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Bodindradebayavarangkun  
July 28, 1952



# The Phuket News

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**BANG TAO TAXI SPAT LANDS PUNCH IN THE FACE > PAGE 4**



Photo: PR Phuket

## NEW POLICE CAMPAIGN TARGETS MOTORBIKE SAFETY AMONG TOURISTS

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

Police across the island have launched a new campaign targetting motorbike safety among tourists, including a push to ensure motorbike rental operators rent out motorbikes only to people who have correct licences.

The campaign was announced at a press launch at the Phuket Merlin Ho-

tel on July 18, led by Region 8 Police Pol Lt Gen Suraphong Thanomchit and Phuket Provincial Police Commander Pol Maj Gen Sinlert Sukhum.

Present for the launch were ambassadors, honorary consuls and car rental operators to address the pressing issue and propose viable solutions.

The aim of the campaign is to target the root causes of traffic accidents involving tourists, said Pol Lt Gen Suraphong.

The initiative includes a comprehensive project and workshop designed to tackle the root causes of road accidents and raise awareness among foreign tourists using motorcycles, he explained.

Pol Lt Gen Suraphong noted that according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Situation Report on Road Safety in 2015, 1.25 million people die from road accidents worldwide each year, with

Thailand having the highest number of road accidents in ASEAN at a rate of 36.2 deaths per 100,000 people.

"These accidents result in both direct and indirect losses, such as loss of income, physical disability and vehicle repair costs," he said.

"The National Statistical Office reports that the main causes of accidents are driver-related, such as careless driving, speeding and driving while intoxicated. Understanding the...

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Tuk-tuk driver threats ignored



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Duana ready for Olympic splash



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# News



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## Sights set on foreigners on bikes

Continued from page 1

...true causes of accidents can help prevent or reduce traffic incidents.

"In Phuket Province, the death rates from road accidents between 2019 and 2023 were 44.02, 32.83, 21.82, 32.84, and 40.93 per 100,000 population, respectively," he added.

Already so far this year, as of Monday (July 22), 94 people had been killed in road accidents in Phuket. A further 14,207 people had been injured, according to national road safety agency ThaiRSC.

Of the people killed, 69.15% were males, and 85% of all accidents involved motorbikes, ThaiRSC reported.

Thalang District was home to 28 of the deaths (Mai Khao 6; Thepkasattri 10; Pa Khlok 3; Srisoonthorn 6; Cherng Talay 2; Sakhu 1), with Kathu also saw 28 deaths: Kathu 17; Patong 7; Kamala 4

Muang District so far has seen the most road deaths this year, with 38 killed in

**TERMS & CONDITIONS THAILAND CARS RENTALS**

- International driving license**  
随身携带国际驾照  
Международные водительские права
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佩戴好头盔  
Наденьте шлем!
- Limit 40 km/hr.**  
限速40公里/小时  
Максимально допустимая скорость не более 40 км/час
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**Getting ready for motorbike rental**

- Driving License
- Wear safety helmet (Driver and passenger)
- Insurance
- Copy of vehicle registration

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- Водительское удостоверение
- Надевайте шлемы водителям и пассажирам.
- Страховка
- Копия регистрации транспортного средства

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- 驾照
- 司机和乘客均需佩戴头盔
- 保险
- 车辆登记复印件

road accidents (Koh Kaew 2; Ratsada 7; Talad Yai 3; Talad Neua 3; Wichit 4; Chalong 7; Karon 4; Rawai 8)

Phuket Provincial Police identified a lack of awareness and regulation among foreign tourists renting vehicles as a major contributor to these accidents. The absence of clear guidance from rental operators often leaves tourists unaware of local traffic rules, Pol Lt

Gen Suraphong said.

The newly launched project aims to rectify this by compiling data from rental operators and educating tourists. The initiative includes creating a big data repository to analyse and address traffic accident problems effectively, he added.

"The statistics show an increase in accidents involving tourists using motorcycles in Phuket. To address this, we

have partnered with Pakfang network and received funding from the Fund for Road Safety to tackle the problem immediately," Pol Lt Gen Suraphong said.

As part of the event, Pol Lt Gen Suraphong handed out educational materials to commanders of all 11 police stations in Phuket. The materials emphasise the importance of having a valid driver's

license, adhering to a speed limit of 40km/h, abstaining from alcohol consumption, wearing helmets and ensuring insurance and vehicle registration are in place.

"We are grateful to the car rental operators who have joined the project. Together, we aim to reduce accidents. The police are here to provide guidance and advice. This initiative will not only reduce

loss of life and property but also enhance Phuket's image as a tourist destination and promote sustainable tourism," Pol Lt Gen Suraphong said.

In Patong, where police have cracked down on drunk driving, Patong Police Chief Pol Col Chalermchai Hirasawat was clear in his warning to motorists: "Wherever you are, strictly respect the law," he said.

## Disputed land claims under review

THE LAND AND NATURAL Resources Committee of the Provincial Representatives Council joined a meeting in Phuket last week to listen and follow up on the progress of land rights disputes in several locations across the island.

The meeting, at Phuket Provincial Hall on July 16, was chaired by Phuket Vice Governor Adul Chutohng, accompanied by committee spokesperson Tittikan Tittiphrutikul, committee advisor Thiwat Damkew, Phuket MP Chalermpong Sangdee

Officials from several departments presented updates on resolution efforts to the disputed claims, with local residents present to provide feedback and track progress. Particularly highlighted was the issue involving the Bureau of Land Conservation, Phuket, concerning the contentious land plot 263 (Baan Bang Thao), in Cherng Talay.

The Bureau reported progress, indicating steps to

resolve the issue and support basic public utility installations, such as water and electricity meters, without disrupting the rights of local residents. However, official reports of the meeting did not clearly define where the land in question was located.

The Phuket Marine Office addressed actions taken to enforce legal measures concerning the construction of residential buildings at Baan Kho En in Moo 2, Mai Khao. The office ordered the demolition of unauthorised constructions, adhering to the administrative regulations.

Mr Tittikan, committee spokesperson, stated after the meeting that the discussions aimed to monitor progress and resolve ongoing issues effectively. He emphasised that the land dispute concerning Baan Bang Thao is expected to see significant developments soon, with anticipated completion by 2026, said the official report.

Meanwhile, regarding the case involving five houses at Baan Kho En in Mai Khao,

the Phuket Marine Office has "expedited legal proceedings", said the report.

"The committee will continue to meet and provide recommendations to relevant agencies to expedite actions and ensure fairness to all parties involved," the report added.

The meeting concluded with plans for further reviews and detailed discussions on the land rights disputes affecting residents in prohibited wildlife conservation zones at Khao Phra Thaeo National Park in Thalang

Sixty-four residents have filed new applications, with 12 non-damaging cases and nine involving suspects of illegitimate land claims. The park authorities will provide further details on the proceedings, the report noted.

In his report of the meeting, MP Chalermpong noted that the meeting yesterday began with affected individuals presenting their concerns to the Land Commission and provincial-level agencies.

The primary issues dis-

cussed were related to housing, with residents providing various pieces of evidence and requesting the province to review and coordinate with relevant authorities to expedite resolutions.

In the morning session, representatives from Thalang District discussed progress on cases involving land rights disputes where buildings encroached on water streams in the Tha Ton Do community area in Mai Khao. Issues related to state and public land in the Bang Tao Beach area were also addressed, alongside challenges concerning agricultural land and housing rights in the Khao Phra Thaeo wildlife sanctuary, MP Chalermpong said.

Later in the afternoon, representatives from Chalong presented issues concerning the housing rights of the Khok Tanod community. They engaged in discussions and posed questions to officials regarding the impacts of evictions and pending legal cases affecting residents.

Regarding the Khok Tan-



Photo: PR Phuket

od community in Chalong, Phuket Provincial Land officers reported findings from their 2017 land inspection. They identified four plots claimed under historical documents pre-dating the Land Code of 1857.

Despite claims of legal land issuance, subsequent inspections in 2023 revealed flooding and waste management issues due to unauthorised occupation and utilisation of the land. Resolutions have been reached, with issued documents now in effect, Mp Chalermpong said.

Of note, the documents used to claim the land as private were SorKor 1 land-occupation deeds. SorKor 1 documents have gained a notorious reputation in Phuket for being used to illegally claim land not belonging to

the claimant.

No details were reported of any investigation into the SorKor 1 documents presented as proof of ownership.

Regardless, residents of the Khok Tanod community recounted how three private individuals originally occupied the area, resulting in lawsuits and successful evictions for some, while two cases remain in legal proceedings, MP Chalermpong said.

Efforts to address electricity supply challenges in the Khok Tanod community involved exploring options for installing poles along the mangrove forest perimeter to provide electricity to residents, given the private nature of the area, he said.

The Phuket News



# Patong tuk-tuk driver fined for bad driving, not threats

**Eakkapop Thongtub**  
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Local residents have again decried the behaviour of Patong tuk-tuk drivers after a disturbing encounter involving a tuk-tuk driver picking a fight with a local resident mid-traffic in Patong.

The local resident shared a 51-second video clip documenting the incident. The video, posted on the popular Facebook page 'Driving Like This Should Be Ashamed in Phuket', highlights an aggressive altercation between the resident and the tuk-tuk driver near Bangla Rd.

The resident, who has lived in Phuket for eight years, explained he was driving with his wife to Bangla Rd when a tuk-tuk, which had been in the right lane, suddenly cut in front of him and parked in the left lane, blocking his path. Despite the local resident's attempts to ignore the provocation, the tuk-tuk driver continued to challenge him aggressively.

"Today I saw it myself," the resident said in his post. "I don't know where this tuk-tuk came from. It cut in front of me and parked in the left lane. I went to drive past him but this tuk-tuk driver came to challenge me, but I didn't [react]."

The video shows the tuk-tuk driver confronting the resident, raising his voice and behaving threateningly. The resident, who recorded the entire incident,



Photo: Patong Police

expressed his frustration and concern over the behaviour, questioning if the Bangla Rd area was dominated by such aggressive drivers.

"I only see it in the news. I didn't think I'd experience it myself. I sent this clip to the Patong Police Station via the [official Facebook] page," he added. "I truly believe that there are still many people who are like me."

The video has garnered significant attention and criticism from netizens. Many expressed their dismay over the aggressive behavior of tuk-tuk drivers in the area. Comments ranged from residents sharing their own negative experiences to others calling for stricter regulations and enforcement to curb such behaviour.

One commenter stated, "I'm a Phuket person myself. I don't plan to travel to Patong at all. It has everything, including all the problems. Experiences like this are

normal, most tuk-tuks drive like this."

The incident raised questions about road safety and the conduct of public transport drivers in Phuket. Local authorities have yet to respond to the video, but the resident's actions in sharing the clip have sparked a broader conversation about the need for accountability and better regulation of tuk-tuk drivers in the area.

Patong Police posted on their official Facebook page last Saturday night (July 20) that the tuk-tuk driver had been called in for questioning.

The incident happened at about 8pm on July 18, police reported.

Police named the driver only as 'Mr Jirayuth'.

Amid smiles, Jirayuth was fined B1,000 – not for his threatening behaviour, but instead for his reckless driving in changing lanes and obstructing traffic.



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

## Tourist mugged on Big Buddha hill

KARON POLICE ARE trying to track down a man seen mugging a tourist on the road leading up to the Big Buddha Viewpoint.

The incident occurred near the Nak-Kerd Seaview Cafe at about 6:22pm on July 16, Karon Police reported.

A Thai man who witnessed the mugging reported the attack by calling the 191 hotline.

The man, named only as Mr Wirat, was driving towards Chalong when he saw a tourist attacked by one criminal, a man wearing a red shirt, said

the brief report.

The make and model of the vehicle used to make his getaway was unknown, the report noted.

Items stolen in the mugging included a wallet containing an unknown amount of money, a yellow shoulder bag, a power bank, and the tourist's room key at a hotel in Karon.

Of note, in the photos presented to *The Phuket News* was a phone showing the name of a Russian woman. Her role in the incident has yet to be confirmed.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Karon Plaza closed pending fire probe

THE RECENT FIRE AT Karon Night Plaza destroyed 20 shops and caused more than B43 million in damage, Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee has confirmed.

The fire ripped through the market, mostly comprising seafood and clothing stalls, in the early hours of Saturday, July 13.

According to Karon Municipality, firefighters were alerted to the blaze at about 11:40pm on the Friday night.

At 1:40am Karon Municipality reported that some firefighters needed assistance recovering from exposure to the fire, but confirmed no people were reported injured from the blaze.

"A total of 20 stores were heavily damaged, with a damage value of B43.75 million," MP Chalermpong said in a post online.

"This has caused many parties to seriously think about the importance of planning and dealing with disasters, including fires and floods, in Phuket Province, which is a world class tourist city," he added.

MP Chalermpong called for forensic investigators to determine the cause of the fire and for local authorities to "expedite appropriate relief



Photo: Karon Municipality

measures for disaster victims without delay."

"I would like to express my condolences to all victims [affected by the fire], and would like to commend the officials of Karon Municipality, all parties involved, especially firefighters. However, in the future we may not be so lucky.

"Even though I understand that this is something that no one wants to happen, I believe we can do better than this. Today is the time to seriously raise awareness of the importance of disaster prevention, for a safe community, for the future of our children," MP Chalermpong said.

In the immediate aftermath of the fire, Karon Mayor Jadet Wicharasorn on Saturday issued a notice declaring the market a "fire disaster zone".

Citing authority under Section 25 of the Fire Prevention and Suppression Act, B.E. 2542 (1999), Mayor Jadet

declared the market to be sealed off until safety and fire investigation reports had been submitted.

The owners or occupiers of the buildings or structures located in the declared area, as well as those adjacent to it, are required to "suspend all building construction, modifications, repairs, and demolition activities within the declared area until further notice", Mayor Jadet said in the notice.

They are also to ensure that all fire prevention measures are strictly followed and maintained according to the regulations set by the Fire Prevention and Suppression Act, B.E. 2542 (1999), he said.

Of note, declaring the market a fire disaster area also allows Mayor Jadet to provide, and request further assistance to be provided, to those affected by the fire.

*The Phuket News*

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## PHUKET SEVEN DAY WEATHER FORECAST

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High: +36°  
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Wind 11 m/s

SAT JULY 27

High: +36°  
Low: +28°  
Wind 11 m/s

SUN JULY 28

High: +35°  
Low: +28°  
Wind 11 m/s

MON JULY 29

High: +35°  
Low: +27°  
Wind 4 m/s

TUE JULY 30

High: +35°  
Low: +28°  
Wind 4 m/s

WED JULY 31

High: +37°  
Low: +28°  
Wind 4 m/s

THU AUGUST 1

High: +36°  
Low: +27°  
Wind 4 m/s

Photo: Ao Nang Police

## American man charged for fatal stabbing

A 43-YEAR-OLD AMERICAN MAN has been arrested for the fatal stabbing of an Australian at Ao Nang Beach in Krabi early Monday morning (July 22).

Ao Nang Police confirmed that US national Randall Owen Johnson was arrested for the stabbing, which occurred near Sea Shell Sculpture at the southern end of the beach.

Police were informed of the incident at about 2am, after Australian Laim Michael Ross, 35, had been rushed to Ao Nang Hospital for a stab wound to his abdomen.

Mr Ross succumbed to his injuries at the hospital.

Johnson has been charged with physically injuring another person causing death, police confirmed in their report.

At time of press details of the argument have yet to be made clear. However, the two men were believed to be sitting together when an argument broke out, resulting in the stabbing, police said.

Eakkapop Thongtub

## Another Bang Tao taxi dispute turns violent

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Cherng Talay Police are investigating yet another conflict between taxi drivers, this time amid accusations that the driver of an allegedly illegal taxi bearing Bangkok licence plates punching a Phuket driver in the face.

The driver of the Phuket-registered taxi, Wiwat Phitaknitinan, 34, from Pa Khlok, filed a formal complaint with police after the incident, which occurred on Soi Bang Tao 4/2 at about 5:20pm last Saturday (July 20).

Mr Wiwat works as a driver for the Bolt ride-hailing service. He explained to police that he was assigned to pick up customers in his grey Toyota Vios, a registered Phuket taxi, from the Sunwing Bangtao Hotel and drive them to Patong.

Upon arrival, he saw that the four male foreign customers had mistakenly entered a white Toyota Vios with Bangkok license plates.

Mr Wiwat said he approached the car and knocked on the rear window where the passengers were seated. The car began to move away, so he knocked on the driver's side window, prompting the driver to stop and roll down the window.

The driver then asked, "Why did you break my car window?"



Screenshot: Supplied

Mr Wiwat responded, "Why did you take my guests? They booked me to pick them up."

The driver, described as a well-built Thai man with a black-red complexion and a mustache, exited the car, made threats and challenged Mr Wiwat to a fight, Mr Wiwat said in his complaint to police.

The four tourists, believed to be Indian nationals, that were in the Bangkok-registered Vios exited the car and attempted to de-escalate the argument, to no avail.

To avoid a confrontation, Mr Wiwat started walking back to his car. As he got closer, he remarked, "Your car is illegal." Once seated in his car, the man reached through the passenger window and punched him in the face, causing minor injuries, Mr

Wiwat told police.

Mr Wiwat then drove his four passengers to Patong and subsequently filed a complaint with the investigating officer at Cherng Talay Police Station. He requested that the police take legal action against the assailant.

The incident was recorded on a video camera fitted inside Mr Wiwat's taxi.

The video was posted online over the weekend, spurring more comments of anger and disappointment over the incidents involving taxis in Phuket.

Lt Col Kajonkiat Khamwichairat, Deputy Inspector (Investigation) at Cherng Talay Police Station, received the formal complaint (No 75/2567) and assured that officers will conduct further investigation.



Photo: Karon Municipality

## Indian man pulled unconscious from dangerous surf at Karon

LIFEGUARDS PULLED a 20-year-old Indian man from the water at Karon Beach last Saturday afternoon (July 20).

Karon Police were called to the scene, near Karon Sports Stadium at the southern end of the beach, at 1:20pm.

Lifeguards were able to recover the Indian man's body, but he was unconscious and unresponsive.

The man was rushed to hospital, where emergency medical personnel continued to provide treatment, police noted in their report.

However, no further details of the man's condition were reported.

Karon Police at last report said they were investigating the circumstances that led to the man's situation. Eakkapop Thongtub

## Hay truck stalls on Patong Hill

A TRUCK OVERLOADED WITH hay bales failing to make its way over Patong Hill caused long traffic tailbacks over the hill on July 15.

A video of the truck shared on the Newshawk Phuket social media channel spurred anger among fellow motorists, and raised serious safety concerns of such a truck being allowed on the road at all, nevermind making its way over Patong Hill.

The 39-second video clip recorded the truck in motion at 11:25pm. The video showed the truck slowing to a standstill after failing to make it up the steep climb over the hill. The truck failed near the base of the hill.

The stopped truck caused significant delays over the hill, as it blocked one lane of traffic up the hill.

After the page shared the video, many social media users criticised the situation.

One person commented: "If you drive that overloaded truck through Phuket, people will immediately see the 'train'.



Screenshot: Courtesy of Newshawk Phuket

It will get stuck, and you'll fall asleep waiting at the checkpoint.

"It's clear you're trying to make it worth the trip by carrying everything at once, but you forgot this is Phuket, haha. Use smaller trucks and spread the load. How did you even get past the checkpoint?"

Eakkapop Thongtub



# Transport Ministry eyes economic development

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

More than 30 senior executives from the Ministry of Transport convened at Phuket Provincial Hall last week as part of a two-day study tour focused on economic development in Phuket through transportation initiatives.

The study tour was part of a broader training initiative organised by the Ministry of Transport, targeting government officials and employees from state enterprises, explained an official report of the visit.

The programme spans from May 27 to August 16, focusing on enhancing expertise in transportation and tourism sectors across the southern Andaman provinces, specifically Phuket and Krabi.

The study tour in Phuket, themed 'Guidelines for Economic Development in Phuket Province with Transportation', focused on practical insights and recommendations to support Phuket's economic growth trajectory, the official



Photo: PR Phuket

report noted. The study tour in Phuket concluded on July 18.

The meeting at Provincial Hall commenced with an address from Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat, emphasising the importance of collaborative efforts between local authorities and national agencies in driving sustainable economic growth in Phuket.

Jantira Buruspat, Chief Inspector-General of the Ministry of Transport, led the delegation of 34 high-level executives in discussions aimed at exploring transportation strategies to bolster tourism and economic activities in the region, said the official report of the visit.

Adcha Buachan, Chief of the Phuket Land Transport Of-

ficer (PLTO), and Natchapong Pranit, Chief of the Phuket Marine Office, were among the local officials present to engage in dialogue and provide insights into regional transportation challenges and opportunities, the report added.

However, no specific details of which policies were discussed were reported.

## Phuket marks Asarnha Bucha, Khao Phansa

PHUKET GOVERNOR Sopon Suwannarat led a Buddhist candlelight procession at Wat Mongkol Nimit in Phuket Town last Saturday night (July 20) in celebration of Asarnha Bucha Day and the beginning of Buddhist Lent (Khao Phansa).

Phra Udom Vajiramonkol, the Chief Monk of Phuket, presided over the religious aspects of the ceremony, while Governor Sopon Suwannarat led the lay participants. Joining them were the Governor's wife Mrs Busadee, who serves as President of the Phuket branch of the Red Cross and Chairwoman of the Phuket Provincial Housewives Association, along with various government officials and Buddhist devotees.

The ceremony aimed to honor the teachings of Buddhism. All participants wore white clothing, a traditional gesture of purity and respect, as they listened to a Dharma sermon, made merit and circled the ordination hall in a candlelight procession.

Asarnha Bucha, also known as "Dharma Day", is one of the most significant Buddhist holidays. It falls on the full moon of the eighth



Photo: PR Phuket

lunar month, marking the day the Buddha delivered his first sermon, the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, to the five ascetics in Sarnath, India, two months after his enlightenment.

The sermon introduced the core teachings of Buddhism, encapsulated in the Four Noble Truths, the essence of the Buddha's teachings. The teachings form the foundation of Buddhist practice, guiding adherents towards a path of moderation and ultimate liberation from suffering, explained an official report of the event.

The religious holidays Asarnha Bucha and Khao Phansa by law invoke a nationwide ban on the sale of alcohol that ended at midnight last Sunday night (July 21).

All government offices were closed on Monday (July 22) as the country observed the substitution day public holiday for the auspicious religious occasion. *The Phuket News*

## Wichit holds tsunami evacuation drill

IN AN EFFORT TO enhance disaster readiness, Wichit Municipality last week held a tsunami evacuation drill and rescue exercise.

Led by Wichit Mayor Kreetha Chotiwichpipat and Mueang Phuket District Chief Worasit Putjeeb, the drill involved various agencies in a Table Top Exercise (TTX) on July 18.

The exercise, part of the municipality's fiscal year 2024 disaster preparedness plan, simulated the response to a tsunami warning, requiring the evacuation of people from Phuket Aquarium at Cape Panwa in Moo 8, Wichit, to Baan Ao Nam Bo School in Moo 6, Wichit.

The exercise also included rescuing "victims" from the sea.

A host of emergency response unit took part in the exercise, including EMS teams from Vachira Phuket Hospital, the Phuket branch of the Department of Disaster Prevention & Mitigation (DDPM Phuket) and the Kusoldharm Foundation.

The exercise aimed to synchronise emergency response strategies among



Photo: Wichit Municipality

governmental bodies, private sectors and the public. Participants gathered at the Marine and Coastal Resources Research Center to simulate emergency procedures and coordination efforts.

Mayor Kreetha emphasised the importance of local-level training, stating that every command center within the municipality actively participated. He praised the drill's smooth execution, highlighting the clear planning in areas such as evacuation logistics, hygiene provisions and community engagement.

"This exercise underscores our commitment to

safeguarding both residents and tourists," Mayor Kreetha said. "We are confident in our readiness to manage any potential disasters, ensuring the safety and well-being of everyone in our community."

The drill also received positive feedback from local businesses and residents, demonstrating strong community cooperation and support for disaster preparedness initiatives.

Wichit Municipality was well-prepared to handle emergencies effectively, reinforcing its reputation as a safe and welcoming destination for tourists, Mayor Kreetha said. *The Phuket News*

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# Superyacht moves underway

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

The Marine Department held a significant meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall last Friday (July 19) to gain feedback from officials and industry partners in determining what changes in the law were required to help boost the superyacht marine tourism industry.

The meeting was presided over by Phuket Governor Sophon Suwanarat, and attended by key figures including Surat Sirisayat, Director of the Ship Registration Standards Bureau, and Phuket Marine Chief Natchapong Pranit.

Joining the meeting were more than 100 people representing government agencies on the island, as well as key tourism industry figures and operators from Phuket's marine tourism sector.

The primary agenda was to discuss the draft announcement of the Ministry of Transport, aimed at establishing new criteria, methods and conditions for granting permissions to large cruise and sports boats – that is, superyachts – to non-Thai owners.

The initiative is a part of the effort to align with international standards and promote Thailand as a world-class maritime tourism hub.

The Ministry of Transport's policy aims to drive economic growth



Photo: PR Phuket

by promoting large cruise and sports boats as a key component of the maritime tourism strategy. Phuket, with its numerous operators and stakeholders in the cruise and large sports boats industry, plays a critical role in the strategy, said an official report of the meeting.

The draft announcement under discussion is pursuant to Section 47 bis of the Thai Vessels Act, B.E. 2481, which must be revised in order for the government to support the development of the superyacht tourism industry.

Section 47 of the Act stipulates,

“Unless agreed otherwise with other countries, Thai vessels registered under this Act and vessels the size of which is smaller than that specified in section 8 for engaging in trading in Thai waters only belonging to a person under section 7, shall engage in trading in Thai waters.

“The provision of the preceding paragraph shall not apply to a vessel, the size of which is smaller than that specified in section 8 for engaging in trading in Thai waters, of a natural person who is a foreigner.”

However, Section 47 bis.12, notes: “In the case where the Minister has

considered that the number of Thai vessels operating in any part of Thai waters is not enough for the demand of the country, he or she shall have power to grant permission to a vessel of a person not qualified to hold an ownership of a Thai vessel under section 7 to carry out activity under section 47. The period of the permission shall not exceed one year and the permitted person shall comply with the conditions imposed by the Minister.”

Also relevant is Section 48, which states, “No person who are not qualified to hold an ownership of a Thai

vessel under section 7 shall lease or take by other means a Thai vessel the size of which is that specified in section 8 for engaging in trading in Thai waters and registered under this Act, and use it to engage in trading in Thai waters.”

In calling for its members to attend the meeting, the Thai Yachting Business Association (TYBA) noted that a key revision will be changing the definition of a superyacht from a vessel longer than 30 metres to a vessel long than 24m.

Also, superyachts applying for a new charter license will require a minimum amount of insurance coverage. The amount is not announced yet, but should be informed in the meeting, the TYBA said.

During the meeting, participants shared their opinions and suggestions, which the Ship Registration Standards Bureau will compile and analyse. The collected feedback will be used to refine the draft announcement to ensure it meets both local and international standards and benefits all stakeholders involved, the official report said.

The outcome of the meeting is expected to significantly influence the future operations of superyachts in Thai waters, aligning the country's maritime policies with global best practices and boosting its appeal as a premier maritime destination, the report concluded.

## Orathai Gerds sub CSR

### PRESS RELEASE

BUMRUNGRAD INTERNATIONAL Hospital Phuket (BIHP) warmly welcomes Khun Orathai Gerds sub as Executive Corporate CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) to be a member of the BIHP team to support communities in Phuket and other Andaman provinces.

Khun Orathai Gerds sub was born and raised in Phuket, studying from elementary to high school in Phuket before pursuing her bachelor's degree at Mahidol University and further with a master's degree at the University of Texas in Dallas.

Her last position before returning to her homeland was Vice President - Head Digital Strategy at Krungsri Auto under Krungsri Bank. From 2022, Khun Orathai has consistently focussed her passion to support communities in many dimensions, such as healthcare, community economics, marketing and branding, environmental preservation, etc. Her dedication has been proven from results and



feedback from communities.

BIHP is honoured to have Khun Orathai Gerds sub, a devoted person, to be part of our team to drive and initiate BIHP Corporate Social Enterprise activities in Phuket and across Andaman provinces. We believe that her knowledge, capabilities, and intentions,

will bring support to our communities continuously and sustainably.

Bumrungrad Referral Office - Phuket - ศูนย์ประสานงาน รพ.บำรุงราษฎร์ ภาคใต้  
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f/bumrungradphuket  
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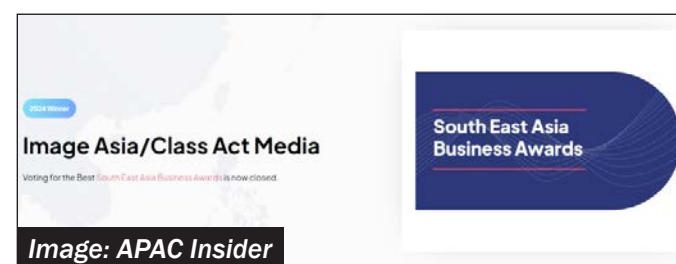
## IMAGE asia, Class Act Media scores APAC Insider award

IMAGE ASIA / CLASS ACT Media has been voted 'Best Regional Print & Radio News Media Enterprise 2024 - Thailand' in this year's UK-based 'APAC Insider South East Asia Business Awards'.

“It has been a pleasure to recognise and award such a strong and dedicated selection of businesses in this year's programme. I'm sure their commitment to their individual missions will continue to help them, and others, thrive,” said Awards Coordinator Kaven Cooper in announcing the awards on July 18.

“South East Asia is home to a wide range of businesses which are having a monumental positive impact on their clientele, region, and rest of the globe. We're pleased to have the opportunity to highlight a myriad of small and medium enterprises which are inevitably strengthening the region's connections and trade links while deeply nourishing the industries we all rely on,” he said in the release.

“From expert BPO services to specialist B2B market research, cross-border eCommerce marketing to



end-to-end PR, and so much more, 2024's collection of businesses across South East Asia are shining examples of the region's contribution to the corporate landscape,” he added.

“Deeply honoured to receive this recognition from the APAC Insider South East Asia Business Awards 2024,” said Class Act Media & IMAGE asia General Manager Jason Beavan.

“It's a testament to the hard work and dedication from our wonderful teams, at The Phuket News, Khao Phuket, Novosti Phuketa newspapers, Live 89.5 FM radio, Phuket News TV, Window on Phuket and Where to Eat in Phuket magazines, on keeping the people who visit and live here updated on all the good and interesting happenings in Phuket.

“A huge thank you to our team, advertisers, readers and suppliers for their past and future support, it's our island and we are your local media company,” he said.

In January, Class Act Media and IMAGE asia were bestowed the award 'Most Comprehensive Print & Online Regional New Media Company 2023 - Thailand' at the UK-based APAC Insider Business Awards 2023.

The Phuket News and Class Act Media / IMAGE asia have performed well in the APAC Insider awards over the years.

In 2022, Image Asia/Class Act Media was bestowed 'Most Outstanding News & Information Business - Phuket' while The Phuket News was awarded 'Leading Provider of Digital News & Information - Southern Thailand'.

The Phuket News



# Chiang Mai cop ‘led scam gang’

CHIANG MAI  
Bangkok Post

The chief inspector at the Hang Dong police station in the northern province of Chiang Mai has been arrested on charges of running a call centre scam gang.

Pol Lt Col Bandit Khonkan was taken into custody last Friday night (July 19) while he was being ordained at a temple in Ngao district of neighbouring Lam-pang province.

He was disrobed and taken to the Chang Puak station in Chiang Mai, said Pol Maj Gen Weerachon Boontawee, deputy chief of Provincial Police Region 5.

The Chiang Mai Provincial Court had issued a warrant last Friday for the officer, who faces charges of procuring equipment, setting up a station and using public airwaves to run a telecommunications business without permission.

Pol Lt Col Bandit reportedly told investigators that he was not the ringleader and was only a member of the gang with Chinese partners.

His arrest followed the apprehension of his daughter, Wanuchapond Akkarasirisinopon, 26, and three others during raids at three Baan Ua-arthorn housing projects in Chiang Mai last Friday, said Pol Maj Gen Weerachon.

The other three were Theerawat Akkarasirisinopon, 22, Suwannarak Pongyos, 25, and Nang Thuzar Nyein, 25, a Myanmar national.



Police at the house of Pol Lt Col Bandit Khonkan (seated right) last Friday (July 19). Photo: NNT

At the Baan Ua-arthorn projects in Hang Dong and Muang districts, police discovered around 12 GSM gateways, or SIM boxes, which are devices that are used for converting cellular networks into mobile phone numbers used domestically.

Ms Wanuchapond reportedly admitted that she was paid B8,000 a month at each of the three locations for renting three rooms and monitoring devices.

She claimed she had no idea what the devices were and accepted the job because the pay was attractive.

Police investigators used a special tracking device to monitor the gang's communications and learned that its base was in Myanmar opposite Mae Sai district of Chiang Rai.

Members used the GSM gateways to

make calls over the internet. By transmitting signals via SIM boxes to convert them into domestic phone numbers, they duped victims into thinking they were calling from Thai government agencies.

Each SIM box can hold 32 SIM cards, with a capacity of up to 300,000 calls a month. A check showed the seized devices had made fraudulent calls over 3.6 million times.

The investigation is ongoing to track down the remaining conspirators, including Chinese and Thai suspects, said Pol Maj Gen Weerachon.

Authorities are still deciding whether Pol Lt Col Bandit will be dismissed from the force, he said, adding that so far, no other officers are known to have been involved.

## MFP seeks to legalise porn, sex toys in Thailand

BANGKOK

THE MOVE FORWARD Party (MFP) is pushing a proposal to amend the Criminal Code to legalise the adult entertainment industry and its related products – including pornographic materials and sex toys – in an effort to break the taboo surrounding the topic and better regulate the industry.

MFP MP for Bangkok Taophipop Limjitrakorn, who submitted the proposal to the parliament last week, said the bill will be discussed in the Lower House in “about a week or two”.

All types of adult materials – including pornographic images and sex toys – are currently banned under Section 287 of the Criminal Code.

If the amendment is passed, only certain kinds of pornographic materials will remain banned, such as clips and/or images depicting sexual violence, rape and paedophilia, said Mr Taophipop.

The amendment will



Photo: Bangkok Post

also restrict individuals under the age of 20 from taking part in the production of adult content.

Mr Taophipop said the amendment will also seek to ease the rules surrounding the sales of sex toys.

Products certified by the Thai Industrial Standards Institute (TISI) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) should be available for the public to purchase legally, he said.

Mr Taophipop said he is ready to face harsh criticism over the party's effort to pass the bill but insisted he was doing it with the public interest in mind.

“I want people to stop pretending [that adult content is taboo]. Let's talk [openly] through parliamentary mechanisms,” he said. *Bangkok Post*

## Ex-senator's son held in online gambling scandal

BANGKOK

THE SON OF A FORMER SENATOR renowned for his academic expertise in gambling has been arrested on charges of owning an online gambling network and its payment system with police confiscating assets worth more than B400 million.

Narote Piriyaangsan, 33, was arrested following crackdowns at three locations across the capital, said Pol Maj Gen Athip Pongsiwapai, commander of the police Technology Crime Suppression Division (TCSD).

Mr Narote's father, Sangsit Piriyaangsan, is an economist who has published papers and books on corruption and gambling. He was among the appointed senators who were studying the government's plan to legalise casino gaming before their term expired.

Police also arrested Narayut Narakaew, 39, the owner of the gambling website 69pg-slot.com. The duo were wanted on arrest warrants issued by the Criminal Court for operating an online gambling website and for money laundering.

During the raid, police confiscated two desktop computers, one laptop computer, 14 mobile phones, 21 bank passbooks, 53 ATM cards, and four high-end cars – a Ferrari 926 GTS, an Aston Martin, a Lexus and a Subaru – worth over B400mn in total.

Police initiated the investigation when



Officers question Narote Piriyaangsan. Photo: Bangkok Post

they discovered the online gambling site with payments made via an automatic deposit-withdrawal system through bank accounts and deposits in the AskMePay system. Players scanned the QR code of VPay and the QR code of Heng Online 888 Company or Heng Pay Company.

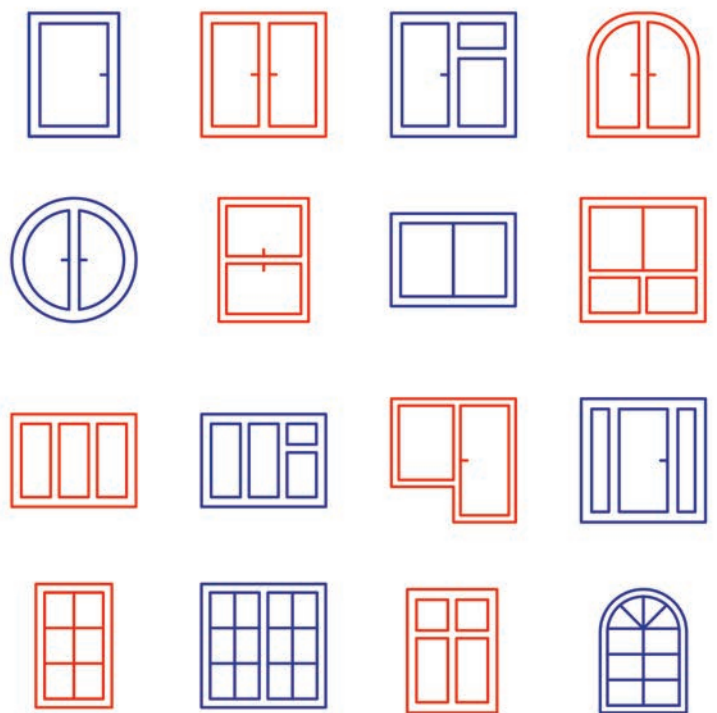
Police also found payments made via QR code scans were transferred to the account of Heng Pay Co and then to the gambling website's mule accounts via AskMePay, which did not involve banks' facial recognition scanning. An investigation revealed a monthly turnover of about B5 billion.

Investigators said the website had been operating for about four years, while the payment system had been used for around eight months.

Pol Maj Gen Athip said Mr Narote was the owner of the payment systems for the gambling website and also the director of Heng Pay Co. After gathering evidence, police later sought arrest warrants for 14 suspects. *Bangkok Post*

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A birds eye view of Ouvea, New Caledonia. Photo: Todd Miller



New Caledonia's UNESCO-recognised lagoon, the world's second largest, near Noumea. Photo: Todd Miller



Moorea, French Polynesia. Photo: Todd Miller

# How not to plan a trip across the Pacific



## GLOBETROTTER

Todd Miller

**S**urely this can't be right, I muttered aloud as I attempted online check-in for our flight to the Solomon Islands. To my dismay, I discovered that our pricey tickets had zero baggage allowance and the additional fees would be US\$120 per bag. We arrived at the chaotic Port Vila airport to discover the situation was even worse. These excess baggage fees, we learned, apply to *each sector* of a two-sector trip to the Solomon Islands – although both flights were issued in a single ticket. For the courtesy of transporting our two 15kg suitcases, Fiji Airways charged us \$420 in baggage fees to get to Honiara from Port Vila, on top of the \$650 we paid for two one-way economy seats. Oh, and they only accept cash payment, they informed us with a smile.

This costly mistake is one of a series of self-inflicted idiot errors this veteran traveler committed when recently exploring the South Pacific. In total we burned more than US\$1,000 due to such mistakes. It's a steep price for a complex island-hopping itinerary spanning 14 flights, nine hotels and one trans-oceanic cruise.

As the travel industry increasingly unbundles pricing and charges separately for each service element, the opportunities for mistakes and price gouging rise exponentially. There are no industry standards when it comes to pricing. Policies vary widely between carriers and travel providers. I'm sharing these idiot errors as a cautionary reminder to mind the small print, to triple check before you click buy, and to make no assumptions.

### THE PLAN

We set out to visit a variety of remote Pacific locations by sea and air. Flights between the islands are infrequent and expensive, and assembling this itiner-

ary felt like trying to put together a jigsaw puzzle in which the pieces do not neatly fit.

For the first two weeks of this five-week sojourn, we sailed from Sydney to Papeete, stopping in exotic ports such as Pago Pago and Bora Bora along the way. Rather than linger in French Polynesia, we wanted to explore Melanesia, a virgin region for both of us, concentrating on New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji and the Solomon Islands.

With fewer than 30,000 visitors last year, the Solomons rank as the 7<sup>th</sup> least visited country in the world. Thailand, by contrast, received nearly 28 million international arrivals last year. During our visit to the Solomons the only other visiting foreigners we encountered were military police from Australia and Papua New Guinea (PNG), who were temporarily stationed in the country to help keep the peace during the elections that coincided with our visit. One PNG officer with whom I spoke said he's bracing for some "action".

As it turned out, the action occurred 1,600km to the south.

New Caledonia erupted in pro-independence protests shortly after our visit, resulting in a weeks-long state of emergency, more than – 1 billion in damage, seven deaths and hundreds of injuries. The international airport closed for nearly three weeks, stranding an estimated 3,000 tourists. In late May French President Emmanuel Macron hastily travelled to the overseas territory to quell the riots.

### THE IDIOT ERRORS

My first idiot error involved tripping over the international date line. I booked the twice-a-week direct flight between Papeete and Noumea, arriving in New Caledonia a day after our original domestic flights were set to depart. We had to forfeit those internal flights and purchase a new set of domestic tickets for \$200.

The next idiot error occurred when I double booked a hotel reservation on a non-refundable basis. Fortunately, I caught the mistake early. After two calls, the Holiday Inn Resort Port Vila graciously agreed to cancel the duplicate reservation without penalty.

My final idiot error happened when we signed up for the open bar package on our cruise ship. In buying this package I assumed the details, based on prior experience, without reading the fine print. The reality was that while I could drink unlimited margaritas, unbranded bottled water and branded coffee were priced a la carte. That \$400 drinks package was mostly money down the drain.

Amidst these idiot errors, we were again exceptionally lucky in timing: the international airport in New Caledonia closed, and the flag carrier of Vanuatu collapsed, just weeks after our visit.

### THE SMART MOVE

When booking flights with connections, I follow a golden rule to allow ample time in case things don't operate on schedule – typically a 2x or 3x multiple of the published minimum connecting time, which varies by airport. Case in point: our flight from Honiara to Brisbane was nearly two hours late, which threatened our connecting flight to Asia. The helpful ground staff and cabin crew of Solomon Airlines went out of their way (and bent some rules) to check our bags all the way to Phuket, although the Asian flights were on a separate carrier and ticket.

### THE VERDICT

The South Pacific has a reputation for priciness because of its remoteness. These are hard-to-get-to islands; everything just costs more. Still, we had sticker shock over mediocre \$30 sandwiches and \$60 taxi rides in vehicles way beyond their prime. But it's hidden fees on top of the already inflated prices that feel, at times, like opportunistic price gouging. Many car rental companies assess cleaning fees, for example. Want eggs with the breakfast you already paid for? That'll be extra. And if you pay for those eggs by credit card, you can add another 2.5%. It all adds up.

There are two standouts from this seven-territory adventure: Vanuatu and the idyllic atoll of Ouvea in New Caledonia. Ouvea is naturally stunning. It takes much for an island to wow us – after all, we live in the Phuket area. But Ouvea's fine, pristine white sand and surrounding palettes of blue totally turned our heads, especially when viewed through the lens of our drone.

I will go to any place once, but not every place deserves an encore. The people are wonderfully friendly and hospitable on every island we visited, and some of the islands are indeed gorgeous. But the travel infrastructure is often too limited, ground transportation too inconvenient, and air transport too fragile. Independent travel in the South Pacific can at times feel like a burden, especially for the value that is delivered. There are many compelling travel experiences elsewhere on the planet that yield more juice from much less squeeze.

After five weeks of travel through the region we found the grass isn't always greener. Sometimes there's no place better than home, especially when that home is in paradise in Phuket.

*Adventurer and author Todd Miller has explored more than 100 countries on all continents. His Amazon bestseller 'ENRICH: Create Wealth in Time, Money, and Meaning', was lauded by Forbes, USA Today, Entrepreneur, and other global media. He resides at Natai Beach. Visit: [www.enrich101.com](http://www.enrich101.com)*

## Where to eat in PHUKET

**The September/October 2024**  
hard copy issue goes to print very soon

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

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# Flood of development a recipe for disaster

Simon Causton

Another year, another rainy season, and another round of devastating floods on the island of Phuket. As the waters recede, homes and businesses are left damaged, transport networks are disrupted, and the island's reputation as a paradise destination is tarnished.

While some may attribute these floods to supernatural forces, the reality is far more mundane and rooted in the rampant overdevelopment that has plagued the island in recent years.

A Thai friend of mine, shaken by the recent floods, suggested that the island's two Heroines, the historic protectors of Phuket against the Burmese, were upset by the temporary relocation of their monument due to ongoing redevelopment. While a charming anecdote, the real culprit behind the increased frequency and severity of flooding is far more tangible: the relentless removal of green spaces, and wetlands, and the excessive concreting of the island.

Phuket's rapid transformation from a tranquil island to a bustling tourist hub has come at a steep environmental cost. Lush green fields and vital wetlands, which once acted as natural sponges, absorbing and filtering rainwater, have been replaced by concrete jungles of hotels, resorts and shopping malls. This reckless development has severely compromised the island's natural drainage systems, leaving it woefully unprepared to handle the tor-



Tourist passenger vans make their way through floodwaters after heavy rain earlier this month. Photo: PR Phuket

rential downpours that characterise the rainy season.

The consequences of this overdevelopment are painfully evident. Areas once immune to flooding are now routinely submerged, and the damage inflicted on homes, businesses, and infrastructure is mounting year after year. The most vulnerable members of society, particularly the poor and marginalised, bear the brunt of these floods. In Cherng Talay, for instance, a makeshift encampment housing hundreds of Burmese construction workers was recently inundated, displacing its already precarious residents.

Ironically, while Phuket's two

Heroines once valiantly defended the island against the Burmese, it is now the waters themselves that seem to be displacing a new wave of Burmese migrants. The overdevelopment of the island has fueled a construction boom, attracting a large influx of workers from neighbouring Myanmar. Many of these workers live in substandard housing in low-lying areas, making them acutely vulnerable to the floods that have become an annual occurrence.

The government's response to this crisis has been lacklustre. Lax planning regulations and a lack of enforcement have allowed developers

to run roughshod over the island's delicate ecosystem. Inadequate drainage systems and failing to invest in flood mitigation measures have exacerbated the problem, leaving residents and businesses to fend for themselves.

Phuket is not alone in facing the consequences of unchecked development. Cities around the world, from Jakarta to Houston, are grappling with similar issues. As urban areas expand, natural landscapes are sacrificed, and the risk of flooding increases dramatically. The poorest and most vulnerable communities are invariably the hardest hit, highlighting the deep inequities that underlie these disasters.

Phuket's leaders must take immediate action to address this crisis. A moratorium on further development in vulnerable areas, coupled with investment in green infrastructure and flood mitigation measures, is urgently needed. Stricter planning regulations and enforcement mechanisms must be put in place to prevent a repeat of the mistakes of the past.

The island's two heroines may be powerless to hold back the floodwaters, but the people of Phuket are not. By demanding accountability from their leaders and advocating for sustainable development practices, they can help to protect their island from the ravages of overdevelopment.

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



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## POP QUIZ

1. Is the 'dark side of the Moon' always dark?
2. How much does one liter of seawater weigh?
3. In which American city did Ronald Reagan survive an assassination attempt in 1981?
4. What is the literal translation of the Latin word 'trivia'?
5. Could the phonograph, invented by Thomas Edison in 1877, record sound as well as play it?

Answers below, centre

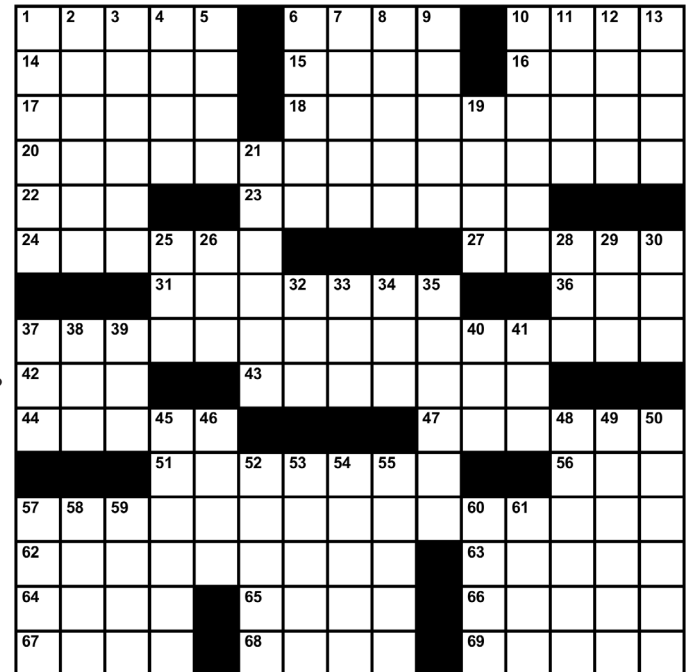
## SUDOKU

Medium

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

## Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across**
1. Billiards move
  6. Certain network
  10. Allergic reaction
  14. None of the above
  15. Allege
  16. Fizzy drink
  17. Flightless birds
  18. Like some agreements
  20. Restoration
  22. Officeholders
  23. Guts
  24. 1943 Bogart film
  27. Open
  31. Wretched
  36. Be beholden to
  37. Shake-ups
  42. Masefield play
  43. Did a tailor's task
  44. Bouquet
  47. Woman's hat
  51. Metrical foot
  56. Pastoral place
  57. Balancings
  62. Hammed it up
  63. Cavern, in poetry
  64. Kosher-style store
  65. "La Dolce Vita" setting
  66. \_\_\_ alcohol
- Down**
1. Cartoon cat
  2. Goddess of wisdom
  3. "Gee whiz!"
  4. Large amounts
  5. Formerly, once
  6. Browning's Ben Ezra, e.g.
  7. Contents of Pandora's box
  8. Purposeful in grammar
  9. Demagnetize, as a tape
  10. The Jackal, e.g.
  11. Dashed
  12. The Kennedys, e.g.
  13. "Stop right there!"
  19. Kind of traffic
  21. Embodiment
  25. Visa statement abbr.
  26. Semi
  28. Bleacher bum's shout
  29. Bristle
  30. Hi-\_\_\_ graphics
  32. Compass reading
  33. Furnace fuel
  34. Big shooter
  35. Safe places
  37. Genetic stuff
  38. Listening device
  39. Kim ending
  40. Addr. book entry
  41. Union agreement?
  45. Relatives of Tahitians
  46. O'Neill's "\_\_\_ Christie"
  48. Dress
  49. Fonda and Prince
  50. Stands for things
  52. African capital
  53. Climber's tool
  54. Tropical tree incense
  55. Factions
  57. Harried
  58. Daring Knievel
  59. Hive component
  60. Old Chinese money
  61. Excited about



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

## Solutions to last week's puzzles:

M	B	A	T	I	L	T	H	S	D	O	P	E
A	I	R	H	O	H	A	H	I	C	O	N	
S	T	R	E	E	T	F	E	S	T	I	V	A
O	M	E	N	A	T	M	E	T	A			
N	A	A	C	P	S	E	N	T	E	N	C	E
S	P	R	A	I	N	S	E	L	M	A	V	E
S	T	R	E	E	T	D	I	R	E	C	T	O
A	W	E	S			U	S			R	E	R
K	I	N		B	C			G	L	A	S	S
I	N	T	E	R	L	E	A	S	E	L	C	E
				N	E	O	S	L	E	T		
O	N	A	T			W	O			A	Y	S
W	E	I	R			P	O	M	E	L	O	
E	D	I	Y			S	N	O	R	E	R	

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

## GOT YOUR NUMBER

6

percent of all US households, accounting for more than 14 million people, do not have a bank account.

46

percent more often do speakers laugh more than their audience – other than at stand-up comedy – a recent study revealed.

100

toxic gases are released by lithium batteries found in products such as smartphones and tablets when they get too hot.

86,400

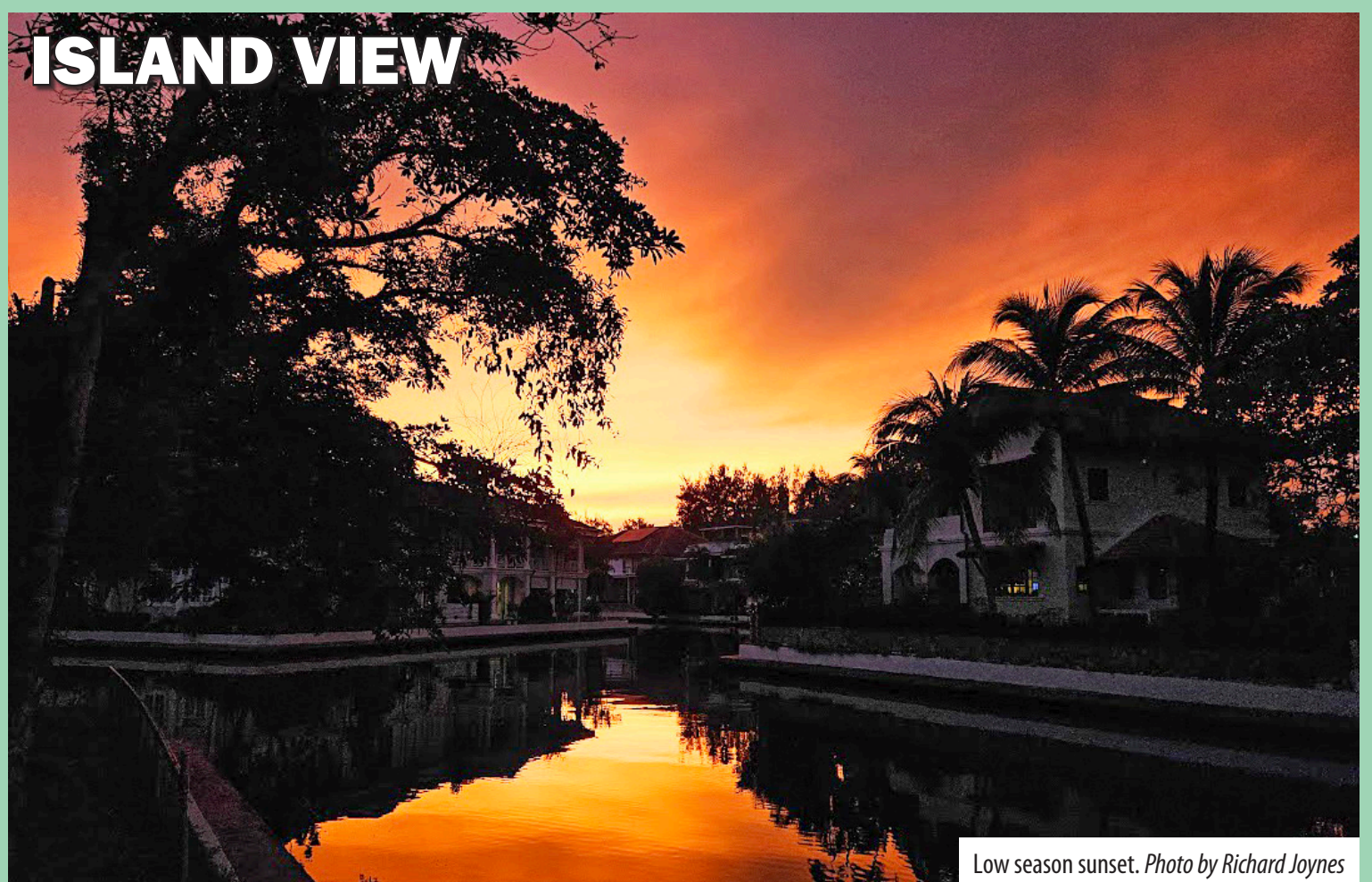
is how many seconds there are in each day.

500,000

feral and stray cats are estimated to be roaming New York City.

Source: *Uberfacts*

## ISLAND VIEW



Low season sunset. Photo by Richard Joynes

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

## This week in history

**July 26, 1951**  
Walt Disney's 13<sup>th</sup> animated film, 'Alice in Wonderland', premieres in London.

**July 27, 1953**  
Cessation of hostilities is achieved in the Korean War when the United States, China and North Korea sign an armistice agreement. Syngman Rhee, President of South Korea, refuses to sign but pledges to observe the armistice.

**July 28, 1571**  
La Laguna encomienda, known today as the Laguna province in the Philippines, is founded by the Spaniards as one of the oldest encomiendas (provinces) in the country.

**July 29, 2015**  
The first piece of suspected debris from Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 is discovered on Réunion Island.

**July 30, 1975**  
Jimmy Hoffa disappears from



James Riddle Hoffa, 1965.

the parking lot of the Machus Red Fox restaurant in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, at about 2:30pm. He is never seen or

heard from again.

**July 31, 1948**  
USS *Nevada* is sunk by an aerial torpedo after surviving hits from two atomic bombs (as part of post-war tests) and being used for target practice by three other ships.

**August 1, 1981**  
MTV begins broadcasting and airs its first video, 'Video Killed the Radio Star' by The Buggles. Source: *Wikipedia*



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**FRI** 26 JUL

**SUN** 28 JUL

**WED** 31 JUL

**SAT** 17 AUG

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**MALAYSIA INDEPENDENCE DAY GOLF THAILAND PHUKET 2024**  
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**SAT** 27 JUL

**MON** 29 JUL

**FRI** 2 AUG

**SOUTH THAI RUGBY UNION MATCHDAY**  
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### Phuket Vagabonds RFC vs Krabi RC

The Phuket Vagabonds welcome Krabi RC to the Alan Cooke Ground in Thalang for a 15s Rugby Union fixture. A fun-filled day where everyone is welcome. Kickoff at w4:30pm. For more information please visit the Vagabonds' Facebook page: Vagabondsrugby

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### Grow Boating Evening - August 2024

We look forward to seeing you at the Grow Boating Evening at the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar at the Phuket Boat Lagoon from 5pm. We are delighted to announce that our drinks sponsor for the evening will be the South East Asia Pilot. The 20th Anniversary - 7th edition of the South East Asia Pilot has recently gone to print and Greenville Fordham will be on hand to tell us all about the cruising bible to South East Asia. southeastasiapilot.com There will be a delicious buffet sponsored by the Boardwalk Bistro and Bar for all attendees and as always, all your favourite beverages will be available from the bar. facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket

**FRI** 23 AUG

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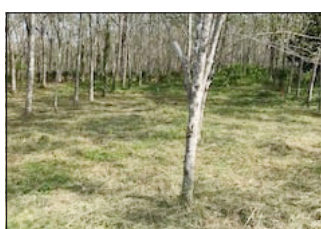
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## SKAL INTERNATIONAL PHUKET DINNER - JULY

This month's Skal Phuket monthly dinner was held at Baan Rim Pa restaurant, hosted by Sue Ultmann, Executive Manager. The Baan Rim Pa team showed why it has won multiple awards for its Royal Thai and local cuisine since 1989. Fabulous Thai dishes served by an attentive team, while guests sat on the side of a cliff facing the Andaman Sea with panoramic views across the bay of Patong. It was the ideal location for this month's Skal dinner. To find out more about Skal and their August dinner visit: [facebook.com/SkalPhuket](https://facebook.com/SkalPhuket)





# Phuket opens rugby development clinic

## RUGBY

THE PHUKET RUGBY scene has received a huge boost with the confirmation that a youth development clinic has been established on the island to help grow the game locally and nationally.

The clinic, known as “Rugby for Life”, is backed by the Rugby Football Association of Thailand (RFAT) in collaboration with famed English Rugby Union club Leicester Tigers, who sent two of their star employees to launch the initiative.

A two-day introductory class was held at Phuket Rajabhat University (PRU) on July 14-15 overseen by Leicester Tigers duo James Wade, head of partnerships, and academy manager Dave Wilks.

During the opening ceremony at PRU, RFAT President Pol. Lt. Col. Kulthorn Prachuabmoh explained that local coaches would be trained and mentored by Leicester Tigers officials to then oversee the rugby clinic on an ongoing basis, a key initiative to developing the game in Thailand.

The clinic will help de-



Photo: PR Phuket

velop young players from not only Phuket but southern Thailand with players that demonstrate particular skill and promise being offered the opportunity to travel to the UK to train with the Leicester Tigers academy team.

Furthermore, additional representatives from Leicester Tigers will visit the Phuket-based clinic to help oversee specific training programmes to maximise the collaboration and potential of local talent.

There were over 250 people present at the opening ceremony, including: Thammawat Wongcharoenyot, President of the Sports Association of Phuket; Ajarn Yongsak, President of RFAT southern region, as well as national youth team and southern region coaches.

The Phuket News

# Pogacar hails ‘golden age’

## CYCLING

AFP

Tadej Pogacar hailed a new “golden age” for cycling after securing a third Tour de France title last Sunday (July 21) to add to his 2020 and 2021 triumphs.

The 25-year-old won the final day’s time-trial with defending champion Jonas Vingegaard coming second at 1 minute 3 seconds on the day to seal second overall ahead of Remco Evenepoel, third on the day and also third overall.

Victory also gave Pogacar the first Giro d’Italia-Tour de France double since Marco Pantani in 1998.

“It was an amazing journey. What a battle with Jonas and Remco. So much happened,” said the champion who finished 6m 17s ahead of Vingegaard in the final standings. Evenepoel was 9m 18s off the pace.

“We are living in the golden age of cycling. The rivalry with Remco (Evenepoel), Jonas (Vingegaard), Primoz (Roglic) is just incredible. We have to take advantage of this moment.”

Astonishingly Pogacar won six stages on this edition of the Tour, just as he did when winning the Giro earlier in the season.

“To achieve the double is incredible,” added Pogacar who had been runner-up to Vingegaard for the last two years.

The world’s greatest bike race, broadcast across the globe, featured a novelty finale on the French Riviera because of



Pogacar celebrates his win. Photo: AFP

the Olympic Games in Paris.

Instead of the last day race around the Champs-Élysées the Tour avoided the Olympic Games sites altogether.

With five stage wins already under his belt, Pogacar stormed out of his adopted hometown of Monaco and up the coast to Nice where he leapt into the arms of his teammates on the celebrated Promenade des Anglais.

Pogacar took the overall lead on a downhill on day four as the race arrived in France from Italy via the Alps.

By the time the race returned to the Alps, Pogacar was three minutes clear and Vingegaard was starting to flag with the Dane still not fully recovered from a major crash in March.

After winning stage 19 on Friday,

Pogacar knew he had won and Vingegaard switched his attention to finishing second.

Evenepoel captured the first time-trial in week two, came third in the overall standings and won the white jersey for best young rider.

Other stars emerged along the way as Eritrean rider Biniam Girmay won three stages, the sprint points green jersey and national hero status in his homeland.

Olympic champion Richard Carapaz won a stage, took the yellow jersey for a day and raced on Saturday in the polka dot best climber’s jersey.

Mark Cavendish also took the headlines, claiming a record 35<sup>th</sup> stage win and was given a special podium presentation for his career achievement before confirming it was his last Tour.

# Maiden F1 win a dream come true for Piastri

## FORMULA ONE

OSCAR PIASTRI SAID HE REALISED a childhood dream last Sunday (July 21) after claiming his maiden Formula One victory in a whirlpool of mixed emotions and vexed team orders as McLaren claimed an emphatic one-two at the Hungarian Grand Prix.

After taking the lead at the start, when he passed pole-sitting team-mate Lando Norris, the 23-year-old Australian pulled clear to control the race until losing out in the pit-stops, when the Briton gained an advantage.

McLaren pitted him first for an ‘undercut’ to fend off seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes who finished third after surviving a skirmish with Red Bull’s Max Verstappen.

This resulted in Norris, who had superior pace, inheriting the lead, leading into the closing laps and receiving repeated orders to give back his position – and victory – to Piastri, who was struggling to close the gap.

After prolonged strained dialogue on the team radio, Norris agreed to slow down and let Piastri pass him with three laps remaining, despite knowing he was losing a chance to cut substantially into Verstappen’s lead in the drivers’ championship.

“A very special day for me,” said Piastri. “This is the day I’ve dreamed of as



Piastri: Number One. Photo: AFP

a kid, to be standing on the top step of an F1 podium.”

He added he was unfazed by the team orders arguments played out over the closing laps as McLaren asked Norris to slow down, preserve his tyres and allow Piastri to catch and pass him.

“The longer you leave it, of course, you get a bit nervous, but it was well-executed by the team and it was the right thing to do. I had put myself in the right position at the start,” he said.

“So long as we finished one-two and did the right thing it was fair.”

Charles Leclerc came home fourth and Ferrari team-mate Carlos Sainz sixth, sandwiching Verstappen in fifth.

Verstappen’s Red Bull teammate Sergio Perez finished seventh, Mercedes’ George Russell was eighth, RB’s Yuki Tsunoda ninth, with Lance Stroll of Aston Martin rounding out the top ten. AFP



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**Brunch/Lunch:** 11.00 – 11.45 hr.  
**Briefing & Group Photo** – 11.50 hr.  
**Shotgun Tee off** at 12.00 hr.  
**Gala Dinner** @ Ramada Plaza Ballroom  
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# Chanettee wins LPGA Dana Open

## GOLF

AFP

Chanettee Wannasaen closed with back-to-back birdies to capture her second career LPGA title last Sunday (July 21), edging South Korean Ryu Hae-ran by a stroke to win the Dana Open.

The 20-year-old Thai star fired a four-under par 67 in the final round to finish 72 holes on 20-under 264 at Highland Meadows in Sylvania, Ohio.

Ryu birdied four of the last five holes and six on the back nine but her lone bogey at 16 dropped her one adrift of Chanettee before both contenders birdied the par-5 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> holes to give Chanettee the triumph.

Chanettee, ranked 43<sup>rd</sup>, won her only prior LPGA title at last September's Portland Classic as a Monday qualifier.

This year, she was third at the Americas Open in May and shared eighth at last month's Dow Championship before breaking through for a second LPGA victory.

Ryu, last year's LPGA Rookie of the Year, won her only LPGA title at last October's Northwest Arkansas Championship. She has seven top-10 showings this season.

Chanettee, who began the day with a three-stroke lead, surged early with birdies at the third, par-5 seventh and par-3 eighth while Ryu's only front-nine birdie came at the par-3 sixth.

Ryu charged on the back nine with



Chanettee celebrates with the trophy. Photo: AFP

birdies at 10 and 12 and added birdies at the par-3 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>.

Chanettee, meanwhile, stumbled with a bogey to begin the back nine and a birdie-bogey run at 12 and 13.

Deadlocked for the lead, Ryu made her first bogey at 16 to fall one stroke back and Chanettee and Ryu both birdied the last two holes to deliver Chanettee the trophy.

## SCHAUFFELE WINS BRITISH OPEN

Elsewhere, Xander Schauffele won the British Open last Sunday to claim his second major just two months after triumphing at the PGA Championship.

The 30-year-old Californian delivered a faultless, zen-like six-under-par final round at Royal Troon to emerge from a congested leaderboard and clinch the

Claret Jug.

Schauffele finished on nine-under par for the championship, two shots ahead of England's Justin Rose and Billy Horschel of the USA.

Schauffele, who registered a major record of 21-under-par to win the PGA at Valhalla in May, is the first player to win two majors in a year since Brooks Koepka in 2018.

His victory on the west coast of Scotland completes an American clean sweep of the game's biggest titles in 2024.

"I thought (winning the PGA) would help me and it actually did. I had this sense of calm, a calm I didn't have when I played earlier at the PGA," said Schauffele.

The world number three described clinching the Open as a "dream come true".



Photo: Bangkok Post

# SAT, companies to pay for Olympics broadcast rights

## OLYMPICS

THE SPORTS AUTHORITY of Thailand (SAT) will join hands with the private sector to invest about B400 million for the rights to broadcast the Olympic games, SAT governor Kongsak Yodmanee confirmed last Saturday (July 20).

Mr Kongsak said the SAT used to receive half of the money needed for the Olympics broadcast rights from the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC). The rest was covered by the National Sports Development Fund with support from the private sector.

For the 2024 Olympics broadcast, the SAT requested B435mn from the NBTC's Broadcasting and Telecommunications Research and Development Fund. The NBTC declined to provide the funding assistance.

A source said the NBTC board voted 7-0 against sup-

porting the budget for acquiring the broadcast rights for the 33<sup>rd</sup> Olympic Games and the 17<sup>th</sup> Paralympic Games in Paris.

"We had multiple discussions with the NBTC regarding our request. However, no SAT representatives were present during the NBTC's final decision," said Mr Kongsak.

"We want to ensure that all Thais can access the Olympic broadcast through various channels as per the Cabinet's direction," he said.

Given the urgency, the SAT brought the issue to the National Sports Development Fund committee meeting on July 18.

The committee decided to proceed, with the government acting as a primary supporter to engage in discussion with private partners.

Although the cost of acquiring the broadcast right cannot be disclosed yet, the amounts reportedly exceed B400mn approved by the committee. Operational costs must also be included. *Bangkok Post*

# Tier two rugby nations have their day but not their say



AFTER THE LAST WORLD Cup in France much concern surrounded the performances of tier two nations. Most lost by large margins, some appeared to be ridiculed by spectators, all tried hard but to no avail.

Options were put forward. My suggestion was to run a separate World Cup for the tier two nations alongside the tier one tournament and at the same venues. The final of the tier two competition would be played the night before the tier one final. The winner would gain automatic entry into the tier one competition in four years time.

More frequent games between tier one and tier two nations would more greatly aid development although the already congested calendar does not allow for many fixtures.

Last Saturday's (July 20) fixtures further demonstrated the class divide with tier one nations fielding second or weakened teams but still winning by huge margins. New Zealand defeated Fiji 47-5,



New Zealand were head and shoulders above Fiji in their 47-5 win last Saturday (July 20). Photo: AFP

Australia beat Georgia 40-29, South Africa dismissed Portugal with ease 64-21, Argentina demolished Uruguay 79-5 and Scotland dismantled Chile 52-11.

Internal development is crucial if a nation is to produce its own players through a carefully designed pathway program and it pays to always remember that every international player was a 12-year-old boy or girl once.

Closer to home, Phuket's own rugby club the Phuket Vagabonds continue to develop the game locally. Tomorrow (July 27) they entertain Krabi Rugby Club at the Alan Cooke Ground in Thalang, kickoff is at 4:30pm. If you are a fan of 15s rugby, come along and

support a club with a player base consisting of Thai and expatriate players. Refreshments are available all day.

All ages and all skill levels are welcome at training sessions, which begin again on Aug 17<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested in wanting to help or know more about Vagabonds rugby, contact rugby@phuketvagabonds.com or visit www.phuketvagabonds.com.

*The Global Rugby Coach, Mike Penistone, is a globally renowned professional rugby coach based in Phuket who is also an ambassador for the Asia Center Foundation, a charity for disadvantaged children. For more information visit: www.rugbycoachingconsultancy.com.*

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# Sport

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Rugby clinic sets up in Phuket > p14

# PARIS BOUND

## Phuket swimmer Duana on Olympic stage

Duana during practice at the BISP campus in Phuket. Photo: Supplied

### SWIMMING

The Phuket News  
editor@classactmedia.co.th

As the 33<sup>rd</sup> Olympic Games gets underway in Paris, France today (July 26) there will be a group of people in Phuket paying extra attention to proceedings in the hope of spotting a local face.

That is because Phuket-based Duana Lama will be part of the opening ceremony procession as just one of seven athletes representing her home country of Nepal.

Duana will compete in the women's 200 metre freestyle swimming, just one of two swimmers to represent Nepal, with the heat qualifiers on July 28, the semi-finals on July 29 and the finals on July 30.

Duana, 18, is a student at British International School, Phuket (BISP) who began her swimming journey

at the tender age of six, back in her homeland. With young Duana displaying clear natural talent in the pool, her parents were then faced with the decision to seek and select an environment more conducive for their daughter's dual pursuits of academics and swimming. When Duana turned 12 BISP was chosen as the ideal location and she hasn't looked back since.

The Koh Kaew-located campus provided Duana with state-of-the-art facilities, including year-round training in the Olympic-sized swimming pool supported by dedicated coaches and staff – a far cry from the 18-metre hotel pool she was used to back in Nepal.

Furthermore, Duana felt extra motivated by being in an environment that is renowned for fostering both academic and athletic excellence. "Easy access to facilities has been great, and it's nice being surrounded

by similar people trying to achieve not just their academic goals but their athletic goals too," Duana explained. The supportive boarding community and specialised support services have also played a crucial role in her development, Duana said, helping her balance training schedules with her academic responsibilities.

### MENTAL RESILIENCE

Duana's journey was not always plain sailing and her transition to BISP had its hurdles. Stepping into a multicultural environment and adapting to a new curriculum posed initial challenges. However, Duana swiftly found her footing, both academically and athletically and was soon flourishing in and out of the pool.

Duana's transition from practising in an 18-metre hotel pool in Nepal to training in BISP's Olympic-sized swimming pool marked a significant

turning point in her athletic journey. "In Nepal, pools shut down in the winter," she explains. "Now I have access to both short-course and long-course facilities, depending on the meet I am preparing for... Plus, being in Thailand meant I could continue competing within Southeast Asia."

Duana credits her coaches for their unwavering support and commitment to her development as an athlete. In a sport where mental resilience is as crucial as physical ability, having female coaches who understand the unique challenges faced by female athletes has been a game-changer. "They've been exceptionally supportive and good to have around," she says.

Navigating the demands of rigorous training schedules alongside academic responsibilities is no easy feat. Yet, as a student-athlete living on campus, Duana has found a rhythm that works for her. Early

morning training sessions at 5am are followed by a full day of International Baccalaureate (IB) classes and further swim sessions in the afternoon. In addition to her passion for swimming, Duana is exploring avenues in either animal conservation or art.

While Duana has represented Nepal at the world championships in Budapest, Peru, Japan and Doha, the Olympics is the pinnacle for any athlete. While Paris is her immediate focus, Duana has already set her sights on competing at the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles, while potentially pursuing higher education in the United States.

She may have already come a long way but there is still much ahead for Duana who will have her own enthusiastic fan club cheering her on from Phuket as she takes to the pool on the biggest stage of all in the French capital.

## Thai athletes target medals at Paris Olympics

### OLYMPICS

THAI ATHLETES WILL BE looking to make their mark as the 2024 Paris Olympics gets underway today (July 26).

In Badminton nine Thai players have qualified for all five events for the first time in 20 years and hopes are high that reigning men's singles world champion Kunlavut Vitidsarn and mixed doubles stars Dechapol Puavaranukroh and

Sapsiree Taerattanachai might finally put an end to the long wait for a medal.

Ratchanok Intanon, Supanida Katethong, women's doubles duo Jongkolphan Kititharakul and Rawinda Prajongjai and men's doubles players Supak Jomkoh and Kittinupong Kedren will also represent Thailand in the French capital.

The badminton competition at Paris 2024 will take place between July 27-Aug 5.

Elsewhere, Thai sprint phenomenon Puripol Boonson will make his Olympic debut and is keen to clock a sub-10-second time in Paris.

The 18-year-old Puripol, dubbed 'Angel Bew' by Thai media, qualified for Paris when he climbed up to No.45 in the latest rankings after he clocked 10.23 seconds to win the 100-metre event at the Kasanov Memorial 2024 in Almaty, Kazakhstan, recently.

The qualifying heats of the men's 100m dash will be staged

on Aug 3 with the semi-final and final races scheduled for the following day.

The first Thai athlete in action will be Subenrat Insaeng, who participates in the women's discus throw competition on Aug 2. It will be her third appearance in the world's biggest sporting event.

Her best effort in the discipline was recorded at 60.33 metres at the 2019 Manila SEA Games, which is a far cry from the gold medal-winning throw of 68.98m



Puripol: Going for gold. Photo: AFP

by Valarie Allman of the United States at the 2020 Tokyo Games.

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