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SPEED TOO



The tour speedboat 'Thanathip Marine 555' after its collision with the channel marker in Chalong Bay. Photo: PR Phuket

POLICE ADD DRUG USE TO CHARGES AGAINST TOUR SPEEDBOAT DRIVER

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Chalong Police Chief Pol Col Kanaen Somrak has confirmed that the driver of the speedboat that collided with a channel marker in Chalong Bay at speed last week, injuring 35 people on board, will be charged with drug use.

Col Kanaen confirmed to *The Phuket News* on Monday (May 22) that a blood test conducted by Mission Hospital Phuket had confirmed that the driver had tested positive for amphetamine/methamphetamine (ya bah/ya ice) use. The test was unable to determine which form of the narcotic the boat driver had ingested, he added.

Of note, despite a flurry of meet-

ings, official reports and press conferences, at time of press not one official had yet publicly named the actual driver of the boat being charged. However, Phuket Tourist Police soon after the incident released a list of names of the people hospitalised for injuries sustained in the incident, which included "Mr Satit Maschai, Thai boat driver".

Chalong Police will proceed with charges for drug use, Col Kanaen assured. "He will be prosecuted for that," he said.

Col Kanaen explained that although the driver tested positive for drug use, it did not confirm whether or not he was under the influence of the narcotic at the time he was driving the tour speedboat when it struck the

channel marker on May 17.

Phuket Governor Narong Wongciew confirmed to the press last Friday (May 19) that 'the driver' (sic) already faces up to three years in jail or a fine of up to B60,000, or both, if he is found guilty of negligence that resulted in the collision, for which he is already under investigation.

At that time 19 witnesses had been questioned, Gov Narong said. All 19 attested that the boat driver acted recklessly, he added.

The confirmation was delivered during an official meeting held at Phuket Provincial Hall. Present to hear the case update included Phuket Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Sermphan Sirikong, Chief of the Phuket office of the Department

of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM-Phuket) Udomporn Kan, Chief of the Phuket office of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MOTS) Ratchadaporn Oin, Regional marine office boat inspector Adul Raluekmoon and Deputy Commander of Thai Maritime Enforcement Command Center Region 3 (Thai-MECC 3) Capt Krit Khluebmat.

Also present were Director of the Phuket branch of the Office of Insurance Commission (OIC) Thiraporn Nokkaew and Noppadon Uwutkam-preecha from Tourism Business and Guide Registration Office, Southern Branch 2.

Governor Narong announced that the speedboat captain had been charged with negligence causing...

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Tour boat driver fails drug test

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...injuries to others under Sections 300 and 390 of the Criminal Code. If found guilty, he faces a potential sentence of up to three years in prison and/or a fine of up to B60,000, according to Governor Narong.
However, if the person confesses to the charges, their sentence is reduced to half the term handed down by the court, in accordance with Section 78 of the Criminal Code.

PROBE LAUNCHED
An inspection of the speedboat Thanathip Marine 555 on May 18 found no technical issues that may have caused the accident.

The inspection was conducted by regional marine office inspector Adul Raluekmoon and fellow technicians at an unnamed shipyard in Chalong, said an official report of the ongoing probe. Present for the inspection were officers from the Chalong Police and Phuket Tourist Police.
Mr Adul said that from questioning mechanics and guides, there was no indication that something was wrong before the accident. "Everything was normal without any signs to say there would be an accident," he said.



Rescue workers and volunteers assist tourists injured in the collision as they are brought ashore at Chalong Pier last Wednesday (May 17). Photo: Tourist Police

"The engine part is normal. Then we looked at the controls and steering. Whether turning left or right or in normal position, all worked normally. But we found a crack in a vent for hydraulic oil," he added.
"All other parts of the boat are normal. There are only traces of damage caused by the collision," Mr Adul said.
"In determining the cause of any accident, we mainly

look at the ship's hull, the ship's controller and the weather. The preliminary inspection of the ship's hull did not find any abnormalities," Mr Adul explained.
"As for the weather at that time, the sea was normal, the rest is with the boat operator, who must be asked what happened at that time that resulted in the accident. We also need to question other circumstantial

witnesses, such as the tourists and guides on the boat.
"Therefore, the exact cause [of the accident] cannot be concluded at this time. We must wait to collect all the evidence first," Adul said.

THE INJURED
In total, 35 people on board were injured in the accident. Among them was a 10-year-old Ukrainian girl.

The boat, operated by A Time Nature Tour Co, was returning to Phuket from Phi Phi Island after a tour of nearby islands when it struck the channel marker at speed sometime before 6pm on May 17. Officials were notified of the accident at 5:52pm.
Among those injured were the boat captain, who suffered a broken leg, and the boat driver, named in the injury reports as Satit Maschai.
Tourist Police reported there were 37 people on the boat – four Thais, 21 Russians, nine Kazakhstan nationals, one Hong Kong visitor, one Chinese national and one Ukrainian – when the collision occurred.
The tourists were returning from a tour of Phi Phi Island, Maya Bay, Bamboo Island, Khai Island and Maithon Island when the speedboat slammed into the channel marker, located several hundred metres from Chalong Pier, said an official report citing Tourist Police.
Those injured comprised four Thais, 21 Russians, all nine Kazakhstan nationals and the Hong Kong visitor and Chinese national.
Six of the injured (two Thais, four Russians) were cat-

egorised as suffering 'code red' (serious) injuries. A further 16 were categorised as suffering 'code yellow' injuries and the remaining 13 categorised as suffering 'code green' injuries.
IN CARE
According to Governor Narong's most recent statement, as of last Friday, 16 of the injured individuals remained hospitalised.
Officers from the Tourist Assistance Center have coordinated their efforts with the Russian consul, the Chinese consul and the Kazakhstan consul for Phuket, officials reported last Friday.
By last Sunday, officials noted that Phuket Immigration officers were assisting foreigners injured with extensions to their permits to stay, so they would not be breaking any immigration laws while recovering in hospital.
Governor Narong confirmed that in addition to the mandatory insurance required under the Boat Act, A Time Nature Tour Co's insurance provider, Thai Pattana Insurance Co, is providing up to B500,000 per injured passenger for medical expenses.
Additional reporting by Eakpop Thongtub

Man arrested at airport for child sex trafficking

AN UNNAMED MAN has been arrested at Phuket airport on charges of child sex trafficking, Phuket Immigration reported last Saturday (May 20).
The arrest warrant was issued just eight days after a raid at Velvet Bar in Patong exposed a nationwide child sex trafficking ring with foreign beneficiaries and customers, though Phuket Immigration did not confirm whether the May 20 arrest was linked to the high-profile investigation.
The arrest of the alleged child sex trafficker was announced on the Phuket Immigration Checkpoint Facebook page, which primarily covers the anti-criminal activities of Immigration Bureau officers working at Phuket airport.
According to the report,

the arrest took place at the International Arrivals zone of the airport at 7:30am last Saturday.
As Phuket airport does not operate any flights during the night, this was the very beginning of the airport's working day, with only one international flight having landed in Phuket by that time. The flight in question was Qatar Airways QR842 from Doha, which arrived ahead of schedule at 7:25 am, according to FlightRadar24 website.
The suspect, whose name and nationality have not been revealed, was arrested on Phuket Provincial Court's warrant number Jor-141/2566 issued on Mar 23, 2023.
The Phuket office of the Immigration Bureau provided the following description of the charges against the suspect: "taking away a minor over



Phuket Immigration officers with the suspect arrested on child sex trafficking charges last Saturday (Mar 20). Image: Phuket Immigration Checkpoint

15 years but not yet over 18 years of age from the parent, guardian, or caretaker for obscene actions even with the consent of the minor, and taking away a minor over 15 years but not yet over 18 years of age from the parent, guardian, or caretaker for indecent actions even with the consent of the minor."

These charges fall under Section 319 of the Criminal Code, commonly known as "child sex trafficking."
NATIONAL NETWORK
Phuket Immigration did not provide further details on the specific investigation that led to the Phuket Provincial Court issuing warrant number

Jor-141/2566 on Mar 23, 2023.
However, the date aligns chronologically with the ongoing high-profile investigation into a child sex trafficking network.
On Mar 15, the Department of Provincial Administration (DOPA) raided Velvet Bar on Soi Sea Dragon in Patong which had been offering underage girls as prostitutes to foreign customers. Police began a full-scale investigation overseen by Deputy Commander of the Royal Thai Police Gen Surchate Hakparn.
On Mar 18, Gen Surchate Hakparn, visited Phuket and announced that the Velvet Bar raid had exposed a nationwide child sex trafficking network operating in other tourist areas of the country. According to Gen Surchate's statement, by Mar 18, the police had already identified three key leaders of

the criminal network.
On Mar 30, Gen Surchate returned to Phuket to announce that his officers had arrested three foreigners for purchasing underage Thai girls for sex, while three other suspects wanted for the same offense had already fled the country.
Arrest warrants had been issued for those three and police had identified 109 other customers who had paid for sex with minors, Gen Surchate added on Mar 30.
Ronnie Peterhitch, believed to be the leader of the child sex trafficking network that included Velvet, Model, Bangla Beach, and Strip Phuket Bars in Patong, had also left the country and remained at large as of Mar 30.
The Phuket News

Kamala landslides fear spurs MP-elect action

Nattha Thepbamrung
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Following heavy downpours across the island last Sunday (May 21), Phuket Move Forward MP-elect Chalermpong Saengdee expressed his concern over potentially dangerous landslides returning to Kuan Na Yak on Kamala Hill.

Landslides on Kamala Hill caused considerable damage during the heavy rains last October. Power poles were felled and the road was closed several times so workers could clear debris from the road.

“Now that it is raining again, local residents have started worrying about landslides, and especially that big rocks will come tumbling down [the hill],” Mr Chalermpong told *The Phuket News* on Monday (May 22).

Mr Chalermpong raised the issue with a post on Facebook last Sunday that featured photos of the dangerous exposed hillside rock beside the road. Local officials installed road barriers along



Photo: Chalermpong Saengdee

the side of the road, but Mr Chalermpong said plainly, “That is not enough.”

Mr Chalermpong on Monday said that he would visit the Phuket Highways Office on Tuesday (May 23) to ask for a solution to the problem, and that he would soon ask Kamala Tambon Administration Organisation (OrBorTor) for support.

“I understand that budget limitations at the local level may not provide enough support. The government needs to decentralise power so that the local authorities can solve problems in a timely manner,” Mr Chalermpong said.

“I will also ask the Phuket Highways Office about how to alleviate the local residents’ concerns about big rocks falling down the hill. In the future, we may have to develop wetlands and create an app that informs local residents about disasters [landslides and floods] in their areas,” he added.

“Phuket has soil-based mountains and when it rains, the soil absorbs and holds the water, but when the amount of water is too much, there will be a landslide. An app will help people to avoid danger from landslides,” Mr Chalermpong explained.

“The risk of landslides has been resolved in Karon as well as on Patong Hill, but the area that I am worried about is just here at Kuan Na Yak.

“However, all the locations should be monitored for land encroachment because it could lead to a natural disaster,” Mr Chalermpong said.

Mr Chalermpong noted that he was particularly concerned about land encroachment as one of the causes of increasing the possibility of natural disasters.

“Apart from natural factors, humans encroaching on forest lands is a major factor. Building constructions that block natural waterways make it even easier for disasters to occur,” he said.

Mr Chalermpong noted that the issue will be raised with Cabinet once the parliament resumes.

“Once parliament reconvenes, we can raise the issue with Cabinet. We will push for a budget to solve this problem. It is better to do it right away than waiting or ignoring it,” he said.



Photo: Patong Surf Life Saving

Lifeguards assessed for beach safety

AS RED FLAGS STARTED flying at beaches on Phuket’s west coast last Sunday (May 21), a group of safety experts started a series of inspections of lifeguard stations to assess their readiness to respond to surf emergencies.

The group, a research team from Prince of Songkla University Faculty of Medicine led by Prof Lakkhana Thaikrua, intend to assess Phuket lifeguard’s capabilities to respond to surf rescues and other beach emergencies as part of their initiative to develop a community-based approach to beach safety, explained a report by the Phuket Provincial Administration Organisation (PPAO).

During their inspection last Sunday, Prof Lakkhana visited lifeguards at Surin and Bang Tao Beaches.

Lifeguards were questioned about the capabilities to respond to beach and surf

emergencies, and their life-saving equipment was also inspected and assessed. The risks to those in the water were also assessed, said the report.

On Monday (May 22), the team visited Patong Beach to continue their assessment there. Joining the inspection at Patong were officials from the Phuket Provincial Public Health Office (PPHO) as well as from Patong Hospital, Vachira Hospital Phuket and Marine Police.

Patong Surf Life Saving explained that suggestions and recommendations were passed on to the team in the hope of improving essential lifeguard services on the beach.

Ahead of the research team’s visit to Patong Beach, Patong Municipality carried out a cleanup of the beach, including a haul of discarded fishing nets brought ashore from the beach water just offshore. *The Phuket News*

Patong local election to affect Bangla area

PATONG MUNICIPALITY HAS ANNOUNCED a local election that will affect the popular nightlife district of Bangla Rd and the surrounding area.

The election, to be held on June 11, will be to elect a new representative for Patong Municipality Constituency 3, which covers the heart of the busy tourism town.

The election is necessary as Patong City Council member Sanakorn Shin has resigned, effective Apr 18, explained Wipa Chanthong, Election Director at Patong Municipality.

The Phuket office of the Election Commission of Thailand (ECT Phuket), has confirmed only two candidates approved to contest the council seat: Siripong Kijdamnern, 47, a resident of Nanai Rd, Patong; and Chokchai Sanguanwong, 48, a resident of Phet Kut Rd, Patong.

Under election law, any election, even local council byelections, invoke a ban on the sale of alcohol in the voting district from 6pm the night before the election through to 6pm the day of the election.

However, Patong officials have yet to issue any clarification on whether this will be applied for this local election, considering the nature of the area affected.

The election notice described the boundary of the election area, which starts along the Patong beachfront and reaches back as far as Nanai Rd.

Starting at the intersection of Thaweewong Rd (the beach road) and Phra Baramree Rd, the boundary continues east along Phra Baramree Rd to the intersection of Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd.

From there it continues south along Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd to the Sai Nam Yen intersection, then travels east along Sai Nam Yen Rd to Nanai Rd.



Only two candidates will contest the council seat, which covers the heart of Patong. Images: ECT Phuket

The boundary then continues south along Nanai Rd to Khlong Thor Sung, which flows beside Nanai Rd, and continues along the canal until it reaches 50 Pi Rd. From there it continues south along 50 Pi Rd until it reaches the boundary with Chalong subdistrict, then continues west until it reaches the boundary with Karon subdistrict.

From there, the boundary returns back to the Patong beachfront and continues north along the shoreline to the starting point intersection of Thaweewong Rd with Phra Baramree Rd.

Among the roads listed to be affected by the election were: Thaweewong Rd; Muen Ngoen Rd; Rat-U-Thit 200 Pee Rd, except house numbers 21-93/4 (odd numbers); Soi Rat-U-Thit 200 Pee, Soi Rat-U-Thit 200 Pee 2; Sirirat Rd; Prachanukroh Rd, Ruamjai Rd; Bangla Rd; Phet Kut Rd; Phang Muang Sai Kor Road (Phra Metta Rd), house numbers 1-197/1 (odd numbers) and 2-234/4 (even numbers); Nanai Rd, house numbers 100-280 (even numbers) and 121-257/2; Soi Nanai 2; Chalerm Prakiat Rd; Had Patong Rd; and Sawatdirak Rd.

The Phuket News

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CONTACT US

editor@classactmedia.co.th 076 612 550

PURIYA BEAVAN
Editor**CHRIS HUSTED**
Executive Editor
084 307 7408
execeditor@classactmedia.co.th**BEN TIREBUCK**
News / Sport Editor
061 806 8132
editor3@classactmedia.co.th**CHUTHARAT 'UM' PLERIN**
Thai Editor
088 766 1615
thai@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**
THANAPONG 'OAK' KHAO-AMPHAIPHAN
Graphic designersThe Phuket News
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SAT MAY 27



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Wind 11 m/s

SUN MAY 28



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Low: +27°

Wind 11 m/s

MON MAY 29



High: +31°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

TUE MAY 30



High: +32°

Low: +27°

Wind 4 m/s

WED MAY 31



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Wind 4 m/s

THU JUNE 1



High: +30°

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Wind 4 m/s



The Toyota Hilux Vigo slammed into a roadside pole, killing two people. Image: Eakkapop Thongtub

Cable technician killed by wayward test drive

TWO PEOPLE DIED WHEN A PICKUP TRUCK slammed into a roadside pole on Thepkrasattri Rd southbound in Ratsada last Friday (May 19), resulting in the deaths of the driver and a cable technician who was climbing a ladder at the time of the accident.

Lt Col Romthiya Suwannaphan of the Phuket City Police was informed of the accident at about 12:30pm.

Officers and rescue workers arrived at the scene, in front of the Mitsubishi dealership on the side, to find a wrecked Toyota Hilux Vigo pickup truck that had crashed into a power pole.

Trapped inside the vehicle was the injured driver, 'Mr Ball' (full name and age not provided). Nearby was the body of cable technician Sornrak Phengphong, 24.

Mr Sornrak died at the scene, while Mr Ball succumbed to his injuries later.

The pickup was so badly damaged that it took rescue workers nearly an hour and a half to cut open the cabin and extract the man.

According to witnesses, Mr Ball was test-driving the Toyota Hilux Vigo, which had been brought to a local repair shop by a customer. For reasons yet to be investigated, he lost control of the vehicle at high speed, causing the pickup to collide with a road sign and then slam into the pole, instantly killing Mr Sornrak, who was climbing a ladder to perform work on the internet cables.

Video footage of the accident captured by a Ratsada Municipality's street CCTV showed and confirmed only the final part of the accident.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Guns, grenades seized as island drug busts continue

Eakkapop Thongtub
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Two fragmentation grenades along with two firearms, assorted ammunition and drugs have been seized in a series of raids conducted by Phuket Provincial Police in Wichit, Chalong and Phuket Town.

The results of the raids were announced by Phuket Provincial Police last Friday (May 19). Similar to last year's "Friday reports", exact dates of the arrests were not provided.

Pol Lt Col Pichit Thongto of the Phuket Provincial Police led all the arrests. Other high-ranking police involved in orchestrating the raids included Phuket Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Sermphan Sirikong, Gen Sermphan's deputy Col Kittipong Klaikaew, Phuket Provincial Police Chief of Investigations Col Ekaluck Boonsaengcharoen, and Deputy Chiefs of Investigations Lt Col Phairot Thanaphanathon and Lt Col Supap Saelim.

Phuket resident Suwit Anchananon, 40; Phuket resident Paradorn Dechakul, 26; and Phang Nga resident Wirairak Aninam, 21, were arrested at a rented room on Soi Boonbandan in Wichit. Items seized included a Chinese-made Type 82-2S hand grenade, a USA-made M19 A2 hand grenade, a homemade handgun (Thai Pradit), and a



Guns, grenades, ammo and drugs were seized in the raids. Photo: Phuket Provincial Police

Smith & Wesson pistol with the serial number removed.

Dozens of rounds of assorted ammunition were also seized as well as 49.3 grammes of crystal methamphetamine (ya ice) and 314 methamphetamine pills (ya bah).

The suspects were handed over to Wichit Police and charged accordingly.

During the initial interrogation, the suspect with the grenades explained that the seized explosive devices did not belong to him and that he had kept them in his house at the request of his "friend". Police did not clarify whether they found this statement to be true.

Phuket resident Sirima Saejun, 34, was arrested at an undisclosed location in Chalong. Items seized included 402 ya bah pills, 0.05g of ya ice, a "drug distribution book" and other pieces of evidence. The suspect was

handed over to Chalong Police and charged accordingly.

Phuket resident Prasert Kaew-sathorn, 40, was arrested at the Caltex gas station near Soi Ta-Ied in Chalong. Items seized included 1.02g of ya ice and other pieces of evidence. He was handed over to Chalong Police and charged accordingly.

Phuket resident Sakorn Boonyor, 45, was arrested at a house in Moo 9, Chalong, with seven ya bah pills and 0.09g of ya ice. The suspect was handed over to Chalong Police and charged accordingly.

Phuket residents Surapong Jutakornpong, 28, and Aditthep Athipongthavorn, 27, were arrested in Phuket Town for the possession of 1,174 ya bah pills and 15.18g of ya ice. Both suspects were handed over to Phuket City Police Station and charged accordingly.

One person under medical care after house fire in Kalim

OFFICIALS ARE YET TO explain what caused a residential fire in Kalim last Friday (May 19), resulting in property damage and one person being taken to the hospital due to smoke inhalation.

Patong Municipality Fire Department and other rescue workers were informed of the fire at about 5pm. Four fire trucks were dispatched to the scene, adjacent to Wada Niyatun Islamiyah Mosque in Soi Kalim 5 (Soi Prabaramee 5), a densely built-up area just north of Patong City.

According to an official incident report, the fire was "immediately suppressed". No estimation of the damage was provided, and no injuries or deaths were reported.



The fire was successfully extinguished north of Patong last Friday (May 19). Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

Rescue volunteers soon arrived and confirmed that they provided medical assistance at the scene, and one person (whose identity was not revealed) was taken to a local hospital due to smoke inhalation.

According to police, the cause of the fire remains under investigation.

Eakkapop Thongtub

FARANG AFFAIRS

By Stephff

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YOU HAVE FALLEN IN LOVE WITH YOUR BUM GUN.



Driveway down the drain

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

A long-term expat in Rawai can now barely access his home after his driveway was cut to a vertical drop of nearly one metre as the local municipality finally has the street paved.

Brett Masters, 58, is an Australian-born British national. He has been living in Phuket for 18 years, and has been living in the house, in Soi Saiyuan 15, Rawai, for the past eight years.

"The house was built 13 years ago, and was fully approved by Rawai Municipality at the time," Brett explains.

At that time, the driveway was nearly perfectly street level. Since work on paving the street began late December, the road has been graded down, and now the freshly installed roadside drains are three feet three inches (99.06cm) vertically below the driveway, cut at the very edge of Brett's property line.

"Me and my girlfriend came back from a holiday to Koh Payam, and we could not even get into the house," Brett notes.

After much discussion, the contractor finally set down concrete 'ballast blocks' (lengths of concrete slab) for Brett and his girlfriend to use as a makeshift ramp to access their home. Two of the three slabs are placed alongside each

other. The third slab leaves a dangerous gap to navigate when they leave the house or come home.

Brett contacted Rawai Municipality to explain what had happened, but Rawai Mayor Aroon Solos was too busy, so he was directed to speak with a civil works officer.

Speaking through the Rawai Municipality public relations officer, who can speak English, the civil works officer offered only one answer to Brett's appeals to fix the problem: "Cannot".

Brett, who lived and worked in the United States as general contractor in construction for 17 years, pointed out that all that was required to was take some of the "fill" from the bottom of the street to raise the grade, and the problem would be solved.

The "fill" is the accumulation of years of the municipality fixing holes left in the street during the rainy season. However, all that was accomplished by those efforts was that with each heavy downpour the "fill" washed downhill, where it remained.

A second visit to Rawai Municipality about a week later returned the same results. The civil works officer said for Brett to just change the driveway gradient on his own property to match the street, and repeated that it was not his problem.

However, this time the civil



The installation of the drains has left a vertical drop of nearly one metre deep. Photo: Supplied

works officer also said he had tried to call Brett many times, but Brett's phone shows no evidence of any of the "attempts" even reaching his phone.

The civil works officer also threatened to sue Brett over the driveway originally extending beyond his property line – despite the house being fully approved by Rawai Municipality at the time the house was built.

The civil works officer even said that Brett made no attempts to inform Rawai Municipality of the problem – despite three posts highlighting the problem being posted on Rawai Municipality official Facebook page proving

otherwise.

"All you have to do is raise it up two feet. Reuse the fill that's still down the street. It would not cost much money, and would not take long," Brett told *The Phuket News*.

"If they did it two weeks ago it would have been easy. Now they have installed drains past the home, and the problem is bigger," he added.

Even the contractor agreed about the simple fix – but the decision to change anything

to do with the construction of the street remained at the discretion of Rawai Municipality, Brett noted.

Brett also confirmed with the contractor that the level that the street is at now is where it will be when the street is to be completed. There will not be any extra fill or layering to raise the street, only a layer of concrete has yet to be applied.

"They will remove the existing dirt that remains above the drains then lay wire on the road and pour concrete over that and call it a road," he said.

Brett has tried lawyers, but there has been a clear lack of interest in taking up his case. "Two lawyers just walked away," he said.

Now the support pillar for the fence to Brett's home is starting to crack. The trench for the drains has been excavated right on the property line, leaving the boundary fence wall at risk of collapsing.

"It will cost B100,000 to rebuild the boundary fence wall and a further B150,000 to excavate and rebuild the driveway so it can safely reach the street and install a new gate, which will have to be a concertina type gate in order

to open with the new space restrictions," Brett explained.

"Further excavation of the front of the property will be needed if we want to avoid banging the car doors on the ground when getting in and out of the car," he added.

"When I spoke to them, fixing this was very, very cheap. Now I don't know what to do," Brett said.

"The initial cost to raise the street level would have been about B20,000-30,000," Brett added.

Now he is facing about a quarter of a million baht to fix the problem.

Brett told *The Phuket News* that his intention of going public with the problem created by Rawai Municipality was to warn other people what may lay in store more than 10 years after moving into their home.

"If this is part of owning your own home in Thailand, people should know about it," he said.

Brett invites anyone who has serious suggestions that might help restore safe access to his home because of a problem he had no part in creating to email him at bmasters150665@gmail.com.

Peranakan Festival to celebrate island's Chinese heritage

THE ANNUAL CHINESE WEDDING event returns to Phuket this year with a brand-new addition for a broader audience. Announced earlier this week, the Phuket Peranakan Festival will be held from June 23-25 to celebrate the island's unique Chinese heritage and showcase that the province is more than just a 'sun-sea-sand' destination.

The festival will take place on the Sino-Portuguese streets of Phuket's Old Town and is organised by the Phuket Provincial Government and the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) in conjunction with the Thai Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB).

The event aims to showcase the sustainability of Phuket's Old Town community, elevate the level of organisation of local art and cultural festivals in Phuket, and promote the cultural heritage and appeal of the province for the mutual benefit of all parties.

Phuket City Municipality, Phuket Peranakan Association and the Thai International Fairs and Festivals Promotion Trade Association are also participating in organising the festival.

In addition to the economic benefits in



The first Chinese heritage festival will be held in Phuket Town from June 23-25. Photo: Phuket Peranakan Festival

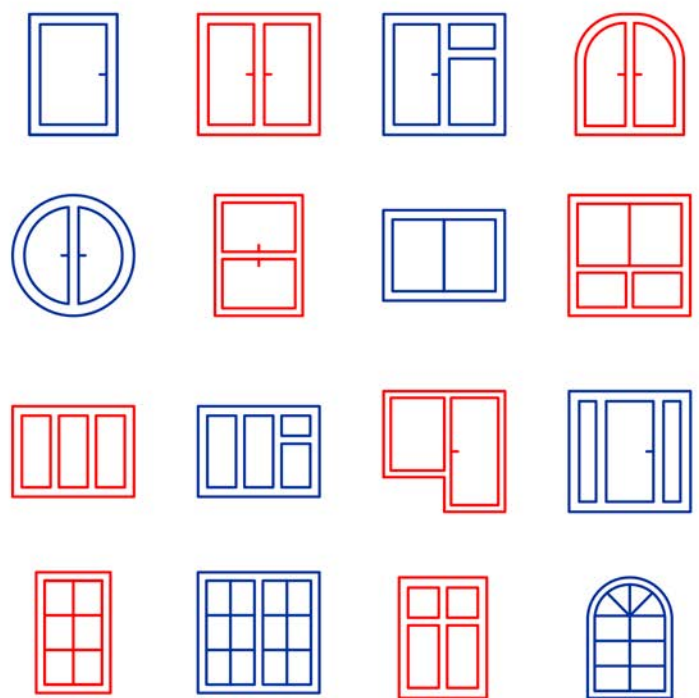
creating job opportunities and generating income for Phuket residents through tourism, the festival aims to strengthen the "City's DNA" by highlighting its integral and indispensable Chinese heritage, known as Baba-Nyonya or Peranakan, which is how the descendants of Chinese emigrants refer to themselves.

The confirmed highlights of the festival include a 'World Phuket Peranakan Carnival' (historical and cultural parade) through Phuket Town on June 24, from 5pm to 6:30pm. There will also be daily street performances, light shows and live entertainment on Thalang Rd and Soi Rommanee from June 23-25, from 4pm to 6:30pm.

The Phuket News



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Cruise liner stops off in Phuket

THE CRUISE LINER *Mein Schiff 5*, operated by TUI Cruises, arrived in Phuket last week, bringing more than 2,000 tourists to the island.

The ship, stretching 295 metres long and some 36m across, anchored in Ao Makham, off Cape Panwa on May 15.

Present in person to welcome the ship and all the guests arriving on the island was Phuket Marine Chief Natchapong Pranit and a team of Marine Office officials.

Mr Natchapong said that Phuket welcomed the first post-pandemic cruise liner visit in October last year.

Since then, Phuket has welcomed some 160,000 tourists arriving by cruise liner, bringing a welcome boost to the island's economy.

"The cruise liners usually drop anchor at Ao Makham and Patong, and are considered a good sign for the Phuket tourism industry," he said.

Launched in 2016, the



Photo: PR Phuket

Mein Schiff 5 can carry a full complement of 2,534 passengers and 1,030 crew.

The ship arrived in Phuket from Langkawi as it was serving a 60-day transit from Hong Kong to Heraklion on the island of Crete, in Greece. The *Mein Schiff 5* stopped off at Samui earlier this month.

The ship departed Phuket late May 16, with the ship was rounding the northern tip of Sumatra as it headed back to the Mediterranean.

According to Phuket Immigration, Phuket welcomed 12 cruise liners in March. However, as Phuket starts to enter its rainy season, Phuket welcomed only six cruise liners in April, Phuket Immigration reported. *The Phuket News*

Housing market forecast for 'double digit drop'

Bangkok Post

The housing market will need to rely on foreign demand to stimulate growth, as domestic buyers are facing challenges in obtaining loans, evidenced by a decline in residential transfers in the first quarter of 2023.

Vichai Viratkapan, acting director-general of the Real Estate Information Center (REIC), said the market in the first quarter was not as good as many developers had estimated in the fourth quarter of last year.

"The figures in the first quarter, both in terms of supply and demand, showed negative trends," he said. "The market is expected to have a double-digit decline this year, influenced by the expiration of the easing of the loan-to-value (LTV) limits at the end of last year."

In the first quarter, the total number of housing transfers nationwide dropped 0.8% to 84,619 units from 85,320 units recorded during the same period last year.

However, there was an 8% increase in value, reaching



Photo: Bangkok Post

B241 billion from B223bn, driven primarily by units in the high-priced segments.

Housing units priced between B7.5-10 million had a notable increase of 34%, and those priced above B10mn saw a rise of 22.6%. However, units priced below B3mn recorded decreases, ranging from 0.2% to 11.4%.

Out of the total units and value transferred in the first quarter of 2023, 3,775 units, accounting for 4.46% and valued at B17.1bn (7.1%), were purchased by foreign buyers.

All of these units were condos with an increase from

2.47% in terms of volume and 4.57% in terms of value in the same period of last year.

Among the foreign nationalities purchasing properties, Chinese nationals were the largest group, purchasing 1,747 units valued at B8.2bn, representing 46% and 48% of total purchases by foreign nationals, respectively.

Russian buyers accounted for 10% with 387 units worth B1.36bn, followed by American purchasers with 156 units valued at B703mn, accounting for 4% each.

The fourth and fifth positions were occupied by British

and German buyers, with 146 units worth B653mn and 131 units worth B611mn, respectively.

Eighth place belonged to purchasers from Myanmar with 76 units worth B497mn.

The total number of land allocation permits nationwide or those for the development of low-rise houses saw a decline of 13.6% to 15,267 units.

This decrease can primarily be attributed to developers' lack of confidence in demand following the expiration of the easing of the LTV limits last year.

"At present, it is difficult to predict the market conditions for 2023, as the positive and negative factors cannot be accurately identified until the new government is established," he said.

REIC anticipates a 10.2% drop in the total number of residential transfers nationwide and a 4.5% decline in their overall value.

The forecast for the total number of newly launched residential units in Greater Bangkok is projected to be 98,132 units, valued at B505bn.

Vietjet's first flight from Hanoi arrives

VIETJET'S INAUGURAL direct flight from Hanoi arrived in Phuket last Friday (May 19), bringing 94 passengers to the island, reported the Airports of Thailand Phuket branch (AoT Phuket).

Flight VJ927 departed from Hanoi on the HAN-HKT route, landing at Gate 15 at Phuket International Airport at 2:15pm.

The 94 passengers on board were warmly welcomed and presented with gifts by the official representatives from Phuket International Airport led by Phuket Vice Governor Danai Sunantarod.

Vietjet has become the first airline to offer a direct service between Hanoi and Phuket. An Airbus A320 departs Noi Bai International Airport at 11:35am with a scheduled landing at 2:40pm. The plane then takes off for the return journey at 5:45pm, with a scheduled arrival at 6:35pm.

Vietjet currently operates the only direct route between Ho Chi Minh City and Phuket, offering two-hour flights daily. In addition to Phuket, the airline provides weekly flights from Vietnam's major cities to Bangkok, as well as a flight from Ho Chi Minh City to Chiang Mai in Northern Thailand.



Vietjet's first passengers from Hanoi are welcomed to Phuket. Photo: AoT Phuket

10MN TOURISTS SINCE JANUARY

Thailand has welcomed almost 10 million foreign tourists since January, generating about B391 billion in revenue. The government expects the number of Chinese tourists to reach 7mn this year.

Deputy government spokeswoman Traisuree Taisaranakul last Saturday (May 20) said that 9.47mn foreign tourists visited Thailand from Jan 1 to May 15, mainly from East Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia.

The government has ordered affiliated agencies to enhance support for incoming tourists, particularly Chinese visitors, to boost tourism growth. According to the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Thailand expects to see over 5.3mn Chinese tourists visiting the country. The

figure might even reach 7mn if supported by other tourism incentives, Ms Traisuree added.

Meanwhile, the Economics Tourism and Sports Division of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports said there were 415,309 foreign tourists visiting Thailand during May 8-14, or almost 59,329 people per day.

Most are from Southeast Asia, East Asia and South Asia. The top-five international tourists arriving in Thailand by nationality are Malaysians, Chinese, Indians, Lao and South Koreans, making up to 47.5% of all international tourists.

The division said that even though Thailand is entering its low season and the number of tourists is expected to fall gradually, there are many incentives to attract foreign tourists.

Nonetheless, Thailand's tourism also is affected by external factors including the world economy, which is facing negative pressure from the US debt ceiling talks, high inflation and the Russian-Ukrainian War, said the division.

Marisa Sukosol Nunbhakdi, president of the Thai Hotels Association (THA), said Thailand's tourism will slow down in the latter half of the year. *The Phuket News*

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Coalition hopefuls unveil pact

BANGKOK

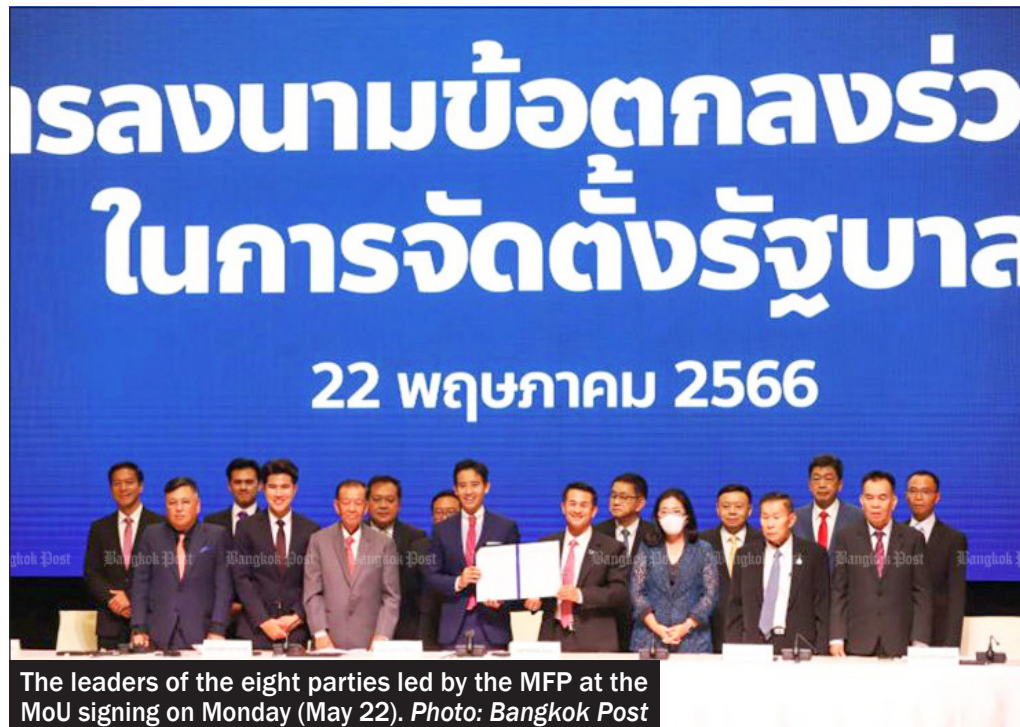
Bangkok Post

The Move Forward Party (MFP) has given assurances that its government's policies will not harm the country's constitutional monarchy.

However, party leader, Pita Limjaroenrat, said on Monday (May 22) that moves to amend the lese majeste law will continue, but the party will be alone in the task.

An eight-party alliance led by the MFP has signed a pact outlining the working agenda of their proposed coalition government. The 23-point memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed by the MFP, Pheu Thai, Prachachart, Thai Sang Thai, Seri Ruam Thai, Fair, Palang Sangkhom Mai and Pheu Thai Ruam Phalang parties omitted amending Section 112, known as the lese majeste law.

Among the key items, however, is a charter rewrite, reinstatement of cannabis as a narcotic drug, replacing military conscription with voluntary recruitment, and pushing for a same-sex marriage law without forcing compliance by



The leaders of the eight parties led by the MFP at the MoU signing on Monday (May 22). Photo: Bangkok Post

people who consider it against their religion.

As he announced the completion of their agreement, Mr Pita said it was a historic day because it marked a peaceful transition in Thai politics. The signing was arranged to coincide with the ninth anniversary of the May 22, 2014 coup.

"The purpose of the MoU is to gather common agendas that we agree to push through government and parliament.

It's our collective responsibility," he said at the press conference.

Mr Pita said every party agreed that the core policies the coalition members all agreed to back must not affect the democratic system with the king as head of state, and the revered status of the king cannot be violated.

According to the source, the signed MoU slightly differed from the version seen by the media. The item on

"administration of justice for cases involving expressions of political views" was dropped.

The source said Pheu Thai reportedly disagreed with an amnesty plan since the coalition talks began due to concerns about conflict of interest and the MFP eventually agreed to exclude it from the MoU.

Asked about the lese majeste law, Mr Pita said the draft law, which was submitted to the House in February 2021, would be pushed by the party,

and he expected its passage.

He said that under the MoU, coalition partners could push their own agendas as long as they did not contradict the MoU, and the MFP would continue to push for all policies it had campaigned on.

The MFP leader played down speculation he would not receive support from senators, saying the working teams would hold talks with the Senate to allay any concerns senators might have over the MFP's plans.

Mr Pita brushed off a rumour that Pheu Thai was in talks with the Palang Pracharath Party (PPRP) to form a rival coalition, saying the eight parties were solid.

He said it was premature to discuss the allocation of Cabinet portfolios and the House speaker post following reports that he would oversee the Defence Ministry.

EC PROBE

Meanwhile, the Election Commission (EC) is expected to rule on whether Mr Pita was eligible to run in the election, due to his ownership of shares in a media company.

A rival lawmaker said the shares were not declared to

the authorities before he was sworn in as an MP in the 2019 election.

A source said the commission is in the middle of examining a petition filed by Ruangkrai Leekitwattana, a Palang Pracharath Party (PPRP) MP, who reported Mr Pita to the poll agency for failing to declare his ownership of 42,000 shares in iTV, a registered media company, to the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) before he took office as an MP in 2019. The shares are valued at B5 apiece.

The petition also raised the question whether the registration of MFP's MP candidates in all 400 constituencies could also be declared invalid if Mr Pita, who approved their registrations, is disqualified over the iTV shareholding issue.

Mr Pita previously said he does not own the shares, as he inherited them from his father. The shares were listed under his name as he was appointed the executor of his late father's estate. He had explained the matter to the poll body before he was sworn in.

The law prohibits shareholders in media firms from becoming MPs.

Bangkok Pride sets sights on hosting world event parade

BANGKOK

A PRIDE PARADE IS planned for June 4 in Bangkok under the theme of "Door to Equal Asia" as Thailand aims to host World Pride 2028.

Waaddao Chumaporn, Bangkok Pride founder, said on Monday (May 22) that the parade will be bigger than last year's, showcasing Thailand's readiness to host the 2028 World Pride event.

Ms Waaddao said this year's event is co-hosted with Naruemit Pride, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA), over 40 civil society organisations and members of the private and public sectors.

The parade will feature six groups of marchers, each representing one of the six colours of the pride flag, displaying key messages on the importance of health and wellbeing in the LGBTQ+ community, she said.

The parade will also show pro-social justice messages for others, including those living with disabilities and ethnic minorities.

"Starting at 2pm on June 4, [people will march] from the Pathumwan intersection



Photo: Bangkok Post

in front of Bangkok Arts and Cultural Center and proceed to the Ratchaprasong intersection," Ms Waaddao said.

"Last year, about 20,000 people attended the march at Silom Road," she added. "For this year, we aim for 20,000 marchers and 100,000 spectators.

"We will have about 2,000 volunteers who will take care of the parade," she said. "We also have the supervision of the Metropolitan Police Bureau and the BMA."

Ms Waaddao explained that 38 organisations will join the parade to show support for LGBTQ+ rights, including officials from the National Human Rights Commission, the Justice Ministry, UN agencies and diplomats from various embassies.

Thailand has a strong potential to serve LGBTQ+ people around the world due to its

tolerance for LGBTQ+ people, she said, calling the country a "safe space" for LGBTQ+ people in the world, especially for those from intolerant countries.

Thailand could tap into the LGBTQ+ tourist market through the tourism, entertainment, media and health and wellness industries, she added.

Other parades will be held in the provinces as well to promote awareness and tolerance, she explained. Also, the Naruemit Pride group will organise an art exhibition called "Road to Bangkok World Pride 2028" on May 29 in front of the BACC building, Ms Waaddao said.

"Pride parade is not only about celebrating who we are but also about elevating the livelihoods of the LGBTQ+ community," she said. "We also want to signal to the government to accelerate LGBTQ+ laws to ensure that our country becomes truly LGBTQ+ friendly.

"If we can celebrate pride every year, we will open the door of equality to neighbouring countries, and it will show our readiness to become the 2028 World Pride host."

Bangkok Post

Safety measures implemented at Tham Luang cave ahead of reopening

CHIANG RAI

THE DEPARTMENT of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation announced the implementation of safety measures on Monday (May 22) in preparation for the reopening of Chiang Rai's Tham Luang Cave in July.

The cave gained global attention in 2018 when 12 young Wild Boars football players and their coach were trapped inside for 18 days due to flooding, ultimately leading to a successful rescue operation.

Currently, only the exhibition zone and the area in front of the cave are accessible to the public. However, starting in July, the first cave chamber, which stretches approximately 150 meters, will be opened to visitors. Each visiting group will be limited to a maximum of 25 people, with each round of exploration lasting 30 minutes.

To manage the flow of tourists, authorities have

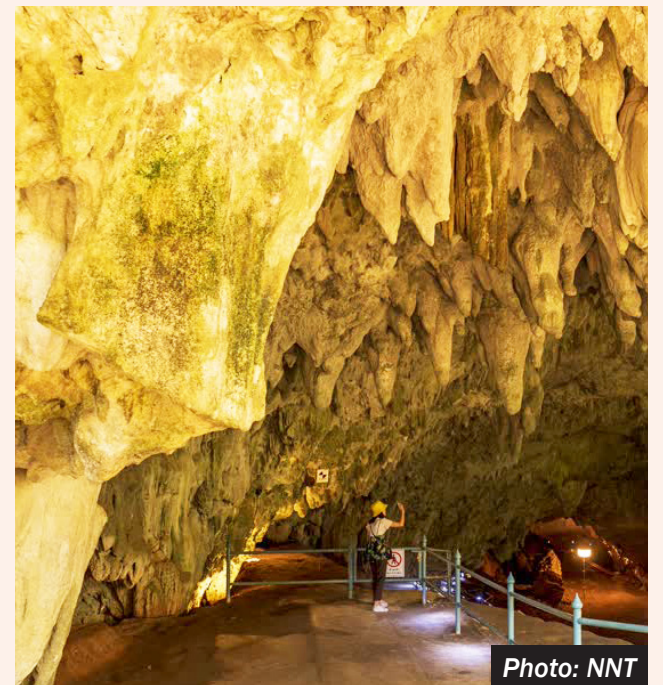


Photo: NNT

established a daily limit of 16 rounds, permitting up to 400 visitors to enter the first chamber each day. For the second chamber, only four groups consisting of 15 individuals will be granted access on a daily basis.

To secure entry, applications must be submitted at least one week in advance. The third chamber will be reserved exclusively for re-

searchers and experts, who are required to submit a letter to the department at least 30 days prior to their visit.

By carefully managing the number of visitors and controlling the duration of each visit, authorities seek to maintain a balance between safety and providing an opportunity for people to experience the cave's natural wonders. NNT



Photos: Vinnie Modell



Ready for snake season

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

As with each year, when the annual rains return in May, snakes across the island will be on the move, often finding their way into people's homes. "It's actually happening already," says long-term Phuket expat and snake wrangler Vinnie Modell. "Although we are not seeing juvenile snakes at the moment, I am being called out to large snakes. There are a selection of snakes you will see all year – monocled cobras, pythons,

golden tree snakes and rat snakes," he explains.

Vinnie has nearly a decade of experience of removing snakes from people's homes. During his years as a volunteer with rescue workers, his Thai colleagues called on him to remove snakes on call-outs due to his experience. This became so common he was given the nickname the "Snake Guy in Phuket".

But as we get deeper into the rainy season, the most common highly venomous snake commonly found on Phuket, the monocled cobra, will be more prevalent in venturing into new areas. Baby cobras start to leave the nest and embark on life journeys of

their own, often entering new areas in search of food and shelter.

"Monocled cobras nest normally underground in rats nests, etc. As the rain starts and the nest floods, the snakes make their way out to find safety. This is especially with juveniles as they are looking for somewhere safe to hide," Vinnie explains.

"They are not looking for humans or pets to bite. In fact you are very unlikely to be bitten by any snake, especially monocled cobras, unless you are trying to interact with them," he adds.

"The monocled cobra mates in Thailand in the months of December and January. After about two months of mating, the females lay between 10 and 30 eggs. The eggs are laid in moderately damp soil, under heaps of leaves or stones, in the spaces of hollow trees, in rat holes, and in spaces under houses.

"Depending on the temperature, the eggs incubate from between 50 and 60 days. The young animals are long, between 25 and 30 centimetres, and identical in colouring and appearance to the adults," Vinnie explains.

Vinnie rates the Top 5 snakes that people should keep an eye out for as:

- Golden Tree Snake (*Chrysopelea ornata*)
- Low Venomous, Non Dangerous Biter
- Oriental Rat Snake (*Ptyas mucosa*)
- Non Venomous, Non Dangerous Biter
- Reticulated Python (*Malayopython reticulatus*)
- Non Venomous, Dangerous Biter
- Monocled Cobra (*Naja kaouthia*)
- Highly Venomous
- King Cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*)
- Highly Venomous

While people have posted online many different ways to prevent and/or discourage snakes away from your home, Vinnie's advice is simple, and drawn from experience: "The use of lime, sulphur, etc, in my opinion doesn't work. I've seen way too many snakes passing straight over these 'defences'. The only line of defence is good housekeeping. Keeping the area clean and tidy, with as many hiding places removed as possible."

Asked what to do inside your home to make it less inviting for snakes, Vinnie continues: "The same answer for all these issues is good housekeeping, keeping rats, mice, frogs etc out of and away from your home. If you have food

waste that attracts rats, mice, etc, you will find snakes following."

If you do find a snake in your home: "Stop, breathe, think, act. Do not become hyperactive."

Also note the snake's colour and any distinguishing markings. Correctly identifying a snake can save a lot of bother, and may become vital later, if things go terribly wrong.

If people are very confident they have identified a non-dangerous snake, Vinnie urges people to simply "encourage" the snake to leave without calling rescue workers.

"These critters move quickly. If you recognise a low-threat snake, such as the golden tree snake – one of the most common snakes to find in the home – use a broom to gently push it toward the exit. They will generally be happy to go with it," he says.

Doing so will save rescue workers time, and leave them free to respond to emergencies. They never know when they will be called to a real emergency.

Other good advice is to be polite, and offer the rescue workers a small something as a thank you for removing the snake. Most people do this, but it is worth remembering the favour they have just done for you.

If people have any doubt about which type of snake they are dealing with, there is only one option: Call Vinnie or your local rescue service.

In the case that you are bitten by a snake, Vinnie has a checklist to follow:

- 1, Stop, breathe and relax.
- 2, Do nothing that will increase heart rate (slows down the movement of possible venom in the body).
- 3, If possible get a photo of the snake from a safe distance (If it has disappeared, do not go looking for it).
- 4, Call EMS (Emergency Medical Service) or have someone take you to the nearest hospital or clinic.
- 5, Do not guess about what bit you. Be honest, it is in your benefit.
- 6, Listen to the doctor. Remain calm – they are the doctor, not you. If you need antivenom, it will be provided.
- 7, Be polite and courteous. They will call the police if you become aggressive or shout.

Vinnie can be contacted via Tel: 080-8648092 (Whatsapp) or via the 'Snake Guy in Phuket' Facebook page. He also offers snake surveying services to check your home and garden to see if there are any major snake-related issues.

Where to eat in PHUKET

May/June 2023 issue

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Thailand's International Ballet Week!

ADVERTORIAL

In December 2023, Bangkok and Phuket will host a unique event – the tour of the St Petersburg State Academic Ballet Theatre, named after Leonid Yakobson, as part of the Russian Ballet Week in Thailand.

The festival of Russian ballet will be an incredible combination of history and modern culture. It will include entertainment and magnificent performances by world-class artists.

Two performances will take place in Bangkok on the 19th and 20th of December: 'Swan Lake' and 'The Nutcracker'. On the 23rd and 24th of December, for the first time in the history of Phuket and the southern part of Thailand, these performances will be shown in the open air. The performances will be accompanied by the Bangkok Royal Symphony Orchestra with invited conductor Valery Ovsyannikov.

'Swan Lake' and 'The Nutcracker' are works that have become real legends of ballet culture. They will open a world of grace, elegance and beauty to the audience.

Classical choreography and impeccable orchestral accompaniment in Swan Lake. The St Petersburg State Academic Ballet Theatre, named after Leonid Yakobson, is an amazing, unforgettable reflection of the traditional ballet school recognised all over the world. The production was created by the ballet master Marius Petipa. It is the story of Princess Odette, who turns into a swan every



night, and her love for the Prince.

The Nutcracker is a world-famous ballet created by the great ballet master Marius Petipa. It is loved by children and adults all year round. The subtle psychology of the characters and their movements, the brilliant theatricality of the director, the amazing costumes. The Nutcracker is the story of a girl called Clara. During the Christmas holidays, she travels to a fantastic world.

State Academic Ballet Theatre of St Petersburg:

The St Petersburg State Academic Ballet Theatre, named after Leonid Yakobson, has a 50-year history and bears the name of an outstanding Russian choreographer of the 20th century. The first ballet company of the Theatre was founded on 12 November, 1966, ordered by the Ministry of Culture of the USSR and named 'Choreographic Miniatures'. Today, the St Petersburg State Academic Ballet Theatre's collective and school are



among the strongest in Russia and the world.

Since 2011 the theatre's artistic director has been Honoured Artist of Russia Andrian Guryevich Fadeev. He preserves and develops traditions. The company is made up of students from the best schools of choreography as well as experienced teachers. With classical productions of Russian ballet, the troupe actively tours the world. Leading Russian artists and directors create the costumes and sets.

Bangkok Royal Symphony Orchestra:

The Bangkok Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1982 under the royal patronage of Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn. In 1985, it was registered as the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra Foundation, and since 2016 it has been called the 'Bangkok Royal Symphony Orchestra'. Since 15 April 2018, it has been under the patronage of Princess Sirivanavari Nariratana Rajakanya.

In Phuket, the performances will

take place at Laguna Grove, the first integrated complex in Asia. It is ideally located on the northwest coast of Phuket in the Bang Tao area. Art of Events has developed a unique stage, partners and boxes to create the atmosphere of a true classical theatre. Guests will be able to enjoy the ballet.

This event will be a meeting of the cultures of two nations and an incomparable experience, conceived and implemented by Art of Events with the aim of supporting and expanding Thai-Russian relations.

The ballet is organised by Art of Events, one of the leading companies in the organisation of unique events in South East Asia and the Middle East, including celebrity concerts, music festivals, shows, exclusive events and other large-scale events.

The specialists at Art of Events Entertainment have impeccable taste and skill. They create unique and unforgettable events that are remembered for a lifetime. Their professionalism and attention to detail guarantee that every event is organised at the highest level.

The performances of the St Petersburg State Academic Ballet Theatre in honour of Leonid Yakobson are under the patronage of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Thailand.

Phuket - Laguna Grove, Lagoon Rd, Choeng Thale, Thalang district,

Ticket «Swan Lake» Phuket - <https://tinyurl.com/2p5tw92e>

Ticket «The Nutcracker» Phuket - <https://tinyurl.com/2z5kfpd6>

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POP QUIZ

- 1. What is the scientific name for the boa constrictor snake?
- 2. In 1960, which country experienced the most powerful earthquake ever recorded?
- 3. Carlos Irwin Estevez is better known by what stage name?
- 4. What was Mary Read famous for during the early 18th century?
- 5. The bombardment of which sea fort started the American Civil War?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Easy

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across

 - 1. Auricular
 - 5. Liq. measures
 - 9. Deity to many
 - 14. "Tain't nothin'!"
 - 15. Unit of distance, in astronomy
 - 16. Flat paper?
 - 17. Some are marches
 - 20. Permeate
 - 21. English satirist
 - 22. Cheer starter
 - 23. Ukraine's capital
 - 26. A shot
 - 27. Rough stuff
 - 28. Dreamy-eyed
 - 32. Girl in a gown
 - 34. Rah-rah
 - 35. "Gimme ___!" (start of an Iowa State cheer)
 - 36. Stir up, in a way
 - 40. Follows a 1960's slogan
 - 44. Polished
 - 45. Roth ___
 - 46. Next in line?
 - 47. Meet
 - 49. Entrusts
 - 51. School of thought
 - 54. Veteran
 - 56. Sibyl
- Down

 - 1. Stone of many Libras
 - 2. Stereo knob
 - 3. Letter before kappa
 - 4. Songbirds
 - 5. Govt. property org.
 - 6. Lending letters
 - 7. Reindeer herder
 - 8. Sharpen
 - 9. Sidekick
 - 10. Majors in acting
 - 11. It's catching
 - 12. Out of bed
 - 13. 1946 Literature Nobel
- 57. Mozart's "L___ del Cairo"
 - 58. Set apart
 - 60. Port of old Rome
 - 64. Debate strenuously
 - 68. Venusian, e.g.
 - 69. Skinny
 - 70. Biblical heirs (with "the")
 - 71. Bead material
 - 72. Anatomical network
 - 73. Nestling hawk
- 18. Spiny shrub
 - 19. Type of column
 - 24. Card catalog abbr.
 - 25. Trattoria order
 - 28. Butts
 - 29. Like an oxyeye window
 - 30. Huckabee
 - 31. Kind of center
 - 33. Annoying
 - 37. Actor Wilson
 - 38. Aforementioned
 - 39. Muffs
 - 41. Snowfield lander
 - 42. "Aeneid" figure
 - 43. Specify
 - 48. Cargo boat type
 - 50. Feline line
 - 51. Resident of the 29th state
 - 52. Cochlea canal
 - 53. Word with kingdom or marker
 - 55. Walking ___
 - 59. Sea flier
 - 61. Low part of a hand
 - 62. Suggestion
 - 63. Solicits
 - 65. Sonnet ending
 - 66. Poetic adverb
 - 67. Other side

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz: 1) Boa constrictor; 2) Chile (9.4-9.6 on the moment magnitude scale); 3) Charlie Sheen; 4) Piracy; 5) Fort Sumter

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14					15					16				
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64					65					66	67			
68							69						70	
71							72						73	

Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

14

percent is how much travel times were reduced in Los Angeles in 2013 when it became the first city to install traffic lights that make automatic adjustments based on car flow.

72

percent of US police officers claim that their poorly performing colleagues were not held accountable, according to a Pew Research Center survey in 2018.

450

kilograms is how much the heart of an adult blue whale weighs. It's about the size of a VW Beetle car.

7,300

percent more than the cost of sending the equivalent amount of data is what phone companies charge for sending texts.

360,000

lives were saved by the horror-movie 'SAW' franchise as people were able to donate blood in exchange for a free movie ticket. More than 120,000 pints of blood were donated.

Source: Uberfacts

ISLAND VIEW



Panwa sunset. Photo by Marco Capriz

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

This week in history

- May 26, 1897**
The novel 'Dracula', by Irish author Bram Stoker, is published.
- May 27, 1907**
Bubonic plague breaks out in San Francisco.
- May 28, 1588**
The Spanish Armada, with 130 ships and 30,000 men, sets sail from Lisbon, Portugal, heading for the English Channel.

- May 29, 1953**
Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay become the first people to reach the summit of Mount Everest, on Tenzing Norgay's (adopted) 39th birthday.
- May 30, AD 70**
Siege of Jerusalem: Titus and his Roman legions breach the Second Wall of Jerusalem. Jewish defenders retreat to the First Wall. The Romans



Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay.

build a circumvallation, cutting down all trees within 15km.

- May 31, 1927**
The last Ford Model T rolls off the assembly line after a production run of 15,007,003 vehicles.
- June 1, 2001**
Nepalese royal massacre: Crown Prince Dipendra of Nepal shoots and kills several members of his family, including his father and mother.

Source: Wikipedia

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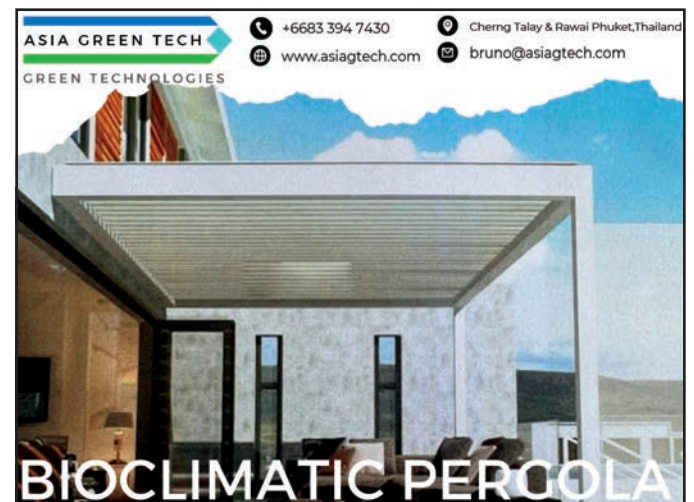
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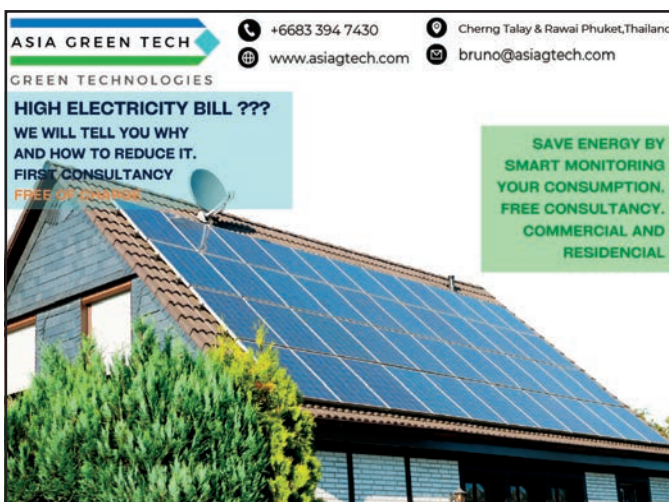
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FRI 26 MAY

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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

JOINT CHAMBERS PHUKET SUNDOWNERS
Friday 26th May 2023
18:00 - 21:00 hrs.
2nd Floor, The Garden, Blue Tree
500 THB for AustCham members, partner Chambers' members, and Australian Alumni Members
800 THB for non-members

Joint Chambers Phuket Sundowners hosted by AustCham

AustCham Thailand, in collaboration with Australian Alumni, American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand (AMCHAM), British Chamber of Commerce Thailand (BCCT), Belgian-Luxembourg/Thai Chamber of Commerce, CanCham Thailand, Franco-Thai Chamber of Commerce (FTCC), German-Thai Chamber of Commerce (GTCC), Netherlands-Thai Chamber of Commerce (NTCC), Phuket Chamber of Commerce and Thai-Swedish Chamber of Commerce, invite you to join us for Joint Chamber Phuket Sundowners at The Garden, 2nd Floor, Blue Tree Phuket, from 18.00 - 21.00 hrs. THB 500 for AustCham members, partner Chambers' members, and Australian Alumni Members and THB 900 THB for non-members. www.austchamthailand.com/event/

MON 29 MAY

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shakersphuket@gmail.com
FB: shakersphuket

Monday BBQ Night

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FRI 2 JUN



Grow Boating Evening

We look forward to seeing you at the Grow Boating Evening at the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar at the Phuket Boat Lagoon from 5pm on Friday the 2nd of June. We are delighted to announce that Phuket Boat Lagoon will be sponsoring both the drinks and the food for the evening. See www.phuketboatlagoon.com There will be a delicious finger food buffet for all attendees and if you are still hungry then there will be burgers for just 100 baht. As always, all your favourite beverages will be available from the bar. Come and join in the fun, everyone is welcome and there is no entry fee and if you know anyone you think would be interested in coming, please invite them along. A special thanks to our Media Partners - The Phuket News and Live 89.5 Radio

JOINT CHAMBERS MEMBERS BRIEFING - EMPOWER YOUR BRAIN
Friday 26th May 2023
16:30 - 18:00 hrs.
3rd Floor, Three House - Blue Tree Phuket
Free of charge for AustCham members, Partner Chambers' members and Australian Alumni's members

AUSTCHAM Members Briefing - Empower Your Brain

Most of us are aware that keeping our bodies physically active is important to remain healthy and prevent illness. This is the same approach that we need to take for brain health too. Brain health is a critical piece of your overall health. It underlies your ability to communicate, make decisions, problem-solve and live a productive and useful life. Join our upcoming event where these topics of common brain diseases in working ages and ways to keep your brain healthy will be shared by Dr Chakorn Chansakul, Neurologist from Bangkok Hospital. Event location: Tree House, 3rd Floor, Blue Tree Phuket. 16:30 - 18:00 hrs. Free of charge for AustCham members, partner Chambers' members, and Australian Alumni Members. www.austchamthailand.com/event

SUN 28 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

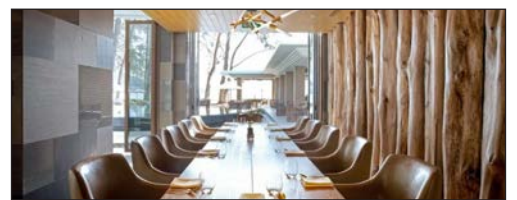
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Wednesday BBQ Night

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

THU 8 JUN



La Chaine des Rotisseurs Phuket Dinner - Jun 2023

The 2023 Michelin Guide-recommended Thai fine-dining restaurant, Jaras Restaurant, in Kamala, will be the venue for the Thursday June 08, 2023 dinner. An amazing menu, with paired drinks, has been created specifically for the La Chaine des Rotisseurs Phuket Dinner. Dress code - Jacket's optional for men, no jeans, with Chaine ribbon. Members - THB 6,000 p.p., limited invited guests - THB 6,900 p.p. To book your seat at this very special dinner, please visit - phuketticketmaster.com *Pay via Bank Transfer and only pay the dinner price, booking fees only apply to other payment options. cuisine@chainephuket.com, 093 581 1494

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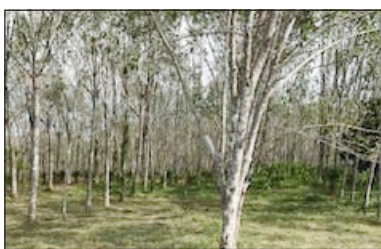
Excellent condition; purchased 2016 with 8000km; local driving only by elderly driver; 112000km; camera; BMW service; leaving Thailand. B750,000. John.johnhkt2560@icloud.com, 0869890919

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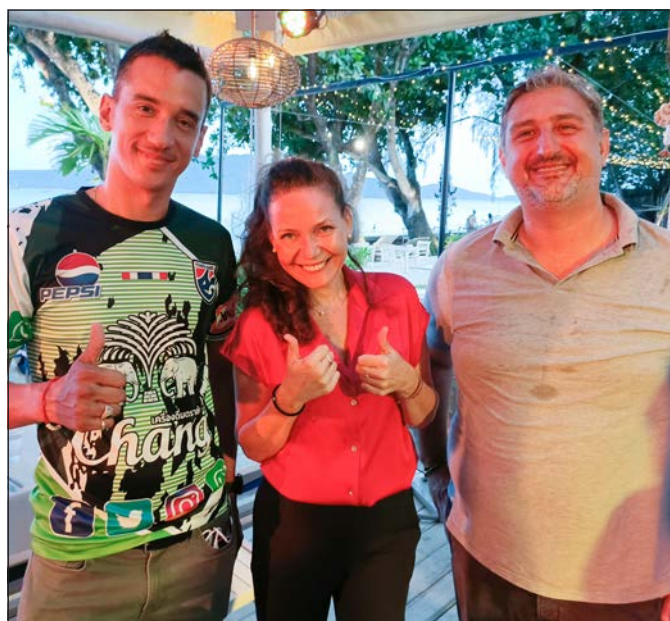
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LA CHAINE DES ROTISSEURS PHUKET DINNER - MAY

Phuket's iconic dining establishment since 1991, Siam Supper Club, was the venue for the Thursday, May 11 dinner. An amazing menu, with paired drinks, was created by Chef Dave Hands specifically for the La Chaine des Rotisseurs Phuket Dinner. And what a menu and evening it was. Thanks to The Selfie Experience Phuket for the great pictures.



SKAL INTERNATIONAL PHUKET MAY NETWORKING DINNER

Held at KEP Phuket, Chalong, on Thursday, May 18, Skalleagues and their guests experienced a different, and exceptional, dining experience. Chef Satya used special dry age techniques to create fish dishes served as sushi, sashimi and Southeast Asian dishes. Looking forward to the next event on June 15.

Thais set sights on 2025 title

SEA GAMES

Bangkok Post

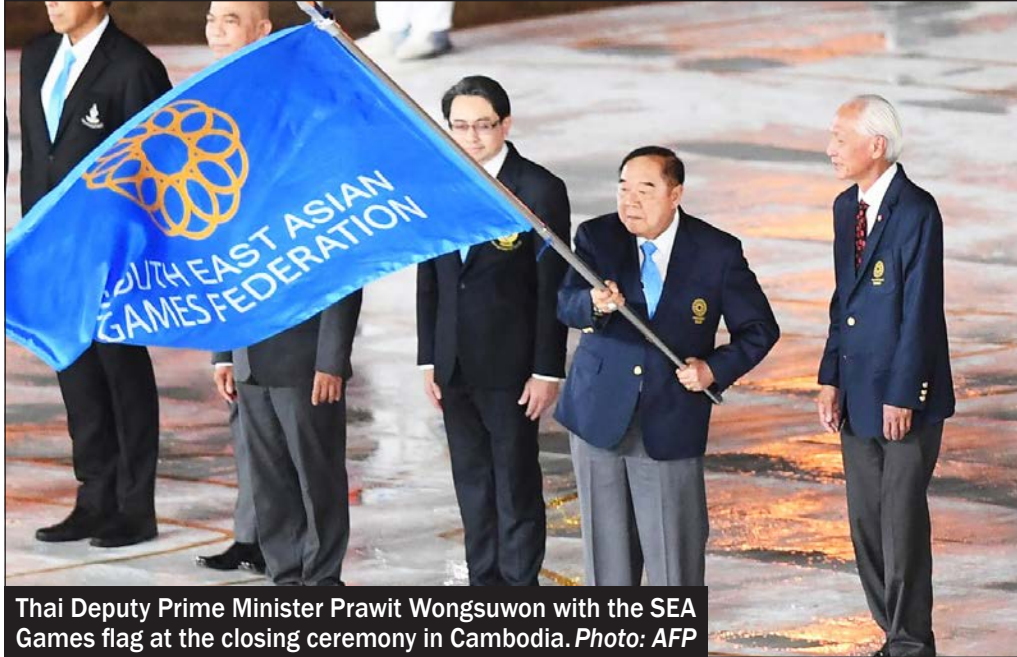
Thailand aim to regain the overall title at the next SEA Games on home soil in 2025, officials have vowed.

The Thais finished the recent 32nd SEA Games in Cambodia with a total of 312 medals, including 108 gold, 96 silver and 108 bronze. It meant a second place finish behind winners Vietnam and ahead of Indoensia at the biennial tournament which ran from May 5-17.

Ahead of the tournament, the Thai sports associations predicted they would win a total of 112 gold medals.

Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT) governor Gongsak Yodmani said on May 18 Thailand were the overall champions at Cambodia 2023 in "international sports" which feature at the Olympics and Asian Games.

Citing information from his Elite Sports Development Department, the governor said Thailand were ranked first with 54 gold medals won in international sports, followed by Vietnam, who took home



Thai Deputy Prime Minister Prawit Wongsuwon with the SEA Games flag at the closing ceremony in Cambodia. Photo: AFP

52 golds and Indonesia (35).

Cambodia finished fourth with 81 golds but won only 10 golds in international sports, according to Gongsak.

The hosts won a large number of gold medals in their own martial arts Kun Khmer and Kun Bokator which Thailand did not take part in, saying they are in fact Muay Thai.

Having failed to win the overall crown for four Games in a row, Thailand aim to reclaim the title at the 2025 Games to be held in Bangkok,

Chon Buri and Songkhla, Gongsak said.

Thailand will focus on organising sports which are included in the Olympics and Asian Games, Gongsak said.

He said the SEA Games Federation Council has approved new regulations which allow the host country to organise only four "regional sports" with a maximum of eight gold medals in each discipline.

"This will lift the standard of the Games and could help athletes in their preparations

for the Olympics and Asian Games," Gongsak said.

At the closing ceremony at Morodok Techo National Stadium in Phnom Penh the SEA Games flag was handed over to Thai Deputy Prime Minister and Olympic chief Prawit Wongsuwon as the country will host the 33rd edition from Dec 7-19, 2025.

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen then declared the Games closed and the cauldron was extinguished at the stadium.

Thailand's chief of delega-

tion Thana Chaiprasit said the country is ready to host the 2025 tournament.

He said the country has vast experience in hosting international sporting events and will organise the Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games in Bangkok and Chon Buri in November this year.

"We are ready to stage the 2025 SEA Games," said Thana. "We should not have any problems with venues, accommodation, transportation and security."

FINAL BRAWL

Meanwhile, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has confirmed it is investigating "acts of violence" after two mass brawls and four red cards marred the men's football final of the SEA Games in Cambodia on May 17.

Indonesia defeated Thailand 5-2 in extra time at Phnom Penh's Olympic Stadium in a match that saw clashes between players and coaches of both sides.

Thailand, who have since apologised and launched their own investigation, ended the bad-tempered final with seven players on the field.

"The AFC is disappointed

with the disorderly incidents at the SEA Games football final," said a spokesperson for the governing body for football in Asia.

"The AFC underlines the importance of fair play, mutual respect and sportsmanship, and takes a zero tolerance approach towards all such acts of violence, which threaten the physical integrity of players and officials."

The Football Association of Thailand (FAT) said the incident, seen by spectators in the stadium and fans around the world, caused damage to the reputation of Thai football and said it would punish anyone found to have been in the wrong.

"The FA of Thailand must apologise for the clash on the touchline," it said in a statement, adding it would "set up a committee to investigate those involved as soon as possible and will take decisive measures".

Thailand remain the most successful nation in the men's football competition with 16 titles. But the War Elephants have failed to win gold for three consecutive Games with their last title coming in 2017.

Koepka takes PGA for fifth major title in landmark LIV win

GOLF

BROOKS KOEPKA outdueled Viktor Hovland and Scottie Scheffler last Sunday (May 21) to win the PGA Championship for his fifth major title, giving Saudi-backed LIV Golf a milestone major triumph.

The 33-year-old American captured his third PGA Championship and became the first player to win a major while with LIV, firing a three-under-par 67 to finish 72 holes at Oak Hill on nine-under 271.

That was good enough for a two-stroke triumph over Norway's Hovland and American Scheffler, who became the new world number one.

Australia's Cam Davis and American Kurt Kitayama shared fourth on 277 with another LIV player, American Bryson DeChambeau.

Four-time major winner Rory McIlroy shared seventh on 278 with Austrian Sepp Straka.



Koepka. Photo: AFP

Koepka was among the stars who jumped from the PGA Tour to breakaway LIV Golf, which offered record \$25 million (B862mn) purses for 54-hole events, despite concern over Saudi Arabia's human rights record.

The PGA banned LIV talent from its events, with a legal fight between them due in court next May. In the meantime, the majors provide the only outlet for

competition between players from the rival tours.

Koepka was greeted with boos when he arrived on the first tee Saturday but turned the jeers to roars with a third-round 66.

There were scattered boos among the cheers as he reached the 18th green on his walk to victory but was undistracted as he finished off the triumph.

AFP

Thailand cricket sees Southern stars

CRICKET

THE ALAN COOKE GROUND (ACG) in Thalang enjoyed some exceptional cricket action as the National Games Region 4 qualifier matches took place last week (May 17-21), shining a very positive light on the sport's future in Thailand.

Men's and women's teams representing the Southern provinces of Pattani, Phatthalung and Songkhla competed, with the two-game per day tournament hampered by heavy downpours on Saturday morning, meaning a reduction from the scheduled 15-overs to a T-10 format.

On Friday Pattani's men defeated Songkhla by 49-runs while their female counterparts overcame newcomers to the sport Songkhla with a 10-wicket win later in the day.

Pattani's women won again on Saturday morning, overcoming Phatthalung by another 10-wicket victory although Pattani men were made to work harder for their 11-run victory over Phatthalung in the afternoon.

Saturday was also highlighted by a coaching session given to the Songkhla teams



Songkhla batting against Phatthalung. Photo: Thanawat Phumipraphat

by former professional Ashan Fonseka of the Phuket Cricket Group (PCG), offering his insights to batting, bowling and fielding techniques.

Fonseka's efforts arguably had some effect to Songkhla's performances on Sunday, with their women's side smashing an impressive 95 for 5 after 15 overs. Phatthalung, however, held their nerve to secure a 4-wicket victory by the 14th over.

A nail-biting finish to the men's game again saw Phatthalung pushed to the final over before claiming their second win of the tournament. Having set a good team-effort total of 101 for 10, Phatthalung faced a determined Songkhla batting side, who reached 94 for 7 in their 15 overs, allowing Phatthalung victory by a bare 7 runs.

With two teams qualifying from this event, Pattani and

Phatthalung both advance to the main event due to be held in Kanchanaburi later this year event, but Songkhla will certainly take great respect and applause for their efforts, and will undoubtedly prove themselves a force to contend with in future tournaments.

Recognition must also go to Cricket Association of Thailand (CAT), especially Thanan Mayteetammawat and Thanyaphat Ananchaikamon, along with their support team of umpires for their enthusiasm and efforts, ensuring an excellent weekend of cricket.

The ACG and the tournament was also honored by the visit of Thailand cricket player Rosanee Kanoh. Ms Kanoh starred for the women's national team during their recent SEA Games gold medal victory in Cambodia, while her visit – and dedication – to cricket is very much an inspiration to young players throughout the Kingdom.

Further gratitude must also go to Seemant Raju and Anongnart Ningnoi for helping to liaise with CAT, guaranteeing a highly successful tournament, while the ACG looks forward to hosting and developing more youth cricket in the future. Neil Quail

Manchester City win third consecutive league title

FOOTBALL

AFP

Manchester City celebrated their Premier League title triumph with a 1-0 win against Chelsea last Sunday (May 21) before captain Ilkay Gundogan lifted the trophy in front of their jubilant fans.

City clinched a third consecutive title and a fifth in six seasons on Saturday when second placed Arsenal crashed 1-0 at Nottingham Forest, a result that means Steve Cooper's side are safe from relegation.

Pep Guardiola's side marked their third successive title by winning a 12th consecutive league game as Julian Alvarez's first-half goal extended their unbeaten run in all competitions to 24 matches.

That blistering streak has left Arsenal trailing as the Gunners failed to end City's reign despite leading the table for much of the season.

"All Premier Leagues are special. Always it's so difficult to win it," Guardiola said.



Manchester City players lift the Premier League trophy. Photo: AFP

"We had to push Arsenal and wait if they dropped some points. They did. We were there. You never know how we are going to respond but the team was outstanding."

The fans' celebrations were going strong by the time the City team bus arrived at the Etihad Stadium, which was surrounded by flag-waving supporters who set off blue smoke flares as they hailed their dynastic team.

City would cement their status as one of English football's greatest ever teams

if they can add the FA Cup and Champions League to their latest Premier League conquest.

Guardiola's treble chasers face Manchester United in the FA Cup final at Wembley on June 3, then take on Inter Milan in Istanbul seven days later as they look to win the Champions League for the first time.

United were the last English club to win the treble in 1999 and City would relish the chance to emulate their rivals' feat.

Elsewhere, Brighton secured European football for the first time in their history with a 3-1 win against Southampton and Manchester United beat Bournemouth 1-0 to keep their Champions League hopes on track.

Liverpool and Aston Villa drew 1-1 while Tottenham's erratic season continued as they were soundly beaten 3-1 at home by Brentford. Crystal Palace and Fulham drew 2-2.

In the relegation fight it all goes down to Sunday's (May 28) final round of games, with Leicester and Leeds in 18th and 19th place respectively, both on 31 points, and Everton in 17th place on 32 points.

Leeds lost 3-1 at West Ham last Sunday, while Everton drew with Wolves 1-1 and Leicester drew with Newcastle 0-0, a result that ensures Champions League football for Eddie Howe's team next season.

Even if Leeds beat Tottenham and Leicester defeat West Ham on Sunday, both clubs would still be relegated if Everton win their final game against Bournemouth at Goodison Park.

Eight-month betting breach ban for Toney

FOOTBALL

BRENTFORD STRIKER Ivan Toney promised to return to "playing the game I love" after being banned from all football-related activity for eight months over breaches of betting rules.

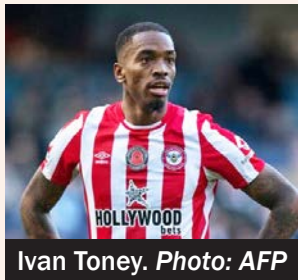
Toney, charged by the Football Association in November with 262 alleged breaches over a four-year period, was suspended with "immediate effect" by the English governing body on May 17.

The 27-year-old England international was also fined £50,000 (B2.1 million).

Toney said he was "naturally disappointed" as he thanked family, friends, Brentford and the club's fans "for their continued support, through what has been a very difficult time".

He added: "I now focus on returning to play the game I love next season."

An independent regulatory commission imposed the sanctions on Toney, who will not be allowed to train with his Brentford



Ivan Toney. Photo: AFP

team-mates until Sept 17.

Toney has scored an impressive 21 goals in 35 appearances for west London side Brentford this season, helping the club's rise to ninth in the table.

He is not the first high-profile player to be banned for offences related to betting.

England defender Kieran Trippier, now with Newcastle, was banned for 10 weeks and fined £70,000 by the FA in 2020 after giving out information for others to bet on his transfer from Tottenham to Atletico Madrid.

In 2017, Joey Barton was banned for 18 months, reduced to 13 on appeal, while playing for Burnley after admitting placing 1,260 football-related bets over a 10-year period. AFP

F1 teams set to gamble in Monaco

FORMULA ONE

MERCEDES AND FERRARI ARE taking notable risks at the Monaco Grand Prix this weekend (May 26-28).

Mercedes will take the significant step of bringing a concept-changing upgrade, including improvements on the car's bodywork, floor and the suspension after team boss Toto Wolff blasted its performance so far this season, labelling the car a "nasty piece of work".

Ferrari is also pinning its season on a big development push, albeit one that works with its current concept rather than wiping the slate clean like Mercedes.

The first tranche of new parts was brought to Miami earlier this month, but to get the most from the revised aerodynamics Ferrari needs new suspension geometry.

Both teams targeted the Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix on May 21 to test and hopefully race their new parts – until the race was called off in the deadly floods sweeping northern Italy.

However, the matter isn't as simple as just pushing the updates back by a week.

The twisting streets of Monte Carlo form the most extreme circuit on the F1 calendar. It's the slowest, lowest energy track of the year, and while car performance is of course important, driver confidence and daring makes far more of a difference between the walls than on other courses.

Teams rarely bring anything more than minor updates or track-specific car parts to Monaco lest drivers lose crucial practice



Toto Wolff. Photo: AFP

time to evaluation.

That old wisdom is what Ferrari is considering in its decision not to bring its potentially pivotal new suspension to Monaco.

But Mercedes has thumbed its nose at convention and is going all-in on its new car.

It's a sign of just how desperate Mercedes is to rescue itself from its current poor form that it's taking this considerable gamble. Every week it doesn't try the revised car is another week lost in the pursuit of Red Bull Racing – and it's already effectively a season and a half behind.

The time for conservatism is over for Mercedes. It's now or never for the team's revival and there's a great deal on the line in Monaco.

Michael Lamonato



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Man City win Premier League > p15

BOY RACER!

Phuket's karting whizz kid wins series opener in Malaysia

Kamolphu 'Porsche' Anutchakun with the trophy after winning the opening round of the Rotax Max Challenge Asia Trophy 2023 in Malaysia on May 14.



GO-KARTING

Ben Tirebuck

editor3@classactmedia.co.th

Phuket-based go-karting sensation Kamolphu 'Porsche' Anutchakun has taken another big stride forward in his development by winning Round 1 of the Rotax Max Challenge Asia Trophy 2023 (RMCAT) in Malaysia on the weekend of May 13-14.

Porsche finished winner overall in the 'Mini Max' age classification at the Shah Alam International Kart Circuit in Petaling Jaya on May 14 after completing four separate race sections; he won the pre-final, won his heat race and finished in second place in the initial qualifying round before going on to secure top spot in the final race.

Competing for DRM Racing Team,

10-year-old Porsche completed all 13 laps of the track in the final within a time of 12 minutes and 47 seconds. His fastest lap was timed at 58.56 seconds and his average speed was clocked at 61 kilometres per hour.

Simba Motoda from Japan racing for Stratos RL finished in second place almost two seconds behind the Phuket-based speedster, with Zephaan Ardeshir of India also representing the Stratos RL team in third place.

Next up in the six-round series is the Bira Circuit in Chon Buri on the weekend of June 3-4. Following that it's back to the Shah Alam International Circuit again for Round 3 on July 15-16 before the UniMAP Racing Circuit in Perlis, Malaysia, hosts Round 4 on Aug 26-27.

The penultimate round will take place at Bira Circuit again on Sept 23-24 before the series closes out at UniMAP Racing Circuit in Perlis

on Oct 7-8.

Selective category winners of the RMCAT Championship will be awarded a ticket to the RMC Grand Finals 2023, which is scheduled to take place in the Kingdom of Bahrain from Dec 2-9.

AVID F1 FAN

RMCAT 2023 is a regionally recognised karting series that provides owners of a Rotax MAX 125 Evo engines with the highest level of competition in the Asian region.

Many Formula 1 drivers started their racing careers in the seat of karts with Rotax engines, including current world champion Max Verstappen, Kimi Raikkonen, Jenson Button and Robert Kubica. Rotax engines have won the most kart racing titles – and still leads the list of overall championship titles.

Genji Hashimoto, CEO of Amprax

Racing Services which organises the series said ahead of the opening race in Malaysia: "My aim is to support the young talents and help the new generation to achieve their goals in motorsports.

"I would like to thank all the race teams, drivers as well the fans and friends of the Rotax MAX Challenge in Asia for their support, loyalty and the passion for kart racing."

Young Porsche, a student at the Kajonkietsuksa School in Kathu, will head into the next challenge full of confidence after his hugely impressive showing in the opening round in Petaling Jaya.

Since launching his karting career at a very young age, Porsche has excelled, winning a raft of races domestically and overseas. Recognition hasn't been merely limited to the race track, however, as he received an official award from Phuket Gov-

ernor Narong Woonciew last July at a special ceremony at Provincial Hall to mark his achievements in go-karting.

"He has been an avid fan of F1 since he was 3-years-old, watching the races whenever he gets the chance," his mother Danlichia told *The Phuket News*.

"Red Bull Racing's Max Verstappen, the current world champion, is his idol and role model – along with his father, of course!

"His goal is to continue to improve and keep racing; his dream is to ultimately progress and one day hopefully qualify to become a fully-fledged F1 driver," Danlichia added proudly.

Watch this space!

For more information about the Rotax MAX Challenge contact +60 12-297 4870 or visit www.ampraxr.com.

National Games qualifiers underway in Phuket

NATIONAL GAMES

SURAKUL STADIUM WAS THE venue to mark the official opening of the Region 4 qualifying rounds for the 48th National Games last Saturday (May 20).

Phuket Governor Narong Woonciew officially declared the competition open by welcoming all athletes, coaches, representatives, spectators and media in his opening remarks at the 5pm ceremony.

Region 4 constitutes the southern area of Thailand and sees a total of 14 provinces participating, namely Chumphon, Surat Thani, Nakhon Sri Thammarat, Ranong, Phang Nga, Krabi, Trang, Phatthalung,

Songkhla, Yala, Satun, Pattani, Narathiwat and Phuket.

Approximately 8,000 athletes, coaches, officials and spectators are expected to attend the event which runs from Saturday until May 28.

As part of the opening ceremony festivities a marching band procession of more than 100 people made their way from Srinagarindra the princess mother school, Phuket to Surakul Stadium, displaying a variety of flags and mascots from the respective provinces. On arriving at Surakul Stadium they were met with a spectacular firework display.

Officials confirmed that a budget had been allocated to carry out upgrades and renovation work to Surakul Stadium so it is in the best



Photo: PR Phuket

shape possible to host the event and create a good impression of Phuket to all visitors.

In addition to the opening ceremony, the majority of sporting competitions during the Games will be held at the stadium, officials confirmed. Certain sports, such as cricket (see page 14), will be held at alternative venues.

Once the Games concludes Phuket will host the National Handicapped qualifying competition from May 29-June 3.

Joining Governor Narong at the opening ceremony on Saturday were Suphot Rodruang Na Nong Khai, Governor of Yala Province; Rewat Areerob, President of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO); Thammawat Wongcharoenyot, President of the Sports Association of Phuket; Phanphop Unsiem, Director of the Sports Authority of Thailand Region 4, as well as heads of the athletic departments from each of the provinces.

Mr Thammawat explained that a total of 43 sporting competitions

were being held during the Games and all are focused on developing athletes to the best of their ability in the hope they can represent not only their province but their country in due course.

Governor Narong extended his best wishes to all the athletes competing in the Games, urging them to respect the rules and their fellow competitors and to compete in a fair manner to ensure the best levels of sportsmanship were adhered to at all times. He then concluded the ceremony by extending an invitation and encouraging residents of Phuket to come along and support the athletes across the wide range of sporting events throughout the Games.

The Phuket News