth in the reservoir. One bystander then took to the water in an attempt to locate the man but was unable to find him.

Rescue divers from the Kusoldharm Phuket Foundation conducted a search and managed to retrieve the body around 4:30am.

The man, who police later identified as a Myanmar national without disclosing any details such as his name, was pronounced dead at the scene and his body taken to Thalang Hospital to enable a post mortem



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

to be conducted before being released to family members for funeral arrangements.

Police explained that during their questioning of witnesses at the scene they spoke to a local resident identified only as 'Auntie Tik' who said she had visited the reservoir after the annual Loy Krathong festival to collect coins left by people on the floating krathongs for the past four to five years and had regularly collected about B3,000 each time.

However, this year she was only able to collect between B200-300 as many more people were now doing likewise, she said.

"Nowadays, I get less because there are a lot of people coming to collect them," police state 'Auntie Tik' as saying. "Most of the coins I get are B1 or B10. After I collect them, I exchange the coins. Most people don't take 25 satang coins though," she concluded. Eakkapop Thongtub

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Minister eyes B3trn stimulus

Bangkok Post

The government has a budget of up to B3 trillion available for economic stimulus over the next four years, says Finance Minister Pichai Chunhavajira.

In his keynote speech titled 'Navigating Economic Challenges: The Future of Fiscal Policy', organised by *The Standard* on Nov 13, Mr Pichai said according to the government's fiscal sustainability framework, public debt is capped at 70% of GDP.

In fiscal 2024, which ended in September, the government's public debt was at 65-66% of GDP, or around B12trn. This leaves the government fiscal space of about 4%, he said.

Mr Pichai said if the debt-to-GDP ratio is kept under 70% over the next four years, the government will have around B3trn in fiscal space, bringing public debt to around B15trn.

"The government's public debt increased significantly, particularly during the COVID period, as 10 years ago public debt was only 48% of GDP," he said.

To drive economic growth, Mr Pichai insisted Thailand needs to increase domestic investment,



Photo: Ministry of Finance

which has remained consistently low.

Over the past two decades, domestic investment has accounted for 20-22% of GDP, down from a previous high of 40%.

Last year, domestic investment tallied only 19% of GDP. As a result, Thai GDP has remained low, averaging just 1.9% growth over the past decade.

For the pandemic period of 2020-21, average GDP growth was 0.4%. This year, growth of 2.7% is predicted, with inflation of 0.7-0.8%.

Low economic growth has caused household debt to rise, reaching 89% of GDP, he said.

Mr Pichai said when a country has low investment, there is high liquidity, attracting investors to stock markets looking for short-term opportunities.

The Thai stock market has hovered around 1,500-1,600 points, unable to reach the 2,000 level many had hoped for, he said.

"As a result, Thailand is like a wealthy individual who cannot see the future, merely living off past gains," said Mr Pichai.

To increase domestic investment, the government has been using the state budget to transition from outdated investment platforms to new ones that leverage advanced technology, he said.

However, to attract investment to the country, Thailand needs to enhance essential infrastructure and reduce logistics and energy costs, said Mr Pichai.

The country should also utilise energy resources in the overlapping Thailand-Cambodia claims area, which are valued at around

B10trn and projected to be usable for 10 years.

Other measures include addressing investment barriers by developing industrial skills, promoting green energy and eliminating bureaucracy red tape, he said.

Mr Pichai said he wants annual targets of 3.5% for GDP growth and 2% for inflation.

"After the 1997 Asian financial crisis, we were afraid to accelerate the economy, so we tried to apply the brakes. Now we need to speed up the growth rate," he said.

Mr Pichai mentioned other government investment schemes, such as the Land Bridge project, connecting the Gulf of Thailand with the Andaman Sea for goods transport from China to the Middle East and Africa, as well as the entertainment complex project.

The government also has a plan to reduce travel costs by capping Bangkok train fares at B20-25 per trip, with funding raised through an infrastructure fund.

Regarding investment in the real estate sector, he said high household debt has blunted demand. The government wants to stimulate demand, using state-owned land or land owned by the

State Railway of Thailand to build affordable housing for low-income earners to rent at prices 70% of the market rate.

In addition, the government plans to amend "rights over leasehold asset" laws, or lease agreements for real estate to allow leases of 70-80 years, compared with the current limit of 30 years.

For private landowners wanting to sell land to foreigners, the government may propose allowing them to transfer their land to the state first, then foreigners can lease it, ensuring the land remains Thai-owned when the lease expires, said Mr Pichai.

He said the government must improve the country's production efficiency, particularly in the agricultural sector, to make products more competitive.

Higher efficiency would allow the government to reduce subsidies, freeing up funds to propel the economy while reducing the government's annual budget deficit to a ceiling of B800 billion, said Mr Pichai.

He said the prime minister is scheduled to chair an economic stimulus committee meeting on Nov 19, with the agenda focusing on the second phase of the cash handout and the debt restructuring programme for small-scale debtors at financial institutions.

Hoteliers decry foreign tour operators using nominees

THE WIDESPREAD USE OF THAI nominees by foreign businesses in Thailand is a growing concern among hoteliers, who fear that low prices and quality could destroy the tourism reputation of the country, according to the Thai Hotels Association's (THA) monthly sentiment index.

THA President Thienprasit Chaiyapatranun said about half of the hotels in Thailand are worried about illegal foreign businesses and investment here, including Chinese entrepreneurs, according to the hotel operator business sentiment index for October.

Among four-star hotels and higher, 53% do not see these businesses as competitors because they have different target markets, but they still said these illegal businesses could affect the positive tourism image here, eventually triggering price wars in some destinations, said Mr Thienprasit.

"The government should put in more effort to crack down on those illegal businesses as they will impact the whole tourism industry," he said.

Three-star hotels and lower are more worried about prices as illegal hotels are direct competitors, and have the same concern about a bad image for the tourism industry in general, with hotels in the central and northern region having the most impact.



Photo: Apichart Jinakul / Bangkok Post

With the high season having started in October, the average occupancy rate of hotels nationwide stood at 57.6%, improving from 54% in the corresponding period last year, while 68% is expected for November.

By category, four-star hotels and above still had a stronger performance in October with 60.2% occupancy, while three-star hotels and below secured 52.7% occupancy, said Mr Thienprasit.

With a larger number of guests, hotels with more than four stars admitted that they faced labour shortage problems as they might be able to accommodate guests, but it still had an impact on quality of service with restricted numbers of staff.

Mr Thienprasit said hoteliers still need the government to provide training programmes to entice more workers into the hotel industry, particularly cleaners, waiters and waitresses, which were not sufficient in many hotels. *Bangkok Post*

Central Retail reports B2.13bn profit, B63.1bn revenue in Q3

CENTRAL RETAIL CORPORATION reported a net profit of B2.13 billion on total revenue of B63.1bn in the third quarter of 2024.

Yol Phokasub, chief executive of Central Retail, said the performance in the third quarter reflects a continued growth trend, attributed to the expansion of the retail and wholesale business.

In the third quarter, Central Retail opened two new Thai Watsadu branches, expanded GO Wholesale in southern Thailand with two new branches in Phuket, and launched another GO! mall and GO! hypermarket in Vietnam.

This led to strong growth throughout the first nine months of 2024, with total revenue of B194bn and a net profit of B5.96bn.

For the last quarter of 2024, Central Retail is set to continue driving business growth in the high season through business expansion as well as festive campaigns across its stores.

For the fashion business, Central Chidlom department store will celebrate the grand opening of 'The Store of Bangkok' on Dec 12, offering a world-class luxury one-stop shopping experience for both Thai customers and international tourists.

For hardline business, Thai Watsadu plans to open another branch in Phrae province, reinforcing its position as Thailand's No.1 DIY home retailer, with a total of 86 branches by the end of 2024, Mr Yoi said.

For the food business, Tops will expand



Photo: Bangkok Post

with nine additional branches across all formats, reaching a total of 690 branches nationwide by the end of 2024.

GO Wholesale will open a new branch on Charoen Rat Road in Bangkok in December, aiming to end 2024 with a total of 10 branches nationwide. Go! supermarket in Vietnam is set to expand with four additional branches, totalling 14 branches across 10 provinces by the end of 2024.

For the property business, Robinson Lifestyle will launch a new business model, the 'Strip Mall', for the first time at Robinson Lifestyle Kanchanaburi. The new format will feature a variety of shops and services to meet customers' lifestyle needs, attracting higher customer traffic and offering more opportunities for local small businesses.

GO! mall and GO! hypermarket in Vietnam are accelerating growth with two new branches in Bac Lieu and Ninh Thuan, responding to Vietnam's economic upswing, with a target of ending 2024 with a total of 42 GO! malls across 32 provinces in Vietnam. *Bangkok Post*

HM King, Queen to visit China

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

Their Majesties the King and Queen will visit China at the invitation of the Chinese government next year when the two countries will mark the 50th anniversary of their diplomatic relations.

Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra confirmed the news following a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the 31st APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting and related meetings in Lima, Peru, last Saturday (Nov 16).

"Their Majesties the King and Queen have accepted an invitation from the Chinese government to pay an official visit to China in late 2025," the prime minister said following the meeting with Xi.

"The visit will be a historic event in Thai-China relations," she added.

Ms Paetongtarn said that the government also hopes the Chinese president and his wife will visit Thailand next year to mark the anniversary, while affirming



PM Paetongtarn Shinawatra and Chinese President Xi Jinping at the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting on Nov 15 in Lima, Peru. Photo: Government House

Thailand's readiness to strengthen bilateral ties between the two countries as well as multilateral ties within the APEC framework.

The PM also praised China's development such as its push for an innovation-led economic growth, adding Thailand is ready to learn from China's lessons in tackling poverty it had experienced in the past as well as its measures to deal with natural disasters, modern technologies in aerospace, electric vehicles and clean energy.

During the meeting with Ms Paetongtarn, Xi extended his best wishes to Their Majesties the King and Queen, and hailed

the long-lasting relations between Thailand and China.

"China and Thailand have enjoyed special relations. We have collaborated closely at every level for a long time," said Xi.

"On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Chinese-Thai diplomatic relations, I believe our relations will deepen even further for the next 50 years.

"China and Thailand have expanded economic and trade cooperation as well as in other several areas such as culture, education, aerospace, innovation, and digital technology. We believe this cooperation will bring progress and prosper-

ity to the two countries and the region," he concluded.

Xi also expressed support for Thailand's bid to join the BRICS international organisation which comprises nine member countries, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, Egypt and Ethiopia.

China is also ready to import more agricultural produce from Thailand as well as expand its investment and cooperation in education, boost social ties, as well as work with Thailand to tackle online scams and transnational crime, Xi added.

Ms Paetongtarn also attended the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) Dialogue during which she voiced support for digital transformation to help micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to improve day-to-day operations and profitability.

She also reaffirmed Thailand's readiness to become a regional and global medical hub through partnership with the private sector to promote Thailand's care and wellness economy.

Malaysian state calls for 100km border wall

NARATHIWAT

THE MALAYSIAN STATE of Kelantan located opposite Narathiwat province will propose the government to build a wall 100 kilometres long in a new move to crack down on cross-border crimes and smuggling.

Deputy Chief Minister Mohamed Fadzli Hassan has said the local government would seek approval from Kuala Lumpur for the wall which could also serve as a barrier to prevent flooding, according to the Bernama news agency.

"If the security forces want to guard the entire border, it is difficult to do so because the Malaysia-Thailand border is very vast. We will bring this proposal to build the wall to the federal government," Deputy Chief Minister Mohamed said on Nov 12.

The move is in line with the idea of the state police chief who recently mooted the plan to the local government.

Kelantan state and Narathiwat province share



A Thai soldier at the wall in Yala. Photo: Bangkok Post

the 100km long water boundary with the Kolok River separating them.

Malaysian security authorities have stepped up campaigns to clamp down on smuggling and crimes along the entire border with Thailand.

But the Kelantan deputy chief minister admitted difficulties for authorities in his state as many border locations along the river are private property.

The two countries are separated concrete walls or fences in several border locations in Satun, Songkhla and Yala provinces. Some were built by the two countries, while others are unilateral projects.

Bangkok Post

Deadline for gas-powered tour bus inspection looms

BANGKOK

THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND Transport has warned the operators of almost 6,000 natural gas-powered (CNG) buses they must present their vehicles for safety inspection before Nov 30 or be taken off the road.

There are 13,426 CNG buses registered to operate on Thailand's roads and 5,925 have not undergone the inspections ordered on Oct 4 following the chartered tour bus fire that killed 20 students and three teachers in Pathum Thani on Oct 1.

The DLT said 59 buses had so far not passed the checks and had been temporarily ordered off the roads.

New Year travellers were advised to use only CNG-fuelled buses that display "passed safety inspection" stickers on the front.

The department warned operators who fail to have their buses inspected before the Nov 30 deadline they will be fined B50,000 and the vehicles will be taken off the road.

If any of the 59 defective buses detected so far were found to be still carrying passengers, the owner would also be hit with a B50,000 fine.

Many operators are expected to fail to meet the Nov 30 deadline. Officials will send them a notice ordering them to take their buses for checks within 15 days.

The DLT said any operator who fails to do so will have their public transport



Photo: Bangkok Post

licence revoked and they must return the licence plates to the department.

Anyone found continuing to operate a bus with a revoked licence will be liable to a maximum penalty of five years in jail and/or a fine of B20,000-100,000.

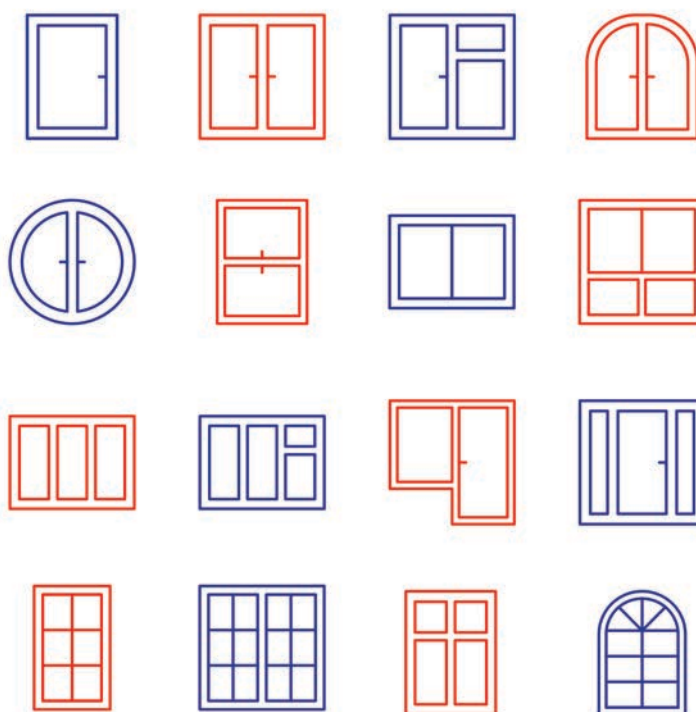
The bus carrying 39 students and six teachers on Oct 1 burst into flames which rapidly engulfed the entire vehicle as it was passing through the Rangsit area of Lam Luk Ka district in Pathum Thani.

The driver Samarn Chanphut, 48, later told police that the front left tire had blown out, causing the wheel to catch fire. He then lost control of the vehicle, and the bus collided with the median barrier.

More than 6,000 people attended a royally-sponsored cremation ceremony at Wat Khao Phraya Sangkharam School sports field in Lan Sak district of Uthai Thani on Oct 8. Bangkok Post



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Is it time to look beyond tourism?

STEP BY STEP

Simon Causton

Bangkok is expected to clinch the title of most visited city in the world in 2024, a title it held in 2023 and has consistently featured in the top 10 list for the last few years. Despite these accolades, the government relentlessly pushes for increased tourism targets in an effort to boost the now flailing Thai economy.

The conversation invariably revolves around numbers and increasing them. I have previously highlighted in this column how the government often talks about focusing on quality over quantity, yet consistently prioritises the latter. This is indeed the case, but the crux of the situation runs much deeper. Is tourism truly the basket in which Thailand should be placing all its eggs?

Bangkok, Phuket, Pattaya, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Koh Samui and Hua Hin are the top destinations for international tourists visiting the country. They spend generously in hotels, restaurants, shops and tourist attractions in these locations. On the surface, it all sounds promising: money flowing into the economy, jobs created and livelihoods supported. The government is keen to promote new areas with 'international' airports in Krabi, Songkhla, Trang etc., to create new hubs and dis-



Image: Simon Causton

tribute the wealth. But is this sustainable? Is this truly beneficial for Thailand in the long term?

While these tourist hotspots thrive, a closer look reveals a troubling reality. The wealth generated rarely permeates beyond these limited geographical areas and often ends up concentrated in the hands of the already wealthy and inter-

national corporations. The 'trickle-down effect', where tourism employees earn more and send their savings back to their families, is largely a myth. Wages in the hospitality industry are kept criminally low, while the cost of living, particularly rent, in these tourist hubs is exorbitant. This leaves little disposable income for employees to save or send home, further exacerbating economic disparities between regions.

Moreover, the skills developed within the tourism sector rarely venture beyond these hubs. We are surrounded by underdeveloped areas where young people are forced to migrate to tourist centres in search of income, perpetuating an endless cycle of economic disparity. The skills acquired in the tourism industry, while valuable, often have limited applicability in other sectors, hindering the development of a diverse and resilient economy.

The over-reliance on tourism also leaves Thailand vulnerable to external shocks. The recent pandemic starkly demonstrated this fragility, as the sudden halt in international travel crippled the economy. Furthermore, an excessive focus on tourism can lead to the neglect of other crucial sectors, such as education and technology.

Thailand recently ranked a dismal seventh in the ASEAN region for literacy, a shameful statistic for a nation of our size and economic standing. Our education system, with its emphasis on rote learning and memorisation, is archaic and ill-equipped to prepare our youth for the challenges of the 21st century. Instead of fostering critical thinking, problem-solving and creativity, our schools churn out graduates who excel at parroting information but lack the skills needed to innovate and drive progress.

To secure a prosperous future, Thailand must invest in its human capital. We need to overhaul our education system, shifting the focus from passive absorption to active learning, from memorisation to innovation. This requires a multi-pronged approach. Firstly, we need to move away from the

traditional lecture-based format and embrace more interactive and engaging teaching methodologies. Project-based learning, where students actively apply their knowledge to solve real-world problems, should be encouraged.

Secondly, the curriculum needs to be revised to emphasise critical thinking, problem-solving, and digital literacy. Subjects like coding, data analysis, and design thinking should be integrated into the curriculum from an early age. Thirdly, we need to invest in teacher training and development to equip educators with the skills and knowledge to implement these changes effectively.

Furthermore, the government must actively promote the development of new industries, particularly in technology and innovation. This will not only create high-skilled jobs and stimulate economic growth but also reduce our dependence on tourism. By diversifying our economy, we can create a more resilient and sustainable future for Thailand. This requires creating an enabling environment for businesses to thrive. Tax incentives, grants and subsidies can be provided to encourage investment in research and development. Incubators and accelerators can be established to support startups and entrepreneurs. Collaboration between universities and industry should be fostered to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and technology.

Looking at successful examples can provide valuable insights. Estonia, for instance, has transformed itself into a digital powerhouse by investing heavily in digital infrastructure and education. Israel, despite its limited resources, has become a global leader in innovation through a strong focus on research and development and an investment culture that encourages risk-taking. By learning from these success stories, Thailand can chart its own path towards a knowledge-based economy.

It's also crucial to address the issue of 'zero-baht tourism', particularly prevalent among Chinese tour groups. These tours often operate within a closed ecosystem, with Chinese tourists staying in Chinese-owned hotels, dining in Chinese restaurants and using Chinese tour guides, often operating illegally. This practice siphons off potential revenue from the Thai economy and undermines local businesses.

The government needs to implement stricter regulations to curb this practice and ensure that tourism benefits Thailand as a whole, not just a select few. This includes cracking down on illegal tour operators and guides, promoting local businesses and encouraging tourists to explore beyond the confines of pre-packaged tours.

In conclusion, while tourism undoubtedly plays a vital role in the Thai economy, it is not a panacea for our problems. Over-reliance on this single sector has created regional disparities, perpetuated low wages and hindered the development of a skilled workforce. To truly unlock Thailand's potential, we must invest in education, diversify our economy and promote sustainable tourism practices.

Simon Causton is a long-time Phuket resident, founder of Citadel Phuket and author of 'The Phuket Periodical' newsletter. X (Twitter): @SimonCauston

The January/February 2025 hard copy issue goes to print very soon

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Flutterby with butterflies

NATURAL PHUKET

Simon Lomas

Once you get out of the concreted over towns, neon lights and traffic congestion and into the hills you get out of the humidity too and find quiet, and often nice cool breezes, not to mention good views. But best of all is the wildlife.

I know over the past few months I have been doing a lot on the birds that are seen around Phuket, from the many different birds of prey to the tiny flowerpeckers and sunbirds that are smaller than many butterflies here in Phuket.

While out getting my photos for birds I slowly found I was seeing more and more different things too that previously I had no interest in and hardly noticed before. Throughout the southwest monsoon season we get a fair bit of rain which not only brings very fast growth to all the plants and flowers but also all the things attracted by them. When the sun breaks through we get huge numbers of stunning butterflies around all the fresh flowers that are appearing everywhere.

I am not a butterfly expert in any way, but it doesn't mean I can't sit back in the sun and be happy in the peace and quiet watching hundreds of different coloured butterflies flitting past me listening to the bird song overhead.

Here are some of the more common ones I see around Phuket:

The Blue Pansy. This is a very common butterfly found on grassy areas at the side of roads and foot-paths as well as more open grassy areas. They are said to be quite territorial but I see them here in large



Blue Pansey (Junonia orithya).

numbers all together. Not as big as many other butterflies here, around 4-5cm wingspan.

Painted Jezebel. Again fairly common all over Southeast Asia but quite often missed as it tends to be higher up (or as far as I have seen it) on the flowers of larger shrubs and trees. Very colourful and easy to recognise with its red and yellow flashes on the white wings makes them really stand out in the sunlight. They again are of a medium size, around 4-5cm.

Great Mormon. Now moving on to the bigger ones we see around. There are two main types of the Mormon butterfly. The Common Mormon and the Great Mormon. Both have similar colouring but the Great being of a larger size. The common Mormon being 7-11cm and the great Mormon up to 13.5cm. Both are swallow-tailed butterflies and very colourful. The female is the more colourful with the males being without the swallowtails and being of a black or very dark blue colour.

Common Tiger. This is a very common sight all over Phuket. There really are thousands of them.

What makes them look more common is that the male and female look very similar. They are 7-8cm in wingspan and very brightly coloured. They seem to live again on grass verges and areas with grass and small flowers. They range from India and all over Asia and Singapore. Nevertheless, it is a really attractive sight to see masses of them all in the bright sunlight.

Leopard Lacewing. Lastly the Leopard Lacewing is another medium-size butterfly seen from India to Southern China. It's slightly smaller than most at around, about 5cm in wingspan. This, too, is easily identified with its bright orange wing outlines with black and splashes of white to the wing tips. The link to the name is the frilly edges to the wings. Again, pretty easy to see as they (when I see them) seem to be just sunning themselves on larger leaves. This butterfly only made it to Singapore in 2005 so it just shows that butterflies are still migrating around the planet.

These are just a few of the more common sights as there really are hundreds of different species here but it's always good to know the common names of the things that we see around us everyday.

I know I have done a few different articles covering various sea birds, birds of prey, beaches and all manner of wildlife through the seasons here in Phuket, as I love all things in the natural world and love photography. So if anyone knows any great sights I will be happy to explore them. I know here on the island there are wild boar and the elusive white squirrel too, so if anyone knows where I can find these I would love to know where, as well as any other interesting wildlife.

Simon Lomas is an expat who has been living in Phuket for more than 12 years, and takes enjoying nature and the island's surroundings to heart.



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POP QUIZ

- What was Buzz Aldrin's mother's maiden name?
- English musician Anthony Ernest Pratt invented which board game?
- Which is the longest suspension bridge in the world?
- What is the state capital of California?
- Including 'No Time To Die', how many James Bond movies have there been?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Easy

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

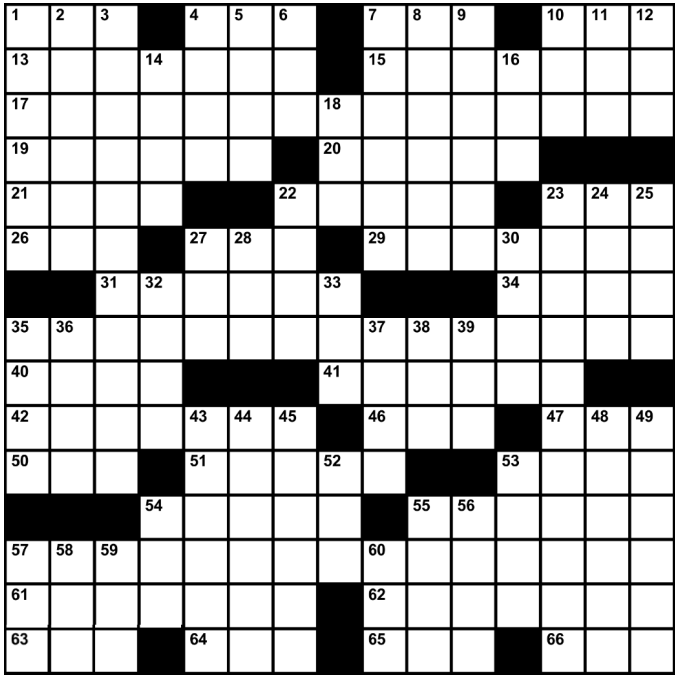
Across

- Taste
- Govt. property org.
- Place for sweaters
- Ed.'s request
- Variable
- Slicker
- Nancy Drew title
- Turkey part
- Pirate's pal
- Layer
- Pursuing
- Bust
- Did nothing
- Costa del ____
- Soften
- Superhuman
- Commotion
- At this moment
- Curved molding
- Japanese art of self-defense
- Apple pie order?
- Flushed
- Essence
- Directed
- Flip, in a way
- Cut back
- Dome-shaped shrine
- Proved deficient

Down

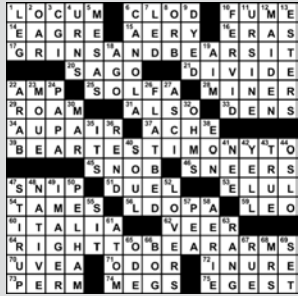
- Fatty European fishes
- Astronomy Muse
- Pita
- Equipment
- Epic
- Sayings
- Series of movements
- Ski trails
- Tailors
- Schuss
- Aspiration
- Mariner's point
- Drop from the eye
- Slop spot
- Global financial overseer
- Got down

- At the last possible instant
- Promising
- Inconsistent
- Uncommon sense
- Trip producer
- Big fuss
- Beast of burden
- Kind of status
- Not "fer"
- Shipping hazard
- Musical scale note
- Joined
- Played for a sap
- Part of a list
- The Company
- Farm young
- Lecher's look
- Like a bog
- Scrape (out)
- Open, say
- Bony
- Dismays
- Saw
- Kidney problem
- Decorate
- Missouri river
- Greek flat bread
- Seaman's reference
- Cross
- Alternative to a fade
- Indignation
- Figs.
- Coffee stirrer
- Mauna ____



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

5

in 10 professional UK soccer players have decaying teeth due to the high-sugar drinks in their diet, according to the British Journal of Sports Medicine.

12

minutes is the average time a plastic bag is actually used before being discarded.

60

doors in total were destroyed by Jack Nicholson for his iconic "Here's Johnny!" scene in 'The Shining'.

50,000

to 70,000 thoughts are experienced by the average person every day.

1.5 million

people worldwide were killed by tuberculosis in 2014, making it a greater cause of death than AIDS. Globally, an estimated 39.9 million people were living with HIV at the end of 2023.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW

Message in the sand at Layan. Photo by Cynthia Tomaszewski

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

This week in history

Tyson v Berbick, 1986. Photo: AFP

Nov 22, 1986
Mike Tyson from Brooklyn, New York defeats Trevor Berbick by TKO in the second round to become the youngest heavyweight champion in boxing history at age 20.

Nov 23, 534 BC
Thespis of Icaria becomes the first recorded actor to portray a character onstage.

Nov 24, 1974
Donald Johanson and Tom Gray discover the 40% complete Australopithecus afarensis skeleton, nicknamed 'Lucy' (after The Beatles song "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds"), in the Awash Valley of Ethiopia.

Nov 25, 1984
Thirty-six top musicians gather in a Notting Hill studio and record Band Aid's 'Do They Know It's Christmas?' to raise money for famine relief in Ethiopia.

Nov 26, 1922
Howard Carter and Lord Carnarvon become the first people to enter the tomb of Pharaoh Tutankhamun in over 3,000 years.

Nov 27, 1895
At the Swedish-Norwegian Club in Paris, Alfred Nobel signs his last will and testament, setting aside his estate to establish the Nobel Prize after he dies.

Nov 28, 1582
In Stratford-upon-Avon, William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway pay a £40 bond for their marriage licence. Source: Wikipedia

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FRI22NOV

22 NOV

17:00 - 18:00 hrs

JOINT CHAMBERS MEMBERS BRIEFING ON

Crafting Tomorrow's Hospitality:

Modernizing Workforce Training in Tourism

Friday 22nd November 2024

17:00 - 18:00 hrs

Courtyard by Marriott

Phuket Town

Free of Charge to AustCham members, partner Chambers' members, and Australian Alumni Members

Sumi Soorian

Director, Mitha Co. Ltd.

Jayne MacDougall

Executive Director of the Phuket Hotels Association

Mr Dary Milani

Pro Vice-Chancellor / Executive Director (Recruitment and International Operations) at La Trobe University

Mr Stephen Healy

Founder and Managing Director from Nurture Higher Education and Global Academy at Siam University

Members Briefing on 'Crafting Tomorrow's Hospitality'

This event is scheduled to take place between 17.00-18.00 at Courtyard by Marriott Phuket Town. MEET OUR SPEAKERS & MODERATOR: Ms Sumi Soorian, Director, Mitha Co. Ltd. as Moderator; Ms Jayne MacDougall, Executive Director of the Phuket Hotels Association; Mr Dary Milani, Pro Vice-Chancellor / Executive Director (Recruitment and International Operations) at La Trobe University; and Mr Stephen Healy, Founder and Managing Director from Nurture Higher Education and Global Academy at Siam University. Bookings - office@austchamthailand.com

22 NOV

18:00 - 21:00 HRS

JOINT CHAMBERS

PHUKET SUNDOWNERS

Friday, November 22, 2024

18:00 - 21:00 hrs.

Courtyard by Marriott Phuket Town

650 THB for AustCham members, partner Chambers' members, and Australian Alumni Members

1,200 THB for non-members.

Sumi Soorian

Director, Mitha Co. Ltd.

Jayne MacDougall

Executive Director of the Phuket Hotels Association

Mr Dary Milani

Pro Vice-Chancellor / Executive Director (Recruitment and International Operations) at La Trobe University

Mr Stephen Healy

Founder and Managing Director from Nurture Higher Education and Global Academy at Siam University

AustCham Joint Chambers Phuket Sundowners

Join us for a wonderful night of making new connections and catching up with familiar faces in the Australian-Thai business community in Phuket at Courtyard by Marriott Phuket Town. Friday, November 22, 2024 - 18:00 - 21:00 hrs. 650 THB for AustCham members, partner Chambers' members, and Australian Alumni Members, 1,200 THB for non-members. Contact - office@austchamthailand.com

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FRI29NOV

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LIVE Workshop in Phuket

LONG-TERM RESIDENT VISA

LTR VISA

Long-Term Resident Visa Workshop

We are pleased to invite you to our upcoming LTR Visa Workshop in Phuket on November 29, 2024. This event, hosted by FRANK Legal & Tax, will provide key insights into Thailand's Long-Term Residence (LTR) Visa process. Our experts will cover essential details on LTR visa requirements, benefits, and practical application tips. Whether you're considering a long-term stay in Thailand or simply want to understand the opportunities available, this workshop offers valuable information in an engaging setting. Speaker: Mr. Fabian Doppler - Managing Partner at FRANK Legal and Tax. Held at SAii Laguna Phuket from 15:00 - 16:00. Register - info@franklegaltax.com

FRI6DEC

A Christmas Carol

A pantomime by J. R. R. Tolkien

Dec 6, 8, 12, 13, and 15

Shows at 6:30 pm

A CHRISTMAS CAROL: THE PANTO

Coming to the Junkyard stage in December Theatrx is bringing you its fifth annual panto, the timeless tale by Charles Dickens of the Christmas-hating Ebenezer Scrooge. See A Christmas Carol in all its glory, pantomime-style, a delight for the whole family that will thrill you as it involves you in the action and fill you with Christmas cheer. Get your tickets now for December 6, 8, 12, 13, or 15 shows, starting at 6:30pm. Kids and adults THB 750 per person. Tickets available at junkyardtheatre.com/events

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Grow Boating Evening - December 2024

We look forward to seeing you at the Grow Boating Evening at the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar from 5pm. We are delighted to announce that our drinks sponsor for the evening will be Paul Poole (South East Asia) Co., Ltd. an independent marketing consultancy based in Bangkok, Thailand specializing in commercial sponsorship. For more details see paulpoole.co.th There will be a delicious buffet sponsored by the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar for all attendees. Find us on facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket/

SAT7DEC

MATE VS MATE

Charity Rugby Bash

Join us for an exciting afternoon of rugby as the Phuket Vagabonds Rugby Club hosts a (anything but) friendly match between teammates on Saturday, at the Alan Cooke Ground (ACG)! Kick-off is at 4:30 pm with social drinks going further into Sunday. All funds raised from the raffle will go toward supporting a child we sponsor through the Asia Center Foundation (ACF) asiacenterfoundation.org a charity in Phuket dedicated to helping disadvantaged kids, as well as christmas gifts for the kids in the Phuket Vagabonds Academy and ACF Rugby Programme. Bring friends, family, and fans along to enjoy the game, support a meaningful cause, and kick off the holiday season with us! Rugby@phuketvagabonds.com

TUE10DEC

Patong Beach Rotary Club

PRESENTS

MERRY CHRISTMAS BASH

FOOD, DRINKS, & FESTIVE MUSIC

Rotary Club of Patong Christmas Party

The Rotary Club of Patong Beach invites everyone to join them for an evening of food, drinks and festive music at Eden Valley Christmas Village. Starting at 6:15pm and includes a sumptuous buffet, free flow soft drinks and various selected beverages. Adults - THB 3000, children 6-12 - THB 800. Book your tickets via email: membership@rotarypatong.org

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LIVING IN PHUKET 2024

A great day on Saturday, Nov 16. Over 60 local businesses, associations and charities attended this year's event. Held at the Courtyard by Marriott Phuket Town and supported by UFE Phuket, Bangkok Hospital Phuket, M.Biz web design and SEO, and *The Phuket News*. Looking forward to seeing you at the 2025 event.



THAILAND BOAT FESTIVAL 2024

Held at Phuket Yacht Haven from Nov 13-17, saw a wide range of on- and off-water marine products on display. It was definitely worth the drive north. For more info, visit - thailandboatfestival.com

Martin claims first MotoGP world championship title

MOTO GP

SPANIARD JORGE Martin produced an ice-cool ride to finish third in the season-ending Barcelona GP last Sunday (Nov 17), which was good enough to secure him a first MotoGP world championship title.

The 26-year-old also ensured that Ducati-Pramac became the first independent team to win the rider's title since Valentino Rossi in 2001, the final year of 500cc racing.

Defending two-time champion Francesco Bagnaia, who started the race 19 points behind Martin, took the chequered flag for the 11th time this season but it was not enough to wrest the title from the Spanish rider who finished the season 10 points clear of his close rival.

"I don't know what to say, I am completely shocked," Martin said afterwards.

"I started crying at the

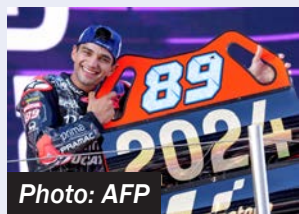


Photo: AFP

end, it was a very emotional race. It's been a long journey, a lot of crashes, big injuries but finally we are here."

Martin, who will be leaving Pramac for Aprilia next season after being denied a ride alongside Bagnaia in the factory Ducati team, had made himself the favourite for the title with a remarkably consistent season.

He only won three grand prix all season but his third-place on Sunday was the 32nd time this season across the 40 sprints and grand prix that he made the podium.

After finishing third in Saturday's sprint he knew he had only to finish in the top nine to secure the title, turning the tables on Bagnaia who went into last year's final race with a 21-point lead. *AFP*

Tri triumph for Wilde, Waugh

TRIATHLON

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

New Zealand's Hayden Wilde celebrated an impressive debut victory at the 30th Laguna Phuket Triathlon last Sunday (Nov 17), while in the women's division the United Kingdom's Kate Waugh successfully defended her championship title.

Elsewhere, Thailand's Thanadon Wisarutsin triumphed as the Thai national champion for the second year running.

Over 1,000 athletes from more than 30 countries participated, highlighting Phuket's reputation as a world-class destination for international sporting events, combining rigorous athletic challenges with the island's stunning natural beauty.

The race kicked off at 6:30am on Bang Tao Beach, with competitors navigating a demanding three-stage course: 1.8-kilometre swim in the Andaman Sea and a lagoon, a 50km bike ride through hilly and scenic terrain, and a 12km run within the grounds of Laguna Phuket.

The competition concluded at Laguna Grove around 12:30pm, producing thrilling performances across the board.

In the men's division, 2024 Paris Olympics silver medalist Hayden Wilde triumphed in his Laguna Phuket Triathlon debut with a finishing time of 2 hours, 19 minutes, and 3 seconds.



The winners on the podium. Photo: Supplied

He was followed by fellow New Zealander Tayler Reid, who clocked in at 2h, 22m and 13s, and Rostyslav Pevtsov of Ukraine, who secured third place with a time of 2h, 23m and 3s.

The women's division saw reigning champion Kate Waugh retain her title with a time of 2h, 35m and 39s. Alanis Siffest of Switzerland took second place, finishing in 2h, 39m and 54s, while Sian Rainsley of the United Kingdom completed the podium with a time of 2h, 43m and 41s.

In the Thai national category, 19-year-old triathlete Tanadon Witsarutsin captured his second consecutive title, finishing the race in 2h, 56m and 56s.

"This event has been on my bucket list for a long time, and it did not disappoint," commented Wilde afterwards. "The course's stunning scenery and challenging terrain were remarkable. Despite the heat, it was an unforgettable experience, and I'm proud to have achieved this victory."

Waugh, the women's champion, said: "I'm thrilled to defend my title in this prestigious event. Competing here is always a privilege, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to race in such an extraordinary setting."

Celebrating its 30th anniversary, the Laguna Phuket Triathlon remains Southeast Asia's longest-standing international triathlon. Known for its challenging course and breathtaking views, the event continues to attract elite athletes and amateur competitors from around the world.

The event's success was made possible by the support of key partners, including: Phuket Province, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Sports Authority of Thailand, Ministry of Tourism and Sports, and Thai Airways International Public Company Limited.

For more information about the Laguna Phuket Triathlon, visit www.facebook.com/LagunaPhuketTri or www.lagunaphukettri.com.

Suteepat defends his Taiwan title after hard-fought thriller

GOLF

SUTEEPAT PRATEEPTienchai became the first player to successfully defend a title on the Asian Tour in seven years when he claimed the US\$400,000 (B13.9 million) Taiwan Glass Taifong Open in Taiwan last Sunday (Nov 17) after the closest of finishes.

The Thai golfer made a birdie on the final hole at Taifong Golf Club to beat his young compatriot Runchanapong Youprayong by one stroke.

He birdied the par-five 18th after chipping to two feet while Runchanapong, playing with him in the final group, missed his four from 10 feet moments earlier.

Suteepat shot a four-under-par 68 to finish 22-under, while Runchanapong returned a 69.

"This means so much, I am very happy, and excited," said Suteepat, who started the day sharing the lead with Runchanapong.

The victory, which earned the 31-year-old a cheque for



Suteepat. Photo: Taiwan PGA

US\$72,000 and moved him to fifth on the Asian Tour Order of Merit, continues a remarkable run of form – particularly on this golf course and in this country.

Two years ago he was playing on the Asian Development Tour (ADT), and won the Order of Merit thanks to three wins in Indonesia and a second-place finish here in Taifong.

Suteepat is the first player to defend the Taiwan Glass Taifong Open, and he is virtually assured of becoming the first foreigner to win the Taiwan PGA Merit list. Just two events remain on the Taiwan circuit where he has also been playing this year.

In addition, the win gives him a three-year exemption on the Asian Tour. *The Phuket News*

'Memorial Pairs' debuts in Kamala

BOWLS

A NEW MAJOR TOURNAMENT known as "The Memorial Pairs" honouring past members who have sadly passed away took place on Nov 8 at Kamala Lawn Bowls Club.

The idea to organise a commemorative-based tournament was made after the very sudden and sad passing of club stalwart and acting club president Ken "Sammy" Sampert earlier this year.

Additional, long standing members such as "Little" Mike Cousens, the legendary "Pineapple chucker" John King and many others were also fondly remembered and honoured via the new tournament, which also served as the launch for the new season ahead.

Pairs were drawn at random on the day to contest a "champions league" style format with the winners and runners up of each of two leagues progressing to the semi-final stage.

Newcomer Richard Knight was drawn to play with his brother Robert, while husband and wife Glenn Collins and Vorada "Nidnoi" Collins were also drawn together.

In League 1, Glenn and Nidnoi managed topped the table by



The winners Nidnoi and Glenn. Photo: Robert Knight

seeing off Par "Pat" Alm and Dean "Deano" Lambert, while Doug "The Coach" Reid and Frank "Borny" secured second spot by a solitary point to also advance.

Meanwhile, Carl "The Mesh" Mesham and veteran George Sasanow sailed through League 2 in imperious, undefeated fashion, with Duncan "Dunking" Kennedy and Ray "The Rocket" Austin in second spot.

Nidnoi and Glenn found form at the right time to beat Ray and Duncan 10-2 in their semi-final, while "The Mesh" and George came out 8-6 winners in a thriller against Doug and Frank.

The final also turned out to be a fantastic match, with Glenn and Nidnoi storming to a 5-3 lead with just 2 ends to go before adding another point to secure a 3 point lead going into the final end.

It meant on the final bowl of the tournament "The Mesh" would need to deliver another one of his world class bowls to win. It was an almost impossible task due to how Glenn and Nidnoi had strategically positioned their bowls and so it proved to be as "The Mesh" was ultimately agonisingly short by inches.

Despite him scoring an admirable 2 points, Nidnoi and Glenn came out triumphant by the final score of 6-5 to win the first edition of the Memorial Pairs tournament.

It was a truly thrilling climax to a wonderful competition of top class bowling, with Nidnoi and Glenn proving that marital bliss and teamwork can also be applied to other areas outside of day-to-day marriage.

The next 'major' tournament is the Club Championship singles competition on Dec 13, for which a bumper turnout is expected.

Kamala Lawn Bowls Club is open six days a week and all equipment is provided. Call 094 898 7476 for more information.

Robert Knight

Sharks maul Lobster Men

FOOTBALL

Simon Causton

Phuket Andaman FC (PAFC) find themselves staring a relegation battle in the face after they fell to a 2-1 loss to bottom of the league Ranong United at Surakul Stadium last Saturday (Nov 16).

Bizarrely, the home side took to the pitch sporting their maroon away kit – a curious decision, perhaps an attempt to shake off their recent string of poor results, the reasoning behind which remains unclear.

If a change in fortune was the aim, the tactic sadly backfired. Ranong United, nicknamed the Sharks, began brightly, their new 3-5-2 formation allowing them to exploit PAFC's left flank repeatedly.

However, it was the Lobster Men who took the lead in the 8th minute when a free kick from the right wing was headed back across the face of the goal by central defender Mark before finding its way into the net. The goal was shrouded in controversy, with strong suspicions of both offside and handball, but the referee remained unmoved.

The lead did not last long, however, as lax defending saw Ranong equalise just two minutes later.

Under the intense afternoon sun, the pace of the then game slowed considerably, losing much of its initial momentum.



Action from last Saturday's (Nov 16) game. Photo: Supplied

PAFC, while posing the greater threat, were wasteful in their attacking play. Despite creating danger on both wings through Ohm and Game, neither player seemed capable of delivering the final ball with the necessary precision.

The midfield, once again, appeared anonymous, lacking a player who could effectively link the defence with the attack. The more advanced midfielders, Wa and Petch, were operating too deep, failing to provide support to the forwards. This meant that when crosses did reach the box, PAFC lacked the necessary presence to convert their chances.

The second half mirrored the first, with PAFC largely reliant on free kicks to create opportunities but wasteful when they did.

Ranong, meanwhile, grew in confidence, pressing PAFC higher up the pitch and disrupting their midfield.

One such instance in the 55th minute led to a Ranong break and an off guard PAFC defence conceding a penalty that the Sharks duly converted.

As has become an unwelcome pattern, the game then petered out. PAFC launched wave after wave of ineffective attacks, while the visitors defended resolutely. The strike partnership of Bank and Bebe showed promise, but their roles require further refinement. Too often, Bank drifted out to the right, leaving the diminutive Bebe isolated in the box.

The loss left PAFC in 11th place in the 12 team league. A significant improvement is needed ahead of Sunday's (Nov 24) game away at Surat Thani. What initially appeared a straightforward fixture is now a must-win game. Otherwise, it won't just be the Ranong Sharks feasting on PAFC's failings.



Ishii. Photo: Bangkok Post

War Elephants need to improve, says Ishii

FOOTBALL

THAILAND WERE HELD to a second draw in as many matches after a 1-1 result with Laos at Thammasat Stadium last Sunday night (Nov 18), as War Elephants coach Masatada Ishii said he will be keeping faith with the same squad for the next month's ASEAN Cup.

After a goalless first half which was dominated by the hosts, the War Elephants took the lead through Sakesan before Bounphachan Bounkong equalised just nine minutes later.

Ishii told a post-match press conference that the main lesson learned from the matches against Laos and Lebanon three days previous, which ended in a goalless stalemate, was that longer training stints were needed to prepare the national team.

"From the two warm-up

matches this month, we have seen many things such as we must train harder than this and must try to correct our mistakes," said the Japanese coach.

"For the ASEAN Cup tournament, we want to win the trophy, but our defensive game needs improvement and we need to be better on offence as well.

"There were many newcomers in the team and we didn't have much time to prepare, so these results were kind of expected. These are the players who will also be featuring at the ASEAN event."

The next mission for the Thai national team is to defend their Asean Mitsubishi Electric Cup 2024 title from Dec 8-Jan 5.

Seven-time regional champions Thailand have been drawn in Group A with Timor Leste, Malaysia, Singapore and Cambodia.

Bangkok Post

Thai duo claims first badminton title

BADMINTON

NEW THAI PAIRING DECHAPOL Puavaranukroh and Supissara Paewsampran claimed their first title together after winning the US\$420,000 (B14.6 million) BWF Kumamoto Masters Japan last Sunday (Nov 17).

In only their third tournament together, Dechapol and Supissara battled past Thom Gicquel and Delphine Delrue from France 21-16, 10-21, 21-17 in 62 minutes to win the mixed doubles title at the World Tour Super 500 event in Kumamoto.

The victory – her first ever in a World Tour level – was a sweet birthday present for Supissara, who turned 25 on Monday (Nov 18).

For the 27-year-old Dechapol, it was his 19th title overall and his third this year after the India Open and the Thailand Masters, won with his former playing partner Sapsiree Taerattanachai.

Dechapol split with Sapsiree after the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris. Sapsiree is now paired with Supak Jomkoh.

Dechapol and Supissara continued their new partnership at the US\$150,000 BWF China Masters – a Super 750 event – this week.

Second seed Akane Yamaguchi of Japan was crowned the women's singles champion in her home tournament last Sunday.



Dechapol (right) and Supissara celebrate on the podium last Sunday (Nov 17). Photo: Bangkok Post

Yamaguchi eased past fifth seed and defending champion Gregoria Mariska Tunjung of Indonesia 21-12, 21-12 in just 34 minutes to capture her second title in 2024. Yamaguchi won the Japan Open in August.

Seventh seed Li Shifeng of China won the men's title after he comfortably defeated Leong Jun Hao of Malaysia 21-10, 21-13.

Yamaguchi was the only home winner after Yuki Fukushima and Mayu Matsumoto lost the women's doubles decider, and sixth seeds Takuro Hoki and Yugo Kobayashi were also beaten in the men's doubles title match.

Unseeded Fukushima and Matsumoto lost to China's second seeds Liu Shengshu and Tan Ning 15-21, 15-21 while Hoki and Kobayashi lost to Indonesia's third seeds Fajar Alfian and Muha. Bangkok Post

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