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## BABY SHARK



Photo: StAR Project

## PHUKET LAUNCHES ENDANGERED SHARK 'REWILDING' PROJECT

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Thailand has officially launched its first-ever endangered shark rewilding initiative aimed at restoring populations of the Indo-Pacific leopard shark (*Stegostoma tigrinum*), a species critical to marine biodiversity and increasingly rare in Thai waters.

The 'StAR Project Thailand' (*Stegostoma tigrinum* Augmentation and Recovery), unveiled in Phuket last Friday (May 16), is a major collaboration involving government agencies, the private sector, conservation groups and international partners. The project marks a milestone in Thailand's marine conservation efforts and

builds on earlier initiatives to protect this endangered species.

The StAR Project was initiated by ReShark, an international coalition of over 100 conservation organisations, large public aquariums, government agencies, and more, with the goal of recovering threatened sharks and rays around the world by re-establishing healthy, genetically diverse and self-sustaining populations.

The first initiative began in Raja Ampat, Indonesia in 2022, and the launch of the project's second site in Thailand marks a significant milestone, with the country taking a major step forward by officially listing the leopard shark as a protected species.

"We are incredibly pleased with

the commitment of the Thai government to leopard shark conservation, and the speed of implementation by the StAR Project Thailand partners. The level of collaboration among partners bodes well for the future success of this groundbreaking initiative," said Dr Mark Erdmann of the ReShark Council.

Thai government agencies brought on board for the project off Phuket were the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR), in partnership with the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) and Department of Fisheries (DoF), working together with Aquaria Phuket, Maiton Resort, WildAid, Ocean Blue Tree and Thai Sharks and Rays.

"Leopard sharks play a vital

role in the health of coral reef ecosystems and are a favourite among scuba divers worldwide," said DMCR Director-General Pinsak Suraswadi. "Through this project, Thailand is not only protecting a key marine species but also reinforcing our commitment to biodiversity and sustainable tourism."

The project began with the transfer of nine juvenile leopard sharks – around 14 months old and bred at Aquaria Phuket – to a newly constructed sea pen at the Maiton Island Resort, on Koh Maithon, off Phuket's southeast coast.

There, the sharks will gradually acclimate to their natural environment under close care before being released into the wild. The site...

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Officials clear out illegals at Surin Beach



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Home comfort for Kunlavut at Thailand Open



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## News



**Brits flee after stabbing French BJJ fighter > p4**

# Police stall Kata landslide probe

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

The investigation into the Kata landslides last August, which killed 13 people and injured dozens of others, has been put on hold as Karon Police still wait for experts to confirm if illegal construction played a role in the tragedy.

Pol Lt Col Ekkasak Kwanwan, Senior Inspector (Investigation) at Karon Police Station, confirmed to *The Phuket News* that the case cannot proceed until the Office of Mineral Resources Region 4 provides an official statement explaining how construction at the Big Buddha Viewpoint may be part of the main cause.

"I want an expert from the Department of Mineral Resources Region 4 office to clearly explain how construction was a contributing factor, and in what way it could be considered negligence," Pol Lt Col Ekkasak said.

"Even though the investigation report lists construction as a factor, without further clarification from the experts, it's still

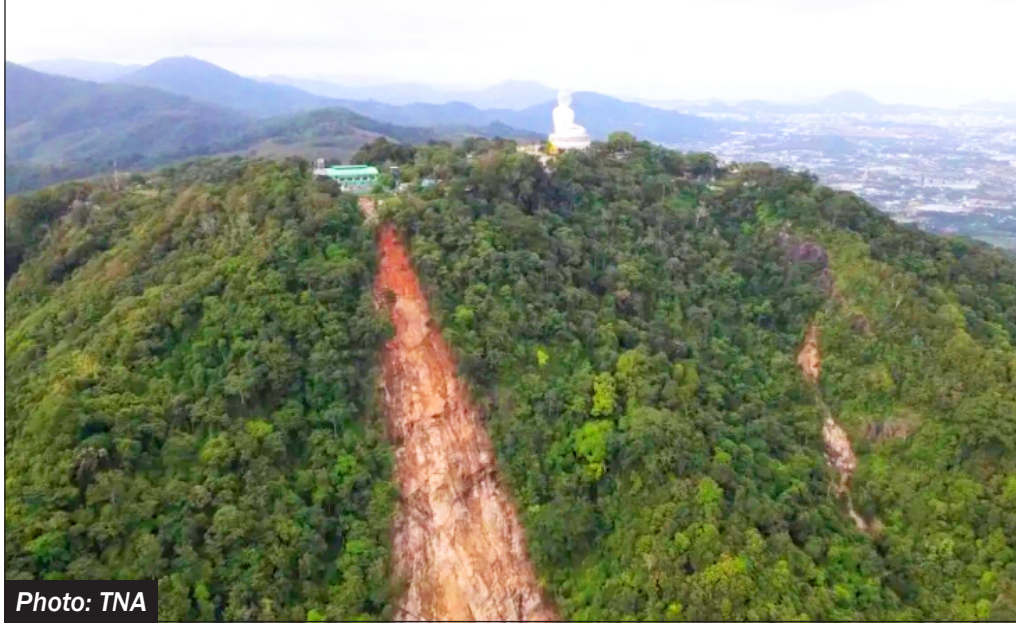


Photo: TNA

weak to claim that construction was the direct cause. Based on current evidence, the main cause remains heavy rainfall and natural rock erosion," he added.

The landslides occurred on protected forest land overseen by the Royal Forest Department (RFD). A report by the Department of Mineral Resources, which was commissioned to determine the cause, identified illegal construction at the Big Buddha Viewpoint as a "contributing factor".

However, police are hesitant to pursue legal

charges without further technical explanation.

Pol Lt Col Ekkasak maintained that he is still waiting for an expert explanation, with no further progress made in the investigation so far.

"Before questioning the Phra Phuttha Ming Mongkol Sattha 45 Foundation and its president, Suporn Wanichkul, we need a detailed statement from Phongsakorn Kangwan, Director of the Office of Mineral Resources Region 4, to confirm whether the construction can legally be considered negligence," he

said, repeating his explanation from a month ago.

Despite already having the Department of Mineral Resources' findings, Pol Lt Col Ekkasak insists on additional confirmation to move the case forward.

However, Pol Lt Col Ekkasak gave no explanation as to why there has been no progress in the past month in having the Department of Mineral Resources repeating its explanation.

Meanwhile, the Phuket Bar Association has expressed concern over the lack of progress. President

Runnapa Phutkaew said her team recently consulted with the Office of Mineral Resources Region 4, which affirmed that the landslide's main causes were heavy rain, unstable soil and rock conditions and slope failure. Construction ranked fourth in the list of contributing factors.

She expressed frustration over the slow progress of the case.

"When they said the main cause was rain, I felt deeply disappointed," she said.

"Their initial findings clearly pointed to construction as a factor, but now they're saying it was mainly a natural disaster," she said.

"As of now, the only viable legal avenue is a civil case to claim compensation for lost property," Ms Runnapa told *The Phuket News*.

"A criminal case is still far from achievable because the burden of proof remains weak," she said.

Ms Runnapa explained that she has urged victims to gather official documentation, such as engineering assessments, to verify the value of property lost in the disaster.

"Some victims just estimate their losses to be around B10 million, but that's not enough. We need verifiable documents to support these claims," she said.

"Without proper evidence, the case keeps getting weaker, despite the loss of 13 lives," she stressed.

Ms Runnapa confirmed a meeting with victims is scheduled for next week.

The association is seeking additional experts who can testify on how construction may have directly caused the landslide.

"In the beginning, we had strong hope, especially after both the Office of Mineral Resources Region 4 and the Phuket Forestry Department agreed with the findings," she said.

"But now officials seem to be stepping back. They're silent. We're doing everything we can to find a professor or expert who can prove these findings to the police and if possible in the court. That is our only hope now," she explained.

Despite officials stepping back, the Phuket Bar Association has pledged to continue fighting.

## Hope for leopard sharks as Phuket launches 'rewilding' effort

Continued from page 1

...simulates natural conditions and helps prepare the animals for life outside captivity.

The launch follows over a decade of ground-work laid by initiatives such as 'Spot the Leopard Shark - Thailand', a citizen science project encouraging divers to submit photos and videos of leopard sharks. Since 2013, over 1,300 images have been collected, helping researchers identify 278 individual sharks and monitor population trends.

"The threats facing sharks and rays – including overfishing and habitat loss – demand urgent and innovative responses," said Metavee Chuangcharoendee,



Photo: StAR Project

Project Manager for StAR Project Thailand at WildAid. "Rewilding offers a real opportunity to reverse population declines."

The Indo-Pacific leopard shark, once abundant in Thai waters, is now classified as 'Endangered' on both the IUCN Red List and Thailand's Red Data list. Its recovery is crucial not only for ecological balance but also for the

diving tourism industry, which benefits from the shark's charismatic presence.

A comprehensive 'Population Viability Analysis' is underway to assess extinction risks and help with future conservation strategies. Genetic testing has confirmed that the juveniles bred at Aquaria Phuket match the genetic strain found in local waters,

ensuring they are suitable for reintroduction.

Daryl Foong, Executive Director of Aquaria Phuket, hailed the breeding success as a national first. "This is a major breakthrough for marine conservation in Thailand. We're proud to be playing a role in protecting these animals and supporting vital scientific research," he said.

As the sharks acclimate, caretakers at Maiton Resort will scatter food throughout the sea pen to encourage natural foraging behaviour. Each shark currently consumes around four to five kilogrammes of shellfish daily. Once released, they will be fitted with tracking devices to monitor their movements and survival rates.

"We're honoured to be

part of this historic project," said Chalermpong Pathumchotisuwana, Chief Operating Officer of Maiton Resort. "Our island has long been committed to marine protection, and we see this as a meaningful step toward restoring Thailand's underwater heritage."

The project's next phase will include tagging the sharks and identifying optimal release sites, with support from DNP and DoF. Both agencies are working closely with project partners to strengthen monitoring systems and explore opportunities for expanding the program to other parts of Thailand, including the Gulf of Thailand.

"Through this initiative, Thailand is setting a powerful example of how science, policy, and com-

munity collaboration can come together to protect marine life," said Athapol Charoenshunsak, Director-General of the DNP.

Bancha Sukkaew, Director-General of the Department of Fisheries, added: "As lead agency for Thailand's National Plan of Action for Sharks, we're committed to knowledge-sharing and supporting sustainable rewilding practices that restore healthy shark populations."

The StAR Project Thailand, now more than 60% complete, is expected to be a model for future marine conservation efforts in the region, contributing to global goals for ocean sustainability and species recovery.



# Surin Beach cleared in crackdown

The Phuket News  
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A major operation to reclaim public land at Surin Beach has concluded after five days of coordinated efforts by provincial and local authorities, culminating in a large volunteer-led beach cleanup on Monday (May 19).

The campaign saw dozens of illegal beachfront businesses dismantled and charges filed against operators who had encroached on state-owned land.

The operation began on May 14, when a multi-agency task force descended on Surin Beach amidst driving rain. Armed personnel were deployed to maintain order, although no disturbances were reported during the dismantling. Business operators were present but offered no resistance as authorities removed their structures.

The crackdown was conducted under the command of Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat, with support from Vice Governors Adul Chuthong and Samawit Suphanphai, and Phuket Provincial Chief Administrative Officer (Palad) Thiraphong Chuaychu.

The operation was led on the ground by Thalang District Chief Siwat Rawangkun and Thalang



Photo: Thalang District Office

District Palad Wisut Romin, with involvement from the Cherng Talay Tambon Administrative Organisation (OrBorTor), police, military, forestry officials, municipal staff, and members of the Volunteer Defense Corps (OrSor).

Many of the illegal businesses removed were thatch-roofed shanties – structures commonly used by encroachers who claim they are “temporary”, despite remaining in place year-round. Among the establishments dismantled were makeshift restaurants, cocktail bars and sunbed rental stands, all targeting tourists.

“This operation is to move objects, buildings, and the entourage of those who illegally occupied public areas on the beach,” said an official statement issued by the Thalang District

Office. “Our goal is to return the area to the public and ensure beaches are managed transparently and sustainably.”

## CHARGES FILED

As part of the enforcement effort, legal action was initiated against several operators. On May 15, officials filed a formal complaint against the MUCHO AMOR Beach Club, which had occupied approximately 0-2-05 rai of land on Surin Beach. A high-level inspection team found that the club had been operating on public land without permission, violating Thailand’s Forestry Act B.E. 2484.

On the same day, a woman identified only as ‘Ms A’ was arrested after officials inspected the ‘Tukta Food and Drink’ stall, which was found to be

encroaching on about 0-1-71 rai of beachfront land. She was taken into custody and handed over to Cherng Talay Police Station for legal proceedings.

Both cases involve alleged violations of the Forestry Act, which prohibits individuals from clearing, occupying or developing forest or public land without official approval. Officials have emphasised that these are serious offenses and said more investigations may follow.

“This is about protecting public land and ensuring fair use of natural resources,” said Thalang District Chief Mr Siwat. “Encroachments not only violate the law but also deprive the public of access to one of Phuket’s most valuable natural assets.”

## BEACH CLEANUP

To mark the conclusion of the demolition and clearance operations, local officials and volunteers held a beach cleanup on Monday. The event was part of the Royal Volunteer Project, inspired by His Majesty the King’s royal initiative “We do good with our hearts”.

Led by Phuket Vice Governor Suwit Phansengiam, who also serves as Deputy Director of the Royal Volunteer Center for the province, the cleanup saw

participation from district officials, Royal Volunteer members, Cheng Talay OrBorTor leaders, and dozens of local residents.

“Surin Beach is one of Phuket’s key public spaces, and we want it to be a clean and welcoming area for everyone,” said Vice Governor Suwit. “With support from the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation [PPAO], we are working to restore and improve the area for sustainable use by residents and tourists alike.”

Thalang District Chief Siwat echoed the sentiment, calling the event a “starting point” for long-term community stewardship of Surin Beach. He said there will be continued cooperation with relevant agencies to ensure the area remains well-maintained.

Officials said they were encouraged by the cooperation shown by business operators and residents alike and reaffirmed their commitment to transparent and sustainable beach management.

The cleanup event ended with participants reciting a pledge of loyalty and unity in support of the royal initiative. As Surin Beach reopens to the public, authorities hope the reclaimed land will serve as a model for responsible coastal management across the island.

## Phuket Town gears up for Pride 2025

PHUKET CITY MUNICIPALITY IS preparing to host its ‘Phuket City Pride 2025’ celebrations on June 28, with a vibrant Pride Parade and a full day of festivities aimed at celebrating diversity, promoting equal rights and boosting tourism and the local economy.

The event is being organised by Phuket City Municipality in collaboration with government agencies, the private sector and community groups.

Phuket City Municipality Chief Administrative Officer (Palad) Chalermpon Piyanarongroj, currently also serving as Acting Mayor, announced the town’s readiness to host the large-scale event at a press conference last Friday (May 16).

Mr Chalermpon emphasised the importance of embracing gender diversity, supporting human rights, and promoting peaceful coexistence in society.

“This is more than just a parade – it’s a movement to recognize the LGBTQIAN+ community and their rights,” Mr. Chalermpon said. “Phuket is proud to celebrate diversity in all its forms and stand with every generation for equality.”

Held during Pride Month, the event will center around the theme ‘Wave of Generations’, honouring LGBTQIAN+ individuals across different eras. One of the major highlights will be a vibrant rainbow parade featuring 25 parade groups from government bodies, businesses, community organisations and popular artists and celebrities.

The procession will begin at 5pm, moving from ‘Dragon Square’ at Queen Sirikit Park to the Chartered Bank Intersection in the heart of Phuket Old Town.



Photo: PR Phuket

More than 500 participants are expected to join the parade, waving rainbow flags and celebrating sexual diversity in a colourful show of pride and unity. The event also features several interactive installations and photo opportunities, including the Phuket Rainbow’ sign, the ‘Rainbow Bunny’ installation in front of the old Police Station at the Chartered Bank Intersection. the Pride Wall’ at Dragon Square, where visitors can draw or write messages.

Other attractions include the iconic Peranakan Museum and ‘Rainbow Building’, Suriyadet Circle’s ‘Nong Ya Ya’ fountain and check-in zones for photography opportunities

To cap off the celebrations, a mini concert by famous artists will be held from 8pm to midnight on the stage in front of the Government Savings Bank branch on Phang Nga Rd.

Parking has been arranged at four locations to accommodate around 800 vehicles, including:

- Next to Mei Zhou Hotel (150 cars)
- Daeng Plaza Hotel area (300 cars)
- Sanaam Chai field (300 cars)
- Phuket City Hall (50 cars)

The Phuket News

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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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High: +36°  
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Wind 11 m/s

SAT MAY 24

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Low: +28°  
Wind 11 m/s

SUN MAY 25

High: +35°  
Low: +28°  
Wind 11 m/s

MON MAY 26

High: +35°  
Low: +27°  
Wind 4 m/s

TUE MAY 27

High: +35°  
Low: +28°  
Wind 4 m/s

WED MAY 28

High: +37°  
Low: +28°  
Wind 4 m/s

THU MAY 29

High: +36°  
Low: +27°  
Wind 4 m/s

## Taxi driver arrested for drunken assault

A 36-YEAR-OLD TAXI driver was arrested last week after using a golf club to attack a sedan driver on Thepkasattri Rd in Thalang.

Officers confirmed the suspect was under the influence of alcohol at the time, with a blood alcohol concentration reported as 293 milligrams percent (0.293 BAC), which is over the legal limit.

The incident, which went viral after people around there recorded the video was shared on social media, occurred near a 7-Eleven convenience store in the Baan Lipon area, Srisoonthorn, at around 12:19pm on May 12.

The victim, Kengpong Nuansri, 38, a tool salesman, was reportedly assaulted after the taxi driver rear-ended his car.

According to the police report filed at 12:20pm, Mr Kengpong had parked his car to make a purchase at the store when the 'green-plate' taxi driven by Sathaporn Suwanmanee crashed into him.

Sathaporn allegedly exited his vehicle, armed with a golf club, and proceeded to strike Mr



Screenshot: Supplied

Kengpong, causing injuries, before fleeing the scene.

Thalang Police were able to locate and arrest Sathaporn at 2:50pm at his residence in Moo 6, Srisoonthorn.

During questioning, Sathaporn confessed to drinking alcohol prior to the incident, said police.

He was subsequently taken to Thalang Police Station, where a breathalyzer test confirmed his intoxication level.

Eyewitness Ms Fon said she saw the taxi driver, who was driving an Isuzu, hit the black sedan first, then get out and attack with a golf club. She noted that the altercation lasted about 10 minutes, but she could not clearly see what led to the escalation due to other vehicles blocking her view.

Police have initially charged Sathaporn with driving under the influence of alcohol, causing bodily harm while intoxicated, and assault. *Eakkapop Thongtub*

## Brits flee to Bali after stabbing Frenchman

**Eakkapop Thongtub**  
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Police in Phuket are seeking arrest warrants for three British men in connection with a violent assault on a French national outside a popular beach club in Bang Tao in the early hours of May 11.

Cherng Talay Police have identified the three men as Rory Billy Colhoun, 34; Emilio Armani Bozzo, 35; and Rayon Stanley Joseph Hamilton Craig (อังกฤษ).

All three men are from Leeds, and all three men left Phuket on a flight to Denpasar, Indonesia, on the evening of May 11, Cherng Talay Police reported.

Officers were called to the scene at 4:20am following reports of a fight involving foreign nationals, said an official report by Cherng Talay Police.

Upon arrival, police found 23-year-old French citizen Jugurtha Nubel Khaleche, a well known Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ) fighter, with three knife wounds to his left side and back. He was taken to Thalang Hospital and is now in stable condition.



Image: Cherng Talay Police

According to the investigation, the altercation began inside a "nearby restaurant" and spilled outside, where Mr Khaleche was assaulted, Cherng Talay Police said.

One of the attackers reportedly used a knife during the incident before the group fled the scene in a grey Mazda 2 sedan with no visible license plates.

Pol Lt Col Khajornkiat Khamwichairat, who is responsible for the case, confirmed that the initial fight happened in a venue different from the venue initially reported by police.

Asked whether the unnamed venue was allowed to be open and trading at that hour, Pol Lt Col Khajornkiat – avoiding

naming the "restaurant" – would only say that the venue operator had been "warned".

The official report by Cherng Talay Police marked that investigators had reviewed CCTV footage from the area and a video clip recorded by a bystander, both of which captured the suspects' appearances.

During their escape, one of the suspects dropped a black iPhone at the scene. Police traced the device to a SIM card registered under the name of Emilio Bozzo.

Police are now working to gather sufficient evidence to obtain arrest warrants for all three suspects, said the official report.

*Additional reporting by Natnaree Likidwanasakun*

## Soi Palai on alert as drunk man fires gun

A 63-YEAR-OLD intoxicated man was arrested after firing more than 10 gunshots into the sky, causing panic among residents in Soi Palai, Chalong, last week.

Chalong Police were called to the scene by concerned residents at about 3:55pm on May 15. Fearing for their safety, locals urged police to intervene.

Officers soon arrived and found the man, later identified as Songphon 'Ko Mi' Thongluen, drunk and inside his house in Moo 3, Soi Palai.

Police secured the area to prevent villagers



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

from approaching and used negotiation tactics, with help from the man's relatives, to persuade him to surrender peacefully.

Two firearms were seized at the scene. Mr Songphon was taken to Chalong Police Station for legal proceedings, police confirmed.

*Eakkapop Thongtub*

## Ukrainian woman arrested – again

A UKRAINIAN WOMAN ACCUSED of vandalising a condominium in Phuket was arrested in Phuket Town on May 13 after failing to attend a scheduled meeting with police.

Anastasia Fidanian, 20, was detained by Wichit Police at a condominium in Phuket Town after investigators obtained a court-issued arrest warrant.

Officers had initially summoned her for questioning after she was stopped by immigration officers at Phuket International Airport on Saturday (May 10) while allegedly trying to leave the country.

She had previously confessed to causing around B350,000 in damage to a rental condo unit, telling officers she was upset that her deposit had not been returned, Wichit Police reported.

Police said she admitted to painting graffiti on the walls and ceiling of the property.

The case gained public attention after the condo owner shared her experience online, warning others about renting to foreigners through agents. The unit was found heavily damaged by a caretaker



Photo: Wichit Police

after Ms Fidanian told the owner she had vacated the premises and thrown the keys away.

Following her failure to report to police as agreed, investigators sought and were granted an arrest warrant by the Phuket Provincial Court.

After her arrest, prosecutors formally filed property damage charges and the court ordered her to be held in custody. She was denied bail due to her inability to secure a guarantor and lack of local relatives.

*The Phuket News*



# Minister visits sea gypsy communities in Phuket

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Minister of Social Development and Human Security, Varawut Silpa-archa, visited the sea gypsy communities of Phuket last Friday (May 16) as part of a government initiative to promote empowerment, improve well-being and support cultural preservation among Thailand's ethnic minority groups.

The visit took place at Ban Laem La in Mai Khao. Accompanied by top ministry officials including Permanent Secretary Anukul Peedkaew, the minister met with members of the local Moken community under the 'Empowering Sea Gypsies for Sustainable Happiness' project. The delegation was received by Phuket Vice Governor Samawit Suphanphai and other local and provincial leaders.

Speaking to community members, Mr Varawut emphasised that all people living in Thailand deserve



Photo: PR Phuket

equal care and protection, regardless of ethnicity.

"Today is a celebration of the Chao Lay way of life," he said, using the Thai term for sea gypsies. "We are here not only to show our support but to deliver essential items and listen to the needs of the community."

He also acknowledged the work of local volunteers and community leaders who continue to support the well-being of these marginalised groups.

Phuket, a global tourist destination, is home to a multicultural population that includes ethnic sea gypsies such as the Urak Lawoi and Moken. While

these communities have maintained their traditions, they face growing challenges, including modern development pressures, loss of access to traditional fishing grounds, and limited educational and welfare opportunities.

Many sea gypsies, who traditionally worked as fishermen, have had to adapt due to environmental degradation, urban expansion and restricted fishing zones. Despite these changes, cultural practices such as the Urak Lawoi's boat-floating ritual, the Moken's beach-sleeping tradition and the Rong Ngen dance performance are still preserved.

Residents of Baan Laem La and nearby Baan Hin Luk Diao – communities linked by shared history, language and spiritual traditions – continue to honour ancestral ceremonies like 'Non Hat', which reinforces their social cohesion. The Moken people, descendants of sea dwellers from Koh Lanta in Krabi Province, have lived in the area for more than 150 years.

According to local data, Baan Laem La is home to 440 people across 145 households, while Baan Hin Luk Diao has 211 residents from 70 families. Both communities face ongoing land rights disputes, particularly in the wake of the 2004 tsunami, which led to land ownership being transferred to the Crown Property Bureau, forcing many to rent and struggle with access to utilities.

In his remarks, Mr Samawit expressed gratitude to the ministry for recognising the importance of ensuring that ethnic groups like the sea gypsies are not "left behind".

## Pawnshop slashes 'Back to School' interest rates

THE PHUKET CITY Municipality Pawnshop has reduced its interest rates in a bid to ease financial burdens for families at the start of Thai school year.

Acting Mayor Chalerm-porn Piyanarongroj said the pawnshop has seen a rise in demand, with over 200 people using the service each day.

To meet the increased need, the municipality has allocated B140 million in revolving funds to help local residents cope with economic pressures.

In a special measure running from May 1 to June 30, 2025, the pawnshop (in English also called the 'Muang Phuket Municipal Pawnshop') is offering reduced interest rates:

- Loans of up to B5,000 will carry an interest rate of just 0.25% per month.

- Loans exceeding B5,000 will be charged 1% per month.

From July 1 to Dec 31, 2025, the rates will adjust slightly:

- Loans up to B5,000 will be subject to a 0.50% monthly interest.

- Loans over B5,000 will continue at 1% per month.

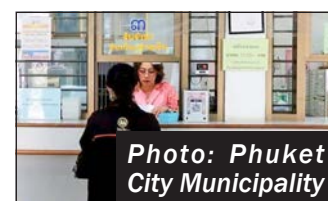


Photo: Phuket City Municipality

These rates, determined in line with the Office of the Local Government Pawnshop Management Committee, are notably lower than those offered by private pawnshops, Mr Chalerm-porn noted.

Customers also have the option to repay their loans in installments with no minimum repayment amount required, he added.

"This is the lowest interest rate we've offered and is aimed at relieving the financial stress many families face during the school term," Mr Chalerm-porn said. "We invite anyone in need of financial assistance to make use of our services," he urged.

The Phuket City Municipality Pawnshop is open Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm, at 17/5 Komaraphat Rd, Talat Yai, Phuket Town. For enquiries, call 076-211424.

The Phuket News

## Officials schooled on education rights

PHUKET OFFICIALS were given firsthand training this week on the rights of migrant workers' children to free education in Thailand, and on how to bring them into the formal education system.

Leading the training session was Dr Monthathip Saiyongka, a Myanmar-born Thai national now serving as Director of the Phuket Provincial Office of Learning Encouragement – a branch of the Ministry of Education that focuses on ensuring children, regardless of background or status, have access to schooling.

Joining her was Wasana Phrombangyuan, Director of the Department of Learning Encouragement in Ranong's Muang District, where officials have had significant experience integrating Myanmar children into Thai government schools.

"The reason she was there is that in Ranong there are lots of Myanmar children, just like our case, so she came to share how they resolve this in Ranong, and how officials can work to bring Myanmar children into the system," Dr

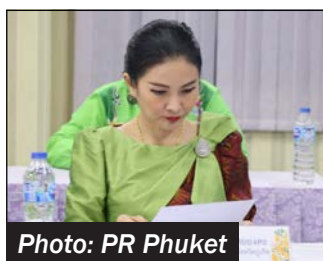


Photo: PR Phuket

Monthathip told *The Phuket News*.

She confirmed the training was held in direct response to recent raids on the Good Shepherd school in Ratsada, which highlighted the number of migrant children not formally registered with the Thai education system.

"Yes, the meeting was held to bring Myanmar children into the system as well, not just Thai kids," she said. "This includes Thai children who do not have a government ID card and for Myanmar children as well, to bring them into the system legally, give them access to education, and help them receive an ID card if they were born and raised here."

Dr Monthathip added that schools such as Piboon Sawasdee Municipal School in Phuket already have Myanmar children enrolled,

and the Phuket District Non-Formal Education Center also accepts young adult Myanmar students seeking to learn Thai.

However, she clarified that education is not automatically free. "It depends on the school they enroll in. Even Thai children sometimes have to pay fees," she noted.

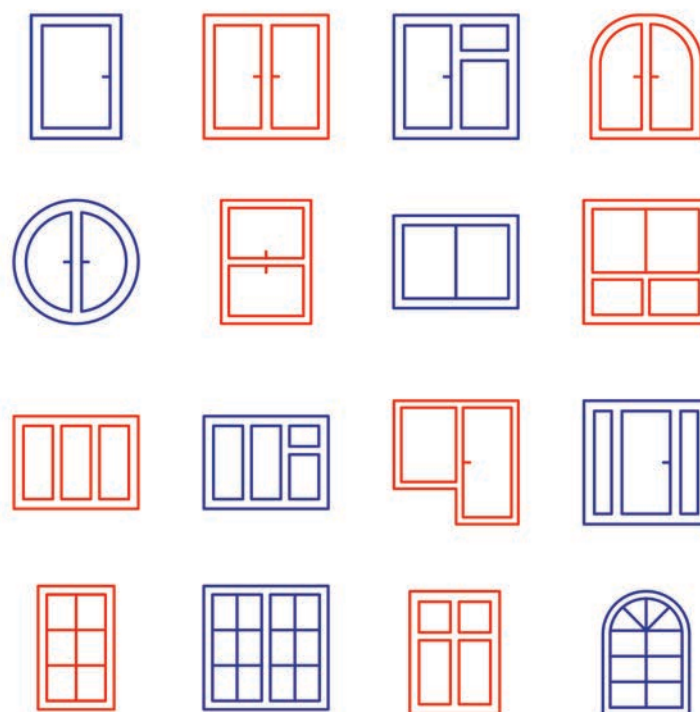
The workshop, held at the Phuket Provincial Education Office on May 14, was attended by Phuket Vice Governor Adul Chuthong and representatives from several key agencies, including the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC), the Phuket Provincial Education Office, and the Office of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education.

The session focused on two critical issues: guidelines for admitting children without Thai nationality or civil registration into the education system, and resolving the legal identity issues of students whose ID numbers begin with 'G' – indicating they lack full Thai citizenship.

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# Condos edge towards oversupply

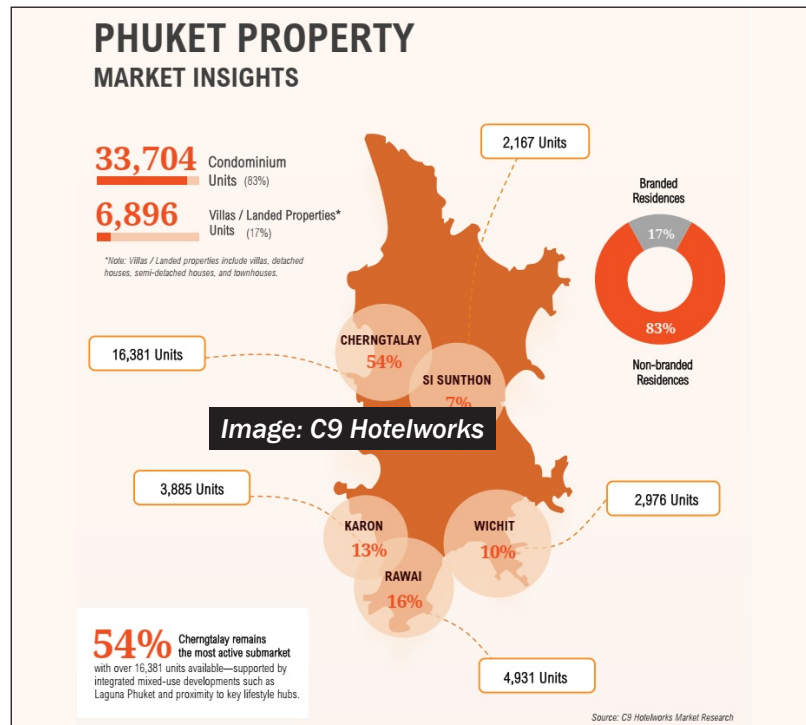
The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket's residential property market is evolving rapidly in 2025, with developers responding to lifestyle-driven demand, rising costs and growing interest in branded real estate, according to a new report from consultancy C9 Hotelworks.

The island is seeing clear shifts in buyer preferences and development strategies, as traditional mass-market approaches give way to more targeted, differentiated offerings, explains Bill Barnett, Managing Director C9 Hotelworks in 'The Phuket Property Market Update – May 2025' report.

The report shows that condominiums continue to dominate the supply landscape, making up 83% of the 40,600 units currently for sale across 343 active projects. Landed properties – including villas and townhouses – are also gaining ground, particularly in upscale areas.

Cherng Talay remains the island's most active submarket, accounting for more than half of total inventory. Anchored by large mixed-use developments such as Laguna Phuket, the area is also home to some of the most expensive properties on the



island, with one-bedroom ocean-view condos listed at up to B19.4 million and villas exceeding B138mn.

**BRANDED VS. NON-BRANDED:**  
**A GROWING PRICE GAP**  
Branded residences are outperforming their non-branded counterparts in both sales velocity and pricing power. Branded condominiums now command an average of B181,000 per square metre - a 28% premium over

non-branded units. Branded villas and landed homes are fetching up to B162,000 per square metre, more than double the price of comparable non-branded offerings.

Despite this premium, non-branded units still dominate total supply. However, buyers are increasingly drawn to the perceived value and amenities offered by branded developments, particularly those with strong management, rental support and post-sale service.

## DEVELOPERS TARGET HIGH-VALUE SEGMENTS

Bangkok-based firms like Sansiri and Ananda have expanded aggressively into the Phuket market, joining established players such as RHOM Bho Property, which holds the largest market share with 4,820 units across nine projects.

Developers are increasingly focusing on flexibility and lifestyle features, with units designed to accommodate both long-term residents and mid-term renters. This trend is especially relevant in light of stricter enforcement of Thai regulations prohibiting short-term condo rentals of under 30 days without a hotel license – a shift that is influencing investor strategies.

## RENTAL MARKET REMAINS STRONG DESPITE LEGAL PRESSURES

The rental sector continues to perform well, particularly in lifestyle hubs such as Cherng Talay, Rawai and Patong. One-bedroom condominiums remain the most in-demand product, renting for an average of B22,541 per month on long-term leases and B26,616 for short stays. Three- and four-bedroom villas average B179,445 per month for short-term rentals,

catering to families and high-end holidaymakers.

However, the government's increased enforcement on illegal short-term rentals has added an element of risk for investors. Properties not compliant with hotel licensing laws face fines and tighter scrutiny, prompting a shift toward legal long-stay offerings and mixed-use developments.

## PHUKET'S VALUE PROPOSITION HOLDS STRONG

Compared to regional urban centres like Bangkok or Singapore, Phuket remains relatively affordable for luxury real estate, Mr Barnett noted.

The island's maturing development ecosystem – with better infrastructure, mixed-use communities and branded offerings – is helping it transition from a holiday hotspot into a viable second-home and investment destination, he added.

As the market becomes more selective, the report notes, success will depend on how well new projects meet the needs of specific buyer groups – from digital nomads and wellness seekers to high-net-worth investors looking for premium amenities and turn-key rental support, Mr Barnett concluded.

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# Schools targetted for allowing student visas for illegal work

THE MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION, Science, Research and Innovation (MHESI) has introduced new regulations to prevent foreign students from using short courses as a cover for illegal work in Thailand. Effective immediately, all institutions must submit their short course curricula for review.

Minister Supamas Isarabhakdi said last Thursday (May 15) that these guidelines aim to ensure foreign students in Thailand comply with legal standards and the agreements between MHESI and the Immigration Bureau.

She said the regulations impose strict measures on institutions, including curriculum quality, management of foreign students and continuous reporting to the ministry.

Institutions offering short courses must demonstrate expertise and readiness in content, instructors and clear learning outcomes to maintain the standards of Thai education.

Institutions must submit detailed course information to MHESI, including the course name, responsible department and instructors. They must also provide the objectives, structure and content, as well as the teaching methods - with at least 60% onsite and no more than 40% online learning. They are required to specify the course duration (not exceeding 180 days), daily and weekly schedules, attendance records, student qualifications, application period, number of foreign students,



Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation Minister Supamas Isarabhakdi. Photo: MHESI

language of instruction, location and assessment methods

Institutions must issue certificates and request temporary residence permits for foreign students based on the course's necessity, not exceeding 180 days per instance, and verify academic records if the student has previously studied at any higher education institution.

Upon approval from the Immigration Bureau for residence to study the course, institutions must report foreign student information to MHESI within 30 days.

Institutions must establish procedures to monitor foreign student attendance and submit monthly progress reports through MHESI's foreign student tracking database, providing details of all current students, as well as details of those who have left or graduated.

If any institution fails to comply with the guidelines, MHESI will notify the institution's council to consider cancelling the course. *Bangkok Post*



# DSI confirms around 1,200 suspects in Senate probe

## BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

About 1,200 suspects are being investigated over their involvement in money laundering linked to vote-rigging in last year's Senate 'election', according to the Department of Special Investigation (DSI).

DSI spokesman Pol Maj Woranan Srilam said on May 13 that the DSI and the Election Commission (EC) are jointly conducting the inquiry.

The DSI has been handling allegations of money laundering and the operation of an illegal secret organisation linked with the selection process held in June last year, he said, adding the running of a body with unlawful income is an offence under the Anti-Money Laundering Act.

When money is acquired by such an organisation, it is deemed to be linked with money laundering practices, he explained.

Pol Maj Woranan said the DSI will examine the financial trails of money and assets acquired through transactions before, during and after the latest Senate selections at the district, provincial and national levels.

Anyone who supported 'vote-rigging' in the election will also face charges under Sections 5 and 9 of



Senate candidates gather for the final round of voting in Nonthaburi province on June 26 last year. Photo: Bangkok Post

the Anti-Money Laundering Act, he said, adding that the DSI will summon them to acknowledge the charges and hear their explanations.

Pol Maj Woranan said the EC is focusing its probe on violations of the Senate election law and will determine if the suspects should be disqualified. It will also ask the Supreme Court to revoke their election rights.

He said the DSI will pursue criminal proceedings against wrongdoers on charges of money laundering and running an illegal secret organisation.

On May 9, the EC and the DSI jointly served summonses on six of 53 senators allegedly involved in the vote-rigging probe.

DSI Director-General Pol Maj Yutthana Praedam confirmed EC officials had approved the first round and DSI officers had delivered them to the suspects' residences in Bangkok.

The six senators are Alongkot Vorakee, Chokchai Kittithanesuan, Jirasak

Chookhwamdee, Pibulat Haruehanprakan, Wuttichart Kalyanamitra and Phisut Rattanawong.

Deputy Senate Speaker Kiangkrai Srirak, one of the first summoned for questioning, met the EC in person on Monday (May 19). However, he refused to disclose the details of his meeting.

At least three key Bhumjaithai (BJT) Party figures are set to be summoned by the EC, including Deputy Commerce Minister Napintorn Srisanpang.

Supachai Phosu, a former MP for Nakhon Phanom and a former deputy parliament speaker, and Wongsakorn Chanakit, who stood on the Bhumjaithai ticket in Phuket in the 2023 election, are the other two expected to be summoned.

All three denied any wrongdoing on Monday, saying they are ready to defend themselves against the allegations if the EC does summon them, as reported by the media.

## Digital handout on hold

### BANGKOK

THE GOVERNMENT has postponed the third phase of the B10,000 handout programme to instead spend the funds on solving structural issues and investing in infrastructure projects, insisting the project is not scrapped but only delayed.

Speaking after a meeting of the committee on economic stimulus measures on Monday (May 19), Finance Minister Pichai Chunhavajira said the government has reviewed the spending plan for B157 billion and agreed that adjustments are necessary.

The third phase of the digital wallet project, expected to cost B27bn, was to be given to 2.7 million young people aged 16 to 20. Critics have argued the funds might be better used elsewhere, citing the limited economic impact of the first two phases.

Mr Pichai said the National Economic and Social Development Council and the Bank of Thailand reviewed the handout scheme during Monday's meeting and



Pichai Chunhavajira. Photo: Bangkok Post

decided to spend the funds elsewhere, particularly on pressing issues.

"These issues are already in the plan, but we will look at the urgent problems, including those facing small- and medium-sized enterprises. We'll focus on increasing competitiveness and employment."

"The committee has approved the framework with a panel tasked with screening projects and another committee to monitor the spending," said Mr Pichai, who is also a deputy prime minister.

Last week, the finance minister confirmed the B10,000 handout programme was under review as the government must reconsider its priorities following the new US trade policy. Bangkok Post

## Premchai surrenders over deadly building collapse

### BANGKOK

THAI CONSTRUCTION TYCOON Premchai Karnasuta turned himself in last Friday (May 16) to face charges of alleged negligence over the collapse of a skyscraper that killed dozens of people in a powerful earthquake, police said.

The 30-storey Bangkok tower crumbled in seconds, killing 89 people, mostly construction workers, when a magnitude-7.7 tremor hit neighbouring Myanmar on Mar 28.

The building being constructed to house the State Audit Office was the only structure to collapse in the Thai capital, raising serious concerns about safety standards and oversight.

A Thai court issued arrest warrants on May 15 for 17 people on charges of "professional negligence causing death", including Premchai, CEO of Italian-Thai Development (ITD), one of the country's largest construction firms.

Premchai and 14 other suspects reported to Bangkok's Bang Sue Police station where "they denied all charges", district police chief Sanong Sangmanee told AFP.

The police chief confirmed that all the remaining suspects reported to the same police station on Monday (May 19).

If convicted, the 71-year-old magnate faces up to 10 years in prison and a fine of B200,000.

Livestream footage from local outlet



If convicted Premchai faces up to 10 years in prison and a fine of B200,000. Photo: Bangkok Post

The Reporters showed Premchai in a wheelchair as officers escorted him from the police station to court.

A court official told AFP that Premchai will be held in pre-trial detention while prosecutors continue their investigation.

This is not the tycoon's first legal tangle. In 2021 a Thai court sentenced him to three years and two months in prison for poaching protected wildlife, including a black panther.

He was released early in 2023 as part of a group of inmates granted clemency for good behaviour.

According to public filings with the Stock Exchange of Thailand, Premchai owns nearly 12% of ITD's shares.

Thai justice department investigators said on May 16 they will probe cement plates used in the tower's construction to gather further evidence for their case. AFP

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# Going beyond 'White Lotus' aboard the SPACECAT



The SPACECAT is all her glory. Photo: Supplied

Joanna Matlub

When *The White Lotus* Season 3 sailed onto screens around the globe, the focus was, as always, on drama, dysfunction and decadence. But amidst the emotional entanglements and twisted plots, there was one sleek star that quietly stole the spotlight: SPACECAT, the ultra-luxurious catamaran that left viewers wondering, where is that boat and how do I get on it?

While the series gave us a teasing glimpse of the 177-foot vessel in all its cinematic glory, the reality is even more

extravagant, and remarkably, within reach. Docked right here in Phuket, SPACECAT is now available for charter, ready to turn your tropical daydream into a real escape.

Some may not realise that these scenes were filmed right here in Phuket, with SPACECAT making her debut in Episode 4 and later becoming a floating stage for some of the most jaw-dropping scenes in Episodes 5 and 6. However, what the cameras did not show is just how extraordinary SPACECAT really is when the director calls 'cut' and the real luxury experience begins.

## A star with secrets

Designed by the world-renowned Espen

Øino and built by Silver Yachts, SPACECAT is more than a mere set piece. While viewers caught glimpses of its sleek exterior, open-plan decks and that glamorous 5.5-metre pool, much was left unseen. Not all of the four beautifully appointed double and twin cabins were featured, nor was the real seamless flow between indoor lounges and alfresco spaces. Yes, it looks stunning on screen, but the details go far beyond the series.

When you step aboard you are greeted by high ceilings, decadent wooden floors and panelled staircases that feel more like a five-star penthouse. Each of the plush cabins boasts fine linens from top-tier Thai brands, and clever design details like hidden, recessed televisions that elevate the aesthetic without compromising the modern vibe.

Moving onto the master cabin, familiar to many due to that unforgettable scene (don't worry, we are not going to dive into the specifics). What did not make it into the final edit though is the incredible attention to detail and craftsmanship. With rich wood panelling, an upholstered bed framed like artwork, a dedicated vanity desk, floor-to-ceiling dressing wall plus the walk-in rain shower incorporating a modern wooden bench that looks like it belongs in a luxury spa.

## Exclusive spaces left on the cutting room floor

Many of SPACECAT's most impressive areas never appeared on screen or were not shown in all their glory. For example, the upper saloon, a sprawling indoor lounge is a revelation containing multiple seating areas, a cinema-sized TV and sliding glass doors that open to an alfresco deck with bar area. If you are after total privacy, simply draw the curtains and the space transforms into your own tranquil massage suite, complete with the soothing sound of waves.

Above this area, yet another secret gem awaits; the upper sundeck that can transform on demand into a gym. This versatile area can be arranged with a full suite of weights, resistance equipment and yoga mats for sunrise sessions, complete with panoramic views to keep you motivated. No matter where you are onboard, you are never far from a refreshment with each deck having its own fully equipped bar, allowing you to refresh on every deck level or enjoy a Thai craft drink in the lounge or dining areas.



## Not just for show

Despite its cinematic allure, SPACECAT is not just for dramatic effect. In contrast, it is a serious vessel, highly manoeuvrable thanks to its catamaran design, which allows it to access shallower bays and secluded anchorages that deeper-hulled superyachts simply cannot reach. This opens up an entirely different side of Thailand's cruising grounds, from the caves of Phang Nga Bay to hidden soft white sand beaches for a bespoke experience.

Helmed by Captain Chris, with more than 20 years' experience navigating these waters, the yacht runs like a dream. SPACECAT is fully licensed and compliant with Thai and international maritime regulations, and staffed with top-tier chefs and a discreet, highly trained crew who anticipate your every desire. This high level of service is more often associated with the Mediterranean's elite charter fleet.

## Yours for the charter

Yes, SPACECAT starred in *The White Lotus*, however her real role is delivering unforgettable journeys for discerning travellers who appreciate the finer things in life. Available through Northrop & Johnson, SPACECAT can be privately chartered from \$160,000 to \$200,000 USD (B5.3 million to B6.6mn) per week depending on season, offering everything from gourmet dining, scuba excursions, paddleboarding at sunrise, wakeboarding and freediving instruction, jet skiing and much more.

So next time you rewatch the series and spot this floating palace slicing through the Andaman Sea, remember, what you saw was only the beginning. The true story of SPACECAT is written not in scripts, but in luxurious experiences where you get to be the star, minus the drama!

For more information on how to charter SPACECAT visit: [northropandjohnson.com](http://northropandjohnson.com).

**Where to eat in PHUKET**

## The July/August 2025 hard copy issue goes to print very soon

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# Phuket leading by example during Pride Month

## LGBTQIA+

Josh O'Neill

Phuket is once again stepping into the spotlight this June as it hosts one of Thailand's most anticipated events celebrating diversity, inclusion and human rights. Phuket Pride 2025 is shaping up to be the island's boldest and brightest edition yet, running throughout June from under the unifying theme, 'Be You, Be Equality'.

The Phuket Pride Festival, which has grown into a regional celebration known not only for its vibrant parades and parties but for its heartfelt message of acceptance. While many see Pride Month as an opportunity to celebrate, it also serves as a vital reminder that equality is an ongoing effort. It is a space to amplify LGBTQIA+ voices and promote Phuket as a safe, welcoming destination for all.

From June 2, Beach Volleyball, Pride Talk and the coveted Miss Queen – Andaman Power 2025 will be held with the Phuket Pride Parade scheduled for Sunday, June 9. The parade will begin at 5pm from Duangjitt Resort and wind its way to Jungceylon Shopping Mall, ending with a spectacular drag and cabaret show. With rainbow flags waving and music in the air, the parade promises to bring together residents and visitors in a powerful display of unity.



Photo: Supplied

Beyond the parade, a week of activities is planned to build awareness and foster connections within the community. Events will include health and wellness sessions, art exhibitions, talks, and cultural performances. This comprehensive programming ensures that Pride is more than just a single celebration; it becomes a platform to support mental health, highlight LGBTQIA+ talent, and push for broader social understanding.

On May 24, just ahead of Pride Week, Bangkok Hospital Phuket will host 'Zumba Phuket 2025: Move for Love, Move for Pride', a high-energy dance event blending fitness, fun and fundraising. Led by Thailand's top Zumba instructors, the event aims to promote heart health while embracing

LGBTQIA+ visibility.

The Zumba event will be more than just a dance party. Participants can expect free heart screenings, a wellness talk by medical experts, prizes and giveaways. The atmosphere will be inclusive and celebratory, with all activities helping to raise funds and awareness for equality and health.

This year's Pride events come at a significant time. Thailand has made important strides in LGBTQIA+ rights, including recent movement on marriage equality legislation, and the community continues to grow in visibility and recognition. Phuket, as one of the country's most LGBTQIA+-friendly destinations, has the opportunity to lead by example.

Unlike larger cities that can some-

times be overwhelming, Phuket's Pride events retain a grassroots feel. Organisers, volunteers and participants are community members who genuinely care about making the island a better place. These events are about connection as much as they are about celebration.

The pride movement exists because, for too long, people have felt unsafe or unseen for simply being who they are. Pride is about rewriting that story. It's about saying, loudly and clearly, that everyone deserves to be respected, included, and loved. And that message has never been more important.

While some still view Pride as a niche interest, the increasing participation of allies, local businesses, hospitals, artists, and families shows that it is, in fact, a shared celebration of human dignity. Pride is a reminder that love, in all its forms, belongs in public spaces.

As the rainbow flags rise across the island this June, Phuket sends a message not just to Thailand, but to the world: everyone belongs here. Whether you live on the island or are just passing through, you are invited to stand up, show up and be yourself.

*Josh O'Neill, a dedicated LGBTQIA+ advocate and community leader, leverages his expertise in DEI, events and cultural engagement to spotlight Phuket's current affairs and vibrant community life. Contact at PFAM International: Phone / WhatsApp 099-9989274. Email: support@pfaminternational.com.*



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POP QUIZ

1. Which country is home to the famous Boiling Lake?

2. There are now believed to be three species of orangutan in the world. True or false?

3. Which city became the seventh World Marathon Major in late 2024?

4. What cheese is traditionally made from the milk of a donkey?

5. Who performs the voice of Homer Simpson?

Answers below, centre

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

1. Gullies

6. "Heaven Can \_\_\_\_" (1978 film)

10. Affected

14. Ten-percenter

15. Reproductive structures

16. \_\_\_\_ 51

17. Is passed down

20. Godforsaken

21. Lines of business

22. Court ruling?

23. Decoy

25. \_\_\_\_ pie

29. Removes from office

33. Ballad's end?

34. Kegger wear, maybe

36. University founder Cornell

37. Get really frustrated

41. Notre Dame niche

42. Reject

43. Pipe joint

44. Ocellus

47. Bedevils

Down

1. Actress Sela

2. Fluish feeling

3. Burrows

4. Step on it

5. Eyelet creator

6. British engineer James

7. Lenten symbol

8. Knock off

9. Midday meal

10. Desert rider

11. Husk

12. Pinochle combo

13. Bears a penalty

49. Tie up

51. Anderson's "High \_\_\_\_"

52. Frog site?

55. Desquamations

60. Reaction to sudden surprise

62. Fraction of thrice

63. De Valera's land

64. Hard seed coat

65. Takes habitually

66. Leaves home?

67. C4H8O2, e.g.

18. Colbert \_\_\_\_

19. Has 2-Down

24. Quiet down

25. Caterpillar hairs

26. Fighting tears

27. Clear the slate

28. Gets rid of

30. Nitrogen, formerly

31. More loyal

32. Stuffs

35. Nile reptile

38. Fixes

39. Mountain spurs

40. Expose to the sun

45. Kind of fall

46. Get-go

48. Kindreds

50. Cathedral topper

52. 10 C-notes

53. Biddies

54. Newfoundland promontory

56. Rapier

57. Love \_\_\_\_

58. Golden \_\_\_\_

59. Telephone button

61. White wine aperitif

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

SUDOKU

Easy

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

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

A	R	C		C	L	O	T	H	E		M	E	S	A	
M	O	O		R	A	D	I	A	N		O	O	H	S	
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8	1	7	3	2	9	5	4	6
2	9	4	7	5	6	3	8	1
5	3	6	8	4	1	2	7	9
7	6	8	2	3	5	1	9	4
3	5	1	4	9	7	8	6	2
4	2	9	6	1	8	7	5	3
1	8	3	5	6	4	9	2	7
6	7	2	9	8	3	4	1	5
9	4	5	1	7	2	6	3	8

GOT YOUR NUMBER

3

is the number of times Jack Nicholson has won an Academy Award (2 for best actor, 1 for best supporting actor)

6

times is how much more likely men are to be struck by lightning than women

98

percent of the atoms in your body are replaced every year

1,350

is roughly how many volcanoes are currently active around the world

940 million

kilometres (about 584mn miles) is how far the Earth travels to complete one orbit of the Sun in one year.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Saphan Hin sunrise. Photo by Michael Rafael

Got an unusual or particularly beautiful picture of Phuket? Email it to [editor3@classactmedia.co.th](mailto:editor3@classactmedia.co.th)

This week in history

May 23, 1934

American bank robbers Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow are ambushed by police and killed in Bienville Parish, Louisiana.



Bonnie and Clyde.

May 24, 1607

Jamestown, the first permanent English colony in North America, is founded.

May 25, 2001

Erik Weihenmayer becomes

Dr Sherman Bull.

May 26, 1967

The Beatles' album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* is released.

May 27, 1703

Tsar Peter the Great founds the city of Saint Petersburg.

May 28, 1830

U.S. President Andrew Jackson signs the Indian

Removal Act which denies Native Americans their land rights and forcibly relocates them.

May 29, 1985

Thirty-nine football fans die and hundreds are injured when a wall collapses at the Heysel Stadium, Brussels, during the European Cup Final between Liverpool and Juventus.

Source: Wikipedia

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**FRI**
**23 MAY**

Show starts at 7:30pm but come early for wine tasting in the restaurant.  
 An original musical comedy  
**by Jim Newport & S.D. Von Nemeth**  
**WINE SNOBS**  
 Dinner theatre at its best! A three-course event!  
**JUNKYARD THEATRE**

**Wine Snobs - A musical Comedy by Jim Newport**

Theatrix presents a deliciously silly new comedy! Step into 1990s Napa Valley, where chaos erupts at a peaceful vineyard when a glamorous jet-setting couple – and their wine-sniffing dog Randy – turn up uninvited. May 23, 25, 29, 30 & June 1. Dinner, theatre and selected beverages included. Brought to you by Theatrix Group, in collaboration with Junkyard Theatre. Expect sharp wit, catchy tunes, and high-energy comedy. Bookings - theatrixphuket@gmail.com

**Collective Art Exhibition**

HeadStart  
 Grand Opening  
 23rd May  
 4:30 PM - 7 PM  
 Featuring Performance  
 by CMA  
**23-28 MAY 2025**  
 Location: Phuket Cultural Center, Phuket Rajabhat University  
 Location sponsored by  
 PKRU

**Collective Art Exhibition**

HeadStart International School, Phuket is thrilled to announce the opening of our expanded GCSE and A-Level Art Exhibition at the Phuket Cultural Centre, Rajabhat University. This special exhibition showcases the hard work, creativity and dedication of our talented students over the past two years. It's an exciting opportunity to witness the artistic achievements of our young artists in a professional setting. Join us for the Grand Opening Ceremony on Friday, May 23 from 4:30pm to 7pm, where you'll enjoy live music performances by our Performing Arts students. The exhibition is open to the public, so feel free to visit at your convenience and explore the incredible work our students have created! For more details - headstartphuket.com

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**Friday Mussels Night**

6 PM onwards: Belgian style mussels served with French Fries. All you can eat. Your choice, Your style: Marinier, Selected drinks, Provencale, Garlic & cream, Creamy curry, Blue cheese or Thai style We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 325 baht P.P. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/shakersphuket Oliver, Shakers restaurant 98/18 Vises Road, Rawai 83130, 081 891 4381

**SAT**
**24 MAY**

**ZUMBA PHUKET**  
 MOVE FOR LOVE MOVE FOR PRIDE



**Move for love move for pride**

Get ready to shake it out and splash your love energy for the world to see! Join us for Zumba Phuket 2025: Move for Love, Move for Pride, Dance for your heart. Dance together at the very first edition! Registration opens at 5pm at the King Carl Gustav Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Bangkok Hospital Phuket. Dress Code: Bright, Colourful, and Unstoppable! Early Bird THB 399, Walk-in THB 499. For more details - Facebook: Zumba Phuket

**SUN**
**25 MAY**

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**Sunday Roast**

12PM – 9PM: All you can eat Sunday Roast Buffet Beef, Pork & Capon chicken – Cauliflower, Broccoli, Peas, Carrots, Fried mushrooms, Grilled Tomatoes – Yorkshire pudding – Roasted Potatoes, Mashed Potatoes – Gravy, Mushroom sauce, Horse raddish, Mint Sauce. We have a kid's playground zone. Adults: 350 baht P.P. Kids under 12 years old: 195 baht P.P. www.shakersphuket.com www.facebook.com/shakersphuket Oliver, Shakers restaurant 98/18 Vises Road, Rawai 83130, 081 891 4381

**MON**
**26 MAY**

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**Monday BBQ Night**

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

**WED**
**28 MAY**

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**Wednesday BBQ Night**

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

**FRI**
**30 MAY**

**JOINT CHAMBERS PHUKET MEMBERS BRIEFING ON**  
**Phuket's Infrastructure Development: Challenges and Future Prospects**

Friday, 30th May 2025  
 17:00 - 18:00 hrs  
 Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort  
 Free of Charge for Phuket Sundowners members and partner chambers members

**Joint Chambers Phuket Members Briefing**

Phuket's Infrastructure Development: Challenges and Future Prospects. This high-level session will explore Phuket's urban transformation, economic expansion, and sustainable growth – bringing together policymakers, urban planners, developers, and investors for an insightful discussion. Featured Speakers: Rathawat Kuvijitrsuwan (Job) – SVP, Advisory & Asset Management – Asia, JLL Hotels & Hospitality Group, Jon Cannon – SVP, Hotel Asset Management (Thailand & Vietnam), Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL). 17:00 – 18:00 hrs. Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort. Cost: Free of charge for Phuket Sundowners attendees. To book contact - office@austchamthailand.com

**JOINT CHAMBERS PHUKET SUNDOWNERS**

Friday, 30th May 2025  
 18:00 - 21:00 hrs  
 Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort  
 650 THB for AustCham members, partner Chambers members, and partner Chambers members, 1,200 THB for non-members

**AustCham Joint Chambers Phuket Sundowners**

AustCham Thailand, in collaboration with Australian Alumni, AMCHAM, BCCT, Belgian-Luxembourg/Thai Chamber, CanCham Thailand, FTCC, GTCC, NTCC, Phuket Chamber of Commerce and Thai-Swedish Chamber, will host the Joint Chambers Phuket Sundowners from 18.00 - 21.00 hrs., at Le Méridien Phuket Beach Resort. Join us for a wonderful night of making new connections and catching up with familiar faces in the Australian-Thai business community in Phuket. 650 THB for AustCham members, partner Chambers' members, and Australian Alumni Members, 1,200 THB for non-members. To book contact - office@austchamthailand.com

**SAT**
**31 MAY**

**GIVE IT UP FOR MUSIC AND HELPING CHILDREN**



**Give It Up For Music And Helping Children**

Rotary Club of Patong Beach invite you to their White Dinner Gala on May 31 at the ballroom at SAii Laguna Phuket. Starting at 7pm with welcome drinks followed by an awesome buffet with assorted beverages until 11pm. Proceeds go to the RCOBP service projects for children. Tickets - THB 2,500 per person, reservations required. For bookings please contact Claudia on rotaryhelpthechildren@gmail.com

**FRI**
**6 JUNE**

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 Enjoy a relaxed coffee chat with our admissions team

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Discover BCIS Phuket – BCIS Phuket warmly invites families to our Open Day on Friday, 6th June at 9:00 AM. From Nursery to Year 13, explore what makes our school a leading international learning community on the island. Join us for an engaging morning where you can: Explore our purpose-built Early Years, Primary, and Secondary campuses Experience the BCIS buzz with real classroom learning and exciting student showcases Enjoy a relaxed coffee and conversation with our friendly admissions team Whether you're new to Phuket or looking for a fresh start for your child, come and discover a school that values curiosity, connection, and creativity. BCIS Phuket, Chalong. 063 473 8800 - admissions@bcisphuket.ac.th Register now and be part of something extraordinary. Explore • Connect • Discover at BCIS Phuket



**Grow Boating Evening - June 2025**

We look forward to seeing you at the June event at Boardwalk Bistro and Bar at Phuket Boat Lagoon from 5pm. Drinks sponsorship for the evening is available. There will be a delicious buffet sponsored by the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar for all attendees. Come and join in the fun, everyone is welcome and there is no entry fee. Find us at facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket/

**SAT**
**7 JUNE**

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**FRI**
**13 JUNE**

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**Phuket Business Networking - June 2025**

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

**SAT**
**19 JULY**

**100 LEGENDS SUMMER BALL 2025**

PHUKET VETERANS PROUDLY PRESENT

**100 Legends Summer Ball 2025**

Phuket Veterans invite all members, families, and friends to join us for the first annual 100 Legends Summer Ball held at The Courtyard by Marriott, Phuket Town. What's Included? Band and DJ, Dancing, Buffet, Thai and Western food. Canapé, welcome drinks and free flow soft drink. There will be a raffle prize draw with the proceeds going to charity - Live, Play, Work Thai Priorities Services. Live Play Work Supports Veterans, individuals, their Families, Community & Business to Live..Play..Work Their Best Life! From 6:00 PM, tickets THB 2,000 THB per person. RSVP - Dave Gormley (IVA Secretary) to register WhatsApp +44 7726 274096 or davegormley@icloud.com or message via Facebook: facebook.com/phuketveterans Dave Gormley, davegormley@icloud.com

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## PAY WITH CRYPTO GLOBAL LAUNCH

Over 150 crypto enthusiasts gather at Shaman Phuket on Monday May 19 for the global launch of a new way to pay that is fast, secure and powered by crypto. Presentations were made on the future of payments with Pay with Crypto that redefines the digital payment landscape. Pay with Crypto brings cryptocurrency and everyday commerce together through seamless, secure and instant transactions.

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## Andaman Trail Run dates confirmed

### TRAIL RUNNING

THE DATES FOR PHUKET leg of this year's Andaman International Trail Running (AITR) event have been confirmed as June 28-29.

The popular running competition will take place at Bang Wad reservoir in Kathu and is expected to attract thousands of local, national and overseas participants.

The race is to be divided into three separate distances of 7 kilometres, 15km and 25km, with all three categories open to male and female competitors and cash prizes and trophies distributed to the top three placed finishers in each.

The Phuket leg of the AITR 2024 competition is one of six races being held, with others staged in the nearby provinces of Satun, Trang, Krabi, Phang Nga and Ranong.

An official press conference to announce the event was held at Central Festival shopping mall on May 14, overseen by Phuket Vice Governor Samawit Suphanpai, who explained



Photo: PR Phuket

the event can help boost tourism and the local economy during the quieter rainy season while showcasing the natural beauty of the island.

Panachakorn Chaiyen, a representative of the Phuket Provincial Tourism Business Association, said that trail running has surged in popularity in recent years and that the AITR Phuket event is expected to attract thousands of local, national and overseas competitors, which will provide a welcome boost to the island's economy.

For more information visit the Andaman Trail Phuket Facebook page or contact LINE: @Thailand SportSeries.

*The Phuket News*

## Verstappen 'proud' of Imola win

### FORMULA ONE

AFP

Max Verstappen said he felt great pride last Sunday (May 18) after he upset forecasts of a dominant McLaren triumph with a reminder of his and Red Bull's pace and race-craft at the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix.

It was a riposte to those who believe Red Bull are in decline as he delivered a fourth consecutive triumph at Imola, his second win this year and the 65<sup>th</sup> of his career at the team's 400<sup>th</sup> race.

Friend and title rival Lando Norris of McLaren finished second and championship leader Oscar Piastri third in the second McLaren ahead of a revived seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton of Ferrari.

"I am incredibly proud of everyone," said Verstappen.

"It's been a very important week for us and the car has performed really well – and, also, I think the execution of the whole race was really good."

He said he was delighted with the move at the first corner of the opening lap that surprised Piastri, who started on pole, and enabled him to take the lead and eventually a commanding victory.

Two safety car interventions were also helpful for Verstappen who was able to save 10 seconds as a result with each of his pit-stops in an eventful and strategic race.



Verstappen celebrates his win. Photo: AFP

"The start itself wasn't particularly great, but I was still on the normal line and I thought I would try and send it round the outside and it worked really well," he said of his bold passing move at Tamburello.

"That then unleashed our pace because once we were in the lead, the car was good and I could look after my tyres – we had very good pace today."

"That virtual safety car was quite handy for me to pit and even on the hard compound our pace was very strong, but then there was a safety car so the field was back together."

"Even on the restart we managed it really well and brought it home."

Looking ahead to next weekend's Monaco Grand Prix, the second event in a three-race triple header started at the Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari, Verstappen will be seeking to add to his victories in 2021 and 2023.

"Next week it's a completely different kind of track in Monaco and that's also going to be very challenging, but for the moment I just want to enjoy today and take it in."

He added that he always enjoyed racing in the heartland of Ferrari, where the fans love motor racing and hope that Imola, in the final year of its current contract, will stay on the calendar in future.

## Phuket community run honours 2025 International Nurses Day

### RUNNING

THE PHUKET PROVINCIAL Nurses Association organised a special running event at Saphan Hin Park last Saturday (May 18) to mark the occasion of International Nurses Day.

The premise of the 'Southern Nurses Run For Well-being 2025' was to promote fitness and proactive healthcare measures while creating awareness of the role of nurses within the local community.

The opening ceremony was presided over by Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat, who was joined by his wife Busadee who holds the positions of President of the Phuket branch of the Red Cross Society of Thailand and President of the Phuket branch of the Ministry of Interior Housewives Association.

Selected heads of government, directors of both public and private hospitals, medical staff, trade union representatives and members of the general public all participated.

Over 600 people participated in the event which saw a 3.5-kilometre race held, with



Photo: PR Phuket

commemorative certificates and trophies awarded to the top three finishers.

In addition to the race was the option to undergo a preliminary health check-up, including a blood pressure reading, body mass index (BMI) assessment, nutritional advice and a general mental health check.

Kritaphon Muangrom, president of Phuket Provincial Nursing Club, revealed that the event focuses on promoting good health and serves as a platform to build good relationships between nursing staff and members of the public, which will lead to the sustainable development of health care within the local community.

*The Phuket News*

## Scheffler outduels Rahm to secure hard-fought PGA Championship win

### GOLF

WORLD NUMBER ONE Scottie Scheffler captured his third major title last Sunday (May 18), outdueling Spain's Jon Rahm down the back nine in the final round to win the PGA Championship by five strokes.

Scheffler, the 2022 and 2024 Masters champion, became the 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive American to win the event, firing a level-par 71 at Quail Hollow to finish on 11-under 273 and defeat countrymen Harris English, Davis Riley and Bryson DeChambeau, tied for second on six-under.

"I knew it was going to be a challenging day. Finishing off a major championship is always difficult," Scheffler said.

"I did a good job of staying patient on the front nine. I didn't have my best stuff, but I kept myself in it, and I stepped up on the back nine."

Rahm stumbled to a 73 to finish on 280 and share eighth after a bogey at 16 and double bogeys at 17 and 18.

Scheffler took home a \$3.42 million (B106mn) top prize from a record \$19mn purse.



Scottie Scheffler with the winner's trophy. Photo: AFP

Scheffler squandered a five-stroke edge, Rahm briefly tying him for the lead, but a birdie at the par-five 10<sup>th</sup> lifted Scheffler back in front to stay.

The 28-year-old Texan took control with birdies at 14 and 15 while Rahm's closing woes secured Scheffler the Wanamaker Trophy, his first major win outside of Augusta National.

"I'm proud of how I did this week just staying in it mentally and hitting the shots when I needed to," Scheffler said.

"This back nine will be one that I remember for a long time. It was a grind out there. I think at one point on the front I maybe had a four- or five-shot lead, and making the turn, I was tied for the lead."

"To step up when I needed to the most, I'll remember that for a while."

"I hit the important shots well this week. And that's why I'm walking away with the trophy."

After suffering a right hand injury last December, Scheffler only won his first title of the year three weeks ago at the CJ Cup Byron Nelson.

The major victory was Scheffler's 15<sup>th</sup> career PGA Tour triumph, all in a span of three years and 94 days, with Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods the only players to hit the mark faster.

Scheffler, whose nine titles in 2024 included Paris Olympic gold, converted his eighth consecutive 54-hole lead into a victory.

He also matched Spanish legend Seve Ballesteros as the only players in the past century to win their first three majors by at least three shots.

AFP



# Champions League for Gunners

## FOOTBALL

AFP

Arsenal secured Champions League qualification thanks to a 1-0 win over Newcastle in the Premier League last Sunday (May 18).

Declan Rice scored the only goal at the Emirates in the battle between second and third to guarantee the consolation of a top-five finish for Mikel Arteta's men at the end of another trophyless season.

"We had a clear dream to deliver a trophy this season. Unfortunately we haven't done it," Arteta said.

"But you have to make sure that chasing a dream doesn't confuse you and allow you to see all the incredible things this team are doing," he added.

Defeat means Newcastle still have work to do to join Arsenal in the Champions League next season.

Just one point separates the League Cup winners in third from Nottingham Forest in seventh.

Victory over Everton this weekend should be enough for the Magpies due to their much superior goal difference over fifth-placed Aston Villa.

Forest maintained their push for a first appearance in Europe's top competition for 45 years after winning 2-1 at West Ham thanks to goals from Morgan Gibbs-White and Nikola Milenkovic.

Forest must beat Chelsea on the final day of the campaign and hope other results go their way to finish in the top five.



Arsenal's Declan Rice scores against Newcastle. Photo: AFP

Chelsea beat Manchester United 1-0 last Friday (May 16) thanks to defender Marc Cucurella's goal to climb to fourth while Aston Villa defeated Tottenham 2-0 thanks to second-half goals from Ezri Konsa and Boubacar Kamara.

"We won and we are on a run but still have work to do. We have to be ready. We have a chance to play in the Champions League," Villa manager Unai Emery said afterwards.

Manchester City remain in sixth place, one point behind both Villa and Chelsea but with a crucial game in hand that, at time of press, was to be played on Tuesday against Bournemouth.

### EMOTIONAL FAREWELL

Meanwhile, Everton said farewell to

Goodison Park with an emotional 2-0 victory over Southampton on Sunday.

Everton's home since 1892, Goodison Park played host to the club's men's team for the final time before they head to a new 52,000 capacity stadium next season.

"Extraordinary atmosphere. The crowd were amazing. The job was to win the game and see ourselves out at Goodison in a good light," Everton boss David Moyes said.

Jamie Vardy brought down the curtain on his Leicester career with his 200<sup>th</sup> goal for the club in the 2-0 victory against Ipswich, while Fulham won 3-2 at west London rivals Brentford to remain in the hunt for a top-eight finish, which could yet be enough for European football.

## Thai Reds to celebrate Liverpool title with Bangkok street parade

### FOOTBALL

LIVERPOOL SUPPORTERS in Thailand will stage a grand celebration marking the club's historic 20<sup>th</sup> English top-flight title, achieved by winning the 2024-25 Premier League season, with a city-centre parade on Sunday (May 25).

The Red Day event, presented by Krungthai-AXA Life, will feature a champions' parade passing various major locations in Bangkok, such as CentralWorld, Victory Monument and Central Ladprao.

Organisers aim to highlight the strength and unity of Thai and Southeast Asian football fans who passionately support one of the world's most popular clubs.

The parade, featuring a single decorated vehicle carrying special guests, will run from 4pm to 6pm. Prior to that, celebratory activities will begin at 1pm at CentralWorld Square.

According to organisers, former Liverpool defender and UEFA Champions League winner John Arne Riise has been confirmed to



Liverpool fans at the announcement of The Red Day in Bangkok on May 14. Photo: Krungthai-AXA Life

join the parade, offering fans a rare opportunity to meet one of the club's legendary figures.

The event is free of charge and open to the public. Interested participants can register and follow updates via Krungthai-AXA Life's official social media channels.

This marks the first time Thai Liverpool fans have organised a public celebration on this scale – a testament to the club's global reach and the enduring passion of its supporters in Thailand.

Bangkok Post

## Eagles soar high to win first FA Cup

### FOOTBALL

CRYSTAL PALACE STUNNED Manchester City last Saturday (May 17) to win the FA Cup for the first time as Eberechi Eze sealed a 1-0 victory that piled on the misery for Pep Guardiola's troubled side.

Eze's early strike rocked City before Palace goalkeeper Dean Henderson saved Omar Marmoush's penalty late in the first half of a dramatic final at Wembley.

While Eze's clinical finish was the culmination of his remarkable rise from rejection by Arsenal, Fulham and Millwall as a youngster, it was Henderson who emerged as The Eagles' hero with a series of superb saves.

City will protest that Henderson should have been sent off for a first-half handball outside his penalty area.

But Henderson made the most of that controversial moment to ensure Palace clinched the first major trophy in their 120-year history and a place in next season's Europa League.

"To be honest I can't really believe it. I think when you play this game 10 times, you win it once, and this happened today," Palace boss Oliver Glasner said.

"The goal was the first time we were in their half and then we



Palace players celebrate. Photo: AFP

just defended with every single part of the body."

Beaten by Manchester United in their previous FA Cup final appearances in 1990 and 2016, Palace's shock win was no more than they deserved as City once again imploded in a dismal season that will be their first without major silverware since 2016-17.

"We did everything but if you're not going to score goals, you're not going to win," Guardiola said.

"We performed really well. Football is like this sometimes."

Eze delivered the knockout blow from Palace's first attack in the 16<sup>th</sup> minute as Glasner's men launched a brilliant break from their penalty area.

Jean-Philippe Mateta held up Chris Richards' long pass and laid it off to Daniel Munoz, who surged down the right flank

before crossing towards Eze, who guided a superb volley past Stefan Ortega from 12 yards.

City were furious when Henderson escaped a red card when VAR checked his handball, which appeared to take place outside the area, after the 'keeper rushed out to challenge Haaland.

VAR said it was "not an obvious goal-scoring opportunity" but it proved crucial as Henderson rescued Palace in the 35<sup>th</sup> minute.

Tyrick Mitchell conceded the penalty with a needless foul on Bernardo Silva as the City midfielder ran away from goal.

Instead of Haaland taking the spot-kick, it was Marmoush who stepped up after the Norway star gave him the ball in a disastrous move as Henderson plunged to his right to keep out the Egyptian's strike. AFP

## Kunlavut wins men's singles at Thai Open

### BADMINTON

THAILAND'S KUNLAVUT Vitidsarn stormed to victory over Anders Antonsen in the badminton men's singles final of the Thai Open last Sunday (May 18) to take his third title this year.

The reigning World and Asian Champion took an epic 92 minutes to dispatch the Dane 21-16, 17-21, 21-9.

It was only the second time in nine matches Kunlavut beat his formidable opponent, who is third in the World Rankings and 2024 China Masters winner.

In the women's singles, Chen Yu Fei of China saw off Thailand's top seed Pornpawee Chochuwong 21-16, 21-12.

The victory for the 2025 Asian Champion came off the back of a two-game semi-final where she knocked out Japan's Tomoka Miyazaki.

There was another two-game win in the women's doubles as Malaysia's Pearly Tan and Thinaah Muralitharan beat South Korea's Jeong



Kunlavut with the trophy. Photo: AFP

Na-eun and Lee Yeon-woo 21-16, 21-17.

Malaysia took an additional doubles win in the men's category as second seeds Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik beat William Kryger Boe and Christian Faust Kjaer of Denmark 20-22, 21-17, 21-12 in an hour.

It was the third World Tour title – their first ever Super 500 – for the pair after they won the Denmark Open in 2023 and the Korea Masters last year.

The mixed doubles final was an all-China affair as Feng Yan Zhe and Huang Dong Ping won two games to beat their compatriots Gao Jia Xuan and Wu Meng Ying 24-22, 21-16. AFP



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## PATTAYA FLOP



The Phuket Vagabonds team in Pattaya. Photo: Supplied

### RUGBY

Anthony van Sleeuwen

Always a popular event on the Asian Rugby calendar, the Chris Kays Memorial 10s Rugby tournament held on the weekend of May 3-4 at the Laem Chabang football stadium on the outskirts of Pattaya attracted a list of 14 highly competitive regional teams.

Never ones to be left out, the Phuket Vagabonds assembled a small but hardy squad of 11 players to attempt a tour upset for the ages. Unfortunately, it was not to be.

With the core of the extended Vagabonds player list attending the wedding of Club Co-President Guy Choobal (congratulations Guy!), it was left to a rag-tag selection of new faces, old veterans and specialist imports to

represent the Vagabonds on the pitch in Pattaya.

As always, the extended travel and allures of the bright lights had the Vagabonds off to a slow start on the Saturday morning for the first game against Surin. Their rapid pace and obvious cohesion had the boys from Surin off to a flying start as they scored within a few plays of the kick-off.

Whilst the Vagabonds rubbed their bloodshot eyes and managed to rally a stiffer opposition for the rest of the game, Surin sealed the match with a second try, whilst the boys from Phuket failed to score. Not the best start.

### SLICK HANDS

The second game against the French Asian Barbarians (FABS) was a much better showing. Inspired by their poor outing in the first game, the Vagabonds stormed into the next with bluster.

The tone of the game was set early with heavy contact and newfound energy.

The first points came by way of a pinpoint accurate 30 metre kick-pass from fly-half Jacob King in to the waiting arms of new flyer Sam Vincent, who went untouched to place it over the line. One of the best Vagabonds tries in recent memory.

Shortly after Sam Vincent found himself with a second after tackle busting centres Cillian O'Neill and Brendan O'Donoghue displayed slick hands from the back of a solid scrum from the enthusiastic forward pack, anchored by ageing vets Anthony van Sleeuwen, Paul Hickey and Sam Schofield.

Solid contact from welcome new addition Shane Buckley and covering defence from 'Mr Reliable' Glenn Beer had the FABS attention, and unfortu-

nately soon after they went on to equalise with two tries of their own. The game ended in a 12-12 draw.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The remainder of the afternoon did not go the Vagabonds' way as foggy heads failed to clear resulting in the team falling short against an extended squad of Chiang Mai All Stars and Bangkok Japanese. Despite recruiting a few subs for the last game, the small squad of Vagabonds could not keep up with the constant interchange of the larger teams and were run off their feet by the end of the day.

Despite their best intentions, the team succumbed to too many injuries by Sunday and were unable to field a team for the final day. Whilst all agreed it had been an epic tour, there is certainly unfinished business for 2026.

Special mentions must go to 'Mr Motivator' Brendan for making the trip from Malaysia, Vagabonds' favourite son Yu Kubota for coming in from Japan to deliver another classy performance and Luke Wysoczanski for producing a brilliant F&B performance having travelled from wherever he was in South America. Finally, a shout out to 'Mystery Mike', whoever you are – if you ever read this, thanks for helping out and hanging out buddy!

Despite the disappointing results, the Vagabonds are buoyed by the opportunity for redemption with the return of the Phuket International 11s, to be held once again at the Alan Cooke Ground (ACG) in Thalang on June 6-7.

If you would like to get involved with Phuket's only open men's rugby club, reach out to the Vagabonds at [rugby@phuketvagabonds.com](mailto:rugby@phuketvagabonds.com).

## Phuket International Rugby 11s confirm schedule change

### RUGBY

THE ORGANISERS OF THIS year's Phuket International Rugby 11s have confirmed that the schedule for the June 6-8 tournament is to be shortened due to various factors affecting team participation.

Due to some teams' unexpected scheduling issues, lack of players and the Thai Rugby Union rescheduling their elite 15s tournament to avoid clashing with the Southeast Asian (SEA) Games at the end of the year, some teams recently

cancelled their participation for this year's event at the Alan Cooke Ground (ACG) in Thalang.

Organisers stated this is unfortunate but understandable and, after much pondering, it has been decided that to maintain the atmosphere of the event the tournament will instead be condensed into two days this year, as opposed to three.

Following discussions with the veterans teams, who will be arriving early as usual, it has been decided to hold the vets tournament as scheduled on Friday, June 6, with the vets'

finals being played on the afternoon of the following day, Saturday, June 7, prior to the men's and women's open finals.

With only eight men's and four women's teams now competing, the Open tournament will be played out on the Saturday, with each team guaranteed a minimum of five games, including finals.

All games will be 12 minutes duration, except for the coffin dodgers over35s and the men's and women's open finals, which will each be two x 11 minutes, with a two minute break.

The organisers stated they

have no doubt it will still be a highly competitive and fun weekend, starting off on the Thursday night with the vets registration party at the Aussie Bar Phuket on Bangla Rd, Patong, which is also open to all teams and supporters and everyone is welcome.

The organisers also apologise for any inconvenience and any logistical headaches that this change may cause and any individual or team involved with the event. A revised schedule detailing all the changes will be released shortly, organisers confirmed.



Image: Supplied

For more information please visit the Phuket International Rugby 11s Facebook page.

The Phuket News