

PROTESTERS CALL FOR PM TO RESIGN > PAGE 2

KINDY COPS



Officials inspect Child Center Phuket, one of five centres shut down from the list of 55 illegal nurseries in Phuket. Photo: PPEAO

OFFICIALS BALK AT TAKING ACTION AGAINST ILLEGAL NURSERIES

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Panna Phromwichian, Chief of the Phuket Provincial Education Area Office (PPEAO), has confirmed to *The Phuket News* that her office has no intention of shutting down all nurseries operating illegally in Phuket – as she says it is only a “technicality” and that doing so would disrupt young children’s education.

The issue came to fore after *The Phuket News* received a copy of a report by the Phuket branch of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS

Phuket) that was submitted to the PPEAO.

The report, dated Dec 27, 2024, identified 55 nurseries in Phuket known to be operating illegally.

Since then five ‘child centres’ have been ordered to close for failing to comply with legal requirements, Ms Panna told *The Phuket News*.

Sungka Sungka was shuttered on Feb 7 and Child Center Phuket and Indigo Kids both closed on Feb 14. ThaiLivingKids in Bang Tao was closed on June 16, after its Chalong centre was closed in February, she said.

Ms Panna pointed out that two of the 55 named nurseries – MIK

Tree and Baan Merak Nursery – have “recently succeeded in obtaining official licenses”, and they would suffer no legal consequences for operating illegally before their permits were approved.

The remaining 48 nurseries of the original 55 illegal nurseries named in the report are under “ongoing review”, with officials working to determine their operational status and licensing compliance, Ms Panna said.

Ms Panna deflected direct questions about her office’s lack of action. Instead she claimed her office was already targetting illegal “schools” in March, but said her

office had now “paused” that campaign.

The only part of the “campaign” that *The Phuket News* can substantiate are the raids specifically targetting the two Good Shepherd schools on the island, which provide free education to children of Myanmar workers living in poverty.

“We have paused the raid since March because we have many campaigns to be taken care of, including no e-cigarettes, ‘zero dropouts’ and bringing Myanmar kids into the [Thai education] system,” Ms Panna said.

Yet trying to say that her office does take action, Ms Panna said...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

NEWS PAGE 3

Full honours for fallen Phuket soldier



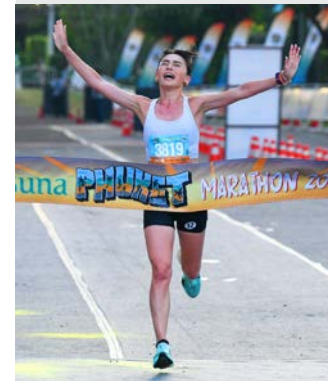
LIFE PAGE 9

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News



Photo: Eakkapop Thongtub

Protesters demand PM resign

A GROUP CALLING THEMSELVES 'Phuket Loves the Nation' staged a rally in Phuket Old Town last week, demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra following the leak of an audio clip allegedly involving her and former Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen.

The protest, June 19, began at 4pm at Queen Sirikit Park on Thalang Rd, with around 200 to 300 people joining the event.

Participants held signs and banners, one of which read: "Rebels, traitors, burdens to the country, GET OUT." Speakers took turns addressing the crowd from a pickup truck.

The group voiced concern over what they described as a national security issue stemming from the leaked conversation.

Pairon Ruamphanphong, speaking on behalf of the protesters, said the movement was led by a figure known as 'Khru Konuan', and that they gathered to show support for Thailand's military forces stationed along the borders.

Several attendees expressed outrage over the audio clip and accused the Shinawatra family of betraying the nation.

Calls were also made for former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and current PM Paetongtarn to be imprisoned, with some urging military intervention. *Eakkapop Thongtub*

Reluctant nursery action

Continued from page 1

... "The ones we do find, we order to close immediately... We want you to know we're doing our job, but each raid requires coordination with the police and other departments as well."

Ms Panna went to lengths to explain that some schools or nurseries continue to operate while awaiting license approval, which she said "technically remains illegal".

She acknowledged this, stating that such schools should be shut down under the law, but in practice, immediate closures are not always enforced – "especially in cases where large numbers of children are enrolled and the schools are actively working toward compliance".

She emphasised the need to weigh the impact of abrupt closures on families and children. "If we order them to shut down right away, where will the children go?" Ms Panna said.

"Parents will be affected in their work routines, children may miss learning opportunities and some families have already paid tuition fees," she added.

Ms Panna also cited "overlapping classifications" as an issue. "The line between being classified as a school and a nursery remains blurred and requires further assessment," she said.

'Schools', as defined by the National Education Act, must be approved by the Ministry of Education.

Nurseries also require Ministry of Education permission to operate, but are also required to pass inspection by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security.

However, 'nurseries' are not permitted to provide any educational learning, Ms Panna confirmed.

For nurseries to provide any



Four people were arrested after ThaiLivingKids in Bang Tao was raided earlier this month. Photo: MSDHS

lessons, they must be registered as a 'school' as defined under National Education Act – and if their students are younger than 6 years old, the venue and the operator must be inspected by the MSDHS, she said.

RUNNERS

Sompit Nuanchan, Chief of the MSDHS Phuket office, reported her own challenges in cracking down on illegal nurseries in Phuket.

"Sometimes we receive a report, but when we go to inspect, the place is already shut down or completely empty.... For example, with Mashasasha Phuket, Ecosphere Innovation and Yedda Blue Phuket – we cannot even specify their exact locations," Ms Sompit said.

Regarding the 'Waldorf Phuket School' in Chong Talay, which is already facing scrutiny, Ms Sompit reported that 'school' underwent an on-site inspection on June 19. The school has since changed its name to 'Waldorf Steiner School Phuket', Ms Sompit added.

"We found minor issues that must be resolved within 15 days. If the school meets all requirements, it will be eligible to apply for an official license," she noted.

Like Ms Panna, Ms Sompit said that the office aims to "guide schools toward legal compliance", not to arrest operators.

She also confirmed that the

Waldorf school will face no legal consequences for operating illegally since 2021. "If all minor issues are resolved within 15 days, the school will be granted a license," she said.

GOVERNOR

Anupong Wongsawan, assistant to the Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat, confirmed to *The Phuket News* that Phuket provincial officials are now aware of the illegal nurseries situation and are taking steps to monitor any action taken.

Coordination efforts were actively underway with the PPEAO to clarify jurisdictional responsibilities and accelerate enforcement actions, Mr Anupong said.

"Phuket authorities have recently reported an update to relevant agencies regarding the ongoing challenge of illegal nurseries and learning centres operating in the province," he said.

The MSDHS report of illegal nurseries and schools was formally addressed through the Provincial Ombudsman's Office, Mr Anupong confirmed.

"The matter was raised with the Provincial Ombudsman rather than the police because some nurseries on the list are actively working toward legalisation. While not all currently meet the requirements, several are in the process of improving their

Officials target local domestic violence > p4



operations and applying for licenses," he said.

Governor Sophon is allowing local officials to address the issue, and his office is monitoring the situation, but will leave actual enforcement to the relevant officials, Mr Anupong added.

"Some fall under teaching management and must apply for permits through the Phuket Education Area Office and the 'centres' must be inspected, but others register as childcare centres through the inspection of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS), creating a grey area," Mr Anupong said.

This overlap between institutions classified as schools and those categorised as childcare centres has complicated enforcement efforts, Mr Anupong noted.

"The line between care services and educational institutions is often blurred, with curriculum certification and documentation being key factors in determining the appropriate oversight," he said.

"If it's about teaching, it must go through the education office, but we also rely heavily on operators to expedite their own licensing processes," he added.

One of the main obstacles, according to Mr Anupong, is the bureaucratic and procedural delays that impede swift licensing approvals.

"Due to many factors, the Phuket education office has not yet been able to drive and accelerate the process," he said.

"The process depends heavily on operators urgently applying for permission, which requires curriculum certification and extensive documentation," he said.

"In Phuket, there are still many places open that are beyond the scope of inspection," he admitted.

Sea gypsy 'cultural centre' rots in ruins

RATSADA MAYOR JIRAYUT Songyot says he has no knowledge of what to do with the long-abandoned Sea Gypsy Cultural Centre on Koh Siray – or how much public money has been poured into it over the past 15 years.

The Baan Laem Tukkae Sea Gypsy Cultural Centre, built in 2010 on more than four rai of land in Moo 4, Ratsada, was originally pitched as Asia's first "New Thai Cultural Center" to

showcase the traditions of the Urak Lawoi people and boost cultural tourism.

But the project stalled within six months, was never completed, and has remained derelict ever since.

Construction began in 2010 under the Phuket Office of Public Works. Though hailed as a green, self-sustaining "living museum", the project was handed over unfinished to Ratsada Municipality in 2012. Multiple attempts to

revive or repurpose the site have since failed.

Phuket MP Chalermpong Saengdee said the original budget was B5.4 million, drawn from the 2010 provincial funds and the national Thai Khem Khaeng stimulus package. In 2017, Ratsada Municipality requested a further B50mn for renovations – but the proposal quietly disappeared with no explanation.

Now overgrown with weeds and falling into decay, the site is

once again under scrutiny. When asked about its future, Mayor Jirayut claimed: "I had no information or plans for the abandoned buildings," and declined to comment on why it was never finished, citing that he was not in office at the time.

Despite holding the top municipal post, Mr Jirayut offered no clear plan for the site's redevelopment, instead suggesting the issue should be handled at the provincial level.



Photo: Chalermpong Saengdee / Facebook

MP Chalermpong, meanwhile, has proposed using the land to build a large water tank and pressure pump system or for a drug rehabilitation centre.

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Phuket honours fallen soldier

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A solemn burial ceremony was held in Phuket last week for Private First Class (PFC) Pakom Suden, 22, who was shot and killed by a sniper while on patrol in Yala's Bannang Sata District on June 17.

PFC Pakom, a machine gunner with the 3rd Rifle Platoon, 1st Infantry Company, Special Operations Unit, was fatally shot during a security patrol in Ban Wang Hin, Tambon Bannang Sata. He sustained critical injuries in the ambush and was pronounced dead while being transported to Bannang Sata Hospital. The patrol was part of ongoing efforts to maintain public safety in Thailand's Deep South.

His body was flown by military helicopter to Wat Mongkhon Wararam School (Wat Nai Yang) in Phuket, arriving at 9:50pm the same night, where a dignified reception took place. An honour guard from the 1st Battalion, 15 Infantry Regiment was on hand to receive the fallen soldier.

Among those in attendance were Thalang District Chief Siwat Rawangkun, Sakhu Mayor Trin Panyawai, Interior Ministry representatives, local leaders, and many villagers who gathered to



pay their respects and support the grieving family.

Following the arrival ceremony, PFC Pakom's body was taken to Darul Abidin Mosque (Bang Malao) in Sakhu for ritual Islamic cleansing (ghusul janazah) and funeral prayer. The burial was held at the Bang Malao Cemetery at 10am on June 18, in accordance with Islamic tradition.

A royal funeral ceremony is scheduled to take place on June 26, when royal burial soil will be formally bestowed – an honour reserved for those who have served with bravery and sacrificed

their lives for national peace and security.

Their Majesties the King and Queen also extended their condolences and graciously sent a royal gift basket to PFC Pakom's family as a tribute to his service and sacrifice. Phuket Vice Governor Suwit Phansengiam was appointed to present the royal gifts to the family on June 19, at the same mosque where the funeral rites were held. PFC Pakom's mother, Prakong Cholthar, accepted the royal tribute, which was received with gratitude by the family and the local community.



Photo: PR Phuket

According to an official report, the royal gesture symbolised the monarchy's enduring respect and concern for the armed forces and those who give their lives in service to the nation.

The funeral was also attended by Col Chaiphiphat Intharathep, Commander of the 1st Infantry Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, Thalang District Chief Siwat Rawangkun, Sakhu Police Chief Pol Col Salan Santisasanakul, and Trin Panyawai, Chief of the Sakhu Tambon Administrative Organisation (OrBorTor). The 15th Infantry Regiment organised the honour guard that accompanied

the casket to its final resting place.

PFC Pakom's mother, Prakong Cholthar, and his sister, Woranuch Angkhara, said he had volunteered for military service and had spoken with them the night before the fatal incident.

"He asked us if we were afraid," his mother recalled through tears. "He said, 'Why be afraid? If something happens, I'll be fine.'"

Officials emphasised that the ceremonies were conducted with full honours to recognise PFC Pakom's bravery and ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

Festival sets noodle world record

PHUKET HAS SET A GUINNESS World Record for the largest number of people simultaneously stir-frying Hokkien noodles, marking a highlight of this year's Phuket Peranakan Festival.

The record-breaking event took place last Sunday (June 22) at Saphan Hin, local officials announced.

Organised by the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) in partnership with Phuket City Municipality, the Peranakan Association of Thailand, the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB), the Thailand International Festivals and Events Promotion Association (TIEFA), and the Phuket Arts Association, the event aimed to showcase Phuket's culinary heritage on the world stage, said the announcement.

The ceremony was presided over by Phuket Vice Governor Suwit Phansengiam and attended by key local and international figures, including PPAO President Rewat Areerob, Peranakan Association founder Anchalee Vanich Thepbutr, Peranakan Association of Thailand President Kosol Tang-Uthai, Asia IFEA President Prof Gang Hoan Jeong, and Boonperm Intanapasat, President of the Thai IFEA branch.

All served as official witnesses and jointly received the Guinness World Record certificate on behalf of the event.

In total, 846 bowls of Hokkien noodles were carefully arranged to spell out the word 'PHUKET', with participants stir-frying the noodles simultaneously for 20 minutes.

Each bowl was required to meet a strict standard weight of 100 grammes. Food



Photo: PPAO

safety and hygiene were closely monitored by dedicated health teams throughout the process.

Following inspection, Guinness World Records officially certified that 508 of the bowls met all record criteria, establishing the first-ever record of its kind.

As part of the festival's commitment to community and sustainability, the cooked Hokkien noodles were also donated to the Sustainable Tourism Development Foundation and distributed to 300 children at the Phuket Special Education Center, promoting zero food waste and responsible event practices.

The event continued with a parade of 800 participants holding bowls of noodles, followed by an International Peranakan Performance Show. The celebrations concluded with participants sharing the noodles together before an evening orchestra performance on the main stage.

See also 'Peranakan on Parade' on page 13.

The Phuket News



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Wind 4 m/s

Russian tourist drowns after swim with son

A RUSSIAN MAN drowned at Karon Beach on June 20 after entering the water despite red flag warnings indicating dangerous conditions.

Police were called to the scene, at the southern end of the beach at 11:40am.

The victim, 48-year-old Nikita Tretiakov, was found unconscious in the sea approximately 100 metres from shore, after disappearing while swimming with his son.

Lifeguards and emergency responders from Karon Municipality brought him to shore and performed CPR, but were unable to revive him. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

According to police, Mr Tretiakov had entered the sea with his son after leaving their hotel, about 10am. His wife remained on the beach.

About 30 minutes later, he was seen disappearing beneath the waves. Lifeguards were alerted and launched a search, locating his body around 11am.



Photo: Karon Police

Despite efforts from lifeguards and staff from Chalong Hospital, Mr Tretiakov could not be revived. His wife and son requested that he be transported to the hospital for further resuscitation attempts, but officials confirmed he had died at the scene.

Authorities have urged beachgoers to obey red flag warnings, which are placed to signal rough surf and dangerous swimming conditions, especially during the southwest monsoon season.

The warning to obey red flags at the beaches followed three tourists drowning at Phuket beach in just two days.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Domestic violence makes its mark

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A total of 38 domestic violence cases were recorded in Phuket in 2024, with the majority of victims being women, according to figures released by the Phuket office of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS).

Of the victims, 33 were women and five were men. Most were middle-aged adults (14 cases), followed by young adults (10), children aged 7-12 (7), and elderly individuals (7).

However, officials warn the true number of cases is likely higher due to significant underreporting.

The figures were presented during a recent meeting at the Provincial Hall chaired by Phuket Vice Governor Samawit Suphanphai, where authorities discussed urgent social challenges and potential solutions to address domestic violence in the province.

Key risk factors linked to the cases included alcohol consumption (14 cases),



Photo: PR Phuket

drug use (eight), mental illness (six), gambling (four), abuse of power (three), divorce (two) and jealousy (one).

Most incidents occurred in working-age households, reflecting economic and social pressures faced by families.

Phuket MSDHS Director Sompit Srikhamhaeng noted that Phuket ranks among the top 10 provinces with the highest proportions of both working-age and elderly populations – a demographic trend that adds complexity to social welfare efforts.

The meeting also underscored the need to align local action with Sustainable Development

Goal (SDG) indicators, particularly those focused on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, said an official report of the meeting.

Nationally, Thailand has only achieved between 51-75% of these targets each year since 2017, the report noted.

Officials at the meeting, including Vice Governor Samawit and Phuket MSDHS Director Ms Sompit, said they plan to use the data to track trends, develop preventive strategies and implement local measures to promote a safer and more resilient society.

No further developments or strategies were reported.

Uzbek woman arrested for illegal beauty clinic

A WOMAN FROM UZBEKISTAN has been arrested for allegedly operating an illegal beauty clinic in Chalong without a license.

The arrest took place on June 17 following a coordinated operation involving the Phuket Provincial Police, Phuket Immigration, Chalong Police and officials from the Phuket Public Health Office.

The woman, identified only as 'Ms Maftu', was taken into custody at the site of the unlicensed clinic, where officers seized more than 13 pieces of medical and surgical equipment as evidence.

Ms Maftu faces multiple charges, including operating a medical facility without permission, importing medical



Photo: Phuket Provincial Police

equipment without registering with the appropriate authority, and working illegally as a foreign national, police confirmed.

Ms Maftu was taken to Chalong Police Station for legal proceedings.

In their brief report, police emphasised the dangers of seeking medical or cosmetic procedures at unauthorised clinics.

Eakkapop Thongtub

Burglar heists B2mn from luxury villas

POLICE IN PHUKET ARE hunting for a thief who broke into four luxury villas in an upscale Baan Yamu estate in Pa Khlok on a single night, stealing high-end items and cash worth over B2 million.

The burglary, which occurred late on June 17 and into early June 18, was captured on CCTV and has since gone viral on social media, drawing widespread attention.

Footage shows a man dressed in black and wearing a face mask climbing over the estate wall around 7:45pm on June 17. He can be seen walking along the wall, apparently surveying the area, before jumping down and making his way into the villa compound.

Police said the suspect first entered Villa 13 and began searching the premises before moving on to Villa 12, where he reportedly stole valuables worth about B1mn from a tourist staying



Image: Supplied

there. He then entered Villa 10 and Villa 9, before returning to Villa 13 around 1am to collect the stolen goods and flee.

Among the items taken were luxury brand handbags, high-end watches and cash belonging to both the villas and their foreign guests.

Investigators from Thalang Police Station are reviewing security footage and following up on leads. Officers believe the suspect may be a foreign national and are examining a vehicle believed to have been used in the escape.

Police are urging anyone with information about the suspect or the vehicle to come forward as the investigation continues.

Eakkapop Thongtub

The pink 'Pho Thong' are gone

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The iconic pink 'Pho Thong' buses that for decades trundled along the streets of Phuket Town have now all gone – replaced with 24 new 'EV' electric buses bought from China costing more than B5 million each.

Over the decades, the iconic buses became symbols of Phuket Town, especially for their image harking back to yesteryear.

The 'buses' were simple: modified six-wheeled flatbed trucks fitted with wooden bench seats along the sides and wooden railings to keep passengers safe during the ride. Commuters would board and disembark using a set of steps attached to the rear.

The pink Pho Thong were launched in April 2008 under a new initiative by Paiboon Upatising, President of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO) at that time.

The moniker 'Pho Thong' was given for a variety of reasons. 'Pho Thong' comes from the Hokkien pronunciation of the Mandarin word 普通 (pǔtōng), literally meaning "ordinary two".

The choice to call the buses 'Pho Thong' served as a dual reflection of the ethnic Chinese



Photo: PPAO

who live in Phuket Town and a reference to the already well-known blue 'songthaew', which continue to provide 'bus services' from Ranong Rd in Phuket Town to the far reaches of the island.

The 'songthaew' are named after the 'two planks' in the back that serve as the seats that passengers sit on.

The Pho Thong were painted pink, as pink is the provincial colour of Phuket.

The last of the Phuket 'Pho Thong' operated on the 'Red Line' – from Chalong Pier to the main SuperCheap store in Ratsada – on June 4, confirmed Rewat Areerob, current President of Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO).

The 24 iconic buses have now been dispersed to a variety of new homes, he explained.

"They were not scrapped, but donated to government schools, temples, mosques and charitable organisations in Phuket," Mr Rewat said.

They might no longer even be pink, he added. "I'm not sure [if they're still pink] since they have already been handed over. Some might have kept the pink colour, while others may have repainted them," he said.

Mr Rewat defended the change, despite some blowback that officials were bringing an iconic symbol of Phuket into extinction.

"This move reduces long-term maintenance costs and aligns with environmental goals. We wanted something more efficient and cost-effective... That's why we chose to go with EV buses instead.

"The EV buses offer better comfort and service, especially during the rainy season when the open-air Pho Thong buses were unpopular among locals," he explained.

Although the new EV buses, painted blue and white, lack the colorful charm of the Pho Thong, the PPAO has no immediate plans to make them more colourful.

Instead, Mr Rewat urged the public to see the change as a step toward a cleaner, more sustainable future.

ROLLOUT

The new EV buses are now operating all services on the old Pho Thong routes: seven buses on the Yellow Line (Saphan Hin to Central Phuket); seven buses on the Green Line (Ratsada Pier to Baan Kathu School); and 10 buses on the Red Line the Red Line (Chalong Pier to Super-Cheap).

"The EV rollout began with three buses on the Yellow Line on Dec 3 last year, followed by another three on the Green Line on Feb 25," Mr Rewat explained.

"The Red Line was the last to receive any EVs. The first EVs rolled out on the Red Line on Mar 26, with additional buses gradually added to all routes until

the entire fleet reached full operational capacity on June 4," he added.

The new EV buses are "Asiastar JS6860GHN NG city buses", manufactured in China at a cost of B5,070,833 each. They feature air conditioning, seating for 23 passengers, USB charging ports for passengers, 24-hour CCTV and wheelchair accessibility.

Each bus can travel up to 150 kilometres per charge, with recharging taking just one to two hours.

"The PPAO has two charging stations installed – one at Saphan Hin and one opposite Ruam Pattana Sathit School [near Ratsada Pier] – while a third at Chalong Pier is under construction and expected to open by September," he said.

Fares are set at a flat rate of B15, with free rides offered to students, senior citizens, monks and people with disabilities.

Addressing concerns about job displacement, Mr Rewat stated that all former Pho Thong drivers had been laid off, and those wishing to continue must pass a new qualification test.

Some have already been referred for new roles through the Phuket City Development Company (PKCD).

Officials demand B12mn over cargo ship reef damage

THAI AUTHORITIES ARE SEEKING B12 million in compensation from the owners of a Myanmar cargo ship that ran aground near the Surin Islands and caused extensive damage to coral reefs.

The claim was filed by Surin Islands National Park following the June 1 incident, when the MV Ayar Linn, carrying 3,000 bags of cement and over 7,700 litres of diesel fuel, struck a reef and sank in Jak Bay, at the northern end of Mu Ko Surin.

The wreck remains submerged and continues to pose a serious threat to the marine ecosystem.

After the incident, the Phang Nga Marine Office issued an order banning the use of unsafe or unseaworthy vessels and mandated the salvage, dismantling, and removal of the Ayar Linn.

Despite earlier efforts by Surin Islands park officials, Royal Thai Navy officers, and members of the local Moken community to lighten the vessel's load and create buoyancy, the ship remains lodged on the reef, causing ongoing environmental harm.

A high-level meeting led by the Thai Maritime Enforcement Command Center Region 3 (Thai MECC 3), which operates from the Royal Thai Navy Third Area Command at Cape Panwa, was held on Monday (June 16) to coordinate urgent salvage efforts and plan for coral restoration.

A dive survey conducted by national park staff and marine scientists from Phuket



Photo: Thai MECC 3


Rajabhat University revealed approximately 75 metres of reef had been damaged. Blue coral (*Porites lutea*), which grows just 0.5cm per year, suffered the most – around 80% loss in the affected area.


Additional damage was recorded to staghorn and choti corals, while brain, cauliflower, and star corals were less severely affected.

To prevent further destruction, officials agreed to expedite the removal of the wreck to a nearby beach where there is no coral. Once relocated, the damage will be reassessed and restoration efforts will begin, including replanting coral – particularly blue coral, which could take years to recover naturally.

The Thai MECC 3 scheduled a salvage mission for earlier this week. The operation was to involve HTMS Mannok, a special operations diving team, and 50 naval personnel from coastal defense units.

Officials noted that salvaging the Ayar Linn and rehabilitating the damaged coral reef were critical steps in protecting the fragile marine environment of the Surin Islands. *The Phuket News*





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Governor eyes China partners

The Phuket News
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Phuket Governor Sophon Suwanarat recently led a delegation to Guangdong Province, China, on a study visit focused on advanced cancer treatment, modern urban development and green technology, with the aim of improving public health services and supporting Phuket's vision as a smart, low-carbon city.

Last Saturday (June 21), Governor Sophon was joined by key provincial officials and business leaders, including Thanusak Phuengdet, President of the Andaman Chamber of Commerce; and Kongsak Khoopongsakorn, President of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce.

Also joining the tour were Somkid Chokong, Advisor to the Governor of Phuket, and Phuket Provincial Chief Administrative Officer (Palad) Thiraphong Chuaychu.

The group visited the Guangzhou RoyalLee Cancer Center, where they were welcomed by Li Min, Chairman of the Board of Directors. The hospital presented its integrated approach to cancer treatment, combining Western and Chinese medicine, and highlighted its expertise in precision radiotherapy, minimally invasive therapy, nuclear medicine, palliative care and integrative oncology, said an official report of the tour.

The centre is accredited by the Joint Commission International (JCI) and recognised as a top-tier, 3A-level specialised cancer

hospital in China, the report added.

The delegation also toured the Guangzhou Taihe Cancer Hospital, the first in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Special Economic Zone to offer two proton therapy systems: the Varian ProBeam and IBA Proteus+.

Taihe Hospital collaborates with world-renowned medical institutions such as the MD Anderson Cancer Center and the Mayo Clinic, using digital technology to support remote diagnostics and patient care, the report noted.

The visit is expected to contribute valuable insights to the planned development of a the yet to be built 'Radiation Therapy Building' operated by Vachira Phuket Hospital, which is set to become a comprehensive cancer treatment centre.

Not explained in the official report is that the Vachira cancer treatment centre, touted by officials as the first government cancer treatment facility in any of the six Andaman provinces, has been funded overwhelmingly by private donations and members of the public.

The project aims to expand access to quality cancer care in Phuket, reduce patient congestion and limit the need for residents to travel to other provinces for treatment, the official report said.

'GREEN TECH'

Last Sunday (June 22), the Governor's delegation continued their study tour at Fushan Industrial Park, operated by Guanghuantou Company. The park showcases modern industrial practices with a strong focus on clean energy, carbon reduction and circular economy principles.

The park is capable of processing up to 12,600 tonnes of municipal waste and 78,000 tonnes of hazardous waste per year and is recognized as a AAA-level industrial tourism site that serves as a public learning center for clean energy and waste management.

The park also features a 'garden-style' design, integrating green spaces, quality worker accommodation and recreational areas to promote a better quality of life within the industrial zone. The development model aligns with Phuket's goal of becoming a "smart, low-carbon city" that balances economic growth with environmental sustainability, the official report explained.

The group later visited the AIMA electric bicycle factory, one of China's leading producers of electric bikes. They were welcomed by Lin Peijia, CEO of

Xiaoju Mobility Technology Co Ltd, who introduced the company's automated production system and international-standard quality control processes.

AIMA has invested more than 2.1 billion yuan (B9.636bn) in research and development to support its transition to carbon-free manufacturing and supplies electric bicycles to over 50 markets in Europe and Asia.

These visits provided valuable ideas and knowledge to support Phuket's smart city initiatives, particularly in promoting clean technology, sustainable urban development, and the use of alternative energy.

STRENGTHENING TIES

In a parallel diplomatic engagement, Rewat Areerob, President of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organisation (PPAO), welcomed Wang Hong, Mayor of Guiyang City, Guizhou Province, along with his delegation, at the PPAO office in Phuket Town last Saturday (June 21).

The two sides discussed opportunities to strengthen relations between Phuket and Guiyang in the areas of culture, tourism, and education. Phuket Vice Governor Suwit Phansengiam also took part in the welcome on behalf of Governor Sophon.

The exchange is part of ongoing efforts to build stronger partnerships between Thailand and China at the provincial and city levels, with a focus on mutual development and cultural cooperation.



Photo: PR Phuket

Phuket scrambles to contain cannabis fallout

LOCAL OFFICIALS and business leaders in Phuket are calling for urgent measures to address the island's growing cannabis problem, warning that unchecked recreational use is driving away family tourists and harming the province's international reputation.

Phuket Vice Governor Adul Chuthong chaired a multi-agency meeting at Phuket Provincial Hall on June 19 to address issues raised during an earlier Senate inspection, including illegal cannabis sales, foreign nominee businesses, and unregistered migrant workers.

The meeting, attended by Senator Prinya Wongcherdkwan, police, and public health officials, followed a Senate



Photo: PR Phuket

working group's visit on April 25, which found widespread cannabis use in public spaces, especially in Patong.

Complaints from tourists and residents have since increased, with many reporting discomfort from cannabis smoke and concerns about cannabis-laced food products, such as

cookies and jellies, being sold near family areas.

"There are reports that families now avoid certain parts of the island," Senator Prinya said, warning that public cannabis use is damaging Phuket's image as a family destination. "This is not only a tourism issue but also one of public health and safety."

Patong Police reported conducting numerous raids in collaboration with public health officials, resulting in arrests and shop closures for selling cannabis without permits. Despite this, the issue remains widespread.

The Phuket Provincial Public Health Office said the island is home to nearly 1,500 cannabis outlets,

with the highest concentration in Muang District, followed by Kathu and Thalang. Some licensed shops have also faced complaints from neighbouring businesses, particularly restaurants, which say the cannabis smell deters customers.

Satjapon Thongsom, Deputy Chair of the Phuket Chamber of Commerce, said the unchecked spread of cannabis outlets is creating unfair competition and environmental problems, particularly in coastal areas where illegal businesses operate openly.

Tourism operators said foreign travel agents have started warning family tourists about Thailand's growing cannabis association, a perception they fear may take years to undo.

Phuket Tourist Association President Thaneth Tantipiriyakij, also at the meeting, said both association members and other business operators support stricter zoning and designated cannabis use areas.

Thailand became the first Asian country to decriminalise cannabis in 2022, but a lack of clear laws has led to a regulatory gap. A proposed bill to limit cannabis to medical use remains stalled due to political uncertainty.

Vice Governor Adul said the meeting's findings would be presented to the governor to push for immediate local action to protect Phuket's standing as a world-class destination.

The Phuket News

Government crisis escalates

BANGKOK

AFP

Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra began a Cabinet reshuffle on Monday (June 23) as a political and judicial crisis sparked by a leaked phone call threatens to sink her government.

The 38-year-old daughter of controversial former premier Thaksin Shinawatra began handing out ministerial posts vacated when her main coalition partner quit last week – a move that nearly took her government down.

Paetongtarn, in office for less than a year, is hanging on by a thread, and on top of the party horse-trading she now faces a Constitutional Court case that could see her barred from office.

She faced calls to quit or call an election last week as critics accused her of undermining the country and insulting the army during the leaked call with former Cambodian leader Hun Sen, which focused on a festering border dispute.



UNDER FIRE: PM Paetongtarn Shinawatra at a press conference on June 19. Photo: AFP

The conservative Bhumjaithai party quit the governing coalition led by Paetongtarn's Pheu Thai party over the call, leaving it with a wafer-thin majority.

But the crisis stabilised as other coalition partners said they would stay, and Pheu Thai secretary general Sorawong Thienthong confirmed that all 10 remaining parties were sticking with the government.

"None of the other parties are pulling out – the

remaining parties are staying united with the government," Sorawong said on Monday.

The new Cabinet line-up will be finalised by today (June 27) but sources said changes are expected in key positions including the defence ministry as the border row with Cambodia rumbles on.

The long-running dispute over several small stretches of the frontier in northeast Thailand flared into military clashes last month that left one

Cambodian soldier dead.

The standoff has shown little sign of going away and on Monday the Thai army closed border crossings in six provinces to all vehicles and foot passengers except students and people seeking medical treatment.

The latest border restrictions apply to foreigners as well as Thais, and mean that tourists cannot enter Cambodia via the popular Aranyaprathet-Poipet crossing point.

The move came a day after Cambodian

Prime Minister Hun Manet ordered a halt to fuel and gas imports from Thailand.

He visited troops on the border on Monday and an evacuation centre housing some 3,850 people moved from their homes near the border as a precaution.

Hun Manet said Monday that the "key" to normalising relations again lay with Thailand, blaming "Thai nationalism and internal politics" for the dispute.

COURT CASE

With the loss of Bhumjaithai, the government can command only a handful more than the 248 votes needed for a majority in parliament, making it deeply vulnerable.

A group of political activists involved in huge demonstrations that helped sink previous leaders linked to the Shinawatras has pledged to hold a major rally tomorrow calling for Paetongtarn to quit.

Even if Paetongtarn rides out the parliamentary crisis, a potentially bigger threat is looming in the Constitutional Court.

A group of conservative senators has submitted a petition asking the court to throw Paetongtarn out of office over her conduct in the call with Hun Sen.

The same court sacked Paetongtarn's predecessor, Srettha Thavisin, in an ethics case in August last year.

Srettha was the latest in a long line of Thai prime ministers from parties linked to Thaksin to be kicked out of office by court orders or military coups – including Thaksin himself and his sister Yingluck Shinawatra.

While Thaksin, 75, remains popular with his rural base, he is deeply disliked and distrusted by Thailand's powerful elite.

In another headache for the Shinawatras, Thaksin faces a criminal trial next week for insulting the monarchy in an interview with South Korean media a decade ago.

Under strict lese-majeste laws, insulting King Maha Vajiralongkorn or his close family is punishable by up to 15 years in jail for each offence.

Scam gang targeting Australians busted

SAMUT PRAKAN

THAI POLICE HAVE ARRESTED 13 foreign nationals accused of running a call centre scam that defrauded Australian nationals out of about B32 million over the past year.

The arrests dealt a major blow to an operation in which an estimated 14,000 Australians have lost billions of dollars over the past two decades, according to Detective Superintendent Kristie Cressy of the Australian Federal Police.

The 13 foreigners were arrested at a luxury house in Bang Phli district of Samut Prakan on June 16, said Pol Lt Gen Jirabhop Bhuridej, commissioner of the Central Investigation Bureau.

The suspects, all men, included five Australian nationals, six Britons, one Canadian and one South African.

The scam gang had previously been raided in Indonesia before its leaders – a Briton and an Australian – fled to Thailand in early 2024, Pol Lt Gen Jirabhop confirmed.

The arresting team seized 58 items of evidence from the house, including computers, network equipment, mobile phones, investment pitch scripts and related documents.

The arresting team found the suspects operating from a converted office space on the ground floor. Each suspect was seated at a workstation equipped with phones, laptops and investment scripts.



The June 16 raid. Photo: Supplied

Documents found at the scene included names of over 14,000 Australian nationals.

According to immigration records, none of the suspects had valid work permits. They had entered Thailand on various kinds of visas but none had overstayed. Their visas would now be revoked and they would be blacklisted from entering the country.

Investigators said the group operated under the guise of legitimate financial firms, cold-calling Australians to lure them into fake bond investments promising fixed annual returns of 7-10% over one to three years.

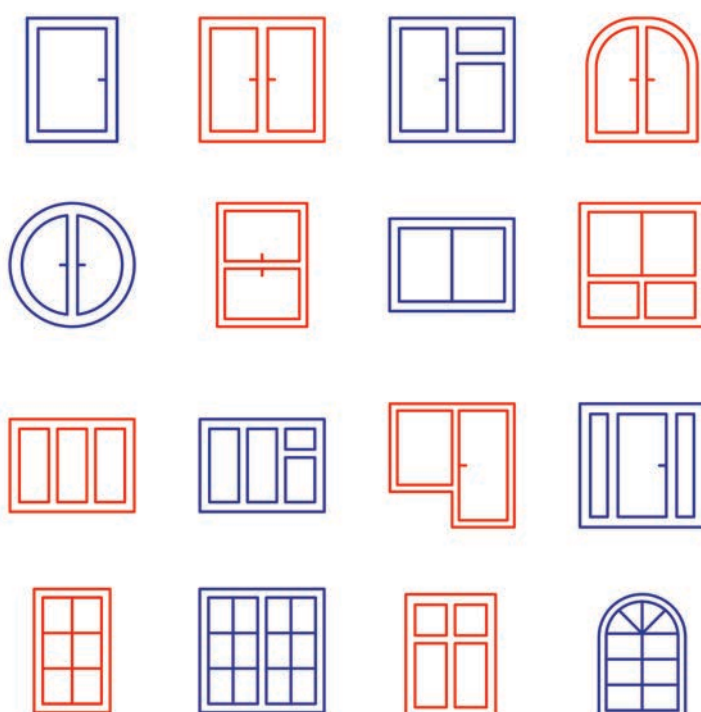
Those working at the house in Samut Prakan kept to Sydney business hours, starting work around 5am local time.

Pol Lt Gen Jirabhop said the Australian Federal Police had alerted Thai authorities to the syndicate's relocation to Thailand. Thai investigators tracked the suspects to Pattaya in early 2024 before they moved to Bangkok.

Bangkok Post



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The Pilgrimage: Pedaling Taiwan's Perimeter

Cycling the Formosa 900. Taiwan's subtropical climate means cyclists might experience four seasons in a day. Photo: Rui Hsieh



GLOBETROTTER

Todd Miller

There's something wonderfully absurd about cycling around an entire country. Yet every year, thousands pedal the perimeter of Taiwan. It's part endurance test, part cultural immersion and an entirely questionable life choice that somehow transformed into a popular pilgrimage.

The Formosa 900 follows Taiwan's coastal highways in a counterclockwise 900-kilometre loop. From the bustling sprawl of Taipei, the route advances along the breathtaking east coast cliffs before returning to the capital. Taiwan's geography ensures the journey is anything but monotonous. The western coast offers flat, industrial

landscapes perfect for building confidence before the mountainous east coast separates the cyclists from the masochists.

The island's weather adds another dimension of challenge. Taiwan's subtropical climate means cyclists might experience all four seasons in a single day, as I recently endured: thunderstorms, fog, tropical heat and mountain chill.

Cultural phenomenon

This cycling craze evolved from cinematic inspiration to cultural phenomenon. The 2006 film *Etude* popularised the island-rounding journey – known locally as 'Huan dao' – into a mainstream quest. Today, the Formosa 900 represents this cultural pilgrimage, which Taiwanese of all stripes – from army captains to grandmothers – aim to complete. The proliferation of e-bikes has democratised this mission. During

my pedals, we encountered other cyclists, but also people circling the island on moped and on foot. Many wear signs that publicise their pilgrimage.

Cyclists have different motives for completing this challenge. Some do it for the athleticism. For others, the inspiration is more personal. My motive in completing the Formosa 900 was to rediscover Taiwan, which provided my initial introduction to Asia many decades ago.

One of my fellow cyclists travelled from southern California to pedal around Taiwan's perimeter. Anson Hui, an American-born Chinese whose extended family emigrated from Taiwan, explained to me that his generation would be his family's last to feel a direct connection to Taiwan. "What might look like an old doorway next to a parking lot to most was the place where my grandparents' house once stood," he told me. "All the memories of that place will eventually disappear."

Contrasts

The first half of the Formosa 900 traverses the near continuous urban sprawl of Taiwan Inc. In Taichung we visited the headquarters of Giant Group, the world's largest bicycle manufacturer and the adjacent Cycling Culture Museum. We also passed monster gigafab facilities operated by Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), the world's largest chip foundry. The massive scale of these giga-factories became apparent as we pedalled past them for blocks and blocks.

Once you 'turn the corner' in the island's south, views of the Pacific – in different turquoise hues – come into focus. Eventually the sea gives way to verdant mountains and rice fields in the Rift Valley. The East and West coasts couldn't be more different, but they share one commonality: the shores of both coasts are extensively fortified, a visible reminder of the Taiwan's pervasive security concerns.

What makes this circumnavigation truly special is Taiwan's legendary hospitality. Locals often cheer cyclists on their pilgrimage, with occasionally bewildered stares that clearly communicate: "You know there are cars, right?" Small-town Taiwan reveals itself in ways impossible to enjoy from a motor vehicle.

The Formosa 900 may not be the world's most famous cycling challenge, but it offers something unique: a 360-degree perspective of an island nation. From industrial powerhouse to natural paradise, modern metropolis to traditional village, flat coastal plains to mountain passes – it's all Taiwan.

When asked how it felt to complete the Formosa 900, Anson Hui quickly



There are more than 4,000 temples in Taiwan, including this vibrant one in Kaohsiung. Photo: Todd Miller



The final group stretch at the conclusion of the Formosa 900 in Taipei. Photo: Rui Hsieh

confessed, "a little sore!" But he returned home to California with a strong sense of accomplishment and much gratitude.

How I travelled

I joined Giant Adventure's Tour de Taiwan, which completes the Formosa 900 in nine continuous cycling days. Giant has run this trip for 16 years, and averages 10,000 riders a year. There are multiple departures every month, with a maximum group size of 40 people. Although this is a large size for any cycling tour, the support staff make it work. On my tour the staff were hardworking and capable. The bigger group size also gives Giant scale economies. The tour represents good value considering the quality of accommodation, meals and support.

As a connoisseur of cycle tours, there are some adorable quirks in Giant's methods. My favourite is the daily group warm up and cool down rituals, as the leader counted to 10 in Mandarin for each of many stretches. On rainy days Giant passed out shower caps to put over helmets, a novel – and to my surprise, effective – strategy.

Nearly half of my group of 40 rode e-bikes. While e-bikes make the Formosa 900 accessible, it also means a range of cycling experience levels. That can be dangerous. There were many accidents on my tour, with at least one a day on average. On Day 6 – perhaps the most challenging day – there were three known accidents, one involving the police. I am aware of two cyclists who went to the hospital after mishaps and I had a close call with another cyclist which put me on high defensive alert for the rest of the tour.

Adventurer Todd Miller has explored more than 115 countries. He authored the bestseller *ENRICH: Create Wealth in Time, Money, and Meaning*. www.ToddMiller.asia

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

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Last chance at love for Soi Dog hospice dogs

PETS

Animal welfare organisation Soi Dog Foundation is calling on residents of Phuket and Phang Nga to join its newly launched hospice foster programme, an initiative designed to provide love, care and dignity to shelter dogs with chronic or life-limiting conditions such as heart disease, kidney disease and cancer.

The programme offers these dogs – many of whom may otherwise be overlooked for adoption – the opportunity to spend their remaining time in the comfort of a home. In return for their love and care, foster carers will receive full support from Soi Dog Foundation, including coverage of all medical expenses and at-home checkups from their mobile veterinary teams.

“This exciting new programme is for people living locally on a long-term basis who want to make a real and lasting difference,” said Soi Dog Foundation CEO Louise Rose.

“By hospice fostering, you’ll be doing something extraordinary for a rescue dog in need. These dogs have spent their entire lives on the streets or in the shelter, but I truly believe it’s never too late to give them the second chance they’ve always deserved.”

While Soi Dog successfully adopts out hundreds of rescued animals globally each year – 461 in 2024 alone – there are many dogs who are unable to



Available for fostering – 7-year-old Khumfon, who is seeking a family to monitor her recurring tumours. Photo: Soi Dog Foundation

travel overseas due to their medical conditions. While these conditions are often manageable, particularly with the support provided by the foundation, they can still hinder a dog’s chances of adoption. Now, through the foundation’s hospice foster programme, these dogs have a new path to a better life.

Among the many hospice dogs available for fostering are 1-year-old puppy Danke who was born with chronic kidney disease and requires a specialty diet; 14-year-old blind Thachana who needs joint medication and a little help navigating the world; and 7-year-old Khumfon who’s seeking a family to monitor her recurring tumours.

All dogs at the Soi Dog shelter in Mai Khao are spayed/neutered; fully vaccinated; microchipped; and medically and behaviourally assessed.

Those interested in hospice fostering are asked to register their interest via a short form at <https://www.soidog.org/content/become-hospice-foster>. A member of the team will then be in touch with all the necessary information.

The Soi Dog Foundation shelter in Mai Khao is currently home to more than 1,800 rescued animals. In addition to rescue, rehabilitation and rehoming efforts, the foundation also educates communities and schoolchildren about animal welfare, campaigns against the dog and cat meat trade in Asia and operates the largest spay/neuter and vaccination programme in the world.

About Soi Dog Foundation

Established in 2003 on the island of Phuket, Thailand, Soi Dog Foundation is Southeast Asia’s largest organisation



Soi Dog Foundation CEO Louise Rose with some of Soi Dog’s many senior dogs. Photo: Soi Dog Foundation

helping stray animals. Its mission is to improve the welfare of dogs and cats in Asia, resulting in better lives for both the animal and human communities, to create a society without homeless animals and to ultimately end animal cruelty.

The Gill Dalley Sanctuary in Phuket is home to over 1,800 animals. Soi Dog also has a treatment facility in Bangkok and responds to crisis situations throughout Thailand. The organisation is dedicated to implementing effective, sustainable solutions that reduce the suffering of dogs and cats in Asia, runs entirely on donations and works efficiently so all donations are used to help animals as effectively as possible. Contact: info@soidog.org; Website: www.soidog.org.

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POP QUIZ

1. In human anatomy, what does the 'hallux' refer to?

2. What is the only U.S. state that can be typed in using only one row of a standard "QWERTY" keyboard?

3. What is the name of the pig in the book 'Charlotte's Web'?

4. How many floors does the Eiffel Tower have?

5. What animal breathes through its backside?

Answers below, centre

SUDOKU

Hard

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

Crossword by Myles Mellor & Sally York

- Across
1. Noggin

5. End

10. Fishhook feature

14. Petri dish filler

15. Matter of debate

16. ___ O's (Post cereal)

17. Pioneer planter of note

20. Biscotto flavoring

21. In vain

22. Fireplace feature

24. Albanian coin

25. The Greatest

26. Participant

29. Fishing spot

33. Fish dish

35. Often-missed humor

36. March composer

41. Sight parts

42. Sentences

43. Clique

44. Harbingers

46. Banquet

49. Sean ___ Lennon

50. Sana'a native

53. Inflectional morphology

59. Furze

60. G men leader

62. At another time

63. Fill up

64. Merlin, e.g.
- Down
1. Kind of party

2. Relating to great pain

3. Baba ghanouj ingredient

4. Surrealist Max

5. Home improvement network

6. Brother of Jacob

7. Some slitherers

8. Mississippi city where Elvis was born

9. "Catch 22" author

10. Chief

11. Trojan ally, in the "Iliad"

12. Fishing rod attachment

13. Soul mate

18. Society column abbr.

19. Cry of mock horror

23. Mascara site

27. Phi follower

28. Diacritical mark

29. Major-leaguers
30. Promise to pay

31. Printer's widths

32. Carpet, Scandinavian

33. Fly in the ointment

34. Kind of driver

35. Something to believe in

36. Wine container

37. Seeds, in a way

38. Nester

39. Elementary particle

40. Nosegay

44. Anxious

45. Golden Horde member

46. Waitress, for one

47. Invisible

48. Capital on the Missouri

49. Horatian work

51. Bigheadedness

52. Fraternal fellow

53. Like some doors

54. Traffic marker

55. Hack

56. Getaway spots

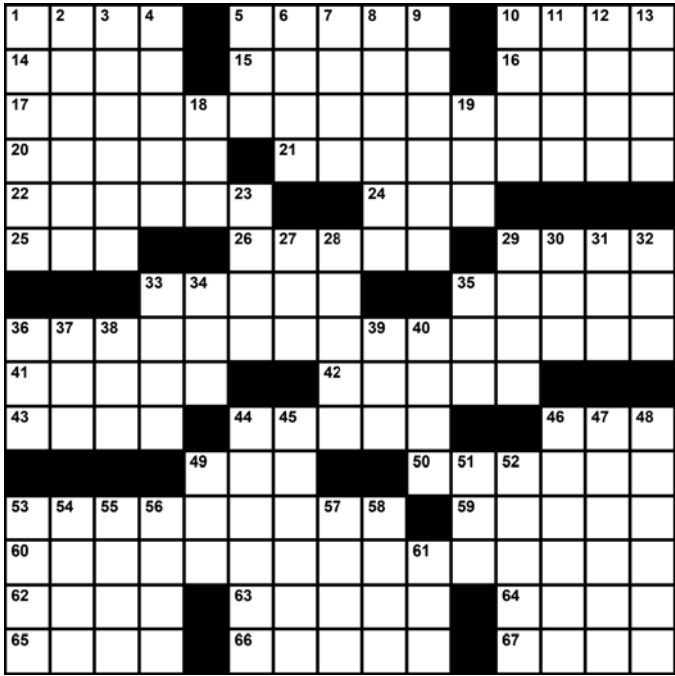
57. Low-___

58. Thus

61. Chop

Answers to this week's Pop Quiz:

(1) The big toe; (2) Alaska; (3) Wilbur; (4) Three; (5) Turtle



Visit: www.ilovecrosswords.com

Solutions to last week's puzzles:

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

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

GOT YOUR NUMBER

16

the number of moons Neptune has.

118

elements are currently on the periodic table.

1911

the year the first Indy 500 was held

28,000

kilometres per hour is how fast the International Space Station travels, taking only 90 minutes for the weightless laboratory to make a complete circuit of Earth.

500,000

US dollars a year is still earned by the song 'Whoomp! (There It Is)'. It was released in 1993 by the group Tag Team.

Source: Today.com

ISLAND VIEW

Magic hour at Bang Tao Beach. Photo by Gus Chesterton

Got an unusual or particularly beautiful picture of Phuket? Email it to editor3@classactmedia.co.th

This week in history

June 27, 1743

In the Battle of Dettingen, George II becomes the last reigning British monarch to participate in a battle.

June 28, 1926

Mercedes-Benz is formed by Gottlieb Daimler and Karl Benz merging their two companies.

June 29, 1974

Mikhail Baryshnikov defects from the Soviet Union to Canada while on tour with the Kirov Ballet.

June 30, 1934

The Night of the Long Knives, Adolf Hitler's violent purge of his political rivals in Germany, takes place.

July 1, 1881

The world's first international telephone call is made between St. Stephen, New Brunswick, Canada, and Calais, Maine, United States.

July 2, 1997

The Bank of Thailand floats the baht, triggering the Asian financial crisis.

July 3, 1035

William the Conqueror becomes the Duke of Normandy, reigning until 1087.

Source: Wikipedia

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FRI

27
JUNE



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Grab and Gather Season 2, We're back!!! A Celebration of Community lifestyle at Blue Tree Phuket. Join us for a delightful event that brings together all the things you love from gardening and gourmet treats to home decor and fine arts! Explore a delightful mix of – Gardening for Nature Lovers', Creative Arts, Crafts & Workshop, Home Décor, Artisanal goods and Handmade Jewelry, Delicious foods and drinks, Pet-friendly zone. Mark your calendars and join us for an unforgettable celebration! 27-29 June 2025 (Free Entry) at 11 AM - 8 PM at Blue Tree Phuket, Cherrng Talay, Phuket.



Friday Mussels Night

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SUN

29
JUNE



Sunday Roast

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

MON

30
JUNE



Monday BBQ Night

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

WED

2
JULY



Wednesday BBQ Night

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

FRI

4
JULY



Grow Boating Evening – July 2025

We look forward to seeing you at the Grow Boating Evening at the Isola restaurant at the Royal Phuket Marina from 5pm. Drinks sponsor for the evening will be the Royal Phuket Marina. Royal Phuket Marina is a distinguished world-class destination combining luxury waterfront living with a state-of-the-art marina. See royalphuketmarina.com/marina There will be a delicious buffet sponsored by Isola Restaurant for all attendees. Come and join in the fun, everyone is welcome and there is no entry fee. More info at facebook.com/GrowBoatingPhuket

SUN

6
JULY



Rotary charity concert - Uniting for Good

In celebration of the position of District Governor and Presidents of the 11 Rotary Club's Year 121 in Phuket. To raise funds for medical equipment for Chalong Hospital. At The Pogo Design Hotel, Phuket. From 17.30-23.00. Come join us for a concert by The Billboard (by Chompoo Fruity and Pom Autobahn), with hit songs from the 70s-90s. Tickets are 1,500 / 2,000 / 3,000pp including food (Chinese style food / tables seat 10). Reserve a table - Khun Kakanang - Thai - 095 412 8588 / Khun Alex - Eng - 098 296 6508.

SAT

19
JULY




100 Legends Summer Ball 2025


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



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Photos: Valerie - Café del Mar Phuket

PHUKET HAS BEEN GOOD TO US FOUNDATION

On Monday, June 23, a special cheque donation ceremony was held at Café del Mar Phuket in Kamala. Café del Mar Phuket is a supporter of Phuket Has Been Good To Us Foundation and made this wonderful donation to support the foundation. A select group of friends of the foundation and 20 children and teachers from Kamala School enjoyed great drinks and snacks from Festilia and Choice Foods. To find out more and how you can help Phuket Has Been Good To Us Foundation visit phukethasbeengoodtous.org



Photos: Phuket Peranakan Festival

PERANAKAN ON PARADE

More than 3,000 people took part in the Phuket Peranakan Parade in Phuket Town last Saturday evening (June 21), celebrating the third year of this major cultural event. The parade, which moved through Phuket Old Town from the Clock Tower Roundabout to Saphan Hin Cape, featured over 20 segments showcasing Peranakan (Baba-Nyonya) heritage, traditional performances and cultural displays from Thailand and neighbouring countries including Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. The event included traditional music, dance, large-scale props, cultural costumes and food-themed processions. A highlight was a student orchestra of over 100 musicians performing 'Sound of Hope' with 'Fufu bats', symbols of good fortune. The festival also promoted local life and attractions, featuring Phuket's cabaret scene, water parks and local food like Hokkien noodles. It ties into Phuket's role as the host of the upcoming Thailand Biennale 2025.

Thais end winless after FIVB HK leg

VOLLEYBALL

THAILAND ENDED the second week of the FIVB Women's Volleyball Nations League 2025 without a win after they lost to Bulgaria 2-3 in Hong Kong last Sunday (June 22).

The Thais battled from two sets down to force the deciding fifth but still fell short as they were beaten 24-26, 13-25, 25-21, 25-22, 9-15 by the Eastern Europeans at Kai Tak Arena.

"It was disappointing that we lost to today," said middle blocker Thatdao Nuekjang.

"We just have to admit that we weren't good enough. We will have to train harder and prepare for the third leg in the United States," she added.

Prior to Sunday's loss to Bulgaria, the Thai spikers lost 1-3 to the 13th ranked Czech Republic, (25-18, 25-16, 32-30). This followed a straight forward 3-0



Thailand's Thanacha Sooksod. Photo: Supplied

(25-19, 25-20, 25-18) whitewash against top-ranked Italy on June 19 and a 2-3 (18-25, 23-25, 25-20, 25-15, 15-11) loss to Japan a day earlier.

Thailand have just one win against seven losses after two weeks of the preliminary phase. They picked up only five points and are ranked 16th in the 18-team standings.

They will travel to the United States to play the third leg in Arlington, Texas, next month.

The opening match against the hosts will take place on July 9, followed by matches against Germany on July 10, Dominican Republic on July 11 and Canada on July 13. *Bangkok Post*

ONE receives support pledge

MMA

Bangkok Post

The Thai government has signalled it may begin backing ONE Championship – after founder Chatri Sityodtong expressed sadness at the lack of official support despite the martial arts organisation's surging popularity and economic impact.

ONE's viewership in Thailand reportedly surpassed the 2024 Paris Olympics, as well as the combined figures for the Thai League and English Premier League, with a recent AC Nielsen report estimating its annual economic impact at US\$470 million (B16 billion).

"We admire what ONE Championship is doing," Thailand's Minister of Tourism and Sports, Sorawong Thienthong, said on June 18, addressing growing scrutiny of the government's recent Formula One bid.

"Mr Chatri and ONE Championship are a crucial part of the effort to promote Muay Thai. We're always willing to support ONE, because Muay Thai is something all Thai people want to see promoted on the global stage."

The remarks came a day after Chatri said in Bangkok he was "saddened" by how the government favours foreign ventures over homegrown success stories.

"I am saddened that the Thai



ONE Championship fighter Rodtang Jitmuangnon. Photo: Supplied

government hasn't supported ONE," he said. "Seventy million people in Thailand love ONE and our athletes. ONE has captured the hearts and minds of the entire country and elevated Thailand's status on the global stage of sports, business and politics. According to Nielsen, ONE is now Thailand's biggest economic engine for tourism, contributing almost 10% of Thailand's GDP and is actually bigger than F1 in terms of viewership and engagement."

Sorawong's comments come as the government faces criticism over its bid to host Formula One in Bangkok from 2028 to 2032 – a project expected to cost over B41bn.

Plai Jitinat, president of ONE Thailand, welcomed the government's new stance but said it had taken time for policymakers to fully grasp the opportunity ONE presents.

While both are global sports properties, Plai insisted ONE delivers more direct and lasting benefits to Thailand than F1 would do, especially for tourism and the domestic Muay Thai industry.

"F1 would cost B41bn and they project B16bn in return – just for a few days a year," he said. "We generate the same economic impact annually, at a fraction of the cost, and in a much more sustained way."

He added that ONE's weekly events, international broadcasts to 195 countries, and grassroots initiatives help grow Thailand's combat sports ecosystem throughout the year.

"The investment in ONE and Muay Thai will directly support the Thai ecosystem and take the country's most cherished soft power to a global stage – we are the Premier League of Muay Thai for fans all over the world," Plai said.

QLD hold off NSW to force State of Origin decider

RUGBY

A REJUVENATED QUEENSLAND forced a decider in the best-of-three State of Origin rugby league series after a 26-24 upset over New South Wales on June 18.

Playing in wet conditions on neutral territory at Perth's Optus Stadium in front of 57,000 fans, underdogs Queensland mustered their famed resilience to build a formidable 26-6 lead before fending off a late rally from the Blues.

Under pressure after an 18-6 home defeat in the opener, Queensland left out skipper Daly Cherry-Evans – the first mid-series axing of a Maroons captain since Trevor Gillmeister in 1996.

Their inspired first-half performance through damp weather ensured the series will be decided on July 9 in Sydney.

"We had a really good first-half... we kept working and turning up for each other," Queensland captain Cameron Munster said.

The Blues were left stunned



Photo: AFP

by the early onslaught as their dreams of winning a fourth straight game for the first time since 1997 quickly faded away.

They dominated with four tries in the second-half, but were left to rue three missed conversions from Zac Lomax.

The Blues were relentless in the dying stages but could not push past a desperate Queensland, who claimed their first victory at Optus Stadium after defeats in 2019 and 2022.

"We still had utmost confidence in what we could do, but the result was disappointing because it was there for the taking," NSW captain Isaah Yeo said afterwards. *AFP*

Lions fail to roar against Pumas



THE GLOBAL RUGBY COACH

THE RAZZAMATAZZ SURROUNDING the announcement of the British and Irish Lions squad to face Australia was abruptly halted in Dublin against an equally depleted Argentinian side last Friday (June 20).

The final warm-up game for the Lions before they embarked on the long journey Down Under for the tour of Australia ended in a 24-28 loss to Los Pumas at the Aviva Stadium – not the ideal result for head coach Andy Farrell.

To be fair, Farrell's hands were very much tied, with many players unavailable. Those who played in the Gallagher Premiership final between Bath and Leicester were unavailable, as were those still playing in France. Plus, one or two had niggly injuries.

This was by no means the Lions' first test starting team, but they were still all fully-fledged international players. Commentators sought to find excuses to pacify TV spectators for the Lions' performance but some players have certainly ruled themselves out of a test spot.

The two Smiths, Marcus and Finn, were substandard. Marcus



British and Irish Lions' wing Tommy Freeman. Photo: AFP

prefers 10 to 15. Finn didn't like to run into the dark areas. The centre pairing of Aki and Tuipulotu, two 12s, must have been forced on Farrell. It just didn't work.

My major concern was the poor performance of the captain, Maro Itoje. He lacked on-field leadership, especially in physical aspects. Worse still, his post-match interview would not have stirred a cat!

Farrell spoke honestly. He will not tolerate another performance like that. Some players will be warned. The coaches are now on notice.

Next up, the Lions face the Western Force in Perth tomorrow (June 28). The Force finished 3rd from bottom in Super Rugby but they are a well-organised team, with seven members of the team

in the Wallaby squad who will be playing against the Lions. Farrell will put out a much-changed team. The blending must be better, similarly the outcome.

Having lived and coached in Australia for several years, I know if the Aussies sniff a weakness they will go for it, and the Kiwi coach Joe Schmidt has years of experience to call on from his time as Ireland's coach.

My tip: Lions by 12, but they will need to start well.

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.

Premier League season set to return with a bang

FOOTBALL

AFP

Liverpool will kick off their Premier League title defence at home to Bournemouth on Friday, Aug 15, while Arsenal head to Manchester United in a blockbuster clash on the opening weekend.

Arne Slot's champions have the chance to secure the first points of the new season at Anfield as they launch the 2025/26 campaign, bidding for a record 21st English top-flight crown.

Following the Bournemouth game Liverpool have tricky fixtures at Newcastle and at home to Mikel Arteta's Arsenal, runners-up for the past three seasons.

Thomas Frank's first match as Tottenham boss will come on Aug 16 at home against newly promoted Burnley, while Sunderland make their return to the Premier League against West Ham. The third newcomers, Leeds, play Everton on Aug 18.

Pep Guardiola's Manchester City, who ended last season empty-handed, will be desperate to get off to a winning start against Wolves at Molineux.

Everton fans will have to wait until the second round of fixtures for their first league game at their new Hill Dickinson Stadium, when they will face Brighton.



Defending champions Liverpool. Photo: AFP

Liverpool dominated the Premier League last season, romping to a record-equalling 20th title with four games to spare in Slot's first season in charge.

They have already strengthened their squad after agreeing a club-record deal, reportedly worth up to £116 million (B\$1.1 billion) to sign Florian Wirtz along with his Bayer Leverkusen teammate Jeremie Frimpong.

A deal for Bournemouth left-back Milos Kerkez is also understood to be well-advanced.

Ruben Amorim's Manchester United, who will be desperate to hit the ground running after a terrible season, have been handed a tough test with a home game against Arsenal on Aug 17.

United finished 15th in the league, their lowest position since they were relegated in the 1973/74 season, and lost in the Europa League final against Tottenham.

Amorim has started a squad rebuild, bringing in Matheus Cunha from Wolves.

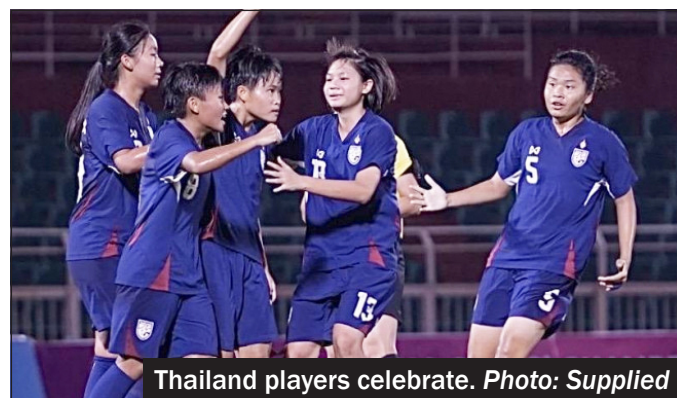
The season consists of 380 games over 33 weekends and five midweek rounds. It concludes on May 24 with matches including Manchester City against Aston Villa.

The Premier League said the start date "allows for the maximum player rest time available – 83 clear days – from the end of the 2024/25 season".

The World Cup in Canada, Mexico and the United States begins on June 11, 2026.

Elsewhere, Premier League great Kevin De Bruyne has signed for Italian Serie A champions Napoli as a free agent after being released by Manchester City.

The 33-year-old enjoyed a trophy-packed decade in Manchester under Pep Guardiola, winning six Premier League titles, two FA Cups, five League Cups and the Champions League.



Thailand players celebrate. Photo: Supplied

Thai girls retain ASEAN U19 title

FOOTBALL

THAILAND RETAINED the ASEAN Under-19 Girls' Championship title after they defeated Vietnam 3-1 in the final at the Thong Nhat Stadium in Ho Chi Minh City on June 18.

Nuengruthai Srathongwien's team won the tournament for the third time after their victories in the inaugural tournament in 2014 and 2023.

The victory capped off a run of five consecutive wins in the tournament for the Thais. They won all of their Group B matches against Indonesia (6-1), Malaysia (7-1) and Cambodia (4-0) before hammering Myanmar 5-1 in the semi-finals.

"This is a great success for the Thai team," head coach Nuengruthai said

after the match. "Our players did very well today and we won the title again.

"Our players dealt with the weather conditions well all week. All the players took good care of themselves and no one was injured or got sick until we reached the final.

"The players in this team are the future of Thai women's football and they are ready to step up to play in the senior tournaments in the future," added the coach.

Thailand's Kurisara Limpawanich finished the tournament as the top scorer with six goals.

The loss was another disappointing result for the Vietnamese, who have now finished runners-up in all four editions of the tournament (2014, 2022, 2023 and 2025). *Bangkok Post*

Thai FA Targets 2027 Women's World Cup

FOOTBALL

THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION OF Thailand (FAT) has officially launched a strategic plan for women's football under the vision "From Grassroots to Greatness," reaffirming its commitment to returning the Thai women's national team, known as 'Chaba Kaew', to the FIFA Women's World Cup stage with the campaign 'Road to Brazil 2027'.

Selected by the AFC and UEFA as one of five Asian countries – including Chinese Taipei, Vietnam, Uzbekistan and Lebanon – to participate in the AFC-UEFA Women's Football Programme, Thailand has developed a comprehensive, systematic strategy to sustainably advance women's football from 2025 to 2029.

The launch event in Bangkok on June 16 was attended by representatives from FIFA and the AFC, including officials from women's football development, technical experts, and the head coach of the Thai women's national team.

FAT Vice President Yutthana Yimkarun underscored the importance of women's football as a priority under President Nualphan Lamsam's leadership. He recalled the historic victory over Ivory Coast at the 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup in Canada – the team's first-ever World Cup win – and their subsequent qualification in 2019 in France, emphasising a renewed



Photo: Bangkok Post

commitment to structured development with clear goals.

The strategic plan aims to build a strong foundation for women's football in Thailand, fostering growth from grassroots to elite competition, with the ultimate goal of securing qualification for the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup in Brazil.

The Thai women's national team began preparations at Alpine Football Camp in Chiang Mai on June 13 ahead of the 2026 AFC Women's Asian Cup qualifiers.

Group stage opponents include Timor-Leste (June 26), Iraq (June 29), Mongolia (July 2), and India (July 5). The group winner will advance to the final tournament in Australia (March 1–21, 2026), which serves as the qualification pathway for the 2027 Women's World Cup.

FAT expressed gratitude to FIFA, UEFA, AFC, coaches, players, clubs, schools and the wider community for their continued support in advancing women's football in Thailand.

Bangkok Post

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Struggle for winless Thai spikers > p14



Laguna Phuket Marathon as popular as ever

Jumping for joy at the start-finish line. Photo: PR Phuket

MARATHON

The Phuket News
editor@classactmedia.co.th

More than 7,000 competitors from over 71 different countries joined in the 19th Laguna Phuket Marathon over the weekend of June 14-15.

The 'Laguna Phuket Marathon 2025 Presented by Supersports' was held on Saturday (June 14) and Sunday (June 15), incorporating a range of distances to encourage participation from as many people as possible.

Saturday saw the 'Sunset Run' take place, including the 2-kilometre Youth Run, the 10km Mini Marathon and the 5km Fun Run, while Sunday's 'Sunrise Run' incorporated the 21.0975km Half Marathon, Marathon Relay Race and full 42.195km Marathon.

Local Phuketian and previous winner Apichai Phuchit crossed the line in first place in the men's full marathon with a time of 2

hour, 51 minutes and 48 seconds, while Mayumi Watanabe from Japan won the women's full marathon with a time of 3h 27m 5s. Apichai, affectionately known as 'Iron Lung' by his friends due to his impressive physical running capabilities, previously won the same race in 2022.

Meanwhile, Mungai Kirogoi, of Kenya finished first in the men's half marathon with a time of 1h 18m 30s and Chiaki Morikawa of Japan won the women's class in 1h 23m 46s.

Special individual awards for senior runners went to Anon Kulpattanasophon, aged 72, who won the Full Marathon and 73-year-old Bhasker Desai from India, who crossed the finish line first in the Half Marathon distance, both of whom were competing in the 70 years and above category.

Several well known celebrities joined the event, adding an extra sense of excitement to proceedings, including two renowned runners from the YouTube 'Run

With Xa' channel, Worat Upanisakorn and Napassorn Hasbamroe, TikTok Penpicha Premcharoen, fitness trainer Nawin Klinrod, and celebrity runner Sonya Habib. The expanded scope of the event also allowed for entire families to join in the fun via the shorter distances.

NATURAL BEAUTY

Phuket Governor Sophon Suwannarat officially inaugurated the event on the Saturday evening ahead of the first race, which started at 4pm. Governor Sophon was joined by his wife Busadee Suwannarat, who also serves as President of the Phuket Red Cross Society, as well as Phuket Vice Governor Adul Chuthong, head of the Sports Authority of Thailand Puhket office Thanawut Petchchara, and selected dignitaries.

Throughout the duration of both days of racing were a range of additional activities to engage and entertain attendees, such as

the Laguna Lifestyle Market, a health product zone, local and international food zones, game activities for children, live music and spectacular light shows. The various race routes also offered participants first hand, unforgettable experiences of the natural beauty in and around the Laguna Phuket area, including diverse landscapes, rubber plantations, peaceful beaches, local temples and glimpses into local community lifestyles.

Similarly, the highest levels of international event safety standards were adhered to, including regular water service points available to runners, fully qualified medical services on hand and full security measures in place.

"Laguna Phuket Marathon is not just a sporting event but a platform to promote sustainable health tourism," Paul Wilson, Managing Director of Laguna Phuket commented. "We are honoured to welcome runners from all over the world to our

resort and we will continue to develop it into an event that everyone looks forward to every year."

Roman Floesser, CEO of Laguna Phuket Marathon 2025 by Supersports, said, "This year marks another milestone in the running industry in Asia. This event proves the power of community, collaboration and the spirit of athletes. Including the diversity of participants, whether they are new runners, children, youth, professional athletes or seniors, everyone runs for health, happiness and inspiration. We would like to thank everyone who participated. We look forward to creating an even better experience next year as we celebrate the 20th anniversary in a big way."

Dates for the 'Laguna Phuket Marathon 2026 by Supersports' have been confirmed as Saturday, June 13 and Sunday, June 14, 2026, with further details announced in due course, organisers said.

Thailand to bid for five-year B40bn F1 race deal

FORMULA ONE

THAILAND'S CABINET HAS approved a plan to bid for the right to hold Formula One races in Bangkok for five years starting in 2028, at a cost of B40 billion.

Tourism and Sports Minister Sorawong Thienthong said on June 17 he has already started discussions with Formula One Group and the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau. He is also heading a committee to study the project, with representatives from various ministries concerned.

Government spokesman Jirayu Houngsub said the proposed race venue would be located in the compound of the Krung Thep Aphiwat Central Terminal Station (Bang Sue Grand Station) and nearby areas, and each annual event would last three days.

He said the 5.7-kilometre circuit would run from Chatuchak park to the station. It will occupy an 800-rai area in the compound of the station, 100 rai at Mo Chit 2 bus terminal, 240 rai near Chatuchak market, 163 rai in Queen Sirikit Park and about

2,000 rai behind the headquarters of PTT Plc.

The combined area would be closed for five days for each event for preparation, two days of training runs and race days.

Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra commissioned a feasibility study into hosting a Grand Prix on a Bangkok street circuit after meeting in March with F1 chief Stefano Domenicali.

Most of F1's 24-race schedule is confirmed for several years but gaps are set to open up and Mr Domenicali has reportedly

suggested that Thailand could be a contender to join the circuit.

F1 already has four races in the Asia-Pacific region, including the Singapore Grand Prix in Southeast Asia.

The Thai government has touted the idea of a "sustainable" event and said the race and associated events could generate about B20bn in revenue for the country.

Mr Sorawong previously expressed confidence that a F1 race, if held in Thailand, would "break even" within a year.

The cost of staging a F1 race



Photo: AFP

varies greatly, but it can range from US\$200 million (B6.5bn) to over \$1bn for construction, with annual hosting fees potentially reaching \$55mn. While many events generate substantial revenue, profitability depends on various factors including ticket sales, sponsorships and overall economic impact. *Bangkok Post*