

TWO TOURISTS COLLAPSE, DIE AT EDC MUSIC FESTIVAL > PAGE 3

JAMMED



The normal view for motorists driving through Koh Kaew. Photo: Aomamm Charinkorn

POLICE LOOK TO USE AI TO EASE PHUKET TRAFFIC SNARLS

Natnaree Likidwatanasakun
reporter1@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket Traffic Police are hoping a plan to use AI technology will help ease traffic jams across the island by optimising traffic flow, at least until major road projects – many of which still have yet to get underway – are completed.

Phuket Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum was tasked with delivering an update on Phuket's traffic issues to Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra during her visit to Phuket earlier this month.

Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum

explained to the PM the heavy traffic situation in many areas across the island, and proposed introducing AI technology for traffic lights control to help ease the long tailbacks that have become the norm in Phuket.

An 'Adaptive Traffic Control System' (ATC) has already been rolled out in Bangkok, where the technology was deployed at 50 locations throughout the capital, for decades well known worldwide for its historic traffic jams.

The ATC adapts to real-time traffic patterns to optimise the traffic flow by changing the timing of traffic light changes in line with traffic demands. The system is dynamic, and constantly adjusting

to accommodate traffic. The new system was last week touted to have overall travel time along the ATC routes by 25%.

Maj Gen Sinlert told *The Phuket News* that PM Paetongtarn agreed 'in principle' to bringing the ATC system to Phuket.

The next step is for an official plan, and budget request, to be drafted, Maj Gen Sinlert said.

JAMMED

"The main issue is too many cars, too few roads, and a lack of coordinated infrastructure planning," said Phuket Provincial Police Deputy Commander Pol Col Phasakon Sonthikun.

Pol Col Phasakon's simple,

obvious yet finally admitted in public assessment comes as Phuket starts to return to "normal traffic jams" after a heavy New Year peak tourism peak period.

In one of the worst-affected areas on the island, in Bang Tao, Cherg Talay, a traffic congestion nightmare saw one resident take 1.5 hours to travel just three kilometres.

That was before the 'Electric Daisy Carnival (EDC) Thailand 2025' held over three days last weekend brought at least another 26,000 people to the area.

Cherg Talay Police deployed more than 250 officers to try to ease traffic congestion. Some officials praised their efforts,...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

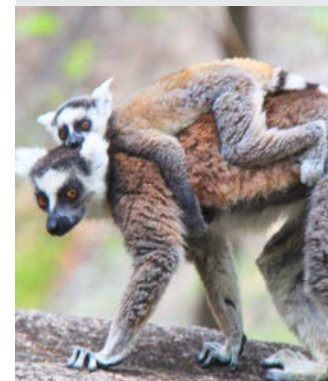
NEWS PAGE 3

Man arrested for sexual abuse of boys



LIFE PAGE 9

The magical natural wonders of Madagascar



SPORT PAGE 15

Season restart a stinker for PAFC after loss



HeadStart
International School, Phuket
Cherngtalay Campus

SECONDARY SCHOOL
Now enrolling 2-14 years old



076 510 623

headstartphuket.com

execeditor@classactmedia.co.th

News



Police nab
EDC drug
suspects > p4

'Splatter plan' to ease traffic jams

Continued from page 1

...yet days before the EDC Cherng Talay Police warned motorists to avoid specific roads leading to the music festival site, at Boat Avenue Lakefront – and warned tourists not attending the EDC to avoid the area altogether.

In Patong, residents complained to *The Phuket News* that at the height of the peak season it took them one hour to travel from one end of Patong to the other.

Meanwhile, dumbfounding traffic snarls have also become commonplace for local residents nowhere near tourist areas. Morning peak hour traffic northbound along the bypass road sees traffic backed up at least a kilometre each morning, and that is before the northbound motorists join the long tailback to the Koh Kaew Intersection, which immediately joins onto the traffic tailback heading towards the Heroines Monument.

Evening rush hour southbound along Chao Fa East Rd past Dowroong Wittaya School is jammed every week night, and long tailbacks are common at other major intersections, including the Khao Lan Intersection in Thalang, and as always at Chalong Circle in the south.

SPLATTER PLAN

Pol Col Phasakon noted that different areas were trying different tactics to try to alleviate traffic jams. "Police chiefs across various districts have been directed to enhance enforcement and trial new traffic management systems," he said.

"The first phase focuses on clearing Route 402 (Thepkasattri



The long tailback of traffic that has become normal in Cherng Talay. Photo: Courtesy of Phuket OK

Rd), which faces significant congestion from Bang Khu to Thalang. Traffic along Route 402 typically peaks between 4pm and 8pm.

"New U-turn points modeled on the system near Thai Watsadu are set to improve traffic flow, reducing reliance on traffic lights. We plan to create five new U-turns... But even with traffic lights at Koh Kaew and Khao Lan intersections turned off, public concerns about U-turn safety necessitate additional measures," he explained.

"In addition to immediate fixes like closing unnecessary traffic lights and introducing U-turn cones, future plans include one-way systems and road network expansion," he added.

Pol Col Phasakon specifically urged Cherng Talay Municipality to speed up road construction projects, stressing the need for "prompt cooperation".

"Cherng Talay's ongoing road construction on Soi 14 and 16 has added to congestion," Pol Col Phasakon said.

"Even when people take a different route to avoid the area, they just add to the traffic in

Patong and Kamala, and spill over to the bypass road and create jams extending as far as Siam Niramit," he added.

Cherng Talay Tambon Administration Organisation (OrBorTor) Chief Manoch Phanchalad said that his office had a "critical long-term plan" to build a road from Laguna to Cherng Talay Soi 14.

"We have set a budget of B64 million to expand the road surface, but it has to be done on a drainage canal, which requires permission from the relevant agencies, with which we are currently coordinating. We intend to expand the road surface in March to allow some more cars to pass through," Mr Manoch explained.

"Another route that is expected to be expanded is the route in front of the OrBorTor offices to Wat Cherng Talay, but it is still under consideration because it is private land," he added.

Looking at other areas, Pol Col Phasakon revealed that plans were afoot to make Soi Sunrise one way from Chalong Circle to Chalong Pier. "We will make it one-way, allowing vehicles to go

straight in without exiting the same way, as there are other available exits," he said.

"Also, turning off traffic lights, particularly along Chao Fa East and West Roads, could significantly ease congestion," he added.

A long-term strategy was to reduce the number of vehicles on the road during peak hours by having more buses providing transport for school kids and older students.

"The Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation [PPAO] EV buses, for instance, are under consideration for route adjustments that accommodate students, potentially reducing private vehicle usage," Pol Col Phasakon said.

"I have suggested that PPAO consider changing the EV bus routes to better suit residents' needs," he added.

PATONG CAN WAIT

"Patong remains a significant challenge," Pol Col Phasakon admitted. "Traffic from Karon, Kamala and Kathu adds to the congestion on the already narrow roads.

"The intersection near Soi Bangla often becomes choked because of many people walking on the street. Patong Municipality proposed to install barriers at crosswalks, but locals were opposed to the idea," he said.

"As a result, plans to address Patong's traffic problems have been postponed to later phases," Pol Col Phasakon said.

MORE COMING

The traffic jams that have become part of life in Phuket are not

expected to ease as the government upgraded its tourism target from 39mn foreign arrivals in 2024 to 40mn in 2025 – meaning more tourists coming to Phuket.

Heading into the New Year break, Lertchai Wangtrakuldee, Director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Phuket office, said the island was expecting more than 230,000 visitors over just four days, from Dec 28 to Jan 1, generating an expected B8 billion for the local economy.

Mr Lertchai said this year's income is expected to increase by 30%, rising from B388bn to B450bn, all from increased arrival numbers.

Even for the end of this month, Pattaraanong Na Chiangmai, TAT deputy governor for international marketing in Asia and South Pacific, said that Chinese tourists coming to Thailand might see a jump of at least 10% year-on-year during the Chinese New Year in the final week of January.

TAKE ACTION

Pol Col Phasakon also recognised the traffic congestion caused by people parking illegally alongside roads.

"If you see a taxi or car parked in the middle of the road or not following the rules, please notify the Traffic Police. We will respond immediately and enforce the rules strictly," he said.

He urged cooperation among local residents and tourists in complying strictly with traffic rules. "Along with public input, this is key to solving Phuket's traffic problems," he added.

Fatal parasail plunge spurs meeting

AUTHORITIES IN Karon are ramping up safety measures for water sports operators following a parasailing staff member falling to his death earlier this month.

A high-level meeting was held at the Karon Municipality on Jan 14, led by Karon Police Chief Pol Col Khundet Na Nongkhai and Phuket Marine Office Chief Natchapong Pranit.

Also in attendance were Pol Lt Col Ekkachai Siri, a Senior Inspector of the Tourist Police Division, and Karon Municipality Chief Administrative Officer (Palad) Sakchai Supaburur,

alongside parasail, jet-ski and other water activity operators from the Karon and Kata areas.

The meeting focused on implementing stricter safety protocols for activities such as parasailing, jet-skiing and other water sports to ensure the safety of tourists and service providers, said an official report of the meeting.

Following the death of parasail staffer Pathompong Sukduang at Karon Beach on Jan 5, authorities have mandated that all parasail staff wear appropriate protective gear while in operation, said the report.

Phuket Marine Chief Mr Natchapong has already clarified to *The Phuket News* that all parasail staffers accompanying tourists on parasail rides must wear a harness and be clipped on for safety.

The safety requirement was already standard procedure for parasail operators for years, Mr Natchapong said.

However, the now-deceased Mr Pathompong was not wearing a harness and was not clipped on to prevent him from falling. Hence, when he lost his grip on the parasail ropes, he fell some 200 feet (about 60

metres) to his death.

Boat operators are also required to adhere strictly to safety regulations, with violations subject to legal action, the official report of the meeting noted.

Police are investigating the fatal parasailing incident and are collecting evidence to determine accountability. Operators found neglecting safety requirements will face prosecution under the law, the report added.

Authorities emphasised the importance of professionalism and safety in Phuket's water sports sector, underscoring its critical role in maintaining the area's



Photo: PR Phuket

reputation as a world-class tourist destination, the report also noted.

Hence the meeting last week also discussed appropriate behaviour by beach operators when confronted by tourists, particularly in incidents involving jet-ski operations.

Operators at the meeting were advised to resolve conflicts amicably and document incidents with video or photographic

evidence before notifying law enforcement.

Use of force or threats against tourists will result in immediate legal consequences, the operators were warned.

The strengthened measures are expected to provide better protection for both staff and tourists while reducing risks associated with water sports activities, the official report concluded. *The Phuket News*

Serial paedophile in custody

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The special operations unit of the Department of Provincial Administration (DOPA), in collaboration with the Phuket Provincial Administration Unit and local police, have executed a warrant from the Phuket Provincial Court to arrest a 43-year-old man accused of sexually abusing a 15-year-old boy.

The suspect, who filmed the assault and shared the footage within a private online group, was arrested while leaving his house in Phuket Town at 7am on Jan 16.

At a press conference held at Phuket Provincial Hall later that day, Phuket Vice Governor Ronnarong Tipsiri detailed the case alongside other officials, including Isra Charoenchasri, Director of the Volunteer Defense Corps Office, and Sakchai Rojanarat, Director of the Law Enforcement Operations Center.

Together, the trio revealed that the investigation began following a complaint submitted through the NGO 'For Freedom International', reporting the suspect's predatory behaviour.

The suspect, employed at a local hotel, reportedly engaged in a pattern of grooming and luring minors. He targeted a 15-year-old



Photo: Supplied

male student, persuading him to engage in sexual acts without protection.

Disturbingly, the suspect claimed to have taken medication to prevent sexually transmitted diseases, misleading the victim into believing the encounters posed no health risks. While the suspect also filmed the interactions and shared the videos in closed online communities catering to individuals with similar interests, he also posted at least one video on X (formerly Twitter).

The operation, initiated by DOPA's special operations unit under the directive of Chaiwat Junthiraphong, Director-General of the Department, involved a coordinated effort by administrat-

ive officers, law enforcement and social services.

When the team executed the arrest warrant at the suspect's home in Phuket Town on Jan 16, the man was intercepted while leaving for work and subsequently detained after being informed of the charges against him.

A search of the suspect's residence uncovered a trove of evidence, including mobile phones, condoms, lubricants and other items linked to the recorded assaults. Forensic officers are currently analyzing these items to corroborate the case.

Preliminary investigations revealed over 1,400 video clips involving young male victims on the suspect's devices, implicating

him in a series of abuses across multiple provinces. Many victims were identified as teenagers, lured during running events that the suspect frequently attended.

Authorities have initially charged the suspect with three offenses: possession of child pornography for sexual exploitation (under Section 287/1 of the Criminal Code); abduction of a minor aged 15 to 18 for profit or indecency, even with the minor's consent (Section 391 of the Criminal Code); and uploading obscene content to a computer system (Section 14(4) of the Computer Crime Act B.E. 2550).

If further evidence emerges showing the suspect profited from distributing the videos, additional charges of human trafficking may be pursued, Vice Governor Ronnarong said.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, Anutin Charnvirakul, underscored the government's commitment to safeguarding social order and protecting vulnerable groups from exploitation, Mr Ronnarong continued.

He emphasised that the possession of child pornography is unequivocally illegal and facilitates the abuse of minors. "The Ministry of Interior is resolute in its mission to create a

safe and peaceful society free from vices. Any threats to this mission will be addressed using all available state mechanisms," said Mr Ronnarong.

The case has highlighted the importance of vigilance in protecting children from predators. Parents, guardians, and the broader community are urged to remain alert and report any suspicious behaviour, said an official report of the arrest.

"Children are among the most vulnerable members of society, making them at high risk of being deceived or exploited in criminal activities. It is everyone's responsibility to help protect them and ensure their safety.

"Possessing child pornography is illegal under the law, regardless of its source, as the law aims to prevent the exploitation and abuse of children. Such materials perpetuate harm and encourage further abuse," Vice Governor Ronnarong noted.

"The public plays a crucial role in safeguarding vulnerable groups by staying vigilant and reporting suspicious activities. Citizens are encouraged to report any concerns related to child exploitation to the Damrongtham Center hotline at 1567. Together, we can create a safer and more secure society for all," he added.

Two tourists die at music fest

AN AMERICAN TOURIST AND A Canadian man died at the Electric Daisy Carnival (EDC) Thailand 2025 last weekend after collapsing unconscious at the music festival.

Thalang Police Chief Pol Lt Kraisorn Boonprasop was informed of the death of the American man at 00:44am last Sunday (Jan 19).

Police identified the deceased as Minh Nguyen Quang Phan, a 32-year-old American national found carrying an Iowa driver's licence.

Mr Phan had been attending the popular electronic music festival at Boat Avenue Lakefront in Cherg Talay. Witnesses reported that he suddenly went into shock and lost consciousness during the event.

On-site medical staff provided immediate care and rushed him to Thalang Hospital at 11:35pm. Despite doctors' efforts to revive him, Mr Phan was pronounced dead at 12:30am.

An initial examination of Mr Phan's body revealed no signs of physical assault, police noted.

However, the exact cause of death remained undetermined.

Investigators and medical examiners have conducted preliminary tests, including alcohol and drug screenings, and have sent the body to Vachira Phuket Hospital for a more detailed post-mortem examination, police reported.

The death of Mr Phan followed Thalang Police being informed by Thalang Hospital at 9:30pm last Saturday night (Jan 18) of the death of a 28-year-old Canadian man who had also attended the EDC.



Photo: EDC

Upon inspection, the man, identified by his Canadian passport and Ontario driver's licence as Sharfaraz Maqbul Ahmed, showed no signs of physical assault, police noted in their report.

Initial investigations revealed that Mr Ahmed had been staying at a hotel in Patong for about two days. On the day of the incident, he attended the Electric Daisy Carnival Thailand 2025 music festival at Boat Avenue Lakefront.

During the event, he lost consciousness. Medical staff at the venue provided immediate care and transported him to Thalang Hospital at 8:50pm.

Doctors attempted to resuscitate him but were unsuccessful. He was pronounced dead at 9:26pm.

Doctors at Thalang Hospital conducted an initial examination but were unable to determine the exact cause of death. Further testing, including alcohol and drug screenings, has been requested, Thalang Police said in their report.

The body has been handed over to the forensic department at Vachira Phuket Hospital for a more detailed post-mortem examination, police noted.

Eakkapop Thongtub

SAii Spa: Laguna Phuket's Newest Wellness Oasis

Be the first to experience unparalleled relaxation as you embark on a journey of self-care, restoring your sense of connection and rejuvenating every aspect of your life, so you can truly Live Well.

Join us at SAii Spa to explore signature treatments designed to revive your body and soul.

SAii SIGNATURE TOUCH

90 Mins | THB 4,600++

120 Mins | THB 5,400++

At SAii Spa, SAii Laguna Phuket
10.00 am - 10.00 pm

For more information or reservations, get in touch:

+66 (0) 76 360 600 | spa.laguna@saiiresorts.com

Price is subject to 10% service charge and 7% government tax.

SAii Phuket LAGUNA

The Phuket News

CONTACT US

editor@classactmedia.co.th 076 612 550

PURIYA BEAVAN
Editor**CHRIS HUSTED**
Executive Editor
084 307 7408
executive@classactmedia.co.th**BEN TIREBUCK**
News / Sport Editor
061 806 8132
editor3@classactmedia.co.th**CHUTHARAT 'UM' PLERIN**
Thai Editor
088 296 1815
thai@classactmedia.co.th**NATNAREE 'MILD' LIKIDWANASAKUN**
Reporter / Translator
082 295 3244
reporter1@classactmedia.co.th**JASON BEAVAN**
General Manager
086 479 7471
gm@classactmedia.co.th**SIRIPORN (NOK) SEANGMAS**
Sales Support
086 479 7470
sales@classactmedia.co.th**NIRAVIT 'MOS' VORAVANITCHA**
Graphic designerf The Phuket News
@thephuketnews

ADVERTISING

ClassAct Media

The Phuket News

WINDOW ON PHUKET

Where to eat in PHUKET

Новости Phuket

ข่าวภูเก็ต

NEWS TV

LIVE 89.5

Phuket TICKETMASTER

076 612 550 ext. 605

Fax: 076 612 553

info@classactmedia.co.th

thephuketnews.com

99/7 Moo 1 (Billion Plaza),
T. Kathu, A. Kathu, Phuket 83120

PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

www.foreca.com

FRI JANUARY 24

High: +36°
Low: +29°

Wind 11 m/s

SAT JANUARY 25

High: +36°
Low: +28°

Wind 11 m/s

SUN JANUARY 26

High: +35°
Low: +28°

Wind 11 m/s

MON JANUARY 27

High: +35°
Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

TUE JANUARY 28

High: +35°
Low: +28°

Wind 4 m/s

WED JANUARY 29

High: +37°
Low: +28°

Wind 4 m/s

THU JANUARY 30

High: +36°
Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

EDC brings drug arrests

Eakkapop Thongtub
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Officers from Karon and Patong Police Stations working together arrested two Canadian nationals found with a haul of illegal rugs after a high-speed police chase that started in Patong and damaged several vehicles before the men were apprehended in Karon last Sunday (Jan 19).

The incident began at 4:45pm when Patong Police Station received a report of an altercation in front of the Patong Condo Hotel.

As officers arrived, the men fled the scene in a black Ford pickup, heading toward Karon. During the escape, the pickup truck struck multiple vehicles, causing significant damage.

Patong Police initiated a pursuit, coordinating with Karon Police Station to intercept the fleeing vehicle.

At approximately 5:10pm, officers from Karon Police successfully intercepted the pickup near the Big C outlet near Wat Karon on Patak Rd.

The driver was identified as Tehran-born Canadian



Photo: Karon Police

national Samuel Lee Jackson, 34 (his name confirmed by his passport), accompanied by another Canadian, Jared Liam Wong, from Vancouver, also 34.

During questioning, Jackson claimed he had fled the scene of the altercation in Patong after being injured in the fight and was attempting to reach a hospital.

Authorities took Jackson to Patong Hospital for treatment and placed Wong into police custody for further investigation.

However, upon searching the vehicle and Wong's possessions, police discovered a significant quantity of illegal substances, including 100 grammes of narcotics (a mix of methamphetamine

and cocaine), 88 cocaine capsules, six lorazepam pills, 50 alprazolam pills, drug paraphernalia and other illicit substances.

Police believe the suspects were attempting to distribute drugs to foreign tourists attending the EDC Thailand event held last weekend at Boat Avenue Lakefront in Cherng Talay.

Phuket Provincial Police Commander Pol Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum ordered an extensive investigation to trace the suspects network and uncover further connections.

MORE ARRESTS

Meanwhile, Cherng Talay Police have confirmed the arrests of three foreign tourists for drug possession and use during the EDC Thailand 2025 music

festival last weekend.

The three arrested suspects, all men, were named as:

Shoei Wakabayashi, a 52-year-old Japanese national, charged with possession of Category 2 narcotics (cocaine) without permission.

Naing Myo Khant, a 33-year-old Myanmar national, charged with using Category 1 narcotics (methamphetamine) without permission.

Ahmad Afif Zayani Bin Ahmad Zubir, a 29-year-old Malaysian national, charged with possession of Category 1 narcotics (ecstasy) and Category 2 narcotics (cocaine) without permission and using Category 1 narcotics (methamphetamine) without permission.

The drug arrests followed strict inspections carried out at the festival after the deaths of an American man and a Canadian man, who both collapsed unconscious during the festival. Both were rushed to hospital, but efforts to revive them were unsuccessful (see page 3).

Police also investigated four individuals found

selling cannabis during the event. Their personal histories have been recorded, and further legal action will be taken against them, Cherng Talay Police reported.

OFF THE WRIST

A 32-year-old British tourist reported to Cherng Talay Police on Monday (Jan 20) that his Rolex Blue Dial Sky-dweller watch, valued at about US\$18,000 (about B625,000), went missing at the EDC event over the weekend.

The man reported the watch missing to Pol Lt Col Khajornkiat Khamwichairat, Deputy Chief of Investigation at Cherng Talay Police.

The man said he lost the watch at around 11:30pm the previous night (Sunday, Jan 19).

He filed a formal complaint requesting an investigation into the incident. Police have since escorted him to liaise with the event organisers to review CCTV footage and assist in locating the missing item.

The investigation is ongoing.

Shots fired over truck blocking alley

POLICE ARE SEARCHING for a man wanted for firing his handgun into the air in a fit of anger after a truck blocked his car from passing down a small street in Ratsada last week.

Police were called to the scene, Soi 10/7 in Moo 3, Ratsada, at 9:30pm on Jan 16.

Officers were told that a middle-aged man had fired several shots into the sky, causing panic among local residents.

According to police, the incident began when Phanuwat Kongniam, 39, became frustrated after a six-wheeled truck blocked the alley, preventing him from driving his car through.

Once the truck moved, Mr Phanuwat fired multiple shots into the air in a display of anger.

Witnesses reported that after the gunfire, he drove to a



Photo: Phuket City Police

friend's house in the alley. However, Mr Phanuwat fled the scene in a white sedan before authorities arrived.

Police officers conducted an initial investigation at the scene, recovering seven .45-calibre bullet casings as evidence.

Officers also reviewed CCTV footage from the surrounding area to track Mr Phanuwat's escape route and locate him for further investigation.

Police assured the public that they are actively pursuing the suspect and will take appropriate legal action. *Eakkapop Thongtub*

Koh Kaew bar shooter still behind bars, say police

PHUKET PROVINCIAL POLICE Commander Pol Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum has confirmed to *The Phuket News* that the man who shot a 44-year-old woman point blank in the face, killing her instantly, at a popular bar in Koh Kaew last month remains behind bars.

The question of whether the suspect, 27-year-old Natchipong Laokham, was at large after he surrendered to police was raised by concerned local residents, fearing that he might return to the bar to inflict further harm.

Phuket Provincial Police have charged Natchipong with multiple offenses, including murder, illegal possession of a firearm, carrying a weapon in public without just cause, and discharging a firearm in a public area without justification, Maj Gen Sinlert explained.

A clerk at Phuket Provincial Court, who asked not to be named, told *The Phuket News* that

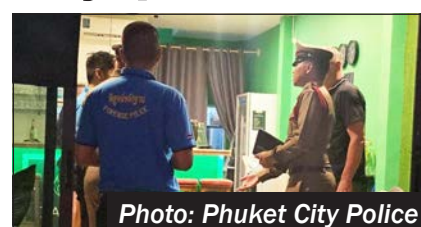


Photo: Phuket City Police

Natchipong is still being held in the detention cells at the court.

He is very unlikely to be granted bail before his trial, Maj Gen Sinlert said. "In cases of severe and intentional killings like this, we never allow bail," he stated.

The Phuket Provincial Prosecutor's Office confirmed that they are still preparing the case against Natchipong.

Police submitted the case file to the Prosecutor's Office only on Jan 14, a clerk at the Prosecutor's Office told *The Phuket News*.

A date for Natchipong's trial has yet to be set, the clerk confirmed.

Natnaree Likidwanasakun

Dugongs yet to find Phuket safe

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Despite sincere efforts by the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR) to protect dugongs that have recently migrated to Phuket waters, the area has yet to prove to be a safe haven for the gentle marine herbivores – especially due to human activities.

A young female dugong was found dead in waters off Koh Maphrao, off Phuket's east coast, on Jan 16 after the marine mammal was found stuck in an aquaculture pen. Many local residents in the area depend on the sea pens for cultivating marine life for Phuket's seafood industry.

A week earlier, on Jan 8, the team from the DMCR's Andaman Sea Marine and Coastal Resources Research Center announced the autopsy results of a juvenile dugong found stranded near Naka Yai Island, also off Phuket's east coast.

The juvenile dugong measured 200cm in length and weighed 142kg. Although the carcass had begun to decompose, it was found to be in relatively good condition.

However, the left end of the tail was missing, showing sharp-edged damage. The autopsy revealed significant internal



Photo: DMCR

injuries. The muscles on the left side of the body were bruised, and ribs 12-18 on the left side were broken.

The wings of the first to third lumbar vertebrae were fractured, and the chest and abdominal walls were torn, causing severe damage to the lungs, intestines, and kidneys, along with internal bleeding.

In the digestive tract, seagrass was found in the mouth, and the stomach was tightly packed with seagrass. Food was present throughout the small and large intestines, indicating normal feeding behaviour before death.

The presumed cause of death was sudden shock from extensive blood loss caused by severe injuries. The injuries were believed to have resulted from a high-impact collision with a boat or jet ski, marine biologists said.

COMMUNITY INPUT

The DMCR convened a special meeting at Tha La Beach in Pa Khlok last week to discuss measures to protect dugongs and seagrass habitats in Phuket.

The event brought together experts and officials from various agencies, including DMCR marine and coastal ecosystem specialist Kongkiat Kittiwattana-wong along with Natthakrit Phonphet, Director of the Environment Division of the Phuket Natural Resources and Environment office, and Nares Chuaphung, Director of the Phuket Marine Resources Conservation Center.

Discussions centered on strategies to safeguard dugongs and manage seagrass ecosystems in the region.

Proposed measures included regulating fishing activities,

reducing watercraft speeds, controlling marine recreational activities, and implementing strict pollution controls.

"Protecting dugongs and their habitats is crucial for preserving marine biodiversity and ensuring ecological balance," said Mr Kongkiat. "The measures discussed today will pave the way for tangible and effective conservation outcomes."

The meeting represented a concerted effort to sustain dugong populations and safeguard the marine ecosystem in Phuket. Officials hope the initiatives will lead to lasting conservation success and ensure the survival of the iconic marine animals for future generations, said an official report of the meeting.

Dugongs, classified as rare marine animals under the Wildlife Conservation and Protection Act B.E. 2562, play a critical role in maintaining marine ecosystems. They depend on seagrass as their primary food source.

Last year, during a spate of dugong deaths along the Andaman coast and following the degradation of seagrass habitats in Trang Province, at least 30 dugongs migrated to coastal areas in Phuket.

In November, Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat set up

a working group to take care of the newly arrived dugongs, which are now often seen in the waters off Rawai Pier, in Ao Tang Khen off the east coast of Cape Panwa, and in Ao Pa Khlok off Phuket's east coast. Dugongs have also been spotted in the Pak Phra Canal, separating Phuket from the mainland.

Special dugong protection areas were announced, with the governor ordering strict enforcement of regulations regarding marine activities and calling for cooperation from all sectors to adhere to conservation measures.

"Quite a lot have died, especially this year [2024], 33 of them. Therefore, it is necessary to work together to expedite the protection of the dugong herd and to have appropriate food for them, especially the seagrass problem," Governor Sophon said at the time.

The DMCR team from the Andaman Sea Marine and Coastal Resources Research Center tasked with observing dugongs in Phuket on Jan 14 confirmed sightings of 13 dugongs and three sea turtles in Ao Tang Khen, one dugong was found near the Sarasin Bridge, no dugongs were found in Rawai and the survey in Ao Pa Khlok was suspended due to bad weather.

Phuket Town readies for Chinese New Year

PHUKET CITY MUNICIPALITY has kicked off its annual community cleaning initiative, 'Sweep the House to Welcome Chinese New Year'.

The opening ceremony, held at Saphan Hin last Friday (Jan 17), was presided over by Phuket Town Deputy Mayor Ornpilai Trakulpariphan.

The event was attended by Wuttichai Bamrungrat, of the Phuket branch of the Department of Local Administration, joined by Phuket City Municipality council members and representatives from other government offices on the island.

The long-standing tradition encourages Phuket Town residents, particularly those of Thai-Chinese descent, to clean their homes and dispose of unwanted items, such as damaged furniture and household goods.

Residents are invited to leave these items – excluding food waste and tree branches – in front of their houses for free collection.



Photo: Phuket City Municipality

Municipality officers will collect the discarded items between 9am and 7pm, following pre-announced routes and schedules, until Monday (Jan 27).

Residents are also urged to tidy up public areas in front of their homes to contribute to the cleanliness and beauty of their neighbourhoods for the upcoming festival.

"The initiative aligns with the spirit of renewal and preparation for the Chinese New Year,

fostering a cleaner and more vibrant community in Phuket Town," Deputy Mayor Ornpilai said.

Chinese New Year this year will be celebrated around the world from Jan 29, marking the beginning of the Year of the Snake.

This festival is celebrated for 15 days. The Snake is the sixth animal in the 12-year cycle of the Chinese zodiac and is associated with wisdom, intuition and strategic growth.

The Phuket News

Indulge yourself where legends go to drink, dine & party!

F1 drivers & models, incl Kate Moss, celebrated in style. Beyoncé rolled up in a black hummer. Vladimir Putin booked the entire Club!

Chef, David Hands, ensures your taste buds join the party.



Cocktail Bar



Chef David Hands



Contemporary Steakhouse



Live Jazz Mondays

THE
SIAM
SUPPER
CLUB

The SIAM SUPPER CLUB

RESERVATION: 061 527 7060
LUNCH & DINNER, 1pm – 12 midnight
Grab Delivery | Catering & Private Events
36-40 LAGOON ROAD, CHERNG TALAY



Government bets on casinos

Bangkok Post

The Cabinet has approved in principle a bill paving the way for setting up entertainment complexes and allowing casinos to operate legally within them.

Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra said the Entertainment Complex Bill, proposed by the Finance Ministry, would promote tourism and investments in accordance with the government's policy while tackling widespread illegal gambling.

She insisted the Council of State (CoS), the government's legal advisory body, did not oppose the bill but had suggested some revisions to reflect the government's policy on tourism.

Ms Paetongtarn said the bill would not require further examination from the CoS and would be forwarded to parliament for consideration.

The prime minister said the government would do its best to push for the bill's passage before the end of this year, noting that Singapore's tourism was bolstered following the setting up of casino complexes.

Asked about links between casino operations and organised crime, she said that with effective enforcement, legalising gambling



Thaksin Shinawatra speaks to supporters in Maha Sarakham on Monday (Jan 20). Photo: Pheu Thai Party

would help solve the problem while also putting more revenue into state coffers.

"If we can ensure transparency, it will benefit the country. This issue is relatively new here, so we need to explain it clearly. Ministries concerned will address the details to ensure everyone gets the whole picture," she said.

Deputy Finance Minister Julapun Amornvivat said the bill, which outlined a framework for integrated facilities, including malls, hotels, sports arenas and theme parks, was in line with the government policy to create man-made tourism destinations.

Such models have been successful worldwide, with casino-entertainment complexes expected to boost foreign tourist numbers by 5-10%, encourage off-season spending by at least

13% and create between 9,000 and 15,000 jobs, he said.

They would generate revenue of B12-40 billion for the state with most of the income deriving from hotels and other businesses within the complexes, not from casino operations, he noted.

Mr Julapun said the CoS would review the bill to make sure it reflects government policy over the next two months before introducing it to parliament.

Pakorn Nilprapunt, secretary-general of the CoS, said the agency did not oppose the bill.

However, he pointed out that its contents were based on a House committee briefed to report on casino-entertainment complexes, which might be too limited for the government's policy objectives.

According to Mr Pakorn, the

CoS therefore suggested revisions to align the bill with broader government objectives and also pointed out that the casino-entertainment projects were not intended to directly resolve illegal gambling as that is regulated under another law.

The National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) also made some observations about the bill.

According to the NESDC, gambling revenue is not considered as adding value to the economy because it does not contribute to production. As a result, economic benefits of casino operations may fall short of expectations.

A network of anti-gambling advocacy groups issued a statement urging the government to weigh the impacts on children and families before pushing ahead.

Last month, the Stop Gambling Foundation criticised the details of the bill as "diverging significantly" from the initial Singapore model.

According to the foundation, the bill allowed for significant downgrades of entertainment complex features promised earlier, such as luxury hotels and shopping malls, with the focus shifted almost entirely to casinos.

THAKSIN'S TAKE

Former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra defended the government's entertainment complex bill, pointing out the contentious matter of a casino represents only 10% of each site.

Meanwhile, while a Democrat Party member is accusing the Pheu Thai-led administration of seeking to establish a "sin economy".

Addressing the public and media in Nakhon Phanom last Saturday (Jan 18), Thaksin responded to criticisms of the bill presented to parliament, saying the minority voices against the draft law have mostly shown a misunderstanding of its language and intent.

Contending that most respondents to surveys about the complex were supportive, the former business tycoon acknowledged that most opponents are concerned that the establishment of a casino on Thai soil would allow money laundering and other illegal activity.

The father of Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra conceded that the lack of understanding of the bill's purpose was the fault of lawmakers attempting to explain it to the public, noting that only 10% of the proposed project would be for a casino.

TAT banking on same-sex marriages to boost figures

WITH SAME-SEX MARRIAGES available in Thailand starting this week as the Marriage Equality Act came into effect, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is banking on the trend, holding trade meetings with businesses targeting couples who seek wedding ceremonies in Thailand.

Siripakorn Cheawsamoot, TAT's deputy governor for Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas, said the agency will roll out marketing activities for couples and LGBTQIA+ people next month to help the private sector capture growing demand from this segment, reports the Bangkok Post.

In 2024, he said the long-haul market reached a new high of 9.79 million arrivals, exceeding the pre-pandemic years. To maintain this momentum and reach its goal of 10.6mn arrivals this year, the TAT has to strengthen potential segments such as couples and LGBTQ+ people, said Mr Siripakorn.

According to the TAT, the LGBTQIA+ segment is a key target for Thai tourism as they spend 40% higher on average than other tourists.

He said tourism trade meetings are scheduled for Feb 11 and Feb 21 in Bangkok, paving the way for at least 70 tourism operators in Thailand to meet agents from the US, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, the Middle East, Europe, Asia and Australia.

The first meeting on Feb 11 focuses on the LGBTQIA+ segment, and all 20 invited



A couple join the celebration of the new Marriage Equality Bill at Government House. Photo: Chananat Katanyu / Bangkok Post

agencies are market specialists in Western countries. Mr Siripakorn said the available slots for this meeting were quickly booked by 20 Thai hotels within two minutes as local businesses are more enthusiastic about tapping this segment, thanks to the new law.

The second meeting targeting couples has 70 slots available for Thai sellers, but 150 hotels, destination management companies and wedding planners are interested in joining the event, he said.

"More hotels and wedding planners in Thailand have received inquiries from LGBTQIA+ couples who are interested in holding wedding ceremonies after the bill was approved," said Mr Siripakorn.

In addition to trade meetings, agents also plan to inspect tourism products in Bangkok, Pattaya, Chiang Mai, Koh Samui and Krabi in February.

Four airports are cooperating with the TAT by holding promotional events for 'Amazing Thailand Romance Month', offering pre-registration and a lucky draw on arrival. Bangkok Post

Lile-it™

PHUKET'S QUALITY TILE BOUTIQUE

@tileitthailand
 @tileitthailand
 @tileit

www.tile-asia.com | letstalk@tile-asia.com | Tel: 076 620168
 177/35 Baan Wana, Sri Sunthorn Rd., Chong Talay, Thalang, Phuket.

Calls to reduce visa-free rule for Chinese tourists

BANGKOK

Bangkok Post

The Senate has called on the government to revise its visa-free policy for Chinese nationals, citing risks of Thailand becoming a hub for criminal activities.

Senator Pol Lt Gen Wanchai Ekpornpichit raised the concern during a Senate meeting chaired by Senate Speaker Mongkol Surasajja on Monday (Jan 20).

The senator addressed how the policy, originally intended to boost tourism which at present provides a 60-day stay in Thailand for Chinese nationals, has been exploited by criminal groups, highlighting cases of Chinese crime syndicates using Thailand as a base for illegal operations.

Pol Lt Gen Wanchai proposed a thorough review of the visa-free policy, particularly for tourists from China and other countries linked to transnational



Chinese tourists visit the Grand Palace in Bangkok. Photo: Bangkok Post

crime, to close immigration loopholes.

He expressed fears that Thailand's location and policies make it attractive for such activities, especially as nearby countries like China, Myanmar and Cambodia crack down on organised crime.

Pol Lt Gen Wanchai also noted that some travellers exploit natural border crossings to enter the country illegally, bypassing immigration checks.

He suggested replacing the visa-free policy with visa-on-arrival (VoA) requirements, which would mandate travellers to provide proof of hotel bookings and travel plans.

In response, Deputy Defence Minister Gen Nattaphon Narkphanit acknowledged the concern but clarified that visa-free travel primarily serves as an economic strategy.

He assured the Senate that the government is working to mitigate risks, including tighter border controls and working together with neighbouring countries.

He also alleged that some Thai government officials have conspired with criminals, making the problem more difficult. However, he said his ministry is cooperating with authorities in neighbouring countries to combat the issue.

The call to slash the visa-free length of stay for Chinese tourists is echoed by the Tourism Council of Thailand (TCT) who have asked the government to act in order to address concerns over illegal employment, transnational crimes and scams.

Thapanee Kiatphaibool, governor of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), said on Monday that the case of Chinese actor Wang Xing, who was lured by scammers to Myanmar via the Thai border, had led local tourism operators to become more concerned about foreign scammers who have been exploiting the visa-free scheme.

She said the private sector wanted the government to reduce the length of stay from 60 days to 15 days, which is more suitable for the actual average length of stay for the Chinese market. The Tourism Ministry is targeting 9 million Chinese tourists this year, out of 39mn to 40mn foreign tourists in total.

Obesity among Thai kids the third worst in ASEAN

BANGKOK

THAILAND RANKS third worst among the 10 members of ASEAN in terms of child obesity after Malaysia and Brunei, a new study has revealed.

Yanee Ratborirak, acting director of ThaiHealth's Office of Media System Promotion and Intellectual Health, said the study revealed 9.13% of Thai children aged up to the age of five years, 13.4% of those in the 6-14 bracket and 13.2% of teens aged 15-18 were obese or nearly obese.

The primary causes were poor dietary habits and insufficient physical activity.

The data also showed that 84.1% of children aged 6-14 often consume salty snacks, averaging 1.35 packs per day. The comparable rate for younger children aged 1-5 was 76.5%, consuming an average of 1.23 packs per day.

To raise awareness of this, ThaiHealth recently joined forces with the Public Health Ministry, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration and several



Photo: Bangkok Post

health advocacy networks to host an event titled "Don't Let Children Become Obese".

The event featured presentations of creative initiatives designed to promote healthier eating habits in young people, emphasising the importance of reducing sweet, fatty and salty foods while increasing vegetable and fruit consumption.

Ms Yanee explained that the project aimed to promote a cultural shift toward healthier nutritional and exercise behaviours through the design of creative media and prototype innovations, while emphasising participation from school administrators, teachers, communities, families and student leaders.

The World Obesity Federation predicts that by 2030, 50% of children globally will be obese.

Bangkok Post

Thaksin's million homes vow for low-income Thais

BANGKOK

FORMER PRIME MINISTER AND de facto leader of the ruling Pheu Thai Party Thaksin Shinawatra has pledged to build up to 1 million housing units for low-income people.

He was speaking during a campaign trail event in Bueng Kan province on Sunday (Jan 19) ahead of the Feb 1 provincial administration organisation polls.

Following the launch of the government's Home for Thais scheme late last week, about 31mn people have expressed their interest in signing up for a unit, with hundreds of thousands already registered, said Thaksin.

The demand is overwhelming while only about 7,000 units are being built so far, he added.

In response to this extremely high demand for housing the government will build at least 100,000 more units this year and another 100,000 the following year. The goal for this project is to build one million units, he said.

Thaksin said he has been thinking about building housing – particularly condos for low-income people who live and work in Bangkok – ever since he led the Thai Rak Thai Party, the precursor of Pheu Thai.

He said he had envisioned these housing projects being built in a



Photo: Bangkok Post

convenient location close to the electric rail system costing no more than B20 per trip. The rail transport system in Bangkok should also continue to be expanded to link with those in other provinces, he added.

Thaksin also claimed he was the one who in 2003 ordered the termination of the Cabinet decision, reached by the previous government, to limit the rubber growing area being farmed while rubber prices were low.

He said he saw hidden potential in the sector and instead ordered an expansion, 1mn rai at the time, while finding new markets where Thailand could demand a higher, fairer price. The success of rubber growing areas in Bueng Kan alone proves he made the right decision, said Thaksin.

He also said there are more good projects to come, including the next phase of the digital money handout scheme for people under 60, while vowing to get tougher on drug problems involving dealers and users.

Bangkok Post

Explore Phuket's newest Pool Club

SO
HO
POOL CLUB

Let's get social

find us at
Boat Lagoon Marina
Phuket

www.sohophuket.com

- chilled out beach club vibe
- open to everyone, no membership needed
- great Thai and Western menu
- fantastic place for your event or party

Are you sitting comfortably? Then I'll begin...

Stephanie Soper

'Hurry! The bombs are falling and we need to run. Quickly choose what you want to take with you. You're allowed one thing and it must be light. We'll be on the road for months.' Yusef looked around his room – what was his most precious thing? If he took his stamps they could sell them if they needed money later, but there was his ancient teddy that his daddy gave him when he was born, and a piece of coral he had collected the only time he had ever seen the sea.

His eyes filled up with tears...

Intrigued? Are you interested in what comes next? It's a prompt we call a 'Round Robin' sent out to our members of Spilt Ink, an international writers group spread out around the globe. Each one of us in turn, adds their own two hundred words before passing it on to the next person until all of us have contributed. So where does the story end? I've put my idea at the conclusion? In reality, it may end up in an altogether different way.

So have you always thought it may be interesting to write? Are you curious? There's no longer a lockdown to while away the hours... but maybe there's another reason? Would you like to see your name in print? Have you a story that you want to tell? Do you need to write some wound away? Writing can be cathartic – takes you to places in



Photo: Aaron Burden / Unsplash

your mind you never thought you'd be.

OK, now you're interested to make a start... you open up your laptop... and then you panic at the blank page showing there.

Here Stephen King would say, just get on with it. But writing groups can help. We offer each other support and a chance to honestly appraise your writing. Start small. Writing's like a

muscle. You work to make it strong. First a small idea. A short story – usually around four pages long. Then short stories aren't enough. Eventually comes the daunting task of sitting down to write a full length novel. A need for ninety-thousand words. Sounds scary, doesn't it! So one step on the diving board and plunge.

Don't expect to earn a fortune. A writer friend of mine just got a six-figure book deal with Penguin and that's as rare as hen's teeth. Besides, her book is about pirates and in many countries, folks have never seen the sea... or know what a pirate is. The publisher wants it changed!

I don't know about you, but I am sick of reading books that promise the earth – usually the cover states it's full of draw dropping twists (I'm a thriller writer) and I get to the end of a usually light-weight read and wonder where I missed this shocking twist. A book should never disappoint.

So why be in a group? Spilt Ink's one commonality is that we have all been involved in Phuket – some stay several months a year and meet up together locally – at other times by zoom. An anthology on a theme is published every other year. We've won awards. We've been on TV and on Radio too. It's fun.

You don't have to be a genius to write. But because we're international and much travelled, we tend to be interesting people and we're zany. So if you want to have a go, email me.

Now about that story that I started with... I would have ended it by saying little Yusef chooses his stamp album for money for his parents, but they insist he chooses teddy. Mummy also hid her diamonds in the bear.

Regretfully most refugees don't end up like Yusef and his parents.

Contact me on sth1000@hotmail.com. Oh, and by the way, my name is Stephanie. Thanks for reading.



THAI
RESIDENTIAL

Phuket's No.1 Trusted Real Estate Advisor

Are You Trying To Sell Your Phuket Property?

List Your House, Villa or Luxury Condo with
Thai Residential
and Increase Your Chances
of a **Successful** Sale.

PHUKET@THAIRESIDENTIAL.COM | +66 94 8411 918 | WWW.THAIRESIDENTIAL.COM
THAIRESIDENTIAL CO., LTD. 82/37 SAM PAO COURTYARD, MOO4, PATAK ROAD, T.RAWAI, PHUKET, 83130



In maddening Madagascar, a rare environmental success story

Baobab trees in the spiny forest of Madagascar. Some Baobab trees in the forest are more than 1,200 years old. Photo: Todd Miller



GLOBETROTTER

Todd Miller

Madagascar, a jewel of biodiversity, appears like a failing state. Since breaking up with France in 1960, Madagascar's been stuck in a political soap opera – featuring more coups than a chicken coop and elections shadier than a baobab tree.

Three-quarters of the population live below the poverty line. The infrastructure is crumbling faster than a stale baguette, healthcare is more theoretical than practical, and the pristine rainforests are rapidly disappearing.

Madagascar can be maddening. It can also be fascinating.

From Green to Red

Madagascar stands as one of Earth's most extraordinary natural experiments, having split from Africa during the age of dinosaurs. This isolation created an evolutionary laboratory unlike anywhere else, where 90% of the island's wildlife exists nowhere else on the planet. It's the exclusive home of all lemur species and hosts other endemic species, some bizarre.

The island's remarkable biodiversity includes over 11,000 plant species. Even Madagascar's human story is unique. Malagasies descended primarily from Southeast Asian seafarers who crossed the Indian Ocean over 1,000 years ago, creating a culture that blends African, Asian and Arab influences in ways found nowhere else.

Once draped in lush green rainforests, less than 10% of Madagascar's original forest remains due to deforestation and erosion. Today, its exposed soils – rich in iron and aluminum oxides – paint the landscape in rusty reds, visible even from space. It's now known as 'The Red Island'. Like the native chameleons, the world's fourth-largest island has changed its colour, a jarring result of human activity.



Lush rice fields abound on the northern part of Madagascar. Photo: Todd Miller



Mother and child ring-tailed lemurs, Anja Reserve. Photo: Todd Miller

A Bio Hotspot

Yet, on this ecologically and economically challenged island, I discovered an unexpected and rare environmental success story.

Ranomafana National Park stands as a curious anomaly in Madagascar's struggling landscape. While Madagascar's forests elsewhere vanish at alarming rates to slash-and-burn agriculture and illegal logging, Ranomafana's rainforest remains vibrantly intact. The park has achieved this through a pioneering model where scientific research directly funds local development. Tourism revenue helps support schools and health clinics, locals train as guides and researchers, and communities receive tangible benefits from preservation rather than exploitation.

This success story contrasts sharply with Madagascar's broader environmental crisis, where poverty drives desperate communities to unsustainable practices. Outside Ranomafana's UNESCO-blessed boundaries, rare hardwoods disappear into illegal timber markets, unique species face extinction and erosion strips away fertile soil. But inside the park, endangered lemurs still swing through pristine canopy.

How did this happen?

Credit goes to the American primatologist Dr Patricia Wright. She rediscovered the greater bamboo lemur (which was thought to be extinct) and discovered the golden bamboo lemur bouncing around these misty mountains. Both species are endemic to the rainforests of Ranomafana.

Proving that determination and a passion for primates can move mountains (or at least protect them), Dr Wright turned her discovery into a conservation crusade. She hustled through bureaucratic jungles, convincing Madagascar's government to protect this biodiverse hotspot in 1991, and securing international donations to finance the endeavour. The park now protects 12 types of lemurs, 120 species of birds and many rare frogs, chameleons, snakes and lizards.

The Bird Nerd

Theo, my passionate guide at Ranomafana, personifies Madagascar's mystique. He grew up in the rainforest. A member of the Tanala (forest people) tribe, Theo started working with Dr Wright at the age of 5 and is now one of the most accomplished naturalist guides in Madagascar. He's truly at home in the forest. He can detect subtle scents, like fresh lemur poo (I couldn't smell anything but my insect repellent), and can convincingly mimic 106 bird sounds. This self-described 'bird nerd' feels pained for the ecological degradation afflicting Madagascar, including the damage done in earlier decades by his own tribe.

"Humans are the biggest predators," he told me, with remorse. "We destroy everything."

How We Travelled: In this infrastructure-challenged country, travel in Madagascar can be maddening. Many roads have more potholes than asphalt; ATMs often don't work or have no cash; electricity and water are not assured (one hotel we stayed, the best in the region, had neither); hygiene is always top of mind (we sanitised our hands every time we touched money).

Despite these challenges, there's plenty to reward the visitor, from unique flora and fauna to a highly diverse topography. While independent travel is possible, we chose the convenience and safety of an organised small group adventure tour, operated by the UK outfit 'Explore!'. Our 13-day 'Madagascar: The Lost Continent' tour traversed the island from top to bottom. It's a fast-paced itinerary that, at times, involves 10-plus travel hours a day due to the inadequacy of the roads.

Emirates links Phuket with Mada-



An endemic frog species, Ranomafana National Park. Photo: Todd Miller

gascar with a connection in Dubai. This flight makes an intermediate stop in Seychelles, and we took advantage of the stopover opportunity. Visas are required for most nationalities for stays 15 days or longer.

Adventurer and author Todd Miller has explored more than 115 countries. He authored the Amazon bestseller 'ENRICH: Create Wealth in Time, Money, and Meaning'. His writing has featured in CNBC, Fast Company and Newsweek. He resides at Natai Beach. www.enrich101.com



The March/April 2025 hard copy issue goes to print very soon

Distributed in resorts/hotels lobbies, in a high number of restaurants and coffee shops, plus inserted in one issue of The Phuket News each month, it is a great way to Talk to Phuket about your F & B outlet

Want to be in it?

CONTACT JASON TODAY – gm@classactmedia.co.th

POP QUIZ

- 'Generation Alpha' refers to people born from which year?
- In which city is the ancient Pantheon located?
- Lemons float but limes sink. True or false?
- 'Rhinorrhea' is the medical term for what condition?
- Who was the centerfold for the first issue of 'Playboy' magazine?

Answers below, centre

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

Across

- Message target
- Worrywort's word
- On the peak of
- States of deep sleep
- Crazy
- Go (over)
- They have a black card
- Tape, say
- First act
- Besides
- Compartment
- Cozy retreat
- Mock astonishment
- Dig
- English cathedral city
- Free weight
- First-rate
- News agency
- Minute amount
- Logging sled
- Periwinkle
- "___ Madness"
- Cable network
- Country singer Evans
- Low-fat Aussie meat source
- Melancholy
- Like some cows
- December 24 and

Down


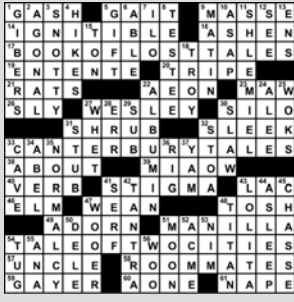
- Seafood entree
- Lure
- Makes right
- Fat
- Letter after chi
- Visibly astonished
- Narrow country roads
- G-man
- Area in Germany
- Natl. Humor Month
- In direct opposition
- Around
- Cancún coin
- Hangdog
- In the next month
- Final transport

- Depth charge targets
- Resinous deposit
- "The lost city of gold"
- Nav. rank
- Thing in court
- Obstacle
- Z___- Jones
- "My Name Is Asher ___" (Chaim Potok novel)
- Goal
- ___ sauce
- Pastries
- Upper crust's home
- Bonny one
- Temperatures
- Arise
- Brown shade
- Curtain fabric
- Sharp ridge
- Scout's mission
- Cowboy boot attachment
- Medea rode on it
- Camera setting
- Manages, with "out"
- Family nickname
- Some germ cells

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14					15				16			
17					18				19			
20					21					22		
23					24				25	26		
27				28	29				30			31
			33			34	35	36		37		
38	39	40							41			
42					43							
44				45					46		47	48
			50			51	52	53			54	
55	56			57	58					59		
60			61						62			
63					64				65			
66					67				68			

Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:



GOT YOUR NUMBER

4

out of 10 Americans have never moved from their hometown.

5

minutes is how long the capybara, the world's largest rodent, can stay underwater at a time.

20

pounds (9.07kg) of eggplant contains the same amount of nicotine found in one cigarette.

61

percent is how much a US job applicant's chances can be negatively affected by having a visible tattoo.

111


is how many handbags the average woman in the UK will own in her lifetime.

420,000

people die every year from tainted food.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Nai Thon Beach. Photo by Gus Chesterton

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

This week in history



Shouichi Yokoi.

Jan 24, 1972
Japanese Sgt Shouichi Yokoi is found hiding in a Guam jungle, where he had been since the end of World War II.

Jan 25, 1995
The Norwegian rocket incident: Russia almost launches a nuclear attack after it mistakes Black Brant XII, a Norwegian research rocket, for a US Trident missile.

Jan 26, 1808
The Rum Rebellion in Australia is the only successful (albeit short-lived) armed takeover of the government in New South Wales.

Jan 27, 1967
Apollo program: Astronauts Gus Grissom, Ed White and Roger Chaffee are killed in a fire during a test of their Apollo 1 spacecraft at the Kennedy Space Center, Florida.

Jan 28, 1393
King Charles VI of France is nearly killed when several dancers' costumes catch fire during a masquerade ball.

Jan 29, 1980
The Rubik's Cube makes its international debut at the Ideal Toy Corp. in Earl's Court, London.

January 30, 1703
The Forty-seven rōnin, under the command of Ōishi Kuranosuke, avenge the death of their master.
Source: Wikipedia

Trades & Services

 The Phuket News
 @thephuketnews

CAR SERVICES



JERRY'S QUICK WASH

10 MINUTE AUTOMATIC CAR WASH
 Complete car care services

 Jerry's Quick Wash Phuket  083-245-1941

 Chao Fah West, inside Shell Gas Station

HOME IMPROVEMENT



HOUSE - CONDO - VILLA
CLEANING SERVICES
 AT YOUR DOOR STEP

BOOK NOW

 **089 6548873**

Spotless Cleaning
 Phuket - Thailand
 nammcasing@gmail.com

CORPORATE SERVICES



VERTIGO
 VIDEO PRODUCTIONS

VERTIGOVideoproductions.com

HOME IMPROVEMENT

Waterproofing & Crack Repair

20 year WARRANTY

 Drone Survey

 Pipe Inspection

under yearly checkup plan...

TCM Asia Co., Ltd - quality services since 2003
 office@tcm-asia.com 086-9439834

HOME IMPROVEMENT



WOOD FLOOR PHUKET

Solid and engineered wood floor
 Sand & refinish wood floor
 Solid wood deck

 /solidwoodfloorphuketthailand
 Matt 081 271 2684 or Jessica 062 372 6624

HOME IMPROVEMENT



SMART TILES
 Tile Leveling System

Baan Wana - Cherrng Talay
 Tel : 076 620168



www.tile-asia.com | letstalk@tile-asia.com


HOME IMPROVEMENT

Plumber
 German Water Team Ltd.Part
 We repair what your husband fixed

MASTERCRAFTSMAN
 WE REPAIR AND BUILD NEW:

- ALL KINDS OF HOT AND COLD WATER SYSTEMS
- HOT WATER SOLAR SYSTEMS AND SOLAR PUMPS
- POOL EQUIPMENT AND SERVICE
- REPAIR ALL KINDS OF WATER SYSTEMS AND POOL PUMPS
- A VARIETY OF WATER FILTRATION SYSTEMS TO FIT YOUR NEEDS

SHOWROOM NEXT TO WAT CHALONG
 OPEN FROM 8AM TO 5PM



094 594 8868 (THAI)
 089 645 4848 (GER / ENG)

www.germanwaterteam.com
 Email: germanwaterteam@yahoo.de

22/12 Moo 6 Chaofa R.d.west Chalong A.Muang Phuket 83130

OTHER

ME LOGO

T-shirt, Cap, Polo-shirt, Flag, apron, Tote bag

Embroidery, Screen Print, Sublimation





 ME LOGO ผลิตภัณฑ์พร้อมงานปัก-สกรีน  @melogo  096 637 9000

MARINE SERVICES



C&C MARINE




MARINE ENGINEERING SPECIALISTS

C&C Marine (Thailand) Co., Ltd.
 Tel: +66 076 272049 Fax: +66 076 273248
 Email: cholmes@candc-marine.com
 www.candc-marine.com
 16/2 Moo 4, Soi Koh Kaew 33, Thepkassatri Rd,
 Koh Kaew, Muang, Phuket 83000, Thailand

WANT TO TALK TO PHUKET?

The **Phuket News** Your Island - Your Paper
 Новости **Пхукета** Твой остров - твоя газета
 ข่าว **ภูเก็ต**

WINDOW ON PHUKET

The **map of PHUKET** Карта Пхукета 普吉岛 地圖
 English 中文 Русский

Where to **eat** in PHUKET

LIVE 89.5 **NEWS TV**

Contact: gm@classactmedia.co.th

FRI

24
JAN



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 Renaissance Phuket Resort & Spa. Join us for a wonderful night of making new connections and catching up with familiar faces in the Australian-Thai business community in Phuket. To book contact - office@austchamthailand.com



Friday Mussels Night

6 PM onwards: Belgian style mussels served with French Fries. All you can eat. Your choice, Your style: Marinere, 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



SUN

26
JAN



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

27
JAN



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

29
JAN



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

7
FEB



Grow Boating Evening - February 2025

We look forward to seeing you at the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar at the Phuket Boat Lagoon from 5pm. Our drinks sponsor for the evening will be ASAP Marine Trading. Established in 2008, ASAP Marine Trading Co., Ltd. has been a reliable supplier of Yacht products for many years. See https://asap-marine.com/en/ There will be a delicious buffet sponsored by the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar. Come and join in the fun, everyone is welcome and there is no entry fee. Find us at facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket

SAT

8
FEB



GLITTER CANCER BALL

BRINGING THE THAI & EXPATRIATE COMMUNITY TOGETHER TO BEAT CANCER Help Us Build a new Cancer Radiology Center in Phuket Each year, Vachira Public Hospital cares for over 600 new cancer patients from Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi who need radiation therapy. Tragically, as there is no Government radiation facility in Phuket, patients are forced to travel long distances to Surat Thani and further, for life saving treatments. While therapy costs are covered, the travel and accommodation expenses place a heavy burden on families, often forcing them to sleep in cars or heartbreakingly, abandon therapy altogether. To change this, we are building Phuket's first dedicated Cancer Radiation Center. Our incredible Thai community have already raised THB 180 million of the THB 290 million

needed. Now, we need your support to raise the final THB 110 million. Let's bring the Phuket community together to ease the suffering of families battling cancer. Join us at the Glitter Cancer Ball on Saturday, 8 February, at the Courtyard by Marriott Phuket Town, with the Phuket Governor as our Guest of Honour. Entertainment: Lilly.V will be flying into Phuket to entertain as well as a Jazz Quartet and DJ Lada. Food: Phuket's top hotels will be sponsoring delicious live food stations. Drinks: Selected free flow beverages for 4 hours Proceeds from tickets and a special auction will go directly toward this vital project. Tables seat 10 and tickets are priced at B3,500 per person or B5,000 per person for a VIP front table with special amenities. Your support will make a life-changing difference Over 130 guests have already reserved their seats. BOOK NOW Chantal Fernandes, phuketcharity@gmail.com, 089 874 2942

WED

15
OCT




Thailand (Bangkok) Amusement & Attraction Parks Expo

Thailand (Bangkok) Amusement & Attraction Parks Expo (TAAPE 2025) will make its appearance in IMPACT Exhibition Centre, Bangkok, Thailand on October 15-17, 2025! The exhibition aims to bring together global amusement equipment manufacturers, theme park operators, amusement service providers and industry experts to discuss the development trend of the amusement industry, display the latest amusement equipment and creative design. The exhibition jointly build a platform for exchange and cooperation, brand promotion and market expansion. Look forward to meeting you in Thailand and start a wonderful amusement trip together!



CLASSIFIEDS

PROPERTY FOR RENT





PROPERTY FOR RENT



2bdr apartments for rent

Bel Air Condominium, Panwa Sea Facing, Large 130-150m2, w/balcony w/Plunge Pool, Recently Refurbished, THB35-45K/month. Contact Paul +65 9651 7134.

BOATS, YACHTS FOR SALE







PFAM COMMUNITY CONNECT

Held on January 15 at Grill 'n Brew, Phuket Town, PFAM held its first monthly community connect event. A great evening with very interesting presentations, music and networking, all in support of the Phuket LGBTQIA+ community. For more information visit - facebook.com/PFAMInternational

The March/April 2025 hard copy issue goes to print very soon

Distributed in resorts/hotels lobbies, in a high number of restaurants and coffee shops, plus inserted in one issue of *The Phuket News* each month, it is a great way to Talk to Phuket about your F & B outlet

Want to be in it?

✉ CONTACT JASON TODAY – gm@classactmedia.co.th

Kasidit rattles Medvedev in Aussie Open thriller

TENNIS

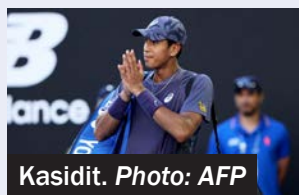
THAI WILD CARD Kasidit Samrej pushed Russian world No.5 Daniil Medvedev to five sets before bowing out in the first round of the Australian Open in Melbourne on Jan 14.

After dropping the first set, Kasidit took the second and third before Medvedev, a three-time finalist in Melbourne, rallied to win 6-2, 4-6, 3-6, 6-1, 6-2.

Medvedev was 3-5 behind in the third and on the brink of going two sets to one down against world No.418 Kasidit when the Russian lost his cool, slamming his racquet into the net camera repeatedly until they both became a broken mess.

Ball kids had to sweep up the debris when he lost the game and set, while the match was postponed briefly as officials ran repairs on the net.

Kasidit, who qualified for his Grand Slam debut



Kasidit. Photo: AFP

by winning the Asia-Pacific wildcard playoff event was broken in his opening service game as he lost the first set in just 30 minutes but refused to go away.

He stunned Medvedev by breaking him at 5-4 to take the second and was well on top in the third before the Russian's meltdown.

But Medvedev regrouped to take charge in the fourth as Kasidit began flagging and an early break in the fifth set put victory in sight for the Russian.

Kasidit, 23, was the first Thai man to compete in a Grand Slam main draw in 13 years.

Medvedev suffered a shock defeat in his next match to American teenager qualifier Learner Tien. *Bangkok Post*

Thai shuttlers top in KL

BADMINTON

Bangkok Post

Mixed doubles players Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Supissara Paewsampran claimed their third World Tour title after winning the season-opening BWF Malaysia Open in Kuala Lumpur on Jan 12.

The 57th ranked Thai pair defeated world No.1 Feng Yanzhe and Huang Dongping of China 21-13, 19-21, 21-18 in an hour and 20 minutes to win the US\$1.45 million (approximately B49,300,000) Super 1000 title at the Axiata Arena.

They took home the \$107,300 (B3,755,500) winners' cheque while Feng and Huang received \$50,750 (B1,776,250).

It was the pair's biggest win after only starting their partnership competitively in October last year at the Arctic Open in Finland where they reached the second round.

Dechapol and Supissara then claimed their first title together at the Kumamoto Masters Japan (a Super 500 event) in November before picking up their second crown at the Syed Modi India International (a Super 300 event) in December.

For Dechapol, 27, it was his 21st World Tour title. He won 18 tournaments with former playing partner Sapsiree Taerattanachai.

"I would like to congratulate



Dechapol (right) and Supissara celebrate. Photo: Bangkok Post

Dechapol and Supissara after they beat world No.1 pair Feng Yanzhe and Huang Dongping from China to win the Malaysia Open, which is the first tournament of the year and a Super 1000 event," said Khunying Patama Leeswadtrakul, president of the Badminton Association of Thailand.

"They started playing together after the Olympic Games in Paris last year and have improved so much – now they have won three titles together," added Khunying Patama, who is also a member of the International Olympic Committee.

"I believe this win will give them a lot of confidence and they will surely be important players for Thailand in the Sudirman Cup in May."

Dechapol and Supissara then continued their fine form as they defeated Tang Chun Man and Ng Tsz Yau of Hong Kong 21-17, 21-19 in their opening round of the

US\$950,000 BWF India Open 2025 in New Delhi last week.

However, the Thai duo were unable to sustain their form as they fell to Malaysian third seeds Chen Tang Jie and Toh Ee Wei 21-19, 12-21, 22-20 on Jan 16 to exit the World Tour Super 750 event.

The Malaysian pair then managed to defeat further Thai opposition in the quarter-finals last Friday (Jan 17) as they overcame mixed doubles pair Ruttanapak Oupthong and Jhenicha Sudjaipraparat 16-21, 17-21.

Compounding Thailand's woes, men's doubles pair Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Kittinupong Kedren lost to fifth seeds Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik of Malaysia 18-21, 18-21.

Thailand's Pornpawee Chochuwong did reach the women's singles final before going down to Korean world No.1 An Se-Young 12-21, 9-21.

Devastating Los Angeles fires prompt 2028 Olympics debate

OLYMPICS

THE LOS ANGELES wildfire disaster has cast a shadow over preparations for the 2028 Olympics, raising questions over whether the city can deliver a safe and successful Games.

So far, none of the more than 80 venues due to stage Olympic competition in Los Angeles have been directly affected by the infernos that, at time of press, have left at least 25 people dead and reduced entire neighbourhoods to smouldering ruins.

But experts say the ongoing disaster has underscored the challenges of staging the world's largest sporting event in a region increasingly under threat of wildfires.

"The situation is clearly grave and given the prospect of significant climate change, you do have to wonder whether the current situation might be repeated, possibly even during the Games," Simon Chadwick, professor of sport and geopolitical economy at Skema Business School in Paris told British daily The iPaper.



Firefighters inspect a burned house in the Pacific Palisades neighbourhood of Los Angeles on Jan 16. Photo: AFP

"This raises very serious questions, not least about insurance, and whether Los Angeles' big-ticket 2028 attraction might be about to become an uninsurable mega-event."

While the flames that razed Pacific Palisades came uncomfortably close to the Riviera Country Club – which will host 2028's Olympic golf tournament – the overwhelming majority of venues are situated outside what would be regarded as high-risk fire zones.

Historical data, meanwhile,

indicates that the chances of a similar disaster erupting during the 2028 Olympics are highly unlikely.

Prior to last week, no fire in Los Angeles County had appeared on a list of the 20 most destructive fires in California history, according to statistics provided by CalFire, the state's fire agency.

The 2028 Olympics will also be taking place in July, a time of year when there are no Santa Ana winds, the powerful seasonal gusts widely seen as the biggest factor behind the unprecedented

scale and scope of the recent carnage.

And Los Angeles has already staged the Olympics successfully on two occasions – in 1984 and 1932.

'LESSONS LEARNED'

Bill Deverell, a professor of history at the University of Southern California, said the ongoing disaster could provide important lessons for 2028.

"Once this is over... there's no question that we would expect that there would be lessons learned about ways we could presumably try to mitigate cataclysmic disasters like this," Deverell said.

Pennsylvania State University professor Mark Dyerson has floated the idea of the Olympics being moved to 2024 hosts Paris if LA was unable to deliver the games.

"They could go back to Paris," the academic explained. "It would be unfortunate, but I'm sure they have some kind of committee – the IOC is a huge bureaucracy – that allegedly looks at contingencies."

California Governor Gavin Newsom, however, told NBC's 'Today' morning program that planning for the 2028 Olympics

and the FIFA World Cup in 2026 – where eight matches take place in Los Angeles – was on track.

Newsom said the flurry of major sporting events in Los Angeles over the next few years – the city will also host the Super Bowl in 2027 – should be seen as an opportunity.

"My humble position, and it's not just being naively optimistic, (is) that only reinforces the imperative (of) moving quickly, doing it in the spirit of collaboration and cooperation," Newsom told NBC.

Newly-inaugurated US President Donald Trump has given his backing, vowing LA 2028 will be the "greatest Games" despite concerns.

"These are America's Olympics," Trump told Casey Wasserman, chairman of the LA 2028 organising committee, on Jan 15.

"These are more important than ever to L.A. and I'm going to be supportive in every way possible to make them the greatest Games," he added.

The 2028 Games are due to start on July 14 and will close on July 30. As head of state, Trump would be expected to play a central role in the opening of the Games. *AFP*

Darwin late show saves Reds

FOOTBALL

AFP

Darwin Nunez struck twice in stoppage time to earn Liverpool a 2-0 win at Brentford and a six-point Premier League lead over Arsenal, who blew a two-goal lead to draw 2-2 against Aston Villa last Saturday (Jan 18).

Liverpool looked set to drop points for the third consecutive league game until the much-maligned Uruguayan doubled his tally of Premier League goals for the season in the dying seconds in west London.

The 25-year-old had not scored in the league since November but was in the right place to finish twice and secure the points for the league leaders who also have a game in hand over injury-hit Arsenal.

"As a striker you get judged on goals, especially at a club like Liverpool," said the Reds' captain Virgil van Dijk. "Today he put his mark on the game."

Arsenal's title challenge faltered once more at the Emirates, despite Gabriel Martinelli putting them into a comfortable 2-0 lead, as Villa fired back through Youri Tielemans and Ollie Watkins.

"Today we cannot concede the two goals we did after everything we did," said Gunners manager Mikel Arteta. "That line is so thin. Credit to them as well."



Liverpool's Darwin Nunez celebrates the first of his goals against Brentford. Photo: AFP

Nottingham Forest remain in third place, level on points with the Gunners, thanks to a 3-2 win against bottom side Southampton, while Bournemouth snapped Newcastle's winning streak in stunning fashion as Justin Kluivert's hat-trick fired the Cherries up to sixth in a 4-1 win.

Bournemouth have never qualified for European competition before and Kluivert said that is the goal for an ambitious squad. "Why not dream big and let's see where we can end up," said the Dutch international.

Elsewhere, Manchester City roared back into form with a 6-0 thrashing of Ipswich with Phil Foden continuing his fine form with two first half goals, either side of Mateo Kovacic's strike.

Erling Haaland celebrated his nine-year contract extension by scoring in the second half, while Jeremy Doku and James McAtee were

also on target for the defending champions.

Neighbours Manchester United, however, suffered another defeat, this time a 3-1 reversal at home against Brighton.

On an emotional day as United paid tribute to one of the club's greatest ever players in Denis Law, who passed away on Jan 17 aged 84, manager Ruben Amorim conceded this version of the Red Devils is the "worst team maybe in the history of Manchester United."

Tottenham's poor run also continued as they were beaten 3-2 by Everton in David Moyes' first game back at Goodison Park.

Leicester were beaten at home 2-0 by Fulham, Chelsea brushed aside Wolves 3-1 and Jean-Philippe Mateta's double secured a 2-0 win for Crystal Palace at West Ham.



New Chaba Kaew coach targets 2027 World Cup

FOOTBALL

NEW THAILAND WOMEN'S team coach Futoshi Ikeda has said he will try his very best to help 'Chaba Kaew' qualify for the FIFA Women's World Cup Finals in Brazil in 2027.

The Japanese coach was speaking at his official unveiling ceremony at the Football Association of Thailand (FAT) headquarters on Jan 15.

"It is a great honour for me to be coaching the Thai women's national team and I am grateful to the FAT and its president Ms Nualphan Lamsam for giving me the opportunity," said Ikeda.

"Thailand have already made it to the final stages of the FIFA Women's World Cup twice, so they definitely have a pool of players with high potential," he added.

"Our main target is to qualify for the 2027 World Cup in Brazil and we all know that it isn't an easy task. We will need all the support from the FAT and the players."

"I am ready to use all my experience and abilities to lead the team and help them achieve their goals."

"My first task will be to assess the potential of the players to come up with a suitable plan for the team."

Chaba Kaew are scheduled to take part in the Pink Ladies Cup in Dubai next month.

"We have the Asian Women's Championship qualifying round in June, which is the first step towards the Women's World Cup, and in December, we have the SEA Games. We will be ready for both events," Ikeda concluded.

Bangkok Post

Same old sorry story

FOOTBALL

NEW YEAR, NEW STADIUM, same owners, same coach, sadly same problems. Welcome back to the soap opera that is Phuket Andaman FC (PAFC).

The mid-season break from the end of the last match in November has been eventful, with the wage bill largely remaining unpaid, the club actively seeking a new owner, many players coming and going and the relocation for the rest of the season to the Provincial Stadium in Phang Nga.

Despite all the changes, PAFC seem to have not developed any new ideas on the pitch as they fell to a 1-0 defeat against PT Satun last Saturday (Jan 18).

Coach Tum cut a dejected figure on the touchline for most of this match, unable to get his message across to many of the players despite now having had almost two months working with them.

Eight new players were in the matchday squad, many of whom have been recruited on the coach's recommendation, yet the same issues evident in the first half of the season seem to persist.

Throughout the game the Lobsters controlled possession but looked unsure what to do with it. They lined up in a new 3-4-3 formation, with new Swedish striker David Danielsson on the left flank



Photo: Supplied

and three other new Thai signings, Theerapat, Anucha and Puttipong, all involved.

Satun looked the more dangerous throughout, pressing well, while PAFC sat too deep and gave the visitors too much time on the ball.

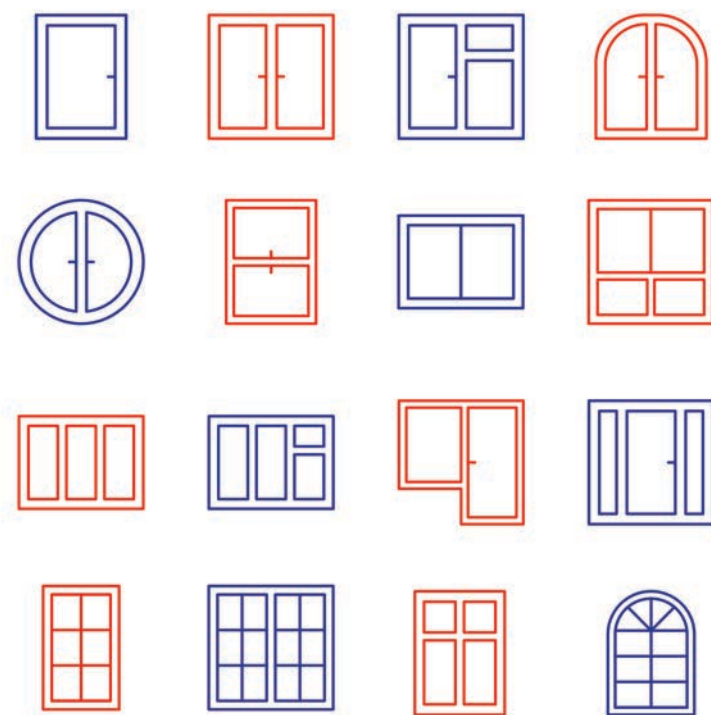
Fitness was again worryingly evident, with the pace of the home side play noticeably dropping throughout the match before Satun scored the decisive goal in the 55th minute.

PAFC can be buoyed that there is at least one team worse than them in the league, but they are clearly in a relegation battle and coach Tum needs to try and stop the rot.

For the approximately 400 fans in attendance, many of whom had made the one-and-a-half-hour journey from Phuket without the club's support, questions will be asked if they should make the effort again next week when the players don't seem to be making the same commitment themselves. Simon Causton



Safe, Secure, Soundproof Windows and Doors



087 061 7631 Nathan Window Man Brown pvcphuket.com



TERRA

Italian Restaurant

Phuket's Newest Italian Dining Experience



Terra is more than just a restaurant; it's an invitation to
relive the joy of Italian dining—rich, sophisticated, and unforgettable.



18 Satun Road, Talat Nuea, Mueang Phuket District, Phuket 83000 Thailand
+66 9 5368 0888 info@tinbaron.com www.terraphuket.com

